

GUIDE · 5 PAGES

Choosing between automation and a full system.

A short framework for knowing when a lightweight automation is enough.

The five questions

1. Is the process stable, or does it change every few weeks?
2. Does one person own it, or does it cross several teams?
3. Is the cost of an occasional mistake low or high?
4. Would fixing this remove a real bottleneck, or just a minor annoyance?
5. Do you already have the underlying data in one place?

Two examples

A restaurant's order-to-kitchen handoff was stable, single-owner, low-mistake-cost: a good automation candidate, and it was solved in under two weeks.

A multi-location inventory reconciliation process crossed three teams and touched finance: it needed a proper system, not a script bolted onto a spreadsheet.

Warning signs

If you find yourself designing a permissions model or an approval chain for your 'quick automation,' it's not a quick automation anymore.