Empower your entire organization to become more agile and efficient by fostering a low-code culture shift.
A period of disruption and uncertainty is ahead, one that will mean taking more digital risks and adjusting to new customer behaviors and preferences. Therefore, hand-crafting your organization’s business applications is simply not an option. Coding is a largely manual and inflexible process with long lead times. Quickly spinning up a mobile application to address a new business requirement or updating an existing system for faster response time is not attainable with hand-coding.

Low-code offers a way forward for the business agility enterprises need now, especially since industry analysts are predicting that demand for mobile apps will grow significantly in the coming months. Developers can build applications with a simple drag-and-drop visual interface, one-click deployment, and simple connectivity to legacy and cloud systems. It supercharges your application development so you can respond to digital urgency and changes in business direction.
Barriers to Innovation

Enterprises with large IT organizations, well-established business processes, and embedded systems are challenged by rapid change that can impact growth, revenue, and market share, placing them at a disadvantage against newer, more nimble competitors.

Growing customer expectations

In a recent Accenture report, just over half of respondents said they have become more impatient and want the buying process to be fast with minimal effort. Eighty-eight percent of these consumers use at least one digital channel when researching a product or service, and 40% want even more digital interactions than companies are providing.¹

Shrinking development cycles

Increased competitive pressure from nimble startups, disruptive technologies, and novel business models means companies have to innovate quickly to remain competitive. Taking months to develop a hand-coded application while using traditional processes risks making the final results outmoded at launch. Additionally, hand-crafted apps can be difficult to update with new functionality that users demand.

Rigid application development processes

Many IT organizations still rely on “waterfall” application development that requires prognosticating what future users will need or want — a stab in the dark at best — leaving business users crossing their fingers that IT understands the vision and has the tools to achieve it.

¹ Customer 2020: Are You Future-Ready or Reliving the Past? Accenture 2020
Security and data governance

Data security remains top of mind for consumers. Existing regulations, such as the U.S. Health Insurance Portability and Accountability Act (HIPAA), have tightened and become more complex. Newer regulations, such as the EU’s General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR) and the California Consumer Privacy Act (CCPA), have created additional game-changing requirements around data security. Such legislation also places the responsibility of governance squarely with the organizations holding the data and imposes stiff penalties for noncompliance — on top of the reputational damage a breach can cause.

Heavy investment in legacy infrastructure and applications

To many, digital transformation means “out with the old and in with the new.” But what about your previous investment in infrastructure and applications? Your organization needs a way to unlock additional value from existing enterprise resource planning (ERP), customer relationship management (CRM), and other core systems without complex customization that makes technology upgrades even more difficult.

Vendor lock-in

If your organization chooses to buy vs. build, be sure you’re ready to be married to your vendor for a long time. It raises the question: How future-proof will your applications be?
8 Ways Businesses Use Low-Code to Advance Their Organizations

To put it simply, low-code turns typical development on its head. Instead of focusing on building an application one line of hand-crafted code after another, your IT team is empowered to focus on the big picture: the business value of the application itself. Let’s look at how.

1. **Rapid development**
   Developers work with a straightforward drag-and-drop visual interface that breaks down business processes. Logic and data turn into modules that can be combined and connected as needed while all the coding happens in the background. Development times fall from months to weeks. This intuitive visual development bridges the chasm between traditional software development processes and modern DevOps, dramatically increasing IT collaboration. The result? Faster time to market and significantly shortened iterative update cycles.

2. **Connectivity**
   A best-in-class low-code platform will provide connectors to any data source or application, including your legacy infrastructure and enterprise backbone, which can result in huge reductions in capital expenditure. It permits integration with industry-standard protocols, API implementation, and third-party business tools like SAP and Salesforce.

3. **Security**
   Human error or oversights during coding can result in security vulnerabilities that put valuable IP and private customer data at risk. The right low-code platform has security processes and built-in audit trails that exceed the strict requirements for public- and private-sector security, regardless of the hosting solution.
Iterative development processes
Low-code can work with code that your IT team has already developed, so your earlier investments don’t go to waste. Advanced platform architecture takes advantage of microservices and containers that offer the flexibility to start small — and scale up and across — without impacting performance or forcing compromises on governance and transparency.

Lower IT costs
When your IT team spends less time on coding basic functionality, they can focus on building applications that differentiate your brand and solve your organization’s strategic problems. Meanwhile, a visual management layer makes the logic understandable in both business and technical terms, speeding collaboration and saving time and resources.

No lock-in
Best in class low-code platforms create native code, which means they don’t require a proprietary runtime engine to run applications. You can take your applications wherever you need them.

Future-proofing
Rapid application development is only the tip of the iceberg. A best-in-class low-code platform allows changes, upgrades, and additional features efficiently, without adding complexity that can slow your applications and disappoint users. Low-code development platforms reduce the accrual of “technical debt” by abstracting the development process from the point of code creation, decomposing application architectures into business-meaningful and easily maintained components.

Delighted users
Applications built with low-code can work on a variety of devices, from desktop, to mobile, to wearables and deliver consistently impressive user experiences — regardless of platform or channel — for brilliant overall customer experiences (CX). Professional and citizen developers can design from scratch, customize a pre-built design template, or import an existing design, all without compromising performance or functionality.
The Low-Code Organization: What to Expect

Low-code compresses development time and speeds time to value, so your organization must learn how to keep up. While these changes will certainly impact your IT team and its processes, it also requires a broader cultural realignment across the organization. Mark DeArmon, Head of Adoption and Transformation at OutSystems, put it this way in a recent blog post: a “low-code platform introduces disruption to existing organizational ‘muscle memory’ — a process and set of behaviors that reflect development being the longest step in the application delivery timeline.” Here are five considerations to keep in mind when deploying a low-code development solution:

**Agility**

What if your organization spots a new market opportunity, uncovers an inefficient internal process, or needs to improve internal or external collaboration? It should be prepared to launch an application to address those needs as quickly as possible. This changes the way your organization approaches and prioritizes solutions: with a faster and less costly development cycle, you can add more to the product roadmap. You might even consider making your customer “radar” more predictive with social listening, app usage analytics, and other tools to gauge customer preferences.

**Continuous software delivery**

Low-code’s visual interface makes it easy for business users to collaborate in the development process and test-drive applications without relying on prototypes. A low-code application development platform can significantly improve iterative feedback and testing by the business during a build by validating targeted features before releasing them for initial user feedback. When you use microservices and containers, you can launch a polished app quickly and add new functionality over time while accurately measuring the app’s impact and return on investment (ROI).
Sound governance

While low-code empowers business users and citizen developers with greater collaboration, indiscriminate access can lead to chaos. Multi-team development initiatives require constant communication and open, but controlled, access to systems and resources. The best low-code solutions provide agile, continuous integration and development without sacrificing visibility or control.

Change management

Rapid development, deployment, and iterative improvements reflect a cultural shift that cannot be understated. The more thoughtfully you manage the “people” side of these changes, the better the outcome. Help team members make successful personal transitions to adopt and support change.

Leadership buy-in

Last but far from least, your organization needs the endorsement from leadership to embrace change and increase agility. Here is some information to share with your executives to help you make the case:

Enterprise low-code application platforms make it simple to deploy enterprise-class applications and systems and integrate them with cloud services. Your organization can build operational systems for departments, core digital systems, or digital experiences that serve millions of users. Enterprise low-code also delivers high performance, scalability, high availability, disaster recovery, security, and much more.
Low-Code Success Stories

The OutSystems platform is a complete, full-cycle, low-code development platform that simplifies every stage of the app development and delivery process — giving your developers and teams the power to provide apps the business requires at the speed the market demands. The following customer stories demonstrate the kind of success you can have with low-code.
Vermont-based Burton, best known for its snowboarding products, had to revamp its logistics operations to move goods through its sales channels so that there were enough products on hand when customers wanted to buy — without incurring big inventory carrying costs. And, because they had to move quickly to capture more sales during the peak winter months, their app delivery window kept shrinking — from 14 months to 11 and then to eight. Compounding the tight timeline was the fact that only one software developer and one intern were available to work on the project.

Using OutSystems, Burton met the deadline, delivering a fully functioning app in just eight months — in time to launch before Black Friday. The app processed 56 shipments a day on average, kept pace during a 14-day stretch of 200+ daily shipments, and generated 10 times its ROI in revenue. Burton has since extended its retail presence, opening four stores in the last two years with plans for 10 additional stores in the future. Burton will use the logistics solution to support sales in all their new locations.
thinkmoney
banking made easy

UK-based thinkmoney helps underserved, unbanked, and time-poor customers manage their finances with a checking account that offers built-in budgeting capabilities. The fintech sought a more agile way to improve its digital services and accelerate customer experience improvements. By adopting OutSystems to power its digital transformation program, thinkmoney gained the freedom to innovate quickly.

Now, the organization provides an unmatched customer experience, has improved efficiency, and continually adapts to meet the needs of customers in the fast-evolving financial services sector. After just 14 weeks of development, thinkmoney was able to launch its mobile consumer app and had three customer-facing services up and running within six months, driving a 30% conversion increase for customer onboarding and leading to more than $367,000 (£300,000) in annual savings.
Supermarket chain Albert Heijn, part of the international food retail group Ahold Delhaize, had an outdated custom inventory management process that involved nine different back-end systems and took employees away from helping customers on the shop floor. Using OutSystems, Albert Heijn was able to merge all nine existing applications into one while still using data from its legacy enterprise resource management (ERM) system.

With low-code development, store employees and IT were able to embrace agile collaboration, resulting in the award-winning Wink app. Over the course of a year, the app rolled out in nine iterations, with added functionality each time, into 1,000+ stores for 100,000+ users. Employees don’t need formal instruction to use the app, and it allows them to perform their most common tasks twice as fast, reducing fines for products past expiration. With less administrative work, employees have more time to serve customers while store managers have more time and flexibility in planning. Ahold is now developing multiple projects on the OutSystems low-code platform.
Curious About How it Works?

Get started with a free trial today.

Thousands of customers worldwide trust OutSystems, the number one low-code platform for rapid application development. Engineers with an obsessive attention to detail crafted every aspect of the OutSystems platform to help organizations build enterprise-grade apps and transform their business faster. OutSystems is the only solution that combines the power of low-code development with advanced mobile capabilities, enabling visual development of entire applications that easily integrate with existing systems.