K2’s Accounting Automation

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Today's Learning Objectives

- List at least **three examples of automation opportunities** in businesses today
- Identify **examples of core technologies** used in automation efforts
- **Differentiate between tasks ideal for automation and those which humans should perform**
- **Identify the importance of Robotic Process Automation** to your accounting automation efforts

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LET'S GET STARTED WITH SOME ACCOUNTING AUTOMATION BACKGROUND

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What Is Accounting Automation?

- **Accounting automation is the process of automating many of the rote, repetitive tasks** often performed in accounting departments or accounting firms
- While some view this as a new topic, in fact, **it dates to 1640 when Blaise Pascal introduced the adding machine!**
- However, with recent advancements in technology, **accounting automation is a viable option for many tasks**

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Examples Of Tasks To Automate

Data entry, such as scanning vendor bills into accounts payable

Automatically **routing documents for approvals**

Matching documents, such as A/P bills to purchase orders to receiving reports

Using smartphones to take pictures of T&E employee expense reporting

And, of course, **bank feeds**

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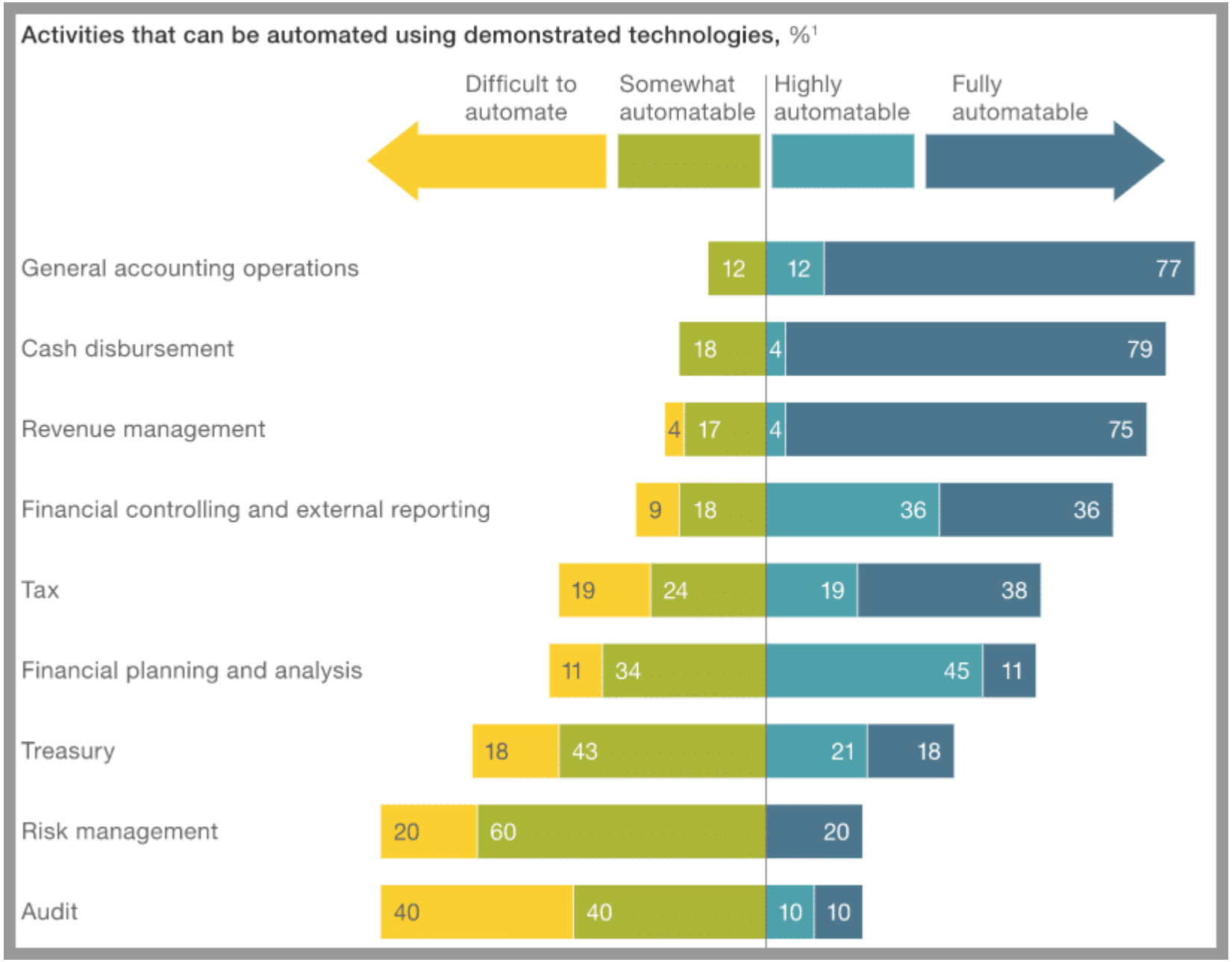

*Results Of **McKinsey** Study On Accounting Automation*

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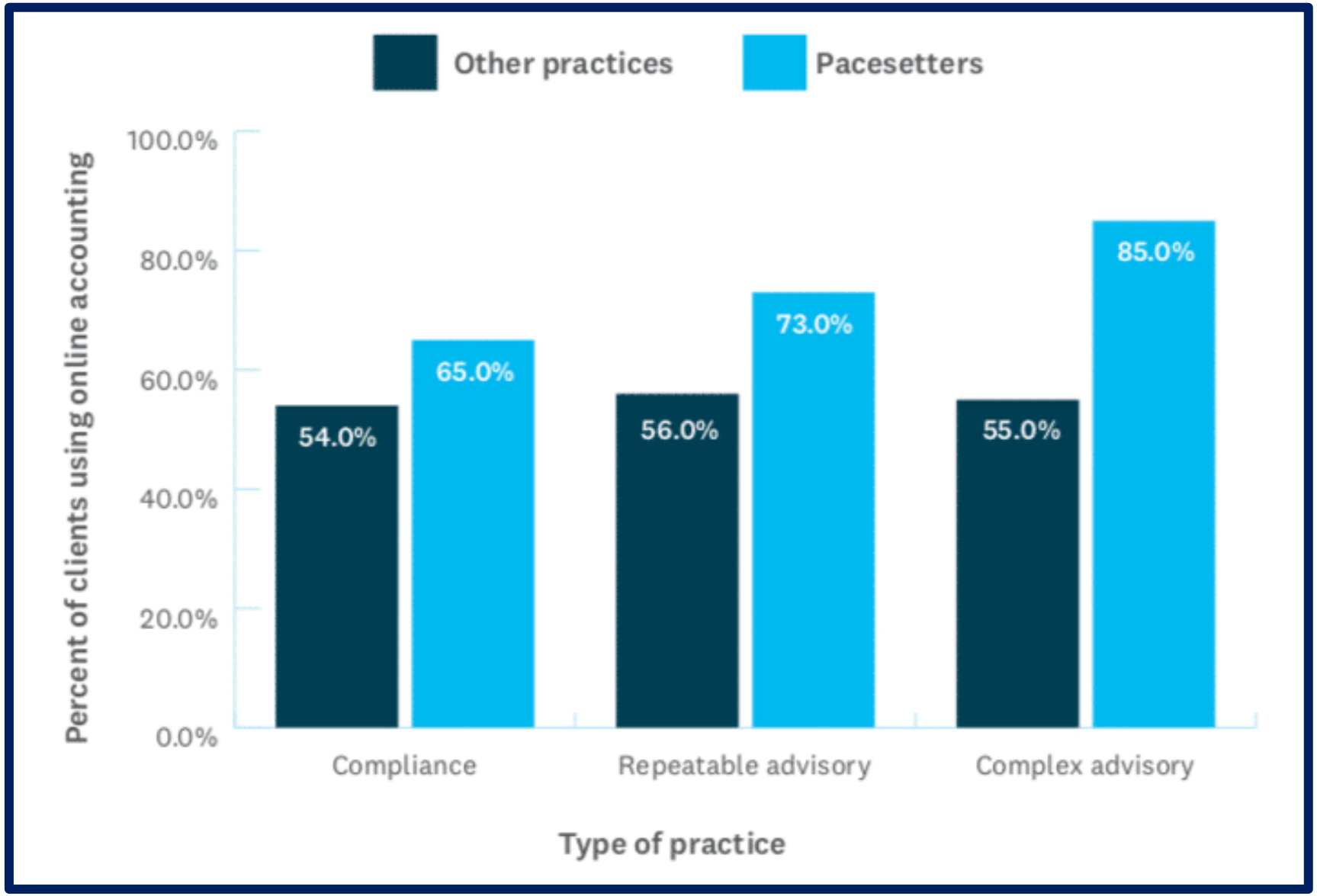

*Moreover, A **Xero** Study Points To Automation As A Potential Differentiator*

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Some Automation Opportunities

1. General ledger
2. Accounts payable processing
3. Payroll
4. Period-end review processes
5. Invoicing and accounts receivable
6. Bill payments
7. Expense Reports
8. Bank, credit card, and debit card data
9. Reporting

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Accounting Automation Benefits

1. Time savings
2. Improved margins
3. Better accuracy
4. Quicker turnaround times
5. Improved customer/client service
6. Helps to “upskill” team members
7. Real-time or very near real-time decisions
8. Improved team member availability and accessibility

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For Success, Focus On These Characteristics And Issues

Transactions should likely be somewhat rote and repetitive

Transactions should be somewhat “standard” with little deviation in source documents

Transactions can be processed according to a set of rules

You can connect various systems using “digital plumbing” tools

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CORE TECHNOLOGIES

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Some Automation Is “Automatic”

- Fortunately, **many tools have built-in automation options** available for you
  - **Bank feeds** are a good example
- For example, **most accounting platforms – both cloud-based and desktop-based – already provide bank feed functionality and options**
  - All you need to do is activate it

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Some Automation Is “Automatic”

- Likewise, **many applications already integrate with other applications**…again, you just need to activate the integration
- For example, **Corpay** is a company that provides accounts payable and payment automation services
- With Corpay One, **businesses can automate customer payment processing**, saving time and money
- Further, Corpay One integrates with **QuickBooks**, **Sage Intacct**, and **Xero**, among others
- Again, just activate the integration

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Other Times, You'll Need More Tech

- **Sometimes, you'll need to acquire other tools** to facilitate your automation projects
- Generally, **these tools serve to move data from one application to another**
- Four examples
  1. **IFTTT**
  2. **Zapier**
  3. **Power Automate**
  4. **Open Database Connectivity**

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IFTTT

- **Simple, easy to use solution for linking data between multiple platforms, sending notifications, and initiating events**
- For example, **you can use IFTTT to automatically generate an email anytime you receive a payment via Square**
- Similarly, **you can use IFTTT to automatically download all transactions from Stripe into a Google spreadsheet**

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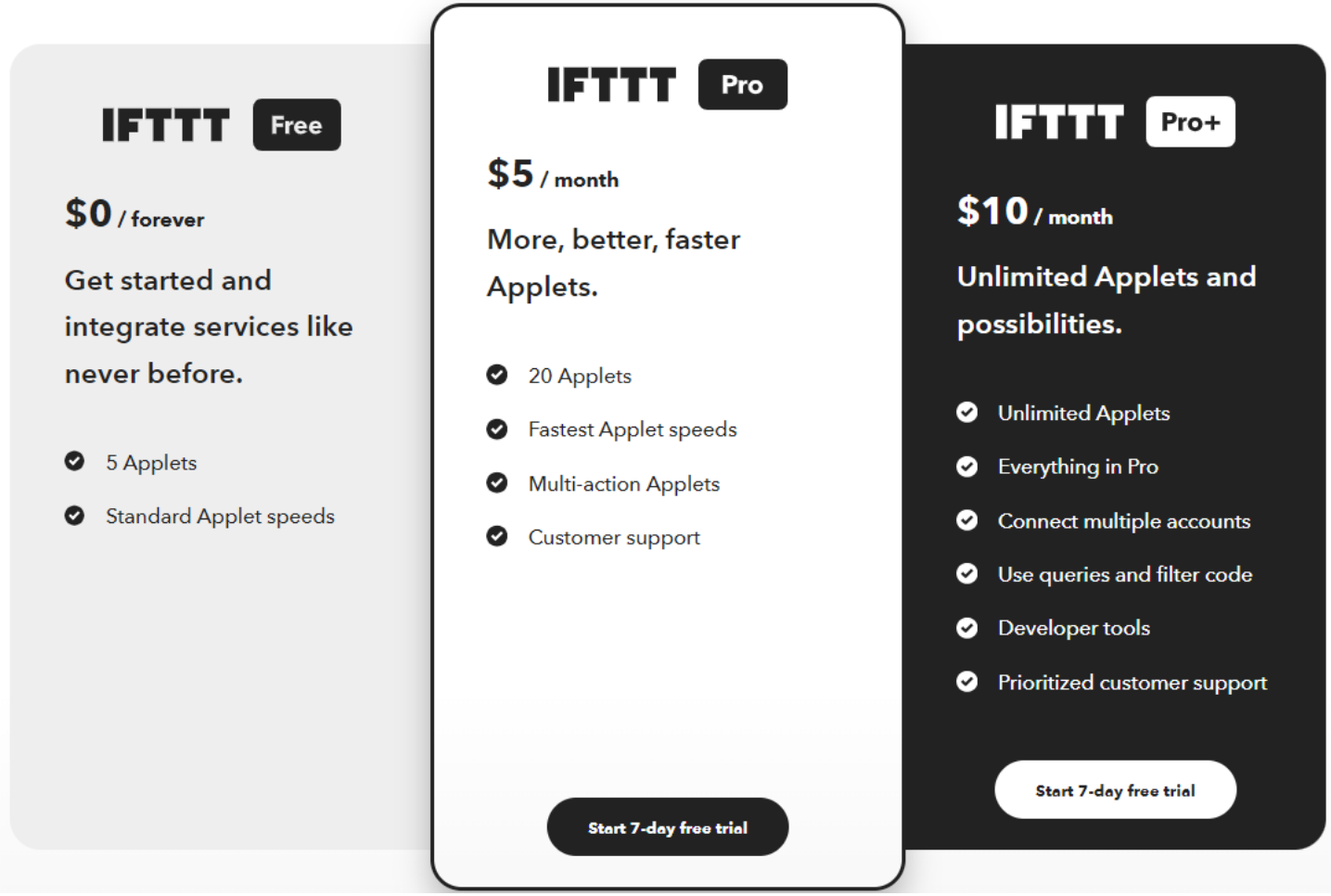
IFTTT Pricing Plans



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Zapier

- **Zapier is another simple – yet very powerful – tool you can use to link systems together and generate notifications**
- **Zapier integrates with many "business-oriented" tools and apps**
- Some examples include
  - **AccountingSuite**
  - **Sage Accounting**
  - **QuickBooks Online**
  - **Wave Accounting**
  - **Xero**

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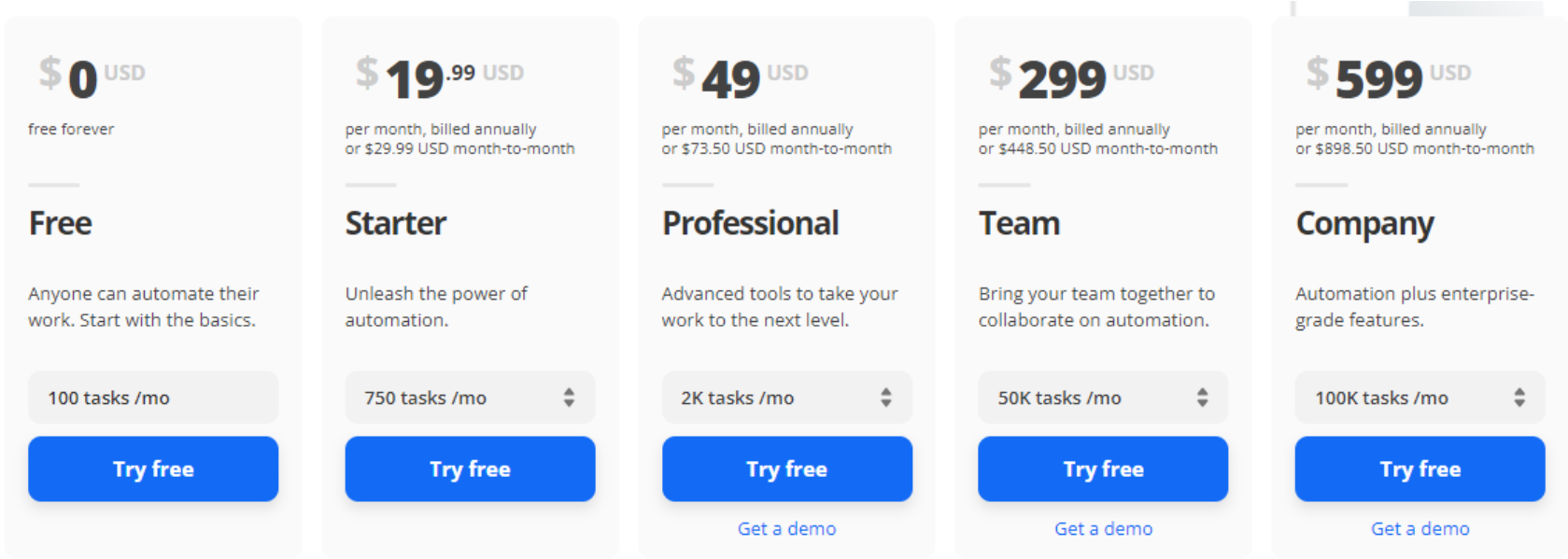

Zapier Pricing Schedule

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Zapier Example

- To illustrate, **you can link QBO to Shopify** using Zapier
- Once the connection is made, **Zapier will automatically create invoices in QBO based on new orders appearing in Shopify**
- Enable this integration by authenticating to both systems and choosing the pre-built automation desired
- You can also create your own “Zaps”
- **Triggering events** include a new Account, a new Customer, a new Expense, a new Invoice, a new Bill, a new Estimate, and a new Sales Receipt

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Power Automate

- Another automation option is Microsoft's **Power Automate**
- If you use a **business-oriented subscription of Microsoft 365, you likely already have access to this tool**
- Power Automate is the strongest of the tools mentioned so far
- With Power Automate, **you can create customized automations or select from a wide variety of pre-built templates**

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Power Automate Examples

Save Office 365 email attachments to OneDrive for Business

By Microsoft

Automated 900393

Send a customized email when a new SharePoint list item is added

By Microsoft

Automated 505332

Send a customized email when a new file is added

By Microsoft

Automated 491937

Record form responses in SharePoint

By Microsoft

Automated 384943

Get updates to Roadmap from Project

By Microsoft

Scheduled 310073

Click a button to email a note

By Microsoft

Instant 196770

Send an email to responder when response submitted in Microsoft Forms

By Microsoft Power Automate Community

Automated 184448

Save my email attachments to a SharePoint document library

By Microsoft

Automated 184202

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Accounting-Oriented Connectors

- Acumatica
- Dynamics 365
- Blackbaud Raisers Edge
- BillsPLS
- Business Central
- Expensya
- FreshBooks
- GoFileRoom
- Paylocity
- Power BI
- SAP
- Square
- Stripe

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Robotic Process Automation

- **Robotic Process Automation (RPA) is a cornerstone technology** when considering accounting automation, and **Power Automate is one of the leading RPA platforms available today**
- **RPA uses software-based robots (bots) to automate fundamental, repetitive tasks**
- In addition to Power Automate, other leading tools include **UiPath**, **Appian**, **Automation Anywhere**, and **Blue Prism**

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Open Database Connectivity

- **Open Database Connectivity (ODBC) is a vendor-neutral specification *linking data*** – not exporting, not copying and pasting – from one database or application into another
- As an example, with ODBC you can link data from your accounting platform into Excel, instead of repeatedly exporting/importing it or, even worse, re-keying it
- You may need an ODBC driver or connector to get the job done
- A great resource for these is cData (www.cData.com)

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EXAMPLES TO CONSIDER…

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Team Member Expense Reports

- Automating team member **expense reports can be easy, inexpensive, and highly effective**
- Many tools can help with this process, including
  - **Concur** (QB Desktop and Online, SAP, NetSuite, et al.)
  - **Expensify** (QB Desktop and Online, Xero, NetSuite, Intacct, et al.)
  - **Tallie** (QB Desktop and Online, Xero)
  - **Zoho** (Zoho Books, QuickBooks Online)

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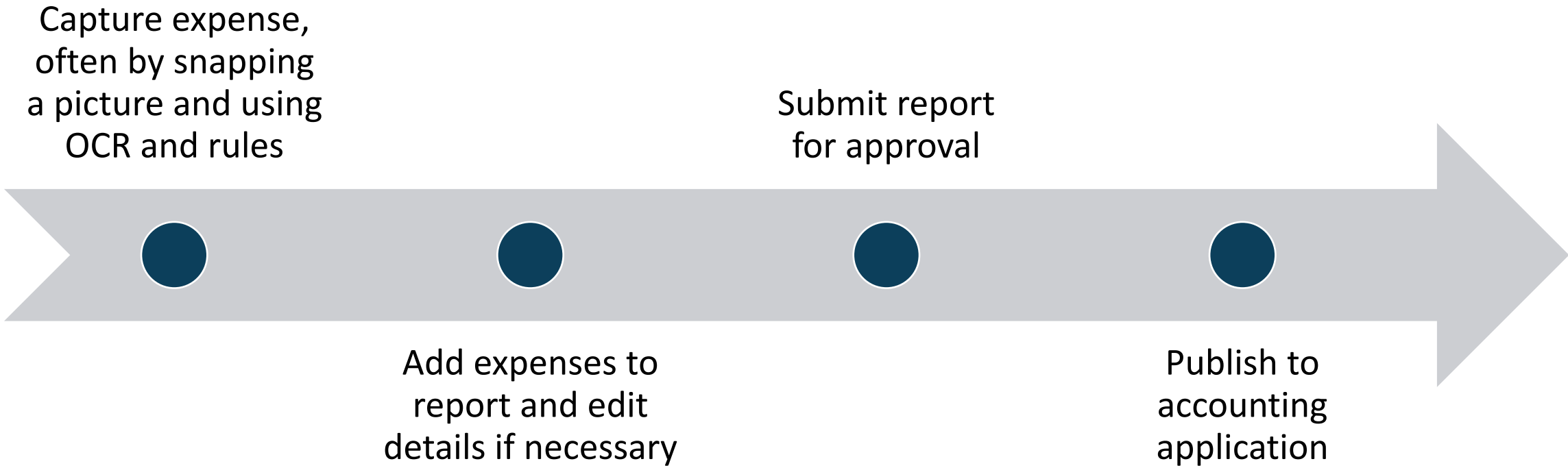
Expense Report Flow



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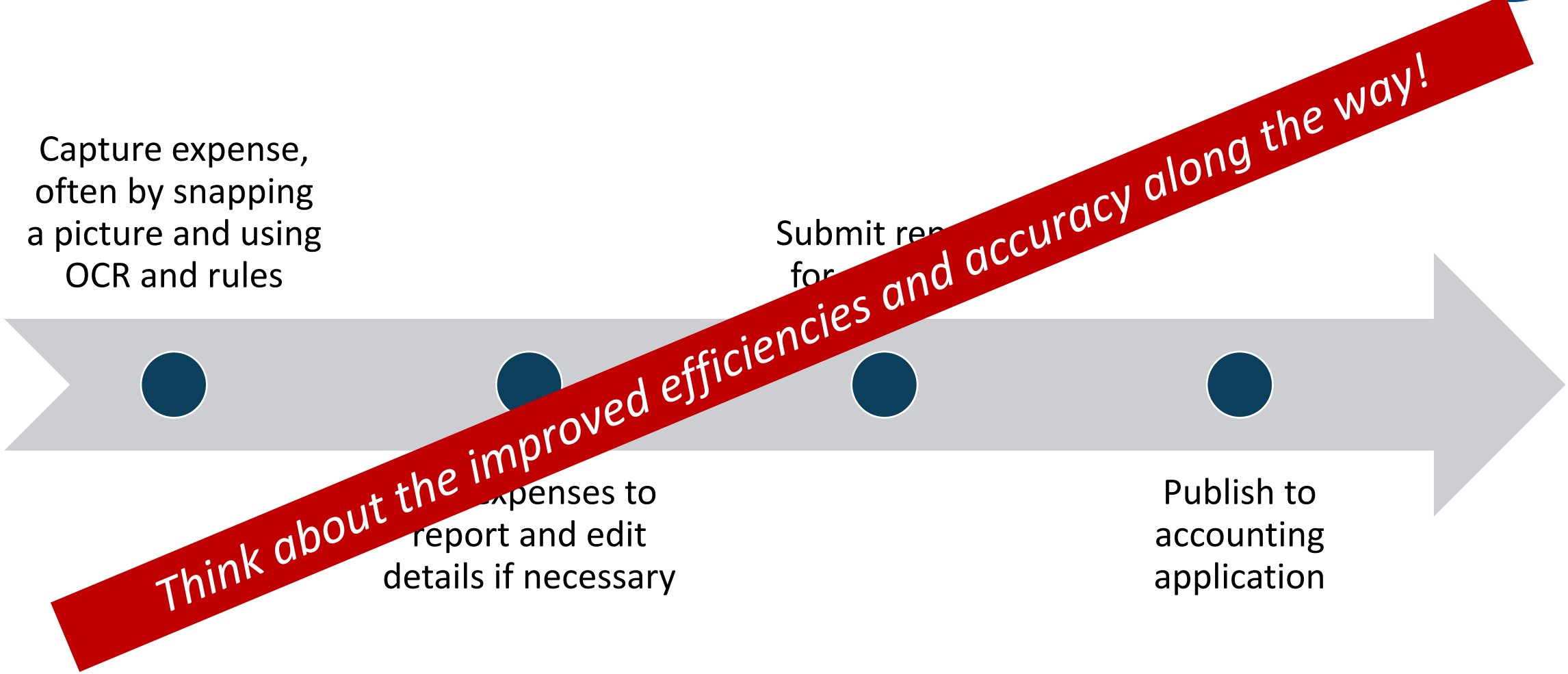

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Enabling Built-In Workflows

- **Many accounting applications now include some forms of pre-built workflow tools**…users and administrators only need to enable them
  - **QuickBooks Online**, **Dynamics 365**, **Sage Intacct**, **Acumatica** are just a few examples
- These workflows often focus on **notifications** and **approvals**

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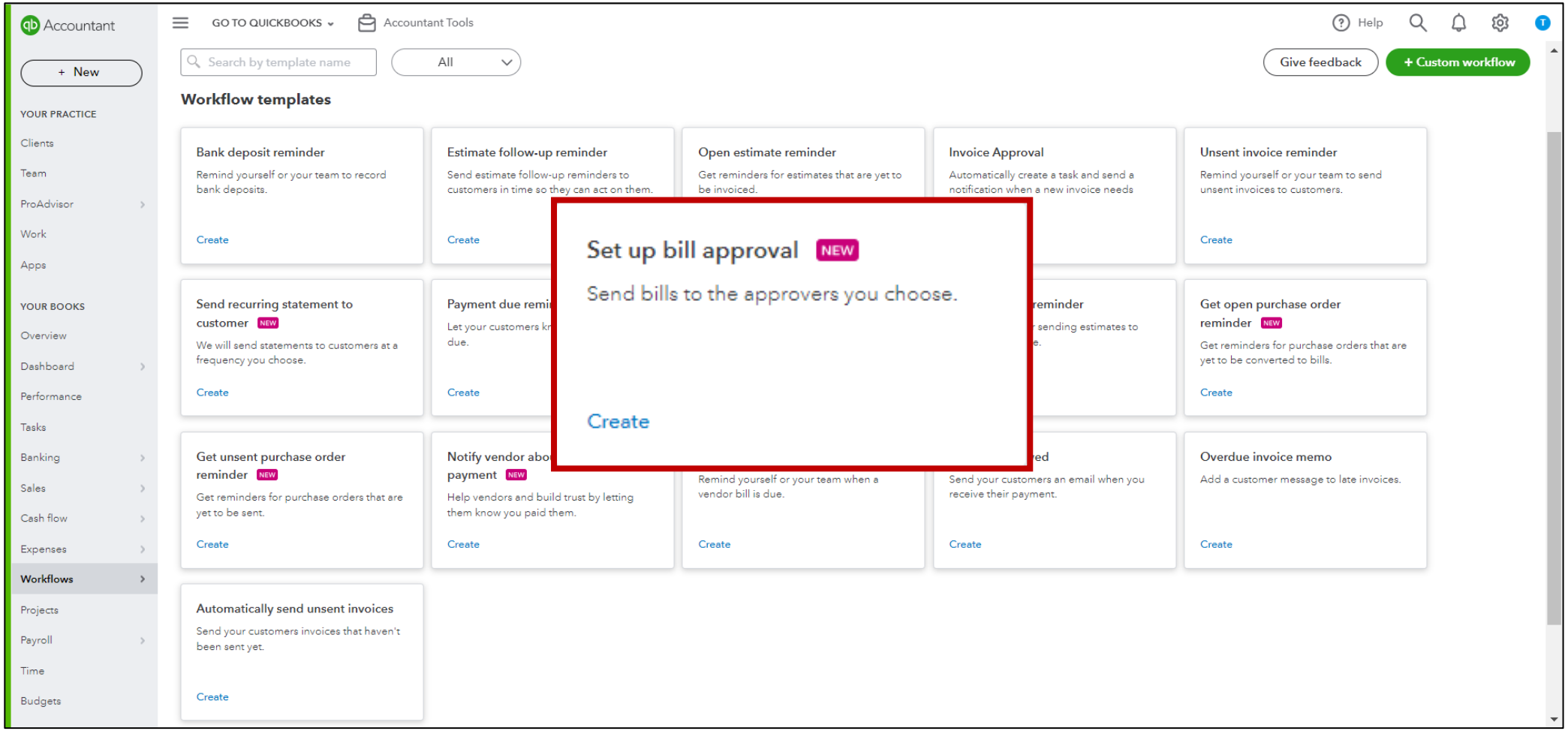
QBO Advanced Workflows



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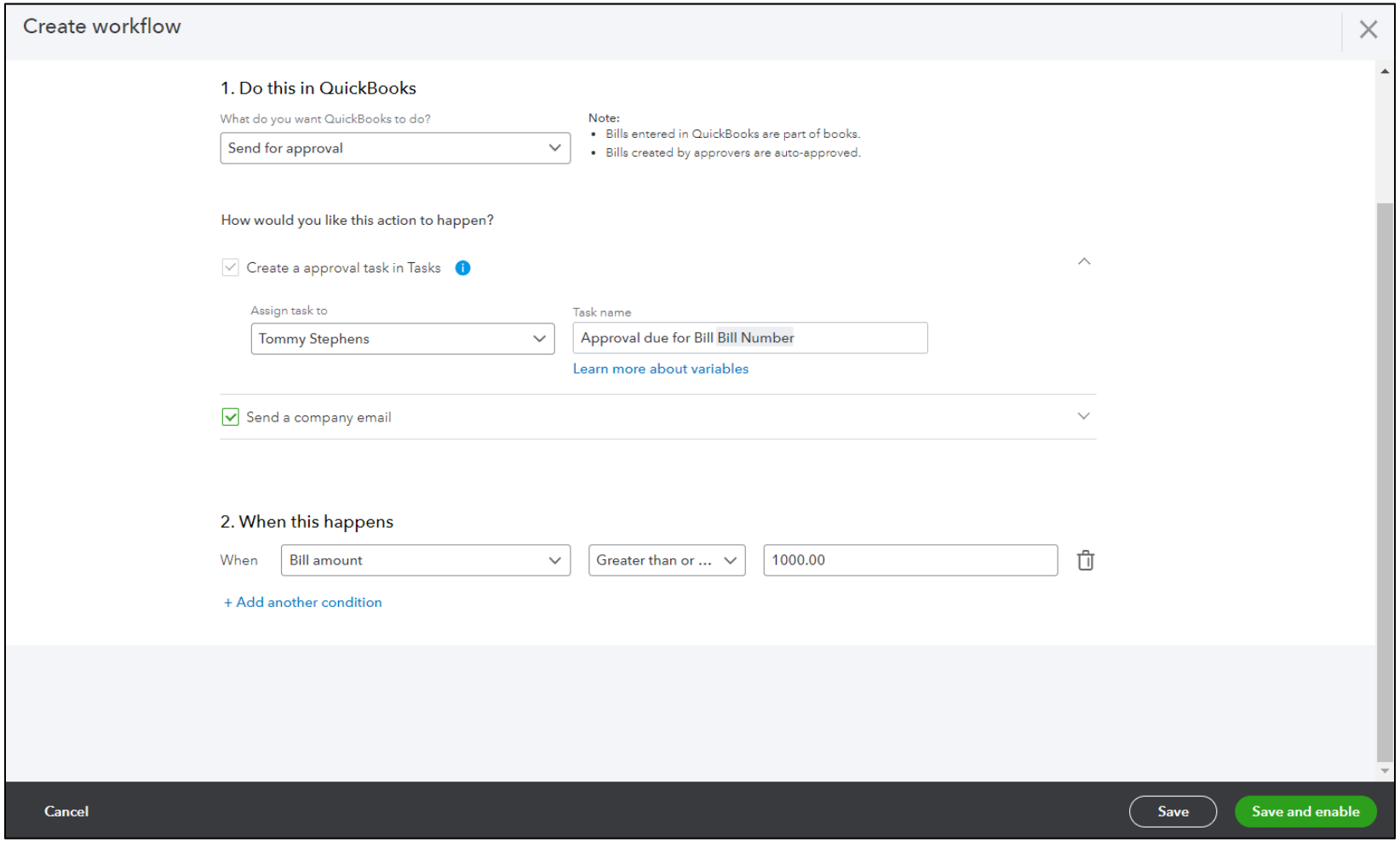

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Using ODBC To Link Data

- Perhaps you want to **create a report in Power BI or even Excel that uses data from your accounting platform** – in this case, QuickBooks Desktop
  - Of course, you want to link the data, not export/import
  - By linking you can refresh your report on demand
- To do this using ODBC, you'll need a connector such as one available from cData

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Using ODBC To Link Data

- In Excel and with QuickBooks open, click **Get Data** from the **Data** tab of the Ribbon
- Choose **From Other Sources**, **From ODBC**
- Specify the **CData QuickBooks Source**
- Expand the folders
- Click the table to link
- Create your report

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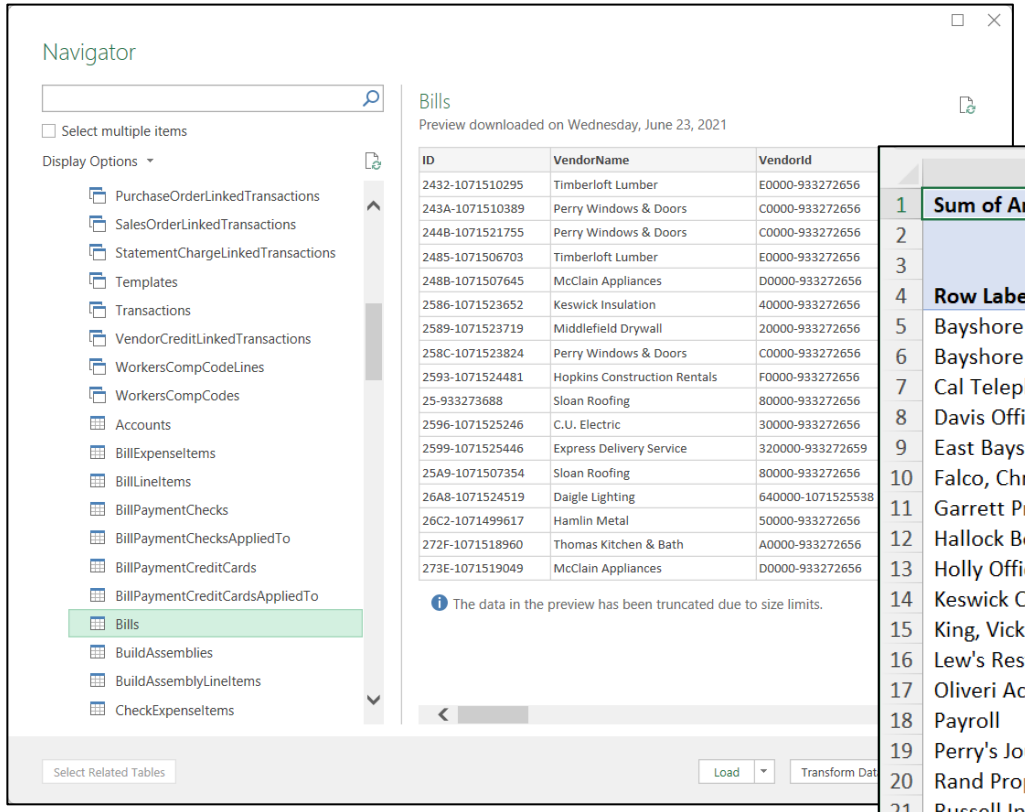
Using ODBC To Link Data



	A	B	C	D
1	Sum of Amount	Column Labels		
2		2024	2025	Grand Total
3				
4	Row Labels			
5	Bayshore Bank_v		$ 10,000,001.99	$ 10,000,001.99
6	Bayshore Times	$ 700.00	$ 1,400.00	$ 2,100.00
7	Cal Telephone		$ 822.00	$ 822.00
8	Davis Office Equipment	$ 15,000.00	$ 92,641.81	$ 107,641.81
9	East Bayshore HMO		$ 13,750.00	$ 13,750.00
10	Falco, Christina		$ 5,000.00	$ 5,000.00
11	Garrett Printing	$ 306.00	$ 12,600.00	$ 12,906.00
12	Hallock Book Store_v		$ 35,000.00	$ 35,000.00
13	Holly Office Supplies & Rentals_v	$ 500.00	$ 42,500.00	$ 43,000.00
14	Keswick Consulting_v		$ 27,500.00	$ 27,500.00
15	King, Vicki - Petty Cash Custodian		$ 173.22	$ 173.22
16	Lew's Restaurant_v		$ 3,200.00	$ 3,200.00
17	Oliveri Accountants	$ 1,000.00	$ 5,000.00	$ 6,000.00
18	Payroll	$ 10,640.00	$ 234,080.00	$ 244,720.00
19	Perry's Journal		$ 1,500.00	$ 1,500.00
20	Rand Properties		$ 37,400.00	$ 37,400.00
21	Russell Insurance		$ 4,800.00	$ 4,800.00
22	Rutherford Pension Fund		$ 6,600.00	$ 6,600.00
23	Thomas Conferences		$ 1,500.00	$ 1,500.00
24	US Postmaster		$ 340.00	$ 340.00
25	**Grand Total**	**$ 28,146.00**	**$ 10,525,809.02**	**$ 10,553,955.02**

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SUMMARY

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Summary

- The **opportunities for accounting automation are almost endless** and seem to expand daily
- Newer technologies and integrations mean that **options continue to grow**
- And the benefits are great…**improved accuracy, less time spent on mundane tasks, greater efficiency, enhanced internal controls are all possible**
- ***Your challenge is to pick three tasks and automate them during the next 60 days!***

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