

From Workarounds  
to Workflow

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# A Strategic Guide to Business Automation

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How to identify high-impact  
automation opportunities in  
your business.

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# 1. The Automation Imperative

**Working smarter isn't the problem. Working around broken processes is.**



Across industries, teams don't seem to be struggling because they lack ideas, tools, or even talent. They appear to be struggling because they've become experts at compensating for operational friction — endlessly pivoting between platforms, re-entering data, chasing approvals, or rebuilding reports because the systems don't talk to each other.

These workarounds could cost more than time. They create silent drag across every part of the organisation. And for leaders tasked with improving efficiency or capacity, the bigger risk may not be doing nothing; it could be mistaking activity for progress.

"Many organisations discover that automating a bad process only creates faster inefficiencies".<sup>1</sup>

This is where high-impact automation can come in — not as a silver bullet, but as a deliberate method for removing the need for workarounds altogether. The first step shouldn't be choosing software. It should be identifying which business processes are actively holding your teams back — and which can be transformed without high complexity or high risk.

That's harder than it sounds. According to McKinsey, while **70% of companies have piloted automation**, fewer than **30% have achieved scale** or measurable ROI from those efforts.<sup>2</sup> Why? Because the wrong processes were chosen — too complex, too cross-functional, or simply not ready.

On the other hand, the right automation opportunity doesn't simply make something faster. It looks to unlock strategic capacity — the potential to reduce adaptation debt, minimise compliance risk, and enable your teams to focus on what actually moves the business forward.

In this guide, we'll help you:

- Identify the signs of automation readiness (in everyday business language).
- Use simple, scalable frameworks to prioritise the right opportunities.
- Understand where and how FUJIFILM Process Automation can support.
- Avoid common mistakes that stall automation momentum.

If your team is working hard but still running into the same roadblocks, automation may not be a question of **if** — but a question of **where to start**.



## 2. What ‘High-Impact’ Looks Like

**Not every inefficiency is a strategic problem — but some could be costing you more than you think.**

When process automation fails to deliver ROI, it may not be because the technology didn't work. It may instead be because the wrong problem was automated.

There's typically a temptation to start with whatever is most visible: time-consuming tasks, manual data entry, or processes staff complain about. But at senior levels, that may not be what creates risk or slows transformation. The real cost can come from the **cumulative drag** created by disjointed workflows, inconsistent execution, and delays in critical decision loops.

High-impact automation doesn't just look to fix inefficiency; it helps remove structural friction. It aims to target the processes that **amplify complexity, reduce responsiveness, or increase exposure** as the organisation scales or changes.

As Deloitte has noted in its global automation research, automating routine tasks can improve efficiency, but that alone won't make a business more competitive; true impact comes from removing constraints that limit agility, decision speed, and cross-functional performance.<sup>3</sup>

### Traits of High-Impact Processes (Through a Strategic Lens)

#### 1. They Create Cross-functional Latency

These are processes that touch multiple teams or systems — where delays, misalignment, or duplicated effort cascade into downstream performance issues. They're often buried inside finance approvals, procurement, compliance reviews, or multi-step HR workflows.<sup>4</sup>

#### 2. They Introduce Risk Through Human Intervention

When processes rely on manual entry, email chains, or undocumented decisions, they lack consistency and auditability. That opens the door to regulatory exposure, reputational risk, or data breaches — especially in sectors like government, education, and healthcare. According to PwC, manual workarounds are a key contributor to risk in highly regulated environments.<sup>5</sup>

#### 3. They Obscure Visibility and Accountability

If leaders can't see where a process stands — or who owns what — they can't govern or improve it. Automation-ready processes are often the ones that currently resist measurement, reporting, or real-time insights.

#### 4. They Tie Up Your Best People in Low-value Activity

This is strategic capacity loss, not operational waste. When your high performers spend hours preparing reports, reconciling systems, or rechecking forms, the organisation loses momentum where it matters: innovation, planning, customer experience.

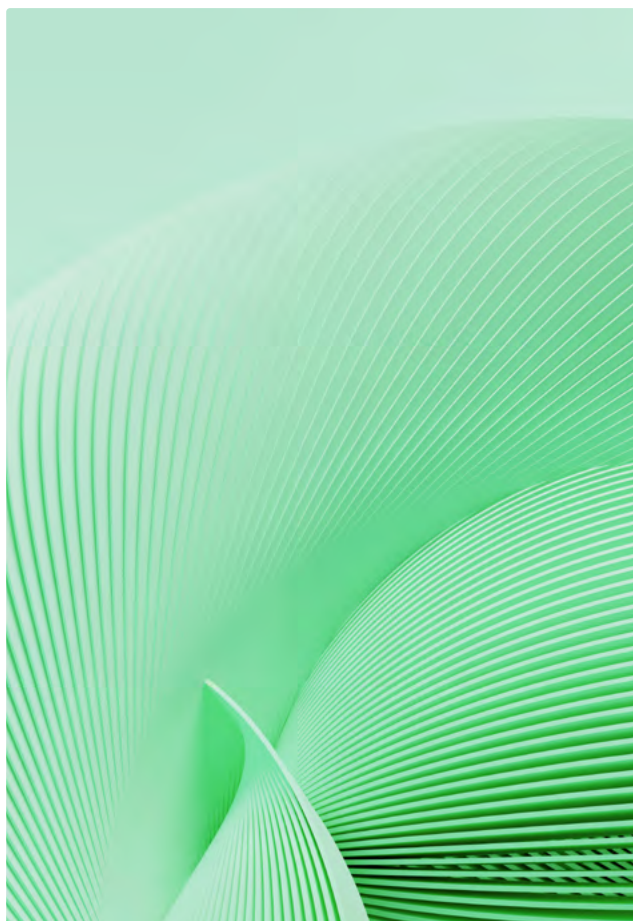
#### 5. They Stall Digital Maturity

Many organisations are accelerating digital investment — but failing to integrate legacy workflows into new platforms. Processes that remain siloed, semi-manual, or system-agnostic are often the blockers. Automating these helps to unlock the value of your broader transformation strategy.



# 3. Red Flags: Signs You're Ready to Automate

**If it feels like your teams are doing too much just to stay still — you're probably ready.**



Most leaders can generally sense when something in the business isn't working efficiently. But the symptoms may not always scream "automate me". They can often show up as subtle, recurring frictions: the same requests being reworked, data that doesn't reconcile, approvals delayed by "just one more check."

What you're seeing may not just be inefficiency, it could be your people compensating for broken or outdated processes.

Automation readiness shouldn't be about how much technology you already have. It should be about whether your workflows, teams, and systems are relying on human effort to do what could be automated by design.

Based on our experience, here are the key red flags within an organisation that suggest a process is ripe for transformation:

## 1. You've Built Workarounds Instead of Workflows

When a business process doesn't support how people actually work, they'll generally patch it with spreadsheets, email trails, or manual follow-ups. Over time, these compensations may become standard — even celebrated as "how we get things done." But they're typically a sign the underlying process isn't fit for purpose.

If the process needs reminders, chasers, double-checks or someone with "tribal knowledge" to make it work, then it's a red flag.

## 2. Audit Trails Are Unclear — or Only Exist in Inboxes

Processes that rely on email approvals or file uploads with no system-of-record visibility can not only be inefficient — they can also be risky. Whether you're in a regulated industry or simply aiming for operational governance, lack of traceability is a clear automation trigger.

Automated workflows help provide structured, searchable records, which are key to compliance, quality assurance, and leadership oversight.

## 3. Staff Are Stuck Between Systems

If your team spends time copying data from one system into another, it may not just be wasting effort — it could be introducing risk. Errors, version mismatches, and wasted time can arise when humans are the integration layer between platforms.

These are ideal automation candidates, especially for document capture, data validation, and workflow handoffs.

## 4. Reporting is Manual, Late, or Met with Scepticism

When leaders don't trust the data in front of them, or analysts spend more time gathering numbers than generating insights, automation can be a force multiplier.

Processes that rely on extracting, cleaning, or stitching together information across sources are not just ripe for automation — they're potentially blocking faster, more confident decision-making.

## 5. New Team Members Need Weeks to Learn ‘The Hacks’

If your onboarding process includes teaching people how to work around the system, that could be a process-level liability. Whether it’s in finance, HR, operations or service delivery, complexity that can’t be documented or scaled may be a drain on productivity and consistency.

Automated processes don’t just help reduce handover risk — they are designed to make business-critical workflows accessible, repeatable, and resilient.

## 6. The Same Issue Keeps Resurfacing on Risk, Audit, or Project Reviews

Sometimes a process technically “works” — but this may not actually be the case if issues around delays, errors, or missed handoffs are showing up, resulting in operational risk reports or customer complaints.

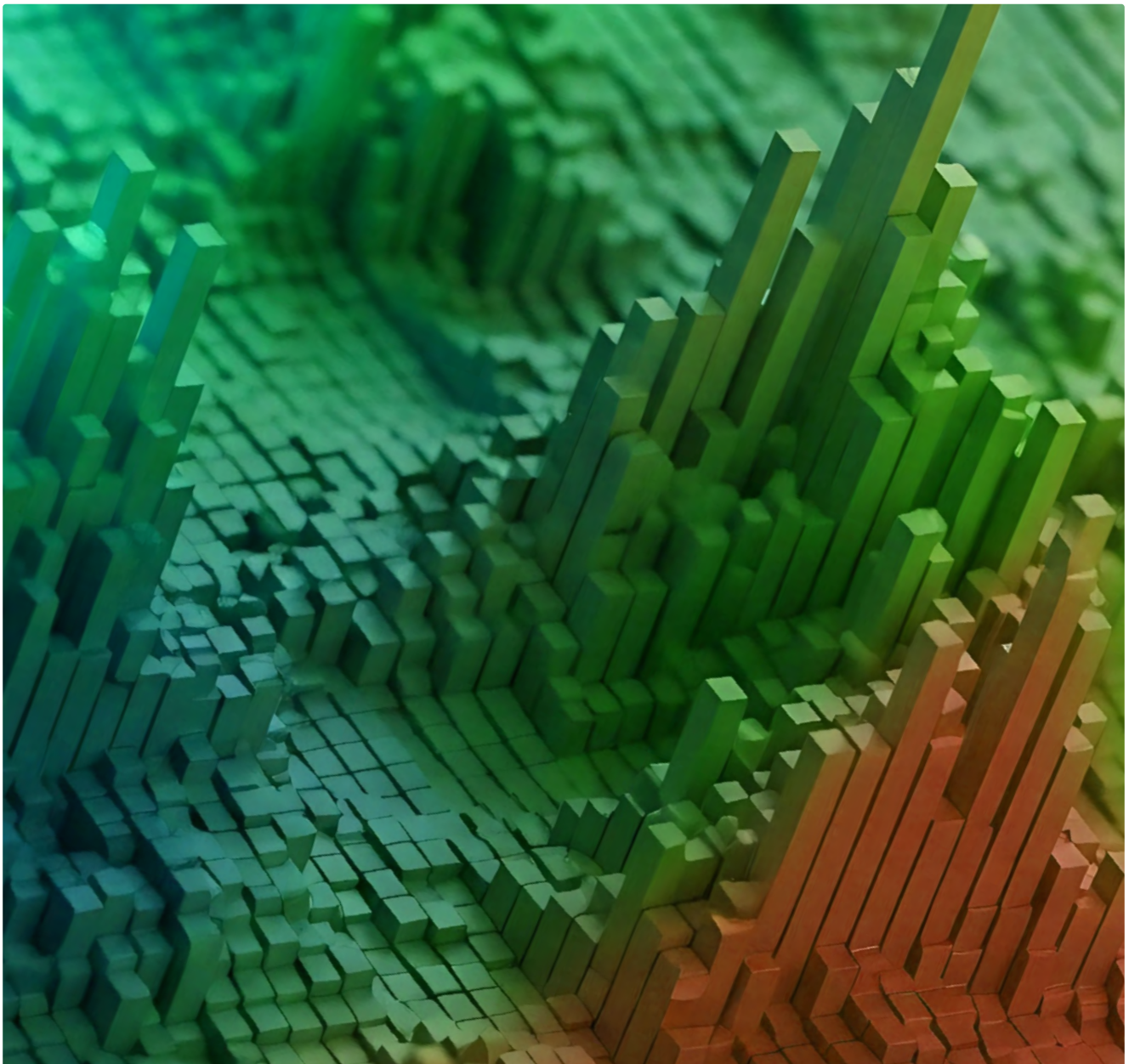
If the same process keeps getting flagged, that’s unlikely to be a team problem — it could instead be a design problem. Automating even parts of that process (data capture, validation, approvals, reporting) may drastically reduce exposure.

## What to Do When You See These Signs

Spotting one or more of these flags doesn’t mean the entire process must be rebuilt from scratch. In many cases, **automating a single step or integration point** may resolve the issue without major disruption.

But these red flags are your signal to pause and ask: **Are we solving this with people, when we could be solving it with process?**

In Section 4, we’ll introduce a simple lens — the **3 M’s** — that can help teams systematically assess whether a process is worth automating, and where to begin.





# 4. The 3 M's and Beyond: Building a Repeatable Lens

**A practical filter to move from 'we should automate' to 'we know where to start'.**

Every business has inefficiencies. But not all of those inefficiencies may be worth automating. One of the fastest ways you can lose momentum and stakeholder confidence may be by investing in the wrong use case.

To help evaluate which processes may best benefit from automation, we suggest a simple diagnostic lens: the **3 M's — Manual, Mundane, Measurable**.

This lens helps focus attention on the types of workflows where automation is most likely to deliver real business value. It looks to help improve speed, accuracy, traceability and, potentially even capacity. While not every process will tick all three boxes, those that do tend to represent **high-impact, low-barrier automation opportunities**.

Let's explore each one — and how they may be applied in your organisation.

## 1. Manual: Human Effort Is Bridging the System Gap

If people are emailing forms, updating spreadsheets, manually rekeying data, or physically routing approvals, there could be an efficiency leak — and therefore, an automation opportunity. Manual effort is often a sign that systems aren't appropriately integrated, or that the workflow isn't well defined. These processes can be prone to delay and error, difficult to trace, and hard to scale or replicate consistently.

McKinsey research shows that in many service and knowledge work environments, **20–30% of employee time is spent on manual, automatable tasks**<sup>6</sup> — typically involving moving data between systems or managing exceptions.

## 2. Mundane: Repetitive, Rule-based, and Predictable

Processes that run frequently and follow clear rules — like "if this, then that" — are strong candidates for

automation. These tasks typically shouldn't require human judgement but often take up a disproportionate amount of team capacity.

Examples of what qualifies:

- Work that happens on a regular cadence (daily, weekly, monthly).
- Tasks governed by fixed logic or business rules.
- Activities with low variation but high frequency.

IBM defines this as "structured, deterministic work" — a foundational building block for successful automation.<sup>7</sup> Replacing human repetition with automation here doesn't just help save time — it could enable people to focus on problems that require judgement, empathy, or creative thinking.

## 3. Measurable: You Can Track Volume, Time, or Risk

If a process can be measured — in minutes, steps, error rates, dollar impact, or downstream consequences — it can be easier to make a business case for automation. Metrics offer visibility, which enables automation success easier to communicate and sustain.

Examples of strong signals:

- Clear baselines: how long it takes, how often it happens, how often it goes wrong.
- Quantifiable business risk: late approvals, missed SLAs, non-compliance.
- Volume-based pain: how many instances per week/month.

As UiPath notes, **automation adoption is more successful when organisations track opportunity size, time-to-value, and repeatability**<sup>8</sup> — all of which hinge on measurability.



## Making the 3 M's Practical

The 3 M's can be used as a conversation starter, particularly in process discovery sessions or early-stage workshops. Rather than asking, "What do you want to automate?", it reframes the question to these:

- What's still manual that could be systemised?
- What's repetitive but not strategic?
- What's measurable and so justifies change?

A simple scoring sheet can be used, where each "M" becomes a column. Teams can bring 3–5 processes forward and assess them together. A process that checks all three boxes should be considered a candidate for automation.

This can encourage **shared ownership** across a number of business areas: finance, operations, HR, and IT — removing the perception that automation is just an IT initiative. It looks to ground decision-making in how the work happens, not just where it lives.

Importantly, this approach may also help build internal capability — teaching teams to self-identify automation opportunities over time, rather than relying solely on top-down initiatives.

## Beyond the 3 M's: Strategic Filters for the C-Suite

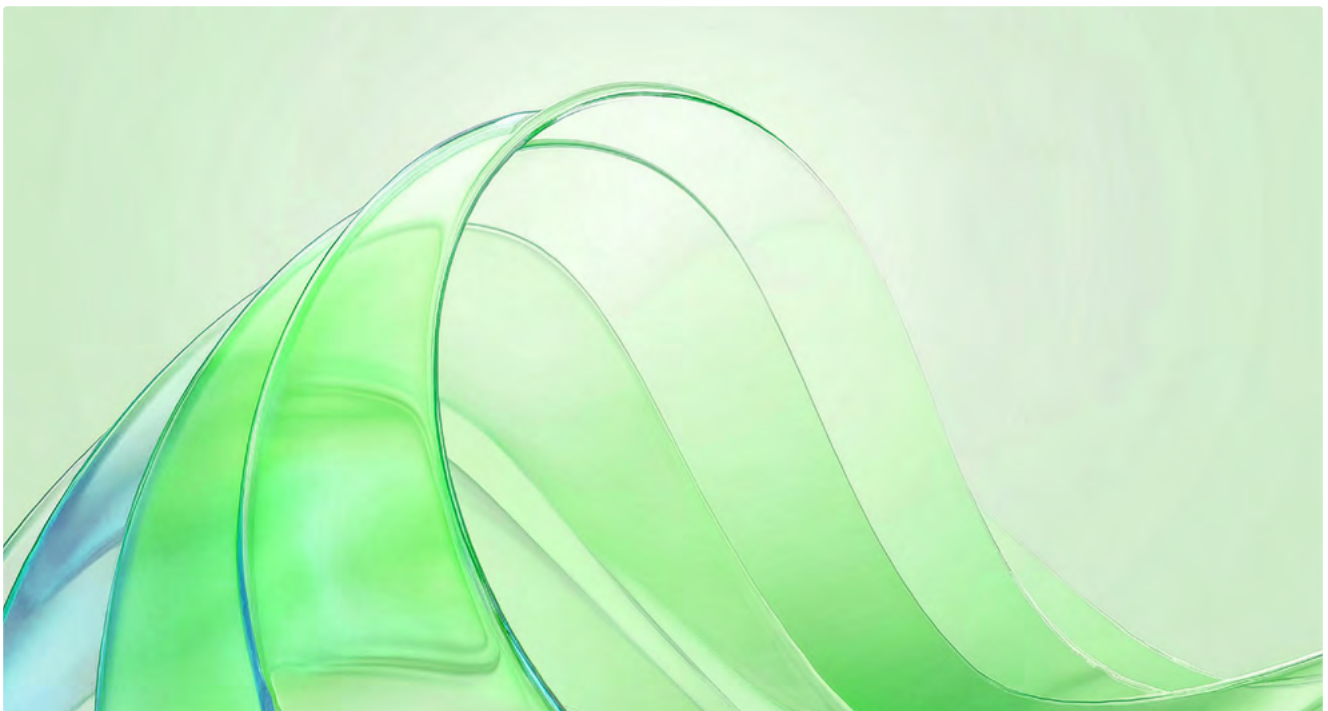
While the 3 M's can be a useful operational lens, senior decision-makers should also consider broader strategic criteria — especially across business units or transformation programs.

### Additional filters to apply:

- **Compliance Sensitivity:** Does this process expose the business to audit, privacy, or data risks if done incorrectly?
- **Customer or Employee Impact:** Does the experience feel slow, inconsistent, or invisible from the outside?
- **Cost of Delay:** What's the consequence — in dollars, morale, or reputation — if this process continues unchanged?
- **Dependency Risk:** Does this process rely on one person or team to function, increasing business continuity risk?

These considerations help avoid "efficiency theatre" — automating low-impact tasks while more strategic processes remain untouched. In mature automation programs, quick wins should only be the beginning. The goal should be to remove structural drag, unlock new capacity, and build long-term resilience.

In Section 5, we'll explore how to combine the learnings into a **prioritisation framework** — balancing impact and effort to build a sustainable automation roadmap.



# 5. Prioritisation Frameworks That Actually Work

**Every automation has potential – but not all of them may warrant the same investment, urgency, or risk profile.**

Once you've identified a set of automation-ready processes using a lens like the 3 M's, the next step should be prioritisation. Most organisations typically have more opportunities than budget or bandwidth — especially if automation is sitting with a single team, rather than embedded enterprise-wide.

That's where a simple **impact vs effort matrix** may bring further clarity.

A matrix can help you sort opportunities by two dimensions:

**Impact** — What's the potential value if we get this right?

**Effort** — How much complexity, cost or change management will it require?

The goal shouldn't just be to find the easiest wins. It's to be deliberate about **which opportunities to accelerate**, **which to stage**, and **which to reconsider** — based on strategic alignment, not just feasibility.

## How to Use an Impact vs Effort Matrix

Plot your automation opportunities on a 2x2 grid using the following guide:

	Low Effort ➤	High Effort ➤➤
High Impact ▲	<b>Quick Wins</b>  Start here to build momentum	<b>Strategic Plays</b>  Worth the investment, plan for scale
Low Impact ▼	<b>Nice-to-Haves</b>  Automate only if resourcing allows	<b>Avoid for Now</b>  High cost, low return

### Quick Wins ➤ ▲

Processes that are high-impact and low-effort. These can be ideal candidates for early automation — they may build internal confidence, demonstrate ROI, and shouldn't require major change management.

But it's important to view them as a starting point, not the whole strategy. As Harvard Business Review puts it, "Quick wins can build momentum, but without a broader vision, they can also distract or stall long-term transformation".<sup>9</sup>

That's why strong automation programs typically stage quick wins deliberately — using them to generate internal buy-in and set the foundation for larger, more strategic efforts.

Example: Automating employee reimbursement approvals using existing digital forms and workflow tools.

### Strategic Plays ➤➤ ▲

High-impact, high-effort. These may involve complex integrations, cross-functional coordination or policy redesign, but are generally worth the planning and investment.

Example: Automating end-to-end procurement, integrating approvals, supplier onboarding, and contract workflows.

### Nice-to-Haves ➤ ▼

Low-impact, low-effort. These might be satisfying to fix or helpful for upskilling, but they're unlikely to move the needle.

Example: Automating a monthly internal admin report with limited downstream use.

### Avoid or Redesign ➤➤ ▼

Low-impact, high-effort. These can be deceptive — often noisy or highly visible — but ultimately may end up not being worth the cost and effort.

Example: Automating a niche legacy workflow that requires custom integration with unsupported software.





## Beyond the Matrix: Other Factors to Consider

While the impact vs effort matrix can be a helpful starting point, senior leaders may need to overlay additional lenses before finalising a roadmap. These include:

- **Risk Mitigation:** Will automation help reduce exposure to compliance issues, fraud, or reputational damage?
- **Customer Experience:** Could automation speed up turnaround times or improve service consistency?
- **Cultural Readiness:** Is the process owner bought in? Are frontline teams likely to adopt the change?
- **System Dependencies:** Is this process part of a broader transformation (e.g. ERP rollout, customer self-service strategy)?
- **Executive Visibility:** Will this automation demonstrate value to the board, CFO, or transformation lead?

These strategic overlays can help automation align to broader business goals like growth, resilience, and digital maturity — and not a siloed efficiency exercise.

## Making It Actionable

You don't need a formal automation program to use the approach set out in this guide. In fact, this method can be used to initiate cross-functional workshops, where teams bring forward 5–10 candidates, assess them using the 3 M's, then plot them on the impact vs effort matrix. It helps build shared language, uncover hidden duplication, and create alignment on where to start — and where not to.

In Section 6, we'll explore what happens when this kind of prioritisation pays off — with real-world outcomes that go beyond saved hours.

# 6. What Happens When You Get It Right

**The ideal automation outcomes shouldn't just be faster processes — they should also be about resilience.**

When automation is done well — with the appropriate process, scope, and support — the potential benefits can move well beyond saving time. The real value can show up in different ways: your teams operability, the speed of decisions, risk management, and the adaptability to change.

Here's what "getting it right" could look like in practice.

## 1. Strategic Capacity Is Unlocked

Automation not only looks to reduce tasks; it can enable your people to lead, not just deliver. Instead of spending time on rework, data entry or chasing approvals, teams may redirect their focus to higher-value work — planning, innovating, improving service.

- In finance, this might mean spending less time closing the books, and more time analysing insights.
- In HR, it could mean moving from forms administration to workforce planning.
- In customer service, it might free up time for proactive engagement, rather than triaging backlog.

This kind of shift in focus is how organisations may begin paying down their adaptation debt — and look to build the maturity needed to scale transformation sustainably.

## 2. Errors Go Down — Confidence Goes Up

Manual, multi-step processes often rely on people catching mistakes. When automation handles the repetitive or rules-based parts, error rates can drop. This isn't just about efficiency — it helps build trust in data, reports, and decisions.

Leaders can act with confidence if they know the outputs are traceable.

## 3. Customers (and Employees) Notice the Difference

Process delays don't just affect internal teams. They have potential to impact turnaround times, approvals, response

SLAs and onboarding cycles — the very things that shape customer experience.

Done right, automation can result in accelerated delivery and improved consistency. It also aims to reduce the noise for frontline employees — fewer follow-ups, fewer duplicate entries, and fewer "sorry, I'm waiting on X" replies.

Over time, these changes may contribute to a more predictable, less frustrating operating rhythm — both internally and externally.

## 4. Risk Is Managed — Even If Compliance Wasn't the Goal

Many automation initiatives commonly begin with a focus on efficiency or speed. But a well-designed automation looks to create side benefits for compliance and risk management.

Structured workflows can be utilised to create audit trails. System-based validation helps reduce errors. Access permissions and activity logs help improve data security. In sectors like healthcare, education, or financial services, these are often the hidden wins that become the most valuable over time.

## 5. Momentum Builds

We consider a powerful outcome of a well-prioritised automation initiative to be momentum. When a team sees a process improve — not in theory, but in practice — the conversation shifts from "should we automate?" to "what's next?"

You can then move from chasing approval for automation to managing demand for it. This shift in mindset is how automation evolves from a project to a capability.

In Section 7, we'll look at how FUJIFILM Process Automation supports this shift — not just with tools, but with the discovery, advisory, and delivery approach to help businesses unlock value from day one.



# 7. How FUJIFILM Process Automation Can Help

**From helping identify the right process to delivering measurable results — we support every stage of your automation journey.**

Automation shouldn't just be about tools. It should be about solving the problems that are slowing your people down, adding risk to your operations, or holding back your transformation.

At FUJIFILM Process Automation, we help organisations pinpoint the opportunities to automate — and implement a solution designed to make a measurable impact. Whether your focus is cost reduction, compliance, customer experience or staff capacity, we work with you to bring the technology, expertise and support to help make work flow.

We work across industries — including education, government, professional services, and healthcare — and partner with teams across finance, HR, operations, IT and compliance to help deliver automation that works in the real world.

## **Our Approach: Practical. Flexible. Business-first.**

### **1. Discovery and Advisory**

Not sure where to start? We offer tailored discovery sessions to help you:

- Identify manual, repetitive or high-risk processes with opportunities for automation.
- Map current workflows and uncover friction points.
- Assess readiness based on existing systems, people and culture.
- Prioritise opportunities using criteria like effort, impact and risk.

We work with your process owners and IT stakeholders with the goal to offer recommendations that are practical, measurable and aligned to your business strategy.

### **2. Solution Design and Implementation**

We don't push a single platform. Instead, we build solutions that help:

- Digitise paper or PDF-based forms.
- Automate multi-step workflows, approvals, and data capture.
- Integrate into your existing systems (e.g. ERP, CRM, HRIS).
- Improve visibility and traceability for governance and reporting.

Our implementation draws on technologies including digital forms and workflow tools, document capture solutions, and systems integration or RPA platforms — considering your environment, not ours.

We design with scale in mind, starting with the use case in front of you, and supporting your growth from pilot to program.

### **3. Change Support and Measurable Outcomes**

We know that a successful automation isn't just a deployment — it's adoption. That's why we also help with:

- Business case development and stakeholder alignment.
- Change enablement planning with your internal teams.
- Success tracking post-implementation (time saved, errors reduced, compliance improved).

Whether you're starting small or ready to scale, our goal is to make automation achievable — and impactful — from day one.

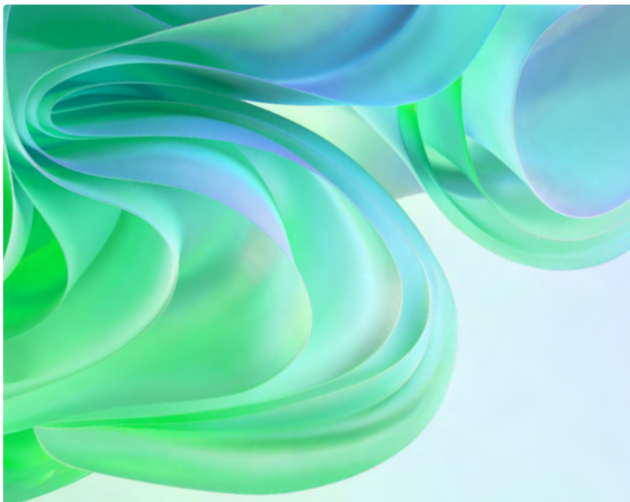
# 8. What Now? Turning Insight Into Action

You don't need a perfect roadmap to begin. You just need a place to start.

This guide has walked through a practical approach to identifying and prioritising high-impact automation opportunities — the ones that go beyond surface-level efficiency and could unlock real value across your business.

Whether your teams are working around outdated workflows, compensating for system gaps, or losing time to low-value manual effort, automation may already be the answer — it's just a matter of knowing where to focus.

If you're ready to take the next step, we're here to help.



## Let's Talk

**FUJIFILM Process Automation works with Australian organisations across finance, HR, operations, and IT to help make work flow — fast, smart, and with less friction.**

**Whether you want to explore a single process or build toward a broader capability, our team can help you assess your environment, align stakeholders, and chart the path forward.**

**Contact us to start the conversation.**



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