Automation Platform Evaluation – Product Brief

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Context: Platform and workflow scalability assessment

Use case: Portfolio / decision artifact

Purpose

This document evaluates automation platforms through a product and systems lens, not a feature checklist. It focuses on how tools behave as workflows evolve, how costs scale with complexity, and where ownership risk accumulates over time.

Automation Scenario

Webhook trigger → validation → transformation → conditional routing → database write → Slack + email → retry on failure.

Baseline volume: 10,000 executions per month.

Platforms Considered

Zapier, Make, Pabbly, n8n, Custom code.

Key Findings

• Abstraction-based pricing causes non-linear cost growth as logic increases.

• Flat pricing reduces platform fees but increases operational overhead.

• Execution-based pricing enables cost transparency and optimization.

• Scale is driven more by change velocity than execution volume.

Conclusion

Automation platforms encode pricing models inside UX abstractions. The correct choice depends on expected change, cost sensitivity, and tolerance for ownership rather than current workflow simplicity.