



APAC: The state of low-code





Preface

An increasing number of businesses across the APAC are turning to low-code technology for developing and deploying data-driven enterprise applications quickly and easily.

We've seen a spike in demand for low-code platforms like **Zoho Creator** as businesses seek to rapidly digitize and automate their day-to-day processes. This change isn't happening at an isolated point, but it is ongoing and accelerating. The need to innovate and adapt in real time has become critical to success in the APAC's fast-changing and competitive business landscape. Our customer momentum is proof of this.

In this ebook, we'll discuss everything low-code and how it's actively changing the ways businesses function in this current era of rapid growth and innovation.

Contents

01	The digital Innovation factory	04
02	The digital transformation blueprint	06
03	Why low-code?	08
	The rise of the citizen developer	
	Lower barrier to entry, cost, and deployment time	
	Automating any business idea in minutes	
04	What can you build using low-code?	11
	PBA Robotics: Production tracker	
05	Busting low-code myths	15
	Too simple	
	Lack of normal software development pipelines	
	Not scalable enough	
06	Customer stories	18
	IOI Properties Group, Malaysia	
	Sakae, Japan	
	deSiam, Thailand	
	Studio 83, Hong Kong	
07	Looking forward	20
08	About us	22

The digital innovation factory

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Most businesses will need to be a digital innovation factory and adapt to technologies like low-code in the next three to five years.

Digitization is radically changing the face of businesses across the globe. What started as a revolutionary manufacturing movement in the heart of Europe, the concept of the digital innovation factory has taken the APAC by storm. Digital factories aim to produce highly customized products and systems by adapting to diverse, innovative technologies. The concept, however, has been adapted by other key sectors, such as logistics, healthcare, education, IT, professional services, and more.



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According to PwC Global, one of the Big Four accounting firms globally, 87% of businesses across the APAC believe that digitization offers them more opportunities than risks.

Once an option, digitization has become a strategic imperative for many organizations across sectors. Of all the innovative technologies available to businesses, one has managed to stand the test of time and evolve as an unparalleled choice for many tech leaders—and that's low-code. Unlike what many believe, **low-code** has been around for decades. It has grown in its strength and capability to integrate and work with old and upcoming technologies alike.

The digital transformation blueprint

A successful digital transformation plan relies on having a clear vision that considers individual technologies and how they work together with other technologies, both old and new, in your organization's wider digital ecosystem. To help you develop and refine your digitalization roadmap, here's our **five-step blueprint** to help you capitalize on low-code technology's full potential and efficiency.



Map out your digital transformation strategy

To develop your digital strategy, start by understanding your current level of digitization. Your digital transformation efforts will utilize diverse technologies. It's important to have a clear idea of how each technology fits your overall ecosystem while allowing space for upcoming technologies.



Create pilot projects

Pilots serve as proof of concept. They also help in understanding what approach might work for your business. Take a critical function at your business and automate it first. By deploying and studying the system's performance, you can decide on the next course of action.



Define and analyse your requirements

Build on the lessons learned from deploying the pilot by mapping out your requirements in detail and listing your priorities. The real goal of a digital transformation is not just to implement the newest technologies—it's to help you achieve tangible outcomes like increased efficiency and productivity and enhancing existing processes.



Automate one process at a time

Map your requirements to the process in your value chain. Think about the process you want to automate, the connectivity tool that'll integrate it with the rest of the system, and the data that'll drive both.



Integrate into your digital ecosystem

Since every system relies on data, a robust yet flexible integration determines whether your digitization plan is a success or not. Data and system integration can become very complex, as it involves mapping diverse data formats and endpoints across the organization. By choosing the right integration tool, you can save on API maintenance costs and reuse them to extend your solution.

Why low-code?

Low-code is gaining a lot of traction in the business landscape right now—and for good reason. So what are some of the top benefits of low-code?



The rise of the citizen developer

With today's growing demand for solutions, most IT teams simply can't keep up. With low-code, even nondevelopers can build much-needed business apps with minimal coding and simpler development cycles.

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Qualified IT personnel have now become a scarce and expensive resource. But we need them to build solutions for the business as new requirements and needs arise. How do we solve this? I think the answer is straightforward. We need to strengthen our internal teams and empower them with the right tools. Adapting to low-code lessens our dependency on external IT teams and helps reduce costs and turnaround time.



James Yang

Managing Director, **Zolution**

Lower barrier to entry, costs, and deployment time

How does low-code compare to traditional application building practices?

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Low-code platforms help businesses bring life into applications in terms of collaboration, decision-making, and applying business logic to data from siloed sources at a much faster pace and lower cost. It doesn't have to take a village to build a solution anymore. Low-code makes sure you have everything to build a robust solution for any problem thrown your way in the most resourceful way possible.



Gibu Mathew

Vice President and General Manager of Zoho APAC

Automating any business idea in minutes

Building applications that behave similarly across an organizational ecosystem is a game-changer in today's hyper-personalized world. Down the line, can everyone become a developer with low-code?

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Software implementation doesn't always succeed. So if it fails, we have to make sure it doesn't cost us an arm. From a business perspective, cost, speed, and iteration are the most important factors in choosing the right technology. We experimented with off-the-shelf solutions, but most of them couldn't accommodate the level of customization we wanted, and those that did cost us six figures.

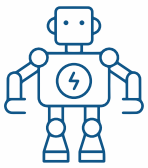
With Zoho Creator, we could get the pilot version out in a matter of weeks. We realized that low-code was quite effective in terms of cost and speed of deployment. We built the production tracker after that and deployed it throughout our factories.

Daryl Tan

Manufacturing Operations Manager,
PBA Robotics and Automation



What can you build using low-code?



PBA Robotics: Production tracker

The production tracker built by PBA Robotics is a classic example of an internal-facing application where they took a core business function like production and digitized it using Creator.

The app helps capture live production data from the shop floor and keeps track of the progress status of each order. Information such as throughput for each step, non-conforming reject points, and more are organized into dashboards that different stakeholders can access, like manufacturing managers, engineers, and production supervisors. With all the details available in a single place, the engineers can detect any issues and solve them immediately.

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At every production and quality inspection station, we have a tablet with the app installed on it. On receiving the job kit, each operator scans the QR code associated with it using the application. Once the job is done, the operator scans the QR code again before passing the kit to the quality inspection station. The quality inspector runs the kit through different dimensional and functional tests and uploads the data to the app. We only allow equipment to move from station A to station B after it passes the specifications mentioned in the tracker application. We are not only able to better control the output quality, but even if there's an issue, we know from which station it stemmed from.

**Daryl Tan**

Manufacturing Operations Manager,
PBA Robotics and Automation

Before the tracker, the technician in charge manually entered the data from different process points on a job sheet. The manual entry of data took a long time and was also prone to errors, which sometimes resulted in faulty products moving to the end of the production line.

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We wanted to trace the root cause of our quality issues and place necessary checks to bring them down. As you can imagine, it's very difficult to do that by looking through paper reports for each batch produced. Now, all we have to do is log into the app, track production progress, and communicate directly to the team via live updates rather than call the factory and ask for the report every time an issue arises. It has made decision-making much more efficient and faster.

**Daryl Tan****PBA Robotics**

Even when the adoption of technology is in supersonic mode, the time it takes for an application to evolve is still enormous. This slow implementation is driven by the complexity of using traditional development methods, resulting in a prolonged launch cycle.

Low-code, on the contrary, aims at removing these obstacles and enabling even non-programmers to develop solutions that reflect specific requirements and workflow processes. For example, a marketer can set up a workflow that'll automatically file a qualified lead into a customer database and then trigger a set of targeted emails based on certain events when they occur, without writing a single line of code.

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Nowadays, we have lots of off-the-shelf software and powerful ERPs, but it's a double-edged sword. As software becomes powerful, it also becomes more confusing. The end user often has no idea how to use it. But with Creator, you can define your user interface and set roles that allow different stakeholders to see what they need to see instead of giving them a complicated UI that they have no idea how to use.

Traditional software is also rigid and doesn't allow you to add or alter the predefined modules or workflows that they come with. Even if you manage to get an external IT person to do it for you, it's going to take a lot of time to get the basic framework down. But with a low-code platform like Creator, it's just a matter of minutes, and practically anyone can do it.

**James Yang**

Managing Director, Zolution

Busting low-code myths

As businesses rapidly transitioned to working remotely, they realized how fast and affordable it was to digitize their manual day-to-day processes with low-code. But behind the scenes, IT teams had their concerns.



Too simple

To a full-stack developer who loves building solutions from the ground up, a graphical drag-and-drop interface can seem too restricting.

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I think low-code is for everyone. If you're a seasoned developer who loves to code, feel free to code on Creator, and for others who don't know how to, there's the drag-and-drop interface to the rescue. We must keep the project timeline in mind, and if there's a tool that will help us achieve that, then it makes sense that we give it a try. In the end, it's up to you to determine which tech should be used while factoring in the level of effort, resources available, and deadlines.



James Yang

Managing Director, Zolution



Lack of normal application development pipelines

Low-code platforms like Creator can potentially spin up a database with a simple form and automatically send out action tasks with a few clicks. Can more functionalities be added to this if a new requirement arises? What if there's a conflict in the development approach between developers? Are there tried-and-true processes to settle this conflict?



Yes, it is a valid concern, but it only becomes a problem when there's a lack of planning. This concern is not specific to low-code but rather any application-building approach. If you don't have a proper plan sketched out, there will be confusion during development.

Before using a low-code app platform, you should know its limitations and the best use case scenarios. To deny the usefulness of low-code because it's too simple is basically giving up on an opportunity to save time and resources to focus on more interesting, specialized, innovative projects.



Gibu Mathew

Vice President and General Manager of Zoho APAC



Not scalable enough

Is scalability an aspect only associated with a solution built using traditional methods? Low-code works extremely well when building POCs and prototypes, but what if the application has to be deployed for use by hundreds of people and across multiple locations over time?

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Our experience with Creator has mostly been positive. We had some hiccups along the way in trying to figure out how an update at the back-end might impact the app, but the solution has remained stable and scalable. If you think about it, we're deploying the solution across the shop floor, and we're running the entire manufacturing process on this single app. It's hundreds of entries and dozens of people using it at any given time. We're also planning to deploy the production tracker across all our factories soon.



Daryl Tan

PBA Robotics

Customer Stories

IOI Properties Group, Malaysia

Read the story of how IOI Properties Group, one of Malaysia's biggest real estate companies, with a commanding presence in Singapore and the People's Republic of China, took their processes to the cloud. They integrated their legacy systems and executed an internal digital transformation drill to make remote work more efficient.



IOI PROPERTIES

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Sakae, Japan

Read the story of Sakae, a manufacturing organization based out of Japan, and how they built custom ERP software to manage their entire manufacturing operation.



[READ THE EBOOK](#)

deSiam, Thailand

Learn how deSiam, a retail manufacturer specializing in Thai ingredients and meals, leveraged Zoho Creator to build an online database and integrate it with other Zoho products, like Books, Inventory, and Commerce, to manage their end-to-end operations.



[READ THE EBOOK](#)

Studio 83, Hong Kong

Learn how Studio 83 brings art to the corporate world by putting their business in the hands of low-code.



[READ THE EBOOK](#)

Looking forward

Customer centricity is key for businesses to survive in today's competitive markets. Many are moving closer to their customers to react to their evolving preferences. Undergoing a digital transformation allows you become more agile and flexible enough to overcome any business challenge without compromising on your core values.

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Different businesses are in various stages of their digital transformations. They know what their core processes are, what needs to be digitized, and what needs to be scrapped. Just pick one business-critical process and automate it. Once done, the rest will automatically follow, because you'll realize the value that digitization brings to your business.



Gibu Mathew

Zoho APAC

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We recently deployed the production tracker application to our factories in Malaysia, and we're looking to implement it across China and Taiwan. Once we integrate the tracker with our ERP system, we can minimize errors and time spent on manual data entry and processing. Our ultimate goal is to build an analytical system to gauge the production and safety performance across factories.

**Daryl Tan**

PBA Robotics

Note: This ebook contains snippets from [Zoho Creator's Tech Table Talks](#) panel discussion on "How low-code is changing the ways APAC is transforming digitally."

You can watch the full webinar [here](#).

About Zoho Creator

At Zoho Creator, we've always worked towards a single purpose—empowering users to build functional apps with minimal coding expertise. We've helped 13,000+ brands create bespoke solutions and improve their end-to-end operations across a variety of industries. With over 25 years of experience in catering to B2B and B2C organizations, we have the best tools in the trade to help you improve your business.

You can get started with Creator [here](#). You can also check out our [prebuilt workflow templates](#) to get started right away.

Top brands that use our platform:





www.zoho.com/creator

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