ZENTHESYS

PUBLIC SELF-ASSESSMENT

AI Operations Opportunity Check

A practical executive self-assessment to identify the right operational problems for process improvement, automation or AI. No technical expertise required.

Fix the process. Connect the systems. Automate what matters.

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

OCTOBER 2026 | ZENTHESYS LLC

PUBLIC / EXECUTIVE RESOURCE

Find the problem before choosing AI

An executive check for manufacturing, supply chain, engineering, quality and service leaders. Start with a costly recurring decision or exception—not a favorite technology.

> Working principle: Use AI where it adds value. Use simpler automation where that is sufficient. Fix the process when technology is not the problem.

How to use this resource

- Set aside 15–20 minutes with one operations, supply chain or plant leader.
- Rate each statement on a simple 0–2 scale: 0 = not true, 1 = partly true, 2 = consistently true.
- Mark one or two operating problems that have a clear owner and measurable consequence.
- Use the results to frame a practical diagnostic conversation, not to justify an AI purchase.

What this is—and is not

This is an educational self-check, not a certified readiness score, AI implementation approval, cybersecurity evaluation or substitute for a detailed engagement assessment. It deliberately excludes Zenthesys internal financial models, weighting, risk thresholds and implementation methodology.

What you will identify	What Zenthesys evaluates in depth
Operating friction and potential use cases	Verified process baseline, value and technology fit
Initial data and governance questions	Data profiling, technical feasibility and security
First next step	Prioritized portfolio, investment case and implementation plan

01 | Where is operational friction showing up?

Select the recurring activities where people are spending too much time, resolving the same exception, or waiting for trustworthy information.

Area	Typical signal	Select
Planning	Manual forecast commentary or repeated S&OP spreadsheets	[ ]
Purchasing	Late PO surprises and supplier status chasing	[ ]
Inventory	Excess stock, shortages or unclear planning parameters	[ ]
Production	Schedule disruptions and delayed shift reporting	[ ]
Quality	Difficulty finding similar NCRs or controlled documents	[ ]
Engineering	Time lost looking for current approved drawings or SOPs	[ ]
Logistics	Manual shipment status and exception communication	[ ]
Customer service	Repeated order status questions or dispute triage	[ ]
Leadership	Slow KPI preparation or meetings without one trusted picture	[ ]

OUR MOST EXPENSIVE RECURRING OPERATING EXCEPTION

WHO OWNS THE DECISION TODAY?

WHAT HAPPENS TO SERVICE, MARGIN, CASH OR CAPACITY WHEN IT IS LATE?

02 | Operating readiness: quick self-check

Rate each statement: 0 = rarely true, 1 = sometimes true, 2 = consistently true. Do not average away a safety or data-privacy concern.

#	Statement	0	1	2
1	The process has a named owner and standard work.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
2	We can measure baseline volume, cycle time, quality or cost.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
3	Escalations and decision rights are clear.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
4	The ERP or primary system reflects how work actually happens.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
5	Required information is accessible and generally trusted.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
6	Users know the authoritative source for decisions.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
7	Sensitive information and access restrictions are understood.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
8	Significant transactions require named approval.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
9	We can compare a proposed improvement with the current process.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
10	Front-line teams will participate in testing and feedback.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
11	An accountable leader will own adoption and benefits.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]
12	We can stop or revert an unsuccessful experiment.	[ ]	[ ]	[ ]

Interpretation: The more gaps you find, the more valuable it may be to improve process, master data, integration and decision ownership before launching AI. This is a conversation starter—not a validated readiness score.

03 | Which technology approach is appropriate?

The most effective recommendation may be to simplify the workflow without introducing any new AI.

What the process needs	A sensible starting point
Clearer handoffs, fewer exceptions or named accountability	Process redesign and daily management
Repeatable rules and complete structured fields	ERP setup or deterministic workflow automation
Trends, thresholds and routine KPI calculations	Analytics or conventional modeling
Document retrieval or interpretation of unstructured content	Controlled retrieval and, if helpful, generative AI
Coordinated actions across software systems	Orchestration with permissions, checks and human oversight

Three illustrations

- Inventory: automate deterministic checks, then use AI only to explain exceptions needing planner judgment.
- Suppliers: identify late PO risks with source data; optionally draft communication for buyer approval.
- Quality: retrieve comparable issues and document references; qualified personnel still determine root cause and release decisions.

A SIMPLER NON-AI SOLUTION WE SHOULD CONSIDER

WHERE HUMAN JUDGMENT MUST REMAIN

04 | Test value and manage risk

Before asking for an AI pilot, challenge the proposed outcome with these executive questions.

Business case questions	Your current answer
What specific KPI will improve?	_____
How often does the work occur?	_____
How much time or money is being lost?	_____
Can time saved become usable capacity or actual cost savings?	_____
What implementation and ongoing costs will result?	_____
Who confirms the financial effect?	_____

Controls checklist

- Only approved company data and systems may be used.
- High-consequence or safety-related actions remain under authorized human decision-making.
- Recommendations must be explainable enough for users to check against evidence.
- Users can reject results, escalate issues and stop the workflow.
- Cybersecurity, privacy, quality and records policies apply before any pilot.

Important: Saving 20 hours per week is not automatically a bottom-line gain. Released capacity and avoidable costs should be described separately.

05 | Your opportunity shortlist

Choose no more than two candidates and explain why the business would care. Your goal is to frame a high-quality conversation.

	Candidate A	Candidate B
Operating problem	_____	_____
Responsible manager	_____	_____
Current pain / cost	_____	_____
Current baseline	_____	_____
Expected change	_____	_____
Data / system source	_____	_____
Human approval needed	_____	_____
Biggest uncertainty	_____	_____

Decision checklist

- We can describe the problem without naming an AI tool.
- A business leader can validate the baseline and target.
- We have considered process, ERP and conventional automation alternatives.
- The consequences of mistakes and data-use restrictions are understood.
- We can start with a narrow and reversible experiment.

WHAT EVIDENCE IS MISSING TO MAKE A SOUND DECISION?

06 | What the full Zenthesys assessment adds

The self-check identifies questions. The consulting assessment tests the answers using observed workflows, source evidence, economic analysis and controlled implementation planning.

Assessment component	Executive output
Operational discovery	Verified pain-point inventory and decision map
Intervention selection	Process / ERP / automation / AI fit rationale
Readiness evaluation	Data, integration, security, adoption and controls
Prioritization	Practical short list with explicit go/no-go conditions
Business case	Finance-reviewed value, cost and uncertainty
Pilot planning	Sponsor, scope, human approvals, success and stop criteria
Roadmap	90-day controlled pilot path and longer-term opportunities

Typical sequence

Discover → Qualify → Evaluate → Prioritize → Roadmap. The broader delivery program then follows the Zenthesys Discover → Design → Build → Evaluate → Deploy → Govern model. A full pilot or production deployment requires separate authorization.

> Engagement fit: Most assessments can be scoped for 2–4 weeks, depending on sites, data access, process complexity and security requirements. Outcomes and investment are established in a written scope.

07 | Start with a better operating question

Not: Where can we add AI?

Instead: Which decision, exception or knowledge bottleneck is hurting performance—and what is the simplest controlled intervention that fixes it?

Bring these three facts to the conversation

- The recurring workflow or decision you want to improve.
- The business outcome currently affected (service, cash, throughput, margin or risk).
- The likely process owner and systems where relevant data resides.

Next step: Explore the AI Operations Opportunity Assessment and request a conversation at zenthesys.com/services/applied-ai-automation/

ZENTHESYS — Make Your Operations Work as One System.
Fix the process. Connect the systems. Automate what matters.

This self-assessment provides general business guidance. It is not a security certification, implementation specification, guaranteed financial projection or regulatory determination.