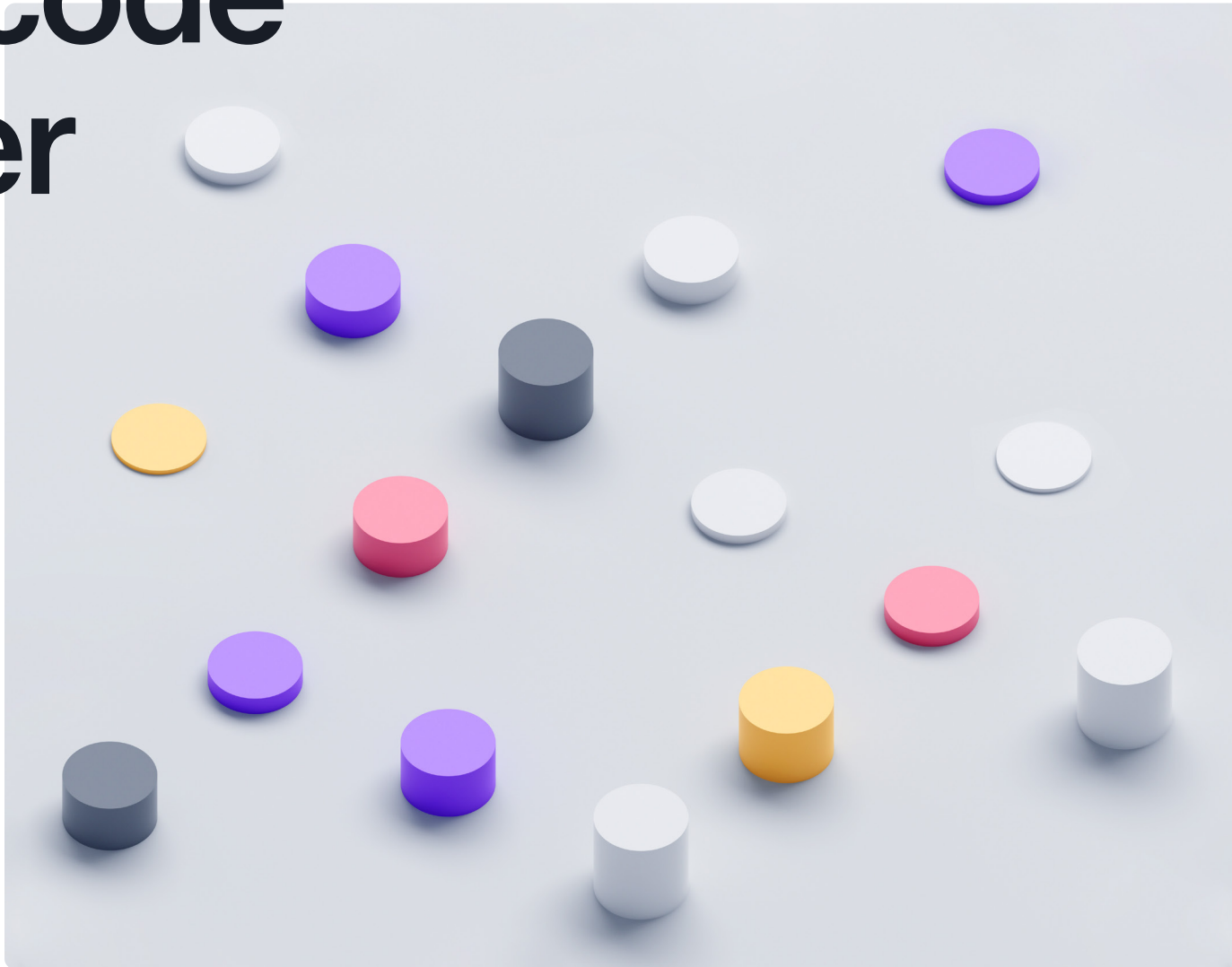# Rise of the no-code marketer

A marketing leader's guide to no-code

Airtable

The phrase "digital transformation" was coined in the 2010s. But it's been over a decade, and despite all of the investment in and adoption of tools, **we're still frustratingly far from the deeply interconnected, hyper-efficient ways of work that we imagined.**

At the turn of the 2020s, the COVID-19 pandemic became an unlikely catalyst for a new wave of transformation. It didn't just force us to adopt decentralized work; it surfaced hidden flaws in the way we'd been working for years—our tolerance for poor documentation, redundant processes, and wasted time.

It accelerated the need for digital transformation; without it, teams are frustrated and unable to do their best work. We've been forced to come to grips with all the ways in which we *haven't* actually digitally transformed. It's surfaced once-hidden flaws in the way we work—and it's also changing the way marketing functions. World-class marketing teams now have to thrive in transition. We need the agility to move, with confidence, through constant change.

Unfortunately, the tools we adopted to increase our speed are, more often than not, holding us back. Our research shows that most teams aren't using the tools they invest in—and the more tools we buy, the more time we spend on operational tasks.

In the search for the most sophisticated, cutting edge tech, teams invest in tools that are purpose-built to meet their specific needs, but relegate them to siloed, disconnected ways of working. They waste precious cycles adapting technology that can't keep up the pace. Or they negotiate precious dev resources from their internal teams, entering into an endless cycle of requests and delays. Marketing leaders look for seamless ways of working, and find themselves with stitched-together processes and tools.

But at the same time, another set of marketing leaders are finding that a *decreased* reliance outside of their own teams—on off-the shelf software, but also on developers and IT— is allowing them to transform their marketing teams into innovation hubs. They're discovering ways to be more resourceful, more agile, and more in control of their work. For leaders who are ready for true digital transformation, it's time to find new ways to unblock your teams, and to steer them toward their best work.

Enter: the no-code marketer.

What is no-code for marketers?

While "no-code" may be a new term for many leaders, marketing teams are already taking advantage of no-code tools. According to Forrester, the no- and low-code industry spending will increase to $22 billion by 2022, and our own 2021 research shows that 33% of marketing teams are currently using no- or low-code tools on a regular basis. The promise of no-code is that it allows you to build applications without writing code. But even that simple premise can sound needlessly intimidating—what does "application" mean, in this context? Why, and what, would a marketer want to build on their own?

As Scott Brinker and Jason Baldwin describe in their Marketing 2030 trends report, no-code becomes more tangible in context of other recent, more familiar developments— thanks to tools like Canva and Easily, marketers can build their own decks without designers. Tableau and Obviously.ai empower marketers to analyze even enormous data sets without analytics support.

"This is the essence of the 'no code' trend. Software that empowers general business users to create things that previously only specialists could produce."

**Scott Brinker & Jason Baldwin,
Marketing 2030**

Formerly, marketing teams were limited to two paths: either you had IT build something for you, or you bought off the shelf stuff. Fluency with no- and low-code creates a third option: build the tools you need, exactly the way you want. Your team already knows what they want—but they're either limited to ill-fitting, off-the-shelf tools, or dependent on technical skills to reach their vision. No-code will empower those on your team who are closest to the work (the martech experts, the operations pros, the program managers) to bring their vision to life. Now, the right people in your org will create the right workflows for your team, driving the most impactful outcomes for your business, and finally allowing you to keep up with the rapid pace of change.

The promise of no-code is not that developers will become obsolete, or that marketers will need to build all of their own software. But just as analytics have become part of any high-functioning marketing team, so will building apps to make your team more impactful.

As a leader, you're constantly being sold tools that are "customizable" or "flexible"—words that everyone wants to hear, but doesn't always mean what you'd hoped. No-code app-building allows your teams to build software that isn't just "customizable"—it's entirely customized to exactly the way you work. And it isn't just "flexible"—your team built it, and your team can change it whenever they need to.

How marketing teams leverage no-code today

While the possibilities are limitless (and we mean that literally), marketing teams are typically using no and low-code for three interconnected reasons: **to connect data** from multiple sources to a single source of truth; **to build logic** on top of that data, automating repetitive or trigger-based parts of their workflows; and **to understand their data** in interactive, visual, and—most importantly—*actionable* ways.

Here's how these elements work together:

Connecting data

Marketing teams frequently need to bring together multiple sources of data—whether you're trying to enrich your customer data by comparing CRM reports and notes from your support team, or simply hoping to combine your comms calendar with your social media schedule. A single source of truth—in which changes made in one place are uniformly reflected everywhere—gives you a more accurate view, but it also gives you a richer one. When you can see how the length of your sales cycle correlates to product adoption, or how interaction with a social campaign reduces support requests, you can make decisions based on signal, not noise. Teams use no-code to bring data into a single source of truth based on their own, specific requirements.

Building logic on top of that data

Operational overhead tends to snowball as teams grow in size and complexity—what used to be a simple hallway conversation becomes an endless barrage of Slack messages; manual updates that used to take minutes are now eating up a team member's week. Once your data is synced and connected into a single source of truth, your team can quickly become ruthless automators, using no-code logic to build automations on top of their database. Automations save teams time, reduce repetitive work (and corresponding human error), and allow them to focus on innovative, creative work. For example, teams frequently build automations to notify team members, publish to social platforms, sync data from outside sources, or make updates to their database.

Transforming data into insight

The more complex and varied your data becomes, the more difficult it is to translate that data into actionable insight. Teams also find that different members need different data to move their work forward—meaning there is no one-size-fits-all dashboard to unblock your entire team.

Marketing teams are increasingly using no-code to build custom reports on top of their data. These data visualization apps allow teams to pull, configure, represent, and share data from as many sources as need be, configured to reflect the insights and metrics most important to individuals, teams, and the organization at large.

How marketing teams leverage no-code today

Planning

Any marketing leaders live in dread of planning: between duplicate workstreams, competing priorities, and lack of clarity, they can never quite get on the same page. To solve this, marketing teams are using no-code apps to sync all of their data together—not just performance data, but everything from operational data (budgets, resources, capacity planning, and more) to company data (like OKRs and roadmaps). Equipped with a single source of truth that's customized to their data and needs, teams can focus their planning efforts on creativity and innovation.

Production

Your team is expected to produce high quality assets with limited resources—our research found that 80% of marketing leaders face an increased volume of campaigns, requests, and compared to last year. Using simple automation apps, teams are able to expedite hand-offs, quickly take in feedback, and push assets over the finish line fast.

Asset management

The marketing team's job doesn't end when an asset goes live—you're also responsible for housing those assets, surfacing them as needed, and enabling the whole company to use them. Marketing teams use no-code to create asset databases, and then to customize them for various stakeholders—preventing duplicate efforts, and getting everyone the information they need.

Measurement analysis, testing & optimization

Many teams do their planning, production, and asset tracking in one place, while their analytics live somewhere entirely different. Using no-code to bring in important analytics from multiple systems, and combine operational data with those analytics, teams can quickly show the impact of their work, generating reports and dashboards directly from their campaign calendars.

The no-code advantage

No-code makes it possible for those closest to the work—even those without developer resources—to build their own apps, exactly how they want them. This transforms organizations, full stop. It allows teams to move faster, to break free of silos, and to grow—*while* opening up precious engineering resources, and increasing their app-building capacity.

Here's a deeper dive into the no-code advantage:

Ship content faster, without increasing headcount

No-code app building makes marketing teams truly agile, able to reduce their dependence on developers, and to quickly unblock their work. By allowing those closest to the operational day-to-day to define (and improve) their own processes, you free up your team to do more with less.

Get aligned across tools and teams

No-code allows teams to break down rigid silos between disconnected tools, so your whole team is working off the same set of information. Simple apps can keep both external and internal data connected and automatically up-to-date, reducing the need for duplication, and minimizing human error.

Grow without operational drag

As your team's goals and conditions inevitably evolve, no-code tools allow your team to make changes quickly, and to scale without losing their autonomy. As your team grows, the no-coders among your ranks can build tools that everyone can use—and everyone benefits from.

Getting started

Marketing leaders have already started to decrease their reliance on external developers and internal IT, and empower the people closest to the work itself.

They've already seen that, as workplaces become more distributed, a single source of truth is the only way to prevent silos. They know that no two teams or workflows are alike—even within the same team, no two quarters are alike. And finally, they know that if growth is impossible without systems built to scale.

If you're ready to bring true digital transformation to your team, and build a culture of innovation, here's how to get your team started with no-code:

1 Start small with one use case.

When you're bringing no-code into your stack, starting small is a great way to go. Have your team start with one use case via the templates below.

See template gallery

2 Start mapping out your ideal workflow.

No-code apps aren't meant to live in silos—instead, they're meant to be woven into repeatable workflows that help streamline the way you work. Help your team learn the elements of good workflow design in the guide below.

Read guide

3 Stitch your tools together.

Most workflows incorporate multiple apps, tools, and information sources. Airtable integrates with more than 1,000 websites and apps. Learn how to bring your tools together in our introduction to Airtable integrations.

Read blog post

About Airtable

No matter your team's size or needs, Airtable's unique combination of power and approachability gives modern marketing teams the agility, flexibility, and scale they need to manage their unique processes and workflows. The fully customizable, low-code platform gives your people the freedom to work the way they know best while also driving innovation, efficiency, and performance. Marketing teams can create a single source of truth for all their work, while still enabling each individual team member to customize how they view the data most important to their role. With Airtable, marketing teams can move quickly and continue to raise the bar on how they produce marketing programs, content, and campaigns.

Contact sales   **Watch demo**

Rise of the no-code marketer