AI Cost & Benefit Worksheet

Aspen Peak Consulting | English | Version 1.0 · November 10, 2026

Use actual quotes, observed work, and clearly labeled assumptions. This worksheet does not provide Aspen Peak prices, predict savings, or promise a payback period. Use the same currency and time period throughout.

1. Define the comparison

Task and expected monthly volume:

Current process:

Proposed process:

What stays the same in both:

Currency:

Date and source of each quote:

Low, expected, and high-volume assumptions:

Compare like with like. An existing subscription you will keep either way is not a new cost of the proposed workflow. Include any upgrade the workflow requires.

2. Record setup effort and costs

List each item once, with amount or hours, source, owner, and whether it is confirmed or estimated.

Discovery and process design:

Data cleanup:

Configuration or integration:

Testing:

Training and initial documentation:

Internal staff hours and the employment cost rate used to value them:

Other necessary work:

Keep outside cash payments and the value of existing staff time visible separately. Staff time matters even when it creates no additional cash payment.

3. Record ongoing costs

For a normal month and a busier month, list:

Additional seats or subscription upgrades:

Automation platform charges:

Model or API usage:

Storage, transcription, or other services:

Outside support:

Staff time for review, exceptions, maintenance, and administration:

Known periodic costs, allocated to the relevant period:

Check usage limits, overage terms, tax, cancellation conditions, and which costs are paid directly. A chat subscription is not automatically a budget for API or automation-platform usage.

4. Calculate the first-year operating cost

One-time outside costs + value of one-time internal work + 12 × (monthly outside costs + value of monthly internal work) + other first-year costs.

This is a full cost view of the proposed workflow. Do not also add an item under “other” if it is already included. Compare it with an equivalent full cost view of the current process.

5. Measure time and quality

Baseline active minutes per comparable case:

New active minutes per case, including preparation, review, corrections, and typical exceptions:

Comparable cases per month:

Additional upkeep hours per month not included in the case times:

Net hours of capacity recovered per month = (baseline minutes - new minutes) × cases ÷ 60 - additional upkeep hours.

The answer can be negative. Do not subtract review or maintenance twice. Track elapsed waiting time separately from active labor.

Also record factual errors, rework, missed requests, complaints, and whether the team can complete the process reliably. Faster work is not enough if quality falls below your requirements.

6. Keep cash savings separate from capacity

Cash costs actually avoided, such as reduced paid overtime or eliminated outside processing fees:

New monthly cash expenses:

Monthly net cash benefit = cash costs actually avoided - new monthly cash expenses.

Upfront cash investment:

Simple cash payback in months = upfront cash investment ÷ positive monthly net cash benefit.

If monthly net cash benefit is zero or negative, there is no positive cash payback under those assumptions. Do not divide by zero. Recovered hours do not automatically reduce payroll or produce sales. Track useful extra capacity and possible revenue separately from confirmed cash savings.

7. Test the assumptions

Recalculate for lower volume, longer review time, higher usage, and a month that requires extra support. Note what changes the decision and what a trial could establish.

What is confirmed:

What is estimated:

What needs a quote or measurement:

Decision and reason:

Review date:

Read next

Understand AI automation costs

Plan a focused first-month pilot

Want help defining the scope before asking for an estimate? Call Aspen Peak Consulting at 303-900-2670. This worksheet does not send information or book a call. Keep completed financial details in a location your business approves.