

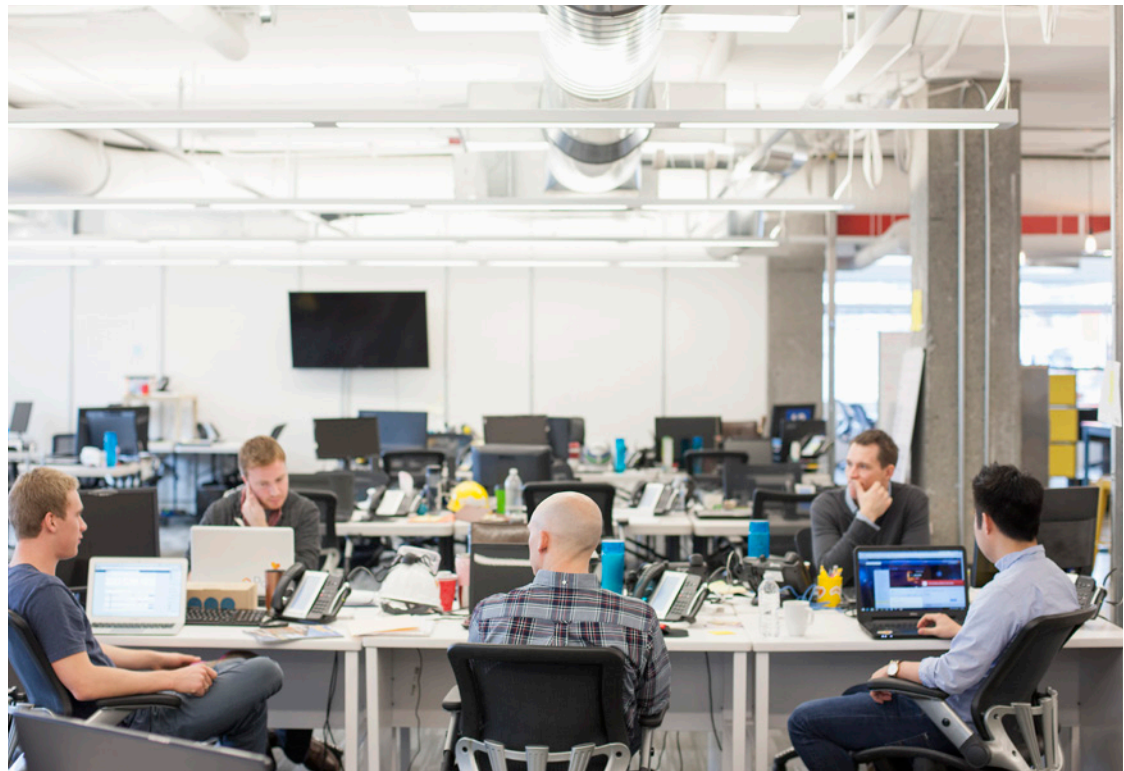


The Role of Low-Code Apps in Digital Transformation

Keeping pace with customer expectations is challenging in a marketplace that's developing as rapidly as technology is progressing.

Many organizations are using business applications to automate tasks, optimize resources and accelerate productivity. However, the way that these apps are being developed, deployed and updated is fundamentally shifting.

Off-the-shelf solutions do not always meet business transformation goals, and traditional hand-coded custom apps are not only costly but also time-consuming to build and roll out. Hand-coding also requires a specialized skill-set, which means organizations will need to hire or outsource a team of developers to build, deploy and maintain this software. To overcome these obstacles, many companies are opting for low-code application development platforms.



What to look for in a low-code platform

Low-code application development platforms are designed to enable organizations to create their own apps by configuring functions, often through a visual drag-and-drop process, instead of coding the software from scratch.

Ideally, for low-code platforms to be truly disruptive and valuable, they should offer the following business benefits:

- **Faster app delivery**

A low-code platform should require minimal hand-coding, enabling an organization to design and deploy business applications much more swiftly than traditional custom-built solutions. This is ideal for companies that want to automate numerous business processes efficiently, to keep pace with new market demands and stay ahead of competitors. Low-code apps should also be agile, scalable and re-usable – allowing IT teams to action user feedback fast, update apps as the business grows and keep productivity levels optimal.

- **Rich functionality**

Often, increased speed to market means compromising on quality but this is not the case with leading low-code development platforms. With the right technology, it's possible to combine the speed and agility of low-code solutions with the rich functionality of classic business process management (BPM) applications to increase efficiency in onboarding, budgeting, help desk ticketing or any other business processes. As these BPM apps can be built efficiently, there is more time for developers to add advanced functions and enhance the user experience.

- **More flexible use of developer skills**

Low-code development platforms should be designed to empower a larger number of users to be involved in app design and roll out. While specialised developer skills are still required, most of the work can be handled by up-and-coming programmers or tech-savvy users from other areas of the business. These app-builders outside of the IT team are known as 'citizen developers' and by 2020, Gartner predicts that 70 percent of enterprises will have citizen development policies in place.¹

With the right low-code technology in place, companies can better mitigate the risk of IT backlogs and make more strategic use of their highly skilled IT resources, leading to greater productivity across the board. This also facilitates deeper collaboration between the IT function and other areas of the business, as silos are broken down and colleagues work together to conceptualize and implement apps that take the business forward.

¹ Forrest, Conner. '[Citizen developers' are ready to fill the gaps in enterprise applications](#)
SEPTEMBER 2015



- **Responsive**

Mobile devices such as smartphones and tablets play a crucial role in any digital transformation, as they enable users to leverage the power of technology on the go and out in the field. Low-code platforms should allow users to develop apps once and then easily configure these to be fully responsive and secure on any mobile device. When using the right platform to build them, mobile apps also work seamlessly across iOS, Android and Windows devices.

- **Central point of control**

Low-code platforms should provide a single point of control to design, implement and update business apps. This gives developers more freedom to test and update apps as user or business requirements evolve. A single technology platform also increases the apps' reliability and stability.

All these advantages considered, a well-chosen low-code business application development platform can play a strategic role in any digital transformation, no matter what industry you're in. Apps that streamline operations, boost productivity and enhance collaboration can be created and rolled out as fast as they are required; and, they are easy to adapt to changing business requirements.

The way forward

Low-code application development platforms can give companies the power to innovate swiftly as the market fluctuates and leverage emerging technologies like machine learning, bots and the Internet of Things.

Of course, digital transformation is not only about introducing new technologies. As discussed in our previous article on the topic, successful digital transformation is a cultural change that impacts all processes, systems, actions and people across the organization.

The right low-code technology provides the tools for change, while also supporting the shift in mindset that is required – fostering inter-departmental collaboration and empowering users outside of the IT department to play a key role in designing the systems that will propel the business forward.

At the same time, low-code app development technology can free enterprises from sluggish and expensive hand-coded software solutions. With a faster and more flexible approach to managing business process applications, companies can embark on a digital transformation journey that is cost-effective, efficient and immediate. Due to their agility and deployment speed, low-code apps can deliver benefits right now as well as at every stage of a company's transformation.

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