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Your First Automation

1 AI A Day · Day 15 · @jjwong.ai

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An n8n workflow you can import today: a new order arrives, your packer gets a WhatsApp-style message with the six fields they actually use — and you get told if the workflow ever goes quiet or fails.

What's in the file

order-alert.json has two small flows in one workflow:

FLOW 1 — the alert

New order (webhook)

- Filter & format: skip orders nobody needs to act on, build the message, note the time
- Send to packers
 - ↳ if sending fails → Alert me: send failed

FLOW 2 — the heartbeat

Every hour

- Heartbeat check: during shop hours, has it been quiet too long?
 - ↳ if yes → Alert me: gone quiet

The second flow is the part nobody builds and everybody needs. A workflow that stops and tells nobody is worse than no workflow — because you've stopped checking manually and stopped getting alerts at the same time.

The six fields

What a packer actually needs from an order, and nothing else:

1. **SKU**
2. **Quantity**
3. **Variant**
4. **Delivery state**
5. **COD or prepaid**
6. **Repeat buyer or not** — worth a handwritten thank-you, or extra care

The message looks like this:

```
NEW ORDER #[ORDER]
2 x BAG-15 — 15-inch / Navy
1 x SLV-13 — 13-inch / Black
Ship to: Selangor
Payment: COD
Repeat buyer
```

Six fields, built for the person packing, not for the database.

Setting it up — one afternoon

1. Import

In n8n: **Workflows** → **Import from File** → `order-alert.json`. If a node shows a version warning after import, open it and save; n8n updates node versions often.

2. Test it before connecting anything

The webhook node has an example order pinned to it. Click **Test workflow** and watch it run end to end — no real order, no real message sent until you set the send address. This is the step people skip, and it's how you find out the workflow works before a real order depends on it.

3. Map your fields

Open **Filter & format**. At the top is a `FIELD` map:

```
const FIELD = {
  orderId: 'order_id',
  status: 'status',
  items: 'items',
  ...
};
```

Every platform and every middleware names these differently. **Look at one real payload first** — trigger one test order, open the webhook node's output, and change the right-hand side of each line to match the names you actually receive.

If your platform only sends an order number and a status, you'll need a step before this one that looks up the full order. That depends on your platform and your access; it's the one part this file can't do for you.

4. Decide what gets skipped

Also in **Filter & format**:

```
const SKIP_STATUSES = ['CANCELLED', 'UNPAID'];
```

Add any status your packer should never see. An alert for every order becomes noise by Thursday, and noise gets muted.

5. Point the three send nodes somewhere real

Send to packers, **Alert me: send failed** and **Alert me: gone quiet** all post `{ to, text }` to a placeholder address. Replace it with your messaging route — a WhatsApp gateway service for group chats, the WhatsApp Business API for individual numbers, or Telegram if your team uses that. Each expects a slightly different body; adjust the fields to match. Add credentials in n8n's credential manager — never paste keys straight into a node.

6. Set the heartbeat for your shop

Open **Heartbeat check**:

```
const QUIET_HOURS = 6;    // alert if no order for this long...
const OPEN_FROM = 9;      // ...between these hours (local time)
const OPEN_TO = 22;
const TZ_OFFSET_HOURS = 8; // Malaysia is UTC+8
```

Set `QUIET_HOURS` to something your shop would genuinely never go without an order during a normal day. Too short and it cries wolf; too long and you find out tomorrow.

7. Activate

The heartbeat only works once the workflow is **active**. The time of the last order is stored in the workflow itself, and that storage only persists on live runs, not test runs.

The rule for your second automation

Run one workflow reliably for a month before you build another. Most abandoned automation setups are six half-built workflows and no habit. One that runs every day teaches you more than six that nearly work.

When you're ready for the next one, the Voice File Pack has a chat-drafting workflow built the same way — including the same "tell me when it breaks" design.

The one thing to remember

Start with the automation that can't hurt you. If this one breaks, you check the seller centre like you did last week. Nothing is lost, nothing is mispriced — and you learn the whole shape of building one.

Questions? Reply to this email — I read them all. More at [@jjwong.ai](#) — one AI play for SEA sellers, daily.