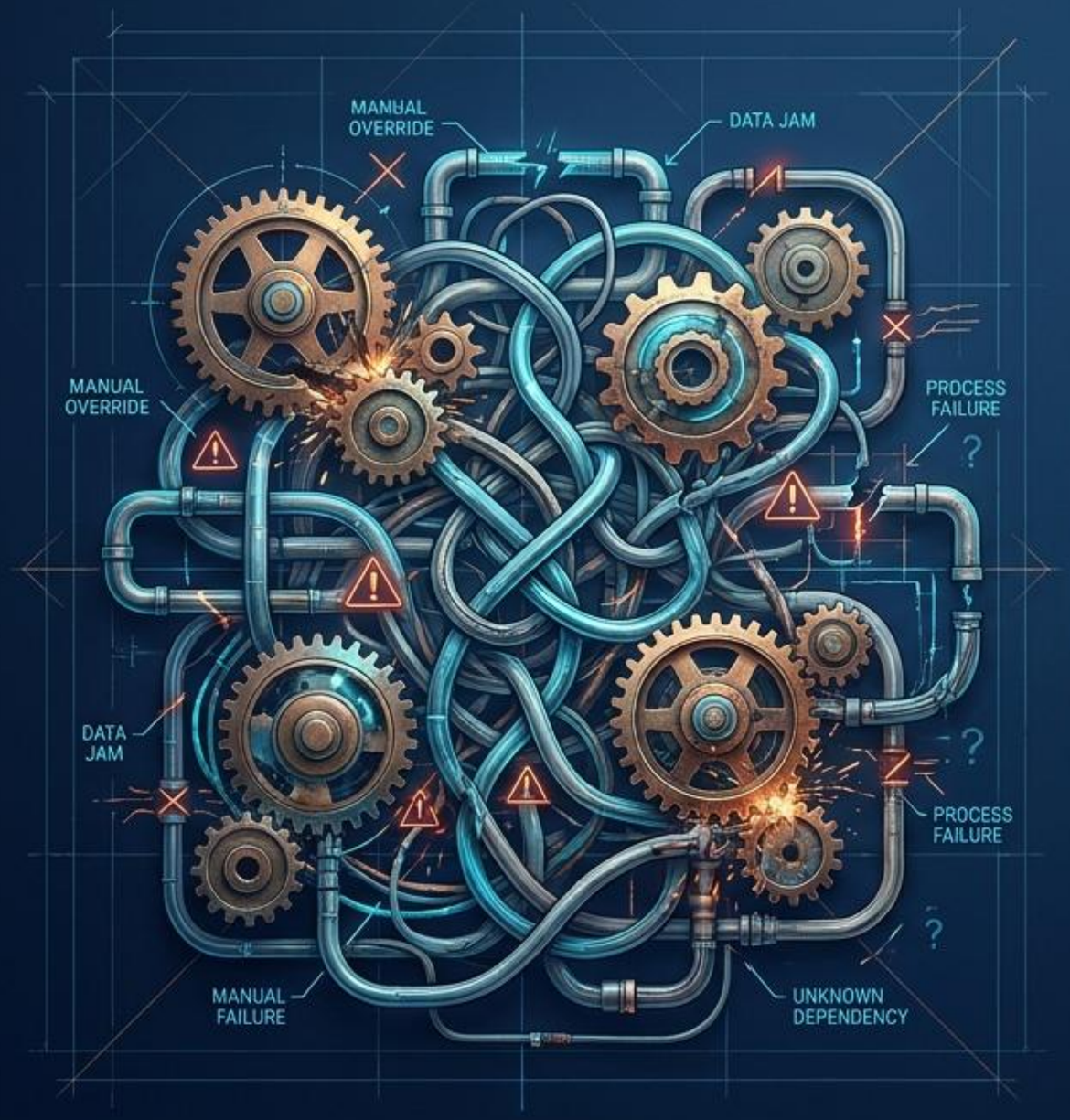
Manual Work Should Not Be the Operating Model

Capability T4: Automation (The Multiplier) inside The Intelligent Organization

Using approved technology to safely multiply human effort and redesign how work gets done.



The Invisible Operating Model.

Most organizations run on more manual work than leaders realize. Automation is not about replacing people; it is about removing unnecessary friction so people can focus on judgment and value.

- People spend hours on copy-paste work, manual status updates, and rekeying data.
- Teams build local scripts, macros, or AI workarounds without clear ownership or controls.
- Manual work hides bad data quality, unclear approvals, and weak system integration.
- Automation opportunities are chosen by enthusiasm instead of value, risk, and readiness.

Do Not Automate Confusion

AI and automation make manual work more visible and urgent. But rushing to automate without discipline just creates faster, automated confusion.

Trigger: Recurring manual task identified.

Node 1: Is the work stable, understood, and valuable?

The Gate: Automate. Only stable, valuable, repeatable, and safe work passes through.

The Loop: Simplify first. Remove steps, standardize rules, and redesign before applying technology.

The Golden Rule: Simplify the work first. Then automate the parts that are ready.

T4 Automation: The Multiplier.

Definition

Automation is the organization's ability to use approved technology to reduce manual work, improve consistency, reduce errors, and support better ways of working.

The Boundary Line

Automation provides the technical means to improve work. The Factory Domain actually turns those opportunities into measured value.

Evidence of Maturity

1. Inventory of active bots, scripts, and AI agents.
2. Documented reduction in manual effort and cycle times.
3. Active monitoring and maintenance of automated workflows.

The Plain-English Test

Can the organization safely use approved technology to remove unnecessary manual work, improve consistency, reduce errors, and support work redesign?

What Automation Is

The practical ability to use technology to perform repeatable work with less human effort, fewer errors, better consistency, and clearer evidence.

What Automation is NOT

It is not a license to automate everything. Some work should remain human-led. Some work is too risky to automate yet.

The Boundary Line: Means vs. Value.

Technology Automation provides the approved technical means. Factory turns those opportunities into measured value.

What Automation (Technology) Owns

- *Approved technical approaches, platforms, and standards.*
- *Technical patterns for safe, supportable, reusable automation.*
- *Guardrails for access, logging, monitoring, and exception handling.*
- *Runbooks, support paths, and health reviews.*

The Boundary Line

What Factory (The Business) Owns

- Business process redesign and value proof.
- Final approval to automate material work.
- Risk appetite and risk assessment.
- Workforce adoption and role changes.

The Five Core Behaviors of Automation.

Behavior 1: Spot

Identify recurring manual work, errors, handoffs, delays, and workarounds that may be ready for automation.

Behavior 2: Standardize

Clarify the work before automating it—including steps, rules, owners, data, and success measures.

Behavior 3: Automate

Use approved tools and patterns to automate the right work safely and supportably.

Behavior 4: Monitor

Track whether automations are working, failing, creating exceptions, producing value, or creating new risk.

Behavior 5: Improve

Use evidence to enhance, scale, retire, or redesign automations as work, systems, data, and risk change.

The Simple Operating Model.

Technology Automation should start with work, not tools. The first question is not “Which bot can do this?”, but “What manual work should no longer be manual?”

1. Find manual work

Where are people repeating steps or chasing approvals?

2. Check readiness

Is the work stable, valuable, and supported by trusted data?

3. Simplify first

Can the work be removed or standardized before technology is applied?

4. Route the opportunity

Does this need simple platform config, integration, or a Factory-managed AI Use Case?

5. Build safely

Are the right tools, testing, and exception handling in place?

6. Operate and monitor

Is it running reliably and producing visible issues when broken?

7. Improve or retire

Should the automation be scaled, changed, or retired based on evidence?

Three Practical Outputs.

Automation should produce a small number of useful outputs to make opportunities visible, patterns clear, and live automations supportable.

Output	Purpose	Quality Standard
Automation Opportunity Register	Makes manual work and automation candidates visible.	Clear enough to separate good automation candidates from noise, demos, and low-value ideas.
Automation Standards and Guardrails	Defines how automation should be built safely and consistently.	Plain enough for teams to follow and strong enough to prevent fragile or unsafe automations.
Automation Runbook and Health Review	Keeps live automations visible, owned, monitored, and improvable.	Useful enough that an automation can be supported even when the original builder is unavailable.

Executive Evidence: Proving the Capability.

A capability on paper means nothing. Score evidence, not aspiration.

Gate 1: Active Inventory

An up-to-date inventory of active bots, scripts, automated controls, and AI agents.

Gate 2: Documented Reduction

Post-launch reports showing documented reduction in manual effort, errors, or cycle times.

Gate 3: Active Monitoring

Monitoring logs, runbooks, and support records showing automated workflows are actively maintained and updated.

Material automations must connect to Governance, Risk, Data, and Factory Evidence Gates.

Measuring the Reality.

Hours of manual work reduced/avoided.

(Shows if unnecessary effort is dropping)

Error, cycle time, and rework reduction.

(Shows if work quality and speed are improving)

% of live automations with a named owner and runbook.

(Shows if automations are actually supportable)

100.9 %

Automation failure and incident trends.

(Shows if automations are reliable and safe)

% of candidates assessed for value, risk, and readiness.

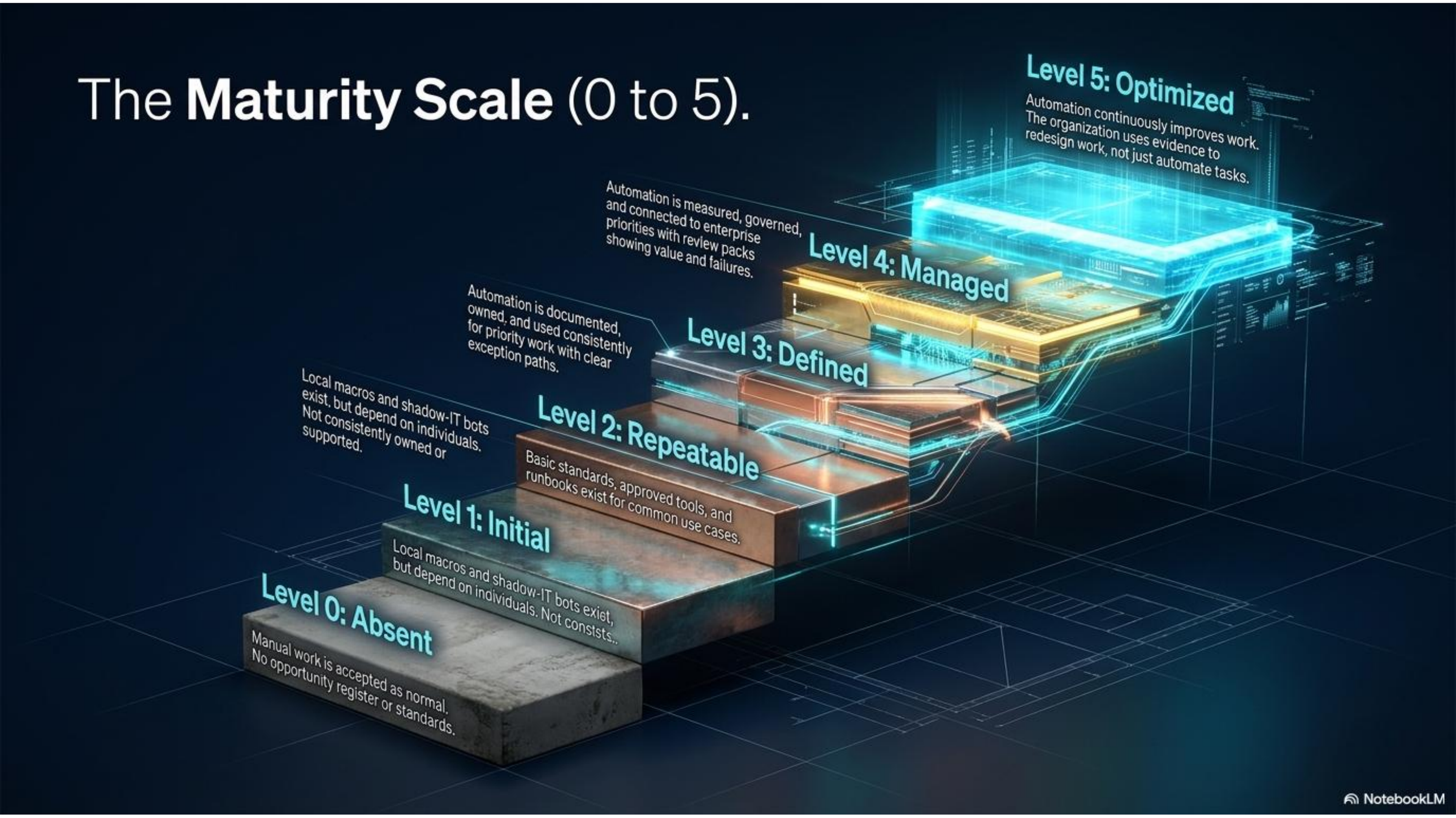
(Shows if selection is disciplined)

Number of fragile or duplicate automations retired.

(Shows if hidden complexity is being managed)

+100 retired

The **Maturity Scale** (0 to 5).



First Moves: What to do Monday Morning.

You do not need a massive automation center on day one. You need a practical view of where your people are doing repetitive work.

Start with the work, not the tools.