2018
State of the Custom App Report

A survey of how businesses are using
and benefiting from custom apps.

What's new in 2018?

The FileMaker Platform has gained major traction across industries with its no code/low-code promise, and this growth shows no sign of stopping. Apps are being built by IT professionals, professional developers and line-of-business employees alike, be it within large enterprises or at small and medium-sized companies. These apps are being used to quickly solve business problems and reduce inefficiencies in a timely, cost-effective manner.

The State of the Custom App Report 2017 honed in on citizen developers, defined as those individuals with little to no professional coding or developing experience. The 2018 report takes a look across the board, examining the myriad ways custom apps are being used and how these tools are helping businesses succeed.

370 FileMaker customers

Organizations of all sizes and across different industries

North America

Europe

Japan

Results presented in this report were gathered in October 2017 from 370 FileMaker customers across North America, Japan, and Europe. Respondents are in organizations of all sizes and across different industries. All respondents were involved in the creation of their custom app(s), and are actively using them.

Introduction

Businesses are building low-code custom apps to solve common challenges such as reliance on paper processes, scattered sources of information, reliance on complex spreadsheets, and significant manual data entry.

Custom apps are flexible, easy to build and require minimal time investment (57% of businesses reported that they had their custom app up and running in under 3 months).

They allow businesses to meet their unique needs, streamline and automate processes, and access data anywhere.

"Teams have better insight into their data and are able to track, manage, and report on it the way they prefer."

— *Phillip Morgan, Editorial Operations, Meredith Corporation*

Key findings

Benefits of a custom app

93%
saw a reduction in inefficient tasks

91%
saw an increase in team productivity

77%
saw a reduction in data entry

76%
reported ROI

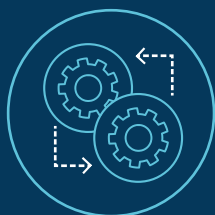## Custom apps in the field

68% consider mobility moderately to extremely important to their organization. *(50% of businesses are using custom apps in the field)*

Advancing the custom app

As business needs change, custom apps adapt to new requirements.

46% integrated or are planning to integrate other systems with their custom app
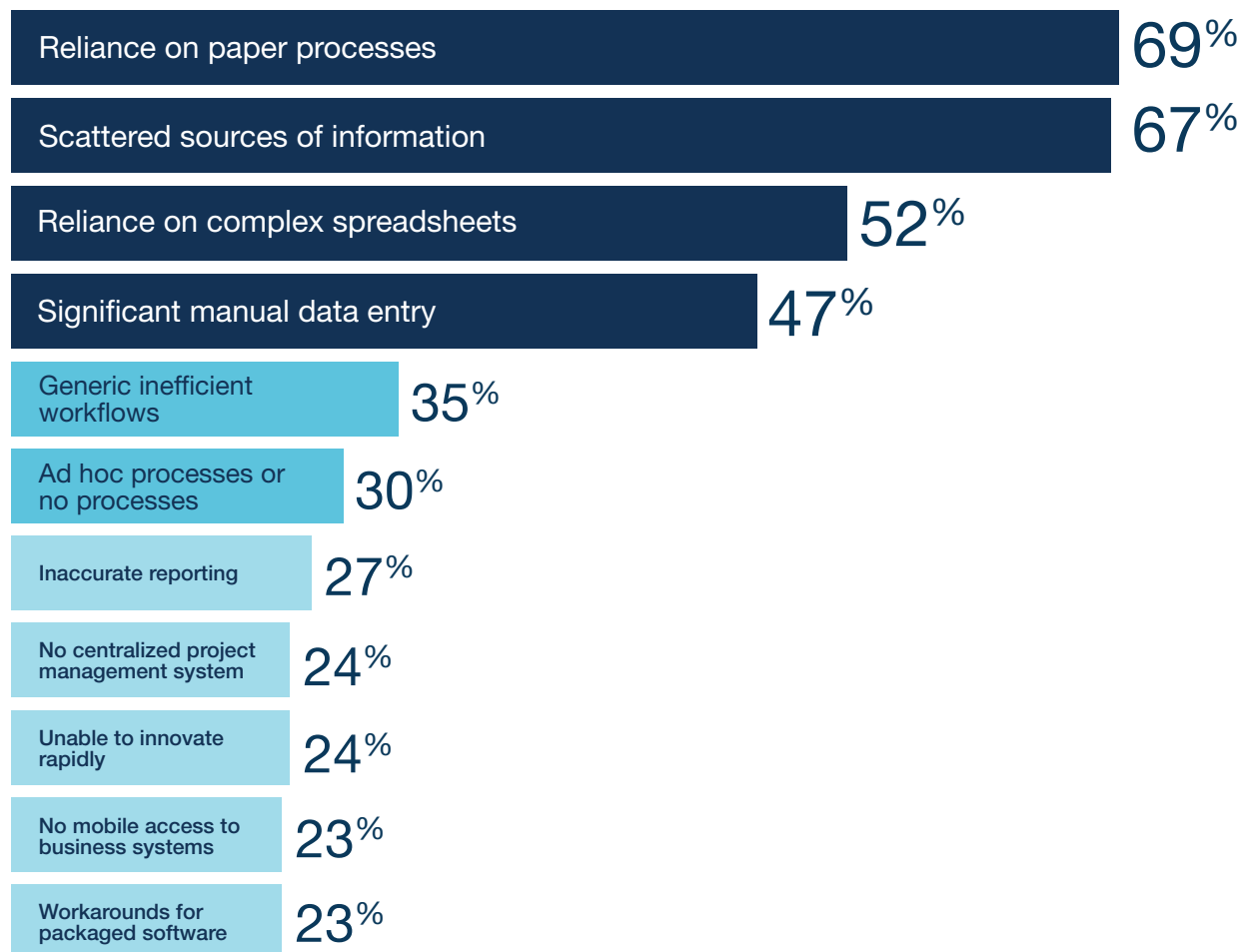
Why
Custom Apps?

Custom apps for any business size

Businesses building custom apps range in size from multi-location enterprises to regional businesses to single proprietors, and all sizes in between.

21%
LARGE
(1000+ employees)

55%
SMALL
(5–99 employees)

24%
MEDIUM
(100-999 employees)
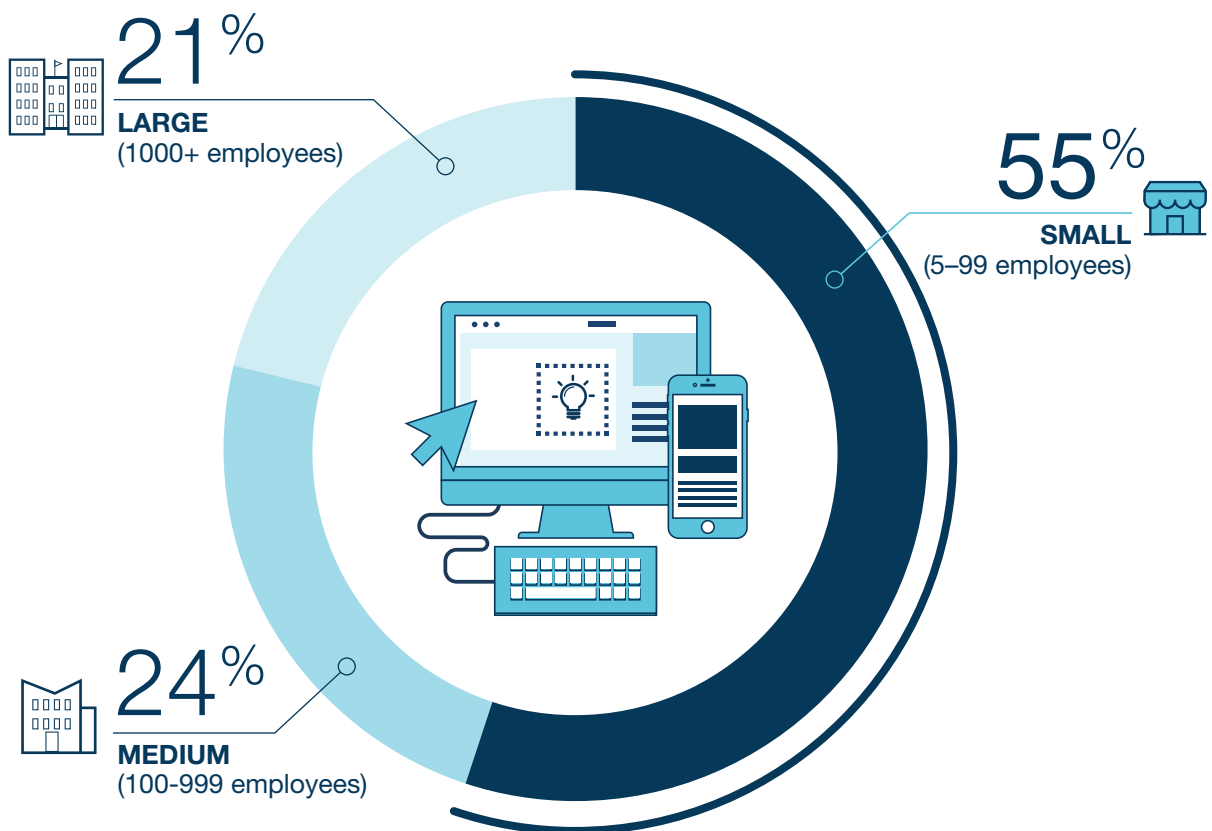
Custom apps for every business challenge

Prior to adopting custom apps, businesses reported struggling with paper processes, scattered sources of information, complex spreadsheets and significant manual data entry.

Challenge	Percentage
Reliance on paper processes	69%
Scattered sources of information	67%
Reliance on complex spreadsheets	52%
Significant manual data entry	47%
Generic inefficient workflows	35%
Ad hoc processes or no processes	30%
Inaccurate reporting	27%
No centralized project management system	24%
Unable to innovate rapidly	24%
No mobile access to business systems	23%
Workarounds for packaged software	23%

94%
Businesses that relied on packaged software did not find it flexible enough to meet their unique needs.

53%
Businesses lack access to real time information with the use of complex spreadsheets.

A need for ease of use and flexibility

Businesses have unique needs which require a flexible solution that is easy to use. One common driver to create custom apps with the FileMaker platform was ease of use (**84%**) and another common driver was flexibility (**81%**).
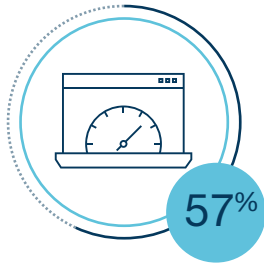
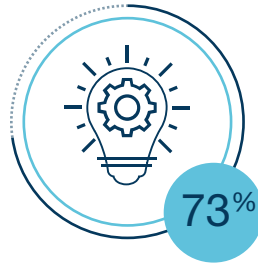**What factors contributed to your decision to create a custom app(s) with FileMaker? (Choose all that apply)**
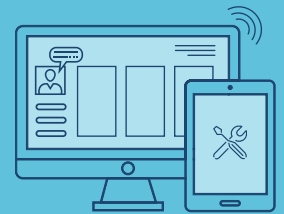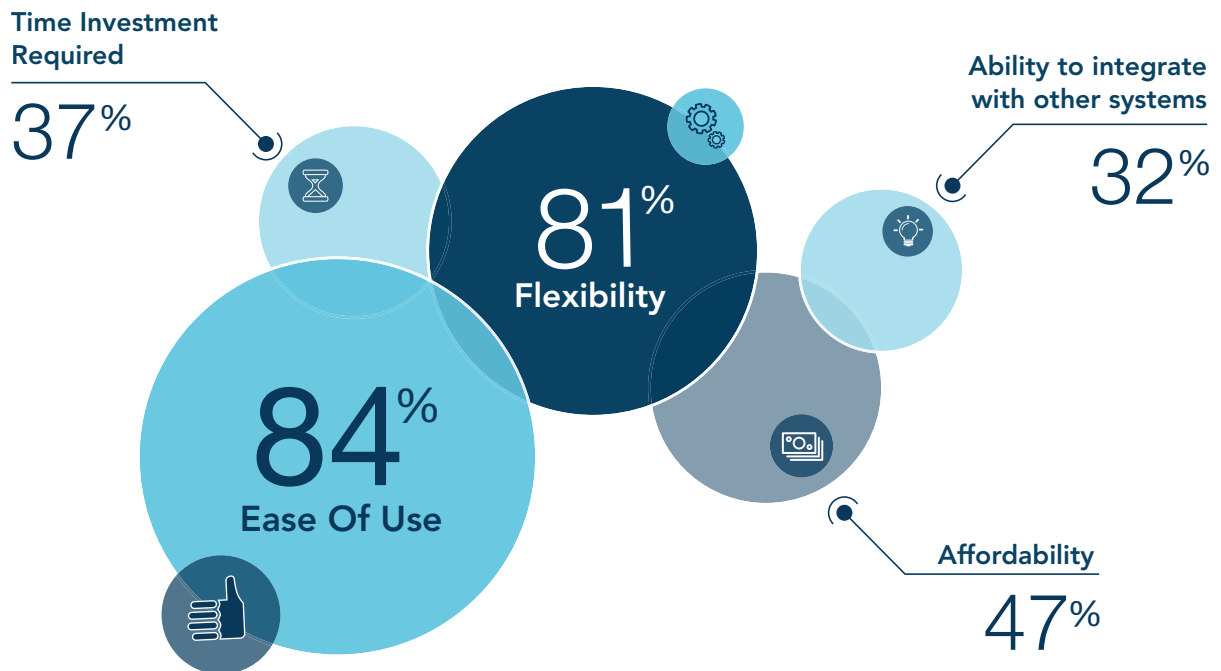
"We have three different branches - before, each branch was using different spreadsheets. Our custom apps have allowed us to streamline the processes."
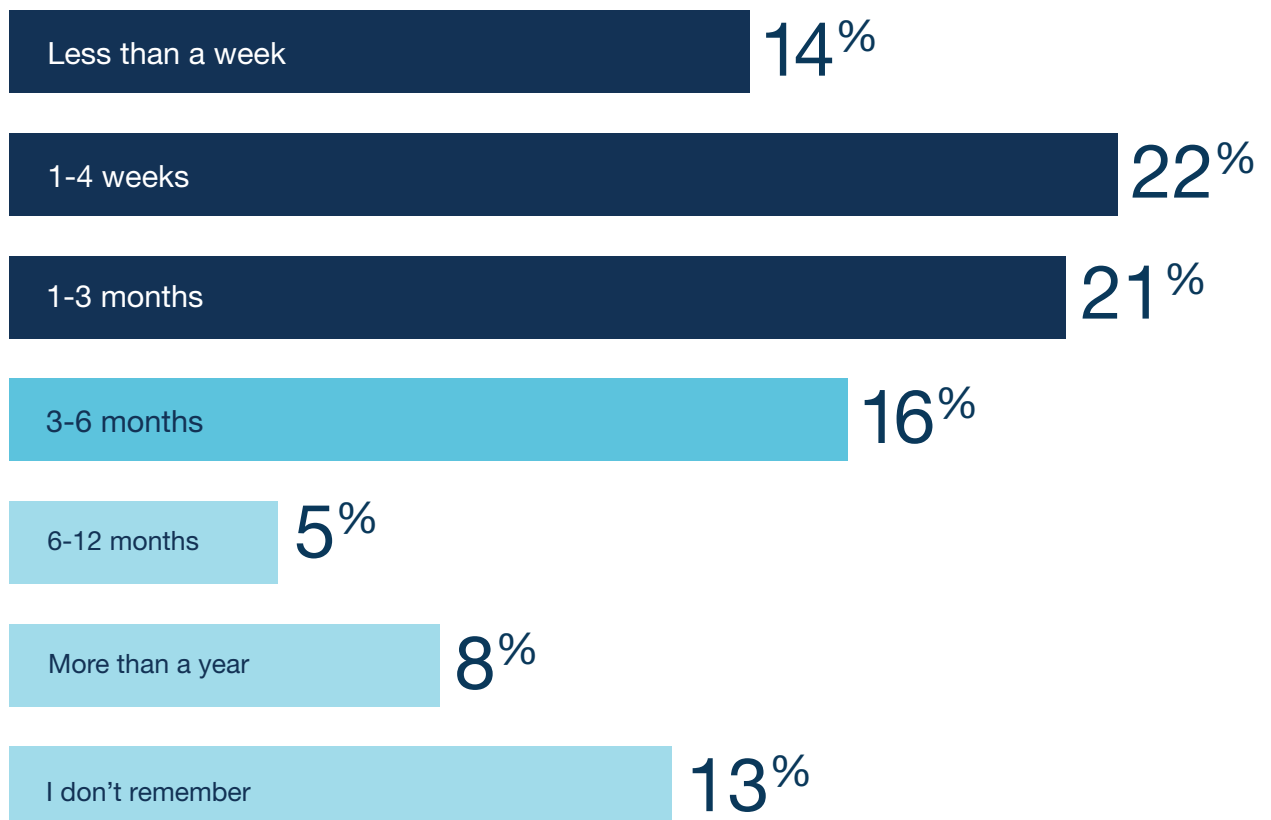
Peter Mactavish,
IT manager, Scott Builders

Time Investment Required

37%

Ability to integrate with other systems

32%

81%
Flexibility

84%
Ease Of Use

Affordability

47%

Custom apps require minimal time investment

57%

57% of businesses had their custom app up and running in under 3 months.

73%

73% had their custom app up and running in under 6 months.

Less than a week	14%
1-4 weeks	22%
1-3 months	21%
3-6 months	16%
6-12 months	5%
More than a year	8%
I don't remember	13%

Custom apps require only a small weekly time commitment

51% of businesses spend less than 5 hours per week developing and maintaining their custom app.

1%
30–35 hours

3%
35–40 hours

3%
25–30 hours

5%
20–25 hours

5%
15–20 hours

8%
Not sure

9%
10–15 hours

51%
Less than
5 hours

15%
5–10 hours
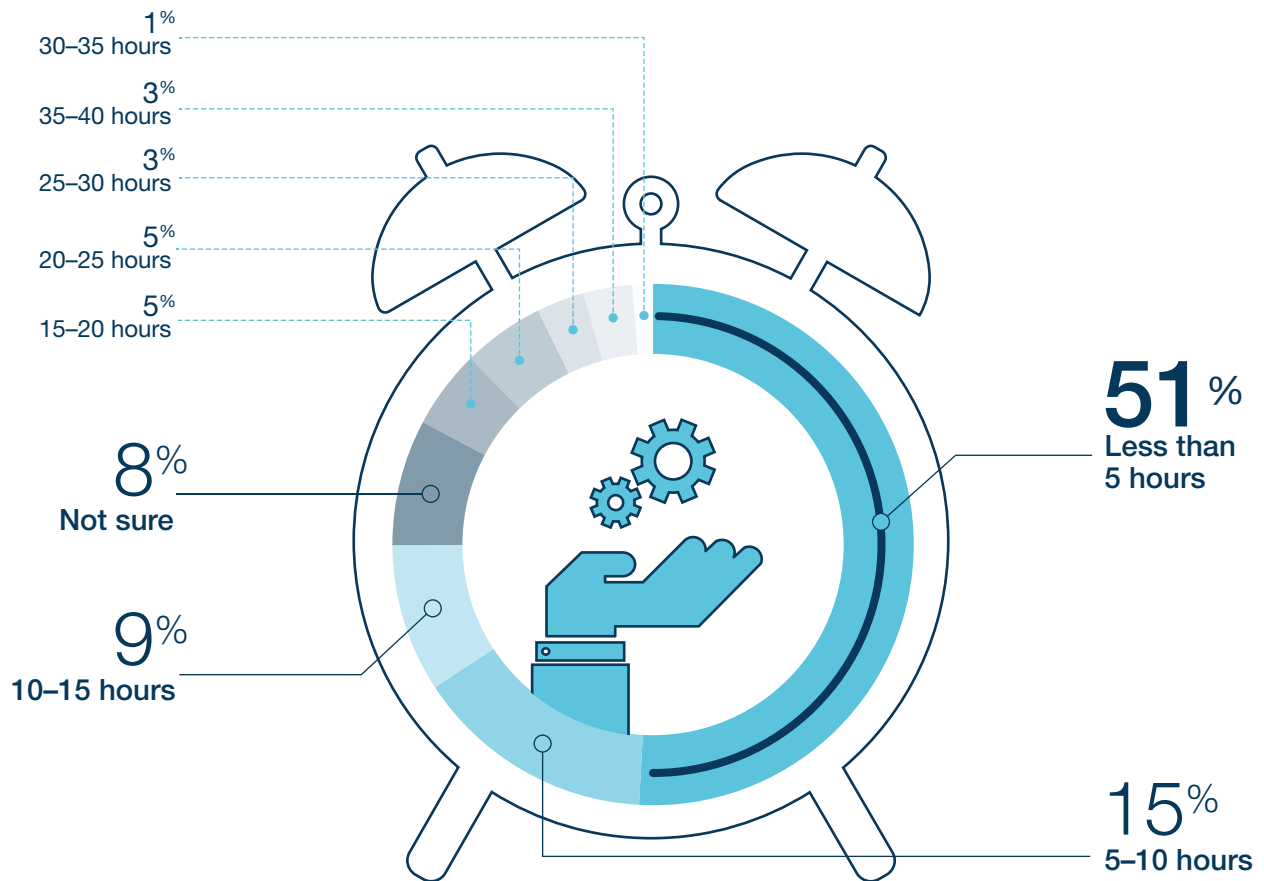
Custom apps can meet your specific business challenges

Businesses build custom apps to streamline their operations. They are managing contacts and projects, providing reporting for analysis, and tracking what matters to them using their custom app.
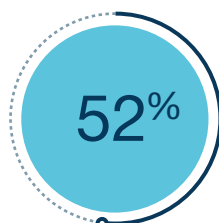
"Our custom app helps run the entire company."
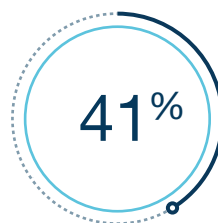
Kyle Putzier
President,
Inventive Label, Inc.

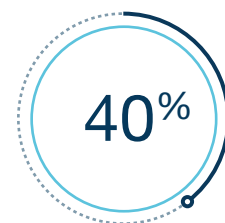## Those surveyed reported using their apps for the following purposes:

57%
Manage contacts: customers, clients, members

52%
Reporting and analysis

41%
Manage projects, tasks, schedules

40%
Managing inventory and assets

39%
Manage documents, images, videos or other files

38%
Invoicing, quotes, orders, estimates
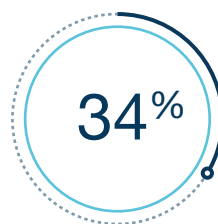
34%
Merging data from multiple sources
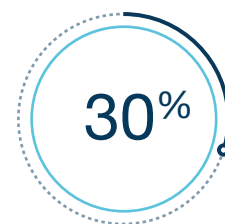
30%
Field data collection and surveys

Collection of energy efficiency data made easier with custom apps

NMR Group Inc. specializes in the design, implementation, and analysis of qualitative and quantitative market research and the evaluation of energy-efficiency and renewable energy programs. Custom apps make it easier for technicians to collect data.

NMR Group Inc

▷ Somerville, MA USA
▷ 25 - 49 Employees
▷ Utilities, Energy and Extraction

Time to build & deploy custom app: 1 – 4 weeks	Reduction in inefficient tasks reported: 40 – 60%	Reduction in data entry reported: 20 – 40%	Increase in team productivity reported: 20 – 40%

" Our work involves data collection in businesses and in people's homes. It also includes administration of many surveys. Doing that on paper was a lot of work and it created opportunity to make mistakes.

We now use a custom app for onsite data collection, where we document inventories of energy features of a home or a business, like light bulbs and heating systems.

The job we perform has multiple rules about what should be done in particular situations. If it's done on paper, technicians have to remember all of those rules, but if a custom app is built, there is much more control over the process. With a custom app, you can make the job easier for the people doing it, which usually gives us much higher quality results and more reliable data. We also look more professional when we show up using iPads to collect data. When the competition is using paper forms, we look better. "

Scott Walker, Project Manager, NMR Group, Inc.
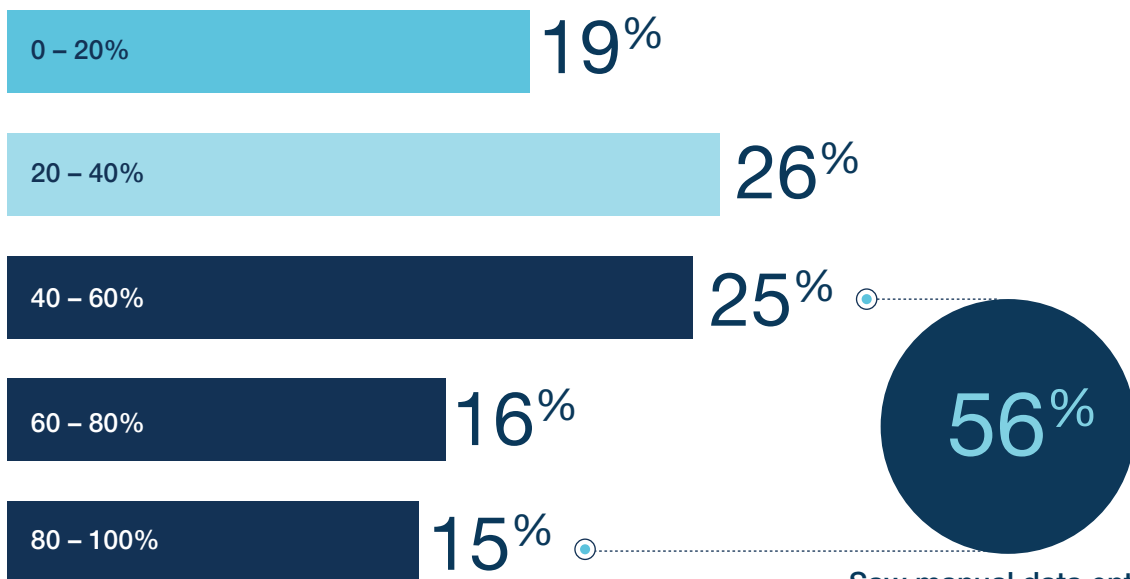
Benefits of the Custom App

Custom apps reduce manual data entry

Since implementing your custom app(s), have you seen a reduction in manual data entry?

Yes 77%

No 23%

Reduction in manual data entry

How much has your custom app(s) helped you reduce manual data entry?

|	
0 – 20%	19%
20 – 40%	26%
40 – 60%	25%
60 – 80%	16%
80 – 100%	15%

56%

Saw manual data entry being reduced by over 40%

Custom apps improve business efficiency

Since implementing your custom app(s), have you seen a reduction in inefficient tasks?

Yes 93[%]

No 7[%]

Reduction in inefficient tasks

How much has your custom app(s) helped you reduce inefficient tasks

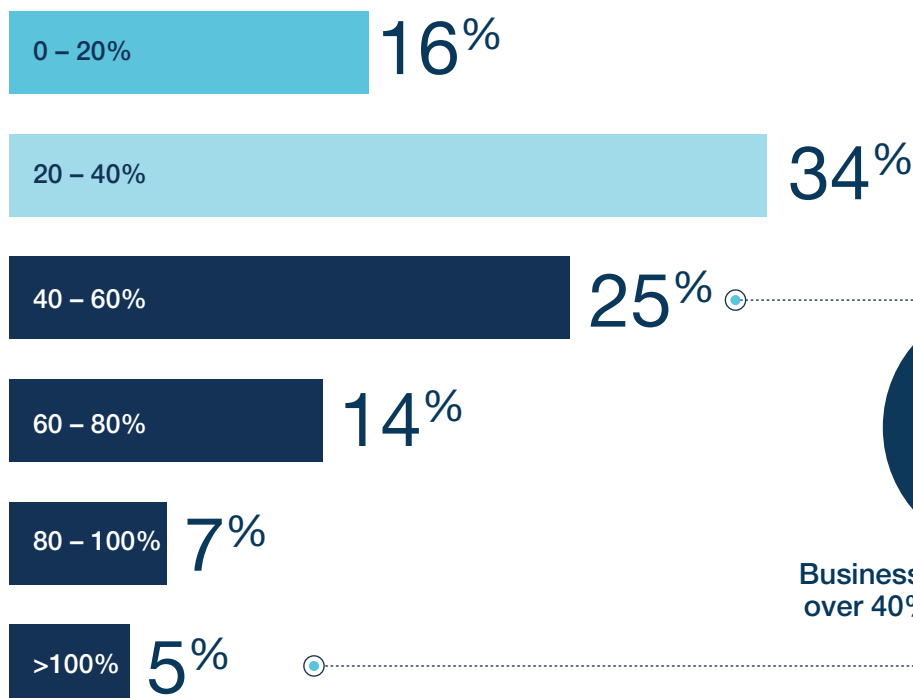|	
0 – 20%	10[%]
20 – 40%	28[%]
40 – 60%	27[%]
60 – 80%	22[%]
80 – 100%	13[%]

62[%]

Saw inefficient tasks being reduced by over 40%
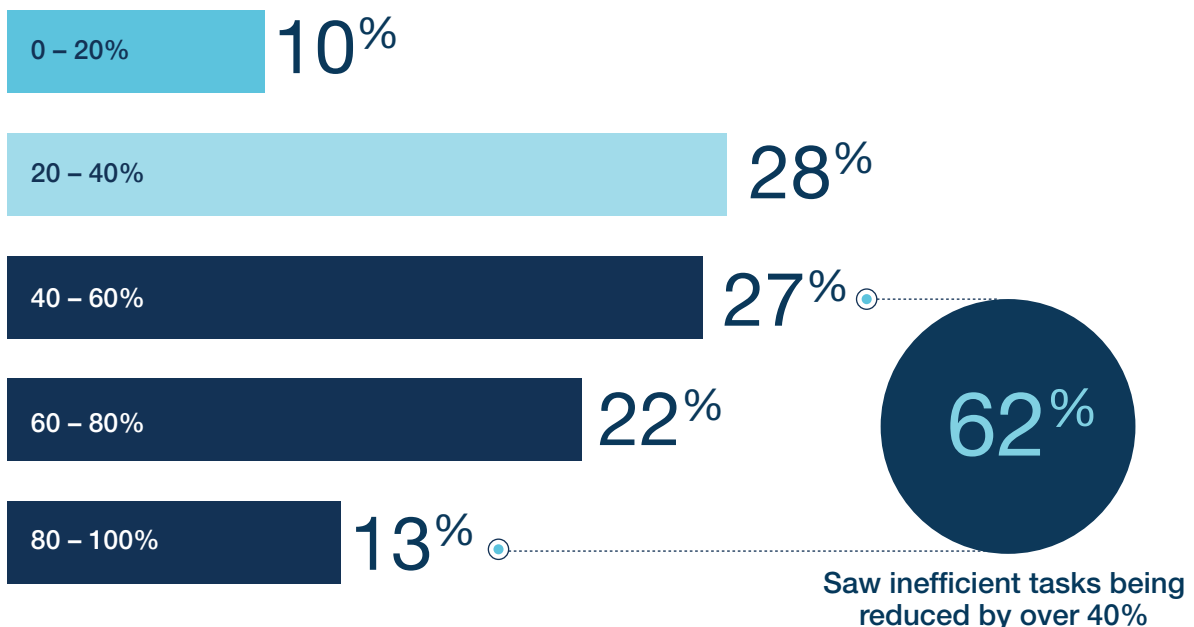
Custom apps drive productivity

Since implementing your custom app(s), have you seen an increase in team productivity?

Yes 91%

No 9%

Increase in team productivity

After adopting your custom app(s), how much more productive is your team?

0 – 20% 16%

20 – 40% 34%

40 – 60% 25%

60 – 80% 14%

80 – 100% 7%

>100% 5%

51%

Businesses saw an increase of over 40% in team productivity

Custom apps are a great return on investment

Have you seen a return on investment (ROI) from your custom app(s)?

Yes 76%

No 24%

ROI from custom apps

What return on investment (ROI) have you seen from your custom app(s)?

0 – 20%	23%
20 – 40%	30%
40 – 60%	17%
60 – 80%	11%
80 – 100%	6%
>100%	13%

47%

Businesses saw up to 60% increase in ROI
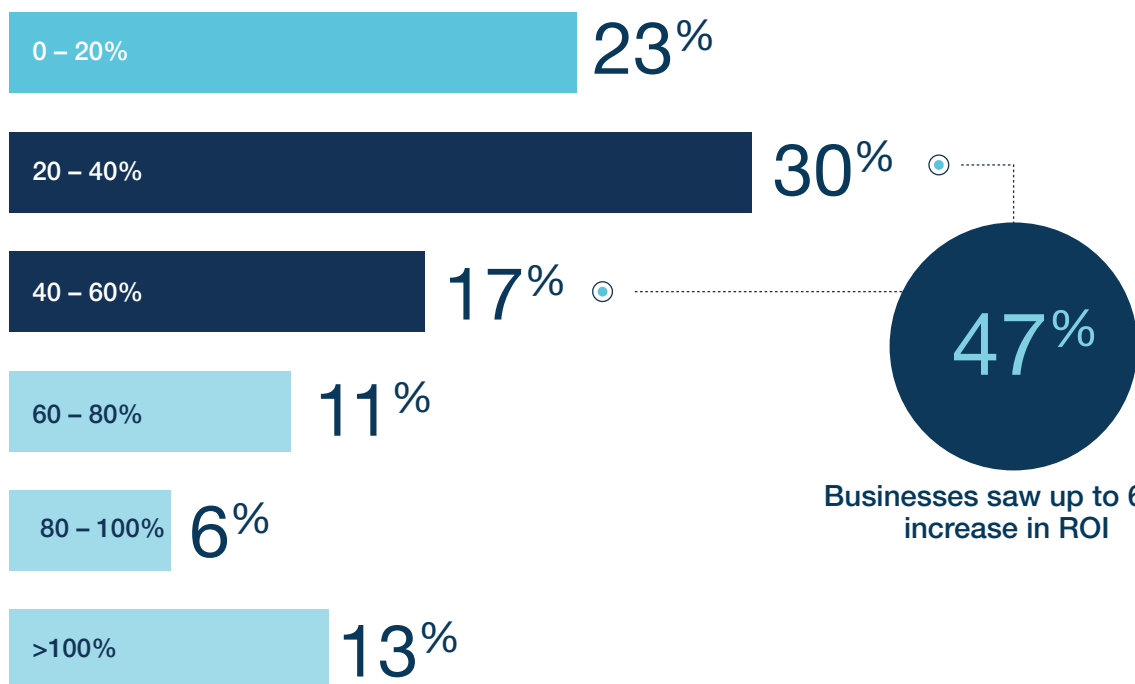
Custom apps lead to increased customer satisfaction

70% saw an increase in customer satisfaction

"Customers are more than satisfied and actively compliment us on how fast we're able to solve their issues, answer emails and answer their calls all in real-time."

Chase Holden,
*Merchant Relations Manager, Merchant Services North America,*
mservicegroup.com

Custom apps
in the field

Custom apps go mobile

Businesses value accessing data anywhere and anytime using their mobile custom apps.
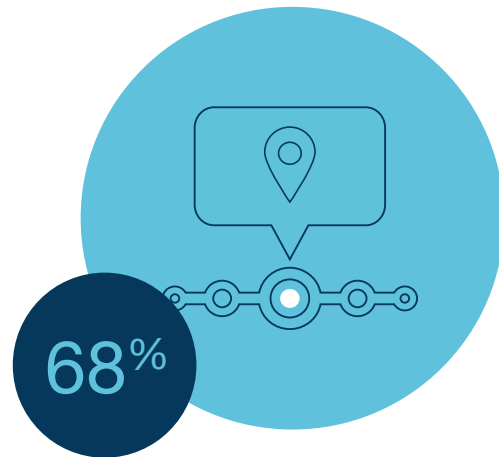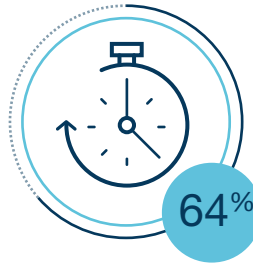
68%

Consider mobility moderately to extremely important to their organization

8%
Not Important At All

24%
Of Little Importance

10%
Extremely Important

13%
Very Important

45%
Moderately Important
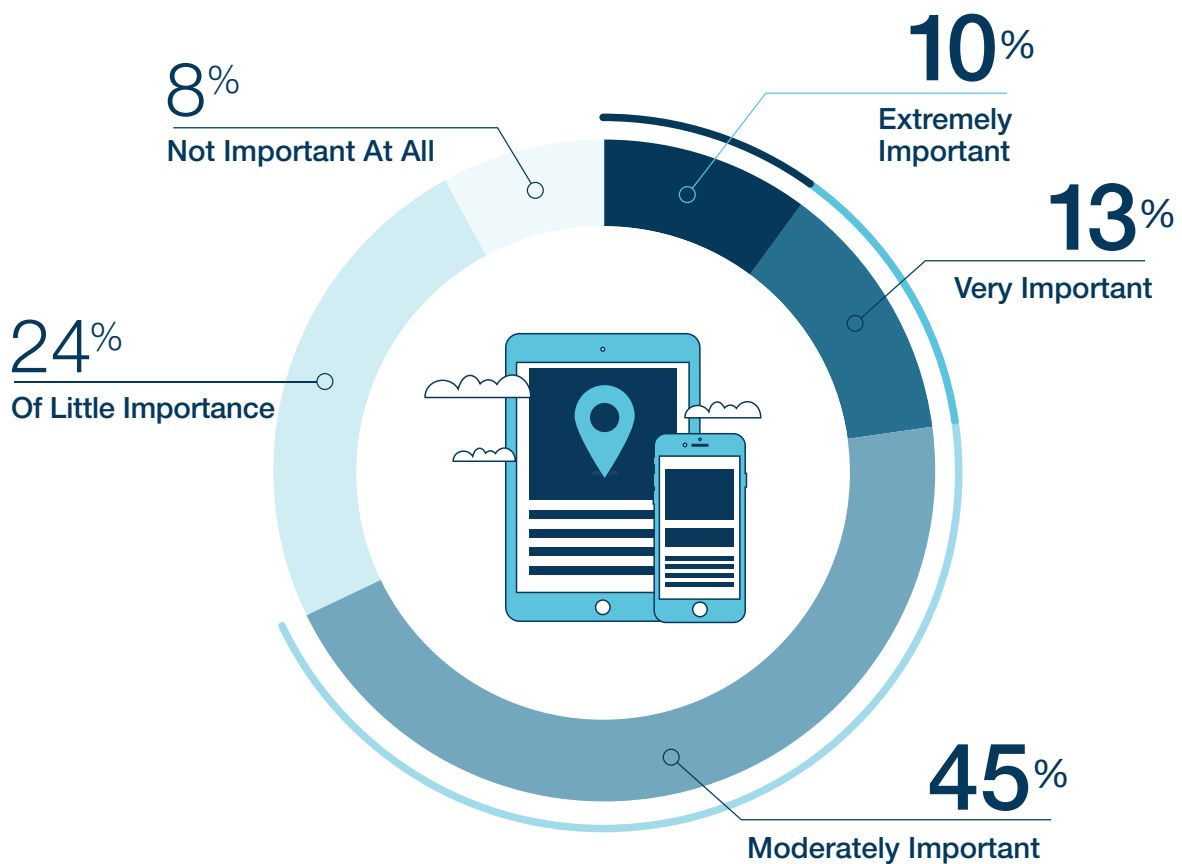
Custom apps enable mobile teams

50%

50% of businesses are using custom apps in the field

64%

64% saw an increase in their mobile team's productivity after adopting their custom app in the field

72%
Use on iPads

49%
Use on iPhones

"With our mobile medical clinic database, we travel to remote villages all over the world where medical care is scarce or non-existent and electricity may not be available. We bring doctors and volunteers to treat patients and identify those at high-risk, often seeing several hundred to almost 2,000 people a week."

Dave Stephenson
IT Support Team Lead,
DaVita Kidney Care

Custom apps for TV productions

Kung Fu Monkey is a television production company that creates shows all over the world. Their custom app helps them track ideas, scripts, projects, and tasks.

Kung Fu Monkey Productions

▷ Burbank, California USA

▷ 5 - 9 Employees

▷ Entertainment & Leisure

Reduction in inefficient tasks reported:
20 – 40%

Reduction in data entry reported:
20 – 40%

Increase in team productivity reported:
40 – 60%

❝ Our people are around town, in meetings, and filming on location. From Portland to London, Los Angeles to Banff, our custom app allows us to keep an up-to-date view of what's going on onsite via laptop or mobile. ❞

Alexander Court, Production Executive, Kung Fu Monkey Productions

Advancing the Custom App

Custom apps for evolving needs

As business needs change, custom apps adapt to new requirements.

"We originally developed it for product creation but it morphed into touching every aspect of our work."

Chris Haupt,
CTO, Online Sports

"FileMaker is so flexible that the app has evolved with the needs of our business so while most of the original intended use cases still apply, we are using it in ways that we could have never imagined years ago."

Charles Zimmer,
Partner, Satellite Office Services, LLC

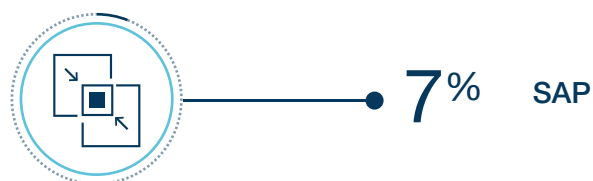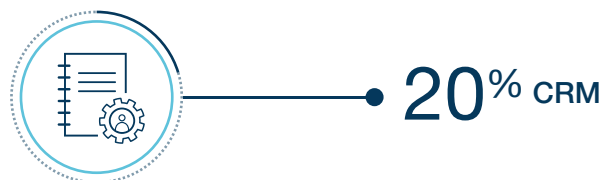**"Our apps continue to grow and reach all functions of our business."**

Carmen Fisher,
Co-Owner,
Once in a Blue Moose

38%
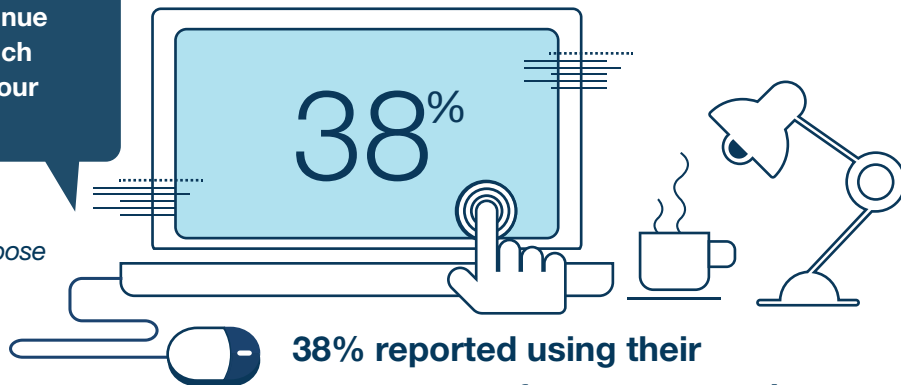
38% reported using their custom apps for purposes other than the original purpose(s) they sought to address.

Taking the custom app further

**46%** of businesses integrated or are planning to integrate other systems with their custom app.

45% Accounting systems

26% Email systems

20% CRM

7% SAP

53% Other systems include:
SQL Databases, Google Calendar, electronic health care records, student information systems, SharePoint, Amazon merchant services, mapping programs, FedEx Shipping Manager, Slack, Jira, GIS, NetSuite, Oracle

"We can integrate data from a lot of different sources - that's really important to us."

Richard Currie,
Vice President of Finance,
Concordia University of Edmonton

Taking the custom app even further

Businesses are leveraging or are planning to leverage web services, iBeacons, and IoT in their custom apps.

57% **Web Services**

11% **iBeacons**
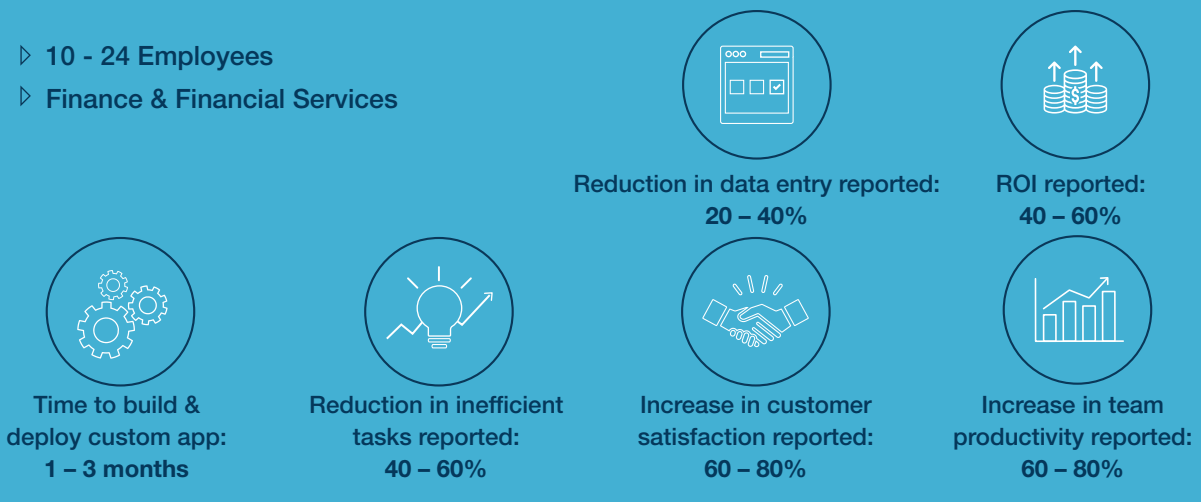
9% **IoT (Internet Of Things)**
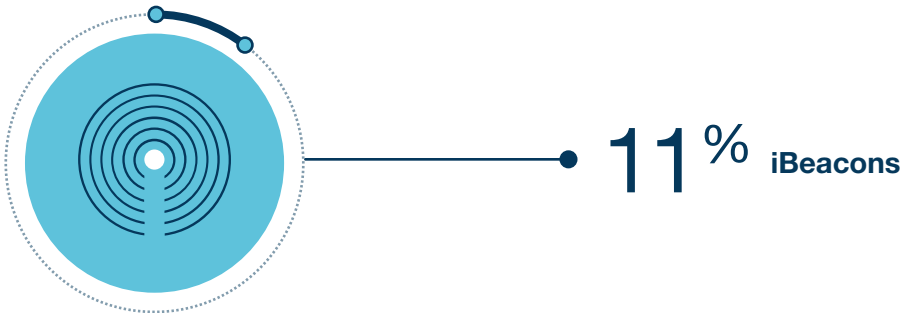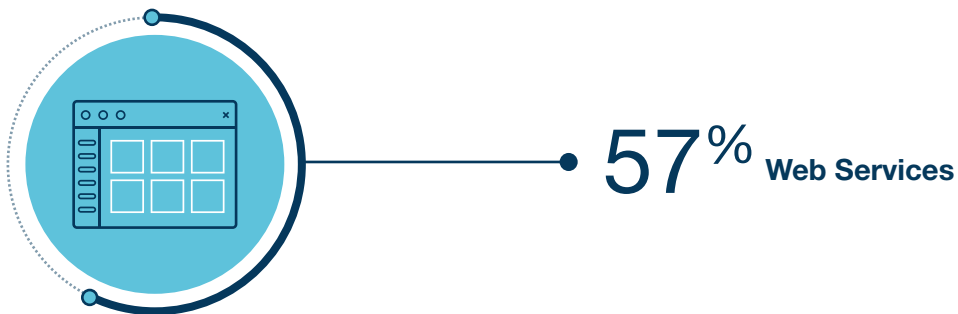
Custom apps in financial services

Merchant Services Group LLC built their custom app to manage human resources, customers, and business relationships. Since then, their usage of the custom app expanded and they have big plans for the future.

Merchant Services Group LLC

▷ 10 - 24 Employees
▷ Finance & Financial Services

Reduction in data entry reported:
20 – 40%

ROI reported:
40 – 60%

Time to build & deploy custom app:
1 – 3 months

Reduction in inefficient tasks reported:
40 – 60%

Increase in customer satisfaction reported:
60 – 80%

Increase in team productivity reported:
60 – 80%

" We have [our custom app] set up to perform electronic deposits using a plug-in from 360 Works. It makes payments for each employee overnight. That's pretty impressive; I don't switch to any other app.

We also just finished integration with Google Calendars now that FileMaker has the data API with JSON integration. It's tied to all of our employees' calendars so when we create an event, it automatically synchronizes with our calendars on our smart-phones and personal accounts.

We can tie it to our lighting system so if employees forget to turn off the power and they leave, the lights go off. We already have a smart lighting system, smart thermostat, some smart doors and some smart locks. One of our goals is to connect those to our database. "

Chase Holden, Merchant Relations Manager, Merchant Services North America, mservicegroup.com

Custom apps built using the FileMaker Platform

Custom apps are changing the way businesses operate. FileMaker Inc., an Apple subsidiary, delivers simply powerful software for easily creating custom apps that work seamlessly across iPad, iPhone, Windows, Mac, and the web.
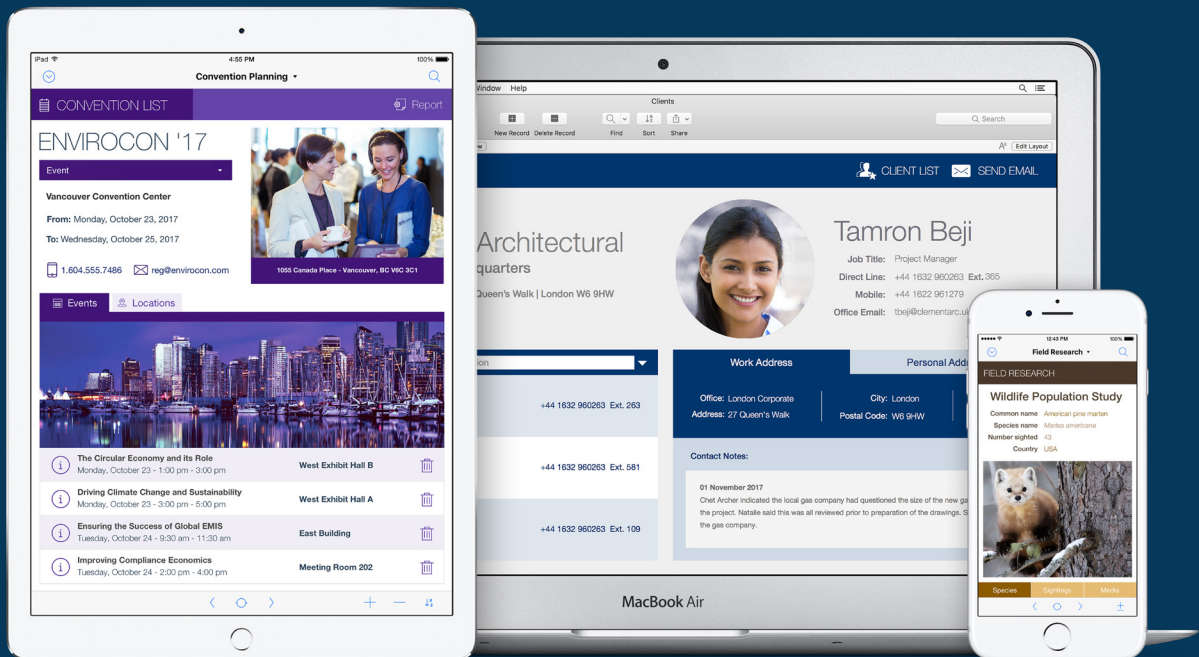
Learn more about creating custom apps using the FileMaker Platform or download a free trial at www.filemaker.com