

5 Warning Signs Your Team Is in a Work Rut

How to tell when technology and processes are holding your business back instead of pushing you forward

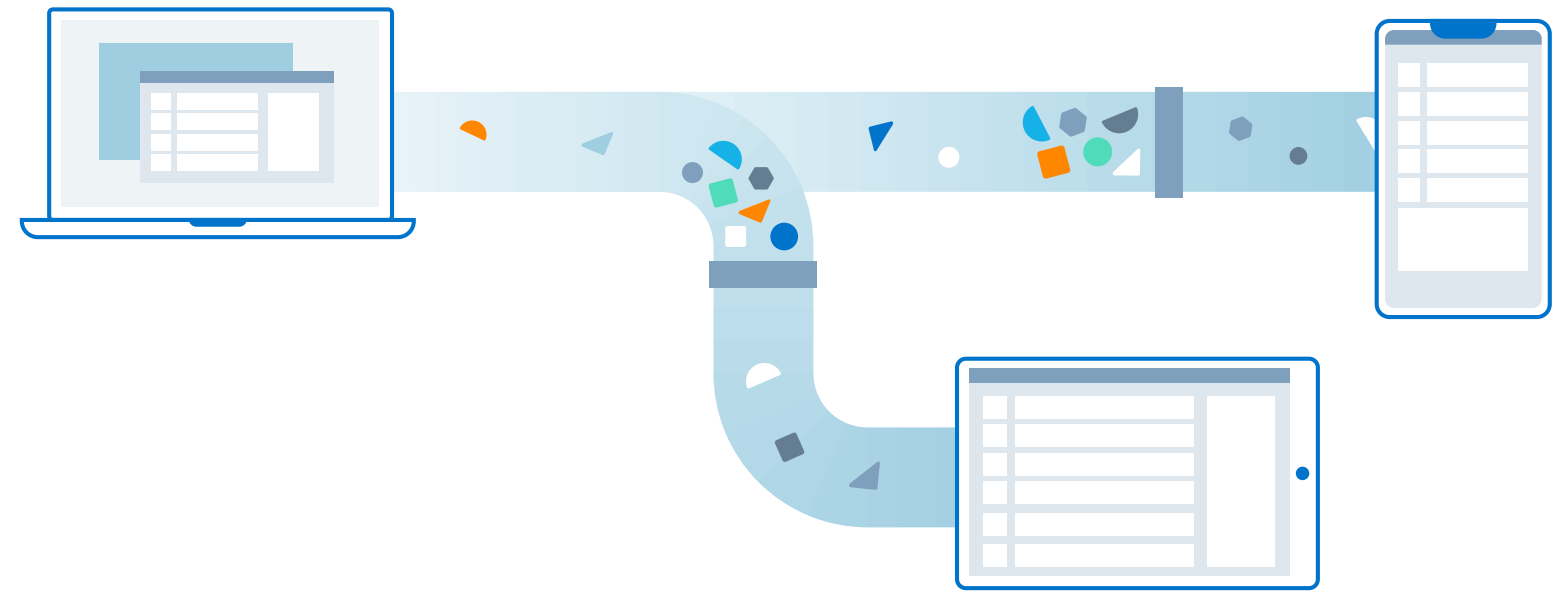


The Problem: Manual data entry. Disconnected systems. Inefficient processes.

You may not realize it, but the day-to-day administrative annoyances that hold your organization back from innovation can all be symptoms of a larger issue: a work rut.

A **work rut** is a problem that affects businesses of all sizes from a few to a few hundred, occurring when teams exhaust or outgrow the capabilities of their existing technologies or processes.

When your business is in a work rut, individuals spend more time on manual processes and administrative tasks than they do on



meaningful work that adds value and contributes to scaling the business. Appliance apps and enterprise systems don't solve the problem entirely.

- ▶ Appliance apps can handle individualized tasks, but they aren't made for innovation.
- ▶ In addition to being costly, large enterprise systems have limited customizability.

Read on to discover not only the warning signs of a work rut, but also the best strategies to combat it so you can get back to doing the work that matters most.

How can you identify a work rut in your organization?

Look for these five symptoms.

01. Frustrated team

Personnel frustration is one of the most important (and most glaring) warning signs of a work rut. Employees dealing with insufficient technology and processes quickly become discouraged, burnt out, and dissatisfied.

Team members and leaders who experience this symptom of a work rut feel their productivity and potential are being limited. Rather than having the freedom to focus on work that scales the business and pushes innovation, personnel are stuck on maintenance tasks.

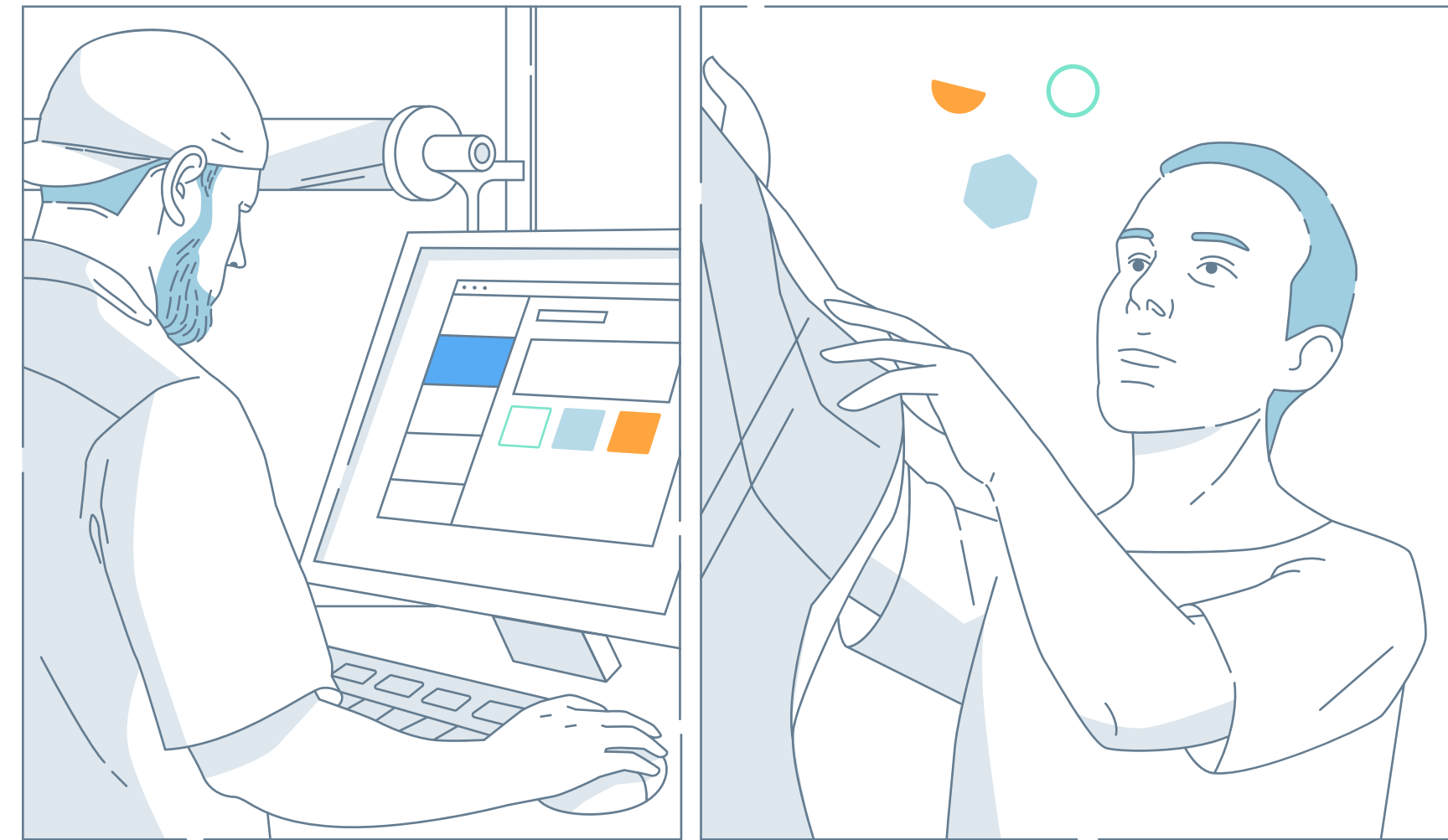
Listen For...

"I feel like I spend all day on spreadsheets."

"My expertise is going to waste."

"These manual tasks take up so much of my time."





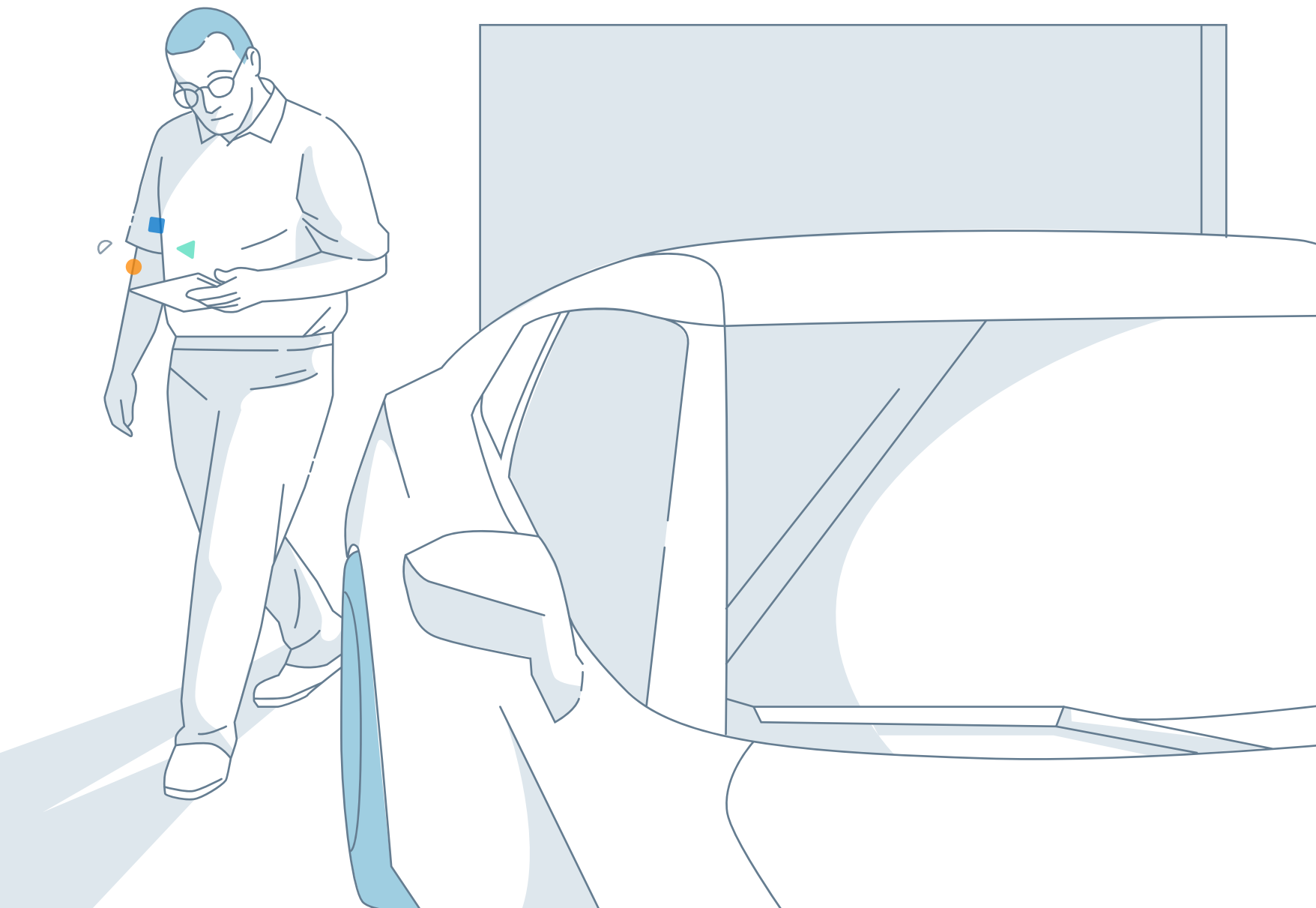
Case Study I

"Five years ago we were chasing paper—sales receipts, work orders, invoicing—I knew we had to go digital, and a custom app tailored to our business made the most sense."

Within 90 days of his first conversation with a FileMaker Business Alliance (FBA) partner about creating a custom app, Rick had a production version deployed in his shop and in the field.

"The custom app has really streamlined our organization. My mind works differently now that I've done this project. I see opportunities everywhere."

Rick Puthoff
Owner of Eclipse Window Tinting



02. Disjointed, disconnected information

How many logins do your team members use in a day? Disconnected systems lead to manual data entry as employees spend valuable time duplicating data from one system to another.

73%

of SMBs have not integrated their applications

46%

still rely on manual Excel file uploads

“Duct tape” integrations between systems may help somewhat, but these connections add more dependencies and more complexity to your business’s digital environment.

Listen For...

“I’m not sure where to find that.”

“It shouldn’t be this hard to compare data from our applications.”

“I have to move data from that spreadsheet to our CRM—they aren’t connected.”





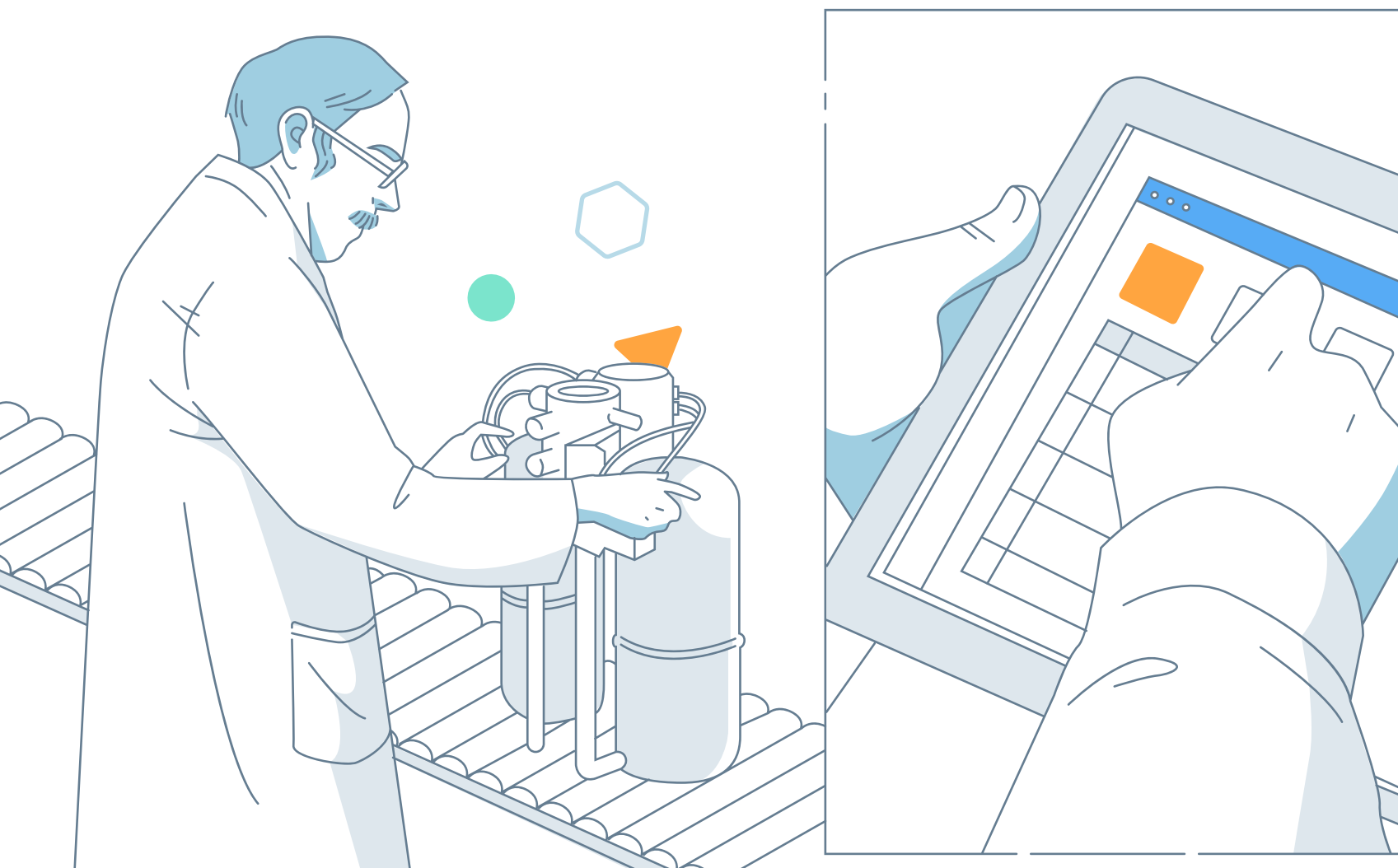
Case Study II

"When I joined the company 20 years ago, there was no real automated system. It was all done on paper; it was all disconnected. There was a lot of manual repetition.

Today, Harvey Water Softeners has a suite of custom apps that manage inventory, manufacturing, sales, installations, customer care, marketing, and more.

Now, we have over 100 custom apps running every aspect of the business. We estimate that saves us, in process control, more than £1 million per year."

Guy Halligan
Harvey Water Softeners



03. Unreliable data

Without visibility into real-time data, employees feel unable to confidently make evidence-based decisions. They spend valuable time double-checking and confirming information from multiple sources. When your team suspects data errors because of manual processes and poor version control, they lose faith in the data. When you can't trust the data it's tough to make educated decisions and progress slows down.

- ▶ Paper processes contain errors, go missing, and cause bottlenecks.
- ▶ Entry-level systems can't handle the amount of data or provide the capabilities your organization needs as it grows.



Listen For...

"When was this updated?"

"I don't think these numbers are correct."

"Has anyone seen that document?
It's not in the file with the others."

04. Rigid technology

When you're in a work rut, your business doesn't have the agility to adapt and customize processes to respond to changes and opportunities. Changes require IT involvement and significant time.

Innovative minds in your organization have ideas to scale and improve the business, but they can't customize the technology and processes to power those ideas. Rigid technology also tethers your workforce. With increased mobility, teams can do work where it makes the most sense.

80%

of today's employees don't sit at a desk

74%

of SMBs agree or strongly agree that mobile solutions help improve employee productivity

57%

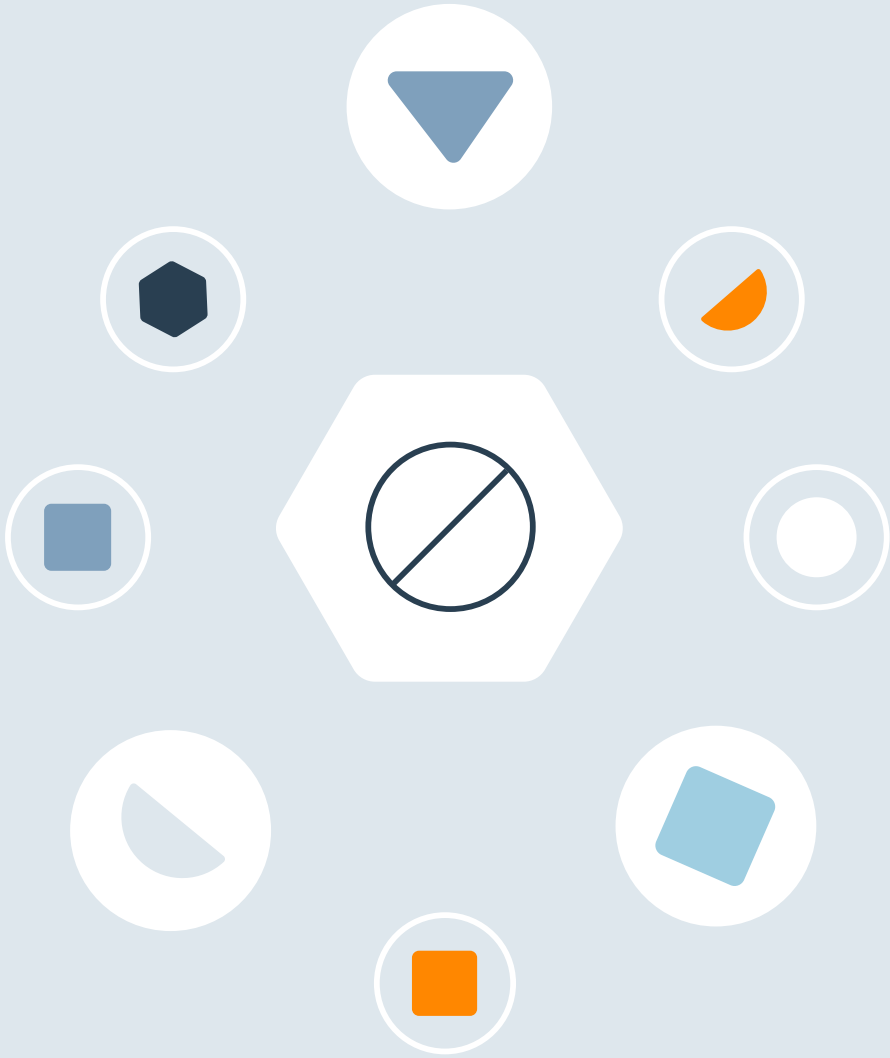
say at least 20% of their workforce travels for work

Listen For...

"Separate departments aren't communicating."

"I wish we had an app that could keep track of that."

"I don't have access to that data on-site, only in the office."



05. Costly, productivity-sucking processes

Time is a valuable resource. In a work rut, maintenance takes up more time than innovation, and the organization doesn't end up with much to show for it.

Outdated or inefficient processes can cost your organization more than wasted time.

- ▶ Paper processes cost money for paper itself, printing, shredding, storage, and disposal.
- ▶ Bloated enterprise systems may contain more capabilities than you need—and charge you for it.

Listen For...

"I could be so much more productive if I didn't have all these admin tasks taking up my time."

"That system is so expensive, and we don't even use half of it."

"We can't build our own apps from scratch, and we don't have the budget to hire someone else to do it."



Sound familiar?

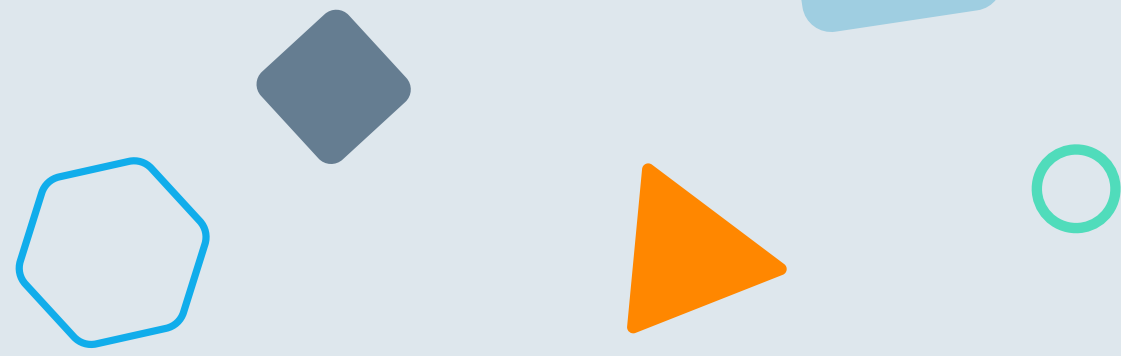
Escape the work rut with a Workplace Innovation Platform



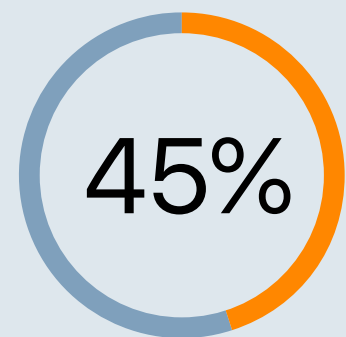
Businesses can use a Workplace Innovation Platform to build custom apps addressing their unique problems and opportunities related to a work rut.

- ▶ These apps:
 - Reduce manual tasks that drag a business's workforce down
 - Allow teams to go paperless (and, with mobile capabilities, go anywhere)
 - Enable consolidation of key communication and sources of information
 - Free up employees' time for value-adding, innovation-focused work

- ▶ Custom apps are not out of reach for SMBs
 - SMBs tend to settle for workplace technology that doesn't meet their needs, but they aren't comfortable transforming their current processes.
 - 55% of small business owners feel that their current technology solutions are actually "a hindrance to incorporating or adopting new technologies".
 - While many app development platforms require considerable time to build and maintain, a Workplace Innovation Platform allows organizations of all sizes to rapidly create custom apps to meet their specific needs.



Put technology to work for you so you can work on innovation.

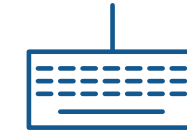


of business and IT executives report that their organization's pace of innovation has significantly accelerated over the past three years due to emerging technologies.¹

Customers cited these challenges as the pain points that led them to create a custom app:



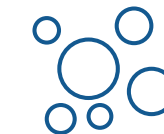
Reliance on paper processes



Significant manual data entry



Reliance on complex spreadsheets



Scattered sources of information

And they reported seeing these benefits:



Reduction in inefficient tasks



Reduced data entry



Increased productivity



ROI

Who takes charge of escaping the work rut with a Workplace Innovation Platform?

Why not you?

Job roles in the digital world begin to blur a bit. With the help with a Workplace Innovation Platform, custom apps can be created by those who know the business the most.

All it takes is a problem-solver's mindset.

Problem-solvers bring the big ideas, push to get other stakeholders on board, and see the process through. Together with the right platform, problem-solvers like you can make the work rut a challenge of the past. Give your business the freedom to innovate and scale with a DIY solution or a successful partnership.



No one knows how to escape
the work rut better than FileMaker, the world's
leading Workplace Innovation Platform.

Learn more about how the FileMaker Platform
can help your business escape the work rut.

www.filemaker.com

