# Course: The Automated Empire: Scale to 6-Figures on Autopilot

## Lesson 1: The "Automate-First" Mindset

### 1. Core Concept & Learning Objective

**Core Concept (142 words):** This lesson is the foundational "why" for the entire course. Most solopreneurs are trapped in "The Manual Mindset," believing "It's faster if I just do it myself." This is a lie that keeps businesses small. The "Automate-First" Mindset is a strategic shift. It trains you to stop seeing your business as a list of *tasks* and to start seeing it as a system of *processes*. You'll learn to ruthlessly analyze every action by its "Return on Time Invested" (ROTI). The goal is to install a new mental filter that, before you *do* any repetitive task, makes you ask: "How can I *automate* this so I never have to do it again?"

**Learning Objective:** By the end of this lesson, you will be able to **audit** your weekly tasks, **distinguish** between high-value (strategic) and low-value (repetitive) work, and **identify** the 5 most time-consuming, low-value tasks in your business that are ripe for elimination through automation.

### 2. Interactive Content Activities

Activity 1: The "Everything I Do" Audit (Strategic Exercise)

- **Type:** Strategic Exercise

- **Time:** 20 minutes (plus tracking over 2 days)

- **Instructions:**

  1. For the next 48 hours, use a simple notes app or a provided "Task Audit" worksheet (template).

  2. Write down *every single task* you do for your business. Don't judge, just list. (e.g., "Checked email," "Posted on Instagram," "Sent invoice," "Researched hashtags," "Updated client").

3. Next to each task, write down the *approximate time* it took.

- **Expected Outcome:** A raw, unfiltered log of where your time is *actually* going. This data is the starting point for all automation.

### Activity 2: The 'Value vs. Effort' Matrix (Case Study Analysis)

- **Type:** Case Study Analysis / Tool Exploration

- **Time:** 15 minutes

- **Instructions:**

  1. Review the provided "Value vs. Effort" matrix (a 4-quadrant diagram: High Value/Low Effort, High Value/High Effort, Low Value/Low Effort, Low Value/High Effort).

  2. Read the case study of "Founder Jane," who has a list of 10 tasks (e.g., "Sending proposals," "Designing 10 social media graphics," "Client discovery calls," "Manually adding leads to CRM").

  3. Drag and drop Jane's 10 tasks into the correct quadrant of the interactive matrix.

  4. The "Low Value / High Effort" quadrant is your "Automation Hit List."

- **Expected Outcome:** A clear mental model for sorting tasks by strategic importance, enabling you to instantly spot what to automate, delegate, or delete.

### Activity 3: "Could an Automation Do This?" (Peer Collaboration)

- **Type:** Peer Collaboration / Discussion

- **Time:** 15 minutes

- **Instructions:**

  1. Take your "Task Audit" from Activity 1.

  2. Find one task that you *think* is "too creative" or "too complex" to automate (e.g., "Sending a personalized follow-up email," "Creating a new project folder in Google Drive").

  3. Go to the community discussion board for Lesson 1.

4. **Post:** "My 'un-automatable' task is [YOUR TASK]. Is anyone else doing this? How *could* this be broken down?"

5. Reply to two other students' posts with ideas (e.g., "For your follow-up email, maybe a tool could send a *template* that you just approve and personalize?").

- **Expected Outcome:** The development of an "automation-curious" mindset and the realization that almost *any* task can be broken down and at least partially automated.

## 3. Assignment & Project Milestone

Assignment: My "Automation Hit List" (Component 1 of Final Project)

- **Estimated Time:** 60 minutes

- **Deliverable:** A 1-page PDF or Notion document, built from the provided template.

- **Description:** This is the most critical first step. You will take your raw data from the "Task Audit" and filter it through the "Value vs. Effort" matrix to create a definitive, prioritized list of the 5 tasks that are costing your business the most time and money. This "Hit List" becomes the target for everything we build in the rest of the course.

- **Step-by-Step Instructions:**

  1. Open your "Task Audit" log from Activity 1.

  2. Open the provided "Automation Hit List" template (Notion or Google Doc).

  3. Transfer *all* your tasks into the template, sorting them into the 4 quadrants of the "Value vs. Effort" Matrix.

  4. Look at the "Low Value / High Effort" and "Low Value / Low Effort" quadrants.

  5. Identify the top 5 tasks that are the most repetitive or time-consuming.

  6. For each of the 5 tasks, fill in the following columns:

     - **Task:** (e.g., "Manually add new leads from Typeform to ConvertKit")

     - **Est. Time Per Week:** (e.g., "90 minutes")

- **"Joy" Score (1-5):** (How much you hate doing it. 1 = HATE).

- **Automation Priority:** (1-5, with 1 being the highest priority to automate).

7. Save this document as a PDF. This is Component 1 of your Final Project.

- **Connection to Final Project:** This "Hit List" *is* your project outline. Your final "Automated Empire Playbook" will be a portfolio of 5-10 "automation recipes" that solve the exact problems you've identified right here.

- **Evaluation Criteria:**

  - **Excellent:** The list is clearly derived from the task audit. The 5 tasks are specific, low-value, and repetitive. The time/joy scores show clear strategic thought.

  - **Proficient:** The 5 tasks are listed but may be vague (e.g., "Email"). The connection to the task audit is unclear.

  - **Needs Improvement:** The list is incomplete or contains high-value, strategic tasks that should not be fully automated (e.g., "Client strategy calls").

## 4. End-of-Lesson Assessment

**(Multiple Choice 1)** What is the "Automate-First" Mindset?

- A. A belief that you should buy as much software as possible.

- B. The habit of asking "How can I automate this?" *before* doing a repetitive task.

- C. A mindset focused on replacing all human interaction with robots.

- D. The idea that "It's faster if I just do it myself." *(Answer: B)*

**(Multiple Choice 2)** In the "Value vs. Effort" Matrix, which quadrant is the *highest* priority for automation?

- A. High Value / High Effort

- B. High Value / Low Effort

- C. Low Value / High Effort

- D. Low Value / Low Effort *(Answer: C)*

**(Multiple Choice 3)** The "Task Audit" in Activity 1 is designed to:

- A. Make you feel bad about how you spend your time.

- B. Create a perfect, accurate timesheet for client billing.

- C. Produce a raw, unfiltered log of where your time is *actually* going.

- D. Help you write your business plan. *(Answer: C)*

**(Multiple Choice 4)** A "low-value" task is best described as:

- A. Any task that you don't enjoy doing.

- B. A repetitive, administrative task that does not directly require your unique genius or strategic input.

- C. Any task that takes less than 5 minutes.

- D. A task that is "High Effort." *(Answer: B)*

**(Short Answer 1)** From your own task audit, list one task that you identified as "Low Value / High Effort." (1 sentence)

- *(Example Answer: Manually creating and sending the same welcome email to every new subscriber.)*

**(Short Answer 2)** Why is the "It's faster if I just do it myself" belief a trap for solopreneurs? (1-2 sentences)

- *(Example Answer: It's only faster one time. Doing it manually 100 times costs 100x the effort, while automating it once saves that time forever.)*

**(Scenario-Based 1)** Your friend says, "I spend 2 hours every Friday manually copying my sales data from Stripe into a Google Sheet to see my weekly numbers." Where would this task go on the "Value vs. Effort" Matrix and why? (2 sentences)

- *(Example Answer: This task is "Low Value / High Effort." It's "Low Value" because*