A Founder’s Guide to No Code

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What is no code? What is low code?

No-code tools are software development platforms that allow people to build and deploy their own applications **without writing a single line of code** often using simple graphical user interfaces.

Low code tools require little programming but for the benefit of more customization.
The no-code and low-code industry have seen strong advancement in the last 5 years
23% market growth for 2021\textsuperscript{2}
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65% of overall application development activity in low-code by 2024\(^2\)
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65% of overall application development activity in low-code by 2024\(^2\)

0.03% of global population are software developers (full-time and part-time/hobbyists) in 2020\(^3\)
23% market growth for 2021

65% of overall application development activity in low-code by 2024

0.03% 0.05%

1.7x of global population are software developers (full-time and part-time/hobbyists) in 2020 to 2025
Uncovering the interplay between no code and entrepreneurship in three ways

1. What differentiates no code entrepreneurship?

Understand what characterizes the no code entrepreneurship space in terms of industry, product types and founders.
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Quantitative Analysis of 100 No Code Startups
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2. For which founders is no code relevant?
   Define what founder personas exist, understand their needs and motivations

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3. Should founders build in no code — how can they decide?
   Propose a best practice evaluation approach and identify relevant considerations
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Behind the scenes: What was the research process?
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Qualitative coding of startups & quantitative analysis

- Dataset: 100 no code startups from nocodefounders.com, YCombinator startups database (for benchmark)
- Researched each startup & qualitatively coded: Industry, product type, lifecycle, founder background
Behind the scenes: What was the research process?

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User interviews
- 10 interviewees: Founders, CTOs, no code developers
- Global representation (organic): Africa, Asia, Europe, North America
- 30-45 min each, semi structured
For which founders is no code relevant?

Quantitative Analysis of 100 No Code Startups
NC startups with strong consumer and education representation

- Strongest overrepresentation vs. YC: Consumer, education
- Strongest underrepresentation vs. YC: B2B software, healthcare
NCF startups had four robust product features

- NCF startups used four robust features
- No code tools strike balance between building use-case specific vs. maximizing modularity
⅔ of founders without CS training speaks for lower barrier

- Originally no code idea especially common in developer circles
- ⅔ of founders with CS background speaks for high adoption and democratization
- NCF founders were mostly solo founders, which is typically not the “preferred model”
What differentiates no-code entrepreneurship?

Founder User Personas and Needs Analysis
Interviews uncovered three decision maker personas

### Side-project founder

**Attributes**

- **Attitude to no code exploration:** Explorative attitude, early adopter of no code
- **Technical knowledge:** ⬤ ⬤ ⬤
- **No code experience:** ⬤

**Motivations**

- Build side project. Build for fun and to learn. Grow clout in startup community.

**Core needs**

- Learn about no code to develop new content. Explore new no code tools ongoingly.

**Key research channel**

- Ask in online communities (e.g. Twitter).
- Search on Product Hunt.

**Financial objective**

- Side-project, potentially business
Interviews uncovered three decision maker personas

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3 Should founders build in no code — how can they decide?

A Founder’s Guide to No Code
Founder’s approach to no code build decisions

Step 1
Define the purpose of your build

Step 2
Research the No Code tech stack

Step 3
Define the product scope

Step 4
Evaluate product limitations

Step 5
Evaluate running costs

Step 6
Evaluate development costs

Purpose definition
Product definition
Consideration evaluation
Founder’s approach to no code build decisions

1. Define the purpose of your build
2. Research the No Code tech stack
3. Define the product scope
4. Evaluate product limitations
5. Evaluate running costs
6. Evaluate development costs

Purpose definition

Product definition

Consideration evaluation
# Step 1 - Define the purpose of your build

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<th>Alternative</th>
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| 1. Validate your idea  
Build first version to visualize and get first user feedback, test basic functionality;  
*Entrepreneurial objective: Raise pre-seed* |  
Mockup/wireframe      |
| 2. Validate product-market fit  
Build a product users actually need and can use, quick development, feedback and product iteration key to build something users want;  
*Entrepreneurial objective: Raise seed* |  
Build in raw code      |
| 3. Build core product  
Build core product for 1-2 year horizon, build extendable product in line with roadmap, running costs & maintenance play bigger factor;  
*Entrepreneurial objective: Raise Series A or beyond* |  
Build in raw code      |
Founder’s approach to no code build decisions

- **Step 1**: Define the purpose of your build
- **Step 2**: Research the No Code tech stack
- **Step 3**: Define the product scope
- **Step 4**: Evaluate product limitations
- **Step 5**: Evaluate running costs
- **Step 6**: Evaluate development costs

Purpose definition → Product definition → Consideration evaluation
Founder’s approach to no code build decisions

1. Define the purpose of your build
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### Step 4 - Evaluate product limitations: Thinking about scale & performance considerations

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<th>Hard caps</th>
<th>Costly scaling</th>
<th>Performance-reducing scaling</th>
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<td>1</td>
<td>Scaling works until a fixed, defined point</td>
<td>Scaling a specific dim. is subject to tiered-pricing, leading to steep increases in running cost</td>
<td>Scaling hurts performance and cannot be upgraded through higher-tiered plans</td>
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<td>Examples: Max. rows (Airtable); max. # CMS items (Webflow)</td>
<td># of tasks execute/month (Zapier), # of people w/ access (Airtable)</td>
<td># of simultaneous users, # of database calls, # of API calls</td>
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A Founder’s Guide to No Code

Welcome. This page was created to share my research on the no code and low code industry’s impact on entrepreneurship and to share the guide I created to help founders and early stage teams decide on whether to build in no code / low code or not.

Guide

- A Founder’s Guide to No Code

Research

- Quantitative Analysis of No Code Startups
- User persona & needs analysis

Dataset

- Dataset: No code startup database

Check out my guide, if you are interested!

https://a-founders-guide-to-no-code.super.site
Thank you!
0.03% of global population are software developers (full-time and part-time/hobbyists) in 2020.

0.05% in 2025.
0.03% 0.05% of global population are software developers (full-time and part-time/hobbyists) in 2020 2025
NCF startups with \( \frac{2}{3} \) live products and strong B2C-focus
Interviews uncovered three decision maker personas