SYSTEMS REVIEW / ILLUSTRATIVE CASE

Which weekly reporting checks can we retire?

The management decision

Before funding a reporting rebuild, find the repeated check that consumes the most time and establish why it exists. Removing it makes sense only if the final figure can still be verified.

When teams pull the same numbers from different systems, a weekly report can become an exercise in reconciling spreadsheets. Managers wait for answers and analysts spend their time checking figures they have already checked. A systems review helps you decide which part of the process to fix before you commit to replacing software or rebuilding a report.

Worked example

Eight depots each spend 25 minutes a week checking the same figures. That adds up to 200 minutes. If 15 minutes of duplicated effort can be removed at each depot, the weekly opportunity is 120 minutes. Check that the report still agrees with the original records.

Example figure	What it represents
8	Depots
200 min	Current checking time
120 min	Time potentially freed

What changes the answer

If the repeated check occurs at only four depots, the opportunity falls to 60 minutes. Allow for the time needed to keep the improved process working.

Systems review

What to commission

Follow one figure from one depot’s source file to the weekly management report, including the last manual correction.

We walk through the process with the people who run it. We look at where staff retype data, enter estimates or lose track of the original reading. This helps distinguish a system problem from a missing rule or unclear responsibility.

How to judge the result

The report owner can reproduce the chosen figure and name the first avoidable repeat check, its owner and the next action.

Time a full reporting cycle after the change, including corrections made later. Multiply the observed minutes released by the number of depots that actually repeat the task.

Decision worksheet

Project detail	Starting point for your team
Decision owner	Finance systems manager. Name the person who will approve the next step.
Records to gather	One report, the systems behind it and a recent example of the problem.
Agreed output	A map of the reporting process and a ranked list of improvements.
Decision date	Record the deadline, any unresolved assumption and who will confirm it.

Discuss this case

In your first message, name the report that causes the most rework and tell us who uses it. If the same discrepancy appears each month, describe when it first shows up and what staff have to do before the figures can be issued.

Email info@oxetc.co.uk and mention IT-01. All figures in the worked example are illustrative.