A JITTERBIT REPORT

State of Automation

How Low-Code Application Platforms Disrupt the IT Status Quo and Ignite Digital Growth

Jitterbit

About This Report

Businesses today are under enormous pressure to drive digital transformation and operate with greater efficiency – yet often lack the internal resources, time, and bandwidth to execute strategies that move the innovation needle. According to the International Monetary Fund, the tech talent shortage will swell to more than 85 million tech workers by 2030[1]. At the same time, the amount of digital data generated, consumed, copied, and stored through 2025 is expected to be nearly triple of that in 2020[2].

So what happens when tech resources are scarce but digital demand is higher than ever? Process bottlenecks occur, inefficient workflows form, progress stalls, and IT teams are left with a waiting list of demands.

Low-code application development platforms have emerged as a key solution, enabling both non-IT and IT teams to build their own business apps without coding experience—while, at the same time, ensuring that they adhere to corporate security and governance protocols. This reduces the burden on IT teams, giving them more bandwidth to address other critical projects and focus on innovation.

To better understand the importance of LCAP, we conducted our *State of Automation: How Low-Code Application Platforms Disrupt the IT Status Quo and Ignite Digital Growth* survey. The goal was to determine how LCAP solutions are being viewed, adopted, and prioritized for both IT and line of business (LOB) users. After surveying executives across IT, marketing, and human resources, we arrived at three main findings regarding low-code tools and their impact on organizations who adopt them. Those three conclusions form the basis of this report.

We hope the insights collected from this survey help you anticipate low-code application platform trends, compare strategies with your peers, and better prepare your business for digital transformation.

Key Findings

01 Low-code applications are an important component of most organizations' automation strategy

Eighty-five percent of survey respondents say that building low-code applications is a top organizational priority. Several different factors are driving this focus, including the growing desire for an effective automation strategy, concerns around the growth of unauthorized applications on desktops and mobile devices, and a genuine desire to solve organizational challenges without significant IT engagement.

02 IT executives are largely supportive of non-IT built applications and data flows, but share concerns about solving key business challenges

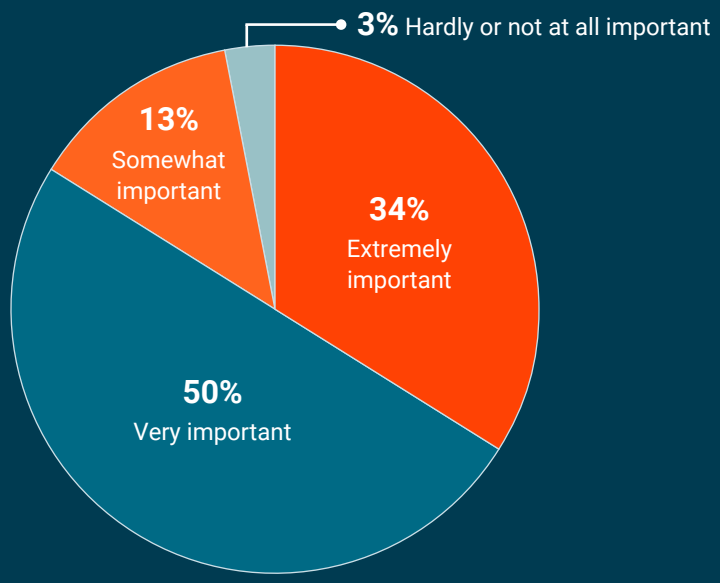
Just over half of IT respondents are either very or extremely comfortable with employees outside of IT using low-code application building platforms. However, this comfort is more muted than it is from other executives like marketing (72%) and HR (75%). IT executives have concerns around solving key business challenges and, to a lesser extent, data security and accessibility issues. With these findings in mind, it's clear that IT leaders understand the role LCAP solutions play in digital transformation, but are still skeptical of the robustness of low-code applications.

03 HR and Marketing stand to benefit from LCAP as they obtain autonomy over IT decisions

Eighty-nine percent of HR and 87% of marketing executives consider it to be a high or very high priority to build, deploy, or maintain low-code applications to help accelerate key initiatives. This makes sense, given the vast majority of HR and marketing teams have yet to fully integrate their existing applications together, and view LCAP as a way to extend the value of their applications, whether or not they are integrated with each other via an iPaaS.

01 Low-code applications are an important component of most organizations' automation strategy

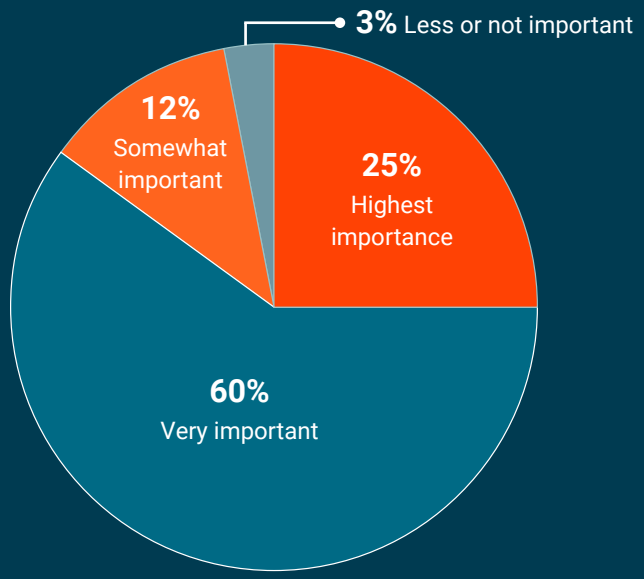
How important are low-code tools to your automation strategy?



Our research found that 84% of respondents consider building and using low-code tools to be either an important or extremely important part of their overall automation strategy. It is noteworthy that such a high percentage of respondents agree on the need for LCAP — especially given the fact that low-code technology is only a decade or so old.

This finding shows us that the vast majority of organizations want to make LCAP a key part of their ongoing automation strategy — a critical long-term journey that joins other technologies such as RPA, AI, IoT, mobile, blockchain and Web 3.0. LCAP tools have the benefit of widening the automation journey outside of just the IT department, giving line of business a chance to participate in, and influence, the outcome of critical digital initiatives.

How much of a priority is it within your organization to build, deploy, or maintain low-code applications designed to help solve organizational challenges without significant IT engagement?



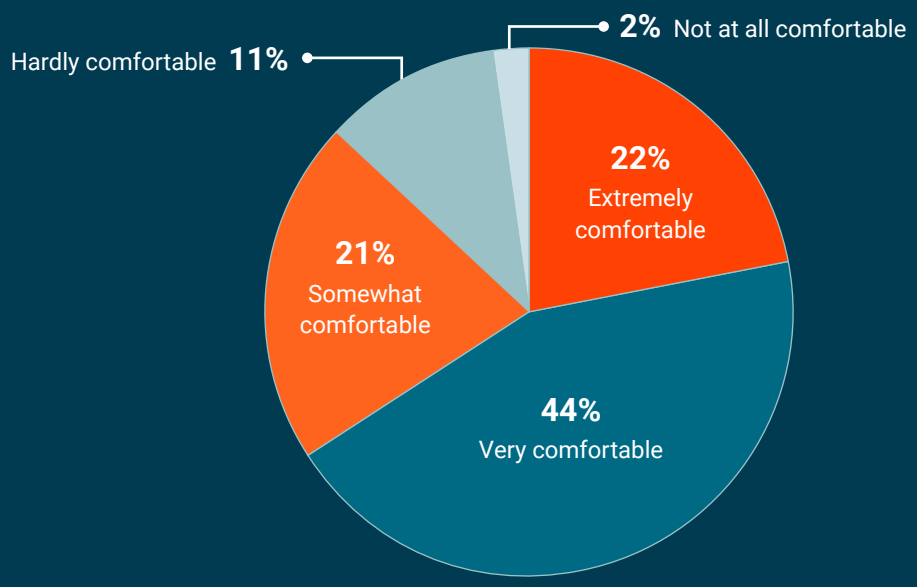
Eighty-five percent of survey respondents stated that building low-code applications is a top organizational priority. A number of different factors are driving this perceived need, such as the growing desire to build an effective automation strategy, concern around the growth of unauthorized applications on desktops and mobile devices, and a genuine need to solve organizational integration challenges without significant IT engagement.

85%

of survey respondents stated that building low-code applications is a top organizational priority.

02 IT executives are largely supportive of non-IT built applications and data flows, but share concerns about solving key business challenges

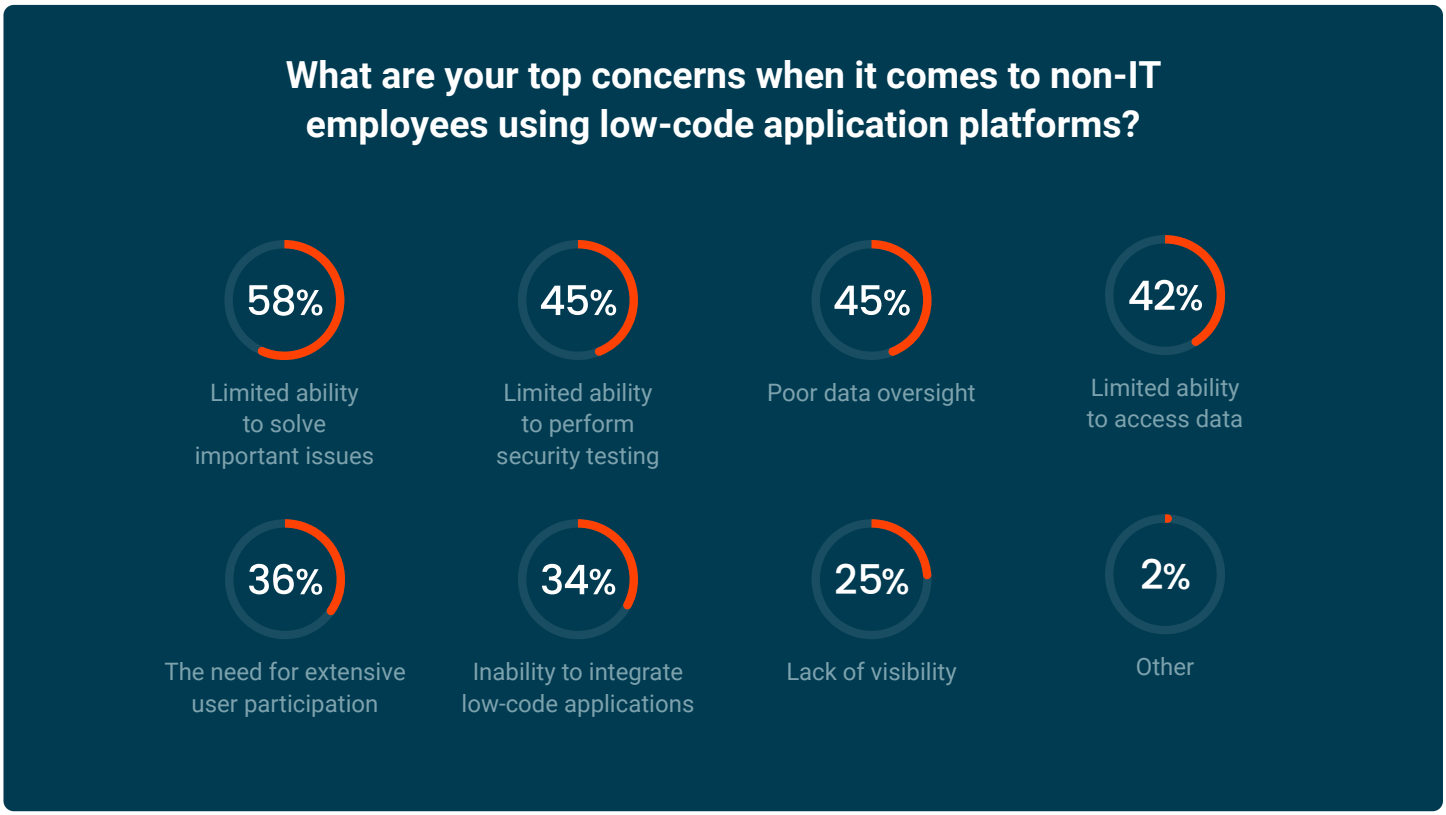
How comfortable are you with employees without an IT function using low-code application building platforms?



When asked about their comfort level, 66% of all respondents are either very or extremely comfortable permitting non-IT employees to use low-code application building platforms.

As would be expected, line of business executives are a little ahead of that average (75% for human resources, 72% for marketing), while IT executives are a little behind the average at 51 percent. HR and marketing executives likely feel more comfortable with low-code tools because they see them as a way of solving problems in a faster manner.

Conversely, IT executives, although generally supportive of low-code tools, are likely to be a little less comfortable embracing technology that disrupts and decreases their overall participation in the process and opens the door to security risks.

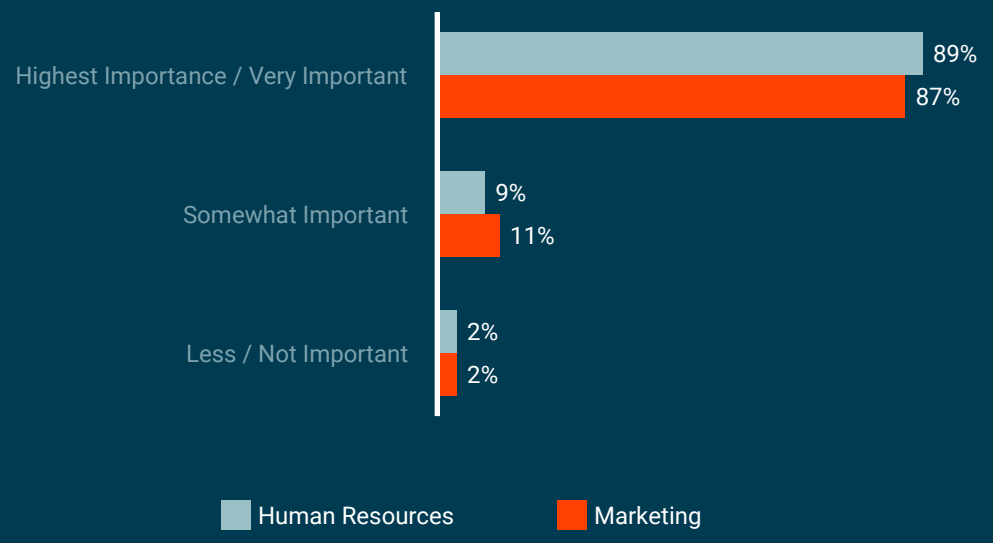


IT executives are less comfortable with permitting employees outside the IT function to use low-code application building platforms due to the limitations this creates for IT to handle potential risks, such as: limited ability to solve important issues (58%), the ability to perform security testing (45%), and poor data oversight (45%).

Considering the relatively recent support and adoption of LCAP solutions, it is not surprising to see concerns (both real and perceived) about the robustness of this technology – especially when it comes to its ability to solve important issues and in a way that protects data, and provides key individuals with necessary oversight. Overcoming these concerns will require careful analysis of an LCAP tool's overall performance and a close partnership with non-IT individuals, especially in the case of understanding the tool's ability to solve important business issues.

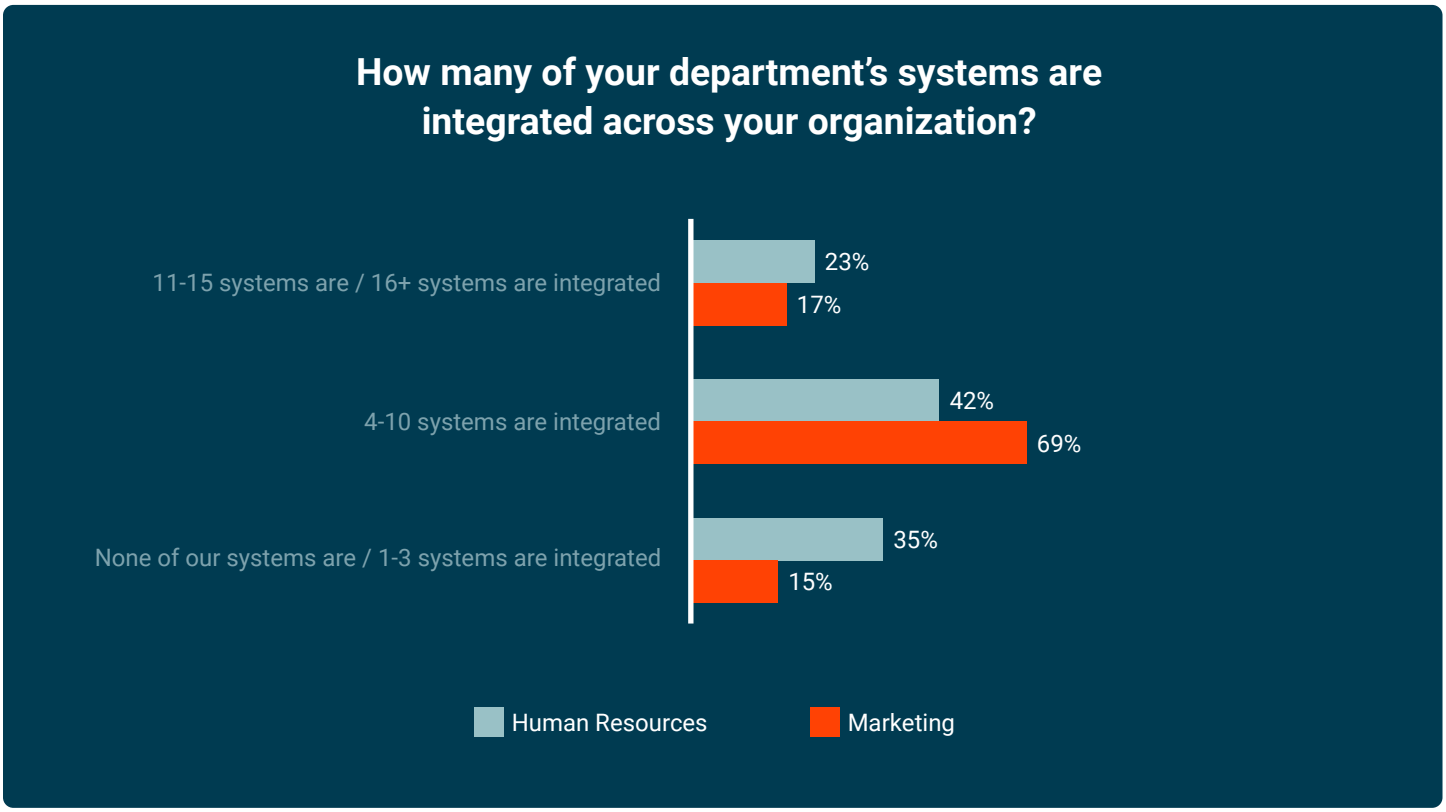
03 HR and Marketing stand to benefit from LCAP as they obtain autonomy over IT decisions

How much of a priority is it within your organization to build, deploy, or maintain low-code applications designed to help solve organizational challenges without significant IT engagement?



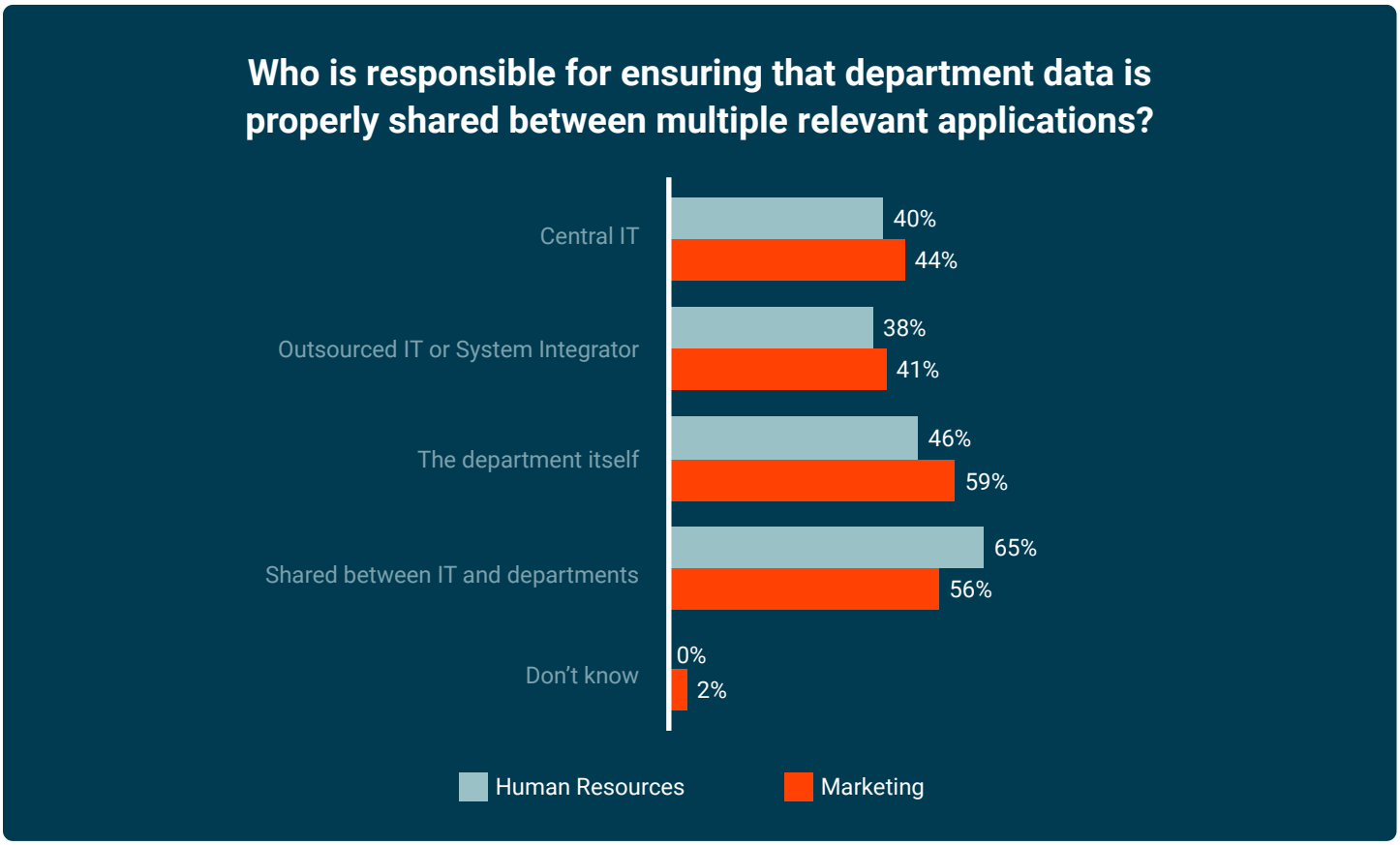
According to respondent data, 89% of HR and 87% of marketing executives consider it to be a high or very high priority to build, deploy, or maintain low-code applications to solve organizational challenges without significant IT engagement. Just 11% of HR respondents and 13% of marketing executives indicated that it is either somewhat important, less important, or not important at all to do the same.

HR and marketing executives clearly see low-code applications as a high-priority initiative going forward This is not surprising, given that the average HR organization utilizes between 9 and 11 different HR-related applications per year to manage crucial employee data[3]. Plus, marketing organizations report having as many as 120 systems and tools in their tech stack[4]. Both of these departments are under considerable pressure to meet and exceed their goals, and must find ways of being successful without being overly dependent on other departments, such as IT.



Seventy-seven percent of HR executives and 84% of marketing executives have less than 10 applications integrated within their department. Only 23% of HR executives and 17% of marketing executives have over 11 different systems integrated.

One of the key value propositions of low-code applications is that they are designed to create applications and extend data flows from applications that are either stand-alone or integrated with another via an iPaaS. If the average HR organization, for example, utilizes between nine and 11 different HR-related applications per year, and less than half of HR executives report having that many systems integrated, low-code application development tools will be in a unique position to solve challenges, while also empowering non-IT executives to do so with their own time and resources.



According to respondents, 46% of HR respondents and 59% of marketing respondents feel that their own department is responsible for ensuring that departmental data is properly shared between multiple relevant applications. Sixty-five percent of HR and 56% of marketing leaders feel that the burden sits between their department and IT. Less than half of both HR (40%) and marketing (44%) believe that central IT manages this responsibility on their own.

HR and marketing departments are still significantly reliant on IT to oversee the rapidly increasing need for data sharing across applications—yet they may feel isolated when it comes to ensuring that department data is properly shared between multiple relevant applications. Low-code application platforms are IT-safeguarded solutions that help HR and marketing departments share data between systems, collaborate with greater efficiency, and solve their critical issues faster.

HR and marketing departments are still heavily reliant on IT to oversee the rapidly increasing need for data sharing across applications.

Conclusion

As the business world continues to evolve with unprecedented speed, low-code application platforms will play an even bigger role in accelerating automation initiatives. Executives looking to keep up with this rapid pace of business are prioritizing LCAPs, but still have concerns around security, data accessibility, and overall success of low-code applications.

Robust LCAP solutions must offer stringent security protocols to comply with corporate policies, provide an intuitive visual interface to reduce the learning curve for non-IT users, and seamlessly integrate into existing applications and systems to prove their value. In fact, respondents agreed that the top five benefits they expect from an LCAP include:

Easy maintenance requirements

The ability to upgrade both the platform itself, as well as apps and data flows.

Ease of deployment

The capability of extending newly created apps and data flows to all relevant parties.

Simplicity of use

Easy-to-use visual application creation with drag-and-drop functionality for any skill level.

Elimination of manual labor

Elimination of manual workflows that are error prone or resource draining so teams can focus on other pressing priorities.

Decreased cost

Build, operate, and maintain business applications with fewer resources and in less time.

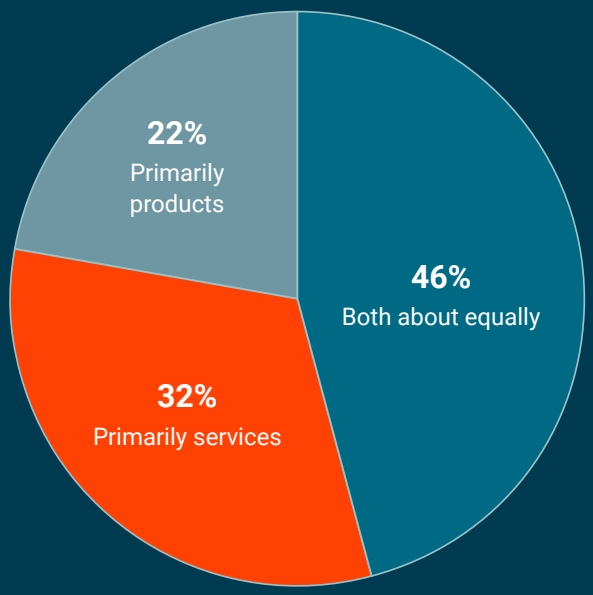
Learn more about Jitterbit's low-code offerings →

Methodology

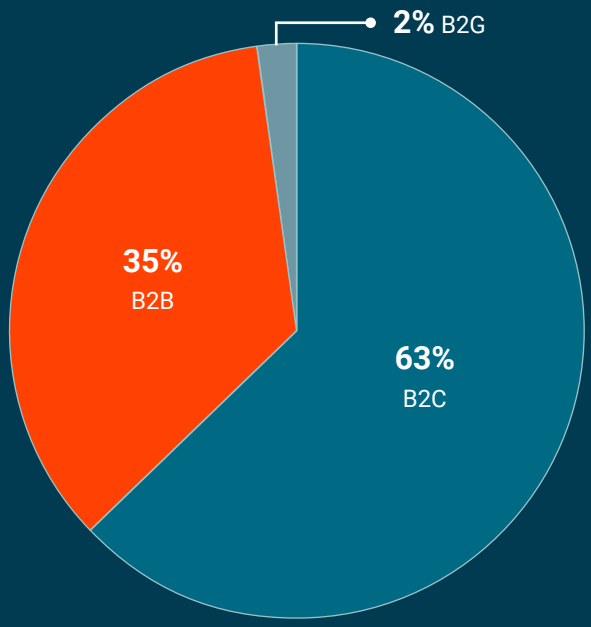
This research into Low-Code Application Platforms (LCAP) was conducted within the context of a larger study into the current state of business automation. The results in this report are from an online survey of IT directors and above, marketing directors and above, and HR managers and above that was fielded from February 2-10, 2023. Over 100 companies responded to the survey, all in firms with 100+ employees. All results are from U.S. respondents. The responses were not weighted.

Thirty-five percent of the respondents had a workforce of 100-999 employees, 54% had a head count of 1,000-9,999 employees, while 11% of those surveyed employed 10,000 or more workers. Contributors hailed from senior management levels, at organizations providing a mix of products and services to the business to business (B2B), business to consumer (B2C), and business to government (B2G) sectors.

Does your organization primarily provide products or services?



Does your organization primarily sell B2B, B2C, or B2G?



Sources

[1] Global competition for a limited pool of technology workers is heating up, International Monetary Fund, 2019, https://www.imf.org/Publications/fandd/issues/2019/03/global-competition-for-technology-workers-costa,

[2] Big Data Statistics 2023: How Much Data is in The World?, First Site Guide, 2023, https://firstsiteguide.com/big-data-stats/

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[4] The average enterprise uses 1,295 cloud services, chiefmartech, 2020, https://chiefmartec.com/2020/02/average-enterprise-uses-1295-cloud-services/,

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