

The AI Automation Guide for Business

Identify your first opportunity, calculate the ROI in five minutes, plan a 90-day rollout, and choose a partner who stays accountable. Built from 1,500 real client engagements across 22 industries.

1,500+ CLIENTS SERVED	4,000+ ENGINEERS	22+ INDUSTRIES	CMMI 5 CERTIFIED
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SECTION 01

Identify Your Best First Opportunity

<p>01</p> <p>Volume and Frequency</p> <p>Runs at least weekly with significant transaction volume. Higher volume means more hours recovered per unit of implementation cost.</p>	<p>02</p> <p>Repeatability and Rule Clarity</p> <p>Follows predictable, documentable rules. Two experienced employees working independently would reach the same outcome 90 percent of the time.</p>
<p>03</p> <p>Data Availability</p> <p>At least 1,000 historical examples exist in digital, accessible form. No clean data means no accurate AI model.</p>	<p>04</p> <p>Error Cost</p> <p>Mistakes have a measurable financial consequence such as rework, escalations, compliance penalties, or delayed revenue.</p>

SECTION 02

Calculate Your ROI in Five Minutes

VARIABLE	EXAMPLE
Employees on this task	8
Manual hours per employee per week	20 hrs
Fully loaded hourly cost	\$25
Annual labour cost	\$208,000
Automation rate	55%
Annual labour savings	\$114,400
Error rate	10%
Average cost per error	\$100
Annual error savings	\$18,920

Total Annual Savings **\$133,320**

AUTOMATION RATE GUIDE

- 35 to 40%** Conservative. Complex, variable processes with incomplete data.
- 50 to 65%** Moderate. Standard back-office workflows with reasonable data quality.
- 65 to 80%** Aggressive. High-volume, fully structured, verified data only.

SECTION 03

Five Processes That Deliver the Fastest ROI

01	Document Processing and Data Extraction Invoices, contracts, forms and emails read and filed automatically. 80 to 90 percent reduction in manual entry time.
02	Customer Support Tier-1 FAQs, order status, basic troubleshooting and ticket routing handled by AI. 60 to 70 percent of tickets fully resolved without a human agent.
03	Reporting and Business Intelligence Data pulled from multiple systems, cleaned and formatted automatically. Reports that took four hours now complete in under five minutes.
04	Invoice and Finance Reconciliation PO matching, discrepancy flagging and approval routing without manual intervention. 90 to 95 percent straight-through processing rate for standard invoices.
05	HR Screening and Onboarding CV screening, interview scheduling, offer tracking and onboarding checklists automated. 40 to 55 percent reduction in time-to-hire.

SECTION 04

Your 90-Day Implementation Roadmap

<p>DAYS 1 TO 14</p> <p>Discovery and Scoping</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Map the process end-to-end including every input, step, exception and output Audit data quality and volume and identify gaps before the build phase Define success metrics in specific, measurable terms agreed by all stakeholders Appoint a named internal owner with decision-making authority 	<p>DAYS 15 TO 45</p> <p>Build and Integrate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Clean and label training data with input from subject-matter experts Build the AI pipeline and integrate with relevant downstream systems Run parallel testing comparing AI output versus human output on the same inputs Target a minimum 85 percent accuracy before moving to pilot
<p>DAYS 46 TO 75</p> <p>Controlled Pilot</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Launch on 20 to 30 percent of live volume with real work and real consequences Monitor accuracy, speed and exception rate daily and fix edge cases immediately Measure early ROI by tracking hours saved per week versus baseline Obtain executive sign-off on pilot results before committing to full rollout 	<p>DAYS 76 TO 90</p> <p>Full Rollout</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Scale to 100 percent of live volume with confidence anchored in pilot data Activate monitoring dashboards and set triggers for retraining Produce a formal results report with baseline versus actuals and financial impact Identify the next process to automate and apply learnings to accelerate it

SECTION 05

Six Mistakes That Kill AI Projects

<p>1</p> <p>Wrong First Process</p> <p>Teams pick the most visible challenge. Start with the highest-scoring process from the framework in Section 1, not the most impressive one.</p>	<p>2</p> <p>Skipping Data Preparation</p> <p>Unaudited data produces inaccurate models. Budget explicitly for cleaning and labelling before the build phase begins.</p>	<p>3</p> <p>No Named Internal Owner</p> <p>Projects without a single accountable owner drift. Appoint someone with operational knowledge and decision-making authority before kickoff.</p>
<p>4</p> <p>Go-Live Is Not the Finish Line</p> <p>AI models degrade over time without maintenance. Budget for quarterly model reviews and define a retraining trigger from day one.</p>	<p>5</p> <p>Choosing on Price Not Accountability</p> <p>The cheapest vendor transfers all performance risk to you. Insist on pre-agreed outcome metrics and a remediation clause in the contract.</p>	<p>6</p> <p>No Post-Launch Support Plan</p> <p>A capable partner has documented SLAs and a remediation process. Obtain all support commitments in writing before signing anything.</p>

SECTION 06

Ten Questions to Ask Any AI Vendor

01	Can you show three case studies from my industry with specific, quantified before-and-after results?	02	Walk me through your delivery process milestone by milestone.
03	Who specifically will work on my project and what are their qualifications?	04	What performance metrics do you commit to before the contract is signed?
05	How do you monitor and handle model drift after go-live?	06	What is your formal process when results fall short of agreed targets?
07	Describe your data security architecture and the compliance frameworks you operate under.	08	What third-party certifications does your organisation hold? Look for CMMI Level 5, ISO 27001 and SOC 2.
09	Can you integrate with our existing systems or must we replace existing infrastructure?	10	What does the post-launch support model look like and what are the SLA commitments? Obtain this in writing before signing.

NEXT STEPS

Ready to Begin?

Take these four actions this week to move from reading to results.

<p>STEP 01</p> <p>Run the scoring exercise from Section 1 with your operations team. You need a spreadsheet and 30 minutes.</p>	<p>STEP 02</p> <p>Calculate your ROI using the formula in Section 2 or the free interactive calculator at sthenos.com.</p>
<p>STEP 03</p> <p>Book a free 30-minute AI Automation Audit. The Sthenos team will validate your candidate process and provide a realistic cost range.</p>	<p>STEP 04</p> <p>Explore the full case study library across all 22 industries at sthenos.com/case-studies.</p>