

OFFERING OVERVIEW

Zoho Creator Platform Redefines EAP With a Deeply Integrated Platform

Leveraging the Full Zoho Platform Empowers Enterprises to
Achieve Enterprise Acceleration



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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report provides an overview of Zoho’s Creator platform, which allows Zoho customers to extend and integrate their Zoho applications as well as build their own automation capabilities.

Zoho has a corporate DNA of “do it yourself,” building out its own technology stack; operating its own cloud infrastructure; and developing higher-level stack capabilities such as email, collaboration, and analytics in-house. The result is that its enterprise application platform (EAP) capabilities, built into Zoho Creator, are very powerful and enable enterprises to achieve more in less time and at less cost than with other EAP platforms.

The other vendor offerings covered in the underlying Constellation Market Overview¹ are (in alphabetical order): Infor OS, Microsoft Dynamics platform, Oracle NetSuite SuiteCloud platform, Oracle Visual Builder, Salesforce platform, SAP Business Technology Platform (BTP), Unit4 People Platform, and Workday Extend platform.²

Business Themes

-  Data to Decisions
-  Technology Optimization
-  Future of Work

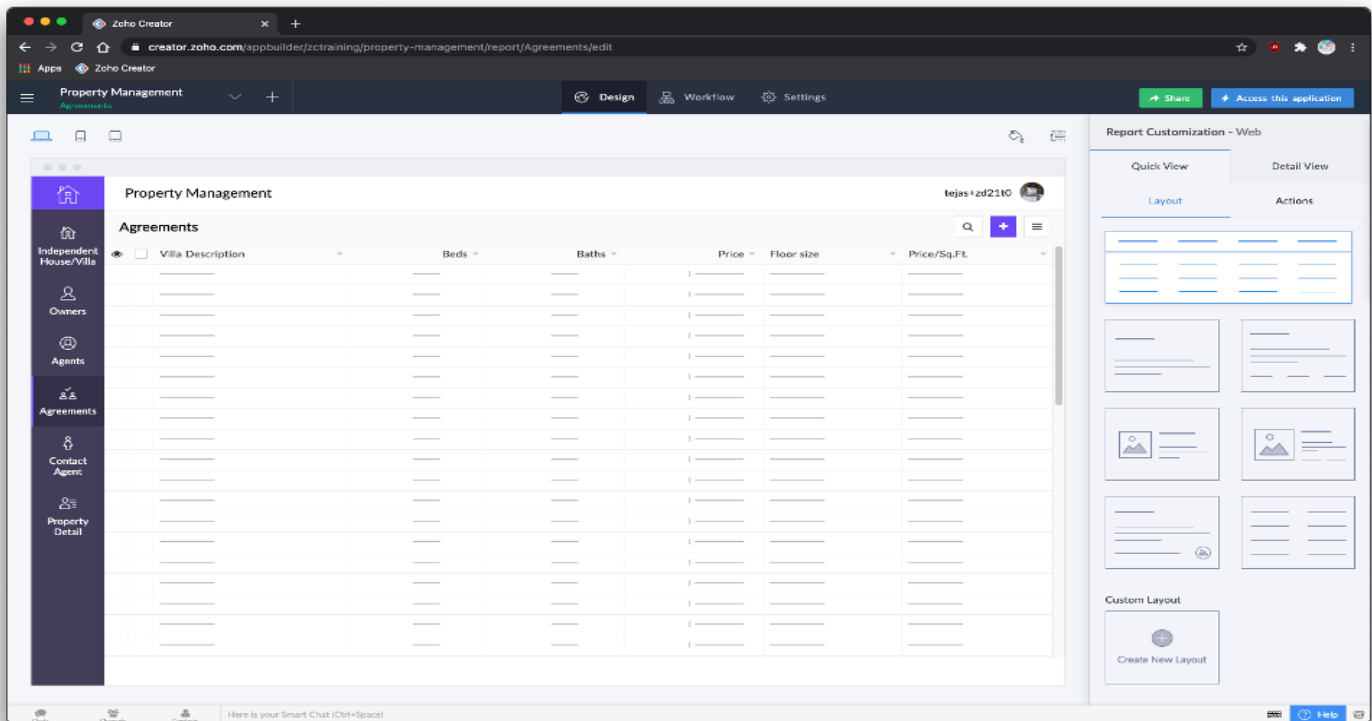
ABOUT ZOHU'S CREATOR PLATFORM

Overview

Zoho Creator: The Low-Code/No-Code Platform for EAP

Zoho, the only privately held vendor featured in the underlying Constellation Market Overview, is a remarkable success story in enterprise software. It has more than 60 million users and a complete business automation suite that goes beyond the traditional boundaries of enterprise applications by offering productivity and collaboration products natively integrated with its other products. On the EAP side, Zoho offers the Zoho Creator platform (see Figure 1).

Figure 1. Screenshot of Zoho Build Use Case



Source: Zoho

The Zoho Creator platform includes the following offerings:

- 1. Zoho Creator.** Zoho Creator is Zoho's low-code platform, which is so easy to master that even business users can create applications. It includes a visual builder tool; supports web and mobile device deployment without the need to recode for different platforms; and allows operation in Zoho's private cloud, in public clouds such as Microsoft Azure, and on-premises. It offers REST APIs and conventional connections for integration with other Zoho and third-party applications. Of special appeal to end users is the instant migration of spreadsheets and custom databases. Strong out-of-the box multilingual capabilities make Zoho Creator a great platform for international automation needs. Zoho Creator also comes with its own speech, conversational bot, and overall AI capabilities. Finally, Zoho Creator enables rapid application development by offering prebuilt components, such as a full-fledged approval system, that enable the rapid creation of complete applications.
- 2. Zoho Analytics.** When it comes to BI, dashboard, and analytics demands, Zoho Analytics offers an easy end user-friendly capability for visualizing data instantly and deploying analytics across a range of devices. Drill-downs, highlighting, and alerts are all supported out of the box, and once dashboards are created, teams can collaborate during the analytical process. Role-based access makes it easy to share data inside and outside of the enterprise.
- 3. Zoho Flow.** When it comes to integration and workflow, Zoho Flow enables users to easily create, monitor, and integrate Zoho and third-party applications as well as the workflows across them. A visual workflow builder makes it easy to create workflows; trigger logic allows for sophisticated automation and branching; and if needed, enterprises can add code for complex automation demands. Zoho Flow comes with easy-to-use integration and workflow-monitoring capabilities as well as built-in dashboards for visualizing the state of workflows. Not surprisingly, Zoho Flow comes with a large list of prebuilt integrations and workflows across Zoho and third-party products.

Overall, Zoho provides a powerful EAP capability with the Zoho Creator platform that enables enterprises to execute all three key EAP usage scenarios: Extend, Integrate, and Build. Ease of use, business-user enablement, and high productivity set Zoho Creator apart from the other EAP offerings featured in this Market Overview.

Market Segment: Enterprise Application Platforms

Market Definition

Zoho Creator competes in the enterprise application platform (EAP) market. These platforms are defined as systems that manage, build, operate, integrate, and extend enterprise applications.

Traditionally, enterprise platforms came along with the enterprise applications of their respective vendors: The platform and applications were inextricably linked. In the past decade, however, platform innovation on the one hand and business process uncertainty on the other have forced enterprise application vendors to open their platforms to their customers.

Scenarios for EAPs include the following three archetypal use cases:

- **Extend:** The requirement for enterprises to extend and/or customize their applications is the oldest usage scenario for enterprise application platforms. Changing the user experience (UX), adding more fields, changing menus, and so on are staples of the Extend scenario.
- **Integrate:** Because enterprise applications do not stand by themselves, organizations seek better ways to integrate them with the rest of their enterprise automation technologies; EAPs need to facilitate this integration effort.
- **Build:** The most recent usage scenario for EAPs is the Build scenario, in which enterprises build their own stand-alone applications on the EAP vendor's platform. This scenario has been triggered largely by business best-practice uncertainty that rules the current phase of enterprise applications (more on that later).
- Another defining market characteristic is the availability of EAPs in the public cloud. The public cloud has changed enterprise IT as no previous technology trend has done, enabling the pay-as-you-go consumption-based licensing business model as well as exceptional resource elasticity.

- All vendors in this Constellation Market Overview support the public cloud. However, data residency and performance demand as well as traditional IT operating models often require organizations to run their enterprise applications on-premises. Most of the vendors in this Market Overview also support on-premises deployment of their applications, adding increased capabilities to the enterprise platform (the lone exceptions being the “born-in-the-cloud” vendors NetSuite, Salesforce, and Workday).
- Lastly, some of the vendors in this Constellation Market Overview—such as Microsoft, Oracle, and Salesforce—provide offerings in both the software-as-a-service (SaaS) and platform-as-a-service (PaaS) areas, but we consider only the capabilities of their EAPs in this report, not their separately offered PaaS offerings. In the overall market, however, these vendors’ PaaS offerings are the key competitor of EAPs, competing especially with those vendors that do not offer support for the archetypal Build use case.

Market Trends

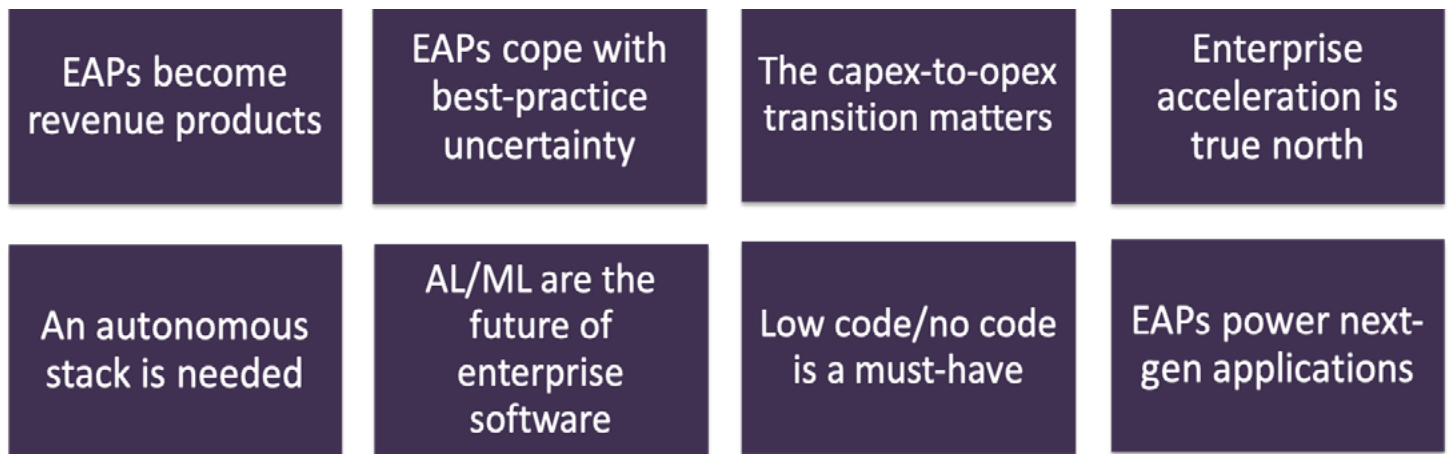
Eight prominent market trends are driving enterprise software/SaaS vendors to offer an EAP (see Figure 2).

EAPs Become Revenue Products

Enterprise resource planning (ERP) vendors, like all other software and SaaS vendors, are under pressure to increase the returns on their research and development (R&D) efforts. Individual developer productivity already has been maximized, as have nearshore and offshore options for the most part, so efforts are focused on increasing productivity both in-house and for customers.

Using EAP platforms is the right strategy for boosting overall developer productivity in the push to create next-generation applications. Because SaaS vendors can create EAP solutions that fit their domain space, they know their inherent application architecture and can increase productivity for their in-house or contracted developers. When offered as products, EAP-built solutions can help customers and partners complete and complement existing SaaS offerings of the ERP vendor. This proves very valuable when SaaS vendors are not able to offer complete wall-to-wall solutions but need partners and customers to fill

Figure 2. Eight Market Trends Define the EAP Market



Source: Constellation Research

in some functional gaps. Historically, EAP offerings have been a giveaway and not on the price list of ERP vendors; that is changing now, as EAPs become a revenue opportunity.

CxOs know that the enterprise software vendor with the better return on R&D will be the winner in their market and therefore the right partner for their enterprise. The availability and maturity of an EAP offering are leading indicators of how well a vendor is positioned for the return on its R&D.

EAPs Cope With Best-Practice Uncertainty

For the first time in the history of enterprise software, technology exceeds the software's computational requirements and enables new processes and best practices. This creates a best-practice void, which means enterprises do not know what the real best practices are and need to experiment and try new best practices. Effectively, this is a repeat of the mainframe era of the 1950s: The hardware was there, but the software had to be written. Enterprises that want to be disruptors and winners in digital transformation must be able to build software for experimental and disruptive purposes.

Naturally, an enterprise does not want to share with its suppliers any best-practice innovations that have market disruption potential—particularly not with its enterprise software supplier, whose business model

would compel it to package and sell that innovation to as many other enterprises as possible. On the other hand, enterprise software vendors cannot build for every experiment their customers want to conduct.

But the need for EAPs goes further than developing software as a strategic tool. Software vendors cannot build all the automation that enterprises need—even if that automation is standardized. Deep localizations and verticalizations, for example, are areas in which EAPs enable enterprises to pursue their own automation destiny.

As a result, enterprises use EAPs to build additional capabilities they deem important to their success (and that they cannot get or do not want to get from their enterprise software supplier); this enables software vendors to provide a platform for experimentation and creation of custom business processes.

The Capex-to-Opex Transition Matters

Software development is capital-intensive and requires vendors to make capital expenditure (capex) investments. The same is true for buying hardware and operating data centers. Because reliable public cloud computing infrastructure has been available for the last few years, enterprise software vendors do not get a good return on their capital by running their own data centers. As Infor CEO Charles Phillips put it in 2014, “Friends don’t let friends build data centers.”³

In addition to the pure capex, running and operating data centers also presents a talent and personnel cost for enterprise software vendors, with talent and budget that could be allocated to software and product development instead being spent monitoring and upgrading servers. Much as how enterprises ran their own power plants about 100 years ago and then gradually moved to using public utilities, they will move to public cloud vendors for their computing needs. And enterprise software vendors will anticipate that trend by closing their data centers and moving to public cloud infrastructures.

Constellation estimates that an enterprise software vendor that moves to a public cloud-based operational expenditure (opex) model can invest between 15% and 20% more in its product. Compounded over a few years, this can result in functional leadership by a public cloud-based vendor of 50% to 60% over a vendor that still operates its own data center(s).

Zoho, on the other hand, maintains that operating its own cloud infrastructure is cheaper than running on any public cloud infrastructure. While the vendor is spending capex on its own infrastructure, Zoho maintains that combined capex and opex savings make it more cost efficient than running on a public cloud.

This trend makes public cloud support a key factor for CxOs selecting the right enterprise software products. Enterprise application vendors that come from an on-premises history must make sure their products, including EAPs, run in the public cloud. The requisite innovation starts with the platform, and this makes public cloud platforms a requirement for EAPs.

Enterprise Acceleration via Solution Completeness

For far too long, enterprises have operated with incomplete and fragmented enterprise software. Workarounds, often manually operated, are still common. In an era when labor costs are quickly rising and talent is getting scarcer and scarcer, a solution's automation completeness, ideally spanning the entire enterprise, is crucial for success.

Experienced CxOs know they cannot expect solution completeness from their enterprise software vendor(s). There is no guarantee that this will change soon; although some vendors offer roadmaps, these roadmaps may not align with the automation needs and current state of business best-practice innovation and competition each enterprise experiences.

The solution to this challenge is an EAP platform provided by the enterprise software vendor that gives enterprises the strategic option to strive for solution completeness, even if their enterprise software vendor does not provide it.

The Need for an Autonomous Stack

Traditional enterprise software functions with an operator mindset: The user must show up for business to happen. If the user does not show up, nothing or very little happens. With economies running out of capacity and talent, it is more and more important for enterprise vendors' software to become self-driving and autonomous.

EAPs play a key role in enabling enterprises to operate in a more autonomous way, because they form the basis for the creation, validation, and automation of the rules and algorithms that power the best practices enabled by Infinite Computing.⁴

AI, ML, and Deep Learning Networks Are Key to the Future of Enterprise Software

The future of enterprise automation is in ... automation. Artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) give enterprises a new option for automating tasks via software.

The first area of innovation involves humanizing the interaction with enterprise software: Instead of typing on a QWERTY keyboard and using a mouse, users can employ natural speech and touch to interact with software. This is a much more human-suited way to interact with software than using the relatively primitive input tools of the past. With humans effectively acting as autonomous 3D processors, the next revolution will involve understanding data in a 3D way, using augmented, mixed, and digital reality.

An even larger impact is occurring on the automation side. For the first time, the digital trail (and digital exhaust) of an enterprise can be used to automate processes—even without human involvement. And these processes can continuously adapt, morph, and reinvent themselves. The capability comes from deep learning networks (DLNs) that continuously look at the digital trail and automate processes autonomously.

Both major trends—the humanization of software interaction and the rise of DLNs—are powered by the public cloud. Vendors adapting to public cloud infrastructure and opting to automate these processes in an enterprise-friendly way in an EAP platform will be the winners as enterprises and vendors transition to the public cloud.

No Code/Low Code Is a Must-Have

Invariably, enterprise use of an EAP requires code automation. Traditional avenues for creating the code—i.e., via developers—have been depleted: The world does not have enough developers to build all the code it needs to survive in the era of digital transformation.

Additionally, vendors do not want their enterprise customers to embark on overly large, traditional software projects, because they compete with the vendor for wallet share. In addition, the overall risk of going live can be affected by the ups and downs of the software development lifecycle of these projects. Therefore, it is crucial for enterprise software vendors to enable their customers to build their next-generation applications via low-code/no-code options.

The result is that enterprises in general, and more specifically reasonably technology-savvy enterprise end users, can be put in charge of their own automation destiny. Practically, this means that the EAPs are being employed by business users for their specific automation needs across an entire enterprise.

EAPs Power Next-Gen Applications

New technology capabilities create new automation needs and opportunities, and enterprises must leverage those opportunities to win markets or at least remain relevant. They cannot wait for enterprise software vendors to build solutions for them in this era of digital disruption and transformation, due to the uncertainty about business best practices.

At the same time, these next-generation applications (see Figure 3) must be operated in connection and cooperation with traditional enterprise software applications—the systems of record. Therefore, it is crucial that enterprise software vendors give their customers the opportunity to build these next-generation applications in parallel with software that supports their existing needs, further reinforcing the need for an EAP.

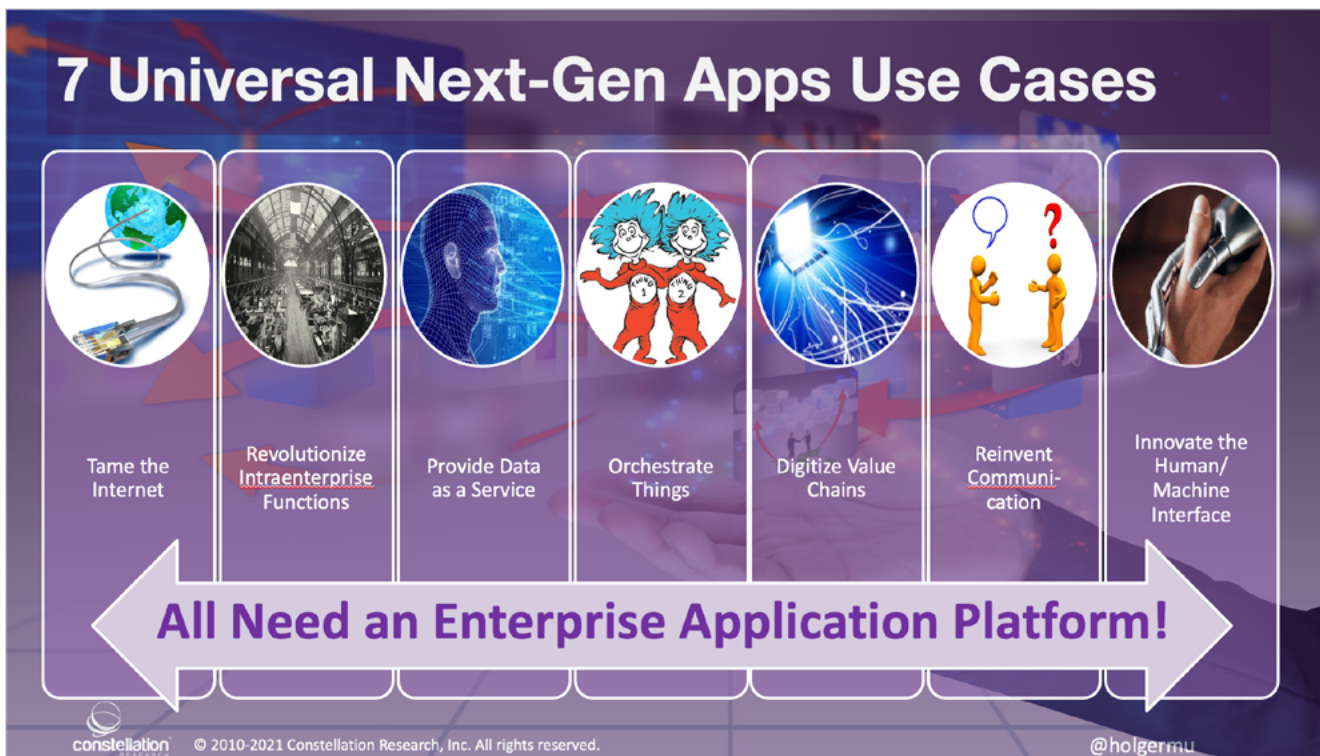
KEY CAPABILITIES

This section describes the most important capabilities of Zoho's EAP, offered through the Zoho Creator platform.

A Deeply Integrated Enterprise Automation–Focused EAP for Next-Gen Applications⁵

Zoho has developed a unique EAP understanding based on its corporate DNA, which has delivered more Zoho-owned automation capabilities than any other ERP vendor. Zoho early on delivered on the

Figure 3. The Seven Universal Next-Gen Apps Use Cases



Source: C3 AI

philosophy of an operating system for business that eliminates the boundaries between applications and platforms.

Some of the unique in-house-developed Zoho capabilities that enhance the Zoho EAP are:

- **Business application platforms.** Contrary to the rest of enterprise automation vendors, Zoho has taken a platform approach to many of the core automation capabilities. Specifically, this means those capabilities have been exposed on an API/microservices level and are available not only for Zoho-built products but also for customer-built apps, as part of EAP projects. Zoho has exposed the following business application platforms.
 - **Customer Experience Platform.** This platform capability exposes, for example, omnichannel capabilities, sales territories, teams and roles, service-related agent productivity tools, and remote assistant capabilities for the Zoho EAP.

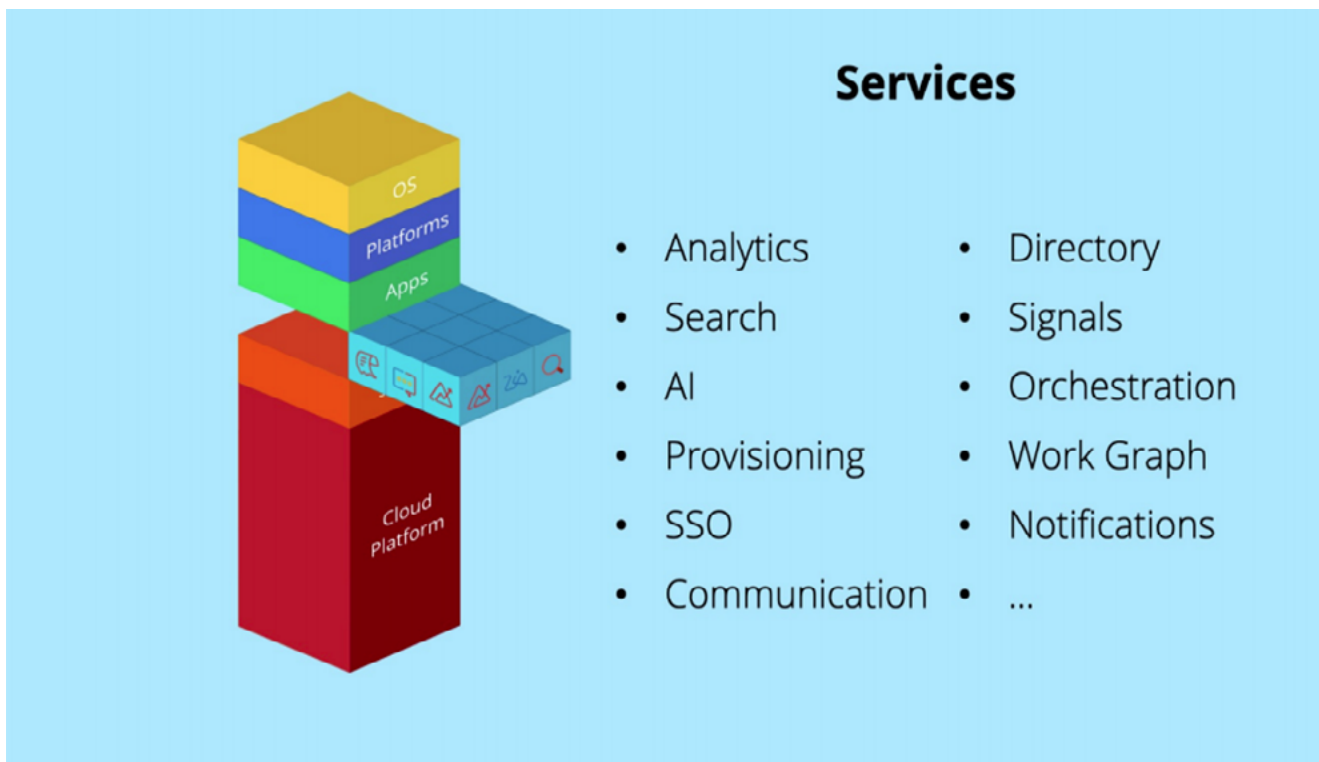
- **Employee Experience Platform.** As part of this platform capability, Zoho exposes candidate-related automation (for instance, résumé management, social recruiting, and candidate portal) and human resource management system (HRMS) APIs and microservices (for instance, role management, agreements, and compliance).
- **Finance Platform.** For this platform capability, Zoho exposes functionalities such as payroll information, travel-and-expense capabilities, and budgeting.
- **ERP Platform.** Zoho ERP Platform exposes back-office capabilities such as payments, expense capabilities, and subscription functionality.
- **Collaboration Platform.** At this platform level, Zoho allows its EAP to take advantage of email, chat, audio/video, telephony, and web conferencing. It enables learning management, access to its own office productivity suite, project management capabilities, document management services, intranet functionality, internal social networks, and more.
- **Automation Platform.** To make it easier to build applications, Zoho exposes a rich set of services—including AI and analytics, user directory functionality, signal management, a work graph, notifications, and single sign-on (SSO) services (see Figure 4).

The result of this platform approach is an incredibly rich set of functionalities and capabilities that enable enterprises to build next-generation applications easily, quickly, and efficiently.

Take an enterprise that wants to create a candidate- and alumni-management next-generation application. The team will start with candidate-related automation from the Employee Experience Platform, take the user role understanding from there, leverage the omnichannel capabilities of the Customer Experience Platform, utilize its sales territories to route interactions to the agents operating the application, and then look up historic paycheck information from the Finance Platform.

Adding subscription-based services for the alumni is easy, because the team building the next-generation application can leverage the subscription capability from the ERP Platform. And all of

Figure 4. The Zoho Custom Automation Platform Services Capabilities



Source: Zoho

that is then augmented with Collaboration Platform capabilities—for example, using the content management functionality to store correspondence, using the project management functionality to automate candidate/alumni events, and so forth. Lastly, the team might use some of the analytics and AI capabilities of the Customer Automation Platform to augment their application. Most remarkably, all of this in a single application, with SSO in one identical user experience.

The Zoho EAP Platform: A Success Story

Zoho's EAP platform has been a remarkable success, both for Zoho itself, because the vendor practices the “drink your own champagne” mantra, and for its customers. The proof is in the usage and adoption statistics:

- **Zoho Creator is a rampant success.** The more than 13,000 Zoho customers have created over 6 million apps, which translates into over 460 apps per customer on average. The apps are being used by more than 7 million users. That makes Zoho Creator one of the most successful no-code/low-code platforms in the market (see Figure 5).

- **One platform for web, mobile, and tablet.** Zoho Creator allows the creation of multiple deployment platforms that matter for enterprises, especially the deployment on web, mobile, and tablets.
- **Forward compatibility is the secret of success.** Knowing that an app built once will be able to run “forever” from a technical perspective encourages business users to use Zoho Creator and enables business continuity, because platform advancements will not stop an app from working.

But Zoho also supports professional developers with its Catalyst platform, a full-stack serverless platform that is open for third-party libraries, code editors, languages, and SDKs. For developer productivity, Zoho Catalyst also offers comprehensive command-line tools. It operates on the Zoho Cloud, and code created with Zoho Catalyst scales elastically, alleviating scalability concerns. For deployment and DevOps needs, Zoho Catalyst operates on and supports sandboxes for testing and validating new code artifacts.

Zoho Catalyst currently is used by more than 200,000 professional developers, which forms a substantial user community by itself. Together, this community has developed more than 26 million

Figure 5. Some Select Users of Zoho Creator



Source: Zoho

functions (a function in Zoho Catalyst is equivalent to a program). Effectively, Zoho has found a way to serve all developers, from no-code/low-code to full-code/pro-code users. And both platforms have seen significant adoption success, which is crucial for EAP platforms as they try to gain critical mass in the install base of a business application vendor.

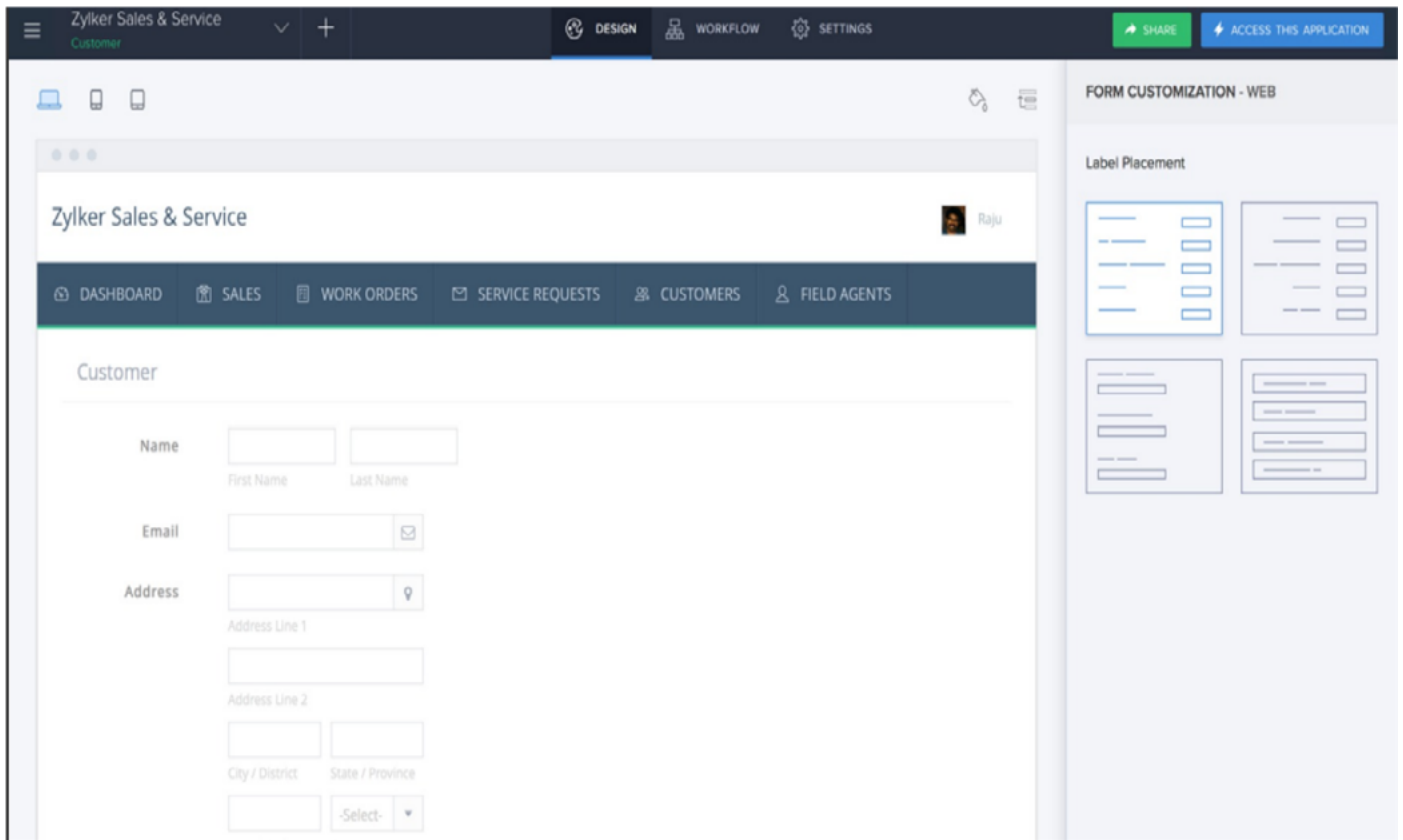
Zoho Creator: A Powerful Low-Code Platform

Zoho Creator is Zoho's low-code/no-code platform. It is specialized to provide applications that run on the web, on mobile platforms, and on tablets. Business users can create their own applications, putting them practically in charge of their automation destiny.

Zoho makes it possible for business users who are not technology-proficient to build their own apps by enabling the following three capabilities:

- 1. Visual programming for an easy and intuitive app-creation process.** Visual programming has been used for a long time but only recently got extended to the nascent no-code and low-code space. As it turns out, it is much more successful with business users than with regular developers, appealing to the visual intuition that comes from seeing the app being created in front of the users' eyes (see Figure 6).
- 2. The broad exposure of platform services to enable automation.** Zoho pretty much completely exposes its services across the entire automation spectrum. This empowers business users who lack full coding skills to leverage full-code automation for their low-code and low-code/no-code apps. Moreover, Zoho offers the custom extension of these capabilities via APIs and SDKs, allowing enterprises to build their needed automation on multiple levels of the overall Zoho stack.
- 3. Forward compatibility allows "lifetime" running of user-created apps.** Business users have a job to do—and that is *not* to create and maintain their no-code apps. Although they may be able to muster the time to create a no-code app, they certainly are not available to maintain it, should that be necessary. Zoho ensures that these Zoho Creator apps run as long as needed, because they are built in a forward-compatible way that is not going to be broken by advances in the Zoho platform.

Figure 6. The Zoho Creator Studio



Source: Zoho

Zoho Flow Addresses the EAP Integrate Use Case

Next to the generic EAP use cases of Build and Extend, Zoho addresses the need for the Integrate use case equally well, with Zoho Flow.

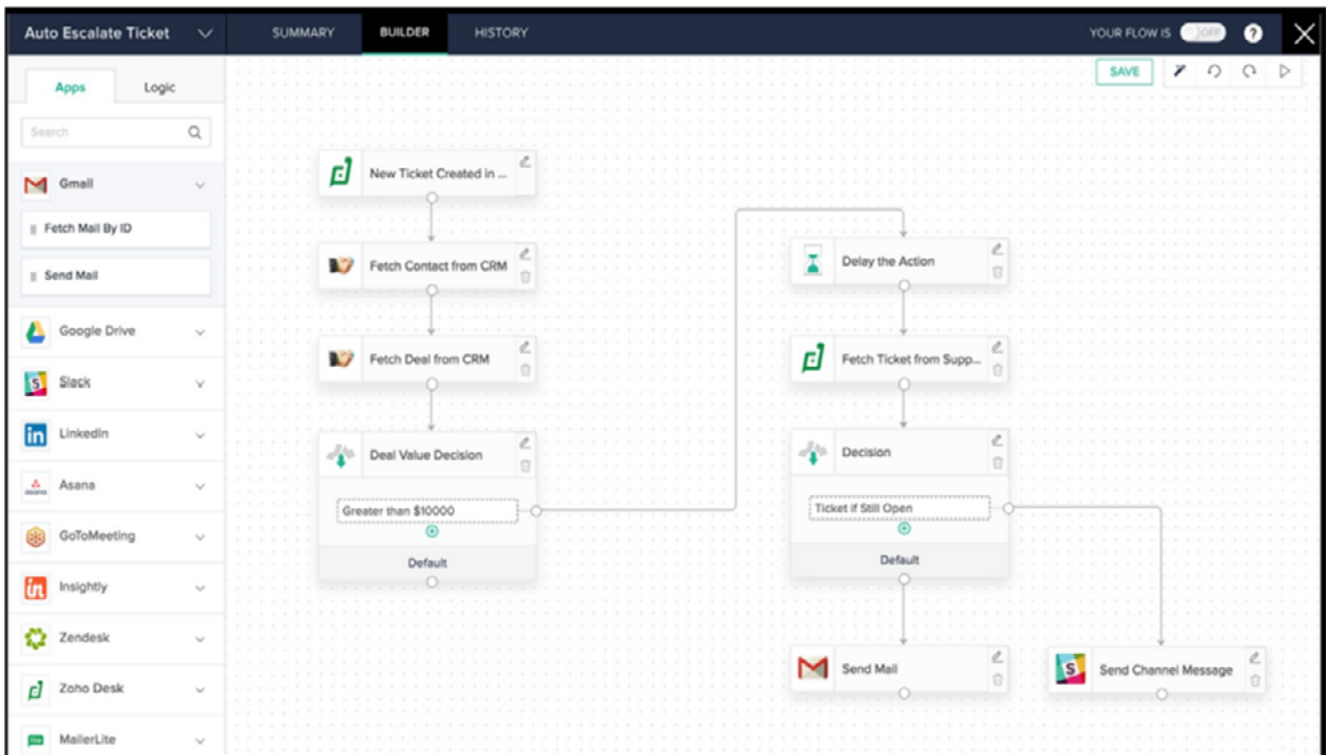
Zoho Flow allows business users to integrate third-party applications in an easy and intuitive way via a declarative interface (see Figure 7). Because integrations often require step-by-step execution, Zoho uses the same tool for workflow as for integration. This makes a business user's life easier, because the fewer the tools, and the more those tools can do, the better: It means business users have fewer tools to master.

When it comes to third-party applications, Zoho has taken the approach of offering prebuilt application integrations. With more than 500 application integrations shipping, Zoho has created a uniquely rich integration catalog that covers most of the integration needs of SMBs around the world.

Moreover, business users can work on the integration efforts in teams, because Zoho Flow allows multiple users to collaborate on integration needs. This can prove to be of great value, because often business users collaborate across locations and with different levels of expertise.

Finally, Zoho Flow offers insights on the current status of a workflow/integration process. Knowing the status of an integration is key for any successful operation. End users can easily see what the status of an integration is from an execution perspective, and why—for example, because certain data has not arrived at the desired destination(s).

Figure 6. The Zoho Creator Studio



Source: Zoho

Zoho Analytics Improves Decision Velocity and Quality

When business users build no-code applications, the day-two problem they face is that they want to look at and analyze the data their no-code/low-code application is using and derive appropriate actions from that data. Therefore, it is important that a successful EAP platform includes at least a satisfactory level of analytics and reporting.

Zoho more than fulfills that demand with Zoho Analytics, which addresses the needs of both reporting and analytics (see Figure 8). Business users can easily build powerful dashboards, visualizations, and reports as needed.

ANALYSIS AND OBSERVATIONS

For CxOs making decisions regarding their enterprise applications, the Zoho Creator platform is a strong differentiator for choosing Zoho enterprise applications, but it is also a veritable no-code platform for

Figure 8. A Marketing ROI Dashboard Created With Zoho Analytics



Source: Zoho

stand-alone automation use cases. Zoho's deeply vertical integrated stack gives end users advantages in regard to usability, velocity, and TCO.

Strengths

The Zoho Creator platform possesses the following strengths compared to other offerings in this market space (see Table 1):

- **Deeply integrated stack.** With its integrated stack, Zoho provides a unique no-code automation offering. It exposes all levels of the stack to business users, enabling them very rich function to provide no-code applications.
- **Easy and simple to use.** Zoho Creator is easy to learn and even easier to use. With very little technical savvy, business users can build powerful no-code applications.
- **High business user velocity.** Business users are not being compensated for building no-code applications. When they think they need to create them, they want to do this in the fastest and most efficient way they can. Zoho Creator offers high business-user velocity for creating, operating, and managing the no-code application they want to use in their enterprise.
- **Ideal third-party EAP offering.** Many ERP vendors' EAP offerings lack the capabilities and simplicity that Zoho Creator offers. Zoho can be a third-party EAP stack that does not threaten an overall ERP strategy but instead enables efficient and effective EAP processes, becoming the EAP/no-code tool of choice for an enterprise with a different ERP vendor than Zoho.

Weaknesses

The Zoho Creator platform possesses the following weaknesses compared to other offerings in this market space:

- **Smaller, less-known vendor.** Although Zoho is growing rapidly and has been successful expanding across the globe, it is still a relatively small ERP vendor, raising potential viability concerns.
- **Proprietary stack concerns.** Zoho’s biggest strength also encompasses a key weakness: a fully integrated in-house-built stack. Although Zoho offers standard industry architectural integration points in its technology stack as well as APIs, detractors will raise this architecture feature as a concern.
- **Battling much larger competitors.** Zoho is one of the smaller vendors in this Constellation Market Overview and clearly is punching above its weight class. It needs growth and economies of scale to thrive in the long term; otherwise, it risks being relegated to a niche vertical and regional vendor.

Table 1. Zoho Creator Platform Strengths and Weaknesses

STRENGTHS	WEAKNESSES
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deeply integrated stack • Easy and simple to use • High business-user velocity • Ideal third-party EAP offering 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Smaller, less-known vendor • Proprietary stack concerns • Battling much larger competitors

Source: Constellation Research

RECOMMENDATIONS

Constellation recommends the following for CxOs looking at Zoho Creator:

- **Enable Enterprise Acceleration.** Enterprises need to move faster than ever before, and IT/computing infrastructures cannot continue to be the shackles on agility that they have been in the past. Therefore, CxOs should look to EAPs that allow their enterprise to not only integrate and extend their automation portfolio, but also to build the relevant applications needed to run their enterprise in the era of digital transformation.
- **Select vendors with an eye on key capabilities, roadmap, and business-user enablement.** EAP capabilities are becoming a larger part of ERP and business software selection. A lack of EAP capabilities can severely hamper enterprise success, so CxOs need to consider roadmap items and roadmap delivery times as well. Finally, IT cannot build it all, so the enablement of business users via no-code/low-code option is a key capability—one that Constellation regards as a showstopper for an enterprise software platform lacking in this area.
- **Pick your next enterprise software platform carefully, and make sure EAP capabilities are key in selection, with a focus on the Build use case.** Traditionally, standard software was all about the fit. That served enterprises well, because best practices were delivered via standard software. In the era of business best-practice uncertainty, though, vendors cannot ship all the best practices. The only option an enterprise has when it needs automation its enterprise software vendor cannot provide is to build it in-house. Therefore, the Build use case is a key EAP capability for Enterprise Acceleration⁶ in the era of business best-practice uncertainty.
- **Exploit Zoho Creator at its fullest when a customer.** When paying for enterprise software, it makes sense to exploit the software at its fullest, taking advantage of what has been licensed both from a functionality and a commercial perspective. Having a licensed EAP such as the Zoho Creator platform and not using it at its fullest is not the best strategy for practicing Enterprise Acceleration.

- **As a prospect, realize the relative competitive strength of the Zoho Creator platform.** When evaluating Zoho, it is key to include EAP capabilities in the selection process. Zoho will do well in that category in terms of functionality, adoption, and robustness. And this is what CxOs need from their EAP: a proven, scalable platform for implementing the key three EAP capabilities.
- **Consider Zoho Creator as stand-alone EAP.** Zoho Creator's capabilities are so attractive that CxOs should consider Zoho Creator as a stand-alone EAP platform next to their ERP offering(s). This can begin as a tactical decision that does not challenge the longtime ERP strategy of an enterprise but offers an EAP-powered no-code solution immediately.
- **Take a stance on commercial prudence.** Regardless the vendor, enterprises need to make sure they obtain the value they seek. For Zoho Creator, CxOs must pay attention to ensure that subscription costs provide their enterprise with an attractive TCO. As with all services-related offerings, prices will fluctuate, need to be contractually agreed upon as long as desired, and must be constantly monitored to avoid negative commercial surprises.

RELATED RESEARCH

For the Market Overview, see: Holger Mueller, “Next-Gen Computing: The Enterprise Computing Model for the 2020s,” Constellation Research, September 14, 2018. <https://www.constellationr.com/research/next-gen-computing-enterprise-computing-model-2020s>

For the Offering Overview of Oracle Cloud@Customer, see: Holger Mueller, “Oracle Cloud at Customer Enables Next-Gen Computing,” Constellation Research, October 2018. <https://www.constellationr.com/research/oracle-cloud-customer-enables-next-gen-computing>

For the Offering Overview of Microsoft Azure Stack, see: Holger Mueller, “Microsoft Azure Stack Emerges as Key Next-Gen Computing Option,” Constellation Research, February 4, 2019. <https://www.constellationr.com/research/microsoft-azure-stack-emerges-key-next-gen-computing-option>

For the Amazon Web Services offline offerings, see: Holger Mueller, “AWS Customers Can Finally Consider Hybrid and Offline Use Cases,” Constellation Research, January 30, 2019. <https://www.constellationr.com/research/aws-customers-can-finally-consider-hybrid-and-offline-use-cases>

For a Constellation ShortList™ on IaaS vendors, see: Holger Mueller, “Constellation ShortList Global IaaS for Next-Gen Applications,” Constellation Research, February 20, 2018. <https://www.constellationr.com/research/constellation-shortlist-global-iaas-next-gen-applications-2>

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² For the Constellation ShortList™ on EAP platform vendors, see: Holger Mueller, “Constellation ShortList Enterprise Application Platforms,” February 10, 2021. <https://www.constellationr.com/research/constellation-shortlist-enterprise-application-platforms>

³ For more on the statement at an AWS event in 2014, see: Holger Mueller, “Event Report—AWS Summit in SFO,” March 26, 2014. <https://www.constellationr.com/blog-news/event-report-aws-summit-sfo-aws-keeps-doing-what-it-has-been-working-8-years>

⁴ For more details on Infinite Computing, see Holger Mueller, “The Era of Infinite Computing Triggers Next-Generation Applications,” June 1, 2018. <https://www.constellationr.com/research/era-infinite-computing-triggers-next-generation-applications>

⁵ The author uses the term “next-generation applications” to describe applications that use a combination of AI, big data, cloud, and build applications across seven distinct use cases. Find more on next-generation applications here: Holger Mueller, “The Era of Infinite Computing Triggers Next-Generation Applications,” June 1, 2018. <https://www.constellationr.com/research/era-infinite-computing-triggers-next-generation-applications>

⁶ Enterprise Acceleration is the term the author uses to describe the need for enterprise to move faster and become more agile. Read more on Enterprise Acceleration here: Holger Mueller, “Why the C-Suite Must Embrace Enterprise Acceleration,” May 2, 2019. <https://www.constellationr.com/research/why-c-suite-must-embrace-enterprise-acceleration>

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