

AI project ROI and business resale: build the evidence

Measure net value and prepare a transferable system without assuming a valuation uplift.

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An AI project can consume cash while a demo looks impressive. Measure the business outcome and the cost of keeping it reliable. Do not assume that automation increases a business resale price. A buyer may discount a system that depends on unclear licences or a supplier who cannot be replaced.

Establish the baseline

Record how the task works today. Track actual work, errors, rework and delays using the business's own records. Name the process owner. Decide what counts as an improvement before the pilot starts. Keep quality and customer impact alongside speed.

Measure net value

Value only the work that changes. Time saved is not cash saved unless it reduces cost or supports useful additional output. Deduct staff review, corrections, hosting, model usage, support, integration upkeep and incident costs. Separate observed results from estimates. Avoid treating reduced handling time as both a labour saving and extra revenue without evidence.

Use your own approved inputs in a financial worksheet. Compare a manual or rules-based alternative. A negative result can be a useful reason to stop before wider deployment.

Prepare for transfer

Keep contracts, dependency licences, code access, deployment instructions and account ownership clear. Record whether provider agreements allow transfer. Document the data rights and retention rules. Test whether another team can operate the system from the handover material.

Make a defensible decision

Use the NIST framework to record risks, measurements and the decision to proceed or stop. Ask an accountant or valuation adviser how evidenced operational changes affect your business. This guide makes no prediction of resale value. During due diligence, a clear operating record is more useful than a claim that the business is powered by AI.

Sources

- [NIST, AI Risk Management Framework](#). Public page fetched 2026-10-29.
- [NCSC, Guidelines for secure AI system development](#). Public page fetched 2026-10-29.

Frequently asked questions

Is this a supplier recommendation?

No. Use this guide to prepare a brief and check the supplier evidence yourself.