No-Code Tools and the Future of Process Work

How the emergence of easy-to-configure technology are revolutionizing the way we map-, optimize and operate our business processes

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Introduction – The future is here!

No-code tools like monday.com, Click-up, Airtables, Trello and Notion, to name a few, are disrupting the way businesses automate their processes by providing a platform for employees without programming skills to create custom solutions. These tools enable individuals to easily design and implement automation processes, resulting in increased efficiency and productivity.

In the past, businesses often relied on IT departments or external developers to create custom solutions for their automation needs. This could be a time-consuming and costly
process, as it required specialized skills and resources. No-code tools, on the other hand, offer an intuitive interface that allows anyone to create automation solutions with ease.

Democratization of technology

THE RISE OF NO-CODE TOOLS

The rise of no code tools is part of a larger trend towards democratization of technology. As more and more people are able to access and use these tools, the traditional ITdepartment model is being disrupted. This shift is giving rise to the concept of the "*citizen developer,*" or an individual who is able to create custom solutions for their organization without being a full-time programmer. This trend is likely to continue as no-code tools become even more powerful and user-friendly. As the barriers to entry for creating automation solutions are lowered, more and more individuals will be able to participate in the process of digital transformation within their organization.

**This has the potential to revolutionize the way work is done.**

Rather than being limited by the skills and resources of the IT department, employees will be able to take a more proactive role in shaping the technological landscape of their organization.

Benefits of no-code tools

One of the major benefits of no-code tools is their accessibility. With a drag-and-drop interface and pre-built templates, anyone can create automation solutions without programming knowledge. This not only saves time and money, but it also empowers individuals to take ownership of **their own automation needs.**

No-code tools also allow for greater flexibility and customization. Unlike off-the-shelf software solutions, no-code tools can be tailored to the specific needs of an organization. This means that businesses can create automation solutions that are tailored to their unique processes and workflow, rather than being limited
by a one-size-fits-all approach.

In addition, no-code tools
are often easier to use and more user-friendly than traditional programming
solutions. This makes it easier for employees to adopt and utilize them,
resulting in increased adoption and buy-in across the organization.
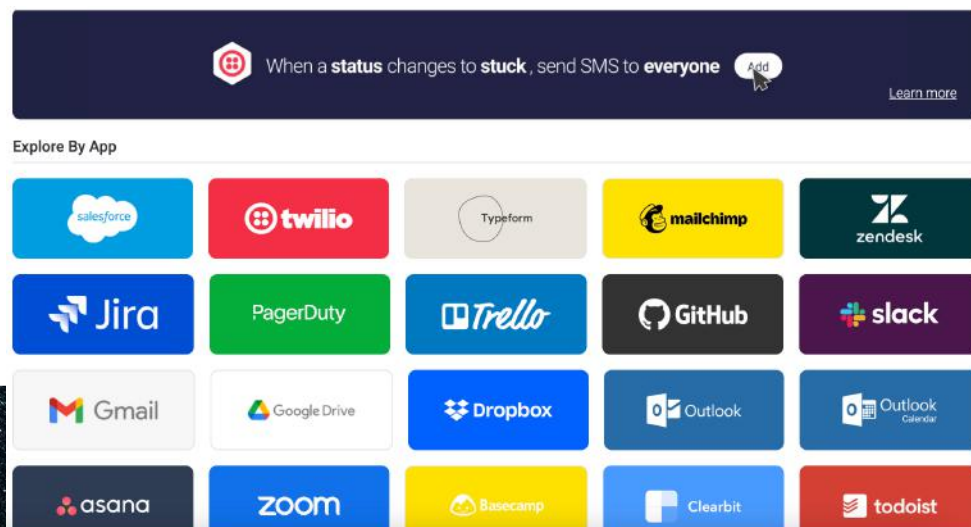
Benefits of no-code tools

As a long time Management Consultant myself, having done **hundreds** of brown-paper mapping sessions, I know how cumbersome and sometimes frustrating it can be, with dozens of Post-it notes in order to understand a clients process (and for them to understand *their own* process), only to have to document it all in diagrams on Laptop tools, that only the consultants knew how to use, transforming them into Power point presentations (for management) and presenting the perfect "future state"….diagram!

The learnings… Although initially enlightening, is very, very difficult to translate into something that people use in their day to day life…

What if we could skip the entire brown-paper and post-it planning phase, that are always so hard to translate into real-life operations and move directly into prototyping?

The new tools remove the lead-time of initial analysis.

• The long brown-paper sessions with dozens of Post-it notes, that needs to be documented afterwords into diagrams and power-points,
• Waiting for it to be updated in the existing IT-systems and platforms (if it ever make it through the IT-waitlist, get funding, priority etc.)
• Get it described in operating procedures (SOP's),
• Trained extensively by operators in order to work (maybe…)
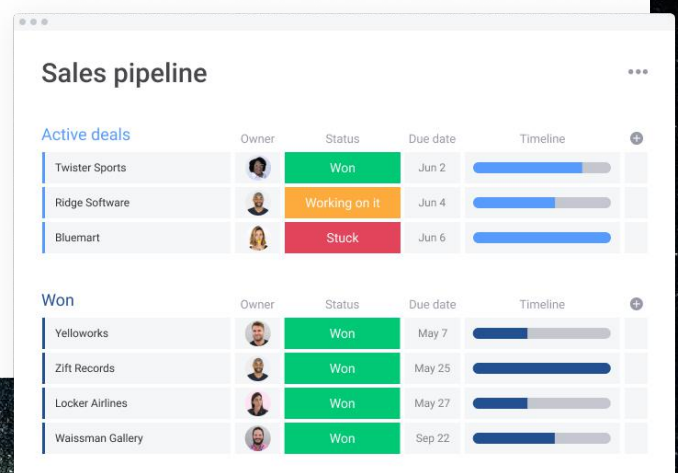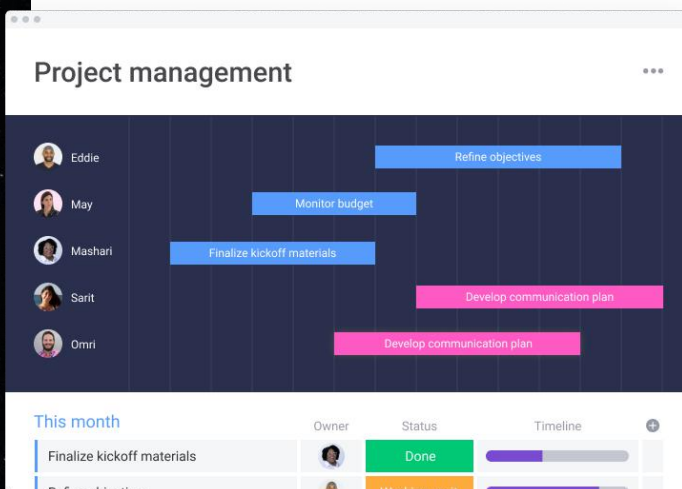…. can be all be completely eliminated.

The death
of Brown **paper-Post-It sessions….Finally!**

Benefits of no-code tools

... Instead do this:

- Map out the process directly in your No-code tool of choice, and run some tasks, cases or products through it **ALREADY IN THE FIRST WORKSHOP!** This way you can immediately see if you got the logic right something that is very difficult to do with post-its.
- Change it up a few times until everybody are comfortable (and by everybody – I don't mean consultants and managers, but the operators, the support-function people, the case handlers...)
- Implement it for a few weeks, continuously updating and adapting to the variations of day-to-day business...

THAT'S A GAME CHANGER!

Project management

	Owner	Status	Timeline
Eddie			Refine objectives
May			Monitor budget
Mashari			Finalize kickoff materials
Sarit			Develop communication plan
Omri			Develop communication plan

This month

	Owner	Status	Timeline
Finalize kickoff materials		Done	
Refine objectives		Working on it	

Sales pipeline

Active deals

	Owner	Status	Due date	Timeline
Twister Sports		Won	Jun 2	
Ridge Software		Working on it	Jun 4	
Bluemart		Stuck	Jun 6	

Won

	Owner	Status	Due date	Timeline
Yelloworks		Won	May 7	
Zift Records		Won	May 25	
Locker Airlines		Won	May 27	
Waissman Gallery		Won	Sep 22	

Case study

monday.com

Monday.com is a popular no-code tool that helps businesses automate their processes and workflows. It offers a variety of features, including project management, task management, and team collaboration tools.

One company that has successfully implemented monday.com is a digital marketing agency. Prior to using the tool, the agency struggled with managing multiple projects and tasks across their team. They used a combination of spreadsheets, emails, and manual follow-ups to keep track of everything, which was time-consuming and prone to errors.

After implementing monday.com, the agency was able to streamline their processes and improve their efficiency. They used the tool to create a custom workflow that fit their unique needs, including tracking tasks, managing deadlines, and communicating with clients.

The results were significant. The agency saw a **30% increase in productivity** and a **50% reduction in errors**. They were also able to onboard new employees more quickly, as they were able to easily understand and utilize the tool.

Building workflows

Processes are simpler than you think

Now, you might think that all processes are different, and it will be hard to teach "common operators" how to automate their own processes, because they are all too complicated.

Well… when you think about it there are only about a handful of "generic" process-types, that each shares the same characteristics regardless of **where** you find it.

So **the trick is to identify** what generic type of process you are looking at… and then **apply the generic attributes** to your specific process, and off you go…

Let me give you an overview and a few examples of 3 generic process-types
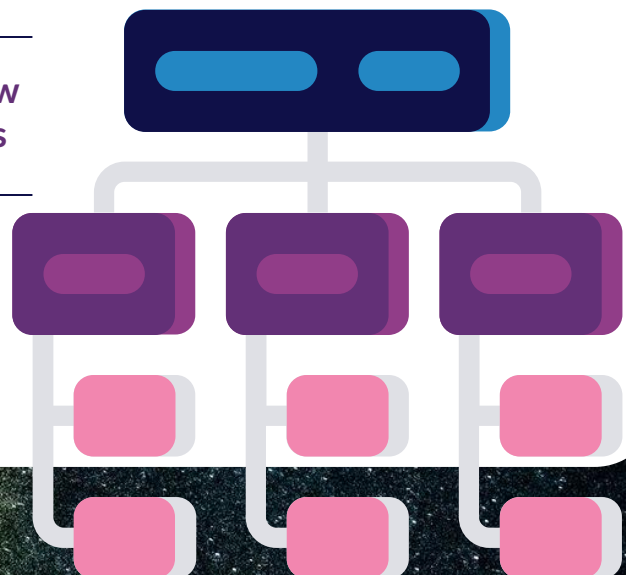
Support process

A support process is initiated by someone "the requester" sending a request to another function, or it can be a customer request directly to a department in a company. Characteristics of a support-process include:

- The trigger for the process is either an error or bug, that needs to be fixed or it is a request for information that requires some tasks to be performed before an answer or solution is returned to the original requestor.
- There is a high degree of customization for each product/response.
- Equipment and resources are not dedicated to a specific product or process.
- Production/planning schedules are often unpredictable, with a large degree of variability in processing times.
- There is a greater emphasis on flexibility and the ability to handle a wide range of products/services as well as to manage the workload of the people involved

Examples
- IT-Helpdesk Tickets related to solving "bugs" in a system or provide helpdesk services to the requestor
- Customer-support: Responding to inquiries, questions and complaints
- HR-support: Questions related to employee-relations (salary payments, vacation rules, people policies etc.) and people-issues (poor performance, complaints over manager or colleague).

Project process

A project process **involves the completion of a unique and complex project**, often with a defined beginning and end. Characteristics of project processing include:

- The project has a defined scope, budget, and timeline.
- Resources are dedicated to the project for the duration of its life cycle.
- The project is usually one-of-a-kind and may involve a high degree of risk.
- Project processes are often managed using project management methodologies and tools.

Examples

- IT-projects
- Improvement projects
- Capital investment projects

Repetitive process

In repetitive processing, **the same product or service is produced repeatedly**, often in large quantities.

Characteristics of repetitive processing include:
- There is a high degree of standardization in the production process.
- Equipment and resources are dedicated to the production of a specific product.
- Production runs are typically long and the processing time for each unit is predictable and consistent.
- The focus is on maximizing efficiency and minimizing costs, often through the use of automation and standardization.

Examples
- Production of a standardized product: (widgets, bottling of beer, assembly)
- Processing a standardized service, (recruitment, onboarding, processing an insurance claim)
- Annual processes (budget, performance review, annual audits)

All of the above process types can be automated using no-code tools. The key is to identify which type of process you are looking at and ideally construct a "template" or standard for how to setup you specific process characteristics within this framework, this will make it easier to get to functional solutions fast.

# Seven steps to automate your processes with the use of no-code tools

1. **Choosing the right no-code tool**: There are many no-code tools on the market, so it's important to choose the tool that best meets your needs. Consider factors such as ease of use, functionality, integration options, and price.

2. **Identify the processes that can be automated**: The first step to automation is to identify the processes that can be automated, thus saving time and resources. It can be anything from repetitive workflows to sending emails and updating databases.

3. **Identify process type**: Identify which of the 3 generic process type you are dealing with and choose the relevant framework for further implementation

4. **Build Prototype**: Build a Prototype of the process solution in a workshop with participants that actually work with the process on a daily basis.

5. T**est the prototype in the workshop setting**.

6. **Implement the automation**: Once you've created a prototype, it's time to implement the automation. This can include creating approval flows, setting up integration points, and testing the process to make sure it's working properly.

7. **Monitor and maintain the automation**: After implementation, it is important to monitor the automation to ensure that it continues to function properly. You may also need to update or change the automation from time to time to ensure that it remains relevant and effective.

A word of caution

While No-code tools provide **a simple and accessible way to automate business processes,** there are some **potential risks** to be aware of:

- **Disconnection** from overall corporate IT-infrastructure such as ERP and accounting systems may cause you to experience inefficiencies in interfaces or even redundancies of processes and data.

- **Compliance issues** with various regulations such as data protection (GDPR).

- **Scalability and Performance**: No-code tools may not be able to handle large volumes of data or complex processes, leading to scalability and performance issues.

- **Lack of control over code**: With no-code tools, you do not have direct control over the underlying code and may be limited in your ability to make changes or debug problems.

- **Technical Limitations**: No-code tools may have technical limitations that prevent you from automating certain processes, or limit the level of automation that you can achieve.

- **Lack of Customization**: No-code tools may have limited customization options, meaning that businesses may not be able to fully tailor the solution to their specific needs.

- **Dependence on the vendor**: If the vendor goes out of business, discontinues support for the tool, or makes significant changes to the platform, your business processes could be impacted.

- **Data Privacy and Security**: No-code tools may store your data on servers that you do not control, which could pose a risk to the privacy and security of your data. So, while no-code tools offer a low-barrier-to-entry way to automate business processes, it is important to carefully consider the risks and limitations before committing to a solution.
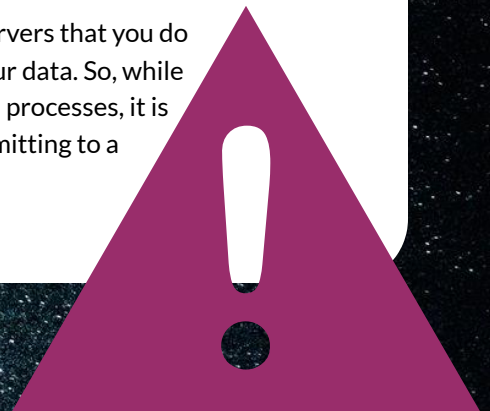
Define guiding principles

In order to mitigate some of the inherent risk of developing your processes with no-code tools I highly recommend that you **carefully define some guiding principles** for when and how to implement no-code automated processes.

**These guidelines could
include:**

- Which processes that are in scope for No-code
- Which processes that are NOT in scope due to overall business risks
- How to go about a no-code automation process, what are the steps and the do's and don'ts
- Who should be involved or infomed in order to assure that no business risks are triggered.

Conclusion

No-code tools like monday.com are **revolutionizing the way businesses automate their processes**. By empowering individuals to create custom solutions without programming knowledge, these tools are increasing efficiency, flexibility, and user adoption.

The success of your business depends on your ability to adopt fast and agile to changing circumstances in your environment and in your business.

By **eliminating IT as a bottle-neck** and enabling employees to quickly update their own processes you can significantly **speed up your process development** as long as you carefully consider the risks and assure that you define some strict principles for how and where to use these tools.

About the author

Lasse Mønsted has started several new companies, been employed in startups and scaleups, worked as a consultant and has been in top positions in large, mature corporations such as Novo Nordisk, PwC and Valcon. He has worked with logistics, production, processes, quality, technology, development, HR and leadership in Denmark, USA and many other countries. He has also been Global HR-Director in the successful Icelandic biotech-company, Alvogen, that grew from 0 to 3000 employees in 35 countries in just 8 years. After 8 years, Alvogen had a 1 billion USD turnover, and a market value of 5 billion USD. A growth case that is today used in teaching Harvard Business School students.