

Your newest teammate has a

SPEND CAP

Campaign Brief Writer	
Owner	Stephanie Vargas
Can be tasked by	Marketing, 9 people
Writes	Briefs only
Spend cap	\$120 / month

Where the research came from

We went through what Google, Anthropic, Microsoft, LangChain, Asana and Notion have shipped in their agent products, alongside the studies published in 2025 and 2026.

Twenty patterns came out of it. **Five deal with the same shift**: an agent stops being your personal tool and becomes something a whole team relies on.

Products are ahead of the research here. Asana, Notion and Slack shipped versions of the same idea **within a year of each other**.

1: Give it a staff record

A name, an owner, a scope and a limit, managed where people are managed.

A name and an owner

Someone accountable for what it does.

A scope

What it may read.
What it may write.

Campaign Brief Writer	
Owner	Stephanie Vargas
Reads	Campaigns, briefs, brand docs
Writes	Briefs only
Spend cap	\$120 / month, \$41 used
Guidance edited by	4 people, last on 12 Aug

A spend cap

So cost is a decision, not a surprise.

In the same console

Not a separate panel nobody opens.

Asana and Notion both work this way. **An agent you can assign work to is an agent you can also switch off.**

2: It can do what that role can do

The agent may do what a person in that seat could do. No more.

The simplest rule available

And the easiest to explain to a security team.

No borrowed access

It cannot read what the person asking cannot read.

Acting for Priya, marketing

- ✓ Campaign briefs
- ✓ Brand guidelines
- ✓ Q4 launch plan
- ✗ **Salary bands**
Priya cannot see these either

What it prevents

An agent quietly holding wider access than anyone on the team.

Asana's argument

What made human collaboration work is what makes agent collaboration trustworthy.

If you cannot state this rule for the agents in your organisation, **that is the first thing to fix.**

3: Decide who may task it

A named group gives it work. That same group keeps its knowledge current.

Tasking rights

A defined group, not everyone in the company.

Shared ownership

The same group maintains its guidance.

Who works with this agent	
Can give it work	Marketing, 9 people
Can edit its guidance	4 people
Can change its access	Owner only
Last guidance change: "always check the legal disclaimer wording", added by Marcus, 12 Aug.	

Still unsolved

Several people teaching one agent, with no way to merge conflicting preferences.

So design for reversibility

You are ahead of the evidence base here.

This is a genuinely new problem. **Nobody has a good answer for whose preference wins.**

4: Two names on every action

The agent that acted, and the person who authorised it.

The actor

Which agent did the thing.

The authority

Who approved it, and when.

Activity, Q4 launch

A **Brief Writer** moved the due date to 14 Oct for Stephanie, who approved the change

P **Marcus** approved the brief

A **Brief Writer** drafted the brief from 3 documents asked by Priya

Why both

A record with one name cannot answer the question people actually ask.

Where it shows

Activity feeds, audit logs, change history.

Ask it of any agent action in your organisation: who approved this?
If the log says "an integration", you have a gap.

5: Keep a register

Every agent, its owner, what it touches, and when it was last reviewed.

Name and purpose

One line each.

Owner and escalation

Who to call when it misbehaves.

Agent register



Campaign Brief Writer
Stephanie · marketing data ·
reviewed Aug



Invoice Chaser
Tomas · finance data · reviewed Jul



Support Triage v2
no owner · customer data · never
reviewed

What it touches

Systems, data, the
identity it runs
under.

A review date

Or the list rots and
stops being used.

Gartner named **agent sprawl** in April 2026. A register is far cheaper to start at agent two than at agent forty.

Sharing an agent

- 1 A staff record.** Name, owner, scope, spend cap.
- 2 Permission parity.** What that role could do, and no more.
- 3 Tasking rights.** A named group, who also keep its guidance current.
- 4 Two names on every action.** The agent, and the person behind it.
- 5 A register.** With an owner and a review date on every line.

The two questions a shared agent has to survive: who approved this, and could we switch it off tomorrow?

Does your organisation know how many agents it is running?
Yes, roughly, or no.

If you change one thing

Put an owner on every agent

Why this one

It takes an afternoon. It is the line everything else in the register hangs off, and no agent should outlive the person accountable for it.

An agent nobody owns is **an agent nobody can switch off.**

Go deeper

The whole pattern library

On the site

Seven families, forty-one patterns.
What each one prevents, and the
product or the paper it came from.
Free, and no sign-up.

thinkbigleaders.com/resources/agent-patterns

Or talk it through

Curious, and nowhere near a decision?
Good. Have a use case in mind? Also
good. Already building one, or want
agents inside your own product? Bring
what you have.



Thirty minutes with Think Big Leaders.

Scan the code to pick a time.