

THREE EXPORTED RUNS, WALKED NODE BY NODE, WITH NO VENDOR NARRATING

Trace-Tree Procurement Checklist

Before you sign, ask the vendor for three exported runs and load them into a trace viewer your own team controls. Walk the eleven nodes and tick what the run can actually show.

BRING One vendor or agent you are deciding whether to deploy

1. The ask - three exported runs

Do not settle for one success and one failure. The near-miss is where governance lives or fails.

- One successful run, exported end to end

- One failed run, exported end to end

- One near-miss or high-risk run - the kind that almost went wrong, escalated late, or sat one approval away from a bad outcome

- The export names which standard it maps to (OpenTelemetry GenAI, OpenInference, or other)

- The export preserves parent-child span relationships

- The export preserves tool arguments, observations and retrieved context

- The export preserves verification spans, model versions and approval events

- The export is redacted: raw personal data masked, provenance kept

- All three runs load into a trace viewer your team controls, not a vendor screenshot

2. Walk the eleven nodes

For each node, record the success evidence the run shows and the failure mode you find. Try to answer without a vendor engineer narrating over your shoulder.

Trace node	Success evidence shown	Failure mode found
Root: user task		
Sandbox		
Tool gateway		
Planner		
Action / observation branch		
Memory		
Sub-agents		
Verification		
Human checkpoint		
Final artifact		
Governance trail		

3. The hinge question

If the run identifier does not resolve to the whole tree, the other ten answers are anecdotes.

- One run identifier resolves to the whole governance trail: spans, artifacts, model versions, policies, tools and approvals

- The final artifact links back to the trace that produced it

- The trace can be audited outside the vendor's story

4. Notes - what you learned before Monday

Write the most important finding from the three runs, and whether it changes your decision.

Companion worksheet to **Essay 15 · Show Me the Run**, in the series **Architecting the AI Coworker**. · Dr Peter McCann Strain · Fill this in against one real agent, action class or vendor. © 2026 Peter McCann Strain.

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