

Manual Task Audit

In most small businesses there is somewhere between half a day and a full day a week of work a computer could be doing. It survives because none of it is difficult, so nobody escalates it.

Do not take that estimate on trust. The point of this sheet is to measure your own.

This finds it. Do it across one normal week.

How to run it

Ask everyone to note any task that is repetitive, follows the same steps every time, and involves moving information from one place to another. One line each, as it happens.

The log

Task	Who	How often	Minutes each time	Systems involved

The arithmetic

Minutes each time, times how often, times fifty weeks. Divide by sixty for hours a year.

Total hours a year across all tasks: _____

At your loaded hourly cost, that is: _____

Loaded cost means wage plus employer costs and overhead, usually about 1.3 to 1.4 times the hourly wage.

What usually shows up

Quotes retyped into invoices. Timesheets copied into a spreadsheet. A monthly report rebuilt by hand because the numbers live in four places. Chasing the same approvals by email. Re-entering client details into a second system. Copying data between an ordering system and accounting.

Sorting the list

Rank by annual hours, then ask two questions of the top three.

Does this task need to exist at all? Sometimes the honest answer is no, and deleting it beats automating it.

Is this the same information being typed twice? If so, the two systems can usually talk to each other, and that is normally a build measured in hours rather than a project.

The one to start with

Not the most annoying. The one with the highest annual hours that nobody has ever questioned.

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