



# CIO 24/7: CITIZEN DEVELOPMENT PODCAST

## AUDIO TRANSCRIPT

**Karen Odegaard [00:00:00]** When citizen developers have this power, they can create solutions 10 times faster than if they were relying on central I.T. solution delivery.

**Sean Butterworth [00:00:12]** Welcome to the CIO 24/7 Podcast. I'm Sean Butterworth with Accenture Marketing and Communications, working closely with our friends at Microsoft. I'm happy to welcome Karen Odegaard to the show today to talk about citizen development. Karen is a leader in our global I.T. organization. She has the inside look at how we are using the Microsoft power platform to empower our people to become what we call citizen developers. Karen, I'm thrilled to have you here today.

**Karen Odegaard [00:00:45]** Hi Sean. Thank you. And I'm happy to be here. Excited to talk about my favorite topic.

**Sean Butterworth [00:00:49]** Great. Well, let's just jump right in, for those of our listeners who may not know, can you explain what exactly citizen development is?

**Karen Odegaard [00:00:58]** Yes. Citizen development is all about providing the power of technology that we typically reserved for folks like myself, administrators within IT, into the hands of everyday employees, essentially democratizing technology, specifically technology to create applications and workflows. If you think about it for years, IT organizations have leveraged the power of platforms, specifically low and no code platforms, to accelerate their digital

transformation. And now employees can do that and leverage these types of platforms to build apps and automation to improve the work closest to them so their own work and productivity and share that with others. And this is driving an incredible amount of innovation and empowering people to deliver technology solutions and automate faster than ever.

**Sean Butterworth [00:01:46]** OK, this is sounding a lot like do it yourself. We're all calling it DIY nowadays. So, can you maybe share a few examples of how people are using citizen development to DIY or do it yourself at Accenture?

**Karen Odegaard [00:02:03]** Yeah, we're all about DIY here at Accenture. We're seeing the fastest pace of growth of app development by our citizen developers across the entire organization. I often tell people if you can create a PowerPoint presentation or write an Excel macro, then you can create a power app thanks to low and no code platforms like Microsoft Power Platform, which we're using in our environment. And I have a couple of good examples, people are using it for literally any and everything.

We're seeing folks creating request forms out there, compliance and asset trackers, pricing apps specifically specific to the work that we do at Accenture, ad hoc solutions to support local Covid-19 support, to name a few. But there are a couple of examples that I really like. The first one is a team that created a compliance application. They took a very disparate and



complex process and put rules engine over it to simplify it for their team. And as a result, they're seeing a reduction of 75% in security related incidents within their organization. And it proved to be so useful that it was adopted more widely. We've also seen in HR a recruiting analyst that created an app to track employee referrals locally in the Philippines. And this is a process that was typically managed in email and spreadsheets. And then lastly, my favorite is a team that created a consolidated view of data that our leaders needed to see on the go; they created a power app specifically designed for mobile use to solve that problem.

**Sean Butterworth [00:03:37]** These are such great examples. They're all very real, I feel like I could do them tomorrow. Thank you. But it's great to hear what our Accenture people are doing. But why do companies like Accenture, and other companies, want to make their people citizen developers? What are the advantages of this?

**Karen Odegaard [00:03:55]** I think there are several advantages. But first and foremost, I see organizations today have a lot of unmet demand. We see that ourselves within our own organizations. And we're seeing when citizen developers have this power, they can create solutions 10 times faster than if they were relying on central IT solution delivery. This time saving is a great advantage for the people that are creating these apps as well as the IT organizations. Secondly, you're getting people closest to the problem to solve them, so you don't need IT to translate it. Also, you are likely creating solutions for problems that would have never hit IT's radar. As an IT organization, getting visibility to these citizen apps is arming us with knowledge to help better solve for our people across the enterprise.

**Sean Butterworth [00:04:42]** This is so empowering. I just love it. It sounds like citizen development is really putting the power back into the hands of those who need it. Ordinary people now can build a broad range of apps with little to no code. I often hear it called low code, no code. And this seems to be resulting in so much more productivity and better outcomes for the business to the point you just made. But thinking about this more, Karen, what changes does citizen development bring to an

organization?

**Karen Odegaard [00:05:11]** Yeah, I think quite a bit. I think for our people, the ability to design and create app experiences faster than ever means that they're gaining valuable time back because they're now automating their work. And then for those high value resources, we're freeing up time from our developers and architects to focus on the more complex solutions that truly drive enterprise value. And then for IT, this is a shift in how we typically do application development. We need to shift how we think about compliance and governance for technology to the platform level rather than the app level, which is where we put most of the focus today. Secondly, for IT – I think the advantage is that we now can re-harvest and centralize some of these user-built innovations. You can imagine how much effort and time could be saved within an I.T. organization! We really must think about that and how we can scale it.

**Sean Butterworth [00:06:02]** That's great. So now I'm curious. I want to know where there were challenges or lessons you learned or encountered. Was there anything that surprised you through this whole process? Pleased do share with our listeners.

**Karen Odegaard [00:06:20]** No, this was super easy, Sean. Not much to learn.(laugh)

No - this was a very complex and we had a lot to learn here. One, there are a lot of players in the ecosystem around low and no code platforms. And so specifically for a citizen developer platform, which is targeted at the average employee, we had to have a narrow set of use cases to target the platform because then it becomes a harder decision on what should live on each of the platforms we have within our organization. Secondly, we had to think about licensing implications because cost effectiveness is important in citizen development. I talked about the demand. We have well over 14,000 applications that have been built within our environment and continuing to grow. Thirdly, as you're building out this technology, it can get very complicated, but the goal will be to keep it simple again, knowing that scalability is important. And then to the question you asked me about examples



showing real-life examples from the user population, of how easy it can be (to develop) and that anyone can do it, even myself. Plus, the value that can be derived is important for adoption and it's going to help increase the usage over time.

**Sean Butterworth [00:07:32]** That's great. OK, now I want to know what's next. What does the future of citizen development look like at Accenture?

**Karen Odegaard [00:07:40]** The future looks bright. We rolled this out late last year and we really didn't have to do a lot of campaigning before we saw some significant adoption. People want this technology. We plan to continue to provide more ways to connect back to enterprise systems that people already use like Salesforce and ServiceNow and the broader Microsoft ecosystem. (We) are making sure we can connect and extend those business processes. We think that automation and self-service robotic process automation are going to bring huge advantages for our workforce, allowing people to automate manual tasks themselves, again, freeing them up to do other work.

**Sean Butterworth [00:08:19]** That's great. Well, good, it's good to know what's next. Now, I really want to know, and I think our listeners will, too, how do I and our listeners get started if we want to go build apps and do some of this DIY?

**Karen Odegaard [00:08:33]** Well, if you're an Accenture employee and interested in developing your own apps and workflows or reports, you can find us on Yammer and join the Citizen Development at Accenture Group to get started. There's all sorts of links and training out there and a large growing community of people that can help support you. If you're interested. If you're interested in how Accenture can help our clients get started on their citizen development journey, you can find us on [Accenture.com](https://www.accenture.com).

Finally, to learn more about our internal journey around citizen development powered by Microsoft Power platform, you can check out our case study [Power to the People | Microsoft Power Platform | Accenture](#) or go to

[Accenture.com/citizen-development](https://www.accenture.com/citizen-development).

**Sean Butterworth [00:09:08]** Great. Karen, this has been so fascinating. I feel empowered and inspired to become one of the thousands of Accenture people. I'm going to add myself to that list who have created their own app. So, thank you again for taking the time to chat with me today. It was an absolute pleasure to speak with you.

**Karen Odegaard [00:09:28]** Awesome. Thanks for having me, Sean. I'm excited to see what you build so we can re-harvest some of those assets! I look forward to talking with you soon.

**Narrator [00:09:36]** Thank you for joining today's podcast. Be sure to subscribe to the Accenture CIO podcast series on Apple podcasts or Spotify. Find the full CIO 24/7 podcast series and additional ways to subscribe at [Accenture dot com slash CIO podcast](https://www.accenture.com/cio-podcast).

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