

AI Opportunity Assessment: Where Should AI Actually Fit in Your Business?

A portfolio sample showing how a business can identify, test, and prioritise practical AI opportunities before investing in tools, automation, or implementation work.

Business situation	Assessment question	Assessment focus
A small business wants to adopt AI but has several possible use cases and no clear starting point.	Which opportunities are worth pursuing, which need redesign first, and which should remain human-led?	Business value, workflow readiness, input quality, human judgement, operational risk, and ownership.

1. Assessment principle

The question is not simply whether AI can perform a task. The question is whether AI can improve the workflow without creating more review, confusion, risk, or hidden dependency than the value it adds.

Core decision rule: use AI where it creates measurable value inside a workflow with clear inputs, defined boundaries, appropriate human judgement, and accountable ownership.

2. Opportunity screening criteria

Criterion	What the assessment checks	Why it matters
Business value	Impact on time, cost, quality, capacity, revenue, or decision speed.	Prevents experimentation without a business case.
Task suitability	Whether the work is repeatable, bounded, and describable rather than highly ambiguous.	AI works more reliably when the task has a stable shape and clear limits.
Input readiness	Whether source material, data, context, constraints, and examples are usable.	Weak inputs create unreliable outputs and expand review work.
Human judgement	Where approval, interpretation, sensitivity, ethics, or accountability must remain human-led.	Clarifies the decision boundary instead of treating automation as the default.
Operational fit and risk	Who owns, reviews, approves, and maintains the workflow, and what happens if the output is wrong.	Determines whether the use case is safe and supportable in practice.

3. Illustrative opportunity map

Candidate use case	Value	Readiness	Risk	Assessment decision
Internal meeting summaries and action capture	High	High	Low-Medium	Proceed to controlled pilot. Use approved inputs, a fixed output structure, and human confirmation before actions are assigned.
Drafting routine client follow-up emails	Medium-High	Medium	Medium	Pilot after workflow design. Define context, tone, exclusions, approval, and escalation rules.
Automated client recommendations	High	Low	High	Do not automate yet. Keep recommendations human-led until authority, evidence, and accountability are explicit.
Reformatting approved content for multiple channels	Medium	High	Low-Medium	Suitable for early implementation. Lock the approved source and validate claims and channel constraints.

4. Prioritisation logic

Decision category	Meaning	Required next step
Proceed to controlled pilot	Clear value, usable inputs, manageable risk, and a defined human role.	Design the pilot, controls, success measures, and ownership.
Redesign before pilot	The opportunity is valuable, but inputs, handoffs, criteria, or ownership are weak.	Fix the operating structure before introducing AI.
Keep human-led	The task depends heavily on judgement, sensitivity, authority, or accountability.	Use AI only for bounded support, not the final decision.
Do not prioritise	Value is low, the process is unstable, or effort exceeds likely benefit.	Remove from the near-term roadmap and revisit later.

5. Recommended starting sequence

1	Choose one bounded workflow with clear value and limited downside.
2	Define what AI may support and what a person must review, decide, or approve.
3	Lock source material, context, constraints, exclusions, and acceptance criteria.
4	Name the source owner, reviewer, approver, and workflow owner.
5	Run a measurable pilot and track quality, review time, correction patterns, and risk.
6	Use pilot evidence to scale, redesign, or stop.

6. Deliverable snapshot

What the client receives	Purpose
AI opportunity map	Candidate use cases ranked by value, readiness, risk, and decision status.
Prioritised shortlist	The small number of opportunities worth piloting first, with a clear rationale.
Human-AI decision boundaries	What AI may support and where human judgement or approval must remain.
Readiness gaps and pilot recommendation	Prerequisites, controls, owners, measures, and the evidence needed for a scale decision.