• COST & PILOT WORKSHEET

Price an automation before you scale it.

Compare the same useful result. Count the retries, review time and licence assumptions before you choose a tool.

For business owners, operations leads and builders. Use this pack before a small pilot or a licensing conversation. You need a defined task, two possible approaches and access to current rate and entitlement evidence. Allow 30–45 minutes for the planning sheet; record actual usage during the pilot.

Start with one outcome

Example: a colleague gets a correct, source-backed help-desk answer. If a ticket is needed, it is created once, in the right queue, with a confirmed ticket ID. Decide who will accept the result and which errors make it unacceptable.

Five things to settle first

- Audience and identity. Employees, guests and customers can have different entitlements. Record the identity that actually runs each step.
- Exact route. Name the product, experience, trigger and connector. “Copilot” is not a billing specification.
- All costs. Separate new cash spend, allocated existing subscriptions, metered usage, human review and one-time setup.
- Evidence. Keep a dated quote or official rate link, the applicable terms and a usage record. Unknown is not zero.
- A stop rule. Name the person who can stop the pilot, the spend ceiling, check frequency and manual fallback.

Use the pack

Page	What you complete
2	Scope, acceptance criteria and pilot guardrails
3	Comparable costs and unresolved assumptions
4	Worked arithmetic and a reusable run log
5	Current Microsoft checks, related videos and references

Version 1.0 • References reviewed 5 October 2026 • Editorial worksheet and illustrative arithmetic. No live tenant, billing account or provider comparison was tested. Recheck terms and rates before spending.

• PRINTABLE WORKSHEET / 1 OF 2

Define the pilot.

Fill this in before you run anything. Keep the same task and acceptance rules for both options.

WORKFLOW / BUSINESS OWNER / REVIEW DATE

ACCEPTED RESULT: WHAT MUST BE TRUE? WHO CHECKS IT?

Scope	Your answer
Users / audience / execution identity	
Inputs, outputs and data allowed	
Product + experience + trigger + connectors	
Current licences / proof they cover this route	
Monthly volume: low / expected / high	

Help-desk planning example from the linked July video: 30 people, about 300 questions and 50 tickets per month. Keep questions, tickets, flow runs and billable actions separate; a ticket may arise from the same question. These counts are workload assumptions, not a current quote.

Set the gates before testing

Gate	Your threshold / owner
Pilot dates + maximum unique cases	
Required accepted results / error tolerance	
Cash ceiling + separate staff-time budget	
Spend check frequency + stop owner	
Manual fallback + recovery procedure	

☐ Stop on unexpected data exposure, duplicate business actions, an unverified bill or loss of the agreed access boundary

☐ No purchase, flow conversion or broader rollout until the unresolved assumptions on page 3 are cleared

• PRINTABLE WORKSHEET / 2 OF 2

Compare the same job.

Use one currency and one period. Keep cash spend and allocated cost visible; do not count the same subscription twice.

Currency: _____ Region: _____ Period: _____
Tax treatment: _____ Quote/rate checked: _____

Cost for this period	Option A	Option B
Product, experience and trigger		
New licences / minimum commitment		
Allocated existing subscription[1]		
Metered usage incl. failed/retried attempts[2]		
Review + correction: hours × loaded rate		
Ongoing support / other attributable cost		
Operating total: sum the rows above		
One-time setup, shown separately		
Full pilot total: operating + setup		
Unique accepted results after review		
Operating cost / accepted result		
Full pilot cost / accepted result		

[1] Record why you allocated that share. Also show incremental cash spend separately; an existing subscription may add no new cash cost but still use capacity. [2] For each meter: confirm units, rate, allowance, pooling, rounding and billing minimum. Subtract only a verified available allowance, once. A missing rate leaves the estimate incomplete.

Incremental cash spend only: A _____ B _____
If accepted results = 0, write "no accepted result"; do not divide by zero.

Assumptions that can change the decision

Assumption / evidence link + date	Owner / verify by

Decision: ☐ Pilot ☐ Investigate ☐ Simplify ☐ Stop
Why / what would change it: _____
Decision owner: _____ Next review trigger: _____

• WORKED EXAMPLE / SYNTHETIC

Count the whole attempt.

Illustrative CAD amounts only. These are invented inputs for checking the method, not provider prices, a recommendation or measured performance.

Both options handle the same 20 support cases to the same acceptance standard. Five cases require a ticket; those are part of the 20 cases, not five extra accepted outcomes. Each accepted case is counted once, even if retried.

Pilot record	Option A	Option B
Unique cases / accepted after correction	20 / 20	20 / 20
Total attempts incl. failed/retried attempts	22	24
Attributable licences (new + allocated)	CAD 10	CAD 20
Usage from all attempts	CAD 11	CAD 6
Review/correction at CAD 30/hour	50 min = 25	70 min = 35
Ongoing support	CAD 6	CAD 4
Operating total	CAD 52	CAD 65
Operating cost / accepted result	52 ÷ 20 = 2.60	65 ÷ 20 = 3.25
One-time setup	CAD 120	CAD 180
Full pilot / accepted result	172 ÷ 20 = 8.60	245 ÷ 20 = 12.25

What this shows: lower metered usage alone does not establish a cheaper accepted result. The example favours A on this cost definition; it does not identify a better vendor or predict your return.

One row per attempt, not just the successes

Case / attempt	Result + evidence	Usage / cost	Review min
H-014 / 1	Failed: ticket not committed; log R14	record actual	record actual
H-014 / 2	Accepted: correct ticket ID verified	record actual	record actual
Your case / 1			
Your case / 2			

Count H-014 once in accepted results. Include both attempts in usage and time. Record measured charges, estimated unbilled usage and allocated costs separately until billing reconciles.

Stress-test the estimate

Recalculate at low and high volume; increase retries and review time; remove an assumed allowance. If a changed assumption reverses the decision, resolve it before rollout. Never combine currencies without recording the conversion rate and date.

• KEEP THE EVIDENCE CURRENT

Check the billing route.

Microsoft details below were reviewed on 5 October 2026. They are verification prompts for your administrator, not a licence determination for your organisation.

1. Copilot Studio standard harness: a user's Microsoft 365 Copilot licence alone does not cover every route. Microsoft's inclusion conditions refer to authenticated, licensed, employee-facing usage. For agent flows, the no-charge inclusion is limited to "When an agent calls the flow"; other triggers can consume credits. [1]

2. GitHub Copilot harness: Microsoft describes a different consumption model, including charges while building, previewing, testing and evaluating. Record which experience you use before assuming a test is free. [2]

3. Power Automate: verify user-versus-process entitlement, connector class and execution identity. Its cloud flows use Power Automate licensing. Converting a cloud flow to a Copilot Studio agent flow changes billing and is documented as one-way. Evaluate a safe copy and a recovery plan first. [1, 3, 4]

4. Spend controls: distinguish an alert from an enforced cap. Record exactly what stops, what can keep running, reporting delay and who will act. Check both the applicable meter and the actual tenant configuration. [1, 5]

Official references

[1] Copilot Studio billing rates and management

[2] Usage-based billing: GitHub Copilot harness

[3] Types of Power Automate licences

[4] Agent flows overview and conversion

[5] Power Platform pay-as-you-go meters

Watch the related videos on YouTube

Same Agent. Same Flow. 18× the Cost.

Same Flow, Different Bill: Copilot Studio vs Power Automate

You Shouldn't Need a PhD to Understand Microsoft Licensing

Microsoft New Pricing for Agentic AI Will Leave You Broke

Related Shorts: internal/customer-facing billing; same workflow; Cowork comparison; spend uncertainty.

Short: Same workflow, different bill

Short: Internal or customer-facing billing

Short: Cowork comparison: real-world costs

Short: Spending uncertainty: Microsoft Kills Cowork

Historical video figures are not reused as current rates. Reference owner: Automate Already. Recheck before purchasing or after any billing change. For a correction, include the page, source and date: hello@automatealready.ca.