Most AI projects should die in a spreadsheet. Here’s the one we use.

Every AI project is a bet. This spreadsheet prices the bet BEFORE you place it. Five numbers per workflow. That’s all.

COLUMN 1: VOLUME

How many times per month does this task happen? (Invoices processed, quotes written, tickets answered. If you can’t count it, you can’t automate it profitably.)

COLUMN 2: LABOR COST

Minutes per instance × loaded hourly rate. This is what the task costs you today. Most companies have never calculated it.

COLUMN 3: ERROR COST

What does a mistake cost when it happens, and how often does it happen? Sometimes this number is bigger than the labor number.

COLUMN 4: ACHIEVABLE AUTOMATION %

Don’t assume 100%. What percentage can realistically be automated while maintaining the required human oversight? Be brutal here.

COLUMN 5: IMPLEMENTATION COST

Build + integration + training + the internal hours your team spends feeding it data. The number everyone underestimates.

THE MATH

(Volume × Labor × Automation %) + (Error reduction) − (Implementation ÷ 24 months) = monthly return. Rank every workflow by this number. Build the top one. Ignore the rest — for now.

One spreadsheet. Five columns. It kills the bad projects and funds the good ones.

— A2 Digital · AI that shows up in the P&L

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