EXECUTIVE BRIEF | OCTOBER 2026

Operational value first. Artificial intelligence second.

The AI Operations Opportunity Assessment

Identify the few AI and automation opportunities that can improve decisions, release capacity, reduce operating friction, and generate measurable value.

An operations-led assessment for manufacturers and industrial businesses

START WITH THE OPERATING PROBLEM

Most AI initiatives begin in the wrong place.

The better question:

Where are people spending time locating information, interpreting exceptions, making repetitive decisions or moving data between systems?

01

Understand the friction

Capture the decision, owner, frequency and operational consequences.

02

Select the simplest viable fix

Process discipline, ERP, rules, analytics, ML or generative AI.

WHERE OPPORTUNITY LIVES

Three practical classes of work

DECISION SUPPORT

Inventory health | Supplier risks | Schedule exceptions | S&OP summaries

KNOWLEDGE SYSTEMS

Engineering drawing retrieval | Quality investigations | SOP assistance

WORKFLOW AUTOMATION

PO exception handling | Approval routing | Supplier communications

MATCH THE INTERVENTION TO THE PROBLEM

AI is one option—not the default.

Broken process	Redesign workflow and decision rights
Repeatable rules	ERP configuration or deterministic automation
Forecasting / pattern detection	Analytics or conventional machine learning
Unstructured content / interpretation	Retrieval, classification or generative AI
Multi-step workflow	Orchestration with bounded authority

No technology is also a valid recommendation.

2–4 WEEK ASSESSMENT | TYPICAL SCOPE

From operating pain points to an investable roadmap.

01 Discover

Interview owners, observe workflows and establish baselines.

02 Qualify

Separate process, ERP, automation and AI options.

03 Evaluate

Test feasibility, data, value, security and controls.

04 Prioritize

Select pilot candidates and define accountable owners.

05 Roadmap

Present business cases, pilot charter and 90-day next steps.

Assessment and roadmap are distinct from a subsequently authorized pilot or deployment.

WHAT EXECUTIVES RECEIVE

Decisions—not a list of AI ideas.

Prioritized portfolio

Ranked use cases with go/no-go gates

Financial logic

Hard savings vs capacity, cash and cost-to-run

Delivery readiness

Data, systems, security, people and process

Pilot charter

Owner, scope, success criteria and stop criteria

Roadmap

90-day pilot path and 12-month scaling view

Control plan

Approvals, audit trail, evaluation and monitoring

CONTROLS ARE PART OF THE DESIGN

The model may recommend.
The business remains accountable.

SOURCE	RULES	REVIEW	ACTION	MONITOR
Approved ERP, operations and document data	Business thresholds, access and permissions	Named approver, escalation and exceptions	Bounded execution with traceable logs	Quality, security, cost and actual benefit

Safety-critical and high-consequence decisions require additional restrictions and qualified human authority.

YOUR NEXT OPERATING IMPROVEMENT

Find your highest-value AI and automation opportunity.

Start with one costly exception, recurring decision, or knowledge bottleneck. We will help determine whether the right intervention is process redesign, ERP optimization, automation, or AI.

zenthesys.com/services/applied-ai-automation/

Assessment: typically 2–4 weeks | Scope and fee determined by organizational complexity