

Scenario

Zappy Financial Services (ZFS) is a local company that provides small business loans. Last year, loan applications increased by over 200%, largely because of a concerted online campaign to establish a strong digital presence. Almost all loan applications and business leads are generated from search engines and digital advertisements, reflecting the decision to increase advertising spend on SEO channels such as Google, Facebook, LinkedIn and similar platforms.

Despite a strong digital marketing approach, the current loan application process remains manual. It requires the online completion of information, including gender, marital status, number of dependents, education, income etc. Loan decisions are manually categorised as either “approved” or “rejected.” To date, several of these factors have been considered in the approval decision. All applications are reviewed and approved by the loan team which, given the recent increase in volumes, has resulted in skills shortages, longer loan approval times and increased potential operational and control risk. The current operating model constrains further growth.

You are employed by ZFS as a Data Team Manager, with programming and data analytics knowledge, as well as a deep appreciation for the need to balance business growth with a robust control environment. You will be leading this project with a team of programmers, with various levels of experience, and have been tasked with providing a scalable solution – that addresses key resourcing and control risks.

Specifically, the Board has instructed you to develop and maintain several partial automation processes that will help the existing loans team, freeing up their time for greater one-on-one customer contact. You need to provide a data-driven solution while working with a variety of key stakeholders each with varying objectives such as marketing, internal audit and compliance. You need to assure the board that you have consulted widely in drawing up requirements and have considered how the any code produced will be further developed and maintained. You also need to consider that any code developed will need to be accessible to (used by) other staff such as sales, customer service and support personnel.

