

FORRESTER®

Help Business Analysts And Managers Raise Their Software Game, Boost Business Results

Get started →

FORRESTER OPPORTUNITY SNAPSHOT: A CUSTOM STUDY COMMISSIONED BY HIGHGEAR | MAY 2020

The Rise Of The Business Analyst

Empowering business analysts with solution development and delivery tools can fill the gap caused by developer talent shortages. Firms are struggling to keep their digital transformation (DT) efforts apace with business requirements — especially in the recent fallout from the COVID-19 pandemic. As such, the divide between DT leaders and laggards is growing. Low-code/no-code application platforms allow firms to utilize untapped resources by enabling business analysts and managers to automate and optimize a business’s workflow.¹ A third of decision makers report their firms already use low-code platforms to build business process/workflow applications.²

Firms can significantly accelerate workflow automation. The most promising talent pool? Business analysts, an established role in both IT and business ops with experience that equips them to take on business automation and easily graduate into the role of “citizen developers.”³

Key Findings



Business analysts and managers are already doing technical tasks such as scripting (55%) and computer programming (51%).



Business analysts and managers lack technical resources, easy-to-use tools, and training to get the job done.



Low-code/no-code platforms can empower business analysts and managers to automate processes.

Business Analysts Need And Want To Create More Software

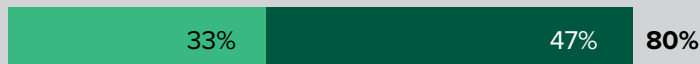
Business analysts and managers see a need to create software solutions. Seventy-five percent agree that they need more technical skills than they did five years ago to be successful. And it's not only necessary, but enjoyable work: Most find satisfaction in solving business problems with technical solutions. Some firms promote active analyst and manager involvement in app delivery, but many miss the opportunity to leverage their employees' expertise and enthusiasm to drive results. Tapping into these wants and needs can boost firms' employee experience (EX) and retention.

Forrester's Employee Experience Index shows that information workers at firms that enable them with the right technology have significantly higher satisfaction and productivity.⁴ To further enrich EX, companies must be more workflow-centric and focus on what the end goal is for the employee: to get the job done.⁵

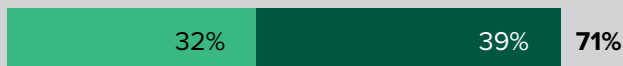
“To what extent do you agree with the following?”

● Strongly agree ● Agree

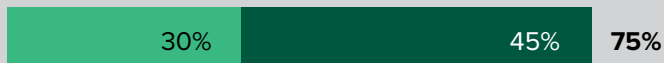
I find satisfaction in solving business problems with technology



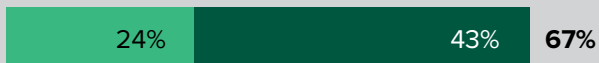
I would like to develop more technical skills to further my career



I find that I need to have more technical skills in a business/operations role than I did five years ago



Although I am not a developer, I am encouraged to find technical solutions to the problems I face in my everyday tasks

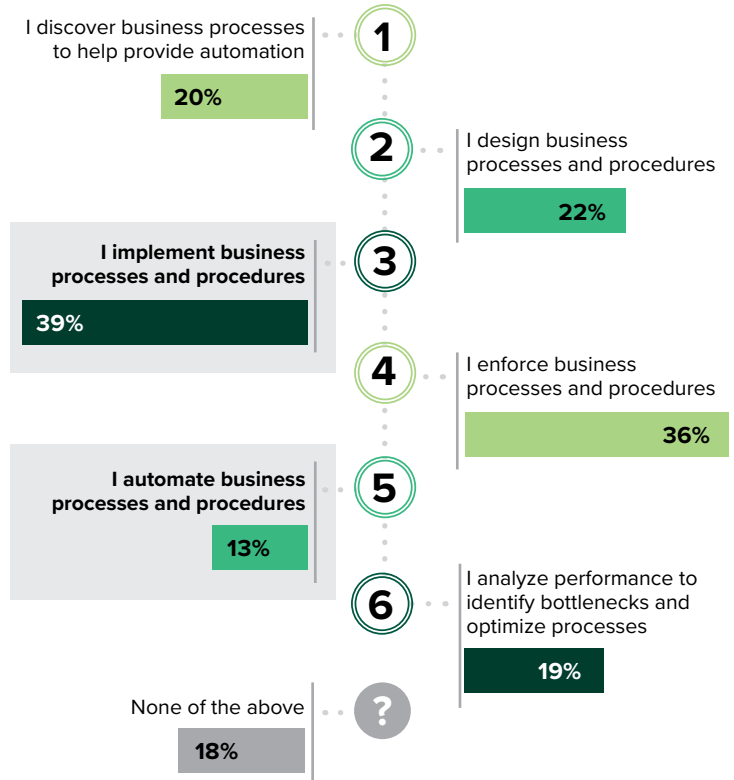


Surprise! Firms Already Rely On Business Analysts To Create Software Solutions

Firms already rely on business analysts and managers to carry out business automation tasks, even if they have IT teams. Most respondents in our study report somewhat or very frequently performing tasks such as scripting and computer programming. Further corroborating this finding, 61% of decision makers indicate their firms currently use a low-code or no-code platform to empower business employees.

Business analysts and managers are also involved in the implementation of business processes and procedures. However, there is room for improvement when it comes to this automation. Low-code and no-code platforms can potentially raise the contribution of business analysts and managers in process automation projects.

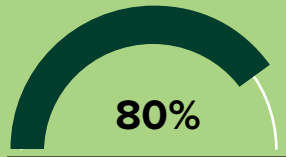
“Which of the following tasks do you complete at your organization?” (Select all that apply)



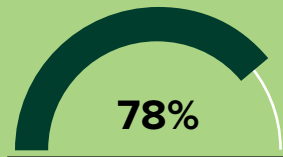
Analysts And Managers Are Held Back By Manual Tasks And Clunky Tools

Even when firms have existing tools, business analysts and managers find these tools too difficult to even get started. Business analysts and managers still overly rely on spreadsheets, wasting time on manual tasks and risking the loss of valuable information. Bottom line: Firms are not providing business analysts with the tools they need to get the job done, leading to increased demand on strained IT resources and mistakes from manually managing information through spreadsheets and emails.

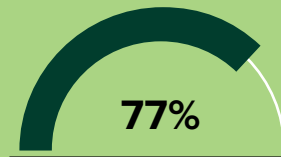
“To what extent are these obstacles to getting your job done?”
(Showing mildly to very challenging)



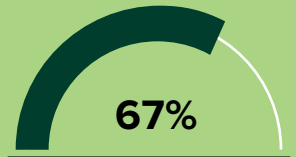
I spend too much time on manual tasks



My team loses valuable information due to lack of version control on files or reports



My team manages critical information in spreadsheets



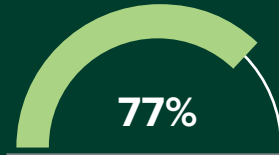
I have tools, but they are too hard for me to use to get started

The Curse Of The IT Bottleneck

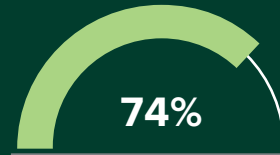
When business analysts lack easy-to-use, comprehensive tools, they must wait for overwhelmed IT teams to create solutions. Seventy-four percent of respondents report that help from their technical colleagues is unavailable. About three-fourths of respondents also lack resources and training for automation self-reliance. To alleviate the reliance on IT, business analysts and managers need an automation solution that is easy to use, fully functional, and readily available. Without this solution, business analysts and managers are at risk for severe delays, mistakes made by manually processing information and tasks, and frustrated employees who are more likely to turn over. Companies miss a main source of frustration for their business analysts and managers when they ignore the impact of easy-to-use tools.⁶

“To what extent are these obstacles to getting your job done?”

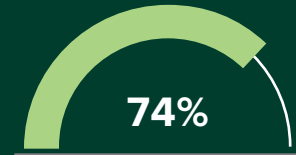
(Showing mildly to very challenging)



Resources for me to automate processes are unavailable



Help from my technical colleagues is not available



Training for me to automate processes is unavailable

The Promise Of Low- And No-Code Platforms For Analysts And Managers

Low- or no-code platforms offer a promising solution to help analysts and managers contribute to software solutions. These platforms give more resources to business analysts and managers to quickly automate business processes and procedures.

The COVID-19 crisis has demonstrated the value of quickly addressing needs rising from unpredictable external forces that disrupt business processes. Some firms have already implemented a low-code or no-code platform to reduce costs, innovate, increase software-delivery speed, and adapt to rapidly changing competitive markets. As a result, firms are shifting some business automation processes to business analysts and managers to lighten the load on IT.

“You stated that you or someone in your organization currently use a low-code or no-code platform. What led you to implement this platform?”
(Select all that apply)



35% To reduce costs



33% To innovate



33% To increase speed



32% To adapt to a rapidly changing market



28% To meet customer demands and provide better customer service



20% We don't have enough developers to create the software we need



20% To comply with policies and regulations



19% To mitigate competitive threats

Empowered Analysts And Managers Streamline Operations And Reduce Costs

The software that analysts and managers deliver streamlines operations, raises visibility and control, and reduces costs. These platforms also allow firms to go to market faster since they can automate business processes without having to wait for IT resources to free up. The flexibility, repeatability, and scalability of these platforms empower business analysts and managers to build and deploy automated processes and apps more quickly, responding to ever-increasing change.

“What benefits would you expect to see/have you seen from utilizing low-code or no-code platforms?”

(Select all that apply)

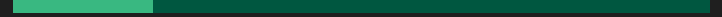
36% Ease of use



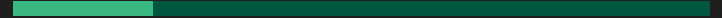
28% Streamlined operations



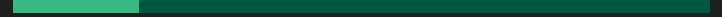
20% Faster time-to-market
(no need to wait for available IT resources)



20% Repeatability



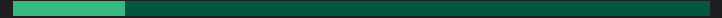
18% Flexibility
(I can use with a low initial investment of time and money)



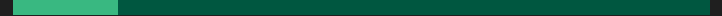
18% Scalability



16% Lower application delivery costs



15% Automatic governance to enforce compliance



67% of respondents report their current tools are too difficult to use for them to get started.

Conclusion

Most business leaders don't realize that their business analysts and managers already contribute important software solutions. These employees know how to solve problems; they just need the right tools to do so. By enabling greater participation with easier-to-use tools, firms put the key in the ignition for more players besides IT to drive the automation car — especially critical given recent global events, when the urgency for delivering solutions quickly is at an all-time high. Firms must:

- Encourage and enable business analysts and managers to contribute more to business process automation.
- Eliminate IT bottlenecks by providing easy-to-use tools and training to other employees.
- Provision a low- or no-code platform that enables business analysts and managers to quickly automate business processes and streamline operations.

Project Director:

Rachel Taylor, Market Impact
Associate Consultant

Contributing Research:

Forrester's Application
Development & Delivery
research group

Methodology

This Opportunity Snapshot was commissioned by HighGear. To create this profile, Forrester Consulting supplemented this research with custom survey questions asked of 158 business analysts and managers in the US, Canada, and UK. The custom survey began and was completed in March 2020.

ENDNOTES

¹In this study, we define a low-code or no-code platform as a platform that empowers business analysts, business users, or technology professionals to create and deploy application software through graphical user interfaces and intuitive configuration instead of traditional computer programming.

²Source: Forrester Analytics' Business Technographics® Developer Survey, 2019.

³In this study, we define citizen developers as business experts sanctioned to contribute to the software strategy.

⁴Source: "A Good Customer Experience Requires Workers To Be Digitally Enabled," Forrester Research, Inc., October 3, 2019.

⁵Source: "Transform Insights Into A Better Employee Technology Experience," Forrester Research, Inc., July 16, 2019.

⁶Source: "Introducing Forrester's Employee Experience Index," Forrester Research, Inc., February 14, 2019.

ABOUT FORRESTER CONSULTING

Forrester Consulting provides independent and objective research-based consulting to help leaders succeed in their organizations. Ranging in scope from a short strategy session to custom projects, Forrester's Consulting services connect you directly with research analysts who apply expert insight to your specific business challenges. For more information, visit forrester.com/consulting.

© 2020, Forrester Research, Inc. All rights reserved. Unauthorized reproduction is strictly prohibited. Information is based on best available resources. Opinions reflect judgment at the time and are subject to change. Forrester®, Technographics®, Forrester Wave, RoleView, TechRadar, and Total Economic Impact are trademarks of Forrester Research, Inc. All other trademarks are the property of their respective companies. For additional information, go to forrester.com. [E-47203]

Demographics

GEOGRAPHY

US: 34%

CAN: 34%

UK: 33%

COMPANY SIZE (EMPLOYEES)

250 to 499: 11%

500 to 999: 20%

1,000 to 4,999: 27%

5,000 or more: 42%

INDUSTRY (TOP 4)

Financial services/insurance: 16%

Technology: 14%

Government: 10%

Transportation: 9%

TITLE

Manager: 39%

Project manager: 13%

Full-time practitioner: 23%

Full-time admin: 25%



FORRESTER®