ABHISHEK AGARWAL · AI × ENTREPRENEURSHIP

The Bubble-Proof AI Buying Checklist

How to make AI decisions during a bubble – **without betting on who's right about the bubble.**

THE 2 QUESTIONS THAT DECIDE IT

QUESTION 1

"Does this tool pay for itself today?"

Your unit economics, at today's prices, this quarter – not the vendor's valuation, not the market's mood.

QUESTION 2

"What does my labor supply look like in 5 years?"

If it's shrinking, waiting isn't free. Waiting is also a bet – that the tech stalls *and* your competitors wait with you.

THE 5-POINT "PAYS FOR ITSELF TODAY" TEST

- [ ] **One measurable task.** The tool does a specific job (answers tickets, books calls, drafts quotes) – not a vague "transformation."
- [ ] **Payback this quarter, at today's prices.** Hours saved × loaded cost > subscription – with the math written down, not vibes.
- [ ] **A tier you're ready for.** Start where *you* fit in the workflow – a tool you drive or supervise before anything unsupervised.
- [ ] **A number you'll check monthly.** Pick the metric before you buy (tickets closed, hours saved, leads booked). No metric = the 95%.
- [ ] **An exit if the vendor dies.** Bubble-specific: your data exports, the workflow survives a vendor shutdown, no multi-year lock-in.

THE PRECEDENT – SAME MOVIE, 25 YEARS APART

	DOT-COM (1996-2002)	AI (2023-?)
The buildout	$500B+ into fiber; 80M+ miles laid	~$725B/yr Big Tech AI capex
The stat everyone repeated	"Traffic doubles every 100 days" (false)	circular deals · "95% of pilots fail" (MIT – the 5% extract millions)
The pop	Nasdaq −78% · Amazon −94% · 85-95% of fiber dark	TBD
What survived	**The technology.** Users 361M → 1B+ (2000-05); dark fiber became cheap broadband & cloud	**Either way: AI is still in your industry in 2030**

Bubbles kill stock prices. They don't kill useful technology. (And the crash didn't save Blockbuster.)

CHECK THE SOURCES YOURSELF

MIT NANDA, "The GenAI Divide" (2025): fortune.com · MIT report coverage · full report PDF
Dot-com parallels: fortune.com · what burst the dot-com boom · the 1990s telecom bubble
Crash & recovery numbers: Nasdaq −78% (Wikipedia) · Amazon −90%+ (CNBC) · 1B users by 2005 (NN/g)
The demographic floor (my last video): The Real Reason Companies Are Investing in AI

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