



Drone Programme Business Case

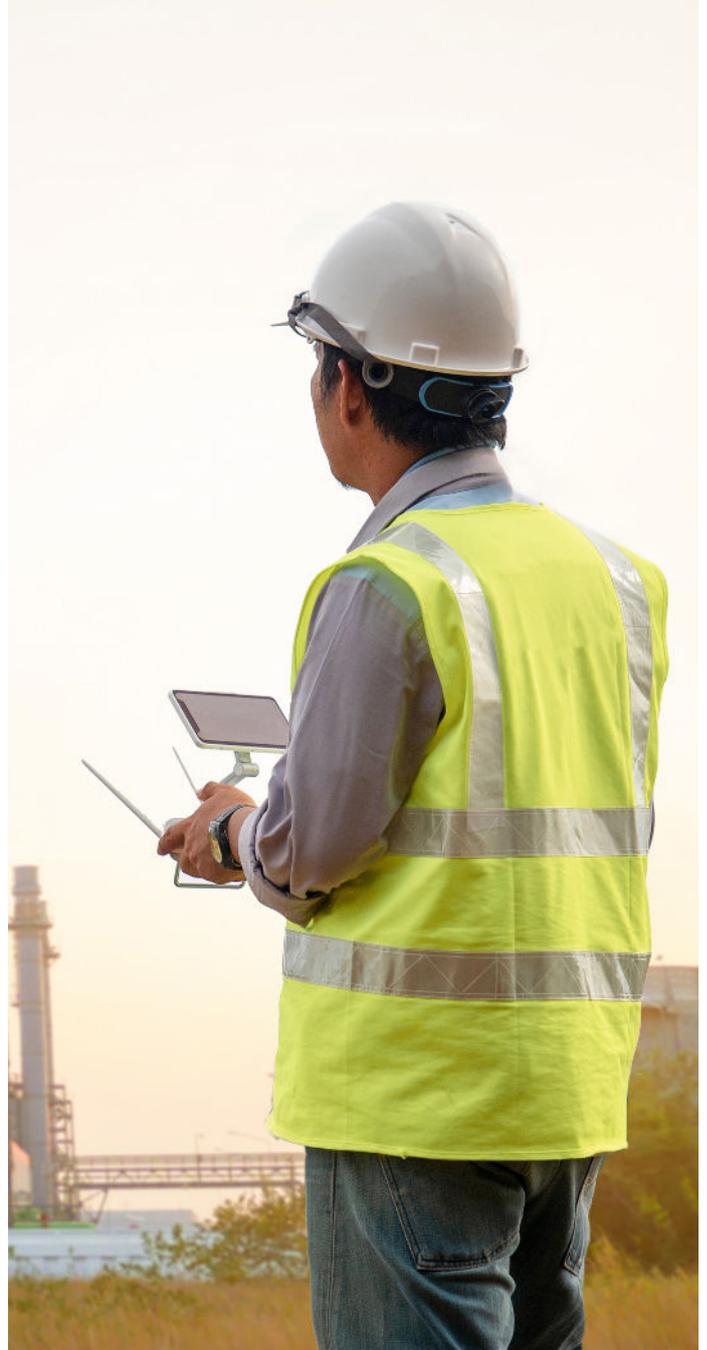
Create a compelling business case for drones in FOUR simple steps.

The toolkit you need to make the case for drone automation in your business.

When it comes to business automation, the options are almost limitless. Whatever issues your business is facing, whatever problems you're looking to solve, switching certain tasks from manual to automated can help save time and money, as well as reducing risk.

We know the power of automation, and we know the power of drones to achieve that automation. But we also know that overcoming management objections to investing in such a project can be a challenge - especially as the selling points for you are likely to be vastly different to those of the final decision-makers.

This whitepaper is your toolkit for putting together a business case that your management team will love.



Ultimately, your business case needs to both articulate the problems with the current situation and demonstrate the new business vision's benefits.



Why do you need a business case?

You're on site every day. You know the challenges you and your team face, from suboptimal workflow efficiency to potential health & safety hazards. You also know that implementing some form of business automation would be a great solution.

But adding new technology of any type can be complex. It requires executive approval, planning, pilot schemes, implementation and training - and that requires a compelling, well-written business case.

A business case will help you:

- Outline the rationale for establishing an in-house drone programme
- Address key concerns that executives may have
- Show the worth of the project at every stage of the process
- Reduce the chances that the project hits delays, fails to address the problems at hand, or runs over budget

In order to put together a plan your board will love, you need to answer:

- What is the project goal?
- How do we reach the goal?
- What type of change is required?
- How confident you are that this will solve the problem?

Business case vs Project proposal

While a good project proposal should give a clear outline of what you're looking to achieve, a business case needs to go far beyond that. This document will be used to answer any and all questions your management team may have - and they will want to see information on financials, risk, timelines, impact of business (both during and after the implementation) and more. This may be the first time you've put a business case together, so we're here to walk you through what you should include.

It will cover the essential elements of any good business case, including:

- Documenting costs
- Assessing business impact
- Communicating drone programme benefits

It also includes a template business case and some examples showing the power of drone technology that you can quickly edit for your needs.

Criteria for a strong business case

A strong business case needs to address four things:

- Outlines how drone technology will support the business goals and strategy
- Highlights the resources you'll need
- An assessment that summarises how risks and opportunities will be managed
- A description of, and plan for, what existing processes and workflows may change after the implementation



Step 1 - Outline how drone technology will support the business goals and strategy

The uses for drone technology are limited only by your imagination. Whether it's for fast, safe and accurate surveying of quarries to measure and track stockpile volumes; automated remote streaming of footage for aerial surveillance patrols; or even fully autonomous inventory counting in large warehouses - all of these and more can be achieved with drone technology and business automation.

But it's important that you frame this in a way the board will both understand and engage with. Drone technology may make your day easier and faster, but the business case will need to articulate the impact on the bottom line. Your board will need to know:

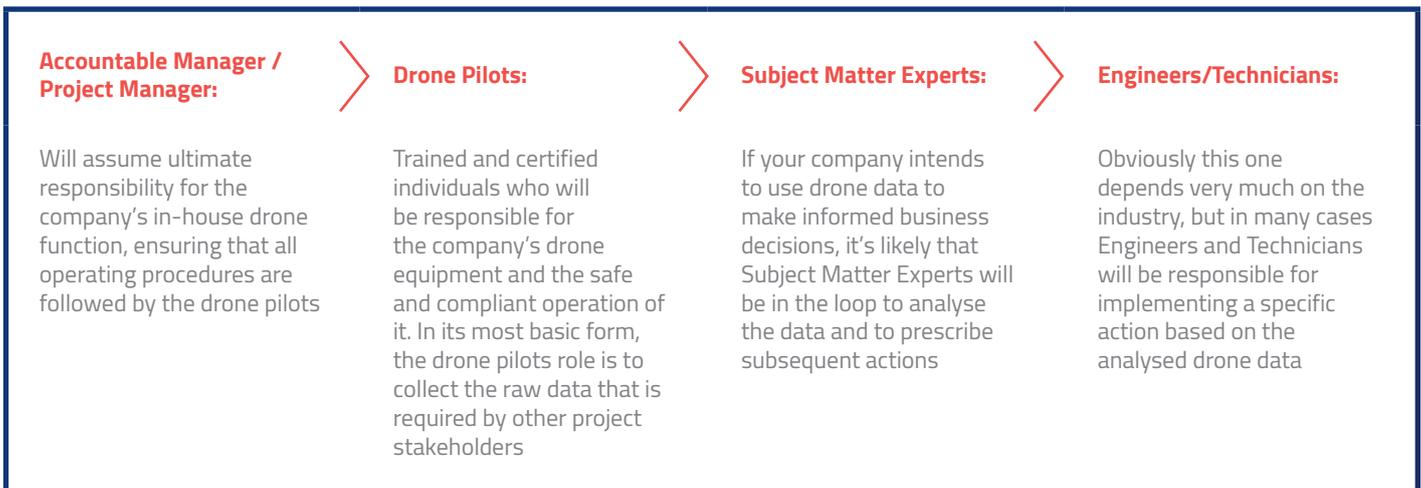
How, and to what extent, the project will deliver a return on investment? What are the current Health & Safety risks that drones will alleviate? To what extent will human error be reduced and what impact will this have on overall profitability? Put yourself in the mind of the finance, HR and H&S members of the board and answer what's important to them, not you.

Step 2 - Build your team

The business case should define who you expect to be involved in the project – this shouldn't be limited solely to the individuals who will be flying the drones; it should also include the specific roles and departments that will interact with the data that you will be producing. It's important that everyone is aligned and knows exactly what to expect when the project goes live.

Resourcing varies from industry to industry and from application to application, but a typical drone programme will involve managers, pilots, experts and technicians - as shown below

This isn't just about time savings but also about the information fidelity and accuracy improvements that drones bring...





Step 3 - An assessment that summarises how risks and opportunities will be managed

Any large scale project comes with risks and opportunities - especially ones that seek to change the way day-to-day operations are conducted. This section should include anything that could arise from your organisation’s ability to drive and deliver change, and should cover:

- What risks are involved with both using and not using drones in your business
- What are the consequences of those risks being realised
- What plans are in place to deal with any risks that arise

Step 4 - A description of, and plan for, what existing processes and workflows may change after the implementation

Business automation can take many forms, and has been around for as long as machines were capable of replicating human tasks, but drone adoption is still a relatively new concept to many businesses.

This means they come with a unique hurdle that must be overcome when selling the idea to your board - taking those initial steps into drone technology that others in their industry may not have yet taken.

But it’s important to remember that any business automation implementation needs careful planning, because you’re making changes to the way your business currently operates. Although drone usage in business is relatively new, the process of automation implementation is not. All you need to do is show your board that you have a change management approach that ensures changes are implemented smoothly and successfully.

RISKS	DOWNSIDE	MITIGATING STRATEGIES	BENEFITS
Delays or failure in “passing” R&D or pilot program	Sunk cost and time	Execute well-tested applications or close derivatives thereof; work with an experienced vendor	Costs associated with hardware and software development in drone based sensing can be much less than other sensing methods, such as IoT or satellite
Drone hardware failure causing a crash	Damage to property and assets; injury	Follow strict flight safety procedures; manage inventory and perform routine maintenance	Compared to manned aircraft or climbs by workers, the likelihood and extent of damage or injury caused by drone failure is orders of magnitude less
Data breach; systems vulnerability	Theft or loss of data; systems disruption	Follow strict data security protocols and processes; modify firmware to create “air gap”	In the strictest environments, drone hardware and software can be modified to establish an “air gap” between the platform and the internet



Developing your business case, and putting it into action

So now you have some best practice guidance on creating your business case documents and selling the idea to your board. Now you need to put that guidance into action.

Develop and evaluate

Now's the time to conduct the financial analysis highlighting the tangible (and intangible) value of the proposed drone programme.

This stage includes evaluating costs and benefits, determining necessary rates for investment, highlighting the ROI timeline and flagging up risks.

You should also work out the best timeline for implementing the project, one that allows for company-wide integration of the programme while also ensuring the technology is delivering as expected before taking it to the next level. It would be worth considering an initial pilot scheme (especially if the programme is to be rolled out across a large number of sites) – discussing this stage early means you can create a far more realistic timeline for the roll-out phase.

One of the big benefits of running a pilot is that the key stakeholders we discussed earlier can contribute relevant input from their respective departments – finance, HR, IT and so on - to refine the project when deployed at scale.

And remember, while the business case should clearly indicate the project's aims, the risks it involves and the rewards it can bring, it should only contain the information needed to aid the decision makers. These are busy people, so make it clear, concise, free from jargon and clearly demonstrate the 'what's in it for them'.

Communicate

As we said right at the start, your reasons for wanting to implement a drone programme will typically be different to those above you who have the final say. It's what makes the process tricky – putting yourself in the mindset of others.

But although the final decision will be made by those above you, it's also important to ensure those around you know what's going on, too. When communicating 'up', highlight the economic and social impact on the business. When communicating 'down', it may be about a range of issues, including safety improvements, reduction in human error or freeing up time for other business-critical tasks.

There will be fewer surprises, greater engagement and increased productivity if you consistently communicate with those around you – as well as the opportunity to learn from others in the business what pain points they may have that your drone programme could also solve.

It's also helpful to ensure subsequent groups understand how others' input has changed the case, so everyone in your business can see how the project is evolving and developing.



Implement

Here's where you set up the working team meetings that will drive the project forward, ensuring the project will deliver as per the business case.

Usually the project manager communicates performance against KPIs through regular progress reports; the business case provides a solid structure to base the project on, and the working group should ensure the goals are being met throughout the pilot and beyond.

Undertaking reviews during the pilot phase will help avoid unnecessary investment in time and money when it comes to company-wide roll-out.

What's next?

To discuss your project in more detail, or for guidance on putting together your drone programme business case, please email drones@rawview.co.uk or call 0203 488 4071.

Your data collection process is a value chain. Each professional, procedure, and tool that you incorporate into the process should add value to the final outcome.