Meet the Rapid Developer:

Bridging IT and Business to Deliver Rock Star Results

mx mendix

Rapid development platforms, also called "no-code," "high-productivity" or simply app platforms, have gained significant exposure in the past year. These platforms enable custom business applications to be built rapidly and deployed instantly without the need for traditional coding. Not only does the concept support speedy delivery, but it opens the door to a new type of developer, one less interested in coding and more interested in business results.

These business-savvy developers rely on visual modeling tools to easily define each element of an application (such as database, application and process logic, user interface, and security). In addition to visual development, platforms like Mendix offer a number of other features that further accelerate productivity, including an App Store with reusable templates, widgets and components, as well as social collaboration, enterprise integration and one-click deployment in the cloud.

With the rise of rapid development platforms, organizations are now able to slash project timelines from months to weeks (or even days). This time to market advantage is crucial for organizations struggling to keep pace with rising business demands, particularly as they look to innovate and differentiate themselves in competitive markets.

MEET THE RAPID DEVELOPER

While much of the attention right now is focused on the 'what' and 'why' of rapid development platforms, the next logical question for many organizations is 'who.' While traditional developers certainly use these platforms, there are a variety of other individuals who are well suited to take the lead using these modern development environments.

So what are the defining traits of these rapid developers? More often than not, they have one leg in IT and the other in the business. This means that they have some technical skills but also possess domain knowledge and are good communicators and collaborators.

The rapid developer prioritizes solving business problems. And they're creative self-starters with a keen interest in tackling new projects, driving innovation and adding value to their organizations. These individuals are likely looking for

new ways to get involved and show additional value. They are hungry for innovation and enjoy tackling new problems.

To help showcase these individuals and some of their successes, we've included short bios on three members of the Mendix community. Each person comes with a unique background and set of interests, but they all share the same desire to build new, innovative applications.

Example 1:
Savan Vyas, LV= Insurance

Computer science graduate turned rapid developer to deliver better solutions.

Savan Vyas, Scrum Master and Mendix Business Engineer at LV= is a great example of a rapid developer. Savan studied computer science at university and while he always liked application development—particularly the creative side of it—coding was something that he didn't particularly enjoy.

When he first came across the Mendix App Platform used at LV=, he says it was the "perfect" fit for him.

"You didn't have to learn 5-10 languages or worry about missing a comma somewhere. You could just focus on building apps that solve business problems."

And solving business problems is exactly what Savan has done—quickly. In less than two years since joining the company, he's completed six app delivery projects, including a broker workflow app and an app that allows distributors/brokers to use the company's platform to sell insurance policies.

Meanwhile, he says his developer friends at other companies are lucky to have finished one project in that same time.

"Mendix enables me to do things that I couldn't do before. It helps me to interact with people, to understand requirements and to deliver the best possible solution."

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Example 2:
Javan Berry, Digital Risk

Web designer turned rapid developer to provide greater value to the business.

Javan Berry, Business Engineer at Digital Risk, a provider of risk, compliance and transaction management solutions, is another great example. Javan received his degree in web design and had been working as a front-end developer for more than a decade when he heard that Digital Risk was building a Mendix team. He immediately asked to be a part of it.

"I really hate coding and saw that Mendix would make it easier to build functionality," he explains. "I was excited about the idea of doing everything on my own, and not needing a developer to finish my designs. I also saw this as a way for me to show greater value to the company."

One of Javan's main projects is an information management app for one of the company's clients that allows their customers to view and update information in real time. The app is so popular that the client constantly has enhancement requests. According to Javan, "We're so fast that we often make changes faster than our testers can test them."

Beyond pure speed, Javan has found greater job satisfaction from being a rapid developer.

"I enjoy my job a lot more. I used to work in Visual Studio .NET and I hope I never have to go back."

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Example 3:

Nolan Ramsey, EPI-USE America

Business intelligence analyst turned to app building to solve new problems.

Nolan Ramsey, Senior SAP Business Intelligence Consultant at EPI-USE America, provides yet another view on the unique skills behind the rapid developer title. Nolan originally received a business management degree before going back to school to study computer science.

Most recently, he has focused on business intelligence, specifically data warehousing, predictive modeling, and customer reporting. He discovered the power of Mendix at the request of one of his clients.

"It's a completely new way to think about development. My BI background focuses on data retrieval and manipulation; I now need to think about data capture. Fortunately, the AGILE methodology framework made a lot of sense to me, specifically sitting with customers in real time and working on frequent, rapid changes. BI is exactly the same, just from an analysis perspective."

Nolan is in the process of building multiple new applications for his client. The largest, to date, includes a mobile expense management application. What started as a way to capture receipts online has grown into a full workflow management tool around receipts, from auditing workflows to integrating into SAP.

"Working in Mendix has lit a fire in me. I was solving similar problems with each new BI client, but now I have the creativity part of my job back. Every time I sit down, I solve new problems."

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BRINGING BUSINESS AND IT TOGETHER

Rapid developers like Savan, Javan and Nolan exist throughout the organization. However, they're potential to take on more responsibility relies on the knowledge and availability of rapid development tools.

While the demand for custom applications has never been higher, traditional, code-based development approaches simply can't keep pace. The key and inherent value of a rapid development platform is that it brings IT and the business together, enabling faster, more iterative and more collaborative development.

Apps can be quickly built, seamlessly deployed and easily changed—with little to no low-level coding. But just as rapid development platforms open the door for a more inclusive and iterative development approach, so too do they open up opportunities for a larger, more diverse group of developers.

Fortunately, this new breed of rapid developer exists not just in IT but throughout the organization, in virtually every department. But to motivate these individuals, you need the right tools.

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