Low-code platforms deliver high rewards

Businesses are embracing low-code as the future of app development and automation

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Has the 'need for speed' ever been more profound than in today's increasingly complex business environment? Businesses in every sector are pursuing the fastest and most-efficient response to the pressing need for modern work environments, digital capabilities and new business models. For a fast-growing number of organizations racing to accelerate innovation and enhance competitiveness in today's new reality, low-code is the answer.

The pressure to adopt game-changing digital solutions is forcing businesses to speed up the pace of innovation amid ever-evolving challenges involving customers, employees, suppliers and partners. Low-code programming platforms, as many are discovering, emphasize simplicity and ease of use, bringing solutions from across the automation spectrum together under one fully configurable umbrella. With its remarkable drag-and-drop simplicity, low-code is helping businesses accelerate enterprise modernization, agility and efficiency in the race to thrive and survive in the new normal.

At KPMG, we see low-code as the future of application development and automation. Low-code platforms can dramatically speed creation of sophisticated enterprise-class applications that incorporate complex business logic, automate workflow, integrate with existing information systems, and enable a slick user experience.

1 Low-code is poised for rapid growth

Analysts agree that low-code adoption is clearly on the rise. Gartner Research predicts that the global market for low-code development technologies will hit US$13.8 billion this year — up about 23 percent from 2020 — and that the

market could be worth US$46.6 billion by 2023. Gartner also predicts that low-code will be responsible for more than 65 percent of application-development activity by 2024.[1] And according to Forrester research, 100 percent of enterprises that have implemented a low-code development platform report satisfactory ROI.[2]

Meanwhile, KPMG research indicates that since the pandemic's 2020 outbreak, the number of executives naming low-code development platforms as their most-important automation investment has nearly tripled.[3]

Businesses are realizing that implementing one automation technology is a short-term measure — it's platforms that can be the key to seamless, end-to-end automation. Low-code technology is essentially being embraced as a major enabler of true digital transformation and we view low-code platforms as the strategic 'tool bench' from which enterprises can increasingly drive large-scale transformation.

To illustrate low-code's game-changing advantages, consider the recent client case that saw KPMG in Canada collaborate with a health-sector company that supports hundreds of long-term-care facilities. The organization needed to implement automation and other emerging technologies to improve its scheduling and staffing amid the pandemic's ongoing impact. Before the crisis, more than 50 employees required 2 weeks to develop 2-week schedules for the client's diverse operations. Turning to low-code, KPMG experts created a technology solution that helped the company schedule 8,000 employee shifts in a remarkable timeframe of just 20 minutes.

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[1] Gartner Forecasts Worldwide Low-Code Development to Grow 23 percent — Feb. 16, 2021
[2] Large Enterprises Succeeding With Low-Code, a commissioned study conducted by Forrester Consulting — March 2019.
[3] KPMG Enterprise Reboot: Scale digital technologies to grow and thrive in the new reality — August 2020. HFS Research in conjunction with KPMG International.

business problems and implement low-code applications at enterprise scale. As more businesses are discovering, when low-code is put in the hands of appropriately skilled developers, the speed and efficiency with which complex projects can be completed is unparalleled.

Low-code will be part of future SaaS implementations

The past decade has witnessed a massive migration away from on-premises software to cloud-based Software-as-a-Service (SaaS) solutions. While delivering significant advantages, however, SaaS solutions are by necessity standardized for multiple users and therefore less customizable. Inevitably, capability gaps exist for individual users throughout the enterprise. But capability gaps and limitations can be filled efficiently and seamless processes can emerge quickly using applications developed on low-code platforms.

The key metric is speed to value

With traditional software implementations, business leaders often focus on two things: how much is it going to cost, and how quickly can it be operational? While the speed with which low-code applications can be developed is one of the technology's key selling points — as is the cost-efficiency of being able to deploy one technology for unlimited applications — the metric that's most important with low-code is speed to value. Because of its simple building-block approach, low-code allows even complex projects to be accomplished quickly, sometimes in as little as a few weeks.

Low-code therefore has the potential to deliver value quickly — whether by improving customer experience, launching new products and services faster, or boosting compliance capabilities. In our experience, the standard procurement process for buying software is typically between 6 and 9 months. With low-code, the user buys the platform once and deploys it everywhere as needed — potentially saving 6 or more months on every project.

4 Conclusion — low-code, high reward

While low-code applications can be used to solve discrete challenges or seize singular opportunities, their more-dramatic value is in serving as the connection that binds an organization and its operations together in ways that simply have not been possible at scale until now.

Organizations wisely embracing the shift to low-code are already seeing their digital strategies become reinvigorated and more unified, and their operating capabilities more agile. Enterprises are able to respond more quickly to ever-changing customer expectations and deliver a more meaningful, engaging experience for employees and customers.

Taking a wait-and-see approach is risky as businesses increasingly embrace low-code's operational and competitive advantages. The ability to automate business processes quickly makes low-code technology and modern application platforms indispensable as businesses pursue the tightly connected digital-enterprise model needed for success in a new era.

To learn more, visit Low-code automation for the digital enterprise – KPMG Switzerland

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Contacts

KPMG AG	**Mark Meuldijk**	**Kevin de Verteuil**
Räffelstrasse 28	Partner	Partner
PO Box	Lighthouse Strategy	Financial Services
8036 Zurich		Low-code Lead
	+41 58 249 48 84	+41 58 249 77 86
kpmg.ch	markmeuldijk@kpmg.com	kevindeverteuil@kpmg.com