LET K2 SHOW YOU WHAT MICROSOFT SHAREPOINT CAN REALLY DO

WHY K2 APPIT FOR SHAREPOINT OUTPERFORMS OTHER SOLUTIONS
WHAT’S MISSING FROM SHAREPOINT?

Microsoft SharePoint 2013 has a lot of great new features, so it’s no surprise that 65 percent of SharePoint users have either moved to or plan to move to SharePoint 2013. Kim, head of the IT department for a large financial-services company, is in the process of upgrading from SharePoint 2010 to SharePoint 2013. This transition was prompted by her company’s need to increase agility and cross-department collaboration in employees’ daily work.

The data that employees need is in SharePoint, but they have to interact with multiple SharePoint sites to get it. This reality creates delays, inefficiencies and risks because the manual process of collecting the information that employees need to do their jobs is slow and error-prone. Kim is eager to use the latest SharePoint technology but also realizes her company needs more than the out-of-box functionality SharePoint 2013 offers.

Despite the addition of new features in SharePoint 2013, its capabilities are often limited in common scenarios, including creating forms and user interfaces, workflow capabilities, management and data integration. A third-party solution could enhance critical SharePoint capabilities and could help integrate SharePoint services across multiple systems.

Kim is looking for a third-party solution for SharePoint that is easily accessible on mobile devices and supports systems both on premises and in the cloud. Kim’s company is using a phased approach to SharePoint 2013 migration, so she’s also interested in finding a solution she can use to span both SharePoint 2010 and SharePoint 2013. She also wants a secure solution that integrates smoothly into the company’s line-of-business (LOB) applications.

At first glance, third-party SharePoint solutions might look fairly similar. But on closer inspection, one solution stands out among its competitors: K2 Appit™ for SharePoint has some fundamental differences that make it the ideal solution for companies wanting to maximize and integrate SharePoint 2013.

Appit is the best choice for a third-party SharePoint solution because it offers:

- Better tools to create powerful forms- and workflow-based solutions
- More options for simple, secure integration with LOB applications
- A seamless hybrid experience for SharePoint on premises or in the cloud

Why use a third-party SharePoint solution?

Approximately 60 percent of SharePoint users purchase third-party add-ons to improve their SharePoint deployments. Why? Because its workflows and forms capabilities are limited in many common scenarios including:

- Forms and user interfaces
- Workflow capabilities
- Data integration
- Management and reporting
POWERFUL FORMS- AND WORKFLOW-BASED SOLUTIONS

A key component of success in Kim’s job is connecting various departments across her organization. With a connected infrastructure, business decision makers have immediate access to tasks and information across the entire organization. In turn, they can perform common business tasks faster and make better strategic and time-sensitive decisions. To connect the infrastructure, Kim’s company needs a viable way to create and automate workflows across systems. They need to create reusable forms that capture and work with information, but that still offer users a familiar SharePoint experience — without the expense or hassle of writing code to customize the way SharePoint works.

While several third-party solutions for SharePoint claim to create reusable workflows and forms, Kim has learned that not all of them do this without some major caveats. For example, many solutions for SharePoint create forms and workflows that are bound to a specific list or library. This binding makes it difficult to reuse them across multiple sites or to add information that’s not stored in that particular list. This structure creates a lack of reusable workflows and forms across the entire environment. In addition, workflows and forms deployed to individual libraries or lists in a SharePoint environment can be challenging to maintain. If something has to be changed, it has to be done on each separate list or library. Kim realizes this can mean long to-do lists for her IT team.

Many solutions for SharePoint also have limited sets of controls and workflow capabilities. As a result, users might find it difficult to create forms and user interfaces that work the way users want them to. For example, if Kim wants to make a form control work to her specifications, she might have to write JavaScript. Or if she wants to create a custom workflow to handle escalations when tasks are not completed by due dates, she might need to resort to writing .NET code.

In contrast, with Appit, Kim can reuse the same application components like workflows and forms across her entire SharePoint environment — even spanning lists, libraries, sites and site collections — and all without writing code. If she makes a change once, it automatically gets updated wherever that form or workflow is used, and she can include additional logic by using the K2® rules engine instead of through code.

Kim likes how easy Appit workflows and forms are to create because they are auto-generated from any list or library in SharePoint and can then be customized by using visual, drag-and-drop designer tools. Appit puts no limitation on the size or type of application Kim can build. And if her needs expand outside of SharePoint, she can still use Appit without having to rewrite all her applications.

Another unique feature of Appit that piqued Kim’s interest is the built-in reporting and audit capabilities that make it easy to build graphical reporting dashboards. These dashboards are invaluable to managers like Kim because they provide insight into process bottlenecks or other inefficiencies that can often go unnoticed.
Kim’s visibility into her systems is also increased by out-of-the-box reports Appit provides. Reports determine the relations that exist between the various workflows and can provide insights that span multiple workflows. This means both Kim and her end-users have the flexibility to report on information that is important to them.

And finally, with Appit, Kim also gets the mobile component she is looking for. Employees can interact with workflows and view reports and dashboards from their phones or tablets, no matter where they are working. Features like the global task list gives mobile users access to all their Appit tasks, across all processes, from a single interface.

Overall, Kim is sold on the superior forms- and workflow-based solutions offered by Appit. She can:

• Get reusable applications without writing code
• Build any application she needs without size or type limitations
• Pinpoint SharePoint inefficiencies
• View custom reports
• Have convenient mobile access

SIMPLE, SECURE INTEGRATION WITH LOB APPLICATIONS

Kim wants to get real-time business data into the hands of decision makers at her company. To do this, she needs her third-party SharePoint solution to integrate smoothly across multiple line-of-business systems.

Solutions for SharePoint that are built on the SharePoint engine aren’t designed to easily integrate across multiple systems. These third-party solutions store data as part of applications they create, often making use of Business Connectivity Services (BCS) in SharePoint 2013, external lists, or a SharePoint column added to a list or library. This approach to development often leads to “stale” data getting passed on to decision makers.

Kim doesn’t have the expertise to implement BCS and doesn’t like the possibility of decisions being made with stale data. The approach can also increase security concerns if someone has access to the SharePoint columns but shouldn’t have access to LOB data. And, it could lead to a breakdown in a company’s governance model if it requires sensitive data to be stored in a specific system of record.

In addition, solutions that use BCS and external lists for data integration have limitations that make it difficult to build useful applications. External lists cannot be used with workflows built on the SharePoint engine and it is difficult to share data across multiple lists, libraries and applications without writing code. If Kim and her team were using this solution they might have to abandon data-architecture best practices to actually use the data they need – a risk Kim isn’t willing to take. What Kim really wants is a solution that runs on SharePoint but that interacts with and uses data from LOB systems by using a different integration method.
She is pleased to learn that Appit does exactly that. It natively supports out-of-box integration with LOB systems, such as Microsoft Dynamics CRM, Microsoft Exchange, Microsoft SQL Server, Web services, and more. Kim and her team can build applications that cross multiple SharePoint lists, libraries, sites or environments to provide fully-functional applications that run within SharePoint. They can build apps that actually fit their organization’s needs. And without having to code, they can focus their resources on more critical and complex business needs.

Appit can integrate across systems because of its unique data-integration framework. It uses the security and architecture of the underlying data system to create reusable components. As a result, data never resides outside of its native system, and it remains protected and secure at all times.

Appit provides access to real-time data within its forms, workflows and reporting dashboards that can be customized to show different information for different users — so decision makers can get timely, relevant information to make more informed decisions.

Kim’s company relies heavily on its LOB applications, so finding a solution that integrates smoothly with SharePoint and LOB applications is crucial to the company’s productivity. Kim’s decision to use Appit will add value to her company, while at the same time making everyone’s lives easier with a solution that spans across systems.

**SEAMLESS HYBRID EXPERIENCE**

Many third-party solutions for SharePoint claim to support a hybrid environment, but not all hybrid environments are created equal. Kim needs a solution that supports SharePoint both on premises and in the cloud. While other solutions might require purchasing two separate products to accomplish this, Appit gets it done with one.

Another drawback of other solutions is that they typically offer limited hybrid scenarios with a lack of feature parity between SharePoint Online and SharePoint 2013. To create apps that span both on-premises and cloud-based environments can be difficult and often requires code. If third-party solutions are built on the SharePoint workflow engine, they inherit the limitations that exist between SharePoint 2013 and SharePoint Online, making it difficult for apps to function the same way across both systems. Workflows created for on-premises scenarios cannot be reused in SharePoint Online and vice versa. A new workflow has to be created from scratch each time, and Kim does not like the sound of that.
In comparison, Appit in a hybrid environment has feature parity and offer a seamless transition between on-premises and cloud environments. Its reusable workflows are designed to work both on premises and in the cloud. Kim can build a workflow once, and it will integrate with the resources that it needs – including lists and libraries in different SharePoint instances.

For example, Kim can build an app that works with documents in a SharePoint Online site and data from on-premises lists and other LOB applications. She doesn’t have to think about where these documents and data live or which department the people accessing the workflow or forms come from. She can focus entirely on delivering the app to the business.

Kim also likes the peace of mind knowing that K2 works closely with Microsoft to ensure SharePoint best practices are followed at all times. That means that K2 runs smoothly, even when Microsoft releases SharePoint updates.

**APPIT HAS SOMETHING FOR EVERY-ONE**

At the end of the day, Kim is sold on Appit because it outshines its competitors. With K2 Appit for SharePoint:

- Employees have better tools to create powerful forms- and workflow-based solutions that span the company’s LOB applications.
- IT has no limitations in the types of solutions they can build without writing code.
- Decision makers can securely access real-time data because of seamless LOB integration.
- Managers have more visibility into bottlenecks and exceptions.
- SharePoint users companywide can do their work from any device thanks to K2’s mobile capabilities.
- The company does not have to purchase multiple solutions nor develop custom code.

To learn more about Appit, contact K2 for a free demo or visit [http://www.appit.com](http://www.appit.com)

**What to look for in a SharePoint solution?**

- Robust workflow and forms capabilities that aren’t subject to SharePoint limitations
- Visual tools that make it easy for all users, even those with non-technical skills, to build complete workflows and form solutions
- Ability to integrate with LOB apps and data across various systems without writing code
- Apps that function the same way on premises and in the cloud
- A product that follows the SharePoint best practices prescribed by Microsoft
- Real-time, secure access to LOB information
- More visibility into bottlenecks and errors that might slow work down