ZENTHOS

PAYBACK WORKSHEET

Workflow Automation: will this process pay back? One page of maths

Volume decides payback more than the quote does. Fill in A-G for one process, then run the formulas.

YOUR INPUTS

A **Items per month**
Orders, tickets, forms: how often the work happens

B **Manual minutes per item**
Time a person spends today, including checking

C **Human minutes left per item after automation**
Exceptions and spot checks, averaged over all items (example: 0.64)

D **Loaded hourly cost**
Wage divided by 0.70 covers benefits (BLS wage share). Example: $24.36 / 0.70 = $34.80

E **Build cost (one-off quote)**
Discovery, build and testing

F **Run cost per month**
Platform licence + AI model fees + maintenance retainer

G **Hires you will avoid (0, 1, 2...)**
Only avoided salaries turn saved time into cash

THE FORMULAS

1. Saving per item = (B - C) / 60 x D

2. Monthly net saving = A x (1) - F

3. Payback in months = E / (2) **If (2) is zero or less, it never pays back.**

4. Volume for a 12-month payback = (E / 12 + F) / (1)

5. Cash payback = E / (G x 173.3 x D - F) **173.3 = hours in a working month**

WORKED EXAMPLE FROM THE POST (ILLUSTRATIVE)

A = 3,000 B = 7 C = 0.64 D = $34.80 E = $25,000 F = $650 G = 1

Saving per item $3.69. Net saving $10,416 a month. Payback 2.4 months. Cash payback 4.6 months.

Thresholds: under 176 items a month it loses money; 741 a month pays back in a year; 300 takes 55 months.

SEVEN QUESTIONS FOR THE AUTOMATION COMPANY

- Who owns the code and the platform licences after go-live?
- When a screen or API changes, how fast is the fix, and is that in an SLA?
- What straight-through rate is the acceptance test?
- How are exceptions routed, and to whom?
- Is pricing per task, per run or per bot? What does it cost at three times today's volume?
- Which AI model and region handle our data, and is there a data processing agreement?
- What does it cost to leave, and do we get a handover runbook?

Tell us the process, volume and minutes per item. We will say if it pays back, even when it doesn't.

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