7 Factors to Consider While Selecting a Low-Code Development Platform

kony
Stay Ahead

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Introduction

The process of designing, developing and deploying applications that deliver an amazing digital experience is a complicated one. While Low-Code platforms promise less code, streamlined workflows and faster time to market questions remain. What's the purpose of the proposed app? What does it need to do? Who's leading the charge?

What do you want users to be able to do? What kind of an experience do you want them to have?

When do you need the app by? Realistically, how long will it take to develop?

Do you have people on staff who can develop an app from start to finish?

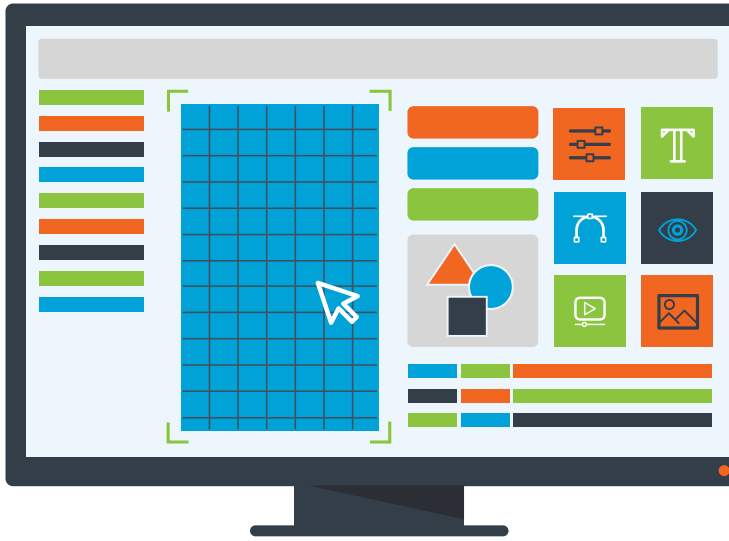
Low-code platforms can help streamline the process of turning ideas into applications but beginning with the end in mind- answering these questions - is paramount not only to your success but in also selecting the Low-Code development platform best suited to your needs. Here are seven of the top questions you should be asking as you evaluate Low-Code development platforms.

1.

Interactive Visual Design Interface

What can I expect from an Interactive Visual Design Interface in my Platform?

The entire idea of a Low-Code application development platform is to make life easier, as compared to the traditional way of developing applications. The typical process involves multiple tools for design and development, creating far too much hand-over between teams during the development lifecycle. As as we all know, working in different systems (usually over each other) usually only makes it easier to develop a headache—not an app. The beauty of Low-Code platforms is that they should provide IT teams with an Interactive Visual Design Interface in which designers can develop an app simply by dragging and dropping design components. Considering the dramatic increase in mobile device usage (not to mention the sheer number of different mobile devices available), a Low-Code platform is worth your time and money provides options to design apps for devices with varying form factors, including smartphones, tablets, and wearables.



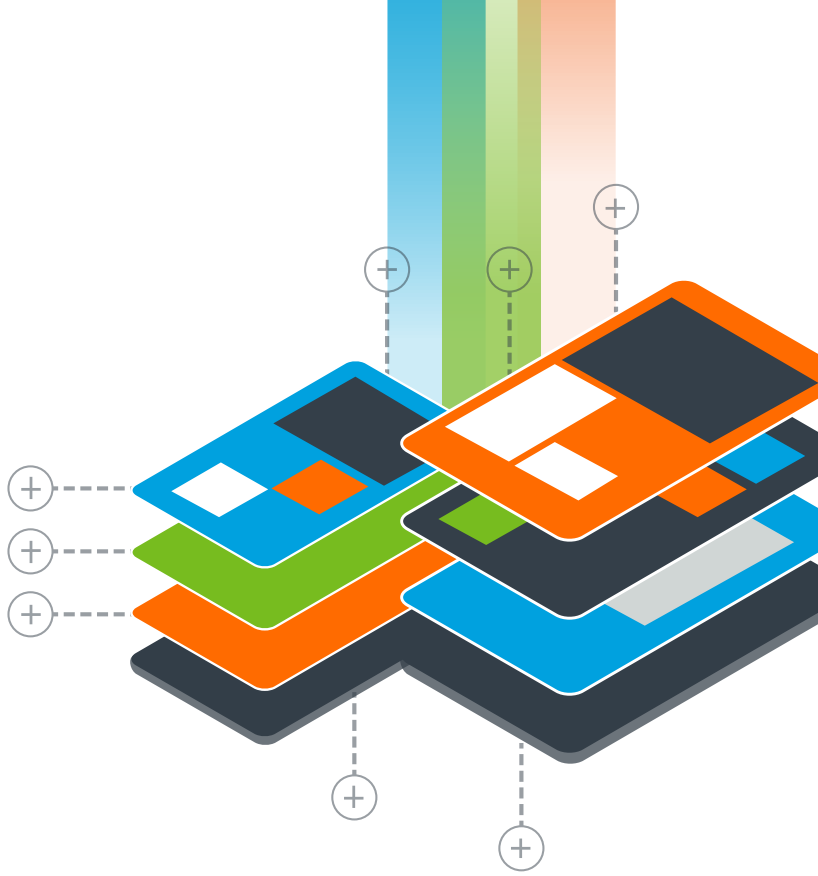
KEY POINTS:

- ✓ ***Low-Code should provide options to design apps across all devices***
- ✓ ***Ready-to-go, extensive design component libraries are essential for speed***
- ✓ ***Design outputs need to be used as-is by developers vs. building from scratch***

2.
Instant Prototyping

How simple is it for me to convert app designs into a live prototype?

We live in an agile world, which means there will always be a need for multiple iterations of app design and rounds of feedback. The ability to quickly build and demonstrate real live app prototypes helps teams enormously in meeting the expectations of stakeholders. Low-Code platforms should enable designers to instantly build live prototypes of an app by including animations and interactions through a visual configuration interface, which eliminates the need for developing prototypes using traditional methods like HTML, native mobile technologies, or third party prototyping tools. Low-Code platforms should allow enterprises to prototype end-to-end business workflows with rich user experiences and view live prototypes on real mobile devices to improve user experience and reduce risk for the organization (that makes everyone happy.)



KEY POINTS:

- ✓ ***Low-Code platforms should enable designers to instantly prototype with animations and interactions through a visual configuration interface***

- ✓ ***Application workflows should be integrated into the process***

3.
Low-Code Development

When it comes to enterprise applications, how low can you go?

At the risk of sounding redundant—agility is important. And in order for designers and developers to be their most productive (read: agile), codeless or Low-Code development is the way to go. It eliminates the need for custom code, which in turn increases the output of IT teams (in business lingo, that's a "win-win"). Going beyond that, Low-Code platforms should also be able to automatically generate code by mapping visual design and configuration parameters to native mobile platform interfaces. Developers should also have an option to generate code snippets for the visual design and animation components—which can then be customized for use in specific business scenarios—instead of being required to write code from scratch. In other words: codeless or Low-Code development should dramatically decrease not only time to market, but also cost.

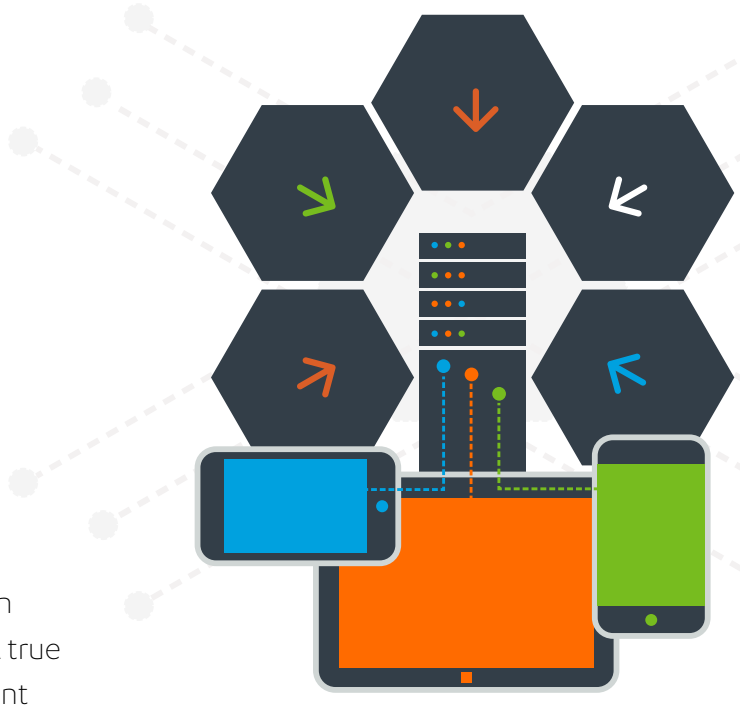
KEY POINTS:

- ✓ ***Codeless design and development options must also allow for customization***
- ✓ ***Understanding what type of code is being generated informs the overall process***

4. Simplified Back-end Integration

Can I quickly integrate applications with back-end enterprise applications using minimal code?

The most time-consuming activity in building an enterprise application is integration with back-end software applications, which accounts for more than 50% of the effort involved in creating an end–to-end enterprise application. A true Low-Code Platform will simplify the entire end-to-end application development process by providing developers with easily deployable, out-of-the-box back-end integrators. Developers should be able to create data models from within the platform, which can then be consumed by the application, thereby bringing about modularity and reusability. While zeroing in on an Low-Code platform, enterprises need to make sure the platform provides the necessary connectors out of the box which will enable integration with existing back-end applications.



KEY POINTS:

- ✓ ***Integration can account for over 50% of application development; look for out-of-the-box backend connectors***

5. Common Standards-based Development

What are the common industry standards supported by the platform?

Common industry standards give developers the flexibility to integrate with any software product without any restrictions by proprietary technologies. Working with common standards increases the availability of support and skilled resources, and using common standards for developing applications reduces the learn cycles during on-boarding of new team members. Low-Code platforms which employ common standards-based application development and also provide developers with a rich repository of documentation and reference material augment enterprise IT teams effectively—not only reducing the amount of time spent in development, but also helping to ensure a great user experience across multiple platforms and devices.

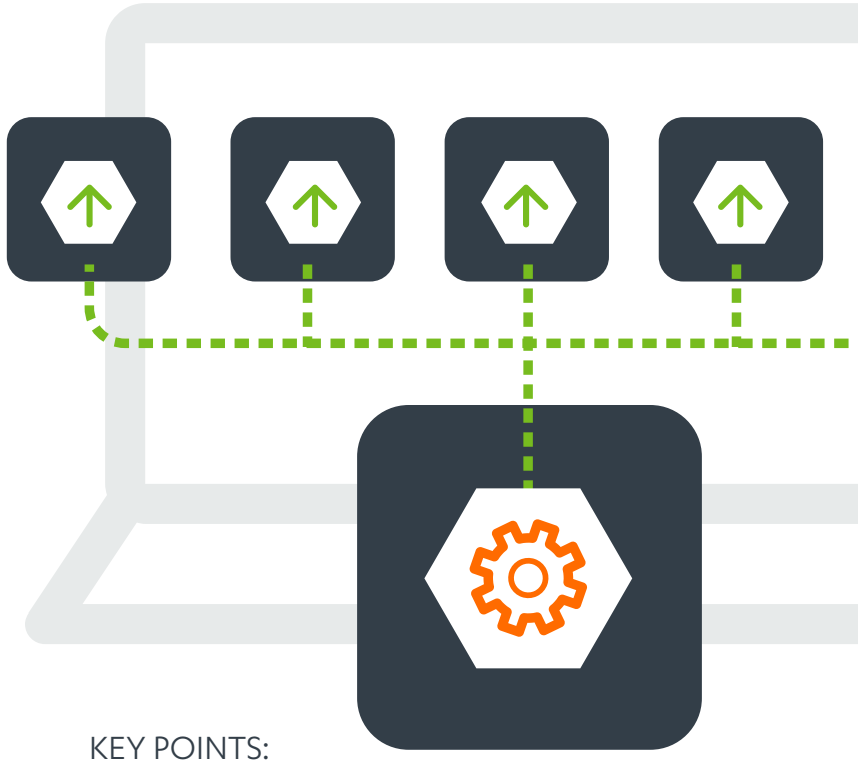
KEY POINTS:

- ***Using common standards for developing mobile applications reduces the learn cycles during on-boarding of new team members***

6. Modularity and Reusability

How much of my effort can I re-use across projects?

Reusability of assets—whether they're design assets or code snippets—is a key driver of productivity among IT teams. Historically, modularization and re-use of assets has been motivated by the idea of reducing the cost of ownership of a project. In today's world where agility helps organizations to remain competitive, a platform that allows designers and developers to modularize and re-use assets enables enterprises to meet market requirements in real-time. A Low-Code platform should allow designers to not just re-use visual assets such as images, themes and skins, but also re-use user experiences in the form of animations and interactions. Developers should also be able to re-use functional modules and code snippets along with backend enterprise application integrators to effectively build applications quickly.



KEY POINTS:

- ✓ ***Low-Code should enable more than asset reuse; user experiences must also be reusable***
- ✓ ***Importing code snippets and functional modules is critical for development speed***

7.

Mobile-Optimized Capabilities

What channel specific capabilities are available out of the box?

A Low-Code platform that provides components out-of-the-box dramatically reduces development efforts and provide designers and developers with simple drag and drop configuration of design components including all native application components such as buttons, text boxes, list boxes, containers, etc. The design components should also cater to the native experiences in the form of animations, gestures, and interactions in various channels such as iOS, Android, and Windows. The platforms should simplify building native functionality like touch authentication in iOS, folder zip, etc., saving developers the effort of building these functions from scratch (which again saves time and money).The platform should also allow simple integration with back-end systems along with visual data model-mapping. Features like these enable designers and analysts without niche mobile development skills to quickly develop an end-to-end mobile application.

Not to be forgotten in all of this is security, which is a critical consideration in this brave new digital world we live in. Along with allowing designers and developers to create an app without having niche skills, a great Low-Code makes security easy, providing simple configurable parameters to include encryption, authentication, and authorization while building enterprise-class applications.

KEY POINTS:

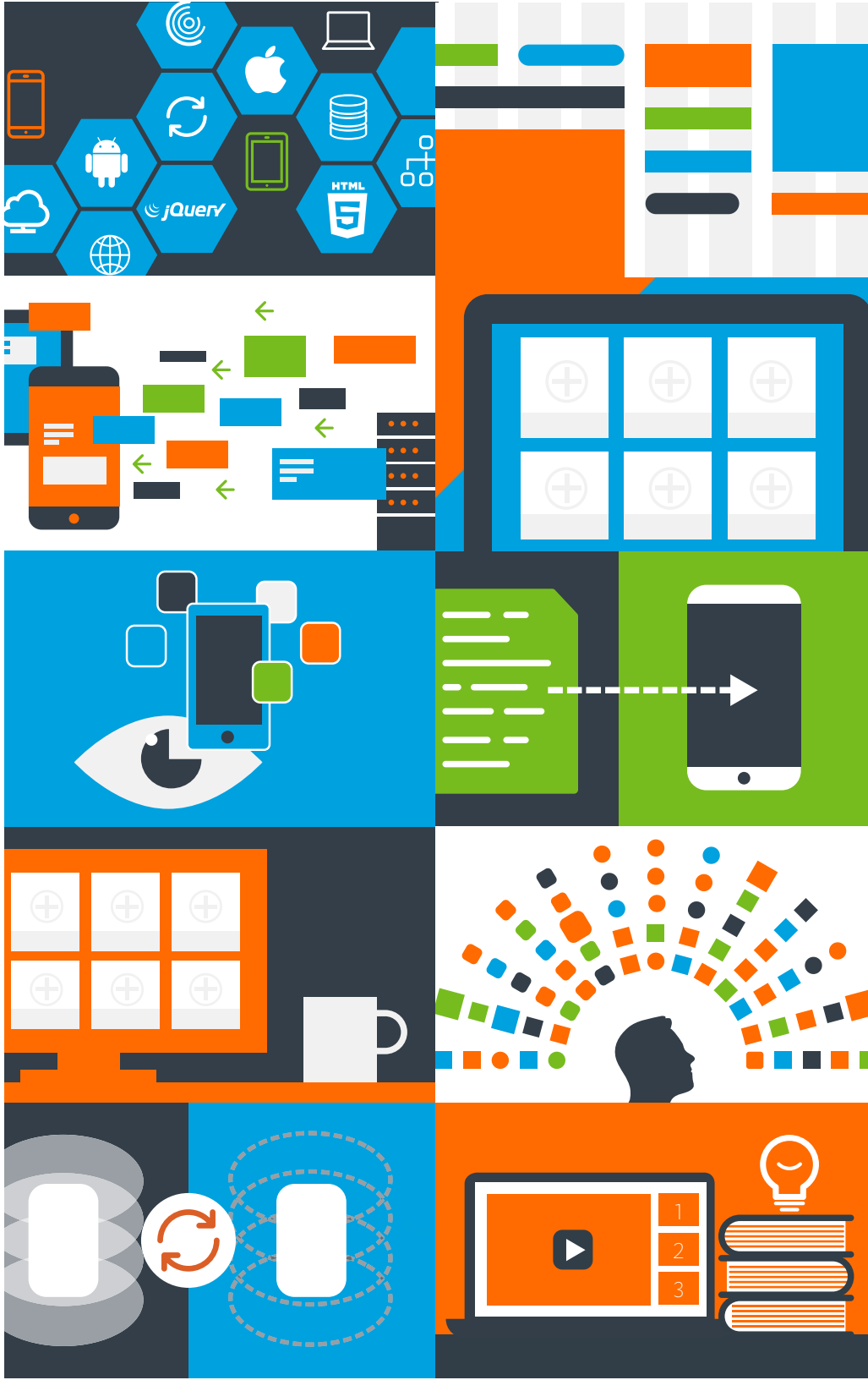
- ***Low-Code should simplify building native mobile functionality like touch authentication in iOS, folder zip, etc.***
- ***Platform security should provide simple configurable parameters to include encryption, authentication, and authorization***

CAPABILITIES	QUESTIONS TO ASK	KONY'S ANSWER	OTHER'S ANSWER
1. Interactive Visual Design Interface	*Does the platform allow me to build designs by simply dragging and dropping components?*	Kony provides an intuitive visual interface where designers can drag widgets and components onto a canvas to build designs for digital devices. Visualizer also provides an exhaustive library of native platform components which designers can choose from while building designs.	
	Does the Visual Design Interface cater to multiple channels such as smartphones, tablets, wearables, and desktops?	Kony helps designers build rich native designs for digital apps on smartphones, tablets, wearable and desktop devices. It also allows designers to reuse designs between these channels which in turn helps churn out consistent designs in quick time.	
	Is the design interface cross-platform and cater to the specifics of iOS, Android, and Windows platforms?	Designers can leverage Kony to build designs for digital applications without getting into the specifics of native experiences. Kony has widgets, animation and interactions which cater to the native user experiences and specifics of native platforms.	
	Is there an exhaustive design component library available to pick and choose from while designing mobile applications?	Kony provides an exhaustive library of native platform components in the form of widgets which designers can choose from while building designs. These widgets also adhere to the specific native user experience depending on the underlying platform.	
	Can my design output be used as-is by developers to build applications without the need for developing it from scratch.	Kony design output can be leveraged as-is by developer while building the production ready application. The design project can be imported as-is by developers who can then wire up the digital app with back end enterprise applications before building the application binaries.	
2. Instant Prototyping	*Can I build prototypes of my enterprise application and view it across devices across multiple channels?*	Kony's intuitive visual interface and design libraries can be leveraged to build digital app designs. These designs can instantly be viewed on a real device (iOS, Android, Windows) using the 'App Preview'. A user would only need to install the 'App Preview' on any device and use the App Design Code to view it on the device.	
	Is there an animation library available to pick and choose from while building prototypes?	Kony comes with an exhaustive library of animations and interactions to choose from. A designer can configure and associate any required animation from the library with the occurrence of an event, while the user interacts with the digital app interface.	
	Can I prototype my application workflows?	Designers can leverage out-of-the-box Action Library to build animations and navigate between various screens while building an application workflow. The prototypes application workflow can be viewed on a real device using App Preview.	
	Is there an option to build custom animations and interactions?	Kony provides a very exhaustive animation library for building app prototypes. Designer who would prefer to use a custom animation have the option of hand coding the experience in JavaScript within the AppPlatform.	
3. Low-Code Development	*Can I build a basic application without any custom code requirements?*	Kony will enable designers build digital app designs using out-of-the-box components without any need for hand coding. This allows developers to build basic digital applications with zero coding.	
	Is it possible to build custom components beyond the available codeless design and development options?	Designers and developers can leverage Kony out of box components to build a digital application, however one is also option to build custom components and experiences by hand coding in JavaScript.	
	Can I generate code for the design components in order to customize and re-use elsewhere?	Kony helps users to design using the visual interface and later generate the code for the designs. This code can be reused by developers and designers elsewhere in the project and can also be customized as per the needs.	
	What is the language in which code is generated? Is it a global standard language or a vendor's proprietary language?	Kony code for designs in JavaScript.	
CAPABILITIES	*QUESTIONS TO ASK*	KONY'S ANSWER	OTHER'S ANSWER

4. Simplified Backend Integration	*What are the backend integrators available out of the box in the platform?*	Kony's digital solution stack help developer integrate mobile apps with a wide range of enterprise applications by leveraging the connectors available out of the box for several enterprise apps including Salesforce, SAP, Oracle, Databases, etc.	
	What are the authentication mechanisms supported for applications?	Kony's digital solution stack support several enterprise grade security systems for authentication including oAuth, LDAP, SAML, Active Directory, Site Minder, etc.	
	Is there a provision to develop offline app capabilities?	Kony's provides the option to configure offline capabilities for a digital application. Users can also configure advanced sync options including conflict resolution.	
	Is there an option to build application analytics?	Kony's digital stack allows for including app analytics. Alternatively users may also integrate with 3rd party solutions like Crittercism.	
	Is it possible to define generic data models which can be consumed by mobile applications?	Kony's provides developers with 'object services' which can be leveraged to build generic data models for consumption by the application. Object services help modularization of code as well as generalization of interfaces in order to reduce impact of change in code in an app project.	
5. Common Standards Based Development	*What development standards are supported?*	Kony AppPlatform leverages JavaScript for building front end digital applications. These applications can further be integrated with several back end applications using methods and protocols which are standardized in the industry like REST, JSON, XML Services.	
	How are older open standards such as HTML4 supported?	Kony AppPlatform supports older standards like HTML4 by allowing rendering of sites designed in HTML4 within the native browser views in the application.	
6. Modularity & Reusability	*Can I modularize views, business logic, and backend integrations?*	Kony allows for building generic back end application integrations with data models that can be consumed by any applications. The frond end user experience can be built separately using along with mapping of front end views with back end information sources.	
	Can I save design assets with animations such as animated buttons, login forms, etc.?	Kony promotes reusability of designs for improving productivity of design and development teams. Kony provides features like templates, collections and Masters which helps designers save assets for future reuse.	
	Can I re-use assets saved across apps for devices with different form factors such as smartphones and tablets?	Kony provides designers with an option to use 'Masters' which will enable saving of design assets and reuse of the same while designing apps for smartphones, tablet and desktop devices.	
	Can I import existing code snippets and functional modules into new mobile app development?	Kony allows the use of external code snippets and modules within the development platform. Developers can leverage existing code snippets while developing an application in Kony without the need for developing it from scratch.	
7. Mobile-Optimized Capabilities	*What are the mobile-specific design assets available for use?*	Kony provides an exhaustive library of design widgets and animation sequences out of the box. The widgets and animations caters to the native user experience on the underlying platform, be it a simple calendar widget view on iOS/Android device to complex interactions between the users and the native mobile app.	
	Are the design components channel specific?	All design components exposed by widget libraries and animation libraries are cross platform in nature, which allows designers to create a single design which caters to multiple platforms. However under the covers, the underlying framework caters to channel specific user experiences without the need for any involvement of the developer. E.g. Using Kony, designers can leverage the list box widget in the app design, which will render as per the native experiences on iOS, Android and Windows devices.	
	Can I leverage all interfaces exposed by the native platforms through the low-code application development platform?	Kony's APIs and Foreign Functional Interfaces (FFI) allows developers to leverage any native interfaces of the underlying platform, from within. This will increase the horizon of imagination when it comes to building rich and stunning user mobile experiences.	

Conclusion

Whether you're just now developing your first app, refining an existing one, or deploying multiple apps, the process for doing so can be complicated. Utilizing a Low-Code development platform can help you not only make that process easier, but also help the business reach its goals in a timely, cost-efficient manner. The great thing about Low-Code platforms is that they simplify the process and give you greater flexibility to create a stunning, user-friendly app that everyone is on-board with.



Kony is the fastest growing, cloud-based digital application and enterprise mobility solutions company, and a recognized industry leader among low code and mobile application development platform (MADP) providers. Kony helps organizations of all sizes drive business ingenuity by rapidly transforming ideas into innovative and secure omnichannel applications. Built on the industry's leading digital platform, Kony provides the most innovative and secure omnichannel applications, with exceptional user experience and app design. Kony's cross-platform, low-code solution also empowers organizations to develop and manage their own apps to better engage with their customers, partners and employees. By seamlessly leveraging and connecting apps to all types of data sources and information, Kony also enables organizations to transform their business processes and gain valuable insight. Kony was named the first place winner in CTIA's MobITs Awards in the Mobile Applications, Development & Platforms category and included on the Inc. 500|5000 list of fastest growing private companies in America.

For more information, please visit www.kony.com. Connect with Kony on Twitter, Facebook, and LinkedIn.

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