AUTOMATION FEASIBILITY REVIEW / ILLUSTRATIVE CASE

Which manual task is worth automating first?

The management decision

Estimate how much of the workload actually follows a stable rule. Use the time left after supervision to judge whether a small build deserves investment.

A repetitive task may feel like an obvious candidate, yet exceptions can eat up the time that automation was meant to save. Before paying for a build, this review helps you compare the volume, effort and risks of a few real tasks. It also helps you see where a simple process change may be enough.

Worked example

Of 200 monthly requests, 60% follow the rule and each would take four fewer minutes. That frees 480 minutes before oversight. Allow 90 minutes to monitor the process, leaving 390 minutes each month for other work.

Example figure	What it represents
480 min	Time saved before checks
90 min	Time for checks
390 min	Time freed after checks

What changes the answer

If only 35% qualify, the calculation yields 280 minutes before oversight and 190 after it. Compare that lower estimate with the effort and cost of implementation.

Automation feasibility review

What to commission

Assess one repetitive task using task counts, handling time and examples that still require a person.

We walk through the leading option with its owner, estimate how much of the work follows a consistent rule and identify what a person would still need to check. We include the practical work of connecting tools and keeping the process running.

How to judge the result

The sponsor can edit the estimate, see oversight time separately and identify the volume at which a pilot is worthwhile.

Price the one-off build and continuing checks separately. Assign a real use to the released hours before counting them as a commercial gain.

Decision worksheet

Project detail	Starting point for your team
Decision owner	Operations manager or automation sponsor. Name the person who will approve the next step.
Records to gather	One or two repetitive tasks, rough volumes and examples staff handle by hand.
Agreed output	A ranked shortlist, an editable estimate and a manual fallback for the preferred task.
Decision date	Record the deadline, any unresolved assumption and who will confirm it.

Discuss this case

Tell us which task keeps coming back and what staff do when it does not follow the usual pattern. A rough estimate of monthly volume and handling time is a reasonable starting point. Mention any renewal or investment decision that affects your timing.

Email info@oxetc.co.uk and mention IT-06. All figures in the worked example are illustrative.