

Citizen development—the foundation of change and innovation



This guide covers everything from the basic definition of citizen development to its impact in organizations. Learn more about how a relatively new technology, low-code, aids citizen developers in bridging the technical gap. _____

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Citizen development

Citizen development is the first step in the process of democratizing technology. It empowers non-technical users within organizations to build high quality applications with IT-approved software. This is crucial, as it decentralizes the processes in place and elevates the quality of software built. Software roadblocks within organizations are common, and it's best addressed by the person who encounters it. In order to tackle this, businesses are introducing their employees to LCNC (low-code/no-code) platforms. These platforms are tailor-made for all levels of expertise, including both ends of the app-building spectrum—from drag-and-drop interfaces to hard-code compilers.



Citizen developers

The agents of citizen development—without prior technical expertise, who leverage low-code platforms to build priority applications within organizations—are called citizen developers. They work within the judicial authority of IT teams to ensure that apps built are compliant on all levels.



A citizen developer is a user who creates new business applications for consumption by others, using development and runtime environments sanctioned by corporate IT.

Gartner[®]

Organizational impact

Short learning curve

Organizations have to adapt to changing conditions, and there's no better way to stay relevant than streamlining business processes with citizen development at its core. As compared to traditional development, citizen development boasts an array of advantages and benefits; ease of use being the most prominent one. This is brought about by these highly intuitive, visually appealing, all-in-one platforms.

Employee productivity

Business problems are best understood and overcome with business users at its helm. This process of empowering business users with LCNC platforms combats the current shortage of professional developers to run the software development show.

Administer IT backlogs

The less dependent you are on IT teams, the faster your in-house innovation—and it's a given that most IT teams are preoccupied with organizational-level software and security. When requests from teams begin to pile up, it leads to backlogs which are sometimes never addressed.

No shadow IT

Backlogs often result in independent teams building applications with software that's not IT compliant, and without consulting the IT department first. This bypassing of the software development process without meeting industry standards is referred to as shadow IT. Citizen development with low-code platforms, which are IT compliant, helps in eliminating shadow IT.



Low-code – Ground zero for citizen development

Citizen development is synonymous with LCNC platforms. These all-in-one platforms offer an impressive visual app-building experience, with features like drag-and-drop, write once run anywhere, and multi-platform versatility. Everything, from the data fed into the application to backend functions like compilers and interpreters, are stored on the cloud. This bypasses manual configurations to app engines and data migration techniques. With this combination of ease of use and guaranteed security, low-code empowers business users and non-developers to become citizen developers.



Customer stories

Citizen development is one of Zoho Creator's prime drivers, and we have many organizations taking advantage of it. Here are some of their stories:





Aboitiz Equity Ventures is one of the largest conglomerates in Asia. It was started in the late 1800's as a hemp trading business, and today its investments are predominantly in banking and financial services. With \$8.1 billion in assets and 3,600 employees, Aboitiz is recognized as one of the best-managed companies in the Philippines.

Business challenge

They didn't have a proper system to track all their CSR activities, and had difficulty managing their internal processes in spreadsheets. Their team needed a solution to help them quickly create apps to manage \$300 million of their CSR funds across all business units.

Solution

The team built a web application in Creator for managing all their CSR tasks in a measurable, transparent way. Based on its success, they created over 40 business apps for different needs. Currently, these app are used by 4,000+ employees.

Results

By the end of 2019, AEV saved over \$670K dollars through the efficiency brought into their application development processes by Zoho Creator. They automated 1,000+ transactions, increasing productivity by nearly 50%.

I was so delighted when I saw members from the accounting team, from admin, from HR—who are not programmers—develop web and mobile applications with minimal help from IT

- Jojo Guingao, Chief Digital Officer, AEV

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Founded in 2014, Mistley Manor is the flagship home of the Stour Valley Care Group (SVCG), a UK-based family-run business in its fourth generation. It's a 70-bed luxury home aimed at providing affordable residential care for the elderly and those suffering from dementia.

Business challenge

They had a tried and true method in place for the management of their care homes: paper. Every department in both homes was managed through paperwork alone, but since this paperwork was spread all over the place, overhead charges were also on the rise.

Solution

Michael Volf, co-owner and a citizen developer himself, built web and mobile applications in Creator for managing seven departments—resident management, restaurant management, HR management, and the care departments like dementia, elderly, and learning disabilities.

Results

Moving from paperwork blessed Mistley Manor with a 70% reduction in stationery costs. The applications saved the caretakers from sorting paperwork, time they now spend with their residents. And their interactive dashboard gives them an overview of the entire business, covering specifics including the number of hospitalized residents.

“It was a win-win situation for us. We can get rid of the hectic paperwork, manage homes more efficiently, and help save the environment at the same time.”

- Michael Volf, Training & IT Manager

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Play Force was established in 2003 in Queensland, Australia, to provide playground-related services to local governments. Since undergoing expansion, they have been involved in taking on projects of all shapes and sizes, from traditional and nature-based playgrounds, right up to complex bespoke installations. In recent years, . now

Business challenge

They were looking for software to handle job management, and wanted to move from a paper-based system, with both environmental and tedious work taken into consideration. The dilemma of using spreadsheets—multiple people formatting it simultaneously—was making it hard to efficiently run their processes.

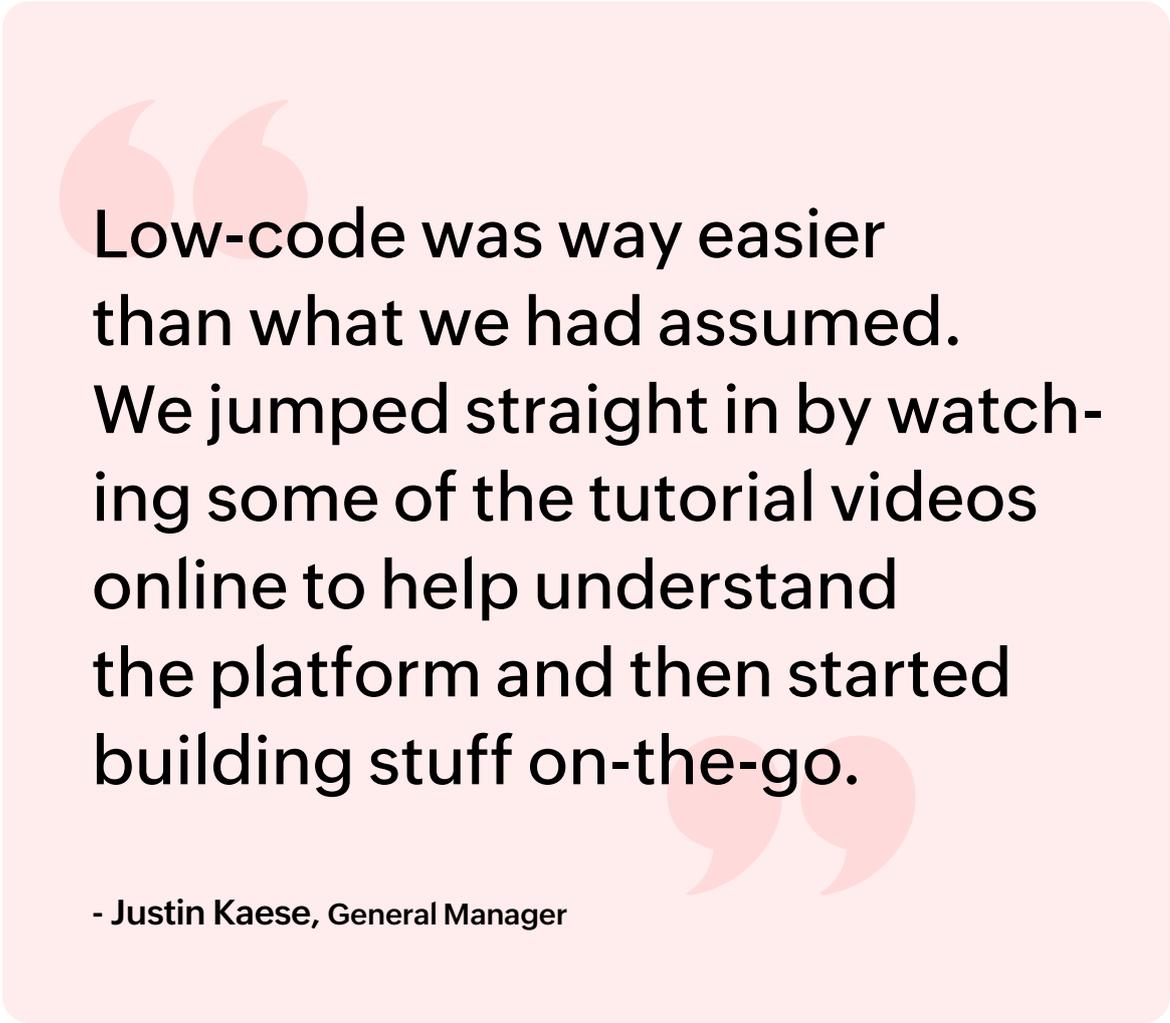
Solution

It took Justin Kaese, general manager of Play Force, less than a month to explore the platform and get the entire company running on Zoho Creator. He built applications for the web, mobile, and tablet—and did it all without needing a developer!



Results

They were able to automate processes with web applications for office spaces, and a mix of mobile and tablet apps for playground inspectors and other remote staff, so they could get real-time updates on their handheld devices.



Low-code was way easier than what we had assumed. We jumped straight in by watching some of the tutorial videos online to help understand the platform and then started building stuff on-the-go.

- Justin Kaese, General Manager

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About us

[Zoho Creator](#) is a low-code platform that's powerful and flexible enough to adapt to your business needs. It comes with a host of templates and plug-ins which enable your teams to create process-specific applications easily. Many of the world's largest organizations use Creator applications to manage their daily operations by streamlining processes, projects, and tasks.

Pick a business process that's been hard for you to automate, sign up for a free trial, and experience Creator personally.





www.zoho.com/creator/

We'd love to talk! Reach out to us:

hello@zohocreator.com