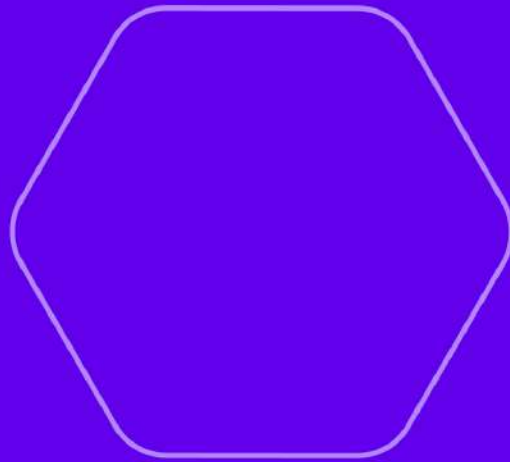


# From Idea to App





# Contents

|   |    |
|---|----|
| Introduction  | 03 |
| The phobia of failure                                 | 04 |
| Making development accessible                         | 06 |
| AI – Your new development partner for unbeatable apps | 09 |
| Real-world wins                                       | 13 |
| Conclusion  | 17 |
| About Builder.ai                                      | 18 |

# Introduction

Here's a thought you might take for granted: all products, whether digital or physical, are someone's response to a problem. Every single product we use in our lives, whether it's furniture, appliances, or - in this case - software, was ideated, designed, and sold by an inventor with a clear vision of how to solve a problem they encountered in their day-to-day lives.

But this makes launching a successful business sound deceptively easy. The painful reality for many would-be entrepreneurs is that there's a wide gulf between a winning idea and a profitable business, or even a workable product. Many people have no clue how to go about bridging that gap or are afraid to try. Some of those people with a fantastic business model to share might be newbies to software development; lacking sufficient knowledge of the process to understand how to get from high concept to workable beta.

**The truth is, having an idea is the easy part. The follow-through is where things get tough.**

This is especially true in the highly competitive software marketplace, where over **70% of software projects fail**. This figure is highly intimidating for anyone seeking to break into the industry with an idea they think could be successful.

So, why do so many great business concepts fail? Well, most ideas break down at the very first hurdle because the latent insecurities of their creators hold them back. The fears that prevent people from actually trying to build their app are:



## Fear of app failure

The entrepreneur is worried that their product won't be successful or profitable.

## Fear of app irrelevance

The entrepreneur is worried that their app won't be able to keep up with bigger industry competitors, who can outstrip their development with larger budgets and more resources.

This seemingly paints a grim picture for potential disruptors who are still waiting in the wings with their business ideas. But there is a solution out there for those who think app development is too intimidating to ever attempt. There are already platforms out there making it possible for more of those great ideas to become a reality.

But before we reveal more, let's first address some of the underlying anxieties that might be holding others back from app development, as well as the barriers to execution that previous developers have been forced to contend with.



# 1

## The phobia of failure

There's nothing more frustrating than having a winning idea be hindered by a lack of resources. Yet, many sound and profitable business ideas fail to get off the ground because the people responsible for them simply lack the money, manpower, time, or skills to properly realise their concept.

This isn't just true for individuals, but also for smaller organisations and large-scale enterprises, who are routinely forced to outsource app development to outside entities. According to a recent study by JetRockets, more than **33%** of tech leaders claim that they are concerned that they don't have the resources and support needed to do their jobs well.<sup>1</sup>



### Case in point

Sometimes outsourcing can alleviate the pressure of turning an app concept into an actual product, but outsourcing also comes with its own issues. For example, in a recent LinkedIn blog post, startup entrepreneur Suhaib Ajlouni explained why outsourcing the development of his app, Friency, led to its failure.<sup>2</sup>

Building an app from nothing is tough. But it's also equally difficult to digitise an analogue business into app form. It forces an organisation to divert money and workers towards its development, and when the company's IT team (who may not have the expertise necessary for the project) is juggling development time with everyday operations, efficiency invariably suffers.

Again, there's also the option of handing development over to an outside team and risk it being mishandled. Third parties might not understand the goals of another organisation, or the business proposition itself. They might fail to capture what made the original business work so well or to translate that into a digital space. The thought is enough to make any business owner break out in a cold sweat.

Taking the above into consideration, we can understand why it's just as tempting for existing organisations as it is for individuals to outsource app development to a third party. Yet, outsourcing is just as much of a challenge for businesses as it is for individuals, especially when there's a scarcity of talent in the relevant sector.

<sup>1</sup> <https://jetrockets.com/blog/jetrockets-2023-it-development-outlook-report>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.linkedin.com/pulse/my-start-up-failed-its-all-fault-friency-app-suhaib-ajlouni/>

A survey from McKinsey, showed a shocking **90%** of surveyed tech executives claim that the current global shortage of software developers has impacted their ability to implement key technology initiatives, like digitisation.<sup>3</sup> Clearly, finding the right people to build your app can be taxing, even if you do have the funds behind you.

However, the rewards that come from an app are too tempting to ignore, since digital versions of existing businesses can massively boost their performance.

For example, the Swedish flat-pack furniture retailer Ikea built their own app to assist in the decision-making process of their customers. Their app gave users the ability to snap a picture of a location and virtually 'install' Ikea furniture to see how it matched the physical space within the room, which later achieved **over 8.5 million** downloads.<sup>4</sup>

Similarly, Dubai Refreshments, one of the largest manufacturing and distribution companies for food and beverages in the Middle East, recently collaborated with Builder.ai to create its own bespoke e-commerce platform.<sup>5</sup> This app was designed to help employees make Pepsi orders in the region. The automated order process freed up their customer service team to engage resellers through personalised offers, which drove significant growth for the organisation.

So, it's obvious that developing an app can prove to be a formidable challenge, but that the rewards are almost always worth the risk. How can all those daring dreamers out there make their fabulous business ideas a reality? More importantly, is there another way for them to build an app that dodges all these stressful pitfalls?



<sup>3</sup> <https://www.mckinsey.com/capabilities/people-and-organizational-performance/our-insights/overcoming-the-fear-factor-in-hiring-tech-talent>

<sup>4</sup> <https://www.retaildive.com/ex/mobilecommercedaily/ikea-entices-potential-consumers-with-augmented-reality>

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.builder.ai/case-studies/pepsi>



# 2

## Making development accessible

What's the biggest barrier to product realisation facing founders and business owners? The answer is a lack of accessibility. Unless they already possess specialised knowledge of app development, the odds of them building a successful, workable product become more and more remote.



This exasperating lack of accessibility isn't inherent to app design, however. Instead, this barrier is more the result of the real-world limitations imposed on would-be developers. We can boil these limitations down to four essential obstructions:

### Lack of strategy:

Without a clear roadmap or goal, a digitisation attempt is usually doomed to failure. Yet, according to [a recent survey by Jabil](#), less than **23%** of manufacturers possess a corporate-wide digital transformation strategy.<sup>6</sup>

### Cost:

App development is expensive. **In the United States, building an app can cost between \$5,000 and \$500,000, depending on the complexity of the software in question.** Many companies lack the funds to pay the developers for the app their business deserves; forcing them to compromise on its overall quality.

### Time management:

Development costs time as well as money, and without a dedicated, full-time team, it's hard for the app to receive the right amount of man-hours needed for it to succeed.

### Lack of IT skills:

This is the biggest obstacle to success. Many organisations lack an in-house IT team with the expertise required to transfer an analogue business to an app, and to provide the much-needed aftercare to ensure that the app retains optimum functionality once it's released to market.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.jabil.com/blog/overcoming-the-top-digital-transformation-challenges.html>

So, going it alone is risky, and entrepreneurs trying to build their first app without prior experience can end up feeling lost at sea; even with their own dedicated IT team to back them up.

Traditionally, there have always been two distinct development models that are designed to help innovators fully realise their dream idea. These dual models either provide the tools and platform to make the apps or connect business owners with experts who will collaborate with them.

The first of these models are software as a service (SaaS) solutions. These on-demand software packages are licensed out from SaaS providers to other corporate entities on a subscription basis; allowing developers to work with the provided toolkits to build the apps they want, exactly the way they want them.

**The main advantages of the SaaS app development model are threefold:**

#### **Flexibility**

Since SaaS toolkits are stored on central servers, they can be deployed at any time and from any location. Not only that but SaaS apps can be modified or updated at any time without it impacting the current workflow.

#### **Cost**

SaaS solutions are often a cheaper alternative than outsourcing to better-equipped outside developers, and offer users a number of tailored payment options. Subscription models can be billed per month, per year, or per user, depending on the user's preference.

#### **Automatic Updates/Scalability**

SaaS toolkits provide a continuous flow of software upgrades to ensure that the app being developed stays as cutting-edge as it can be.

**The second option is to hire a third-party development agency to build the app instead. This method boasts several distinct advantages of its own:**

#### **Experience**

Hiring seasoned software development professionals means that business owners won't be left to pick up dozens of new skills on the fly. Instead, they can leave the experts to sweat the technical side of things while they focus on the bigger picture.

#### **Diversity and Suitability**

There's a wide variety of developers out there, all of whom specialise in building different types of apps. Plus, they will have their portfolios on hand to prove it. This means that business owners can shop around to find the third-party developer that best matches their vision, values, and mindset, before committing to an RFI.

#### **Bigger Arsenals**

Third-party software developers, by their very nature, will have invested more money into their tech and more time into their training. Their developers will have access to more sophisticated (and expensive) tools than most SMBs.



Although these options do make it more likely for apps to follow through from conception to implementation, that doesn't mean that they automatically make the development journey effortless. Indeed, both of these development pathways come loaded with their own constraints.

For starters, although SaaS toolkits are convenient and affordable, they can often be limited in their scope. Once a subscription is paid for, it can be difficult (or impossible) to customise, which can make things tricky when the developers come up against a software issue that their SaaS package cannot brute force.

SaaS packages also leave business owners (literally) to their own devices, with little to no guidance to help them utilise their toolkits effectively. This can be unhelpful for newbie developers struggling to come to grips with the ins and outs of development without the benefit of the right guidance and mentorship.

Meanwhile, third-party programmers can provide tailor-made solutions and have the tech and skills to pivot development if needed. But taking this route means that the success of the app depends on a sound working relationship and very clear communication. If the collaboration breaks down, the app breaks down with it. Obviously, no business owner wants to end up with an app that no stakeholders are happy with, as well as a hefty bill in the bargain.

As you can see, neither approach is fool-proof, and these drawbacks are enough to dissuade plenty of people with highly viable business ideas from ever attempting to get them off the ground.

*It's a great tragedy that fear and anxiety is holding so many back.*

But if you're someone who is feeling too intimidated to ever start development: don't be discouraged. The current road to product realisation isn't as binary as it first appears. There is a third option that combines the best of both worlds, without the associated issues of either.

Builder.ai sits comfortably between the above two models as the best alternative to both. It combines the flexibility and expertise of a third-party developer with the affordability and ease of use of a SaaS platform; making it simple for creators to actualise their app concepts.

Builder's team of dedicated programmers are highly collaborative and work in tandem with creators to make their business concepts a reality. It harnesses all the tech and best practices of low code, artificial intelligence, and custom development tools, to provide a streamlined, efficient user experience as a result.

There's just one question: how exactly does it work? Let's delve a little deeper into the Builder's processes and methodology.





# 3

## AI – Your new development partner for unbeatable apps

Builder.ai is all about making the right connections for people with a vision at the start of their development journey. Taking the best principles of no code and low code development, it employs machine learning to partner users up with human programmers and AI assistants. This dream team then works together to help real people build the apps their businesses deserve.

Rather than simply handing the relevant design software over to entrepreneurs, and leaving them to fend for themselves, the work of coding is taken on by Builder's team, leaving business owners the freedom to focus on the larger picture of product design and strategy. It's a fully collaborative process from start to finish, with designers on hand to offer guidance and support throughout.



And the best part? The whole thing takes minutes, not months.

As a rule, the first (and arguably most important) task facing developers is building a solid working prototype. Building this usable 'first draft' of a product is when concepts become concrete, and where any major issues with your product can be discovered ahead of time and ironed out.

From there, developers can proceed to build upon this prototype until they have a **'Minimum Viable Product,'** or **'MVP'**, to test its efficacy with consumers. In this instance, the term refers to the most bare-bones version of the app that can go to market, sitting between the prototype and the final product, which can be tested by users and used to gather valuable data.

Take the case of Uber's initial MVP as a blueprint for successful software development. Garret Camp and Travis Kalanick first had the idea for the rideshare app back in 2009, but they wanted to test if there was actual demand for their idea. Setting to work, their MVP version was very basic compared with the juggernaut of an app users are familiar with today. 'UberCab', as it was then known, started out as a simplified mobile interface, with limitations such as:

- ✔ The app was first only used by the founders and their acquaintances.
- ✔ Access could only be granted by emailing Camp or Kalanick personally.
- ✔ The app was only available to iPhone users.
- ✔ Due to the limited number of cars, the app was only available in San Francisco, and later in New York City.

Although the MVP lacked many of the staple features Uber is now known for, such as the live-tracking of drivers, fare splitting, automatic credit card payments, and estimated fares, the data the founders acquired was invaluable. Camp and Kalanick were able to leverage the MVP to test market risks and the viability of their app, and added new features as they iterated based on the feedback they received from their small sample of initial users.

Unfortunately, it's not enough these days to create a product that fulfils the customer's needs in the most basic way possible. In a highly competitive market, where customers can be fickle about their purchases, 'viable' doesn't cut the mustard. After all, the average app loses **77%** of users after three days. Within 30 days, **90%** leave. Within three months, **95%** are gone.<sup>7</sup> Nobody wants potential users to download an app, use it once or twice, and then never go near it again.

Because of this, Builder's perspective is slightly different to the industry standard. We believe that, rather than creating a MVP, developers should strive instead to create a '**MLP**', or '**Minimum Lovable Product**.'

Instead of aiming for the bare minimum in terms of functionality, developers and designers should aim to create an app that their customer base will fall in love with and keep returning to. Devoting equal time, care, and effort into the app's design and UI as the app's function can help designers understand what extra features give the product an edge over its competitors.

This isn't a challenge to create the perfect product: that can only come from the customer data gleaned by the MLP. But the MLP should still work well, intuitively, and easily for those people it's tested on.

This might sound arduous, especially to a first-timer. But the good news is that Builder's stock of tools and AI software is supposed to accelerate development; freeing up creators to plan, strategise, and revise their creations as needed.

Bearing this in mind, it's important that we break down some of the key features that customers are looking for, and how developers can anticipate and respond to these needs during the development cycle.

The first attribute of an app is its actual purpose. Designers must think hard about what problem/problems their product solves. Every iteration of the app must not only work to solve that problem but also communicate loud and clear exactly what kind of solution it offers.

This can be challenging, especially as the more innovative apps might be designed to resolve an issue customers aren't even aware of. However, careful consideration of the app's purpose will keep your development team focused on your product's key objectives.

The second major attribute of an app is a positive user experience. It must be easy to use and intuitive, so that as many potential customers can engage with it as possible. It should strive to remove any frustrating features or design choices. It should also, ideally, entertain its users, making it more likely that they will enjoy the experience of interacting with the app and return to it multiple times.

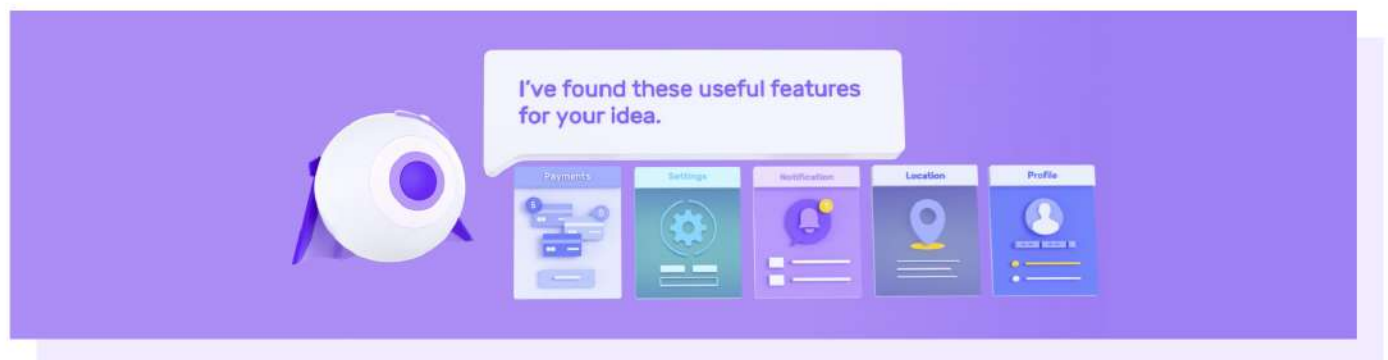
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<sup>7</sup> <https://andrewchen.com/new-data-shows-why-losing-80-of-your-mobile-users-is-normal-and-that-the-best-apps-do-much-better/>



The last vital feature is ongoing improvement. The designers must work to continually enhance and rebalance the app's functionality, and provide a steady stream of patches, bug fixes, and updates to ensure that the product does not stagnate. Indeed, research from Statista shows that users will abandon apps after initially downloading them if they feel that the product wasn't as useful or functional as they initially believed.<sup>8</sup>

So, how can developers out there leverage Builder to create an app that comprehensively fulfils all these demands? Let's examine how Builder's AI tools work in tandem with human designers and business creators to produce apps that will instantly win over users.



**Builder's app development process takes place across six distinct phases, which are managed by our AI Project Manager, Natasha. The six development stages are as follows:**

- ✔ Using machine learning algorithms to gather **80%** of info automatically, Natasha, recommends the features consumers need based on the type of app they want. Natasha also creates an instant prototype to help visualise the idea.
- ✔ Natasha works out all of the tasks needed to build the app, in the most efficient order, and generates a Buildcard. Builder AI then uses automation to turn the designer's screens into code in just **60 seconds**.
- ✔ Natasha then recommends the appropriate developer for the app project. They then customise the code on a virtual desktop.
- ✔ Natasha and a team of human developers then check the approved design and code to spot any issues.
- ✔ Builder AI provides an estimated price for the app based on the features you've chosen and our AI-powered analysis tool to reduce cloud costs.
- ✔ We then complete and check all your customisations and integrations, and ship the final release and source code.

<sup>8</sup> <https://www.statista.com/statistics/259329/ios-and-android-app-user-retention-rate/>

Through this process, we enable state-of-the-art AI and experienced designers to empower creators to bring their visions to life. This way, a lack of programming knowledge or a background in coding is no longer a barrier to product realisation. Builder's user-friendly interface makes crafting an app an artistic, intuitive, and accessible process; one where creators are supported on every step of a fulfilling journey.

Another aspect of Builder's ethos is that development is an ongoing process of continual refinement and that creators shouldn't be left high and dry after their product eventually launches. Aftercare is vital to ensuring that released apps stay relevant and up-to-date. So, Builder's product experts are available after the app's completion through our support product Builder Care, to ensure software remains updated. This provides creators with:

- ✔ Server uptime monitoring.
- ✔ Software application bug fixes.
- ✔ Platform updates for the latest iOS/Android apps.
- ✔ Proactive technical support for third-party API/SDK updates on all standard features.
- ✔ Security patches and backup management.
- ✔ Updated tech-stack.
- ✔ Multi-channel support via messaging apps, email, etc.

But don't take our principles for granted. Let's take a look at two real-life examples of creators who had an idea for a winning app, but lacked the technical knowledge and resources to fulfil it on their own. Builder's team helped them overcome their confidence issues and develop a successful product that delivered a measurable impact.



# 4

## Real-world wins

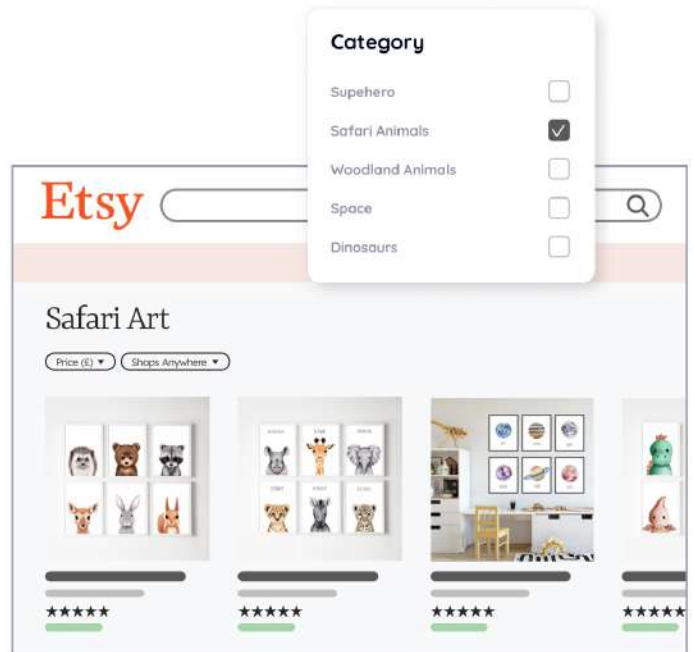
**SafariArt** is a prime example of an app that was built using our platform according to the unique specifications of its creator. The germ of the idea came about from a real-life problem the business' founder, Anup Lalli, experienced in her life. Lalli is an artist who specialises in crafting homemade decorative animal prints, and had been using the e-commerce market site Etsy to sell her products.

For two years, it was business as usual. But suddenly disaster struck. As Lalli herself later explained:

For two years, it was business as usual. But suddenly disaster struck. As Lalli herself later explained:



*I spent a lot of time building up the product catalogue and presence and out of nowhere one day, my account had been blocked. When getting in touch with Etsy customer service I was given a boilerplate terms and conditions response, and no specific reasons as to why my account had been suspended.*



Lalli was understandably frustrated by this impediment to her business. But then she came up with a solution: why not launch her own online marketplace catering specifically towards the products she was selling? The idea seemed like a viable business proposition.

Lacking the technical skills to build her platform single-handedly, Lalli turned to Builder for help with her development. Working with Builder Studio Store, Lalli managed to create her own apps and website to grant herself full control over her business, without the hassle of Etsy's extra transaction fees.

**Some of the features Lalli employed through Studio Store included:**

- ✔ A display list of all available discounts and offers on the SafariArt store to encourage customer purchases.
- ✔ Social media connectivity to enable site visitors to import profile information from their various accounts – saving time when setting up their profiles.
- ✔ Ad hoc reporting to create reports based on customers' purchasing data and track relevant retail trends.
- ✔ An advanced search bar, to help customers filter product listings based on specific criteria.
- ✔ Custom labels and statuses for customer orders.
- ✔ Email notifications to inform users about special offers, promotions, and updates.
- ✔ A tool to calculate the cost of shipping for customer's purchases.
- ✔ Product categories and subcategories to organise and group data, products, listings, and posts.
- ✔ API data to exchange information between relevant systems.

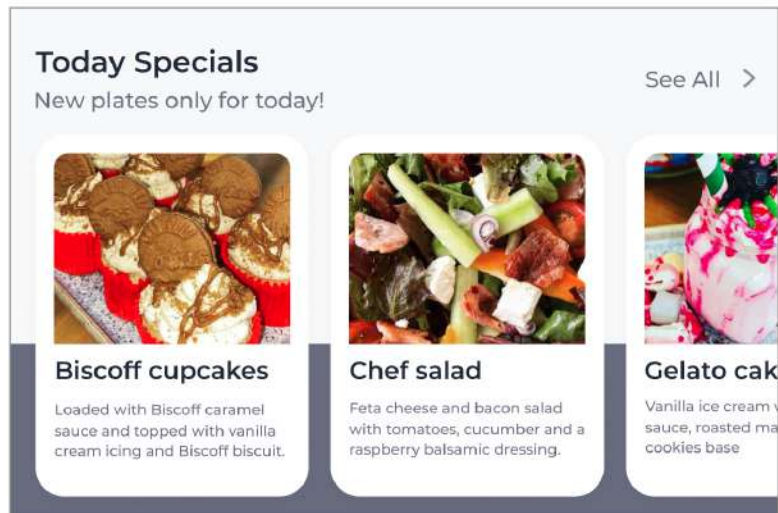
**Commenting on the development experience in a later testimonial, Lalli stated:**



***Builder.ai's Studio Store offered everything I needed to get my business online in one package. I needed a website and app, and with Studio Store I could get everything from the same company... The whole setup process was really quick and easy – the **Builder.ai** team made every step very clear and everything went smoothly.***



For over eight years, cafe owner Louise had run her business **Eat@Denby's** successfully from her site in Derbyshire, England. However, when COVID-19 restrictions forced the United Kingdom into lockdown, Louise's cafe immediately suffered. As social distancing measures deterred potential customers from actually visiting the business premises, Louise decided to pivot her business to a more delivery-based model, move it online, and capture customers stuck indoors.



It was a solid plan from the outset, but when she started looking at development tools, she was immediately discouraged by the lack of accessible options. Louise stated:

“

*I looked online at the many businesses on Google that offer website building, app development, QR codes, the products available all sounded great, but I have little development experience.*

As we've seen, it's this very same knowledge that stops so many businesses from taking the plunge and migrating online. Undeterred, Louise tried to go it alone, but without help and guidance, she only met with more problems. Louise later reflected:

“

*We tried to get our own online ordering system going, but we quickly found that the customers could not order what they wanted... we were losing more money than we were making due to the 'system' not being fit for purpose.*

Thankfully, Louise turned to Builder to quickly build the app and website her business truly needed. Leveraging Studio Store, Louise worked with Builder's team to create her own app and website; boasting simple ordering systems and no commission on orders – helping her keep more of her profits.

**Some other key features Lalli deployed with Studio Store include:**

- ✔ A display list of all available discounts and offers on the menu.
- ✔ A loyalty rewards program, to offer discounts and extras to repeat customers.
- ✔ QR codes to make it easy to access the menu and view the listed items.
- ✔ Referrals, so customers can share the menu items with others.
- ✔ Reservations, both for tables and foot items.
- ✔ A time tracker, to measure how long customers spend ordering.
- ✔ Product categories and subcategories to organise and group menu items.
- ✔ API data to exchange information between relevant systems.

**Commenting on her development journey, Louise herself later stated:**



*I loved the fact that the app and website is an asset to my business. There are no commission charges, the payment plan to pay for the app and website was affordable and simple, with no hidden charges and the product is fantastic.*

# Conclusion:

## Don't let fear hold you back

When starting out any new project (particularly one that you've invested time, money, and emotion into), it's easy to feel overwhelmed by the prospect of failure or irrelevance – especially when venturing into a field you might lack expertise in.

But that anxiety shouldn't be the death of solid business ideas; not when there are platforms like Builder out there providing the tools and support to help others realise their concepts in a viable, profitable digital format.

Ultimately, even if your ideas are still half-formed and gestating, think of development as a process of iteration and experimentation, where you have the freedom to try new things and implement novel features without the headache of coding to contend with. Platforms like Builder are designed to be a creative playground, where you can try out the tools on offer and have fun with the creative process of app development.

It's also easier to overcome a paralysing fear of failure when you have experienced collaborators to back you up and lend a hand. In that sense, Builder is more than just a development platform; it's a gateway to creative collaboration, giving you instant access to experts to bounce ideas off of and help you fine-tune your concepts into a feasible real-world product.

So, don't let your good ideas go to waste. Visit [Builder.ai](https://Builder.ai) and see what our platform can offer you. Your development journey could begin today.





# About Builder.ai



## What we do

At **Builder.ai**, we've pioneered a new software category between low-code and custom software development. Our platform lets you build, run and scale just about anything you can think of by combining the scalability and ease of use of low-code tools with the flexibility of traditional agencies.

First, our AI, Natasha, helps you build custom-made software. Around **500 features** make up **80%** of all software (things like login, secure payments or Live Chat). So, we coded these features, and Natasha helps you pick and choose the ones your idea needs. Then our network of specialists customises your software so it fits your idea perfectly.

You maintain total control over your software throughout without sacrificing speed to market or simplicity. As a result, we build apps using half the resources of traditional dev workshops.

## What we offer

**Builder Studio** is our flagship app-building service that lets you turn any idea into custom-made software, without writing any code, or speaking to a developer/agency. Starting with an app template, you can add or remove features and receive guaranteed cost and timeline projections ahead of the building process.

We also offer a range of support services, including **Studio One**, which continuously monitors your software – upgrading and fixing it – before you even know there's a problem. Similarly, **Builder Cloud** offers best-in-class cloud support from all the major providers and ensures your digital service is infinitely scalable at a moment's notice.

## How to learn more

See how quickly you can build your app idea and find out about our guaranteed prices by [booking a demo today](#).