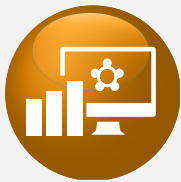


# Power Platform Insights September 2022



## Maximizing Power Platform Adoption for Better Business Outcomes



### Introduction

September's issue of Power Platform Insights is all about adoption — how to maximize usage of the Power Platform by makers and users to increase return on your Microsoft investment and achieve your goals of digital transformation through low-code solutions.



Have any questions you would like us to answer in future newsletters?



Send them to [lgreszler@hitachisolutions.com](mailto:lgreszler@hitachisolutions.com)



## Section 1

# Defining Adoption and How to Focus Your Efforts



The Microsoft Power Platform is a suite of low-code tools for applications and automation, and can be customized for your organization's particular business needs.

Some companies are de-centralized and have many makers in different departments all creating apps and automation workflows, while others maintain a more central group of developers and makers who create apps and automation for their company.

Wherever you fall on this spectrum, adoption of the platform is important, but your focus may be different.

For maker-centric organizations, primary focus should be driving adoption of the platform by app and automation makers, while for more centrally managed organizations building large applications, the focus should be on adoption of these applications by end users.

### Why should you care about Power Platform adoption?

So why should you care about adoption of the Power Platform? You have a lot on your plate, and you are using low-code development platforms to "do more with less." Why should you focus on adoption of the platform?

- 1 You are investing in a powerful platform and want to ensure that you are realizing a positive return on your investment.**
- 2 To ensure that your app and automation developers are staying within desired licensing**
- 3 To Increase maker productivity**
- 4 Poorly architected apps and automations can turn users off to a technology**
- 5 Validate that apps and automations are increasing productivity and simplifying processes, rather than further complicating processes**



## Section 2

# Power Platform Adoption Whammies

Despite our best intentions, some business practices can negatively affect successful adoption of the Power Platform. While business leaders want to provide a secure and productive environment, well-intentioned policies can contribute to the failure of their employees adapting to and adopting the platform.

**Let's take a closer look at some of those whammies and how to avoid them.**



**1. Security policies:** to keep the platform "safe," IT team locks down everything. As a result, makers are prevented from using connectors and are forced to use manual processes like flat files, which are in reality a higher security risk than using a connector.

**Our Recommendation:** Common sense Data Loss Prevention (DLP) rules and restrictions are important, but any restriction should understand business needs and take other approaches to mitigate risk while still enabling solution builders.



**2. Lack of training for makers:** while Power Platform is easy to learn, there are advanced techniques and capabilities that are important to understand as you build enterprise-grade apps. For example, responsive design, offline, advanced formulas in flows, etc. While it is possible for makers to learn these capabilities on their own, the risk is the apps they build will not fully meet business requirements or will do some in a less than user-friendly manner, and both maker and user experience will suffer.

**Our Recommendation:** Provide adequate training for your makers, and provide examples of best practice development techniques that your makers can reference to understand advanced techniques.



**3. Limiting everyone to standard licenses:** You have Power Apps and Power Automate as part of your Office 365 licensing, and you want to avoid paying unnecessary premium license fees. This is a good goal but can be short-sighted as the adoption of the platform grows, and your makers build more complex applications.

SharePoint is great, but it is not a good fit for complex data models or if it blocks automating local systems or applications not covered by standard connectors. Some companies have tried complex workarounds to avoid paying license fees, such as manually importing data extracts to SharePoint lists, and the results have been fragile systems that are easily broken, and users will not want to use the application.



**Our Recommendation:** evaluate the ROI for business requests involving non premium connectors — will the automation or application save employees time, and if so, does that outweigh the cost of the licensing?



**4. Lack of ownership of the platform:** investing in the platform is not enough — Somebody needs to own it. By “ownership” we mean someone who is responsible for the adoption of the platform — for setting the rules and strategy for the platform, and for identifying how and when the platform will be used. Without this, while you may see some success, it will likely be inconsistent and sporadic.

**Our Recommendation:** Define ownership of the platform from a business and a technical perspective and empower the platform owner to make decisions. Consider tying their goals to the success of the platform around defined metrics and outcomes.



**5. No process:** Just because it is low-code does not mean it is no-process. While makers can jump in and make an app or flow quickly, if they are not following development best practices, the resulting apps and flows will be unstable and poorly architected.

**Our Recommendation:** institute guidelines for makers to drive best practices in app and flow development. Some examples:

- Anything above personal productivity grade should be developed in a different environment than where it will be used.
- Any app or flow should be thoroughly tested before deploying it to production
- Source code for very important enterprise applications should be stored in ADO or Github
- All enterprise grade apps should be tested on the types of devices on which users will be accessing the app — don't test mobile apps on desktop.
- All enterprise grade apps should be designed to be responsive
- Flows should be tested at scale to ensure they are efficient and performant and do not exceed API limits
- Production flows should be owned by a service account in production and use service principals where applicable
- All enterprise grade apps should be tested as each app persona/security role



**6. Poorly performing applications:** a poorly performing application may be worse than not having an application to begin with. This can especially be true in citizen developer centric environments where a maker creates an application that looks “cool” but when used at scale with full set of data, is very slow, has errors, or does not return enough data due to delegation limits.

**Our Recommendation:** Provide your makers with guidelines for testing enterprise grade apps and ensure that all enterprise applications moved to production have been fully tested for performance at scale.



**7. Bad user experience:** When developing applications with low-code tools, your makers may create apps that are functional but not beautiful. Maybe the process of entering data is cumbersome, requiring navigation across numerous screens. Maybe the user flow in the app is inconsistent, with a variety of buttons, tabs, and fields, all arranged in an inconsistent manner. All of these things can lead to a frustrating user experience and degrade adoption of the Power Platform in your organization

**Our Recommendation:** Invest in UX training for your top makers, provide examples and re-usable controls and templates that makers can use to easily create good looking applications that fit your organizations' branding guidelines.



### Section 3

## Tips for Driving Adoption for Makers



If your organization is focused on many groups using the Power Platform to build apps and automation, in this section we will discuss techniques you can use to grow adoption with developers and makers.

**Set clear guidance** on the purpose of the platform and where it fits in your organization. Many developers have their favorite tools. Even within developers on the Power Platform, you will find some "SharePoint people" and some SQL DBA's that think all apps should be built with one particular technology. Set guidelines as to the fit for purpose of each tool, and when Power Platform should be used (or when it should not).

**Empower makers** to create apps and automations within realistic limitations. While you may not give everybody premium licenses, have an accessible process for requesting premium licenses for applicable business scenarios

**Provide developer licenses for makers:** If your developers only ever have access to standard licenses, they will not learn how to use the more advanced capabilities. Fortunately, you can provide makers with a Power Platform Developer Environment <https://docs.microsoft.com/en-us/power-apps/maker/developer-plan> where they can build apps and flows using premium connectors for free that do not count against your Power Platform capacity and do not risk exposing your production data.

**Provide training to makers:** While makers and developers can do many things with the platform on their own, they will achieve more consistent results if you provide training to them — this training can be lead by one of your experienced makers, there are online training options available, such as [learn.microsoft.com](https://learn.microsoft.com), and Hitachi Solutions also provides focused training to enable your makers to succeed.

**Provide support to makers:** Somebody needs to be able to help a developer when they get stuck — if they are “on their own” they might find an answer to the question from Google, but they may also get frustrated and get turned off to the platform.

Makers need someone they can turn to when they are stuck who can not only give them guidance but also work with them to help enable their success. When you are just getting started, a partner like Hitachi Solutions can fill that role, but as your organization and number of makers

increase, you will want to be sure that there are internal structures established to provide support to your citizen developers.

### **Some approaches that have been successful for our customers:**

- internal user groups
- mentors and champions
- Lunch and learns where makers can share their successes and challenges



Note that while support can also be provided by an internal it/helpdesk, this is typically best for enterprise app support, as most IT groups do not have enough resources to support every maker with every formula question.

Also, since the IT group is not part of the same business department as the makers, frequently a champion/IT pro who is closer to the business group can more effectively provide app design guidance.

Provide time for your makers to make: we have seen this story play out on multiple occasions — an organization wants to build Power Apps, and they have an excited maker who is showing promise with Power Apps. However, this employee also works full time and does not have any time available to dedicate to building apps or automations.

As a result, it takes a long time for them to build apps and flows, and the value received from the platform is limited. If you are investing in the platform and want employees to build apps and flows that will make your business more productive, you need to give them some time to build apps and flows.



## Section 4

# Tips for Driving Adoption for App Users

So your developers and makers have built a very important application, and now you want people to use the application. What are some techniques that you can use to maximize your user adoption of your Power Apps?



**Get users involved early.** By involving users from the beginning, you can ensure that the app is designed with them in mind. Make sure you are accurately capturing their business process, and that the app you are delivering will make the users more productive.



**Evaluate the overall user process, not just the process in the application.** Is this application going to make users more productive by removing steps or making the process faster, or will it add steps and complexity to their process.



**Monitor usage of the application.** Monitor how users are actually using the application, not just how you want them to use the app. You can do this by doing “ride along” sessions with app users where you observe while they use the app, or you can use tools like **Azure Application Insights** to capture telemetry about how your users are actually using the application. <https://docs.microsoft.com/en-us/power-apps/maker/canvas-apps/application-insights>

Plan for updates and enhancements.  
Your app is not going to be perfect in its initial release.  
**It's a process!**





## Section 5

# Helpful tools for managing adoption of the Power Platform



Here is a list of some helpful tools you can use to monitor and facilitate Power Platform adoption:

**Center Of Excellence (COE) starter kit:** <https://docs.microsoft.com/en-us/power-platform/guidance/coe/starter-kit>

Microsoft provides a very useful set of tools that can help you better secure and govern the Power Platform, as well as nurture user adoption. Following are some of our favorite tools in the COE for adoption:

**Power BI reports** to understand how many people are using your apps and environments

**Maker Assessment Tool** walks a citizen developer through question to help them think like IT and presents potential challenges of which they should be aware

**App Catalog** shows makers other apps in your tenant and allows them to borrow and steal from other developers in an efficient manner

**Azure Application Insights:** <https://docs.microsoft.com/en-us/power-apps/maker/canvas-apps/application-insights>

Application Insights is a feature in Azure Monitor that is helpful for diagnosing issues and analyzing what users actually do inside your applications.

**Power Apps Code Review Tool:** <https://powerapps.microsoft.com/en-us/blog/power-apps-code-review-tool/>

The code review tool is a tool that reviews your Power App source code against a checklist of best practices and is very useful for your internal center of excellence team to use when reviewing apps built by citizen developers and coaching them to use best practices.

**Microsoft Learn:** <https://learn.microsoft.com>

Microsoft Learn is your one stop shop for Power Platform training. You can choose from role based content, or select specific products. The content is completely free, and is useful for managers to use to monitor their makers' training toward their learning goals. Also very useful if you are studying for Power Apps or Power Automate certification.

**Power Apps Monitor:** <https://docs.microsoft.com/en-us/power-apps/maker/monitor-overview>

Monitor allows an admin to connect live to an app session and stream what is happening at the event level to troubleshoot and diagnose problems. When a user reports an issue, it can be challenging to know exactly what is going on, and what the user is doing and seeing in the app. By connecting with Monitor, you can see exactly what the user is doing and review the event data from the app as the user uses the app.



# Microsoft Power Platform

## “In the news”

Following are the top news items from the Microsoft Power Platform team.

Download Power Apps onto your desktop and leverage offline functionality with the Power Apps for Windows application

<https://powerapps.microsoft.com/en-us/blog/announcing-general-availability-of-power-apps-for-windows/>

Automate data extraction from contracts, statements of work, and financial reports using AI Builder's new unstructured document processing capabilities

<https://powerautomate.microsoft.com/en-us/blog/automate-unstructured-documents-like-contracts-with-ai-builder/>

Create Power Pages that can be accessed by external customers, vendors in the new Power Pages design studio

<https://powerpages.microsoft.com/en-us/>

Reassign a flow to a new owner from the Power Automate portal

<https://powerautomate.microsoft.com/en-us/blog/change-owner-of-a-solution-flow/>

Use an expanded set of data types for input/outputs variable in Power Automate Desktop

<https://powerautomate.microsoft.com/en-us/blog/power-automate-for-desktop-june-2022-update/>



Looking for ways to connect in person on all things Microsoft Power Platform? Check out Microsoft's first annual **Power Platform conference in Orlando, September 20-22**. Look for Hitachi Solutions — including Matthew Devaney who will be featured in Charles Lamanna's Keynote Address, Kylie Kiser and Troy Taylor who are featured speakers — while you're there!

### Why Hitachi Solutions?

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