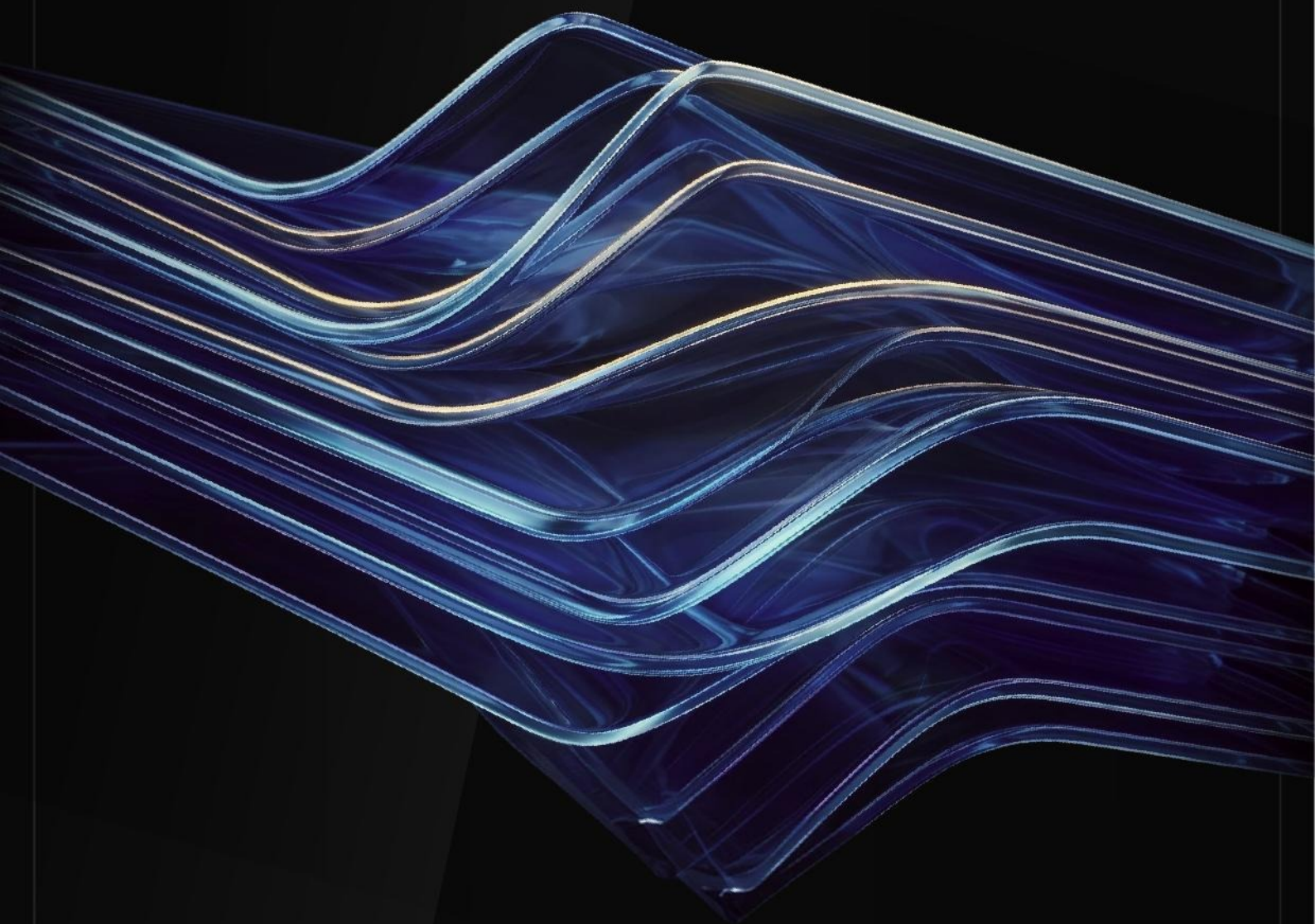


Which process do you automate first?

Scorecard · October 2026 · Marrallisa Kreijkes



HOW TO USE THIS SCORECARD

Start with the value, not the tool.

Most automation projects stall because they try to do everything at once. Pick one process, prove the value in production, then take the next. This scorecard helps you choose the first one.

Score up to five candidates on six criteria, then run the winner through the readiness checklist. It follows the governance principles we use for every n8n workflow we build.

By **Marrallisa Kreijkes**, Founder of Viralistic and official n8n Ambassador

01 HOW TO SCORE

1 is low, 5 is high. For exceptions the scale is reversed: few exceptions earn a high score.

CRITERION	THE QUESTION	SCORES 1	SCORES 5
Frequency	How often does it run?	A few times a year	Several times a day
Time per run	How long does a run take?	A few minutes	Half an hour or more
Error cost	What does a mistake cost?	Easy to fix, unnoticed	Lost revenue or a fine
Exceptions	How often is a run different?	Almost every time	Almost never
Data access	Can a system reach the data?	Paper, calls or memory	API, webhook, fixed email
Client value	Does the client notice it?	Not at all, it is internal	Faster, with fewer errors

02 YOUR SCORECARD

Score each criterion 1 to 5 (maximum 30). On a near tie, pick better data access and fewer exceptions.

PROCESS	FREQUENCY	TIME	ERROR COST	EXCEPTIONS	DATA ACCESS	CLIENT VALUE	TOTAL
1							
2							
3							
4							
5							

03 IS THIS PROCESS READY TO AUTOMATE?

Check the process with the highest score. Every open box is work to do before the build starts.

- ☐ **The outcome and its metrics are agreed and written down before anything is built**
For example hours saved per month, response time or error rate. Measure the current value as your baseline.
- ☐ **The process has one clear owner**
The owner decides how it should run and owns the automation after go-live.
- ☐ **The steps are documented: who does what, in which tool, in which order**
If the process only lives in someone's head, write it down first.
- ☐ **The inputs are available via an API, a webhook or a predictable email**
n8n has ready-made nodes for most common tools, and an HTTP Request node for any tool with an API.
- ☐ **The edge cases are known and you decided what happens with each one**
Go through the last twenty runs and list every exception.
- ☐ **A person signs off before every irreversible step**
Sending, paying and deleting wait for human approval.
- ☐ **Logging and alerts are in place, so failures reach the owner straight away**
Every run leaves a trail: you can always see what happened and why.
- ☐ **Access follows least privilege: the automation only gets the permissions its job needs**
- ☐ **The automation runs on a dedicated account, not on someone's personal login**
A personal login hides who did what, and breaks or keeps far too much access when that person leaves.
- ☐ **Personal data is handled in line with the GDPR and you know where it is stored**
Self-hosting n8n keeps your data under your control. With managed n8n hosting in Europe you do not have to maintain the server yourself.

04 BEFORE YOU GO LIVE

A workflow that works in a demo is not yet ready for production.

- ☐ **The workflow is tested with real data, including the edge cases on your list**
Use real examples from recent weeks, not invented test cases. Anonymise personal data where you can.
- ☐ **Changes are built and tested in a test environment or a test copy, never in the live workflow**
- ☐ **Every run ends visibly: it succeeds, or it fails with an alert**
In n8n, set an error workflow with an Error Trigger in the workflow settings.

- ☐ **Automatic retries are switched on only for steps that are safe to repeat**
A payment or an email must never go out twice.
- ☐ **AI steps have spending limits and treat incoming emails and forms as data**
They never follow instructions inside those messages. This is your protection against prompt injection.
- ☐ **Passwords and API keys are stored as credentials, never pasted into a node**
- ☐ **Monitoring is in place and the owner reviews the executions weekly in the first month**
Failures and unusual volumes reach the owner straight away.
- ☐ **A rollback plan is written: how to stop the workflow and return to the manual process**
Keep the previous version and make sure the team still knows the manual route.
- ☐ **The workflow is documented: what it does, which systems it touches and who owns it**
- ☐ **The team knows what changes, what stays manual and where to report a problem**

05 MEASURE AND SCALE

Make the result visible, so the next step is an easy decision.

- ☐ **After thirty days you compare the result with your baseline**
Using the metrics you agreed before the build: hours saved, response time, error rate.
- ☐ **The result is visible in a simple dashboard your team and management can see**
- ☐ **Credentials, sub-workflows and naming conventions are reusable for the next process**
That is how every next wave goes faster than the last.
- ☐ **A quarterly review is in the calendar: does the workflow still run well, and is it still needed?**
- ☐ **The next process is chosen and scored again with what you learned**

Any questions? Get in touch.



Scan to connect with Marrallisa on LinkedIn

Plan a strategic call: calendly.com/marrallisa/30min

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