

Case Study

From Bottleneck to Breakthrough: How Ducker Carlisle Unlocked \$1M in Operational Savings with AI

Overview

When Fabien Cros joined Ducker Carlisle from Google, he expected to find teams already building sophisticated AI workflows with frameworks like LangChain and AutoGen. Instead, he discovered something far more common: organizations overwhelmed by AI possibilities, unsure where to start, and relying on small technical teams that had become impossible bottlenecks. "Coming from Google, I was expecting everybody to be super advanced, ready to build their own solutions," Fabien recalls. "What we discovered is that most companies are completely lost about AI. It's not a criticism, it's just a fact. So we repositioned the way we think about AI entirely."




Ducker Carlisle, which had recently consolidated its Sparkwise Solutions brand under the Ducker Carlisle name, now pioneers a radically different approach to enterprise AI: the Citizen Developer Program. Built on StackAI's no-code platform and supported by centralized governance, the program enables business users across the firm to rapidly design and iterate AI agents without writing code. The results speak for themselves: over 50 agents deployed across dozens of use cases, with the company on track to achieve \$1 million in annual cost savings.

"We used to be the bottleneck. I had dozens of requests coming in, and it was unsustainable. By decentralizing from a team of 5-10 people to 100 people equipped with StackAI, we went from weeks of building time to minutes."



Fabien Cros
Chief Data and AI Officer

Impact

-  100+ employees empowered to build AI agents with StackAI
-  On track to reach 1M+ in operational savings with AI agents
-  50+ AI Agents across use cases and departments

The Challenge: Breaking the Centralized AI Bottleneck

Ducker Carlisle faced a problem that plagues most mid-sized consulting and professional services firms attempting AI transformation. Their data and AI team was drowning in requests while most employees waited weeks or months for basic automation workflows.

Fabien's lean tech team received dozens of requests for AI use cases across different practice areas. Building each workflow in-house with traditional development tools meant week-long backlogs. By the time one use case was deployed, ten more requests had arrived. The team couldn't scale to meet demand, and business users grew frustrated with the pace of innovation.

Some organizations had tried the opposite approach: giving everyone access to generic AI tools like Microsoft Copilot with minimal training or support. This rarely worked. "They install Copilot, tell people it will be magical, and nobody trains them. Nobody gives them support," Fabien explains. "People look at it, see it's not working, and then say 'AI doesn't work.' It's a complete failure."

Ducker Carlisle realized they needed something in between: a way to decentralize AI development while maintaining the expertise and governance that made solutions actually work.

The Solution: Empowering Citizen Developers with StackAI

Ducker Carlisle's answer was a structured Citizen Developer Program built on StackAI's no-code platform. The program follows a simple but powerful model: business users build 90% of their AI workflows themselves, while a central team of experts provides the critical 10% of technical support that makes solutions production-ready.

The program's strength comes from its community aspect. When one team solves a problem, others learn from it. When someone discovers a useful integration pattern, it gets shared. When a workflow delivers exceptional value, it becomes a template others can adapt.

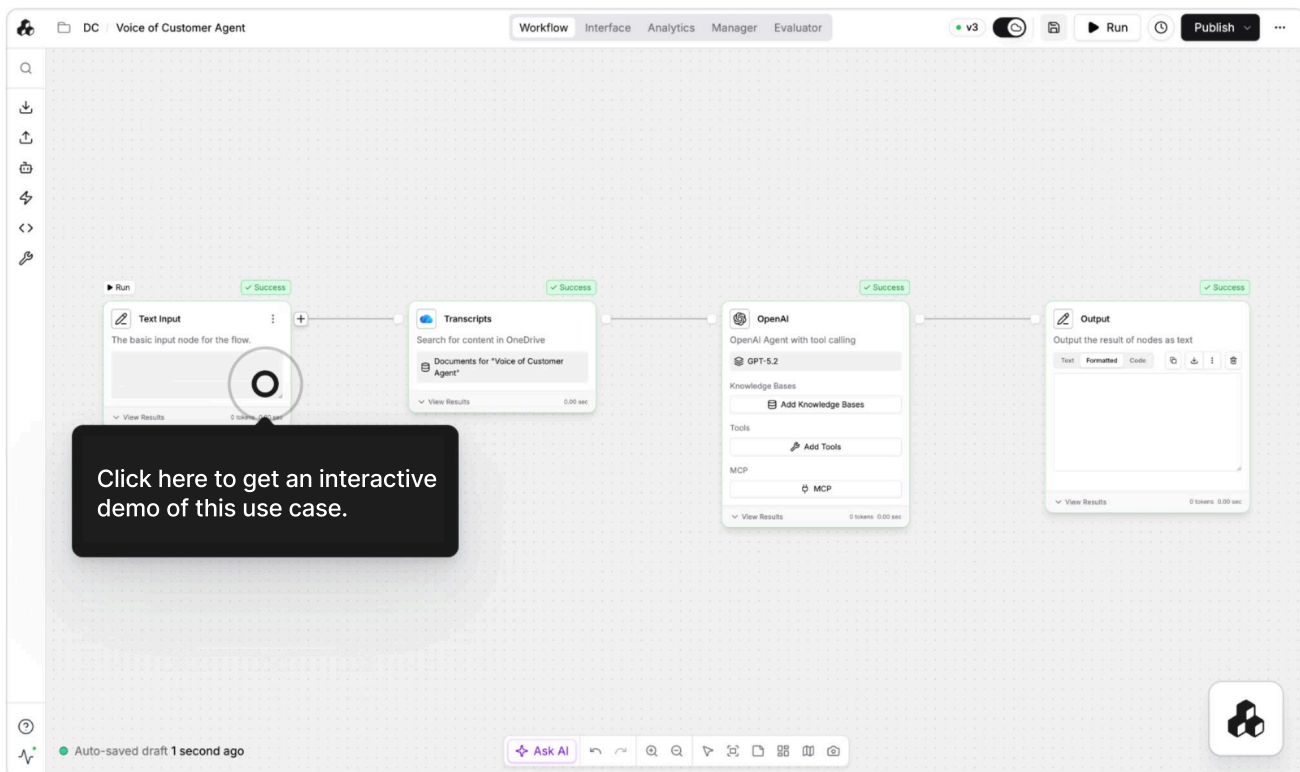
This community approach has created a flywheel effect. More builders means more use cases. More use cases means more shared learning. More learning means better quality and faster development across the board.

Voice of Customer Analysis

Ducker Carlisle's M&A practice conducts 10-15 customer interviews per project, generating 150-200 pages of transcripts. Writing final reports required finding specific quotes to support key findings. Consultants spent 8-12 hours per project using Ctrl+F to manually search through hundreds of pages, often settling for "good enough" quotes instead of the perfect illustration. They frequently lost track of which interview a quote came from, requiring time-consuming re-verification.

From Hours to Seconds

The Solution: The team built an AI agent that indexes all interview transcripts in a single Knowledge Base with automatic metadata tagging. Consultants now ask natural language questions like "Find quotes about pricing concerns" or "What did customers say about implementation challenges?" and the agent returns exact sentences with full source attribution—interview name, timestamp, participant role—in under 10 seconds. They can click any citation to verify full context in the original transcript.

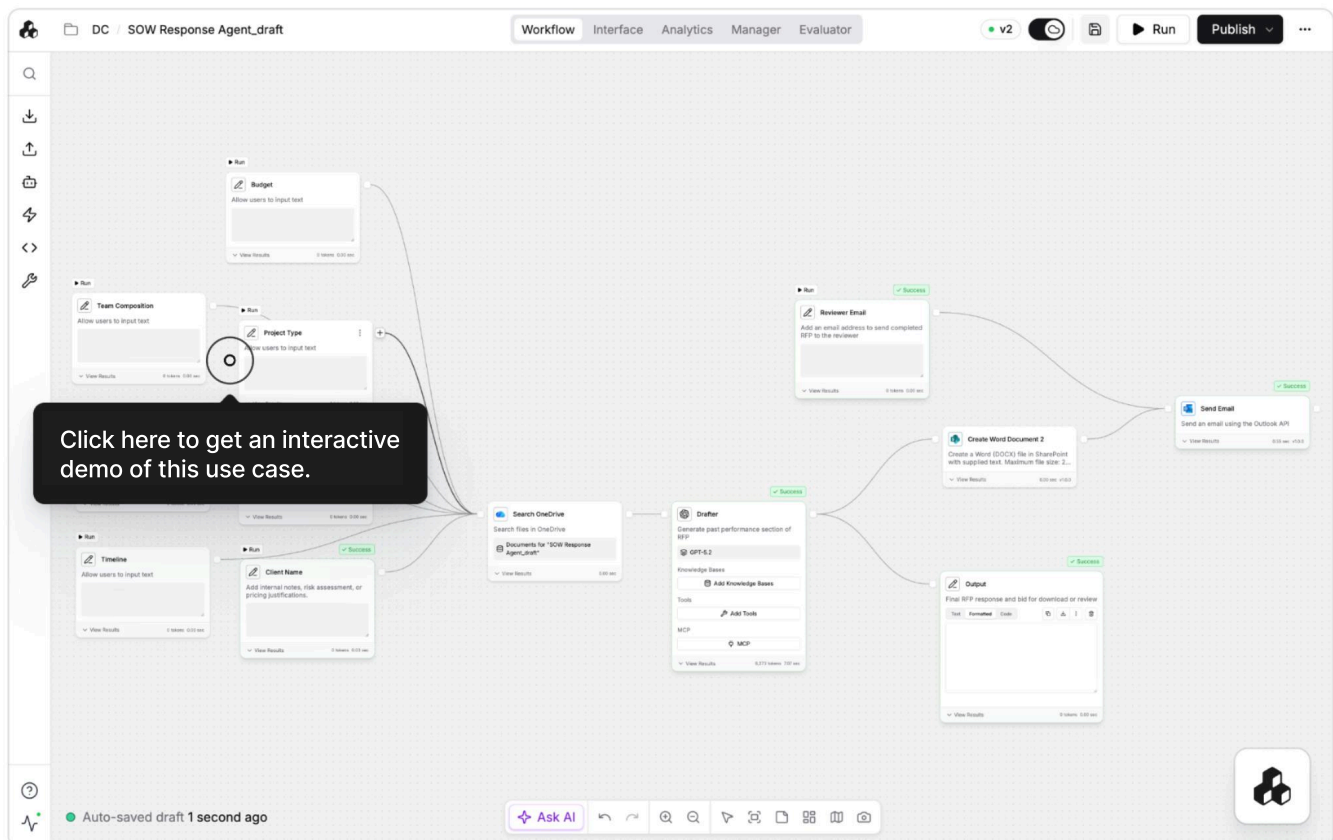


Scope-of-Work Generation

Every consulting engagement required a Statement of Work outlining scope, methodology, deliverables, timeline, and pricing. Partners and senior consultants spent 2-3 hours per SOW: finding similar past examples, manually editing details, updating methodology, and customizing pricing. With 50-60 projects annually, this consumed 150+ hours of senior-level time on administrative work instead of billable client service.

Automated, Informed Document Drafting

The team built an interactive form agent that prompts for project essentials: client name, industry, project type, scope elements, timeline, team composition, and budget. The agent selects the appropriate template from their library, populates all client and project details, generates tailored methodology descriptions, creates deliverables lists, builds realistic timelines, and outputs a complete formatted Word document. It pulls from a Knowledge Base of past SOWs to suggest realistic timelines and flag scope combinations that historically caused budget issues.

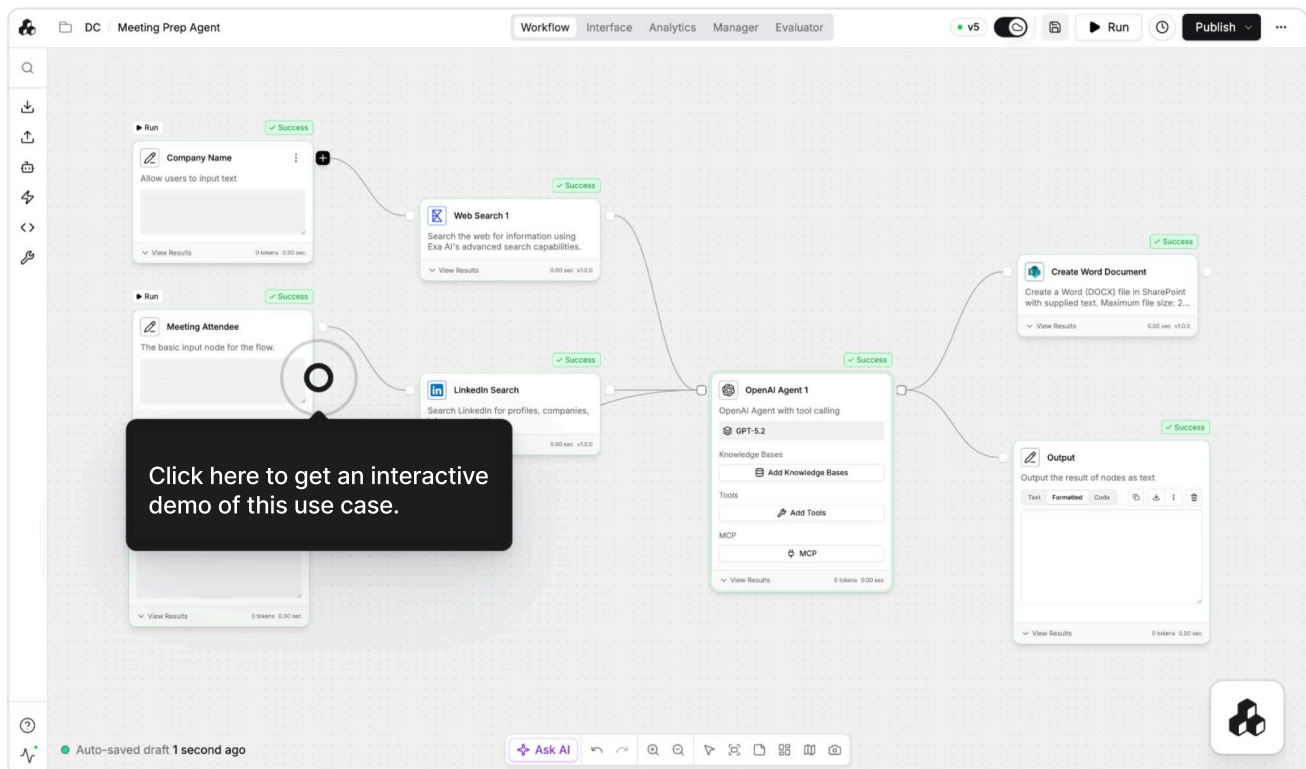


Meeting Preparation Agent

Consultants frequently met clients, prospects, or experts with minimal background information. Proper preparation took 45-60 minutes per person: LinkedIn profile review, Google searches, company news, publications, and compiling talking points. With 5 meetings per week, this meant 2.5-4 hours of prep work. When time was limited, research was inconsistent or skipped entirely, resulting in missed rapport-building opportunities.

Comprehensive Notes in Minutes

The team built an agent that automates comprehensive meeting preparation. Consultants enter a name, company, and meeting context, and the agent retrieves LinkedIn for background and recent activity, searches for news mentions and publications, pulls company intelligence on recent announcements, identifies personal interests and hobbies, and generates 5-7 specific conversation starters. Within 60 seconds, it delivers a formatted brief with executive summary, background snapshot, recent activity, conversation hooks, company context, and suggested meeting approach.



The Business Impact: \$1 Million in Annual Savings

The Citizen Developer Program's financial impact has exceeded expectations. Ducker Carlisle is on track to achieve \$1 million in annual cost savings from workflow automation, time savings, and efficiency improvements across the organization.

These savings come from multiple sources:

- Reduced manual work across routine tasks that agents now handle automatically.
- Faster turnaround times for deliverables like proposals, reports, and analyses.
- Better resource allocation as senior consultants spend less time on administrative tasks.
- Improved accuracy eliminating costly errors and rework. Increased capacity allowing the same team size to handle more projects simultaneously.

Perhaps more importantly, the program has unlocked innovation capacity that was previously trapped. Ducker Carlisle went from 5 people building AI solutions to over 100 active citizen developers. The bottleneck disappeared.

Why StackAI: Platform Advantages That Made It Possible

For Ducker Carlisle, several StackAI capabilities proved essential to making the Citizen Developer Program work:

- 1. Integration Flexibility:** As a Microsoft shop, Ducker Carlisle needed seamless connections to SharePoint, OneDrive, and other Microsoft 365 tools. But they also use Google Drive and Box for specific workflows. "You can connect SharePoint with Google Drive with Box and boom, you have a full workflow grabbing information from everywhere," Fabien explains. "For me, that's the biggest differentiator of StackAI. Everybody asks why we didn't install Perplexity or Anthropic or ChatGPT or Microsoft Copilot. With Microsoft Copilot, you're really stuck with one thing."
- 2. Ease of Use for Non-Technical Users:** The visual workflow builder makes AI development accessible to people who have never written code. Citizen developers can see their agent logic laid out visually, test each step independently, and understand what's happening at each stage without technical jargon. This accessibility is what makes the 90/10 model work. Business users genuinely can build most of their workflow themselves.

Conclusion

By empowering 100+ business users to build AI agents themselves, supported by a small team of experts providing strategic guidance, Ducker Carlisle achieved what centralized development never could: rapid innovation, \$1 million in projected annual savings, and a sustainable model for ongoing AI adoption. Further, the success of Ducker Carlisle's internal program has led to a new business opportunity: offering the Citizen Developer Program to clients.

AI transformation doesn't require every employee to become a developer. It requires giving curious people accessible tools and supporting them with expertise when they need it. As Fabien puts it: "You don't have to be a nerd. You just have to be curious."

"StackAI made AI accessible across our entire company. Business users can easily build sophisticated workflows connecting SharePoint, Google Drive, Box, and more. We've gone from a bottleneck of experts to a citizen developer movement, and we're on track to reach \$1M in operational savings."



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Chief Data and AI Officer



Let's Build AI Agents for Your Enterprise, Together

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