



CUSTOMER STORY · NONPROFIT · AGENTIC AI

## How BDPA turned its staff into AI agent builders, starting with a \$180k win

No new platform. No outside team to maintain. Capacity returned to the people doing the work.

**\$180K**

annual savings opportunity as the AI agent ramps into production

**4 hrs → 20 sec**

first-attempt task completion by a non-technical staff member

**12 trained**

with organization-wide self-service AI adoption following

A few months after a workshop on AI agents, a BD Performing Arts (BDPA) senior staff member named Lainey was about to message the technical helpdesk on Slack® to convert a Microsoft® Word document into a different format. Before she finished her first sentence, she stopped herself. “Wait, I can just ask ChatGPT®.” The helpdesk who used to field twenty of those small requests a week continued their day uninterrupted.

That moment, repeated quietly many times across the organization, is what this case study is about.

BDPA is a 68-year-old performing arts nonprofit with eight touring groups, a fleet of 17 vehicles, and a network of more than 700 high school bands across 25 states. The organization operates lean, with staff carrying hybrid roles that might stretch across human resources (HR), finance, operations, and IT. Although a mature non-profit like BDPA is probably not a business most people could envision prioritizing AI adoption, they are no different than any other business. Every hour matters, and especially at BDPA, the seasonal surges of a touring calendar make modernizing IT workflows more difficult yet more valuable.

BDPA brought in Prowess Consulting to help them explore how and where AI could fit into their organization. The result was not limited to the working AI agent that has begun to claw back as much as \$180,000 a year in outsourced accounting expenses; it was an organization where staff with no technical background can now self-serve on AI tasks every day, freeing up the business’s technology leader to focus on work that only he can do. This is what capability transfer, even with new technologies like agentic AI, looks like when it actually happens.

## Where BDPA started

BDPA's primary revenue source is a charitable gaming operation centered on bingo. Compliance requires daily transaction data to be recorded into the organization's accounting books. For years, BDPA outsourced that work to a third-party accounting firm at an average monthly cost of \$15,000. The cost was the visible problem, but the less-visible problem was that bingo data sat in spreadsheets, waited for an outside team to process it, and only later made its way into QuickBooks®. Month-close stretched, and cash visibility lagged.

Other workflows had similar shapes. HR tracked travel eligibility for hundreds of touring performers across spreadsheets and PDFs. Operations coordinated logistics for contractors and volunteers across emails and shared docs. IT handled recurring subscription updates and ticket triage one request at a time. Each group had built its own coping mechanism, and none of them had a common approach to automation.

In this landscape, every small, AI-adjacent question, such as "how do I convert this PDF," "can you reformat that table," and "what's the fastest way to clean up this spreadsheet," was routed through one person in IT. BDPA built a willing and capable IT function, but they were increasingly the bottleneck; there were only so many hands they could hold.

## What the engagement delivered

Prowess Consulting began our work with BDPA with what we now call our Ignition engagement: a structured first engagement designed to align leadership, assess organizational readiness, scope the first agent, and transfer capability to internal staff in parallel. The Ignition engagement is not a pilot, nor is it a free strategy workshop; it is a paid, fixed-fee engagement with defined objectives. In our work with BDPA, the Ignition engagement produced four such deliverables simultaneously:

### 1. Alignment and prioritization

A full-day on-site session brought together staff from HR, finance, IT, and operations. The group mapped workflows and surfaced opportunities. Leadership identified daily bingo transaction tracking as the highest-value first build—a clear, quantifiable cost with a definable end state.

### 2. A platform choice matched to BDPA's environment

Google™ Gemini™ fit naturally with the existing BDPA Google Workspace™ stack. Paired with n8n®, an automation platform intuitive enough for non-technical staff but extensible enough for IT, BDPA got a foundation that it could grow into without buying a new platform or signing a new vendor relationship.

### 3. A working agent in 15–20 hours

We developed the Bingo Daily transaction agent in roughly 15 to 20 hours of build effort. The design of this agent is deliberately conservative: the AI doesn't do the math; calculations are programmatic, and the AI is there to read the input spreadsheet, structure the journal entries for QuickBooks, and flag anomalies for human review, such as negative balances, unusual ratios, and days that fail to net to zero. This is the right place for AI in an accounting workflow, and it was a deliberate maturity decision.

### 4. Capability transfer happening at the same time

While we were building the agent, we ran one-on-one mentoring sessions with BDPA staff across departments. In total, we trained 12 people—and by the end of the second session, several were producing working prototypes of their own, whether for HR, for operations, or for IT workflows. One operations manager, Carl Nelson, took a recurring data consolidation task that had previously taken him roughly four hours and brought that time down to 20 seconds on his first attempt.

## What changed for the organization

The Bingo Daily agent is the proof point that prospects ask about first. It represents a \$180,000 annual savings opportunity (the cost of the outsourced accounting work it is built to absorb), and BDPA's team is now beginning to use it in production. The rollout is deliberately incremental. As staff and partners learn their role as the human in the loop, reviewing what the agent has flagged, refining the prompt where the agent's judgment can be sharpened, and expanding the share of daily transactions that flow through it, BDPA stands to claw back more time and reduce more cost. The trajectory is the point: this is not a one-time cutover; it is a capability that compounds as the team's confidence grows.

But the more durable change is harder to put a number on. The training created a baseline of AI literacy across the organization that has produced some big effects for BDPA.

#### **Staff stopped routing every small task through IT**

IT used to be the place you went when you needed a PDF turned into a Word document, a table reformatted, or a quick HTML snippet put together for a marketing page. After the training, those questions started landing somewhere else: Claude or ChatGPT.

#### **Embedded prompts lifted everyone's work**

The IT team began building reusable prompts into the tools that other staff use. The marketing team now drops a structured prompt into Claude or ChatGPT, gets back clean bootstrap HTML, and pastes it into the website's editor. Articles that used to take a back-and-forth with IT can now ship the same day, and according to CEO Mike Stone, they are "looking 10 times better." That is the kind of compounding improvement that training is supposed to produce but rarely does.

#### **The Technology Lead Got His Time Back—and Used It**

With the steady drip of small requests redirected, IT turned their attention to higher-leverage work. They have built out an end-to-end agentic engineering pipeline for the development team: as soon as a task moves to the done column on BDPA's Jira® board, documentation and release notes generate automatically and publish to the internal site without human staging. The development team is now two people producing the output that would have previously required eight. They are also building a REST API for BDPA's financial data, which is the kind of infrastructure work that makes future agents easier to build.

None of that downstream work was a deliverable from the Ignition engagement with Prowess Consulting. It is what becomes possible when an empowered technology lead is not spending his week converting PDFs.

“After the workshop, I built my first agent in under an hour. I didn't need a technical background or hand-holding. The training made it feel doable and even fun.”

— Lainey Braatz, Senior Administrator, BDPA

## **WHY THIS WORKED**

### **The pattern we look for before every engagement**

Across every successful agentic AI engagement we run, two conditions matter more than budget, industry, or company size: a fiscally disciplined executive sponsor willing to move, and an empowered technology team with the authority and inclination to drive change.

At BDPA, it starts with Mike Stone, the CEO, who decided that moving forward with AI was worth doing. It also meant protecting the time and attention to do it right. On the other side, the technology team took the opposite of the easy path. Rather than building a moat around AI and making themselves indispensable, they nurtured the capability and freed themselves for higher-leverage work.

At Prowess Consulting, we see what happens when one half of that pair is missing. An enthusiastic technology lead with no executive air cover gets tamped down. An eager executive sponsor without a willing technology lead never gets past the strategy deck. This leadership pattern is what enables agentic AI to move within an organization, and it is the first thing we assess in every Ignition engagement.

## What's next at BDPA

BDPA is in active motion. The Bingo Daily agent is in early production use, with the accounting team progressively expanding its share of daily transactions as their human-in-the-loop role matures. Mike's REST API for financial data will give future agents a cleaner integration surface. Internal builders across HR, operations, and IT continue to ship small agents and embedded prompts.

The organization has what it needs: a scalable, internally owned model for continuous improvement, and the cultural permission to keep using it.

That model is what Prowess Consulting engagements are designed to leave behind. The agent is the proof point; the capability is the product.

### About Prowess Consulting

Prowess Consulting is a capability delivery and operations firm. We do not sell software; we transfer capability by training workers, mentoring builders, and building agents alongside client teams. Every engagement begins with Ignition: a structured, fixed-fee first engagement that produces a working scoped agent, a governance framework, and a clear plan for what comes next.

