

How low-code is transforming field and site operations

Discover new ways to unlock greater agility and cost savings



Can field and site operations really do more with less? Yes, but it needs fresh thinking

Organisations with field and site operation teams need to be on the front foot – ever responsive to industry pressures, unexpected events and customer needs.

It's the same, whether you operate in transport, logistics, utilities, construction or facilities management.


Most likely, you're trying to streamline operations and remove friction for customers, colleagues and partners.

But an array of unnecessary delays, costs and frustrations may be holding you back. These can impact frontline teams, their colleagues, customers – and bottom-line profitability.

However, there's good news.

Easy-to-use technology can bring about radical change, leading to greater agility and significant cost savings.

This guide explores the everyday issues facing field and site operation teams – and finds valuable answers for chief executives and leaders in finance, CX, operations and IT.



“We said to Netcall, ‘Here’s our process. Build a prototype and show us what we can do. You’ve got two weeks.’ And they did!”

*Anand Patel,
Head of Technology & Innovation*

NetworkRail


Half of desk-based work-time is wasted (or unproductive)

£1

out of every £8 is wasted on needless manual admin¹

60%

of knowledge worker time is spent on unskilled work²

£11.4bn

per month is lost in productivity related to poor customer service³



Sources:

(1) Netcall cost analysis combining McKinsey and UK Customer Institute research 2023

(2) Asana – Anatomy of Work Index: How people spend their time at work


(3) UK Institute of Customer Service (ICS) reported in The Guardian (January 30, 2023)

Stubborn problems impact morale and efficiency

Field and site operations often excel at using technology to transform business at speed, such as switching to cloud storage, supporting home-based working for admin staff, and tracking valuable assets.

But even in the age of AI, stubborn problems deep within businesses can get overlooked and drain resources.

Despite all the money spent on technology, there's often a small army of people still tied down dealing with everyday exceptions, fixing anomalies and finding costly manual workarounds to inefficient processes. And that's a massive drag on performance and profitability.



“Create was very intuitive to use. One of our team members, with some training and support from Netcall, was able to quickly learn how the platform worked, allowing us to adjust workflows, create our own automated comms and store relevant data, all in one platform. This saved significant time and cost.”

John Hornsey,
Lean Programme Manager



How to pinpoint root causes and fix problems

Put simply, each of the issues we've explored requires intense manual effort. This is because key systems are disconnected, reliable data isn't easy to access and teams are forced to devote valuable time and talent to solving mundane issues themselves.

Manual processes can be extremely resource-intensive – whether it's rekeying data, compiling reports, issuing approvals or attempting to co-ordinate disparate groups of people. These activities often lock up hours of time for employees or temporary staff, putting a strain on budgets.

We're all prone to errors too.

Mistakes in data entry, calculations or approvals can have significant financial implications. Fixing these errors can be time-consuming and costly, slowing down operational efficiency.

What's the cost overall?

It's significant. For example, the average knowledge worker devotes 60% of their time to “work about work” – which includes various manual admin-type activities, according to research*. In fact, **just 27% of time is dedicated to the skilled craft** that employees have been trained and hired to do.

But here's some good news.

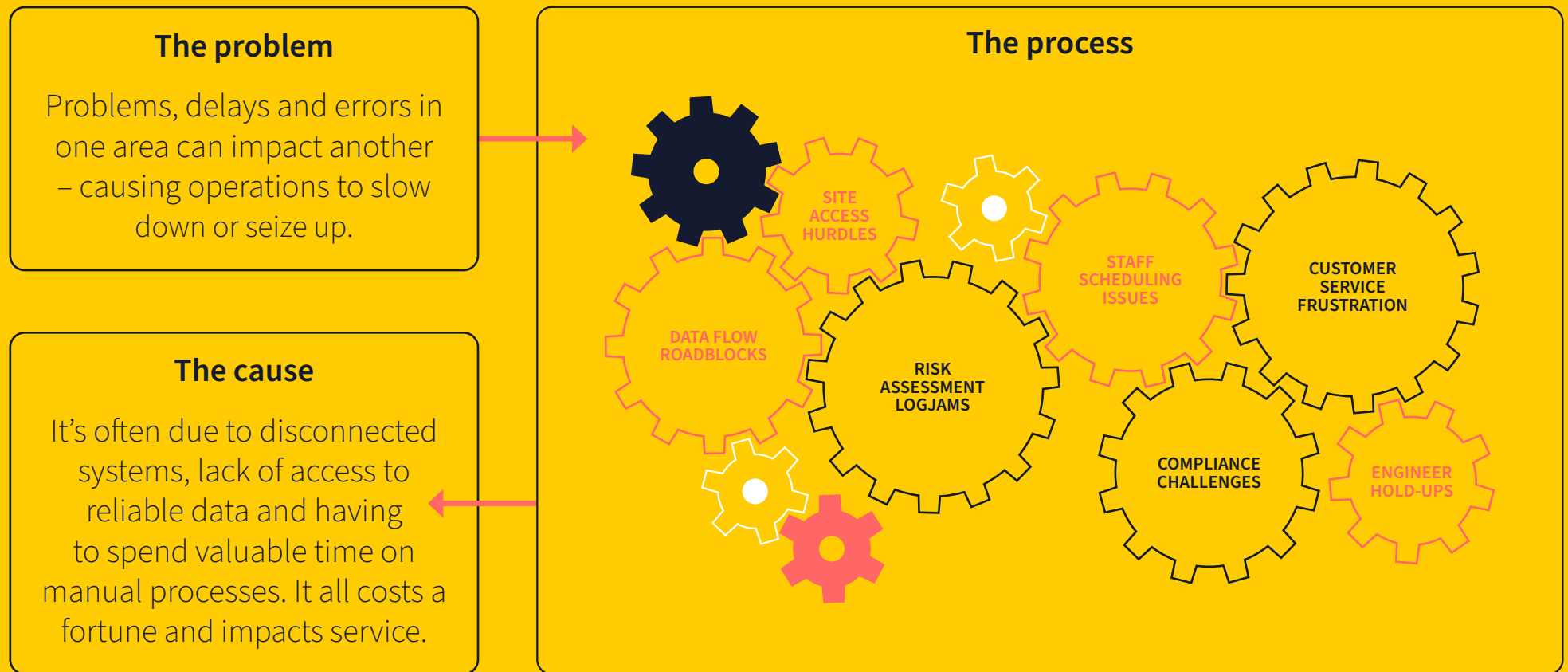
There's an answer — it's possible to improve outcomes and save money. You don't need a huge budget, turn your business upside down, or wait months or years to see the benefits.



Source:

*Asana – Anatomy of Work Index: How people spend their time at work

Field and site operations are often complex



Costs and delays are holding back field and site operations

Frontline teams can struggle with everyday issues that should be simple to sort. Tricky problems can also entangle people in the office or colleagues working remotely. In turn, this affects suppliers, customers and other stakeholders.

The outcome? Organisations are blighted by unnecessary complexity, cost and delay. Below are typical scenarios impacting field and site operation teams and customers:

Customer delays

Customers can feel as if their requests vanish into a void. In reality, teams struggle to liaise manually with specialists and other teams – while keeping customers updated about timelines and costs. Delays lead to poor satisfaction scores and damage the brand's reputation.

Engineer hold-ups


The process for booking engineers feels cumbersome, arduous and lacks transparency. It sometimes takes days or weeks for staff to find and hire contractors to fix broken equipment. This harms the customer experience.

Site access issues

A repair team arrives on site and suddenly discover they need access via property belonging to other parties. This information was missing and it takes days to secure permissions, which involves emails, calls and spreadsheets. There's no central way to track progress and keep everyone informed.

Risk assessment roadblocks

At safety-critical sites, outside visits must be carefully booked in and risks assessed. But arranging this may take weeks and involve lengthy documents being emailed between all parties – with no simple way to manage the process.



“Liberty Create is amazing, it's so agile. Within weeks you have something tangible. You can test, use and iterate in real time.”

*Philippa Callcut,
Enterprise Architect,
Chief Innovation Technology office*

NetworkRail


Costs and delays are holding back field and site operations cont.

Compliance challenges

Teams risk non-compliance with changing regulations and standards. It's hard to easily access proper documentation, manage version control and provide audit trails. Failures can result in legal penalties and damage to the organisation's reputation.

Staff development hurdles

Setting personal goals, up-skilling and empowering employees to be their best is a key business objective. But staff find that most of their time is spent administering the process and trying to communicate assessment appointments.


Niche systems dilemmas

Highly-bespoke systems built by inhouse teams to answer an organisation's niche needs become slow and inflexible over time. But there's no suitable replacement on the marketplace and commissioning a software company would be too expensive.

Data management overload

Staff get overwhelmed trying to manage GDPR, Data Protection Impact Assessments (DPIAs), data access requests and legitimate interest processes.

This is just a snapshot of the kinds of daily hurdles faced by field services organisations every day across the UK.



“The great thing about building the lean application on the Liberty Create platform is that it gives us the ability to expand, developing and building different elements to the lean platform. It has given us the tools to build framework for driving innovation and improving performance.”

Lee Warwick,
Senior Compliance Advisor
& Network Operations Data Champion



Low-code brings transformation to field and site operations – at speed and scale

Say No to...

- Manual workarounds
- Siloed data in a sprawl of spreadsheets
- Untracked email-based approvals

Say Yes to...

- Intuitive tools (without needing to code)
- Empowering your teams to create solutions
- Seeing the right results – fast

Your team knows the issues – and what success will look like

They can deliver massive business breakthroughs for your organisation.



Bring great ideas to life

Simply map the process you want to create, including steps, actions and end points and the software takes care of the rest. Within weeks you have something tangible that you can test, use and iterate in real time as your business needs evolve.

Use low-code to transform at speed and save resources

Low-code application development lets you connect people, processes and systems. Instead of purchasing an expensive IT solution or commissioning outside developers, it's possible to transform business processes and save money – quickly using the skills of the people around you.

What this means for you: Get applications 10x faster*

Low-code can speed up application development by as much as 10 times faster than traditional methods. Accordingly, you see the business benefits in a fraction of the time.

Lifting the mystique around low-code

In essence, low-code is a way to develop applications without needing to know how to code. Instead, you use a drag-and-drop interface and other intuitive tools to connect disparate systems, unlock data silos and optimise processes. You can connect with AI and robotic process automation too.

ATS Euromaster managed to free up staff and overcome manual processes, thanks to an automated solution for that brought together

legacy systems and data sources. Meanwhile, teams working for a major UK company found a smarter way to book maintenance engineers, boosting agility and efficiency.

What about our legacy tech and ESG?

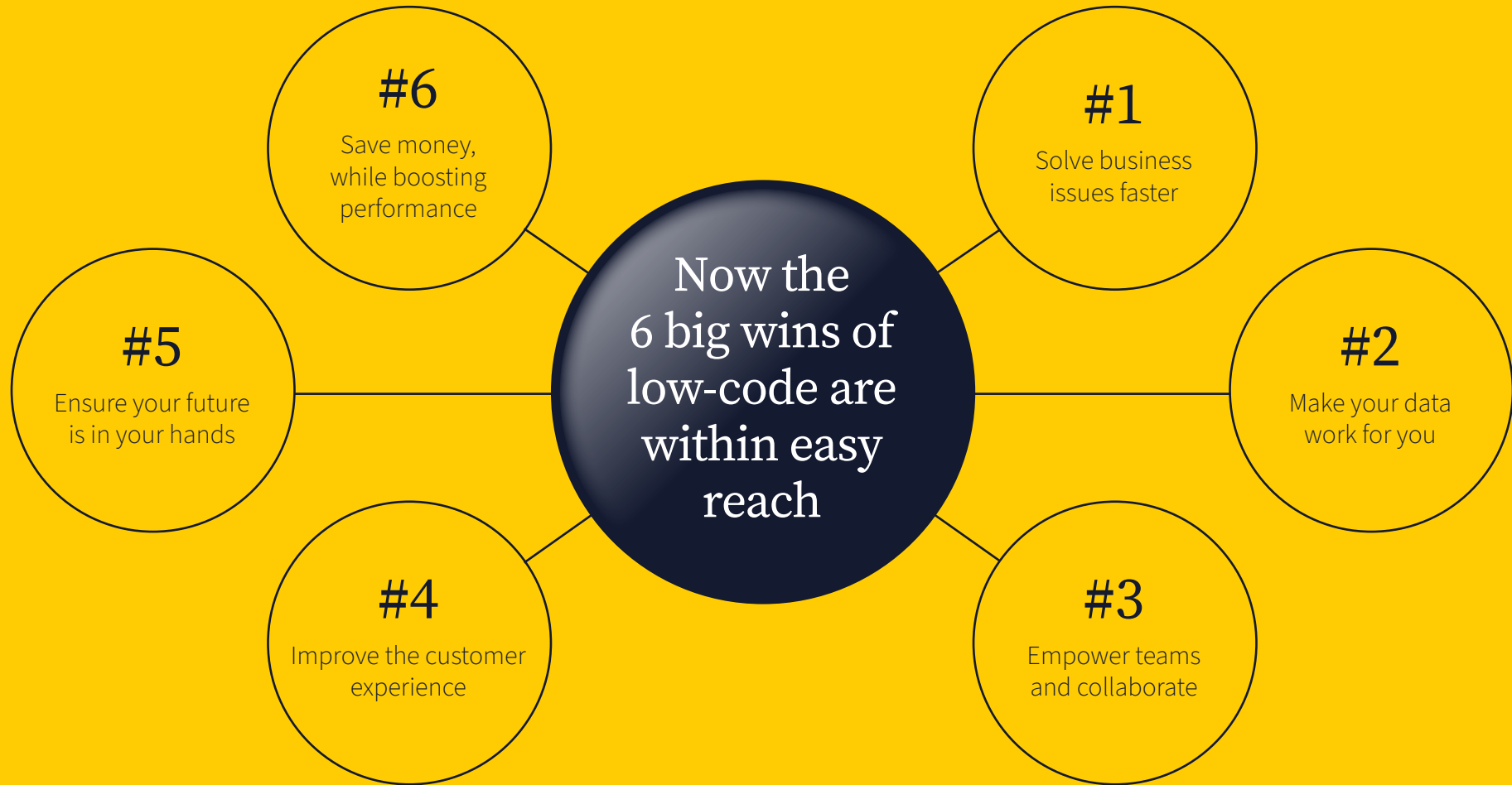
Often, there's no need to rip and replace older systems. Low-code will help you to access data and breathe more life into existing tech, so you can maximise your return on investment and

But low-code may also provide a nimble way to simply replace a legacy system that's proving costly and complex to power, sustain and support. Low-code platforms enable the development of lightweight applications that consume fewer resources. This can support your environmental, social and governance (ESG) goals around sustainability.

“In roughly four months, the organisation has been able to turn around five or six big business problems which they’ve been able to automate.”

Philippa Callcut, Enterprise Architect,
Chief Innovation Technology office





How low-code benefits everyone

By embracing low-code, you can position your field and site operations business at the forefront of digital transformation and drive sustainable growth – benefitting colleagues, customers and your organisation’s overall financial performance. The development lifecycle accelerates, so you can deliver solutions faster and become more agile.

Here are the six big wins for field services:

- #1 Solve business issues faster**
You can deliver solutions at speed and become more agile. It’s easy to build an app for virtually anything – from creating directories and prioritised waiting lists, to handling requests, automating approvals and keeping everyone up to speed with projects and processes across disparate teams.
- #2 Make your data work for you**
You can tap into valuable real-time and historic data, previously locked up in silos – and connect information across systems. Suddenly, you’re able to replace mundane, copy-and-paste activities. Workflows are streamlined, bottlenecks unplugged and a host of actions can be automated.

- #3 Empower teams and collaborate**
You can foster a more collaborative company culture and empower people to deliver the innovation that improves their working lives in a meaningful way. These citizen developers make teams more diverse. A wider range of employees will be given a voice, the chance develop new skills and this leads to greater job satisfaction.
- #4 Improve the customer experience**
It’s possible to create a joined-up view of your customer data, enabling better care, personalised experiences and self-service options. It’s effortless to collect data and present the next step in the process automatically. Companies using low-code have seen their customer satisfaction and industry ratings improve.

- #5 Ensure your future is in your hands**
With low-code, you’re in control of your own roadmap – with the tools and AI power to put your smart ideas into action. You gain the confidence to build, deploy, manage and maintain apps yourself. Applications can grow and adapt to your changing needs.
- #6 The bottom line: Save money, while boosting performance**
With low-code, you can save a stack of money and reduce your cost-to-serve by eliminating labour-intensive tasks, minimising errors and improving operational efficiency. For some admin teams, this can mean recouping 50% of their time, according to Netcall’s analysis. You may also be able to retire expensive-to-run legacy systems that were slowing you down – and save on the cost of having to buy a pricey replacement.

The keys to success



Powerful but easy-to-use tools



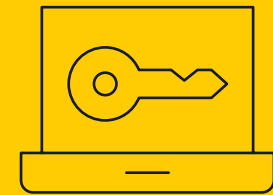
Integration with virtually any third-party system



Ability to add AI and robotic process automation (RPA)



Jargon-free training and stellar support



Access to a low-code community and free apps

Why choosing the right low-code platform is key

To get the most from low-code, it's important to select a feature-rich platform – with all the support you might need – from the outset. That way, it'll be faster, easier and less expensive for your teams to build apps for digital-first processes. Here are the top questions to ask a potential platform partner:

Q1 Does the platform have the right capabilities?

You should be able to create enterprise-grade, scalable apps with mobile and cloud connectivity where needed. The option to add AI, machine learning and robotic process automation (RPA) is important too – plus the ability to integrate with virtually any third-party system.

Q2 Does the provider have a proven track record?

Ask for reference customers and case studies. Ensure the provider offers clear contracts and honest pricing.

Q3 How easy is the platform for me to use – and does it come with good support?

Tools must be powerful yet friendly intuitive, so your people don't feel dropped in the deep end. The provider should be responsive and engaged – from delivery to training and support, offering jargon-free advice too.

Q4 Does the platform enable oversight when apps are being created?

It's important that organisations have governance tools, with the ability to set sensible guidelines and boundaries around development. As a result, you can ensure your new apps are on-brand and must pass quality control checks before they are released.

Q5 Can we trust the platform? Is it secure?

A low-code platform should have robust security at its core, with operational resilience and the ability to support requirements such as GDPR. There should be transparency throughout the development process with visual modelling and documentation, encouraging good corporate governance.

Q6 Can we collaborate with citizen developers in other organisations?

Being able to join a wider low-code community is a massive bonus. As well as connecting with your peers and learning about best practice, you should also be able to access resources like an application library – free of charge. This could mean simply downloading the niche app you need for free, rather than reinvent the wheel.

Use low-code to start saving valuable resources today

Can you think of areas of your field and site operations that could benefit from low-code?

It's a good idea to test the water, grow your skills and then begin to transform your business from the inside. It's a proven way to achieve greater agility and significant cost savings.

Discover more and
experience low-code at its best.
Contact our team for a demo today.

"The solution is a brilliant time saver. It's now a lot easier for Network Rail to approve requests and it's given transparency to all that use the system. Plus, it has dramatically reduced our workload. I can now approve an eRAMs request in 20 minutes, before it would have taken hours to review and administer. It's invaluable."

*Peter Hurst,
Station Operations Manager*



Put the power of low code in your hands today

...and create enterprise-grade, scalable apps with mobile and cloud connectivity for field and site operations.

For more information visit:

www.netcall.com

Call: 0330 333 610

