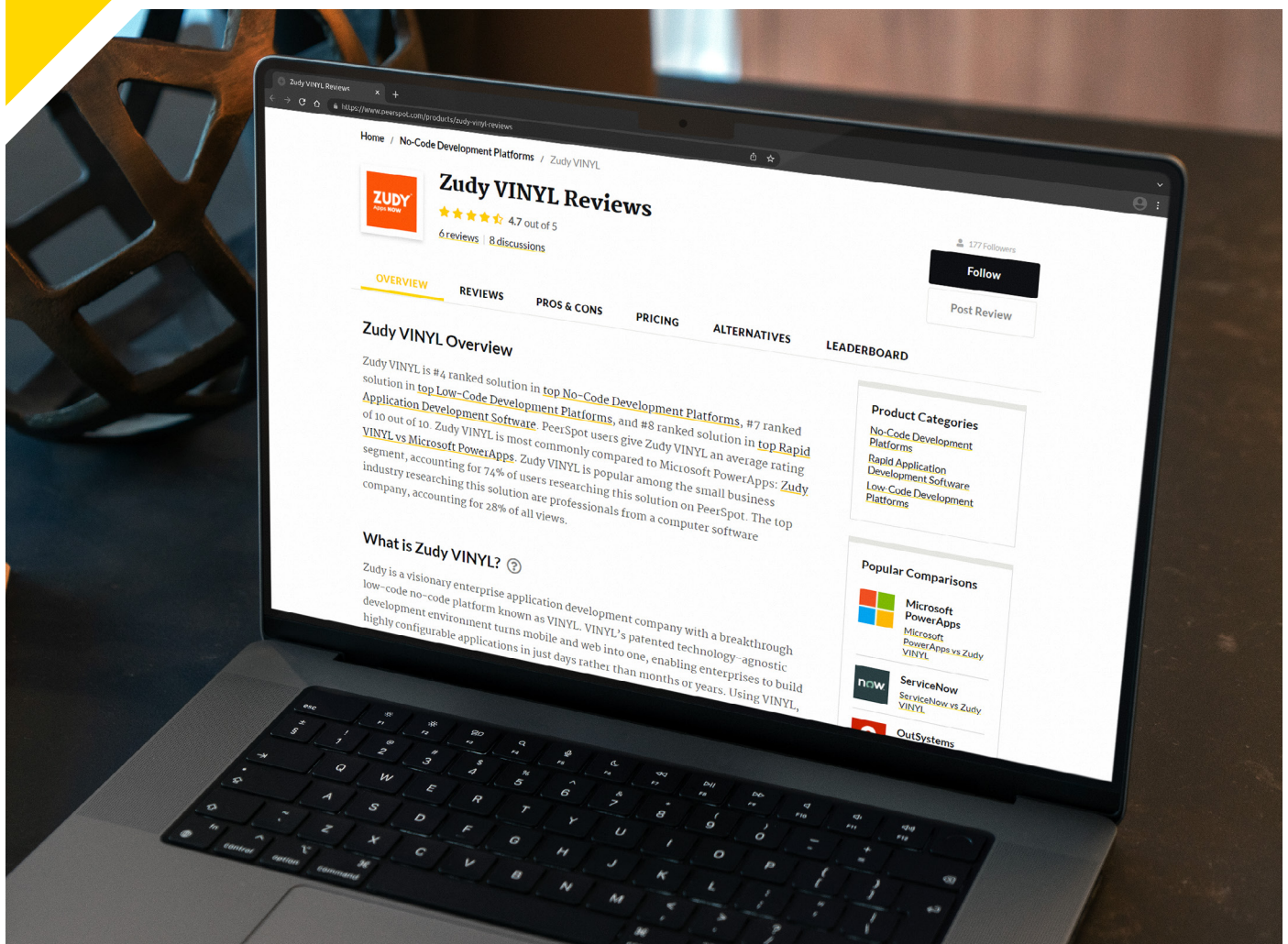


PeerPaper™ Report 2022

Based on real user reviews of Zudy VINYL

Advantages of Low-Code Software Development for Life Sciences Companies



Contents

Page 1. **Introduction**

Page 2. **Software Development Pressures in the Life Sciences**

Page 3. **Advantages of the Low-Code/No-Code Approach**

Ease of Use

Speed of Development

Integration Capabilities and Workflow Improvements

Security, Compliance and Risk Mitigation

Page 13. **Conclusion**

Introduction

Life Sciences companies face pressure to build digital solutions in a rapid succession with tight time frames. This puts IT in the hot seat and stretches technical resources to the breaking point. The struggle to balance priorities can derail digital transformation initiatives. Low-code/no-code development platforms offer a potential solution to business challenges faced by Life Sciences companies with a few caveats. Some, but not all low-code/no-code solutions enable citizen developers to create effective, customizable, secure and compliant applications.

This paper explores the advantages of this approach, based on real user experiences with Zudy's VINYL low-code/no-code development platform, as described on PeerSpot. In particular, we will look at how some low-code solutions enable faster development, greater ease of use, better integration capabilities and workflow improvements when compared to conventional software development alternatives—while also reducing risk and enabling rapid digital transformation.

Software Development Pressures in the Life Sciences

Traditional out of the box “one size fits all” solutions are generally difficult to fit into a Life Science scenario due to the industry’s strict compliance and security requirements, along with the need to quickly adapt and modify solutions as the industry evolves. Throw in the need to quickly and securely integrate with many different disparate data sources and that can introduce unnecessary risk when trying to build out automation. With hundreds of distinct use cases in the Life Science industry, such as Clinical Trial Management, Guided Buying, Dynamic Prescriber Surveys, to name a few, one would need a team who can fast-track projects and deliver unique and powerful solutions in days and weeks, not months and years.

Furthermore, unlike software in most other industries, applications in the Life Sciences must comply with a variety of regulations. Security is at a premium and compliance with government regulations are a must. A data breach or falling out of compliance could shut down operations of a Life Sciences company. Data breaches or loss of data could also result in the loss of extremely valuable intellectual property or compromise critical research due to the sensitive nature of the data involved.



**Zudy is really
easy to use**

Advantages of the Low-Code/No-Code Approach

Low-code/no-code software development solutions are finding a receptive audience in the Life Sciences industry. These agile development tools can offer ease of use and the ability for “citizen developers” to create applications without overtaxing IT and Development teams. Some of these development platforms can improve development timeframes by as much as 80%, while meeting the stringent security and compliance requirements. Subject Matter Experts (SMEs) using Zudy’s VINYL platform can leverage this low-code/no-code environment to build out powerful solutions that include workflows, secure integrations and full automation of virtually every Life Science use case.

For example, a Sr. Director, Business Area Solutions at Intra-Cellular Therapies, Inc., a pharma/biotech company with over 200 employees, put Zudy VINYL to work implementing and automating workflows for complex tasks requiring many handoffs. He said, “We onboarded a great number of employees at the late end of 2019 and early 2020, we had about 100 people who needed to be onboarded in a short timeframe. There were a lot of handoffs, people involved, and steps which could go off the rails if we didn’t have some clear structure for how the handoffs would work.”

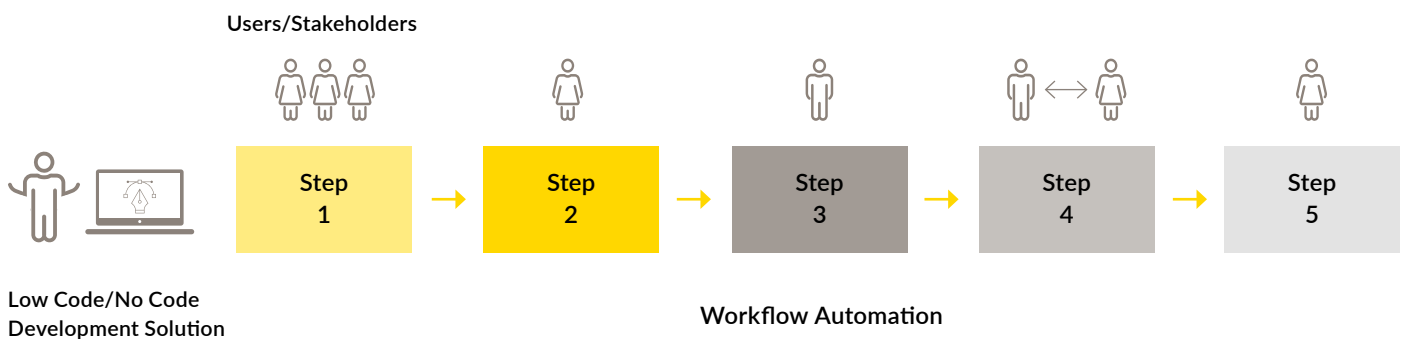
“Using the Zudy VINYL platform, we were able to automate that workflow and make sure that everybody was on task and on point”

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He added, “Using the Zudy VINYL platform, we were able to automate that workflow and make sure that everybody was on task and on point.” Figure 1 depicts this kind of workflow. He then expanded into additional workflows from there. They built more custom applications for niche solutions and individual business problems that people were bringing to IT to solve.

Creating apps for equity trade requests was the low-code/no-code use case at Alnylam Pharmaceuticals Inc., a pharma/biotech company with over 1,000 employees. According to their Vice President of IT, “We use VINYL quite a bit across the organization. Everybody in the entire company uses the VINYL app if they want to get approval on key business decisions. We built a VINYL app that routes the approval to the person’s manager. We also use it on the commercial side for CRM-related activities.” He then revealed, “We augment our business process quite a lot with it. It’s in a private AWS [Amazon Web Services] environment at the moment that Zudy is hosting for us. We are going to move it to our own AWS environment shortly.”

Figure 1 - Software from low-code/no-code solutions is used to automated workflows in Life Sciences companies.



“Ease of use was one of the main reasons that Zudy won our RFP”

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Ease of Use

PeerSpot users like low-code/no-code solutions that are easy to use. Indeed, that is one of the key advantages of the entire approach, though not all solutions deliver true ease of use. According to Intra-Cellular Therapies’ Sr. Director, Business Area Solutions, “Zudy is really easy to use. I am a non-developer myself, and I’m able to hang out in the conversations with our technical folks and Zudy consultants who drive a lot of the work development for us. The no-code/low-code platform is extremely intuitive. Our users are able to visualize solutioning.”

“Ease of use was one of the main reasons that Zudy won our RFP,” explained a Director of National Promotion. “For someone like me, who knows enough to be dangerous, who can get in, and build and experiment around, but by no means is software development my first expertise or my ‘day job,’ it’s been wonderful to not have incredibly sophisticated needs on the build side, but still be able to have incredibly sophisticated results.”

**“it’s unbelievably
easy to have
it work on any
device”**

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Zudy enabled a company Founder to pull off his dream. He shared, “Everybody wants to say they can do it. I’ve tried all kinds of different platforms and Zudy was the first one that not only could pull off the back-end data modeling and the backflips and the crazy things that I needed it to do, but it could also handle the front-end well enough. On top of that, it’s unbelievably easy to have it work on any device. I have hardly had to do any tweaking from device to device. Whereas previously, it was very difficult.”

He elaborated on this idea, saying, “As for the ease of use for VINYL for non-developers, I like it. I do have some technical background, but I don’t have the full-stack development abilities. Yet, I’m able to go in and I love that I can make changes on-the-fly when a customer says to me, ‘Hey, this button in this place doesn’t quite make sense.’ I can move it. I don’t have to call up a developer. I don’t have to try and find somebody to do it.” For context, he shared that his mother is his beta tester.

“super fast at getting things done”

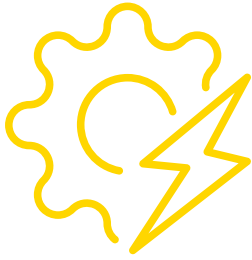
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Speed of Development

Use of low-code/no-code solutions should translate into faster development, all other things being equal. A CTO framed the issue when he described Zudy VINYL as “super fast at getting things done.” The advantage, from his perspective was, “We are able to experiment, and usually you can’t afford to experiment much.”

A National Administrator echoed this sentiment, saying, “Zudy has increased development speed. What would take us months to be able to complete, we’re getting done in a matter of weeks.”

“We’re always trying to develop the functionality and get it to the customer as soon as possible,” said a Director of Application Development. “We have a process in place where we look at requirements of the application, and then we say, ‘Right, this is going to be a good fit for Zudy,’ and we’ll jump in and start coding. In those instances, we know that it’s going to be the quicker product and the way to get things turned around faster.”



Faster development

Decreasing the “go-to-market time” has been an outcome of using Zudy VINYL for the Director of National Promotion. He commented, “It has also absolutely increased our ability to get things to market faster, without a doubt. I’d be guessing, but I’d be fairly confident saying that it decreased go-to-market time by at least 25 percent, anecdotally. It’s a significant amount. To get 25 percent of our business to market faster would be a significant change for us.”

Other notable comments about speed of development included:

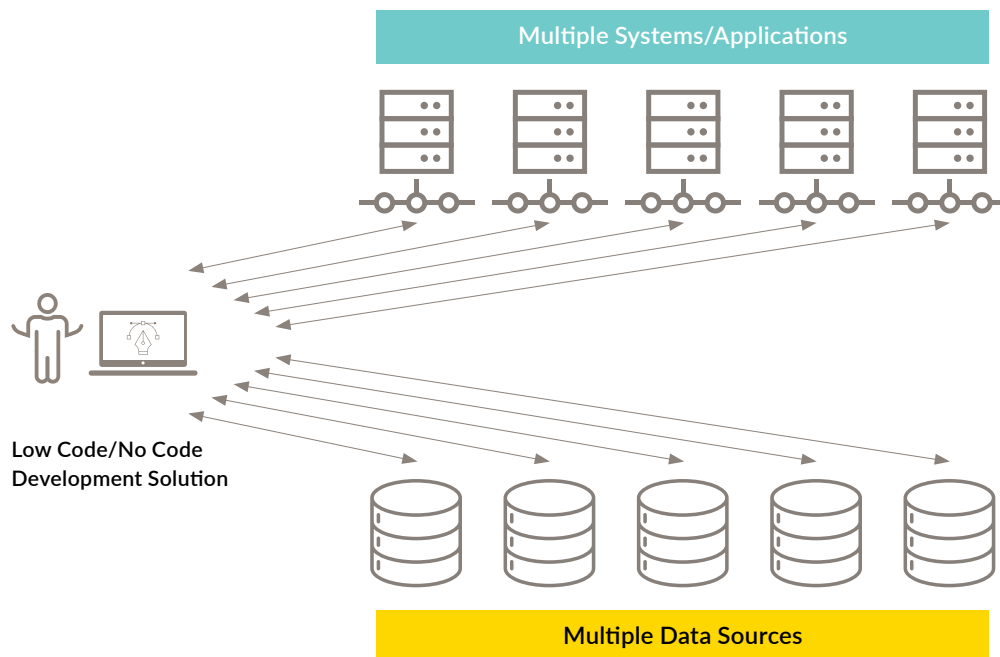
- “It is probably close to 60% to 70% that you can deliver things quicker than you could with more traditional development frameworks or even low-code development frameworks, because there isn’t really a limitation in terms of the number of tools or systems that VINYL can integrate with.”
- Alnylam’s Vice President of IT
- “The most valuable feature within Zudy VINYL is just the ability to quickly, without having to worry about digging into code, put together user interfaces that match the business requirements and the user’s expectation to do rapid deployment. In addition to the time savings, the ability to enable people with an effective solution where there was really no alternative.” - Intra-Cellular Therapies’s Sr. Director, Business Area Solutions
- “They [developers] were able to pull off stuff in much faster times than what I was able to do with my previous team, and with the team before that, and with the team before that. We’ve been able to accomplish a lot and I’m happy with that.” - Company Founder

Integration Capabilities and Workflow Improvements

Software developed using low-code/no-code solutions must be able to integrate easily and effectively with other systems. Also, to create value for the business, the solution needs to be able to improve workflows. PeerSpot members spoke to these two needs in their reviews of Zudy VINYL.

Alnylam’s Vice President of IT, for instance, remarked, “We have used it on the IT side of things just to help facilitate integration. Where we didn’t necessarily build an app, we would move data, leveraging VINYL, from one system to another if we were having trouble with the integration. The ability to connect to a lot of different data sources in an easy way has really been a benefit both for building applications, but also for our infrastructure team when they are building integrations from point to point.

Figure 2 - Applications developed using low-code/no-code solutions should be able to integrate with multiple data sources and systems.



**“It’s allowed
us to make
faster, smarter
decisions”**

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“Zudy’s data connectors and the API integrations have been great so far,” said the company Founder. In his case, his team has been able to integrate older data sets as well as external elements like Babel. They found Google integration helpful, as well. Alnylam’s Vice President of IT put it this way: “You don’t need to find another solution or work out different integration capabilities when you’re dealing with the VINYL platform. You are just limited more by your imagination than you are by any of the technical capabilities of the system.”

For the Director of National Promotion, the value from Zudy came from its ability to run a variety of back office processes without coding. He said, “That has very much to do with the integrations that we’ve built into place, that Zudy VINYL is able to handle. It’s allowed us to make faster, smarter decisions, which is really important. Because systems didn’t talk before, because they weren’t integrated, just getting data was a bit of a challenge and it slowed the process down. That part is really important.”

In terms of workflows, Alnylam’s Vice President of IT observed, “It’s a great platform for business process improvement. The fact that you can connect to any data source really provides workflow approvals, etc., in a very timely way. This has really empowered us from an organizational perspective.” His team has incorporated hierarchy information so they can route things that need manager approval within the company. This has facilitated many business processes, where, as he revealed, “sometimes the core applications only get you about 80% of the way there.”

“If you are using Excel spreadsheets or workflows that are primarily dependent on human manual communication, this solution will address so many of those needs,” said Intra-Cellular Therapies’s Sr. Director, Business Area Solutions.

Other PeerSpot members shared:

- “It also gives us the workflows and approvals for stakeholders who need to sign off on events throughout the process. That custom application was built earlier this year. The workflow, and the ability to add business intelligence tools into our platform, to make us work smarter, not harder, has been a lifesaver for us.” - Director of National Promotion
- “In terms of the user interface, we have come upon solutions that make workflow easier with efficiencies in making things, from a process standpoint, easier for the agencies to utilize. We’ve taken all the guesswork out of the process for them.” - National Administrator



Reducing risk

Security, Compliance and Risk Mitigation

Risk mitigation is an essential aspect of all software development processes (or should be) but building security in development is not easy. For a low-code/no-code solution, in particular, where the users are not experienced coders, the matter is all the more urgent. A solution needs to enable security countermeasures and regulatory compliance without requiring a great deal of expertise.

“Zudy has even made us a more compliant company,” said Alnylam’s Vice President of IT at Pharmaceuticals. “We have been able to build business processes for things that could introduce compliance risk. Being able to do that quickly and efficiently without having to spend a lot of money on a custom solution, and the fact that it plugs into our infrastructure at this point and works across a variety of solutions, just works well for us. It has dramatically positioned our time to market.” In Alnylam’s case, security also requires encrypting data, which Zudy VINYL makes possible.

Zudy handled data encryption, user authentication and user identity management for the company Founder, who put the matter in context by saying, “Security is very hard to do. You can do 9,998 things right, but if you do one or two things wrong, the bad guys will find it. Breaches are probably somewhat inevitable in some ways, but I think it’s certainly a lot less likely because you didn’t have to set up all of these things and know all these best practices because it was done well for you ahead of time. That’s been a comfort to me because, of course, I have a lot of data and a lot of security things that I am worried about, and I’ve been glad to be able to rely on Zudy.”



**Value for the
business**

Conclusion

The need to quickly create secure, compliant digital solutions places pressure on IT departments and development teams at Life Sciences companies. A low-code/no-code platform can be a solution. However, in order to work, the platform has to enable developers to balance a number of factors. The toolset must allow for high-speed development, but also flexibility and strong integration. It should improve workflows wherever necessary. The end product has to be highly secure and ensure compliance with regulations. When a solution meets these criteria, it makes possible the kind of digital transformation that Life Sciences companies are now pursuing.

About PeerSpot

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About Zudy

Zudy[®], a visionary software company, has built VINYL[™], an end-to-end Enterprise Application Development platform allowing Citizen Developers or Professional Developers to build powerful, fully integrated, bi-directional enterprise apps without a single line of code. VINYL apps run on all devices and enable any business to quickly build scalable, flexible, easily configurable, progressive “Enterprise Ready” apps in 1 week—not months/years. VINYL users can integrate seamlessly with all existing systems and future data sources with cross platform CRUD and complete alignment with all enterprise security. Dissolve application backlog, without the high costs and long timeframes you face with other platforms, and traditional hand coded application development. With VINYL, businesses decrease development costs by 90% and dramatically increase digital transformation velocity. Get your free trial at Zudy.com.

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