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First chapter only

The AI-First GTM Playbook

Zero-Dollar Customer Acquisition Through AI Distribution Channels

The AI-First GTM Playbook

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Published by Pragma Vision LLC

First edition, 2026.

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The Death of Paid Acquisition

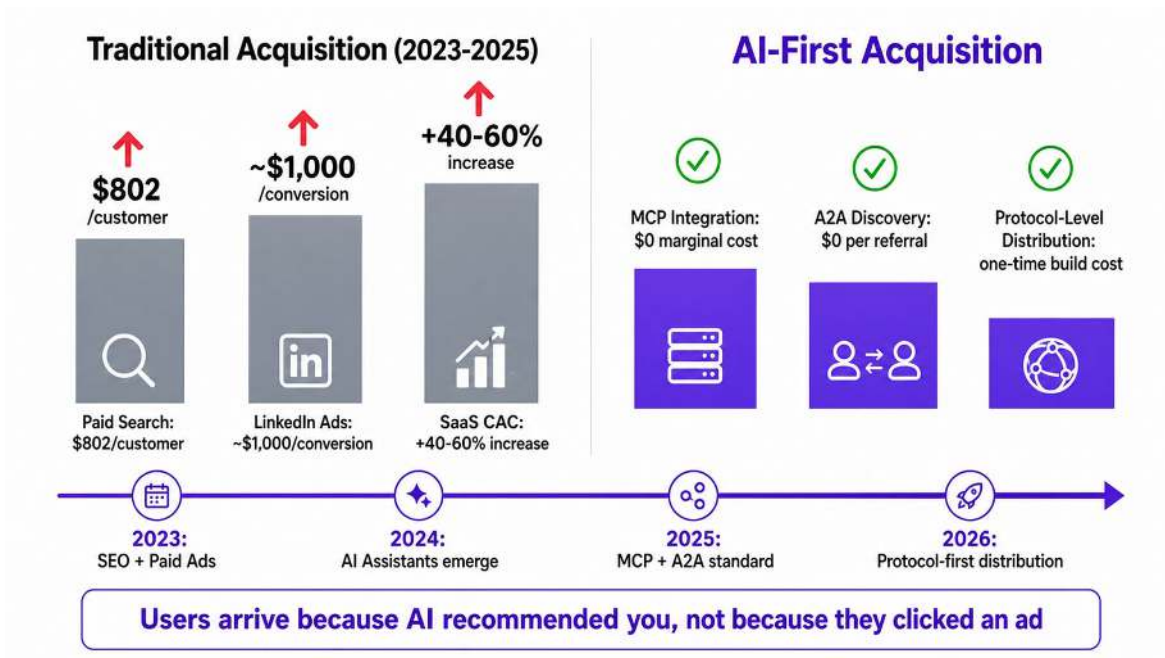


Figure 1. Traditional acquisition costs rise from 2023 to 2025—paid search at \$802/customer, LinkedIn Ads at about \$1,000/conversion, and SaaS CAC up 40–60%—while AI-first channels show \$0 marginal cost and protocol-first distribution by 2026

Between 2023 and 2025, customer acquisition costs across B2B SaaS climbed 40–60%. Paid search now averages \$802 per acquired customer. LinkedIn ads run nearly \$1,000 per conversion. The arbitrage that built the last generation of startups—cheap clicks, viral loops, SEO dominance—has collapsed under its own weight.

During this same period, a parallel distribution system emerged. Customers arrive not because they clicked an ad, but because an AI assistant recommended your product during a conversation. Discovery happens not through search engine rankings, but through protocol-level integration with the systems people already use to make decisions.

40–60%

cumulative increase in customer acquisition costs between 2023 and 2025¹

This book is about that parallel system—building a go-to-market strategy where your primary distribution channel is not Google Ads or cold outreach, but the AI assistants that hundreds of millions of people consult before making purchases.

1.1 About Pragma.Vision

Pragma.Vision is an AI-native commerce ecosystem—a growing family of interconnected platforms sharing infrastructure, identity, and payment systems. We did not build Pragma.Vision and then figure out how to market it. We built it *for* AI distribution from day one. Every product in the ecosystem is discoverable by AI agents through standardized protocols, not through a website optimized for human eyeballs.

This book distills twelve development sprints of building AI-first distribution into a commerce platform. The strategies are extracted from production systems processing real transactions through AI channels, not from theory.

¹ProfitWell (Paddle), *Subscription Benchmarks and CAC Trends*, 2024–2025.

1.2 Why Traditional GTM Is Failing

The traditional go-to-market motion follows a predictable pattern: identify a target audience, create content to attract them, run paid campaigns to accelerate discovery, convert visitors through a website funnel.

Each step has become more expensive and less effective:

- **Content saturation:** Every SaaS company publishes blogs, whitepapers, and webinars. The signal-to-noise ratio has collapsed.
- **Ad platform inflation:** Google and Meta operate auction-based pricing. More advertisers means higher costs for everyone.
- **Privacy restrictions:** iOS App Tracking Transparency, cookie deprecation, and GDPR have degraded ad targeting precision.
- **Attribution breakdown:** Multi-touch attribution across fragmented channels has become unreliable, making it impossible to know what actually works.

The result is a paradox: startups spend more money to reach fewer people with less certainty about outcomes.

1.3 The AI Distribution Shift

Something fundamental changed in 2024–2025. People stopped searching and started asking. Instead of typing keywords into Google, they describe what they need to ChatGPT, Claude, or Gemini. Instead of browsing comparison websites, they delegate evaluation to AI assistants.

This shift creates a new distribution layer. Products that are legible to AI assistants—structured, protocol-compliant, machine-discoverable—get recommended. Products

that exist only as web pages with marketing copy get passed over. The AI cannot recommend what it cannot parse.

Key Insight

The companies winning in 2026 are not the ones with the biggest ad budgets. They are the ones whose products are natively integrated into the AI systems their customers already use. Distribution has moved from “how do I get eyeballs?” to “how do I make AI assistants aware of my capabilities?”

1.4 What You Will Learn

This book covers the complete AI-first go-to-market strategy:

1. **Channels:** The four AI distribution channels and how each works (Chapter 2)
2. **Discoverability:** Making your product visible to AI systems (Chapter 3)
3. **MCP:** Publishing tools that AI assistants can directly invoke (Chapter 4)
4. **A2A:** Agent-to-agent discovery and task delegation (Chapter 5)
5. **Measurement:** New metrics for AI-first acquisition (Chapter 6)
6. **Conversion:** Turning AI-discovered users into customers (Chapter 7)
7. **Implementation:** Building your complete AI-first GTM stack (Chapter 8)

By the end, you will have a concrete plan for distribution that costs nearly nothing to operate, scales without proportional spend, and compounds in effectiveness as AI adoption grows.

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