How to roll out Power Apps in your organisation

Your step-by-step guide

Getting started with Power Apps

Gone are the days when building an application would take months if not years to produce. Power Apps is a low-code solution by Microsoft that is designed specifically to help businesses to create custom apps quickly and enable non-technical staff to build productivity tools. With a ready-made database, built-in security, connectors and a drag and drop editor, Power Apps makes building new applications easier than ever before.

However, with such wide-ranging access comes certain challenges, especially when it comes to best practices and governance. To ensure roll out success, establishing guidelines and clarifying expectations amongst your teams and stakeholders are key to developing effective policies.

In this guide we aim to give you an overview of Power Apps, what they can do and enable you to create a roll out strategy for effective adoption of Power Apps across your organisation.

This guide covers

› Power Apps overview

› Types of Power Apps

› Rolling out Power Apps in your organisation

› Licensing

› Choosing a Power Apps partner

Power Apps Overview

Power Apps is a no-code/low-code platform for building applications. It comes with a wide range of functionality that makes building an app as easy as possible. With a built-in database, data connectors to most modern technology platforms and a drag and drop editor, anyone can get started with building apps.
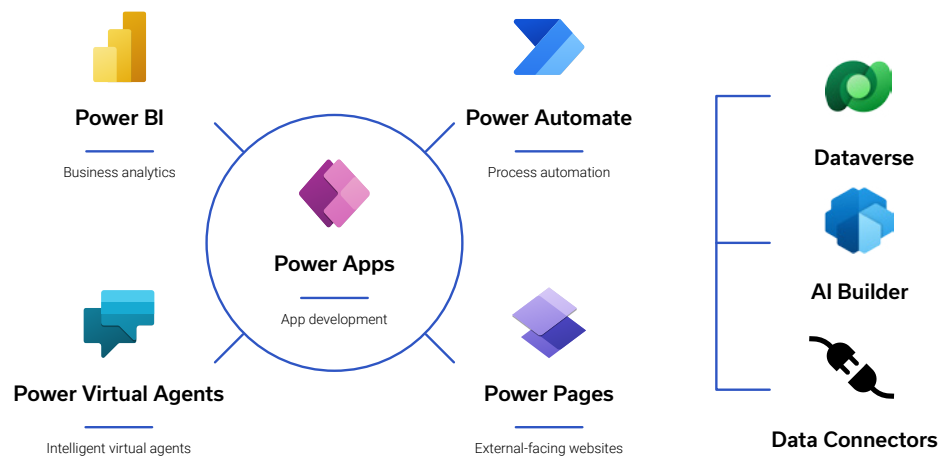
If you can envision an app to solve a business problem, then you can use your existing skills to build it. Although Power Apps can be used by virtually anyone, it also offers advanced functionality for seasoned developers to design complex applications with ease.

Dataverse

We can't talk about Power Apps and not mention Dataverse. Dataverse is the data platform that comes with Power Apps and allows you to store and model business data. It's the platform on which Dynamics 365 apps (such as Dynamics 365 Sales, Customer Service, Field Service, Customer Insights, and Project Operations) are built. If you're a Dynamics 365 customer, your data is already in Dataverse. Dataverse allows you to securely store and manage data within a set of standard and custom tables, and you can add columns to those tables when you need them.

Anatomy of a Power App

Any platform support

Supports all major platforms and gives native access to device capabilities like camera, GPS and more

Share apps like documents

Share your app with 3 clicks and an email address. It's pushed to mobile devices in seconds

Seamless integration

Directly integrated with Power Automate, Power BI, Microsoft Teams, Office 365, Dynamics 365 & Azure

Simple design experience

Like PowerPoint, it provides a pixel perfect drag and drop design experience.

Data connectivity

Connect to a multitude of services and apps with built-in connectors for everything from Adobe, to ZenDesk, to om-premises. Use Dataverse to store app data in a standardised Common Data Model

App logic

If you can understand formulas in Excel, you can add logic to your Power App using a user-friendly low-code language called Power Fx

Types of Power Apps

When using Power Apps there are two main types you can build. Firstly, we have canvas apps which are the most common and use the drag and drop editor. Then we have model-driven apps which are driven by data and use a data-driven approach, where the interface is generated based on the data model. Here is an in-depth look into what each of the app's entails.
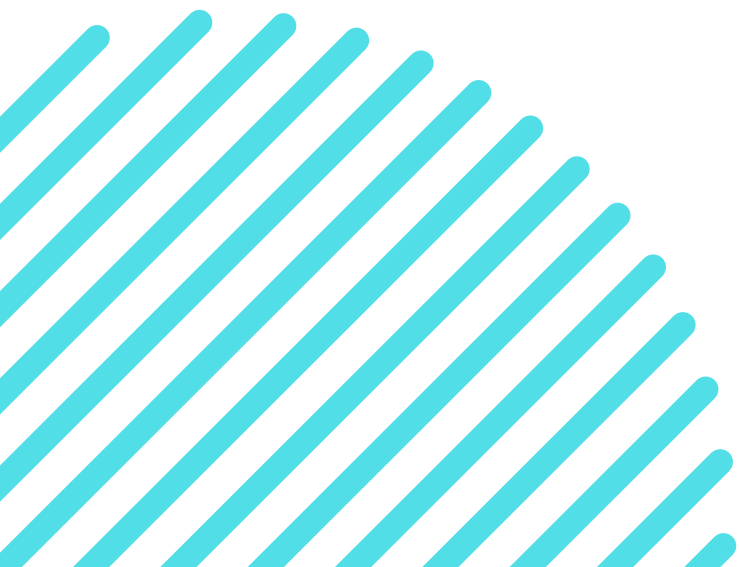
Canvas apps

To easily remember what a canvas app is, think of a blank canvas. They get their name from the canvas that users are presented with when they start to create a Power App. It resembles an empty PowerPoint slide and gives you a background where you can drag and drop various elements. Canvas apps are designed for citizen developers (an employee who creates application capabilities for consumption by themselves or other), so there's still a click, drag and drop format powering the interface.

With this type of app, the user has full control on how it will look including size and formatting of the components you add. With this creativity and flexibility, no two Canvas apps are the same.
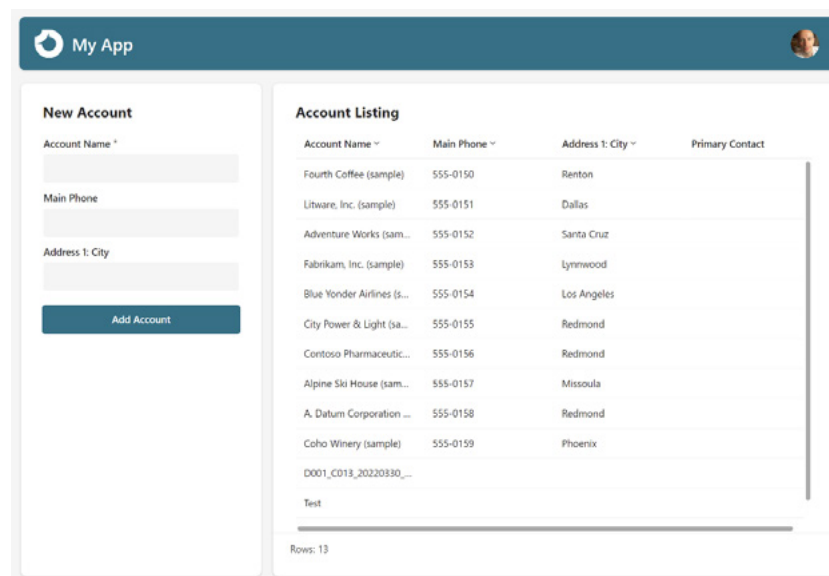
An example canvas app for account listings built using modern controls

Model-driven apps

With a model-driven app you build the underlying database, and the application interface is generated for you. The main point to remember here is model-driven apps take a more data-driven approach than a canvas app, the key word here is data. They are like Dynamics 365 applications and follow that process.

When comparing the look of model-driven apps you will notice they are not as bespoke in design as canvas apps. This is because users have less control over layout and functionality than with canvas apps. The app conforms to the data, rather than the other way around.

If you're familiar with Dynamics 365, model-driven apps are used for the Dynamics CRM apps and customer engagement applications. It's useful to note that model-driven apps are generally for more administrative tasks, or very structured data updates, and canvas apps are more for frontline workers or where a bespoke interface is needed.
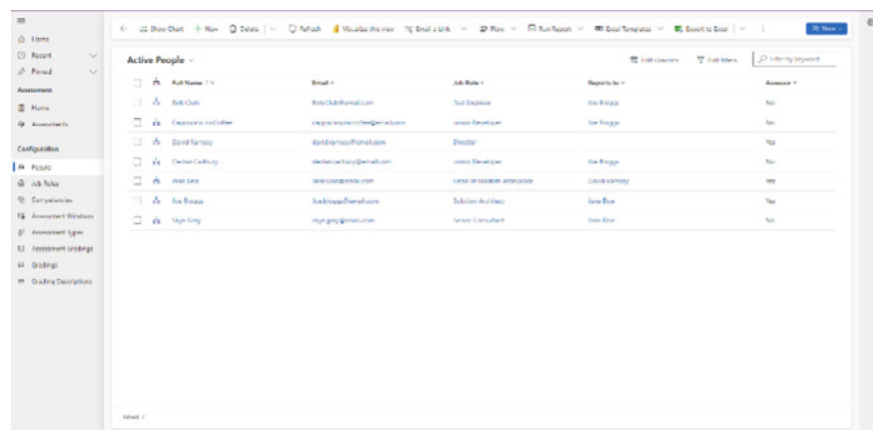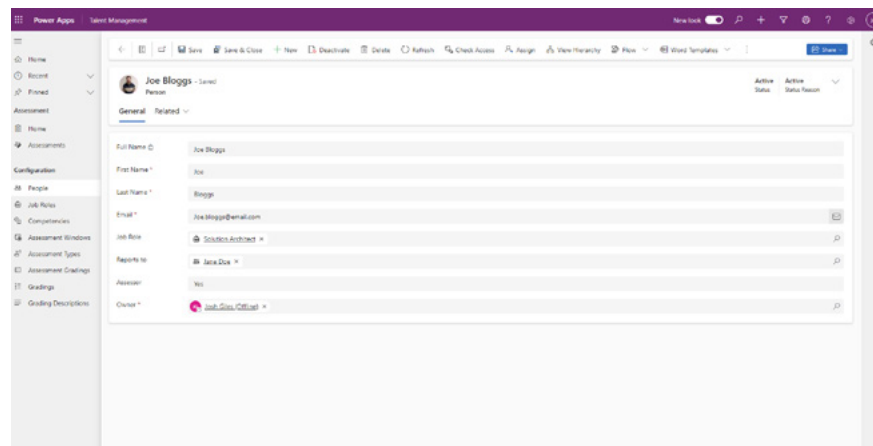
An example model-driven app for talent management

When it comes to deciding which type of app to use, we recommend weighing up the pros and cons of each as well as thinking about future features you might want to implement.

Rolling out Power Apps in your organisation

Once you have decided to use Power Apps as a core technology platform, you need to consider how best to roll it out. As the solution is designed to support citizen developers, this can encompass much of your organisation.

Here are the steps we would recommend to ensure a successful roll out of Power Apps. This approach combines establishing strong governance with driving training, engagement, and continuous improvement.

ASSEMBLE YOUR TEAM — **DEFINE YOUR STRATEGY** — **GET STARTED WITH GOVERNANCE** — **TRAIN YOUR ORGANISATION** — **TRACK SUCCESS**

Assemble your team

Any successful project begins by bringing the right team together, here we would recommend starting with your project stakeholders. They should include representatives across your organisation who have accountability for project success. We have included some useful guidelines from Microsoft when assembling your team. Note that while it is recommended that each role in this table is filled, this may not be possible in smaller organisations. If you are a smaller business, then the same person may be required to fulfil multiple roles.

Role	Responsibilities	Department	Who?
Executive Sponsor	Communicate high-level vision and values of the Microsoft Power Platform to the company	Executive Leadership	[Name Here]
Success Owner	Ensure the business goals are realized from the adoption process	Any department	[Name Here]
Champions	Help evangelize Power Platform. Create a circle of influence and can feed back to the Adoption team what works/what doesn't work.	Multiple departments	[Name Here]
Training Lead	Manage and communicate training content about Power Platform - can be internal or external vendor	IT or other	[Name Here]
Department Leads (Stakeholders)	Identify how specific departments will use the Power Platform and encourage engagement	Any department (management)	[Name Here]
Communication Lead	Oversee company-wide communications about the Power Platform	Corp Communications, IT or other	[Name Here]
Power Platform Admin Team	Responsible for establishing an environment strategy, setting up data loss prevention (DLP) policies, and managing users, capacity, and licensing. They also make data available to makers through connectors, integration, or migration.	IT	[Name Here]
Power Platform Nurture Team	Organizes app-in-a-day events and hackathons, provides mentorship to makers, ensures new makers get off to a good start, and generally evangelizes Multiple departments the platform. Provide business change management.	Multiple departments	[Name Here]
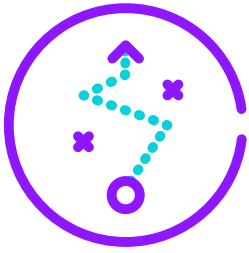
Define your strategy

To get a clear vision of where you're going and how to get there, it's a good idea to work with your team to assess any pain points. Look at your existing workflows and identify any challenges with your current solutions. With this analysis it can quickly become clear which solutions can be streamlined and would benefit from a Power Apps implementation.

You then want to collate these findings into an assessment report. This should include details of suggested business needs and processes to target, what benefit the Power Platform can bring to these business areas and how that can help the business goals overall. Once you have a clear findings report use this to guide and track your progress.

Armed with the information from the assessment report, define a Power Platform strategy aligned to business goals and outcomes. Outline the vision, use cases, and a suggested phased rollout plan. Once a strategy is agreed upon create a Power Platform Centre of Excellence (which we cover a little later in this guide) and agree on a mission statement to be at its core.

Environments

Another key task you should carry out at the strategy stage is to set up the specific environments for your Power Apps. A Power App environment is a container for your Power Apps to be hosted in. It will also contain all the Power Automate Flows, Common Data Service databases, gateways, and connectors for your solutions.

There are multiple types of environments that all have different purposes:

› **Default** – This environment is the standard out of the box environment and must not be used for production of business applications. This is used for personal productivity as everyone can create solutions.

› **Developer** – These environments are isolated for development teams to work in isolation on an application before planning to move into a pre-production state environment.

› **Sandbox** – This environment will be used as a pre-production environment to test your development before moving into a production environment.

› **Production** – This is your live environment where your Power App solutions will be accessed by end users. It is advised that the development team does not have any admin access to this environment, and it is purely the IT team that deploys the solutions to this environment.

There are numerous factors to consider when deciding how many environments and which types you should build. This can include the size of your organisation and how important the Power App solution will be to the organisation itself. For more information on setting up environments we'd recommend this Microsoft resource or alternatively getting in touch with a Microsoft partner.

Get started with governance

As a business, it's important you understand the capabilities of those building with the Power Platform, while regulating the power they have. There's sensitive information out there, and to build a foundation for success, we suggest you implement a governance structure. This will ensure no boundaries are crossed and all tools are used in compliance with your organisations values.

When starting their governance journey, organisations will typically adopt the Power Platform similar to the model shown below.

Increasing investment and ROI
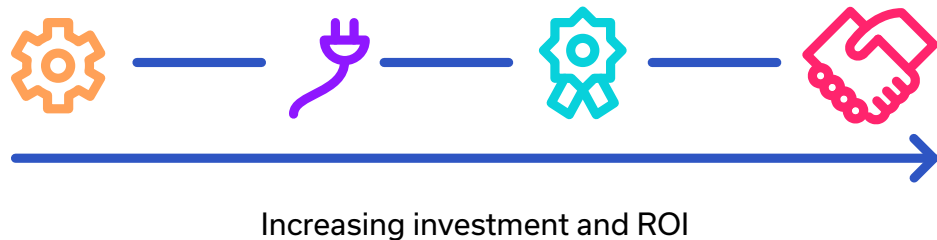
› A citizen developer (a user creating new business applications for consumption by others), starts building with no support.

› These users become champions and begin to support each other and new users to create applications.

› IT are asked questions regarding the applications and offer basic support.

› The Centre of Excellence (CoE) model is eventually adopted.

While this approach works, it can create problems which later require governance. A better approach would be to start with the governance model. If adopted at the beginning of the process, the Power Platform CoE model can be a powerful way for an organisation to align around business goals rather than individual department metrics.

What is the Power Platform Centre of Excellence? (CoE)

A Microsoft Power Platform Centre of Excellence (CoE), is a team or governance program that is responsible for nurturing the growth of the platform in their organisation, while applying the right administrative boundaries and governance.

When designing a Power Platform Centre of Excellence, it's important to capture the governance principles that are important to your organisation and create a reference framework to base all decisions on.

The Power Platform Centre of Excellence should be responsible for managing a range of things including:

› Application audit process

› Managing application ownership

› Provide best practice and training

› Manage the connectors and data available to users

The CoE starter kit

While this can seem like a minefield you don't have to start from scratch. Consider downloading the Power Platform Centre of Excellence (CoE) Starter Kit. A collection of free templated best practices, designed with administration and governance in mind. Included in the kit is a set of dashboards and reports that provide oversight. Allowing you to see what apps are in use, what apps are orphaned, who is creating apps and what environments the apps are created in.

Improving Power Platform solution quality

While the CoE can take some time, there are simple solutions that you can begin with. The Power Platform environment offers a solution checker and an app checker as part of its built-in development environment.

Solution checker – For rich static analysis of Power Apps solutions that improve quality by flagging specific performance and stability risks.

App checker – To find and resolve errors as well as performance issues faster in apps.

Making use of these will ensure that the quality of the apps is kept high and in line with best practice and errors. Plus, performance issues are spotted earlier and can be resolved.
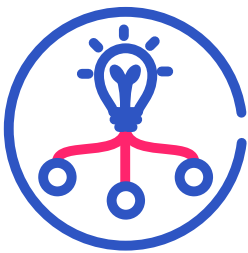
Train your organisation

Every day is a school day with Power Platform. With new updates and fixes being introduced regularly, you need to keep your team up to date with what's going on. Start with providing extensive training and education for the team on all aspects of Power Platform. Cover the main capabilities of Power Apps and the wider Power Platform stack.

Depending on how your business operates, it may be worth having the core Power Platform team get certified alongside studying and digging deeper into Microsoft's governance and administration best practices. When building your training strategy, we recommend the following areas to focus on:

Focus on the why

Make sure employees know why the change is happening, what's in it for them, and why they're being asked to change.

Use real work scenarios

Use tasks or business processes that are familiar to your audience to draw them in to learning how to use the technology.

Use multiple formats

Training end users should take on multiple forms to accommodate different learning styles, geographical barriers and resource constraints.

Reinforce

Make the training stick with reinforcement options such as on-demand training, lunch and learn sessions and new employee training options.

You may also want to consider teaming up with a Microsoft Partner to get your strategy in place quickly and smoothly. A partner can provide training courses you require and services to bridge any knowledge gaps.

Facilitate adoption

When creating your strategy, it is worth creating a timeline and including certain adoption techniques along the way. Consider getting the message out about Power Apps as soon as possible. You can do this with newsletters, posters around the office, Teams announcements and demonstration videos in meetings. You can also use a range of methods detailed below:

Training

Consider the different stakeholders of the Power Apps strategies and what training requirements each group will have. Include in your strategy what types of materials and courses they will require to fulfil their responsibilities to the overall strategy.

App in a day

A great starting place for your training roadmap is to schedule an App in a day training session. This can be provided by your chosen Microsoft Partner. The day should consist of quickly designing and building proof of concept application. The objective of the day should be to understand the overall build cycle of a Power App. You can also build at least one proof of concept application your organisation could start using to gain return on investment right away. We can provide this service and you can find out more on our website. v

Online resources from Microsoft

One thing you can count on from Microsoft is a plethora of resources. You can use the Microsoft Learn portal to create canvas and model-driven apps, as well as access a wealth of information from official Microsoft documentation.
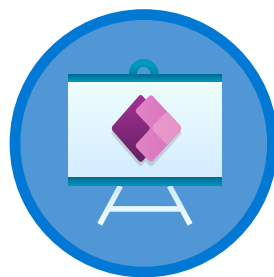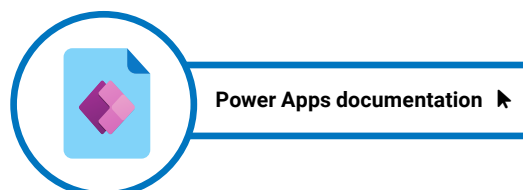
Getting started with Microsoft Power Apps

Create a Canvas App in Power Apps

Create a Model Driven App in Power Apps

Power Apps documentation

Success tracking

You did it! The roll out is complete but don't get too excited, the journey does not conclude once your Power Apps are deployed.

Continuous monitoring and improvement are crucial for sustaining the effectiveness of your applications. Implement robust monitoring tools and establish key performance indicators (KPIs) to track app performance.

Regularly soliciting user feedback and making iterative improvements is essential for keeping the applications aligned with evolving business needs. We recommend you assess your organisations maturity level using the model below.

The Power Platform Adoption Maturity Model identifies consistent themes, patterns, practices and behaviours applied by the most successful organisations as they implement digital transformations with

Power Platform. This model can help you understand your capabilities along multiple dimensions and identify areas of focus to help advance further.

Initial	Repeatable	Defined	Capable	Efficient
› Pockets of success and experimentation with Power Platform.	› Initial Power Platform controls implemented by a central team.	› Standardizing repeatable practice.	› Standard processes for managing and monitoring Power Platform.	› Organization has proven the capabilities of Power Platform to transform mission critical capabilities
› No strategy or governance approach.	› Start to identify applications that are broadly used in the organization	› Achieving measurable success to digitally transform their organization.	› Power Platform capabilities are being used to transform the business broadly and used for enterprise-critical apps and integrations.	› Established community of experts.
› Apps are team-based and supported by the makers.	› These organizations sometimes believe that the use of the Power Platform is running out of control:	› Defined Power		› Fusion teams enable legacy capabilities and modern cloud architecture to be used easily.
› Organisation sees the potential of a strategic investment, but there is no clear path forward.		› Platform Centre of Excellence team.	› Platform Champions have established channels.	
		› Transformation may still reflect organic growth.		

Remember, app development is not a one-time endeavor but an ongoing journey. As you develop more apps and gain experience, you'll refine your practices and continually improve the quality of your apps. By adhering to these guidelines and staying informed about the latest developments in the Power Apps ecosystem, you'll be well-equipped to create apps that meet your organisation's needs efficiently.

Power Apps licensing

When rolling out Power Apps, you need to consider how many apps are likely to be built and how many of these will need premium connectors, in addition to this you'll need to work out how many users will concurrently have the apps in use.

Once you havÅe this information you can decide on the types of licenses to purchase, as explained in more detail below.

Per App plan

The per app plan is a license that is not attached to a particular user. Your organisation can assess the apps you have and the expected number of users at any one time and then purchase that number of licenses. The main benefit of this route is the fact that it is concurrent users not named users. One of the slight complications of the per app plan is it gives more than access to one app, it provides access to 2 apps and a portal, which should factor into your calculations for how many licenses you need.

Premium

Power Apps Premium or as it was known Power Apps per user plan, is the more traditional licensing route. You purchase licenses that are attached to a user and allow that user unlimited access to any Power App in your organisation.

This is more expensive than the per app plan but for organisations with many well used Power Apps, this will be the better option. It is useful when you are planning on rolling out lots of apps across your organisation.

Pay as you go

Power Apps pay as you go pricing is as it says, you only pay when users access your Power Apps. It's great for when you are trying to work out what your usage/license needs or in cases where use of the App is for a large volume of users but only once or twice a year, rather than pay for a license all year you can pay for the use that month. The license cost gets you access to one app for one user for that month.

	Power Apps Per App	Power Apps Premium	Power Apps Pay as You Go plan
Price	£4.10 per user/app/month (includes up to one individual app)	£16.40 per user/month	£7.45 per active user/app/month*

Choosing a Power Apps partner

If you're looking to start your journey with Power Apps, we can help. Bridgeall is a leading Microsoft Solutions Partner (formerly known as Microsoft Gold Partner) that provides a range of services to support your journey with Power Apps. We have a specialist team of Microsoft certified consultants and developers who will work with your organisation and align your business intelligence with your business objectives. We are certified for application development and application integration and provide a full range of advice, implementation, licensing, training and support services for your business.

What's next?

Power Apps briefing

Our Power Apps briefing is designed to provide you with a complete overview of the capability available. Whether you are exploring your options or want to get started, we will discuss your individual requirements to ensure the best solution to meet your needs.

FIND OUT MORE ›

Power Apps Quickstart

With our Quickstart package we help you get up and running with Power Apps and develop a framework for success and give you the tools to start developing low code solutions. We'll work with you to foster an environment where your users are empowered to identify opportunities and develop solutions quickly and securely.

FIND OUT MORE ›

Since 2003 Bridgeall has delivered advisory, development, implementation and support services to our clients on 100's of successful projects. We're have multiple Microsoft solution partner designations and ISO9001, ISO27001 and Cyber Essentials accredited.

WE'LL HELP YOU BUILD YOUR MODERN INTELLIGENT WORKPLACE QUICKLY AND SECURELY.

bridgeall.com

linkedin.com/company/bridgeall

twitter.com/bridgeall

Glasgow Head Office
George House
50 George Square
Glasgow, G2 1EH

www.bridgeall.com