

App-driven digital transformation

How companies are creating their own catalysts for change without losing control





In our new era of business, where a digital solution exists for nearly every function, change is the only constant. Shopping is largely carried out on mobile phones. Banking takes just a few clicks. All travel booking can be done on one website. And in the new normal, you need to be ready for perpetual change. To reach this level of agility, you need to deliver new apps fast.

Apps are now the workhorses of digital transformation. They are simplifying and speeding operational processes, and orchestrating requests, approvals, and notifications across small teams or full enterprises. While app creation is taking off, IT leaders and companies are finding the

development process itself in need of a hack. Developers are hard to find and expensive to use. Many apps require arcane native-language programming. Outside development firms, meanwhile, need time to learn internal processes and culture. Communication with vendors can be difficult, and compliance is often tough to manage.

During a time of uncertainty, companies need to reduce software and cloud spend fast.

Platforms that enable enterprises to grow through in-house low-code and no-code app development are putting the power in the hands of experts who understand the complexities and demands of their businesses.

Low-code and no-code app development is the future of enterprise efficiency and efficacy, but it needs to be properly executed. Here's how IT leaders can balance the needs of digital transformation while maintaining the integrity of their systems.



Within four years, **nearly three-quarters of large enterprises are expected to be using at least four low-code tools** for IT application development and citizen development initiatives.¹

The promise of low-code app development

With the advent of low-code and no-code app development, stakeholders within companies are empowered to create the workflows and apps they need to improve their processes, reduce costs and time to implementation, and become the catalyst for enterprise change.



Speed is critical in digital transformation.

By offering pre-built connectors, reusable code packaged as drag-and-drop building blocks, natural language, intuitive development environments, and low-code development tools, businesses can empower teams or their outside partners to build the apps they need quickly.

In an analysis of companies using ServiceNow App Engine for low-code development, Forrester Research found that delivery time for simple and complex app-development projects was reduced by nearly six months. Less code also means less complexity, which translates to fewer errors.

When companies brought app development in-house, they saved \$2.2 million on average while speeding time to delivery. A key piece of these savings came from deploying junior team members to develop apps, freeing senior developers for more complex and long-term projects. At the same time, IT, governance, and partner firms are also finding new efficiencies in working together on the same platform.



1 The promise of low-code app development

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Multiparty development requires flexibility.

One challenge associated with the traditional app development model was getting the initial fit right but still needing a series of small changes. Likewise, companies trying to accomplish the same task working exclusively with in-house talent may be closer to the problem but lack the requisite development skills. One of the benefits of a multipersona platform is that it supports in-house, partner-led, or collaborative workflows.

For example, take a project where an in-house business analyst designs the entry forms, the layout of the basic initial workflow, and other simple tasks predicated on understanding the user experience, the process, and the business need. The integrated platform allows them to use tooling that matches their skill and experience level. The project is then taken up by a professional in-house or partner developer to finish complicated integrations or UI upgrades.



Productivity increases when legacy systems are replaced.

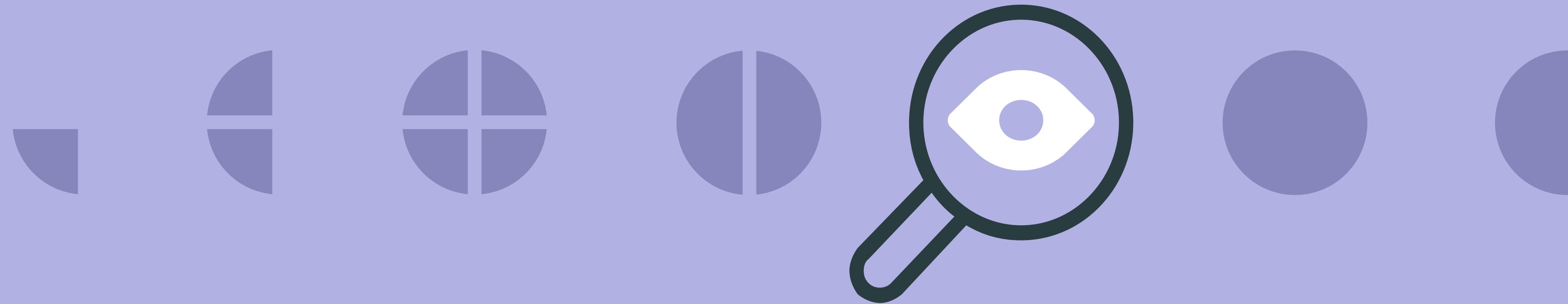
Many companies have spent years clinging to outdated and inefficient processes because the cost of change is significant—and the risks too great. Over time, however, sticking with a patchwork of legacy systems can hamper productivity and impact at-risk profit margins.

The surge in available out-of-the-box apps, meanwhile, resulted in many companies cobbling together specialized purpose-built apps to serve narrow functions. Increasingly, businesses are seeking to connect all of these standalone apps in a single, structured, end-to-end workflow. Connecting these fragment apps can lead to greater productivity gains and eliminate the hassle of navigating between apps.

Low-code and no-code app development can help bridge the gap. As lower-cost and more nimble apps replace older, slower entrenched solutions, companies start to realize productivity gains and cost savings.

1 The promise of low-code app development

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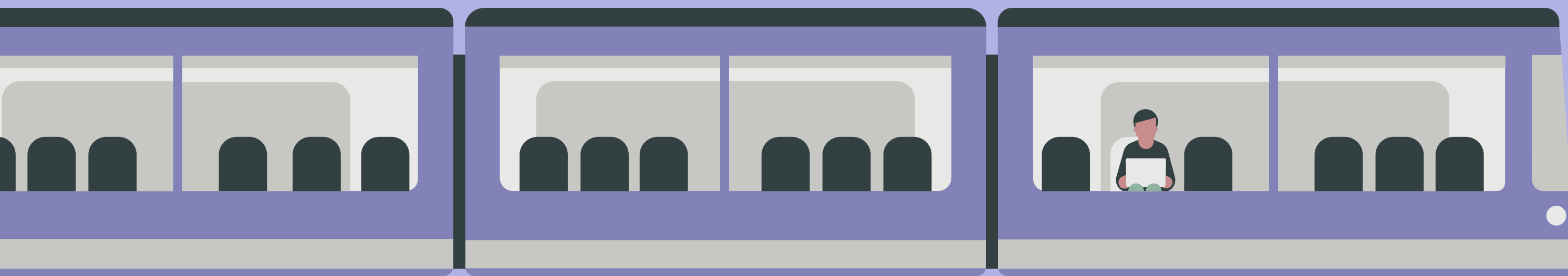


A transparent process facilitates governance.

Top-level decision-making ideally involves data that have been verified and interpreted. This data can come from multiple sources, such as product spreadsheets, sales forecasting models, and integrated apps—all of which can lead to data sprawl. When data is pulled from silos throughout a company, it is difficult to know if it is being properly reconciled for smart decisions.

The alternative: Develop apps on integrated platforms. Through this approach, companies can avoid silos, use information from other apps on the platform, and easily integrate other relevant data. With data shared through apps across a platform, it's possible to avoid data sprawl and realize true digital transformation.

Under the old model, every new app creates its own issues related to a company's privacy policies, governance, and compliance. Another key benefit of developing apps on an integrated platform is the transparency between teams. Transparency of process allows app governance to happen in real time, reducing risk and cost as projects move forward and speeding time to market.



Best practices for scalable app development

Opening the doors for more multiparty collaborative app development has myriad benefits, to be sure, but it also comes with its own challenges. Here are common problems—and solutions for navigating app-driven transformation.



Use a common platform to avoid IT silos.

One of the biggest knocks against no- and low-code app development is it can give rise to IT silos and create issues that compliance and IT departments eventually need to clean up.

The key to overcoming shadow IT scenarios is for central IT to give the lines of business what they are demanding—an app dev solution they can use to digitize their own processes at their speed by their process experts independently of central IT.



Balance creative input and distraction.

As with any new venture or initiative, app-driven transformation has the potential to pull employees away from their primary roles. Department managers and human resources teams should look for creative ways to harness employee input without forsaking their main job functions.

Enhance app governance and avoid duplicating efforts.

Multiple departments creating their own must-have apps risks overlap of purpose and duplicated efforts, thus wasting time and creating more work for the IT department. By using a common platform for development, companies are able to view and mitigate overlapping and duplicate efforts.

What's good for one may not be good for all. Given the entrepreneur greenlight behind low- and no-code app development, there is an impetus for department managers to rush to create apps that will best suit their specific functions, be it sales, marketing, or customer service. While a specific app might offer immediate benefits, it could have unintended consequences for the organization. A solution, again, is for centralized IT governance to support and oversee app-driven efforts to ensure they are consistent with overarching needs and goals.

Conclusion

The ability to develop apps in-house and through low- and no-code programs allows enterprises to respond and succeed even in disruptive times when “normal” is redefined. These apps can solve problems faster, create new efficiencies, and reduce the drag of legacy systems. But it’s the balance between speed and oversight on a unified platform that reveals the greatest ROI.

[Learn more about ServiceNow Creator Workflows](#) ▶



App Engine speeds benefit delivery and cuts costs

Global companies using using ServiceNow Creator Workflows said their development efforts were accelerated by 290%, allowing them to develop apps nearly six months faster. On more complex projects that required multiple APIs or served multiple lines of business, application development efforts were accelerated by nearly a factor of two. Total time-to-value productivity gains by end users amounted to more than \$20 million over three years.²

 **290%**

290% acceleration in development efforts

 **\$20M+**

More than 20 million in productivity gains over three years

² Forrester Consulting, “Driving Digital Transformation And Business Value With ServiceNow,” 2018.