Apps Incubator

The **Softools Apps Incubator** provides an end-to-end process and web-based platform to design, develop and deploy business process applications – *without the need for coding.* Apps are instantly secure, scalable, integrated, compliant with standards, mobile and run off-line – all running with the same great user interface
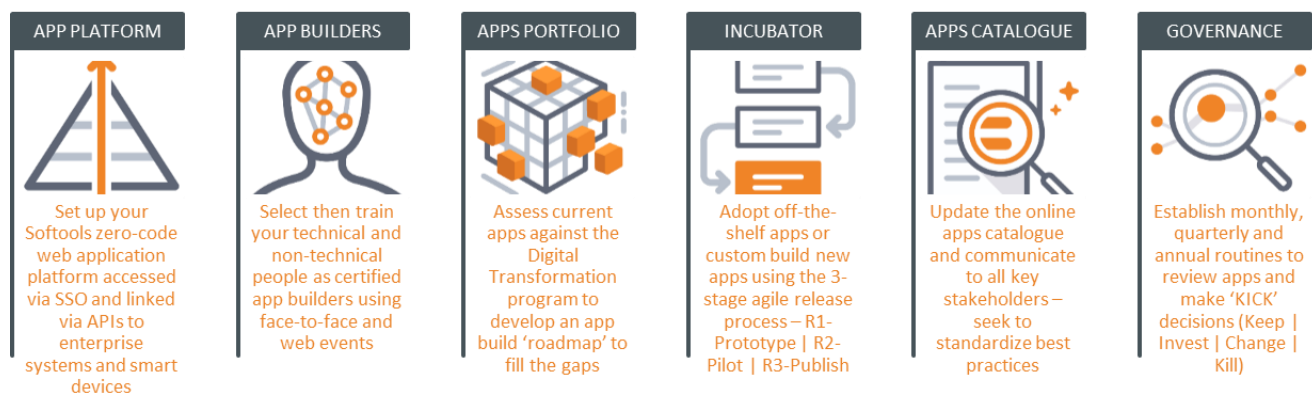
BUSINESS DRIVERS

Increasingly IT is seen as **the** critical enabler of the Digital Transformation of the business and its extended value chain. However, IT departments are overwhelmed supporting enterprise systems such as ERP and CRM, leaving Business Units little choice but to buy in non-standard software products or to build their own solutions in Excel. This increasing trend is often referred to as 'Shadow IT', and it results in the emergence of 1,000s of business applications that are not secure, integrated, compliant or controlled. This issue is made more complex with the emergence of Industry 4.0 thinking and the Internet of Things (IoT) as organisations seek to transform productivity in an attempt to gain competitive advantage.

SOLUTION OVERVIEW

The Apps Incubator delivers Smart Apps to enable the Smart Business. Apps that may be simple or complex, stand alone or fully integrated with enterprise systems and smart devices across the business.
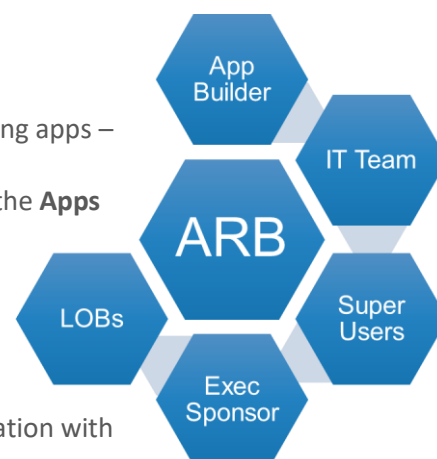
So what does it take to get going? There are six components to setting up and running an effective Apps Incubator based on the Softools web application platform:

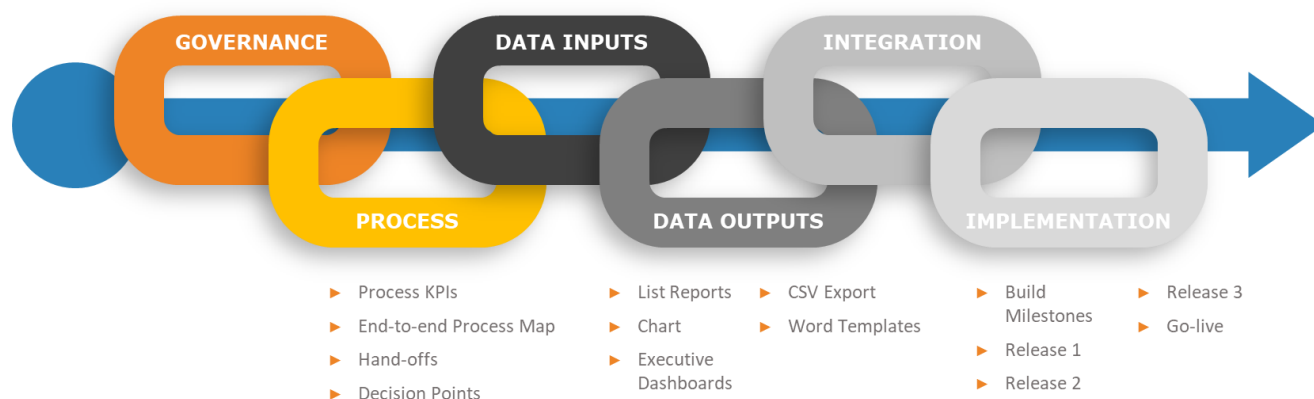| APP PLATFORM	APP BUILDERS	APPS PORTFOLIO	INCUBATOR	APPS CATALOGUE	GOVERNANCE
Set up your Softools zero-code web application platform accessed via SSO and linked via APIs to enterprise systems and smart devices	Select then train your technical and non-technical people as certified app builders using face-to-face and web events	Assess current apps against the Digital Transformation program to develop an app build 'roadmap' to fill the gaps	Adopt off-the-shelf apps or custom build new apps using the 3-stage agile release process – R1-Prototype | R2-Pilot | R3-Publish	Update the online apps catalogue and communicate to all key stakeholders – seek to standardize best practices	Establish monthly, quarterly and annual routines to review apps and make 'KICK' decisions (Keep | Invest | Change | Kill)

SOFTOOLS

APP BUILD PROCESS

The Softools App Studio provides an agile process for designing and building apps – *without coding*. But before work begins, the app needs to be scoped at a Configuration Workshop involving key stakeholders (often referred to as the **Apps Review Board ARB**):

- The **Line of Business LOB** and **Executive Sponsor** will clarify the business need and measures of success

- The **Super Users** will confirm the desired 'user experience'

- The **IT Team** will validate conformance with IT Policies and integration with Enterprise systems or Smart Devices if required

- The **App Builder** will confirm their understanding of what is required by when, before starting work.

CONFIGURATION WORKSHOP TOPICS

- ▶ Business Need
- ▶ Key Stakeholders
- ▶ Users | Teams
- ▶ Access & security

- ▶ Input fields
- ▶ In-app Charts
- ▶ App structure
- ▶ Form layout

- ▶ App Links
- ▶ 3RD Party System Links
- ▶ SSO requirements

- ▶ Workflow
- ▶ Notifications

- ▶ Process KPIs
- ▶ End-to-end Process Map
- ▶ Hand-offs
- ▶ Decision Points

- ▶ List Reports
- ▶ Chart
- ▶ Executive Dashboards

- ▶ CSV Export
- ▶ Word Templates

- ▶ Build Milestones
- ▶ Release 1
- ▶ Release 2

- ▶ Release 3
- ▶ Go-live

OUTCOMES

Once the Apps Incubator is established as **the** way in which business process apps are developed and deployed, the Softools Apps Incubator rapidly delivers a step change in performance and is a key building block for **Digital Transformation**.

- ✓ Business Process Apps running in a secure, scalable and compliant web environment

- ✓ An off-the-shelf app store offering 100s of off-the-shelf apps for business units to choose from

- ✓ Custom app build capability where new apps can be ready in hours – *with 'zero code'*

- ✓ A low-cost rapid development capability for creating Proof-of-Concepts for complex apps

- ✓ Great user engagement and experience with single sign-on, common navigation and look & feel

- ✓ An agile futureproof environment where the underlying technology is always current, and exciting new features are available every two weeks

APP BUILDER PROFILE

So, who makes a good **App Builder** today? They may be IT developers, but increasingly they are business managers, subject matter experts up and down the business or external consultants.

The best App Builders are those that:

✓ understand how the business works

✓ know how to design optimum operating processes

✓ recognise the potential of IT to transform performance, and

✓ are effective communicators.

APP BUILDER PROGRAM

The Softools App Builder program provides a complete package to ensure the continuous development and deployment of world-class business process applications for both Corporate and Public use.

The Softools App Builder - Annual Licence Fee delivers a comprehensive support program:

- APP STUDIO: Access our zero-code app building environment to edit your apps, or to build new apps from scratch. Your 'business process' app may be simple or complex, and stand alone or integrated into Enterprise Systems or Smart Apps as part of an 'Industry 4.0 solution.

- OFF-THE-SHELF APPS: Gain free access to over 100 off-the-shelf business process applications. Whilst you may choose to build apps from scratch, advanced App Builders often start with an existing app and then localise it or customise it for use within a specific situation. This can dramatically reduce the build time.

- TECH CHAT: The App Builder Licence entitles certified App Builders to a monthly call to the Softools DevOps team to gain advice or insights.

- TECH SUPPORT: App Builders also have real-time access to the online support centre and ticketing system, where specific issues can be captured, prioritised according to strict SLAs and resolved.

- BETA RELEASE PROGRAM: Softools operate an agile approach to development where new features and functions are constantly added to the platform. Be the first be see them as they become available.

- PLATFORM ROADMAP: The strategic roadmap for the Softools web-application platform is set each year and updated quarterly. App Builders are encouraged to input into the roadmap both in terms of idea and priority, and may be invited to participate in Focused Innovation Workshops.

- APP BUILDER COMMUNITY: Finally, become a member of the growing global network of Softools App Builders. Share ideas for new applications, new features, and options for successful deployment of apps within your businesses. Membership of the Community is personal and can be transferred as the App Builder moves from one team or business to another.

APP BUILDER LICENCE

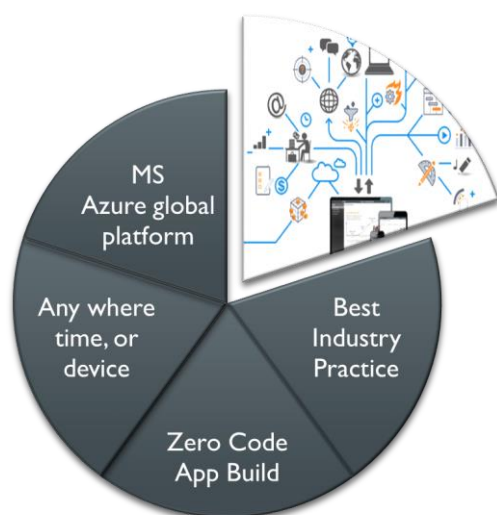The App Builder Annual Licence Fee is currently **£500**.

COOL FEATURES

Smart Businesses do things more effectively and efficiently than their competitors. They achieve this by designing processes that work better, faster and at a lower cost – enabled through **Smart Business Process Apps**. Furthermore, these apps will all run on a single common platform which is secure and scalable, enables single sign-on, supports the real-time exchange of data between apps, and offers a great common user interface and great user experience.

Emerging web technologies are also continuously introduced to drive competitive advantage such as:

- **Automated workflow:** driving activities in line with time, cost and performance expectations

- **Notification:** feeding key messages to users via email, SMS or slack

- **Drill down:** enabling performance reviews to be conducted real time

- **Mobile operation:** allowing busy managers to work anywhere, anytime, any device

- **Off-line capability:** supporting continuous operation in zero-bandwidth environments

STANDING OUT FROM THE CROWD

As well as delivering a world-class web-application platform, Softools differentiate from the competition by offering five core capabilities:

- Running multiple apps on a single platform

- Capturing and embedded industry best practices

- Creating and editing apps without the need for coding

- Ability to run on any device from PC to smart phone

- Option to deploy anywhere in the world in less than 2 hours

KEY FACTS

ACCESS

Access to the platform is via any modern browser (IE11, Edge, Chrome, Safari, Firefox, Opera+). The platform is mobile-optimised and so can be accessed on any device from PCs and tablets to Smartphones. Off-line capability is enabled using csv export and import routines, or linked-in native apps.

APPS COMPLEXITY

Applications can range from simple list-based stand-alone apps (e.g. Risk Register), to complex apps (e.g. Supply Chain Assessment) that are linked together, driven by workflow and synchronised to 3rd party systems via APIs.

APP BUILD

Certified AppBuilders use the integrated AppStudio to design, configure and deploy apps using a systematic process in hours and with zero coding.

BUSINESS CONTINUITY

The platform is used by many of the world's leading organisations and Governments, and so data is always held in a secure encrypted environment, controlled by clients and exported at any time.

DATA INPUT

CSV import is used to complete a one-off migration of client data during set-up. Then data is entered into the platform in 3 ways: 1) manual data input, 2) export / import via csv, and 3) real-time data synchronisation with 3rd party systems via WebHooks / APIs.

DATA VALIDATION

Data field parameters and logic based on field type will validate data input is consistent and complete. Specific fields can be set to be mandatory. Specific input forms can be visible or hidden using workflow based on user team or field values.

INFRASTRUCTURE

The platform is deployed in a web hosting environment as single-tenant or multi-tenant. Our default hosting partner is MS Azure and so deployments are instantly secure, scalable and stable.

INTEGRATION

The Softools API is a JSON-based (JavaScript Object Notation) RESTful API with authentication via "OAuth 2.0 Resource Owner Password" flow with support for refresh tokens.

LANGUAGES

The platform is configured to enable the dynamic translation feature in modern web-browsers (e.g. Google Translate). This allows users in different regions & countries to work on a common platform in their own language. It is also possible for App Builders to 'hard code' all system labels in local languages.

PERFORMANCE

Speed of access if largely determined by the bandwidth of local wireless & wired network connections or via 3G & 4G mobile networks. The size of the app will also determine how much data in transferred and will impact speed, as will the proximity of the database to the user (latency). Dramatic advances in web technology continue to enable faster data transfer speeds globally, and the potential to work off-line.

SCALE

The platform can scale from 1 app and user to 1,000s of apps and over 1,000,000 users for a single client.

SECURITY

Softools is used by banking, military and nuclear organisations world-wide and can be locked down to any level. Access to the platform is on a named user basis which determines what a user can see (security) and what they can do (permissions). Single Sign-On (SSO) is available as an option.

SUPPORT

Users gain first line support from on-screen help. Second line support is provided by internal Administrators. Third line support is provided to certified Administrators via phone, email and WebEx.

TRAINING

Users and App Builders are trained via webinars or in workshops using an 'action learning' approach:

Level 1 - Basic User (2 hours)
Level 2 – Super-Users / Administrators (+2 hours)
Level 3 – Site Administrators (+2 hours)
Level 4 – Basic App Builders (+ 1 day), and
Level 5 – Advanced App Builders (+ 2 days).