Tend — Positioning One-Pager

Internal · Canon as of 2026-08-12 · Source: repositioning-2026-08-11/POSITIONING-v2.md · Prices never appear on the deck

THE THESIS

Every company now needs its own AI team: a couple of elite engineers at the frontier who never miss a beat, continuously building custom tools that modernize how the company works, while building and maintaining the company's data layer. Almost no company can get that team — scarce, expensive, hard to evaluate, harder to retain. **Tend is that team, as a service.** You don't hire AI engineers; you retain Tend.

CATEGORY & ANCHOR

Boutique AI engineering firm — your embedded AI team. Not "AI transformation consulting." Not SaaS. The anchor is a line item every CEO understands: **headcount** — two real AI engineers run $520–730K/yr fully loaded, *if* you can find them, evaluate them, and keep them current. Comparison beats education in every room.

WHO IT'S FOR

Owner-controlled companies, $30–300M revenue. Governance type over size: one decision-maker, short sales cycle, whole-company mandate. The credible competitors all fight over Fortune 1000; this segment is unserved. Vertical chosen by lead flow, not doctrine.

THE OFFER ARC

Move	What it is	Duration	Band (proposal only)	What the client accumulates
1. Install	Paid entry sprint: map workflows, stand up data layer v0, ship 1–2 working tools against their loudest constraint	45 days	$35–50K	Working tools + data layer v0 + prioritized build map
2. The Team ★	The standing retainer — continuous tool building, data-layer stewardship, frontier watch	ongoing	$30–50K/mo	Compounding tool stack + maintained data layer, reported quarterly on the **asset register**
3. Initiatives	Bigger systems scoped as projects — always sold from inside the retainer, never cold	6–12 wks	$150–250K	The system

★ The retainer is the product. Year-1 client value ≈ $500K–1.1M. Retainer scope defined in explicit units (N sprint-weeks/mo + stewardship + frontier briefing); initiatives strictly out of scope.

WHY WE WIN — THE OWNERSHIP STORY

> ***"Most firms rent you their platform. We build you yours."***

Everything Tend ships lands on the client's side of the table: their tools, their data layer, their asset — appreciating every month. Every credible competitor keeps the compounding asset vendor-owned; nobody else says "you own it." Ours is **contractual** (client owns data layer + client-specific tools; Tend owns harness, playbooks, cross-client patterns) — deployed as the closer when a sophisticated buyer raises lock-in, never as headline copy.

Language rules: never "fire us any time" or any departure framing. Sell accumulation and FOMO: companies renting vendor capability fall behind companies accumulating their own — and accumulated, structured company context can't be bought later, only built. The quarterly asset register makes the accumulation legible and carries the price justification as the labor anchor deflates.

WHY NOW

- The frontier moves monthly; a company without a standing AI function compounds disadvantage, not lag.
- Build cost collapsed — scarcity moved from capital to talent that stays current.
- The data layer is the prerequisite for everything AI offers next year. Starting now is the cheapest it will ever be.

THE SALES CONVERSATION

1. **Claim:** "You need an AI team. You can't realistically hire one. We're yours." 2. **Proof:** live demo — an agent working over a real data layer. 3. **Ownership card** when lock-in is raised. 4. **Close:** an agreed install-sprint scope; proposal carries the number. **No prices on the deck.** Free part capped at one meeting — leave with a written scope; no free pilots (paid first engagements convert 60–70% vs <25%).

CURRENT STATE

Parked: Clark Hill, Mint. **Active:** lead generation (channel thesis: CPA/MSP referral relationships) · deck rebuild on the new thesis (with Elie) · module-1 side app (with David) — the product the team installs is the product we sell.