Made to Fit AI

Workflow Audit Report

PREPARED FOR	**Claremont Business Services (fictional)**
PACKAGE	AI Ops Review
DATE	2026-05-14

SAMPLE REPORT

Company and data are illustrative. This is the Workflow Audit Report an AI Ops Review client receives: ranked pain points, root-cause analysis, and one recommended first build, delivered in one week for $4,950.

Executive summary

Claremont Business Services delivers management accounts to 22 CFO retainer clients each month. Three senior accountants spend 35–40 hours per month producing these packs: pulling data from Xero, formatting in Excel, and writing narrative commentary. In February 2026, tax season pressure displaced two weeks of that capacity and three clients received their packs late. The firm declined three prospective advisory engagements in the preceding six weeks because there was no senior accountant capacity to take them on.

The commentary step is the clearest bottleneck. Approximately 80% of months produce standard-pattern observations (revenue versus prior month, gross margin movement, cost variances). The narrative is written from scratch each time despite following the same structure. A draft commentary generated from Xero data would let each senior accountant shift from writer to reviewer, recovering roughly one hour per client per month.

The second pain is firm-wide WIP visibility. Tax compliance jobs are tracked in MYOB AO; bookkeeping and advisory jobs are tracked in XPM. No integration exists. The managing partner's weekly WIP view requires a manual export-and-merge that takes two to two and a half hours and is stale by the time it is complete. A MYOB-to-XPM migration was evaluated and rejected as too costly; the dual-system state is structural for the foreseeable future.

What we found

Workflows inspected

Workflow	Frequency	People	Current time	Pain rating
Management accounts production (Xero pull + Excel format + commentary)	Monthly (22 clients)	3 senior accountants	35–40 h/month total	High
Firm-wide WIP aggregation (MYOB AO + XPM export + merge)	Weekly	1 partner	2–2.5 h/wk	High
Advisory proposal assembly	2–3/month	1–2 senior accountants	3–5 h/proposal	Med
Management accounts partner review	Monthly (22 clients)	1 partner	~5 h/month total	Low

Technical constraints

STACK

MYOB AO (tax compliance, entity management, 20-year client history), Xero (68 bookkeeping clients + firm accounts), XPM (bookkeeping + advisory job tracking + billing), Microsoft 365 (Outlook + SharePoint + Teams), Power BI (management dashboards for 3 clients), DocuSign (engagement letters), Excel (compliance scheduling, WIP aggregation, management account templates).

DATA SURFACES

Management accounts data lives in Xero per client org. Commentary lives in Word/Excel monthly files. MYOB AO and XPM are separate job tracking databases with no shared schema. WIP aggregation requires manual export from both systems weekly.

COMPLIANCE Financial reporting engagements for some clients involve ASIC-registered entities; the management accounts are not statutory reports but some clients use them as board papers for regulated entities. Financial planning para-planning support operates under the financial planning practices' AFSL licences. Claremont does not hold its own AFSL. No compliance constraint directly limits management accounts automation.

FAILED ATTEMPTS MYOB-to-XPM unified system migration evaluated in 2024 and rejected by partners on cost ($80–100K estimate) and disruption grounds. Power BI dashboards built for 3 clients as a management accounts alternative. Partners found the narrative commentary was still required by most clients and the dashboards didn't replace the pack.

ROADMAP No planned stack changes. Partners have discussed a further Power BI rollout but no decision. Possible additional senior accountant hire for FY2027.

Pain point analysis

Management accounts production is the largest time sink: 9.5 h/wk blended across three senior accountants, nearly 4x the next pain

Top pain points (ranked)

#	Category	Pain	Frequency	Cost	Impact	Tractability	Data readiness
1	Reporting drudgery	Management accounts production	Monthly	9–10 h/wk blended	5	4	Ready

#	Category	Pain	Frequency	Cost	Impact	Tractability	Data readiness
2	Manual reconciliation	Dual-system WIP aggregation	Weekly	2–2.5 h/wk	4	3	Needs cleanup
3	Document parsing	Advisory proposal assembly	Per proposal	3–5 h/proposal	3	4	Needs cleanup

Root cause analysis

1. Management accounts production

SYMPTOM Three clients received late management packs in consecutive months when tax season displaced senior accountant capacity. The firm has declined three advisory prospects in six weeks because there is no capacity to take them on.

IMMEDIATE Each management pack requires a senior accountant to pull Xero data, reformat it in an Excel template, and write narrative commentary from scratch. The commentary step alone consumes 60–90 minutes per client on a standard month.

SYSTEMIC The narrative commentary is structurally formulaic for 80% of months but is produced as bespoke writing. The observation types (revenue variance, gross margin movement, cost variance flags) follow a consistent pattern that is not codified anywhere. It lives in each senior accountant's professional knowledge.

TRIED Power BI dashboards for 3 clients as a management accounts replacement. Adopted by 3 clients; most clients still require narrative commentary. No other automation attempted.

WHY NO Power BI resolved the data visualisation step but not the narrative. Clients who receive board papers require a written executive summary; the dashboard did not replace it.

2. Dual-system WIP aggregation

SYMPTOM The managing partner cannot see firm-wide job status in one view. Two system exports, manually merged weekly into a spreadsheet, take two to two and a half hours and are stale on completion.

IMMEDIATE	MYOB AO and XPM have no integration. Each system tracks a different subset of the firm's work: compliance in MYOB AO, bookkeeping and advisory in XPM. Billing also splits across the two systems.
SYSTEMIC	The firm arrived at a two-system state by acquiring Xero-based bookkeeping clients while retaining MYOB AO for its 20-year compliance history. A unified migration was rejected as too costly. The dual-system state is now structural.
TRIED	MYOB-to-XPM migration evaluated and rejected (2024).
WHY NO	Partner consensus rejected the migration on cost and disruption grounds. No interim integration approach was evaluated at that time.

3. Advisory proposal assembly

SYMPTOM	Proposals for new advisory engagements take 3–5 hours to assemble and are written by the same senior accountants who produce management packs. Proposal turnaround of 5–7 days costs deals when prospects are comparing multiple firms.
IMMEDIATE	The Word proposal template leaves 6–8 fields to manual completion every time: client description, entity structure, proposed reporting scope, fee recommendation. No structured data source exists for these fields. Each section is drafted from meeting notes and the accountant's memory.
SYSTEMIC	The proposal library consists of Word templates updated informally. There is no structured client data store that could pre-populate a proposal; client information sits in MYOB AO (compliance) and XPM (bookkeeping) but neither system exposes it in a form suitable for proposal generation.
TRIED	Word template library created and maintained by the firm. Informal sharing of previous proposals as references.
WHY NO	Templates reduce formatting time but the narrative sections still require manual drafting per engagement. The unstructured client data problem means no system can pre-populate the proposal automatically.

Data readiness: implication for AI feasibility

1. Management accounts production

READINESS	Ready
WHAT EXISTS TODAY	Xero has structured financial data per client org with consistent chart of accounts across the bookkeeping client base. The Excel management

account templates have a consistent structure. Three senior accountants have consistent commentary patterns that can be extracted and codified.

IMPLICATION

High tractability. A Xero API integration that pulls current-period and prior-period P&L and balance sheet data, compares against budget (where available), identifies the standard observation types (revenue variance >5%, gross margin movement >2pp, cost line variances above threshold), and generates a draft commentary in the firm's voice is feasible with current tooling. The senior accountant's role becomes reviewer and exception handler. The 80% of standard months yield a draft that requires 15–20 minutes of review; the 20% of exceptional months require the accountant to add interpretation. Net time saving: 45–60 minutes per client per month across 22 clients.

2. Dual-system WIP aggregation

READINESS

Needs cleanup

WHAT EXISTS TODAY

MYOB AO exposes job data via export. XPM exposes job data via API. The two schemas are different. No shared client identifier exists between the two systems.

IMPLICATION

An automated export-and-merge pipeline that runs weekly and pushes a unified WIP view to a shared dashboard (Power BI or similar) would recover the 2–2.5 hours per week and eliminate staleness. The pre-requisite is a client identifier mapping between MYOB AO and XPM client records: a one-time cleanup of 40 records. Without the mapping, the merge requires manual disambiguation. Tractable in 2–4 weeks once the mapping is established.

3. Advisory proposal assembly

READINESS

Needs cleanup

WHAT EXISTS TODAY

Word proposal templates exist. Client data in MYOB AO and XPM is structured but not in a form that maps to proposal sections. Meeting notes that inform proposals are unstructured (Outlook emails + Teams chat).

IMPLICATION

Partially tractable. An intake form that captures the 6–8 structured fields required for a proposal (client entity structure, reporting requirements, fee bracket, engagement start date) would feed a proposal generator that pre-populates 50–60% of the document. The narrative sections (client description, engagement rationale) still require accountant input. Net time saving: 1.5–2 hours per proposal. The intake-form discipline is the prerequisite: without it, the generator has no structured input.

What we recommend

Top opportunity

Automated management accounts commentary via Xero API

Pull current-period financial data from each client's Xero org via the Xero API, run it through a rules-based commentary generator that identifies the firm's standard observation types, and produce a draft narrative that the senior accountant reviews and sends. The accountant stops writing and starts editing on standard months.

EXPECTED IMPACT	45–60 minutes recovered per client per month on standard months (estimated 80% of months for most clients). Across 22 clients: 16–22 hours per month recovered. Annualised: 190–260 hours. At senior accountant billing rate of approximately $180/hr, that represents $34,000–$47,000 of recovered capacity per year, equivalent to 2 new CFO retainer clients without a headcount increase.
EFFORT ESTIMATE	Medium. Xero API integration is well-documented; the observation-type rule set needs to be codified from the senior accountants' existing practice (estimated 2–3 sessions). Total build: 6–10 weeks. A Xero-native reporting tool (Fathom, Spotlight Reporting) may cover the data pull and template steps without custom code. Worth evaluating against the build cost.
RISK FLAGS	Commentary quality on exceptional months depends on the accountant's interpretation, which the generator cannot replicate. The review step must not be eliminated on speed grounds: a draft that goes directly to a client without accountant review carries professional liability risk. Client-specific narrative voice will require calibration per client in the first 2–3 months.

Opportunities deferred

- Deferred: MYOB AO-to-XPM unified migration. Rejected by partners on cost grounds; not revisited in this engagement. Revisit only if a new practice management system is evaluated that covers both compliance and advisory.
- Deferred: Proposal generator. Deferred in favour of an intake form as a prerequisite. Revisit once 3 months of structured intake data exists to validate the generator's input quality.
- Recommended evaluation: Power BI rollout to further advisory clients. Hold until the management accounts commentary generator is deployed. If the generator cuts commentary time by half or more, the dashboard may become viable without a narrative layer; the rollout decision is the firm's to make against that result.

What we recommend against

- Sending AI-generated management accounts commentary to clients without accountant review: the commentary contains financial observations that carry professional liability if incorrect, and several clients table these packs as board papers for ASIC-registered entities. The 20% of exceptional months are exactly the months where an unreviewed draft is most likely to mislead, because the generator's rule set covers the standard observation types only. A draft-and-review workflow is the minimum required; auto-send without review is not appropriate regardless of measured generator accuracy.

Suggested next steps

The findings above point to a clear first build with a defined evaluation path before it. A few practical follow-ups:

1. Evaluate Fathom and Spotlight Reporting against the commentary generator requirement before scoping a custom build. Both tools have Xero integrations and narrative generation features. A 2-week evaluation will determine whether the build is already done.
2. Codify the commentary rules. Ask each of the three senior accountants to annotate 3 months of their own management packs with the observation types they applied. This produces the rule set the generator needs and takes approximately 3 hours per accountant.
3. Build the MYOB AO-to-XPM client identifier mapping. A one-time cleanup of 40 records; assign to an accountant for a half-day. This unblocks the WIP dashboard without any new tooling.

WHEN THIS REPORT BECOMES STALE

This audit reflects the operation as observed on 2026-05-14. Material changes that should trigger a fresh look: addition of a fourth senior accountant to the advisory practice (capacity ceiling shifts); a MYOB AO replacement decision (changes the dual-system WIP pain fundamentally); loss of a CFO retainer client (changes the management accounts production volume and the ROI calculation); or a Xero API change that affects the data pull architecture.

Appendix

Interview log

2026-05-10 · Helen Yee (partner) + Jason Tran (senior accountant) · 61 min

Helen framed the engagement around the two months of late delivery, which created a clear trigger. Jason's description of the commentary step was the most useful data point: his breakdown of standard-month vs. exceptional-month observations (80/20 split) directly sets the tractability ceiling for the commentary generator. Helen's frustration with the WIP aggregation was evident but she acknowledged it as a structural consequence of the MYOB AO decision. She was not expecting a fix, more a mitigation. The proposal assembly pain was raised by Jason late in the call; it was added as rank-3 because the time cost is real but the frequency (2–3/month) limits its total impact relative to ranks 1 and 2.

Methodology notes

This audit drew on the firm's intake form and a 61-minute capture call with two participants. No separate interviews were conducted under the AI Ops Review package. Three pains were ranked from the call and intake data. A fourth candidate (partner review of management packs, ~5 hours/month) was assessed and dropped: it is a quality gate, not a removable step, and automating it would require removing professional oversight on client-facing financial reporting.

Quoted context

> If something could draft the standard-month commentary based on the Xero numbers, I'd review it and send it. I'd get an hour back per client per month. Across 22 clients, that's 22 hours a month.
>
> — Jason Tran, senior accountant, 2026-05-10

> I pull a MYOB export, pull an XPM export, put them in a spreadsheet, and that takes me two to two and a half hours. Then it's already out of date because someone completed a job between when I pulled the export and when I finished the spreadsheet.
>
> — Helen Yee, partner, 2026-05-10

QUESTIONS

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