

Enterprise Checklist: Pave The Path To Digital Prowess With Low-Code Platforms

Today's enterprises have the imperative to execute on a digital strategy in order to better engage and serve their customers, empower their employees, and outpace the competition. Application development and delivery professionals are increasingly seeking robust low-code platforms to support the fast delivery of large, complex, and reliable customer solutions.

Appian commissioned Forrester to survey IT and executive leadership at North American enterprises regarding their low-code platform implementation strategy for three digital initiatives: digital process automation, digital customer engagement, and digital transformation.

KEY FINDINGS

Forrester's study yielded the following key findings:

- › Low-code platforms solve delivery-speed challenges more cost effectively, with better performance and at greater scale, than traditional platforms. According to survey results, areas of notable or significant improvement when using low-code development platforms as opposed to traditional development include speed to deliver process innovation/improvements (89%), faster app updates (87%), and meeting business requirements on time (86%).
- › Implementation success hinges on strategic alignment; having the right skills in place to not only build applications, but to evolve the platform; and being able to continuously innovate.
- › Using low-code platforms to support digital initiatives not only can result in better financial outcomes, but can also help organizations realize improvements in customer experience, process efficiency, and business agility.

This checklist is designed to help companies build solid digital strategies using low-code platforms for application development and deployment.



METHODOLOGY

Appian commissioned this study to understand three digital initiative use cases of low-code platforms at enterprise companies: digital process automation, digital customer engagement, and digital transformation.

To achieve this objective, Forrester conducted an online survey of 209 organizations across industries in the US and Canada. Survey participants included decision makers in application development and delivery. Questions provided to the participants asked about the requirements of a low-code implementation as they relate to digital initiatives, as well as corresponding challenges and benefits.

✓ **Set your digital initiative priorities.**

Prioritize the digital road map according to top business objectives, but seek synergies to build upon — rather than recreate — your digital strategy.

Digital process automation, digital customer engagement, and digital transformation are all top of mind among today’s enterprises. As organizations set their goals on achieving the speed, flexibility, and scalability required to deliver applications to win, serve, and retain customers, they are adopting low-code development platforms to support these digital objectives:

- › **Digital process automation.** This is the automation of business processes through new applications, ranging from enterprise processes like order-to-cash to team and departmental workflows and decision-making workflows.
- › **Digital customer engagement.** Digital customer engagement is the development of new applications to engage customers, employees, partners, and other communities, including eCommerce functions. Included are mobile and web apps, portals, and eCommerce experiences.
- › **Digital transformation.** This involves the radical transformation of application delivery for business innovation and modernization of business models and processes. Digital transformation encompasses digital process automation and digital engagement.

It is crucial to understand where your top digital priorities fall to make the right decisions, since each initiative requires different resources and yields different benefits for the business. However, there are enough similarities between the three initiatives that developing the right plan for low-code platform implementation in one area can put you ahead of the game as you expand and build upon your digital strategy.

✓ **Lay the groundwork for success.**

Buy-in is critical to getting low-code digital initiatives off the ground.

Regardless of your digital initiative, organizational buy-in is critical to successful execution. However, each use case will require you to tap different stakeholders as you build your business case.

Digital transformation	Digital process automation	Digital customer engagement
Buy-in by major stakeholders	Buy-in by the users of the platform	Buy-in by the owners of customer strategy

Buy-in means commitment to successful project outcomes and solution adoption by all stakeholders. Rather than assigning blame

Over seven out of 10 app dev professionals are prioritizing digital process automation, digital customer engagement, or digital transformation in the evaluation or adoption of low-code platforms.

Source: A commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of Appian, June 2017

when initiatives encounter inevitable challenges, all stakeholders commit to resolving the challenges so the initiative can keep moving through to successful user adoption.

✓ **Prioritize business requirements.**

Top business requirements are very consistent across initiatives.

Enterprises implementing low-code platforms agree that regardless of your digital prerogative, the top business requirements to consider should remain consistent: The platform must fit your budget and cost expectations while supporting security and compliance requirements.

There is one area where the three initiatives differ slightly: While enterprises undergoing digital process automation and digital customer engagement prioritize low-code platform reliability and availability, those undergoing digital transformation place slightly greater emphasis on the ease of upgrading on the platform. Why the difference? Digital transformation initiatives require multiple platforms used for hundreds of applications over many years. Thus, sustaining those platforms over long time periods is paramount. Platform reliability and availability are almost assumed.

Digital transformation	Digital process automation	Digital customer engagement
Fits budget/cost expectations	Fits budget/cost expectations	Fits budget/cost expectations
Supports security and compliance requirements	Supports security and compliance requirements	Supports security and compliance requirements
Easy to upgrade	Highly reliable and available	Highly reliable and available

✓ **Identify technical requirements.**

Top technical requirements diverge depending on the initiative – except where security is concerned.

Application development professionals agree that of the technical requirements for any of the three digital initiatives, advanced security and privacy controls are low-code platform must-haves. Organizations must be able to implement their data and application security and privacy policies using those development platforms. That is where the similarities end, however, as each use case demands different functionality from the platform.

Low-Code Platforms Must Fit Budget And Cost Expectations

(Critical or important)

Digital customer engagement



Digital process automation



Digital transformation



Source: A commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of Appian, June 2017

Digital transformation	Digital process automation	Digital customer engagement
Advanced security and privacy controls	Advanced security and privacy controls	Advanced security and privacy controls
Addresses all aspects of the process	Visual, declarative tools that limit hand-coding	Allows deployment to public cloud platforms
Advanced business process management	Advanced integration features	Advanced reporting and analysis features

- › **Digital transformation.** Digital transformation requires a comprehensive platform to address many use cases, from user experience design to back-end services if necessary. Because business processes are fundamental to digital transformation, strong business process management (BPM) modeling, simulation, and operational management features are a priority.
- › **Digital process automation.** While digital process automation requires a process platform, it more specifically requires a platform that uses visual tooling (as opposed to hand-coding) and easy adoption to speed application delivery. Further, because digital processes rely heavily on integration with a wide variety of apps and data sources, rich integration features are a top requirement.
- › **Digital customer engagement.** Digital customer engagement requires a platform that allows deployment to public cloud platforms. Why? It's difficult to predict the capacity that the applications will require; deployment in public clouds provides plenty of headroom for wildly successful apps. Advanced reporting and analysis features are crucial to helping understand customer response to engagement apps, as well as overall customer behavior — insights that keep the apps evolving in positive directions.

Advanced Security And Privacy Controls Are A Top Technical Requirement

(Critical or important)

Digital customer engagement



Digital transformation



Digital process automation



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✓ Build your implementation team.

Tap the right stakeholders for implementation success.

Integrating low-code development platforms into your organization is not a “set it and forget it” process. In fact, implementing the platform is just the first step. The true value of low-code platforms is in the agile development, deployment, and continuous evolution of applications — and the platform itself — to win, serve, and retain customers. The implementation process includes:

- › Implementing the platform.
- › Building prototypes.
- › Testing prototypes.
- › Deploying applications.
- › Developing applications.
- › Evolving applications.
- › Evolving the platform.

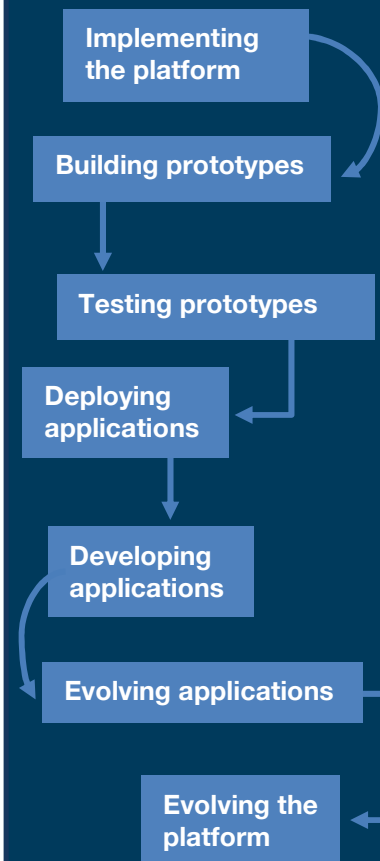
This process requires a team of individual contributors, from the first stage of implementing the platform, through application deployment, to the point where the work is in evolving the platform. Depending upon the stage of the process and your digital initiative, your implementation team should include:

- › Professional developers.
- › Process experts.
- › External integrators.
- › Business analysts.
- › Business experts.
- › User experience (UX) designers.

Professional developers should play an active, leading role throughout the implementation process — regardless of your digital initiative. But you will also need to bring in other stakeholders to collaborate on the process in order to meet the following objectives:

- › **Digital transformation.** Process experts should work alongside professional developers to lead the implementation of the platform and the building of prototypes. Once the prototypes are built, bring the entire team together to test prototypes. Business analysts, business experts, process experts, and external integrators should work in lock-step with your development pros throughout the remainder of the process.

Envision The Entire Development Road Map



Source: A commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting on behalf of Appian, June 2017

- › **Digital process automation.** Lean heavily on your development pros to steer the ship, bringing in external integrators to help lead implementation, and business and process experts to spearhead application deployment. Once again, no one group leads prototype testing — rather, it’s a collaborative process between professional developers, business analysts, business experts, and process experts. As with digital transformation, a core team of business, process, and integration professionals should be in place to ensure your professional developers have the input and expertise needed to successfully evolve both applications and the platform itself.
- › **Digital customer engagement.** Given the customer-facing and enabling nature of this initiative, ensure that you include UX designers in your implementation team. While professional developers lead much of the process, UX designers should take an active role in building, testing, deploying, and evolving applications. Round out your implementation team with business experts, business analysts, and external integrators.



To read the full results of this study, please refer to the Thought Leadership study commissioned by Appian titled, “Power Your Enterprise’s Digital Initiatives With Low-Code Platforms.”

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