

The Forrester Wave™: Mobile Low-Code Platforms For Business Developers, Q3 2018

The 12 Providers That Matter Most And How They Stack Up

by Jeffrey S. Hammond and Bill Seguin
August 7, 2018 | Updated: August 8, 2018

Why Read This Report

In our 30-criteria evaluation of mobile low-code platforms for business developers, we identified the 12 most significant providers — AppSheet, Betty Blocks, Dropsource, DSI, Intelledox, Microsoft, MobileSmith, Pulpstream, Quick Base, Skuid, Snappii, and Zudy — and researched, analyzed, and scored them. This report shows how each provider measures up and helps application development and delivery (AD&D) professionals make the right choice.

Key Takeaways

AppSheet, Betty Blocks, And Microsoft Lead The Pack

Forrester's research uncovered a market in which Microsoft, AppSheet, and Betty Blocks are Leaders; Dropsource and Skuid are Strong Performers; Intelledox, DSI, Quick Base, Snappii, and MobileSmith are Contenders; and Pulpstream and Zudy are Challengers.

Business Users Are Taking Control Of The Apps They Need

The mobile low-code platform market for business developers is growing as more business users are looking to get the apps they need even when mobile developers are in short supply. In many cases, that means starting with an existing app and using a platform to quickly customize it.

Startup Experience, Declarative UX Tooling, And Location Are Key Differentiators

Many business users don't want to wait on IT to provision a low-code platform for them. Vendors with an easy startup experience, automatic app creation, native UI controls, and robust location support stand out in helping business users quickly deliver customer value.

The Forrester Wave™: Mobile Low-Code Platforms For Business Developers, Q3 2018

The 12 Providers That Matter Most And How They Stack Up

by [Jeffrey S. Hammond](#) and [Bill Seguin](#)

with [Christopher Mines](#), Allison Vizgaitis, and Ian McPherson

August 7, 2018 | Updated: August 8, 2018

Table Of Contents

2 Mobile Low-Code Development Tools Help Close The App Gap

Mobile Low-Code Platforms Must Support Multiple Mobile Workloads

Mobile Low-Code Platforms Are In Flux As The Market Matures

4 Mobile Low-Code Platforms For Business Users Evaluation Overview

Evaluated Vendors And Inclusion Criteria

6 Vendor Profiles

Leaders

Strong Performers

Contenders

Challengers

16 Supplemental Material

Related Research Documents

[The Forrester New Wave™: Low-Code Platforms For Business Developers, Q4 2017](#)

[How To Harness Citizen Developers To Expand Your AD&D Capacity](#)

[Now Tech: Mobile Low-Code Development Platforms, Q1 2018](#)



Share reports with colleagues.

Enhance your membership with Research Share.

The Forrester Wave™: Mobile Low-Code Platforms For Business Developers, Q3 2018

The 12 Providers That Matter Most And How They Stack Up

Mobile Low-Code Development Tools Help Close The App Gap

Mobile engagement naturally becomes a high priority as business leaders look to digitally transform their customer and employee experiences. But mobile apps don't just create themselves, and experienced mobile developers remain in short supply in many digital and IT organizations. At best, most firms field one or two mobile IDEA teams that tackle a customer-facing “hero app” — leaving other mobile experience demands unfulfilled. This imbalance between demand for mobile experiences and supply of mobile development talent creates a gap in app delivery. That's why the ability to better meet business demand for customer applications and address backlog is the second biggest software development priority for global developer managers.¹ Professional developers attack this problem by increasing delivery speed through adoption of Agile and DevOps practices. But what happens when that is not enough? Low-code development tools in the hands of business users are another option that allow digital leaders to:

- › **Tap into an untouched well of subject matter expertise.** Enterprise organizations have many frontline employees with good subject matter expertise who are also digital natives capable of expressing how mobile apps should work. They run complex queries and reports in Salesforce and build formulas in Excel. Many of the low-code tools Forrester evaluated in this report leverage similar metaphors that allow business users to work with what they know while broadening the breadth and depth of mobile apps they can build.²
- › **Leverage technical knowledge and skills.** Finding the right development talent is an ongoing struggle for application development leaders.³ With low-code (sometimes no code) platforms development leaders leverage the professional developers they do have in support of business users. Business users focus on UX and customer journeys, while pro developers build web services that integrate data from existing applications and databases. In other cases, low-code platforms are used as a powerful “gateway tool,” opening up advancement opportunities for business users into full-time app development.⁴ For example, we spoke with one low-code customer who was a customer service employee with an interest in building an application. His innovation garnered the attention of his company's IT director and spurred his advancement to a managing role in the innovation center of central operations.
- › **Emancipate themselves from manual process work and improve customer experience.** Mobile low-code platforms for business users tend to be less complex than their counterparts for AD&D pros. They are tailored to streamline business activities and make the road to a useful app as easy as possible. In many cases, the apps made on mobile low-code platforms are replacing pen-and-paper processes, cutting down what once took days to a few minutes. Leveraging these platforms not only helps business reduce IT's development workload, but also frees up their time from mundane tasks and gives them more time to focus on delivering a great customer experience.

The Forrester Wave™: Mobile Low-Code Platforms For Business Developers, Q3 2018

The 12 Providers That Matter Most And How They Stack Up

Mobile Low-Code Platforms Must Support Multiple Mobile Workloads

Mobile low-code development platforms are an offshoot of the broader category of low-code platforms, designed to support the particular needs of mobile apps and several classes of mobile developers. The Forrester Analytics Business Technographics® survey of 1,456 global developers using low-code tools shows that one-quarter of respondents were building complete mobile applications with these tools.⁵ These products go beyond general-purpose low-code development platforms by including dedicated features closely associated with mobile experiences, including support for mobile notifications, enterprise mobile management tools, biometric authentication, and support for offline caching and filtering of data when devices aren't connected. Business users wield mobile low-code development platforms to:

- › **Quickly build mobile apps.** At the risk of stating the obvious, most aspiring business users select mobile low-code development platforms because they have an idea or need for a mobile app and can't get it built by the professional developers in their IT organization (assuming there are even developers on staff). For these business users, the need for tools is tactical and immediate.
- › **Mobile-enable existing business processes.** Another set of business users wants to automate existing business processes on mobile devices for employees and business partners. Common examples include field or plant inspections, construction management, patient engagement, purchasing approvals, inventory management, and expense approvals. In this case, business users must integrate with existing systems of record, either by building an app on top of an existing web application or through APIs or connections into underlying database storage systems.
- › **Create interactive reports or dashboards.** Getting status information to people who need it, when they need it, is another common workload that mobile low-code business users embrace. Notifications alert interested parties that data has changed, and large-screen mobile devices or tablets provide enough space to replicate executive briefing books or interactive reports with drillable charts and graphs. The resulting mobile apps provide glanceable information at any point in the day without requiring users to find a computer and boot up a browser.
- › **Replace pen and paper with dynamic forms.** Much of the world's information gathering still relies on data capture via standardized paper forms (for example, a passport renewal or tax return). Mobile low-code development platforms allow business users to create interactive experiences that guide a user through a data collection process, capture only the information needed, and fill out the electronic equivalent of a form behind the scenes.

Mobile Low-Code Platforms Are In Flux As The Market Matures

The mobile low-code platform market is in flux. Larger platform and public cloud vendors are moving in and precipitating consolidation, while new startups continue to pop-up to meet the needs of market niches. Over the course of our prior research and this Forrester Wave™ evaluation, Forrester found that:

The Forrester Wave™: Mobile Low-Code Platforms For Business Developers, Q3 2018

The 12 Providers That Matter Most And How They Stack Up

- › **Mobile low-code platforms are segmented by target user.** As in the general-purpose low-code market, we are witnessing a division in mobile platforms. They are either tailored to business users like the ones in this Forrester Wave or designed and marketed for full-time professional developers. The business platforms evaluated in this report often label themselves as “no-code” and are all about simplicity. Platforms aimed at professional developers are trying to win converts who might scoff at the high-level abstractions used by platforms aimed at business users. Forrester has not yet seen a vendor successfully address both market segments with the same tools, as the best experiences cater to a specific audience and use case instead of trying to meet somewhere in the middle.
- › **AD&D mobile low-code platforms merge and business platforms remain independent.** Our research into mobile low-code platforms indicates that solutions focused at professional developers are beginning to rub elbows with other development tool offerings like general-purpose low-code platforms or digital experience development platforms that have expanded their capabilities. As these tools coalesce into a broader tool ecosystem, mobile low-code platforms for business users remain a distinct category.⁶

Mobile Low-Code Platforms For Business Users Evaluation Overview

To assess the state of the mobile low-code platforms for business users market and see how the vendors stack up against one another, Forrester evaluated the strengths and weaknesses of top mobile low code platform vendors. After examining past research, user need assessments, and vendor and expert interviews, we developed a comprehensive set of evaluation criteria. We evaluated vendors against 30 criteria, which we grouped into three high-level buckets:

- › **Current offering.** Each vendor’s position on the vertical axis of the Forrester Wave graphic indicates the strength of its current offering. Key criteria for these solutions include startup experience, data binding and access, location support, and embedded reporting.
- › **Strategy.** Placement on the horizontal axis indicates the strength of the vendors’ strategies. We evaluated business model/service vision, product road map and self-service enablement.
- › **Market presence.** Represented by the size of the markers on the graphic, our market presence scores reflect each vendor’s product revenue, product revenue growth rate, and number of enterprise customers.

Evaluated Vendors And Inclusion Criteria

Forrester included 12 vendors in the assessment: AppSheet, Betty Blocks, Dropsource, DSI, Intelledox, Microsoft, MobileSmith, Pulpstream, Quick Base, Skuid, Snappii, and Zudy. Each of these vendors has (see Figure 1):

- › **A focus on business users.** While there is some variance in the complexity of the development metaphor across vendors, each vendor we assessed focuses primarily on enabling business users or business developers.

The Forrester Wave™: Mobile Low-Code Platforms For Business Developers, Q3 2018

The 12 Providers That Matter Most And How They Stack Up

- › **Interest from Forrester clients.** We've included vendors that have come up in our inquiries with clients that are evaluating low-code tools in order to aid their due diligence.

FIGURE 1 Evaluated Vendors: Product Information And Inclusion Criteria

Vendor	Platform	Version
AppSheet	AppSheet	
Betty Blocks	Betty Blocks	
Dropsourc	Dropsourc	2.1
DSI	Digital Supply Chain Platform	9.0 Service Pack 4
Intelledox	Intelledox Infiniti	version 10.1, Service Pack 1
Microsoft	PowerApps	
MobileSmith	MobileSmith Platform	6
Pulpstream	Pulpstream Platform	
Quick Base	Quick Base Platform	
Skuid	Skuid	Skuid Millau
Snappii	Snappii	4
Zudy	Vynil Platform	

Vendor inclusion criteria

1. The vendor offers a platform that is specifically designed and dedicated for the development of mobile apps (instead of a general-purpose platform).
2. The vendor's platform is designed to serve business developer clients with little or no technical expertise.
3. The vendor's platform generates at least \$500,000 per year in mobile low-code product revenue.

The Forrester Wave™: Mobile Low-Code Platforms For Business Developers, Q3 2018

The 12 Providers That Matter Most And How They Stack Up

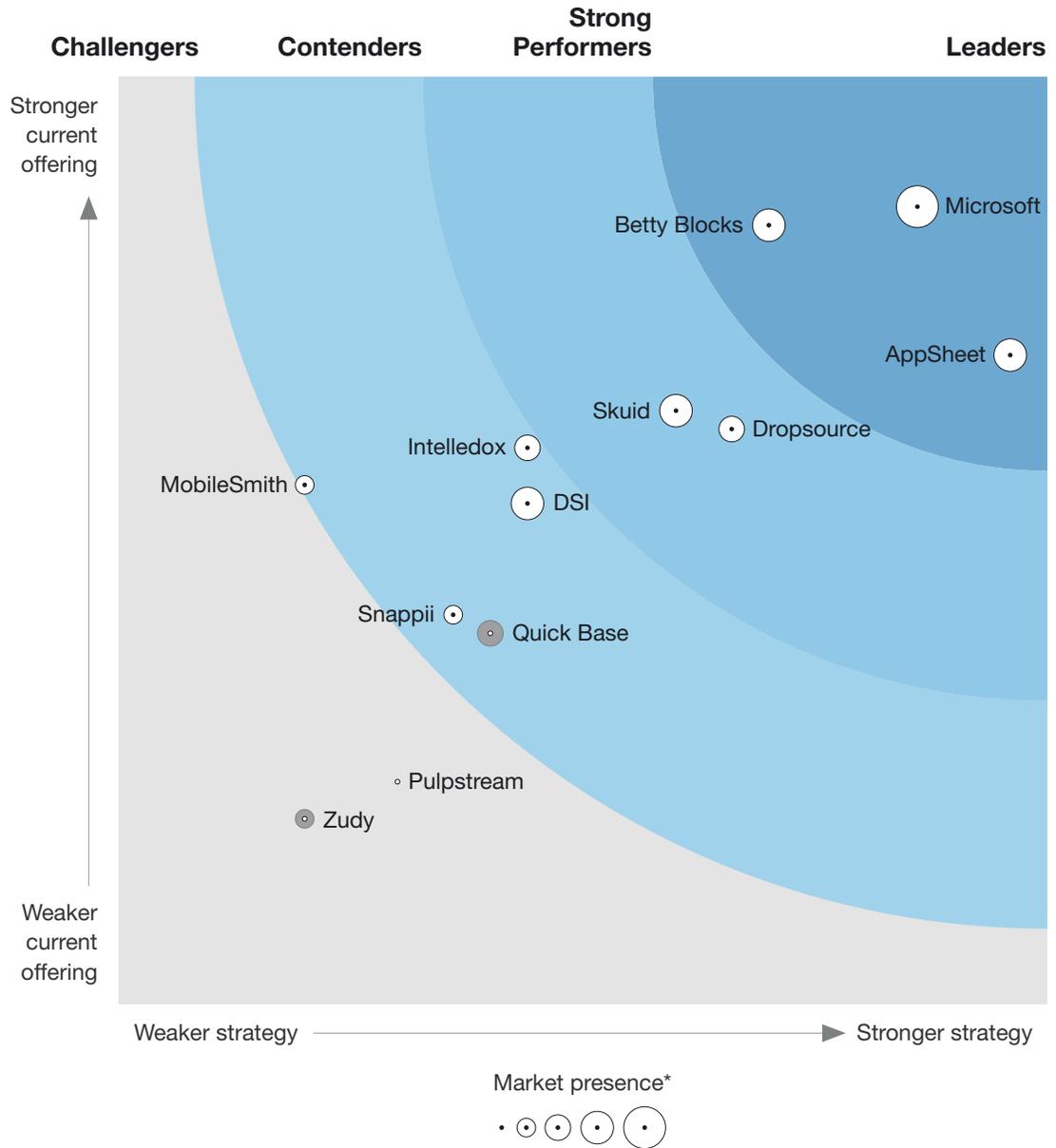
Vendor Profiles

This evaluation of the mobile-low code development platforms market is intended to be a starting point only. We encourage clients to view detailed product evaluations and adapt criteria weightings to fit their individual needs through the Forrester Wave Excel-based vendor comparison tool (see Figure 2 and see Figure 3). Click the link at the beginning of this report on Forrester.com to download the tool.

The Forrester Wave™: Mobile Low-Code Platforms For Business Developers, Q3 2018

The 12 Providers That Matter Most And How They Stack Up

FIGURE 2 Forrester Wave™: Mobile Low-Code Platforms For Business Developers, Q3 2018



*A gray marker indicates incomplete vendor participation.

The Forrester Wave™: Mobile Low-Code Platforms For Business Developers, Q3 2018

The 12 Providers That Matter Most And How They Stack Up

FIGURE 3 Forrester Wave™: Mobile Low-Code Platforms For Business Developers Scorecard, Q3 2018

	Forrester's weighting	AppSheet	Betty Blocks	Dropsource	DSI	Intelldox	Microsoft
Current Offering	50%	3.50	4.20	3.10	2.70	3.00	4.30
Startup experience	5%	5.00	3.00	3.00	1.00	3.00	5.00
Declarative UX tooling	5%	3.00	5.00	5.00	1.00	1.00	3.00
Data binding and access	5%	5.00	5.00	3.00	1.00	3.00	5.00
Integration	5%	3.00	5.00	3.00	5.00	3.00	5.00
Embedding content	5%	3.00	5.00	3.00	1.00	5.00	5.00
Collaboration support	5%	3.00	3.00	5.00	1.00	3.00	5.00
Location support	5%	3.00	5.00	3.00	5.00	1.00	3.00
Embedded reporting	5%	5.00	5.00	1.00	3.00	3.00	5.00
Analytics	5%	3.00	3.00	5.00	3.00	3.00	5.00
Platform deployment options	5%	3.00	5.00	3.00	5.00	3.00	3.00
Mobile offline	5%	5.00	3.00	1.00	5.00	5.00	5.00
Deployment	5%	5.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00
App store support and asset sharing	5%	3.00	5.00	5.00	1.00	1.00	3.00
AI and NLP	5%	5.00	5.00	3.00	1.00	3.00	5.00
Identity management and authorization	5%	1.00	5.00	5.00	5.00	3.00	5.00
App scaling and performance	5%	1.00	5.00	1.00	3.00	1.00	3.00
Platform certifications	5%	3.00	3.00	3.00	1.00	5.00	5.00
Mobile client support	5%	3.00	3.00	5.00	3.00	3.00	3.00
Internationalization and localization	5%	3.00	5.00	1.00	3.00	5.00	5.00
Platform administration	5%	5.00	3.00	1.00	3.00	3.00	5.00

All scores are based on a scale of 0 (weak) to 5 (strong).

The Forrester Wave™: Mobile Low-Code Platforms For Business Developers, Q3 2018

The 12 Providers That Matter Most And How They Stack Up

FIGURE 3 Forrester Wave™: Mobile Low-Code Platforms For Business Developers Scorecard, Q3 2018 (Cont.)

	Forrester's weighting	AppSheet	Betty Blocks	Dropsource	DSI	Intelldox	Microsoft
Strategy	50%	4.80	3.50	3.30	2.20	2.20	4.30
Business model/service vision	25%	5.00	5.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	5.00
Product road map	25%	5.00	5.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00
Self-service enablement	25%	5.00	1.00	5.00	1.00	1.00	5.00
Partner ecosystem	10%	3.00	3.00	1.00	3.00	3.00	3.00
Commercial model	15%	5.00	3.00	3.00	1.00	1.00	5.00
Market Presence	0%	3.40	3.40	2.20	3.40	3.00	4.60
Number of enterprise customer logos	20%	3.00	3.00	1.00	5.00	3.00	5.00
Global footprint	20%	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	5.00
Product revenue	20%	1.00	3.00	1.00	5.00	3.00	3.00
Product revenue growth rate	20%	5.00	5.00	5.00	1.00	3.00	5.00
Enterprise installation growth	20%	5.00	3.00	1.00	3.00	3.00	5.00

All scores are based on a scale of 0 (weak) to 5 (strong).

The Forrester Wave™: Mobile Low-Code Platforms For Business Developers, Q3 2018

The 12 Providers That Matter Most And How They Stack Up

FIGURE 3 Forrester Wave™: Mobile Low-Code Platforms For Business Developers Scorecard, Q3 2018 (Cont.)

	Forrester's weighting	MobileSmith	Pulpstream*	Quick Base*	Skuid	Snappii	Zudy*
Current Offering	50%	2.80	1.20	2.00	3.20	2.10	1.00
Startup experience	5%	3.00	1.00	5.00	1.00	3.00	1.00
Declarative UX tooling	5%	3.00	1.00	1.00	3.00	3.00	1.00
Data binding and access	5%	3.00	1.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	1.00
Integration	5%	1.00	1.00	3.00	5.00	1.00	1.00
Embedding content	5%	3.00	1.00	1.00	3.00	1.00	1.00
Collaboration support	5%	1.00	1.00	1.00	3.00	1.00	1.00
Location support	5%	5.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	3.00	1.00
Embedded reporting	5%	1.00	3.00	3.00	5.00	1.00	1.00
Analytics	5%	3.00	1.00	5.00	1.00	3.00	1.00
Platform deployment options	5%	3.00	1.00	1.00	5.00	1.00	1.00
Mobile offline	5%	3.00	1.00	1.00	3.00	1.00	1.00
Deployment	5%	3.00	1.00	1.00	5.00	1.00	1.00
App store support and asset sharing	5%	3.00	1.00	1.00	5.00	5.00	1.00
AI and NLP	5%	1.00	1.00	1.00	3.00	1.00	1.00
Identity management and authorization	5%	5.00	3.00	1.00	3.00	1.00	1.00
App scaling and performance	5%	5.00	1.00	1.00	5.00	3.00	1.00
Platform certifications	5%	3.00	1.00	5.00	3.00	1.00	1.00
Mobile client support	5%	5.00	1.00	1.00	1.00	3.00	1.00
Internationalization and localization	5%	1.00	1.00	1.00	3.00	5.00	1.00
Platform administration	5%	1.00	1.00	3.00	3.00	1.00	1.00

All scores are based on a scale of 0 (weak) to 5 (strong).

*Indicates incomplete vendor participation

The Forrester Wave™: Mobile Low-Code Platforms For Business Developers, Q3 2018

The 12 Providers That Matter Most And How They Stack Up

FIGURE 3 Forrester Wave™: Mobile Low-Code Platforms For Business Developers Scorecard, Q3 2018 (Cont.)

	Forrester's weighting	MobileSmith	Pulpstream*	Quick Base*	Skuid	Snappii	Zudy*
Strategy	50%	1.00	1.50	2.00	3.00	1.80	1.00
Business model/service vision	25%	1.00	1.00	1.00	3.00	1.00	1.00
Product road map	25%	1.00	1.00	1.00	3.00	1.00	1.00
Self-service enablement	25%	1.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	1.00
Partner ecosystem	10%	1.00	1.00	3.00	3.00	1.00	1.00
Commercial model	15%	1.00	1.00	3.00	3.00	3.00	1.00
Market Presence	0%	1.80	1.00	2.20	3.40	1.40	1.40
Number of enterprise customer logos	20%	1.00	1.00	3.00	3.00	1.00	1.00
Global footprint	20%	1.00	1.00	1.00	5.00	1.00	1.00
Product revenue	20%	1.00	1.00	5.00	3.00	1.00	3.00
Product revenue growth rate	20%	3.00	1.00	1.00	3.00	3.00	1.00
Enterprise installation growth	20%	3.00	1.00	1.00	3.00	1.00	1.00

All scores are based on a scale of 0 (weak) to 5 (strong).

*Indicates incomplete vendor participation

Leaders

- › **Microsoft enhances Microsoft 365 with low-code extensibility.** With its PowerApps platform, Microsoft makes a strong play in the mobile low-code market, offering a tool that is naturally tailored for business users. The platform is free with an Office 365 or Dynamics license and readily connects to other Microsoft tools like Flow and Power BI through the adoption of its Common Data Service. In the app development environment, business users will see UI controls resembling PowerPoint and use formulas analogous to those in Excel. The platform allows users to autogenerate applications from data sets and supports strong authentication options through Microsoft's Authenticator app. Reference customers told us about growing in-house demand for PowerApps skills, citing the backlog of requests they get from other teams in their company asking for a mobile apps. Forrester believes that as a free offering through O365 Microsoft has a strong channel to attract new customers.

The Forrester Wave™: Mobile Low-Code Platforms For Business Developers, Q3 2018

The 12 Providers That Matter Most And How They Stack Up

Despite its strengths when operating in the Microsoft ecosystem, PowerApps falls short when it comes to platform deployment options. Also, watch out for licensing if a firm does not already have Office 365 or Dynamics licenses: In this case, per-user licensing costs can grow quickly, especially if apps need to tap the Common Data Service.

- › **AppSheet is laser-focused on creating apps from business-friendly sources.** The AppSheet platform stood out as a powerful facilitator for business users with little to no programming knowledge to create apps in a matter of minutes. Often starting from Excel or Google Sheets, AppSheet can autogenerate an app and allow the user to customize from there. With a focus on business process applications that reach throughout the enterprise, AppSheet customers tell us that the platform allows business users to end their dependence on IT, improve customer experience, and make team members “. . . realize that they can influence their IT system.” Users on the platform create robust applications and leverage top-notch app analytics for suggestions to improve performance. AppSheet is also investing in new technology that will allow business developers to use full English sentences to define and autogenerate aspects of their application.

The ease of app creation on this platform comes at a cost, by limiting the extent to which a user can create a custom UI. The company may not be working with the resources of some of its larger competitors but benefits from a powerful platform, strong vision, and clear road map to achieve that vision.

- › **Betty Blocks marries low-code with open source to create a powerful platform.** The Betty Blocks platform is centered around the idea of reuse and leverages integration to a variety of services to enhance its core product. Betty Blocks’ customers laud the startup experience where they can quickly pick and choose functional blocks from which to build their app. Customers can either choose to take premade apps from a public “Block Store” or create components themselves and store them in a private Block Store. There is also strong ability for users on this platform to commercialize the blocks they have built. An integration with Kumulos (free of charge for Betty Blocks customers) unlocks even more functionality that enables users to create geofences, run powerful app analytics, and create stylish dashboards. As a European-based vendor, Betty Blocks also exhibited a clean experience to help users translate and localize their applications.

While the general flexibility of the Betty Blocks platform is its biggest strength, its WYSIWYG is not as high fidelity as other vendors’ in this evaluation. Customers should always be aware of Betty Block’s unique pricing model, charging by the number of blocks instead of number of users. This may open up the potential for apps with high functionality to get expensive and puts the responsibility on business developers to ensure the value delivered is worth it.

Strong Performers

- › **Dropspace builds beautiful native apps without the need for a runtime.** Don’t let the relative newness of the Dropspace platform (commercially available since April 2018) fool you. Its ability to create robust native mobile applications sets it apart from other vendors in this evaluation that

The Forrester Wave™: Mobile Low-Code Platforms For Business Developers, Q3 2018

The 12 Providers That Matter Most And How They Stack Up

take a cross-platform development approach. Dropsource users love the drag-and-drop controls in a real-time, WYSIWYG editor that allows them to make pixel-perfect apps tailored for any device. Additionally, Dropsource does not have a runtime, which allows customers to download the code and the platform to roll in new features, like iPhone's Face ID, the day they become available.

The platform's shine is dimmed slightly by its lack of prebuilt data connections to business systems, lack of intuitive controls when binding data to elements, and need for IT teams to handle deployment. While the platform is currently best for those with a knowledge of development, Dropsource is working to improve its startup and integration experience.

- › **Skuid blends deep data access with a design-first approach.** The Skuid platform supports responsive web-based and hybrid native applications with a design environment that's approachable to business users and line-of-business developers. The vendor established itself in Salesforce's community, satisfying requirements for modern UX experiences that Salesforce itself could not meet. Customers report that it's quick to create applications in Skuid; users with administrator-level skills can create and deploy apps in just a few weeks. Skuid has particularly strong data modeling and reporting functionality, so it's a good choice for business users who want to create mobile apps with data, reports, and charts that users will manipulate in deployed apps.

As a multichannel low-code platform, we found Skuid's design- and development-time interface tuned more to responsive web than to native mobile apps, so business users looking for a pixel-perfect design-time experience for mobile may find better options elsewhere.

Contenders

- › **Intelledox shines for document-centric mobile apps.** The Intelledox Infiniti Adaptive Forms platform aids business users that need to mobilize existing business processes that capture customer data on a paper or electronic form. The business users transform these using the Infiniti designer and can even input Microsoft Office or PDF files as a starting point for an app. The Infiniti design environment is "near WYSIWYG," and it's also got great support for embedding content into mobile apps and localizing them to support a global customer base. Customers report great success scaling the Infiniti platform to support thousands of customers, and they are also pleased with the ability to extend and integrate the Infiniti platform into existing application infrastructure.

It can be a bit tricky for business users to self-provision the Infiniti platform; in a typical deployment, an internal IT organization will do set up and configuration of data sources, and then provision the platform to business users.

- › **DSI is "the" solution when it comes to supply chain apps.** DSI comes to this evaluation with a strong track record with supply chain management applications. Its Digital Supply Chain Platform is able to create extraordinarily powerful applications managing warehouse processes, even acting as one reference customer's mobile ERP solution. The platform benefits from strong connectors to

The Forrester Wave™: Mobile Low-Code Platforms For Business Developers, Q3 2018

The 12 Providers That Matter Most And How They Stack Up

popular business systems like Oracle NetSuite and SAP and is unrivaled in this field when it comes to mobile offline capabilities. DSI demonstrated staying power and a strong set of relationships with a wide array of services providers that will help it maintain its current rapid rate of growth.

Unfortunately, these complex applications were created in a complex developer experience. DSI's primary audience of professional application developers or IT managers may be able to grasp this more easily, but the app creation experience was less suited for business users than other platforms. As it looks to improve upon the platform, DSI is encumbered by the need to support older technologies that are still widely used by its supply chain customer base.

- › **Quick Base has a nimble startup experience with expanding mobile capabilities.** While Quick Base was reviewed as a nonparticipating vendor in this evaluation, its growing customer base and gradually expanding support for mobile engagement make the platform a contender in the mobile low-code space for business users. Business users need to do more work to tune their user interface designs for mobile browsers, but it's easy to get started with the product, and data access and reporting capabilities are strong. When we went hands on with the tool as a prospective user, we were quickly contacted by customer support to understand what questions we had and what type of app we were trying to build, even before we purchased a license.

Quick Base is a good solution for business users looking to build data intensive apps or replace complex spreadsheets with more streamlined data management and reporting. And while the platform is more tuned toward a general-purpose web application delivery model today, skilled business user of the platform that want to build both regular and mobile web experiences are likely to find that building web apps tuned to mobile browsers with Quick Base is preferable to learning a second, dedicated mobile-low code platform, especially because we expect to see Quick Base improve its responsive design capabilities in future releases.

- › **Snappii has a growing presence in the construction industry.** Snappii provides both a business-user-focused low-code platform and a set of ready-to-deploy apps for project management and work-log tracking. Business users can customize existing apps, import forms or PDFs, or build their own apps from scratch. First-time business users will find the Express Builder route makes it simple to build apps by starting with one of more than 400 templates. As business users get more experienced with the platform, the Guru App Builder mode lets them create reusable app components and deeply customize mobile apps to meet their needs. Data used or created by Snappii apps is stored in SQL server, and the platform generates native app code from the builder environment.

Snappii's focus on building and construction makes it a good fit for firms in that business, especially small to midsize firms without a lot of IT skills. But the platform is more limited than other platforms we reviewed when it comes to reporting capabilities, integration connectors, and ease of embedding content and collaboration workflows. In addition, a proprietary styling engine means business users are limited to the tool's facilities to incorporate company standards for app look and feel.

The Forrester Wave™: Mobile Low-Code Platforms For Business Developers, Q3 2018

The 12 Providers That Matter Most And How They Stack Up

- › **MobileSmith has a special focus on apps for the healthcare industry.** Since we last looked at MobileSmith in 2015, the company has sharpened its focus to apps and mobile low-code for hospitals and medical practices. The company uses a set of app “Blueprints” that include implementation assistance to get customers up and running very quickly. Customers that we spoke with deployed production apps to thousands of practice customers in weeks to months with minimal involvement from their IT organizations. Business users also deploy updates to applications while the app is live without needing to submit updates to app stores.

The business users we spoke with did note that prospective customers would benefit from some basic HTML skills to get the most out of MobileSmith’s platform. MobileSmith only participated partially in this evaluation.

Challengers

- › **Pulpstream offers a rich UX design environment.** While Pulpstream is reviewed as a nonparticipating vendor in our research, we nonetheless felt it was important to highlight its platform given its mobile capabilities. Pulpstream’s UX modeler is rich, flexible, and takes advantage of native device features. Data modeling is also a strong point for the platform.

In addition to its low-code platform, Pulpstream also offers solutions for common mobile use cases like claims and incident management, environment, health and safety tracking, and construction and process management. Business users looking to implement these or other common mobile-enabled use cases are likely to find these solutions a good jumping off point for their own efforts. But business users looking for a self-service approach to low code will find Pulpstream’s guided approach less suited to their needs. Pricing transparency and public documentation are also sparse compared to other platforms.

- › **Zudy engages business users with an integrated approach.** Zudy declined to participate in our research and was evaluated according to our Incomplete Vendor Participation Policy.⁷ We nonetheless felt it was important to highlight its Vinyl platform given its mobile capabilities. To build apps on the Vinyl platform, business users make a quick start on an app by answering simple questions about it, and then dive into deeper configurations to complete it. Zudy offers help, and the platform is aggressively priced.

That said, Zudy’s go-to-market approach makes it a challenge for business users to explore Vinyl on their own terms and timeline. We could not find a way for a business user to easily download and explore Vinyl, and there’s not as much publicly available documentation or a community presence around the platform yet. This makes Zudy a viable option for business users that want a highly assisted approach, but those that want a self-paced experience will find better options elsewhere.

The Forrester Wave™: Mobile Low-Code Platforms For Business Developers, Q3 2018

The 12 Providers That Matter Most And How They Stack Up

Engage With An Analyst

Gain greater confidence in your decisions by working with Forrester thought leaders to apply our research to your specific business and technology initiatives.

Analyst Inquiry

To help you put research into practice, connect with an analyst to discuss your questions in a 30-minute phone session — or opt for a response via email.

[Learn more.](#)

Analyst Advisory

Translate research into action by working with an analyst on a specific engagement in the form of custom strategy sessions, workshops, or speeches.

[Learn more.](#)

Webinar

Join our online sessions on the latest research affecting your business. Each call includes analyst Q&A and slides and is available on-demand.

[Learn more.](#)



Forrester's research apps for iOS and Android.

Stay ahead of your competition no matter where you are.

Supplemental Material

Online Resource

The online version of Figure 2 is an Excel-based vendor comparison tool that provides detailed product evaluations and customizable rankings. Click the link at the beginning of this report on Forrester.com to download the tool.

Data Sources Used In This Forrester Wave

Forrester used a combination of three data sources to assess the strengths and weaknesses of each solution. We evaluated the vendors participating in this Forrester Wave, in part, using materials that they provided to us by June 27, 2018.

- › **Vendor surveys.** Forrester surveyed vendors on their capabilities as they relate to the evaluation criteria. Once we analyzed the completed vendor surveys, we conducted vendor calls where necessary to gather details of vendor qualifications.

The Forrester Wave™: Mobile Low-Code Platforms For Business Developers, Q3 2018

The 12 Providers That Matter Most And How They Stack Up

- › **Product demos.** We asked vendors to conduct demonstrations of their products' functionality. We used findings from these product demos to validate details of each vendor's product capabilities.
- › **Customer reference surveys.** To validate product and vendor qualifications, Forrester also conducted reference surveys with 3 of each vendor's current customers.

The Forrester Wave Methodology

We conduct primary research to develop a list of vendors that meet our criteria for evaluation in this market. From that initial pool of vendors, we narrow our final list. We choose these vendors based on: 1) product fit; 2) customer success; and 3) Forrester client demand. We eliminate vendors that have limited customer references and products that don't fit the scope of our evaluation. Vendors marked as incomplete participants met our defined inclusion criteria but declined to participate or contributed only partially to the evaluation.

After examining past research, user need assessments, and vendor and expert interviews, we develop the initial evaluation criteria. To evaluate the vendors and their products against our set of criteria, we gather details of product qualifications through a combination of lab evaluations, questionnaires, demos, and/or discussions with client references. We send evaluations to the vendors for their review, and we adjust the evaluations to provide the most accurate view of vendor offerings and strategies.

We set default weightings to reflect our analysis of the needs of large user companies — and/or other scenarios as outlined in the Forrester Wave evaluation — and then score the vendors based on a clearly defined scale. We intend these default weightings to serve only as a starting point and encourage readers to adapt the weightings to fit their individual needs through the Excel-based tool. The final scores generate the graphical depiction of the market based on current offering, strategy, and market presence. Forrester intends to update vendor evaluations regularly as product capabilities and vendor strategies evolve. For more information on the methodology that every Forrester Wave follows, please visit [The Forrester Wave™ Methodology Guide](#) on our website.

Integrity Policy

We conduct all our research, including Forrester Wave evaluations, in accordance with the [Integrity Policy](#) posted on our website.

Endnotes

- ¹ Base: 2,085 global developers who are manager or higher and have taken any action. Source: Forrester Analytics Global Business Technographics Developer Survey, 2018.
- ² AD&D leaders are reexamining the potential of citizen developers to help keep up with rising pressure for more software. To learn more, see the Forrester report "[How To Harness Citizen Developers To Expand Your AD&D Capacity.](#)"

The Forrester Wave™: Mobile Low-Code Platforms For Business Developers, Q3 2018

The 12 Providers That Matter Most And How They Stack Up

- ³ While the gap may not be as big as it seems, firms definitely struggle to attain tech talent. The following report explains how this skills gap is more pronounced in certain technical specialties and exacerbated by geographic location. See the Forrester report “[Debunking The US Tech Talent Shortage](#).”
- ⁴ In the following report, John Rymer explains the advent of citizen developers and shows how they can move forward in their organizations and change roles as they develop. See the Forrester report “[How To Harness Citizen Developers To Expand Your AD&D Capacity](#).”
- ⁵ Base: 1,456 global developers or their firm who have plans to adopt low-code development platforms. Source: Forrester Analytics Global Business Technographics Developer Survey, 2018.
- ⁶ Forrester also covers these adjacent markets in the following reports. See the Forrester report “[The Forrester New Wave™: Low-Code Platforms For Business Developers, Q4 2017](#)” and see the Forrester report “[The Forrester Wave™: Digital Experience Development Platforms, Q2 2018](#).”
- ⁷ Source: “The Forrester Wave™ And The Forrester New Wave™ Incomplete Vendor Participation Policy,” Forrester (<https://www.forrester.com/marketing/policies/wave-vendor-nonparticipation-policy.html>).

We work with business and technology leaders to develop customer-obsessed strategies that drive growth.

PRODUCTS AND SERVICES

- › Core research and tools
- › Data and analytics
- › Peer collaboration
- › Analyst engagement
- › Consulting
- › Events

Forrester's research and insights are tailored to your role and critical business initiatives.

ROLES WE SERVE

Marketing & Strategy Professionals

CMO
B2B Marketing
B2C Marketing
Customer Experience
Customer Insights
eBusiness & Channel Strategy

Technology Management Professionals

CIO
› Application Development & Delivery
Enterprise Architecture
Infrastructure & Operations
Security & Risk
Sourcing & Vendor Management

Technology Industry Professionals

Analyst Relations

CLIENT SUPPORT

For information on hard-copy or electronic reprints, please contact Client Support at +1 866-367-7378, +1 617-613-5730, or clientsupport@forrester.com. We offer quantity discounts and special pricing for academic and nonprofit institutions.