

# AI in Action: Hiring Your First Digital Intern

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## FLORIDA ATTRACTIONS ANNUAL CONFERENCE

**May 31 - June 3, 2026**

**TAMPA MARRIOTT WATER STREET**

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***JOHN PENNEY***  
***FOUNDER***  
***BLACKDOG ADVERTISING***



Member Forum

# AI in Action

Hiring your first Digital Intern

John W. Penney | BlackDog Advertising

Florida Attractions Association Annual Conference • Tampa, FL • June 1, 2026





# The Buzzword Translator

*THE TECH LANDSCAPE: MOVING TO "AGENTIC"*

THE INDUSTRY TERMS

**Agentic AI**

**AI Agents**

**Autonomous Agents**



OUR TRANSLATION



**Digital Intern**

*You'll see these everywhere in the next 12 months.*



# Where We Were vs. Where We Are Going

## 2025 | THE INFORMATION ASSISTANT

### Brainstorming Ideas

*Asking AI to come up with concepts and angles.*

### Writing Marketing Copy

*Emails, social posts, ad copy on demand.*

### Summarizing Documents

*Meeting notes, grant drafts, research reports.*

### Custom GPTs & Gems

*Specialized chatbots, custom brand personas, tailored writing assistants.*

VS

## 2026 | THE DIGITAL INTERN

### Executing Multi-Step Workflows

*Give it a goal. It plans and executes the steps.*

### Monitoring Business Triggers

*Watches for weather, reviews, demand signals 24/7.*

### Connecting Operational Systems

*Booking engines, SMS, email, review platforms.*



# From Assistant to Action

Last year we gave AI a *question*.  
This year we're giving it a *job*.

## TRADITIONAL AI / CHATBOTS

### Reactive

- You type a prompt → It spits out text.
- Sits and waits for you to ask something.
- One task. One response. *Done*.



## AI AGENT / DIGITAL INTERN

### Proactive

- Give it a goal → It orchestrates tools to get it done.
- Connects multiple systems behind the scenes.
- Executes a multi-step task from start to finish.



# The #1 Fear in the Room

**"I cannot let a machine touch my pricing, access my ticketing system, or talk to my guests publicly."**

*"What if an AI mistake goes live?"*

A bad automated reply on TripAdvisor. A pricing error. There is no undo button in public.

*"I don't understand how it decides."*

If I can't explain why it did something, I can't defend it to a guest or my board.

*"My team will feel replaced."*

I need my people to trust this process - not fear it.

*Skepticism is SMART risk management.*





# The Safety Net: Human-in-the-Loop

## 1. AI Does the Work

Monitors data, pulls records, drafts content in the background.



## 2. AI Preps Output

Assembles a draft response, report, or recommendation.



Steps 3 & 4 are always human.  
AI never has final authority. **Ever.**

## 3. Human Reviews

Receive notifications with the draft & options for **1-click** actions.



## 4. Human Approves

Proposed actions only go into place **AFTER** a manual click to execute.



### Golden Rule:

*Intern Proposes & Boss Approves*



# The Digital Intern at Work



**The AI Agent never deploys without Manager approval**



# The Weather Intern

EXAMPLE 1

**THE HEADACHE:** The manual, chaotic scramble to text/email guests & handle rebookings during sudden Florida rainouts.

1

## TRIGGER

NOAA Weather API hits a 70% certainty of rain for afternoon tour window

2

## WORK

AI logs into ticket engine, pulls the roster, creates unique rebooking links, & drafts custom text alerts

3

## GATEKEEPER

**AI sends alert to Ops Manager:**

*"Click to review & authorize storm protocol for 42 guests."*



4

## APPROVED

Manager taps 'Approve' on their phone → Texts deploy automatically via SMS

5

## DONE

42 guests notified with personalized rebooking links. Zero staff scramble.

THE WORKFLOW

*No guest receives a message until a human approves.*





# The Review Intern

EXAMPLE 2

**THE HEADACHE:** Logging into Google, TripAdvisor, Yelp, Facebook, & Expedia daily to find, track, & respond to reviews. A 2-star post can sit unanswered for 72 hrs.

1

## TRIGGER

A 1-star or 2-star review is published on Google, TripAdvisor, or Yelp

2

## ANALYZE

AI scans the text, identifies the specific complaint (e.g., gate wait times)

3

## DRAFT

Writes a brand-compliant response offering a recovery remedy - no boilerplate

4

## GATEKEEPER

Intern emails GM:

*"New review: Click to edit or authorize this draft."*



5

## PUBLISHED

GM approves → AI posts the reply directly back to the platform's API

THE WORKFLOW

*No draft posts to any platform without a human reading & approving it first.*



# The Pricing Watchdog

EXAMPLE 3

**THE HEADACHE:** Missing sudden local demand surges because you aren't tracking events, conventions, or competitor pricing shifts.

1

## TRIGGER

Weekly automated Monday morning market scan @ 6AM, no manual trigger is needed

2

## RESEARCH

AI scrapes local convention calendar & competitor prices

3

## ANALYSIS

Cross-references data with historical booking pace and identifies any revenue opportunity

4

## GATEKEEPER

**AI suggests action:**

*“Convention surge detected Saturday. Recommend Peak pricing. Click to deploy.”*



5

## DEPLOY

Director approves & AI pushes price updates to ticketing engine automatically

THE WORKFLOW

*The revenue decision stays entirely with your leadership team*



# The AI Landscape: Build vs. Adopt

You don't need to be a coder to hire a Digital Intern

## TECH ARMS RACE

Every major travel software vendor is racing to build this in.

## THE TIMELINE

Today requires setup.  
Tomorrow will be pure drag-and-drop.

## YOUR REAL JOB

**YOU DON'T NEED TO BUILD IT.**

**YOU JUST NEED TO MANAGE IT.**

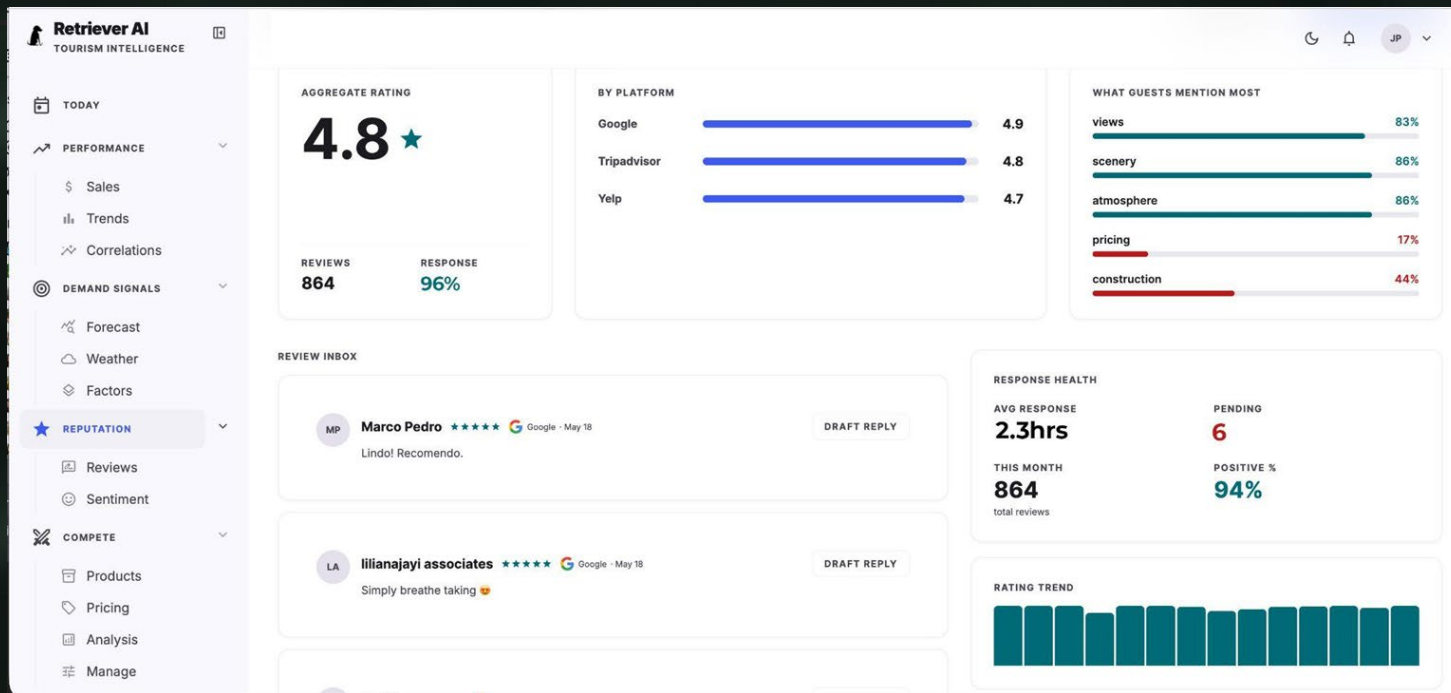
Right now, behind the scenes, there is a massive tech arms race happening





THIS IS WHAT AGENTIC AI LOOKS LIKE IN PRODUCTION

# Real-World: BlackDog AI Dashboard



## Zero Code.

Just clean operational data.

## The Intern's Report Card.

AI does the heavy lifting in the background across separate platforms.

## Fast Human Decisions.

Manager logs in, sees the landscape, makes a high-level call.



# Real-World: Gemini Workspace/Spark

The screenshot displays the Gemini Workspace Studio interface. At the top left, the text "Workspace Studio" is visible. In the top right corner, there are links for "Send Feedback", a help icon, and a menu icon. The main workspace is titled "Untitled flow" and contains two blocks: a "Starter" block labeled "Choose a starter" and an "Actions" block labeled "Choose a step". On the left side, there is a vertical sidebar with a "+" button, a "Discover" button, and a "Flows" button. At the bottom of the workspace, there are "Test run" and "Turn on" buttons. On the right side, a panel titled "Choose a starter" provides a list of event triggers to launch a flow. The selected trigger is "On a schedule".

Workspace Studio

Send Feedback ? ☰

← Untitled flow ✎ ⌵ 🔗 ⋮

+

Discover

Flows

Starter

Choose a starter

Actions

Choose a step

▶ Test run ⏻ Turn on

☰ Choose a starter

Choose how to start your flow  
This event or schedule will launch your flow

- 🕒 On a schedule
- ✉ When I get an email
- 👤 When someone joins a space
- 💬 When I get a chat message
- 🗣 When I'm mentioned
- 👍 When an emoji reaction is added
- 📄 When a sheet changes
- 📁 When an item is added to a folder
- 📄 When a file is edited
- 📁 When an item in a folder is edited
- 🗓 Based on a meeting
- 🗣 When meeting outputs are ready
- 📄 When a form response comes in



# How to Start This Week

*Your 3-Step Blueprint*

## Find the Chores

01

Focus on predictable, rule-based chores like weather or reviews instead of creative projects - if the steps are always the same, it's automatable. **Write it down before you leave this room.**

## Map the Connective Path

02

Write down exactly what systems need to talk to each other to solve that problem. Sketch out how your ticketing engine, text messaging, and email inbox should connect. **A half-page description is enough to get started.**

## Build the Gatekeeper

03

Establish the exact spot where a Manager must review and green-light the work. Your Intern can do the drafting, but a human always retains final approval. **If you can't define the gatekeeper, you aren't ready to automate.**



MEMBER FORUM - OPEN EXCHANGE

# AI in Action

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Look at your own operation - Monday to Sunday:

**What is one repetitive manual chore at your attraction that you would love to offload to a Digital Intern tomorrow?**



# Coming Up Next!

## Power Lunch

Grand Ballroom – 11:45 am

Presented by



Your mission. Together.

- Arrival of the Gavel and FAA Annual Meeting
- Florida Attractions Scholarship Foundation Presentations
- Florida Attractions Leadership Academy – Inaugural Cohort
- **Visit Florida Update – Bryan Griffin (CEO Visit Florida)**



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