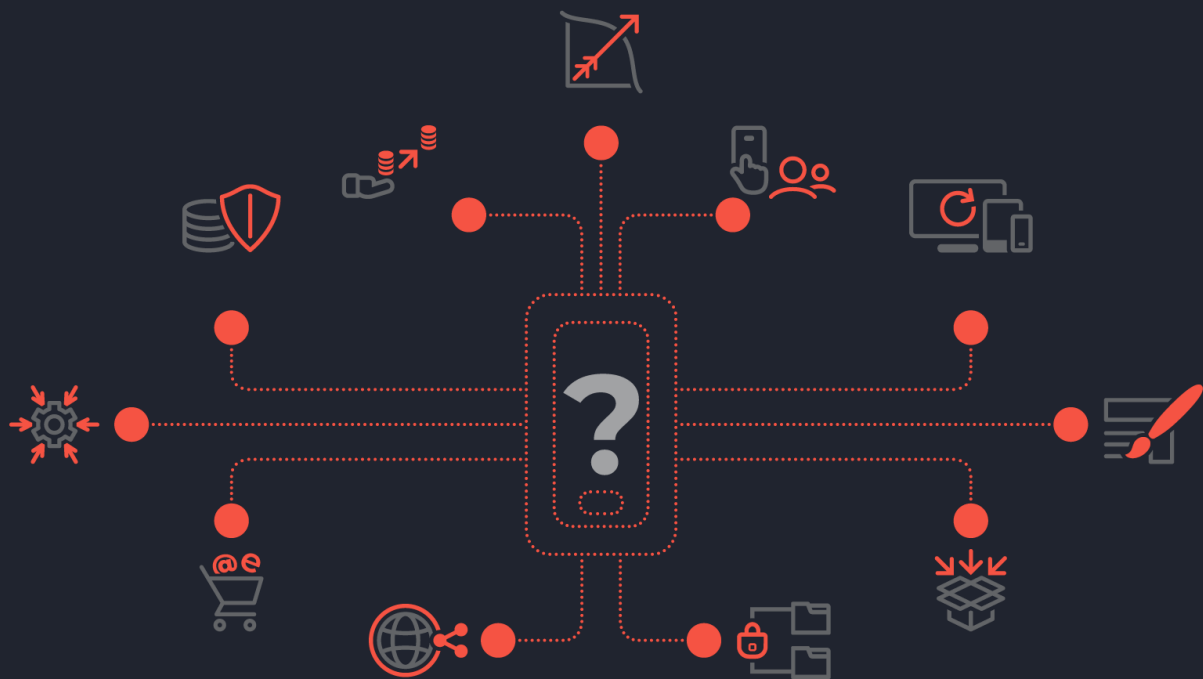


How to select your no-code platform for app development



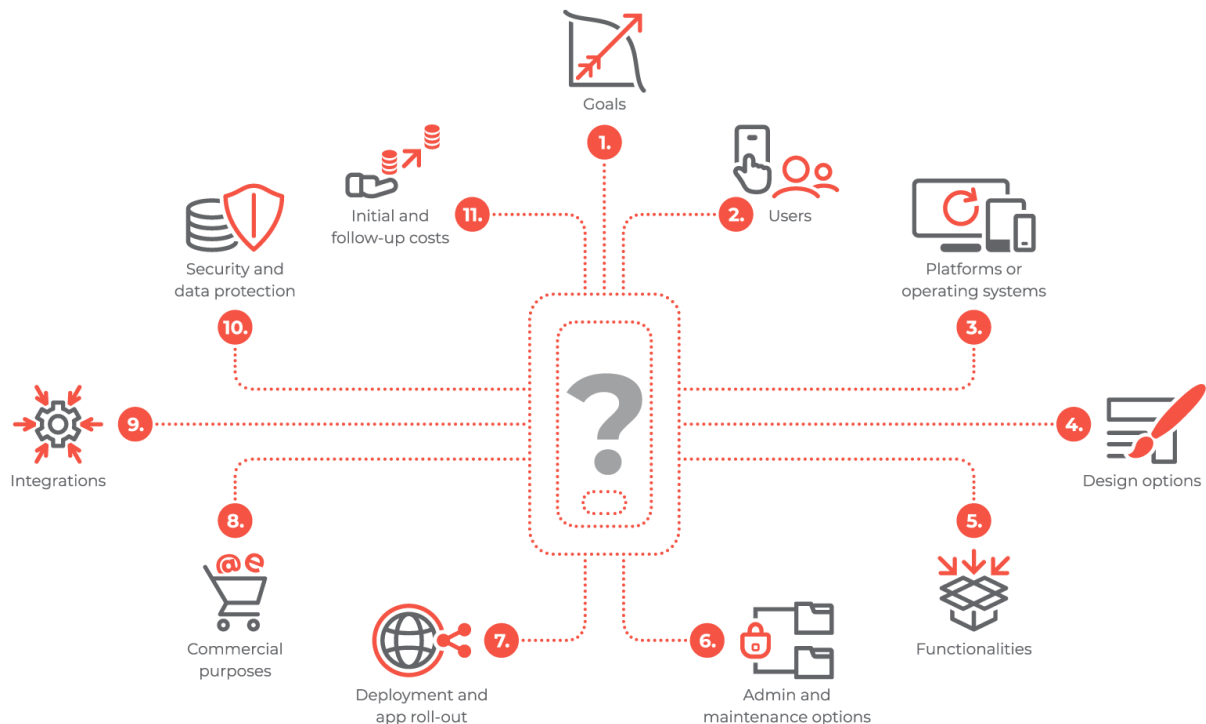
The 11 most important things to consider
when choosing to innovate your business
with no-code apps

How to select a no-code platform for app development

Selecting a no-code platform may seem like an easy task at first. But once you research existing solutions, making a choice may suddenly seem next to impossible.

Should you opt for ease-of-use or pick something that requires some coding skills but offers greater capabilities? And how can you know you're making the right choice, given that the field is relatively new yet already a number of very different solutions exist?

There is no straightforward answer to those questions. That will depend on a wide variety of factors that you will have to consider and evaluate. And based on such an evaluation, you should be able to make an informed and good choice.



To help you with the above, we've devised the following guide. Keep reading for a list of all the different criteria you might want to consider when choosing a business no-code platform.

Important considerations beforehand

Providing an exhaustive list of all the important factors that could guide your decision-making process when choosing a no-code app platform is difficult. This is because all sorts

of no-code or low-code solutions are constantly popping up and are being attempted. That means that no-code platforms are evolving day-by-day, and it's hard to have a full overview of what's to come.

Yet, the benefit of implementing a no-code platform can be significant. It can help you resolve both long-standing business issues that would otherwise require a much greater investment, improve internal and client communications, and free up resources to expand further.

That said, below we have provided a list of important criteria to help you determine what your real need is when looking for a no-code app platform. These criteria are specifically targeted at helping business users without IT or programming skills in making a choice. I.e. they are addressed as so-called "citizen developers".

Below are some of the main criteria we have found to be of importance when it comes to selecting a no-code platform. Of course, you may have other considerations and needs which we haven't covered. If you feel something's missing in the list or want to ask about other aspects of choosing a platform, leave us a message!

This list will be updated in the future and, as you will see, wherever Open as App covers certain criteria this is noted in a visible manner.

The general rule

If there is one general rule that should guide your thinking when you look for a no-code platform, it should be the following:

When you consider a platform, think about what you want to do with it in the future. If this guides your choice, then even if a solution satisfies your current needs but can't go beyond them, it will likely not be enough for you in the future. So when you try a solution, test its limits and see if that would be sufficient to realize what you plan to do in the long term.

With that in mind, have a look at the list below. It features some of the most important criteria that we have found are of interest to users when they look for a no-code platform. Having a set of criteria when choosing a platform is important because of the many differences that exist between the various solutions. By making a list of all the criteria that matter to you, it will be easier to pick a platform.

How to select a no-code platform

The following are important criteria you can use to evaluate the different no-code options that are available to you. Each of these includes a number of considerations or questions that can help you clarify your needs and your subsequent choice of platform. Roughly, these criteria are the following:

1. What are your goals?
2. Who will use your apps?
3. For which platforms or operating systems can you create apps (or want to)?
4. What degree of design are you looking for?
5. What functionalities do you want to make available in your app?
6. What level of administration and maintenance of your app does the no-code platform provide?
7. What options for deployment and app roll-out are available to you?
8. To what degree can you use your app for commercial purposes?
9. What kind of integrations are available?
10. How secure are the no-code platform and the apps it allows you to create?
11. What are the initial and follow-up costs of subscribing to a certain platform?



What are your goals?

As in the general rule above, your goals are the main determining factor for your choice of no-code platform. We've found that there are three general goals that users frequently point to as a reason for looking for a platform.

Based on our observations and experience, a great many people who choose Open as App do so in order to improve their business. Open as App works by analyzing the logic of the spreadsheet and creating an app based on that logic, instead of imposing ready-made blocks or modules which limit the type of data that the app can work with.



This makes apps created with Open as App extremely versatile and allows them to meet any of the above sub-goals of improving a business, as long as the data is coherently and consistently laid out in a spreadsheet or a database. This group includes both big companies that are solidly data-driven and continuously improve their processes as well as SMBs. Examples of apps within this category are [offer calculators for clients](#), payment plans app, agency reporting tools, etc.

Two other groups of people use the platform either as a way to create a product, as part of their already existing business, or to start a business from scratch.

The first group of users usually consists of people who already have a working business and wish to expand their range of products or offer an app as an addition to another product. In all of these cases, as long as a product is data-driven, i.e. the data is laid out in a spreadsheet, Open as App can help businesses meet these goals.

The second group is usually made up of users who have an idea about an app which they then wish to market. Creating an app through Open as App allows such users to roll the app out very fast and start marketing it.

Your goals checklist:

- **Improve your business**
 - Respond to business needs faster
 - Innovate and get ahead of competitors
 - Share know-how/data and protect know-how
 - Reduce costs
 - Reduce errors

- Speed-up reporting/feedback
- Speed up data collection
- Increase resources for digitalization
- **Start your own business**
- **Create your own product**



Who will use your apps?

By knowing who and how they will use your app, you have specific criteria against which you can check a no-code platform. Will your users prefer a certain type of template or specific design? What about the function of the app itself - is it intended to resolve simple and everyday tasks such as serving as a calculator for calories or will it be used to make difficult financial analyses?

So far, no-code platforms work in one of several ways.



One segment of current no-code platforms works by creating (simple) web apps. These apps are a lot like a type of content management system (CMS) that allows users to add things like text, images, a shop, a booking system, and various other workflows. As such, these platforms are ideal for the needs of many small businesses. A common

disadvantage though is that all of the content needs to be added manually, as most of these platforms do not offer automatic updates or sync with a data source. Usually, you cannot build apps with any logic, like a calculation.

The second segment of no-code platforms works by linking to a data source - i.e. you do not need to input the content manually - but use ready-made blocks. These are so-called coded management systems that provide users with ready-made attributes and functions that they can use for their apps. The limitation of this approach is that there is a limited amount of blocks that are offered by each platform. Moreover, users are not given the option of personalizing these blocks to adapt them to what they need.

Open as App functions in a third way. The platform analyzes the logic of a spreadsheet and builds the app around that logic, adapting to the data, so to speak. Open as App recognizes the type of data, its values, and most formulas used in spreadsheets, and based on that suggests ways in which you can build and design your app. But in the end, you are given the freedom to decide how exactly you go about this process.

With all this in mind, you can return to the question about who your users will be, and what they may want from your app. Based on how you respond to any of the additional questions below, you can then create a checklist against which you can compare the no-code platforms that are out there.

Your users checklist

- ☐ Who is the app for and what will they expect?
- ☐ What is the main task of the user with the app?
- ☐ What devices/operating systems are they using?
- ☐ Do they need to be able to work offline?



For which platforms or operating systems can you create apps (or want to)?

By knowing who and how they will use your app, you have specific criteria against which you can check a no-code platform. Will your users prefer a certain type of template or specific design? What about the function of the app itself - is it intended to resolve simple

Which operating systems are supported by a platform is also an important consideration. You may simply require an app that works with your own operating system, so as to support your business. In that case, one operating system will do.

But maybe you're looking to create an app that you want to share widely with your partners or sell over a wide range of systems. Or, possibly, you'd like to have an app that also works offline and is not dependent on users' access to an internet connection. In that case, you'll need a platform that can do that.

Below are some of the main platforms and OS that are currently in use. Wherever you see a (✓) symbol, this indicates that OAA supports a particular feature or OS.

Your platform checklist

- ☐ iOS (✓)
- ☐ Android (✓)
- ☐ Native (✓), hybrid, web (✓), Windows, Linux
- ☐ Online/offline (✓)



What degree of design are you looking for?

No-code platforms also differ in the amount of app customization and design they offer to users.

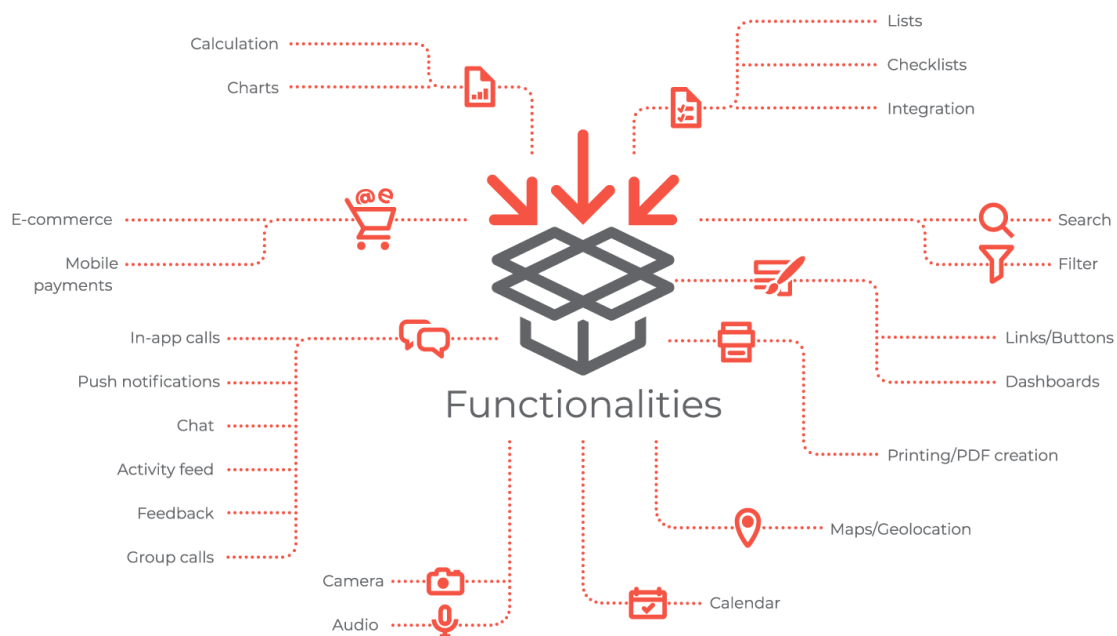
Your design checklist

- ☐ Customizable (✓) – this refers to anything from how to position and format the different elements of your app, to determining how users can interact with them, and setting specific conditions within which these elements operate
- ☐ Colors (✓)
- ☐ Images (✓)
- ☐ Brandable templates (✓)



What functionalities do you want to make available in your app?

How a no-code platform works with the data provided in your spreadsheet depends on the types of functionalities that it can offer. Here are some of the main functionalities which you may want for your app, and those that are currently supported by Open as App.



Your functionalities checklist

- ☐ Calculation (✓)
- ☐ Charts (✓)
- ☐ In-app calls (✓)
- ☐ Links/Buttons (✓)
- ☐ Dashboards (✓)
- ☐ Lists (✓)
- ☐ Checklists (✓)
- ☐ Integration (✓)
- ☐ Search (✓)
- ☐ Filter (✓)
- ☐ Printing/PDF creation (✓)
- ☐ Maps/Geolocation (✓)
- ☐ Push notifications (✓)
- ☐ Calendar (✓)
- ☐ Camera (✓)
- ☐ Chat
- ☐ Audio
- ☐ Activity feed
- ☐ E-commerce
- ☐ Feedback
- ☐ Group calls
- ☐ Mobile payments



What level of administration and maintenance of your app does the no-code platform provide?

Since spreadsheets frequently require the input of several people, similarly - apps also need to be able to allow for administration and maintenance on varying levels. Unlike with spreadsheets, though, an advantage of creating an app is that there are no versions to get mixed up and broken.

Your admin and maintenance checklist

- ☐ Will you be working alone or with a team? (✓)
- ☐ Roles (admin, creator, user) (✓)
- ☐ Accounts (✓)
- ☐ Approval workflow (✓)
- ☐ Tracking/user (✓)
- ☐ User rights/Read-only/Read-Write (✓)



What options for deployment and app roll-out are available to you?

Depending on the goals you have when creating an app, you may want to deploy it in a particular way.

Businesses that seek to improve internal operations will likely not need social media to roll their app out, but sharing in a protected way and having accounts in the app would be necessary options. Conversely, users who create an app with the main goal of selling that app will need all kinds of ways to share it widely on social media.

Your deployment and roll-out checklist

- ☐ QR Code/Link (✓)
- ☐ Social media (✓)
- ☐ Account (✓)
- ☐ Privacy/protected sharing (✓)
- ☐ Social sharing (✓)



To what degree can you use your app for **commercial purposes**?

A further consideration when choosing a no-code platform is its ability to create apps that allow for various commercial purposes. This may include integrations with e-commerce services, as well as in-app purchases, such as buying premium features or subscribing for a particular service.

Your commercial use checklist

- ☐ In-app purchase (coming soon to Open as App)
- ☐ E-commerce integrations
- ☐ In-app coupons
- ☐ Loyalty coupons



What kind of integrations are available?

If your app will exist within an ecosystem of other apps, systems, and devices, then you will require some form of integration. From access to user lists and contacts, or to financial and company data, a whole range of integrations exist. Here are the major types of integrations you may need for your app:

Your integrations checklist

- ☐ API (✓)
- ☐ REST API (✓)
- ☐ Online databases (✓)
- ☐ Excel (✓)
- ☐ Google Sheets (✓)
- ☐ Web Services (✓)
- ☐ CRM database (✓)
- ☐ ERP database (✓)
- ☐ SQL (✓)
- ☐ Google Analytics (✓)



How secure are the no-code platform and the apps it allows you to create?

Do you have sensitive information that must not be made public? Or do you want to be able to limit access to your app and only allow certain people to use it?

In either case, the platform you choose will need to be able to provide you with some form of data protection. The advantage of using Open as App is that you can exclude or hide any important data which you have in your original spreadsheet from the app. In that way, users cannot uncover the data fields which you have omitted.

Moreover, Open as App does not keep your data, apart from reading it once as part of the app creation process. For even greater security, you can always create an app with a copy of your original spreadsheet and fill it with dummy data. You can then later substitute that data with the original one. In this way, none of your data is ever revealed.

The main aspects of data protection which a no-code platform should offer are listed up in the following checklist.

Your security checklist

- ☐ GDPR/Data Protection (✓)
- ☐ Data hosting/Cloud (✓)
- ☐ Privacy settings (✓)
- ☐ Hosting options (✓)
- ☐ On-premise (✓)



What are the initial and follow-up costs of subscribing to a certain platform?

And of course, there are cost considerations which you will want to examine. Does the platform charge you per app, users, or otherwise? Do you need to pay for upgrades and if yes, how much?

With Open as App, you are given the option to create apps for free and then [get a Basic, Pro, or Enterprise account](#), based on your needs. These differ according to various parameters. If you don't intend to use Open as App commercially but, say, for your family and friends, or a research project, then it is free of charge.

Open as App does not charge users for updates of your app. You also do not require any extra knowledge to use Open as App, nor do you have any additional costs, associated with its use (such as requiring an Appstore account). Finally, you will also not need any expert support or developer services to use or publish your app.

Your costs checklist

- Platform costs – charged for the app, per number of users, or based on the size of the business?
- Costs for updates and/or upgrades
- Extra costs or knowledge required - for example, do you need an Appstore account for iOS and Android?
- Is expert support or additional coding required?



Now, as you know what we can do. Why not, give Open as App a try?

Open as App is the first #nocode platform empowering everyone to create and share apps automatically, including logic, charts, and calculations.

We enable individuals and companies of all sizes to

- save time and budget
- protect their know-how
- secure and manage the way, data are shared
- provide great customer experience and innovation
- increase their resources for digitization with citizen developers

And the best, Open as App is free to try.

Want to try creating an app?

Just open our app wizard, watch a short video and then upload your own data or try our sample files! Go to www.openasapp.com and create your first app today!



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