

eBook series

The DIY Guide to Building Your First Business App

Turn bright ideas into brilliant apps

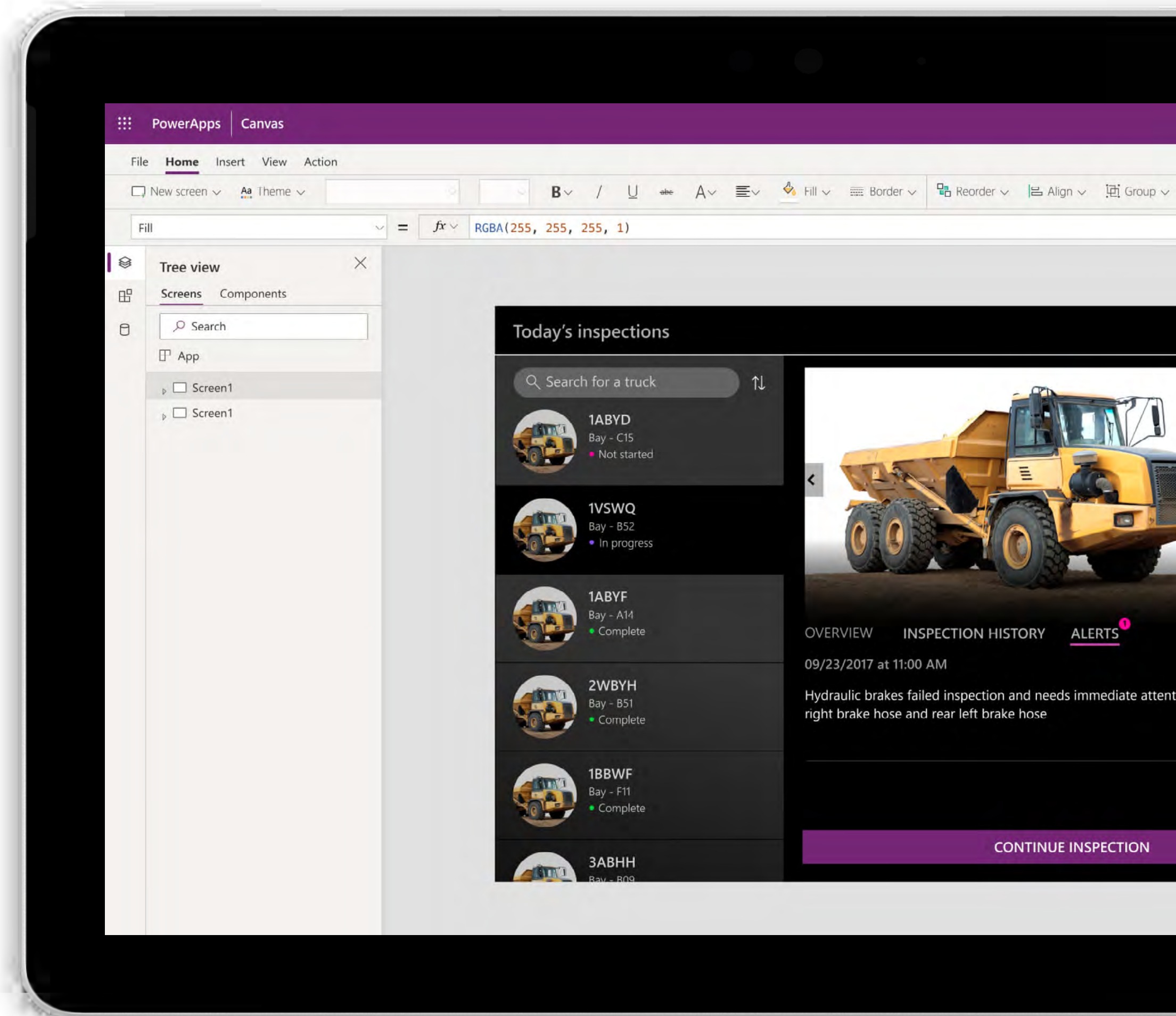
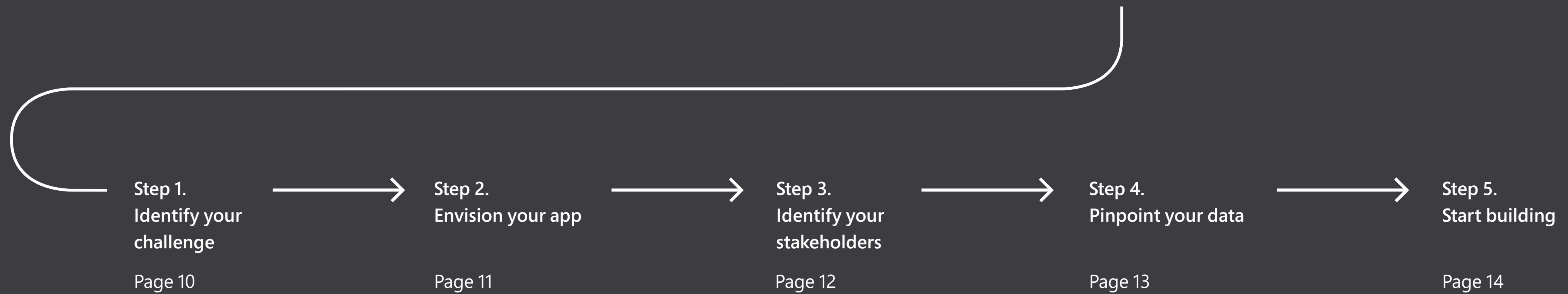
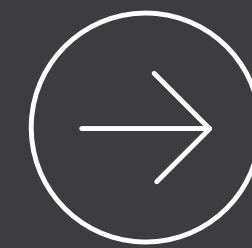


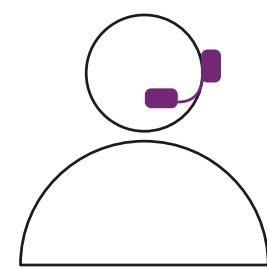
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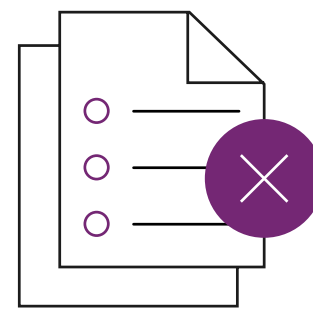
01.

Turn your business ideas into apps – no coding experience required

Have you ever thought, “I wish we had an app for that?” You’re not alone. There’s rapidly growing demand around the world for apps that can:



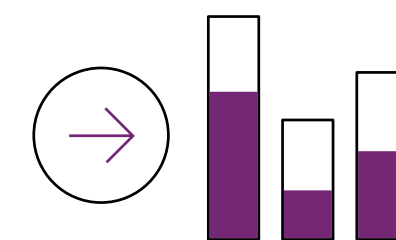
Support better customer and employee experiences.



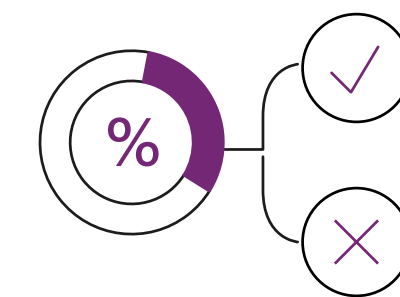
Eliminate paper-based and manual processes.



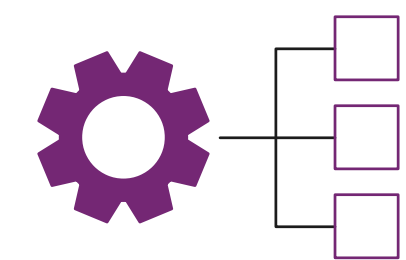
Keep databases and files up to date.



Democratise dashboards and analytics.



Enable data-based decision-making.



Automate repetitive tasks to free up more time to focus on strategic work.

You might think that building apps like that would require teams of developers to write the code line by line. In the past, it would have. But today, with an innovative approach known as 'low-code' development, you can build them yourself.

Using existing data, prebuilt connectors and Excel-like expressions, non-technical workers are becoming app developers. Democratising app development across an organisation is creating opportunities for individuals and organisations alike to transform the way they work. These new apps are becoming part of the fabric of the workday across organisations of all kinds.

Samit was a security officer at the biggest airport in Europe. Now he's building apps and teaching others to do the same.

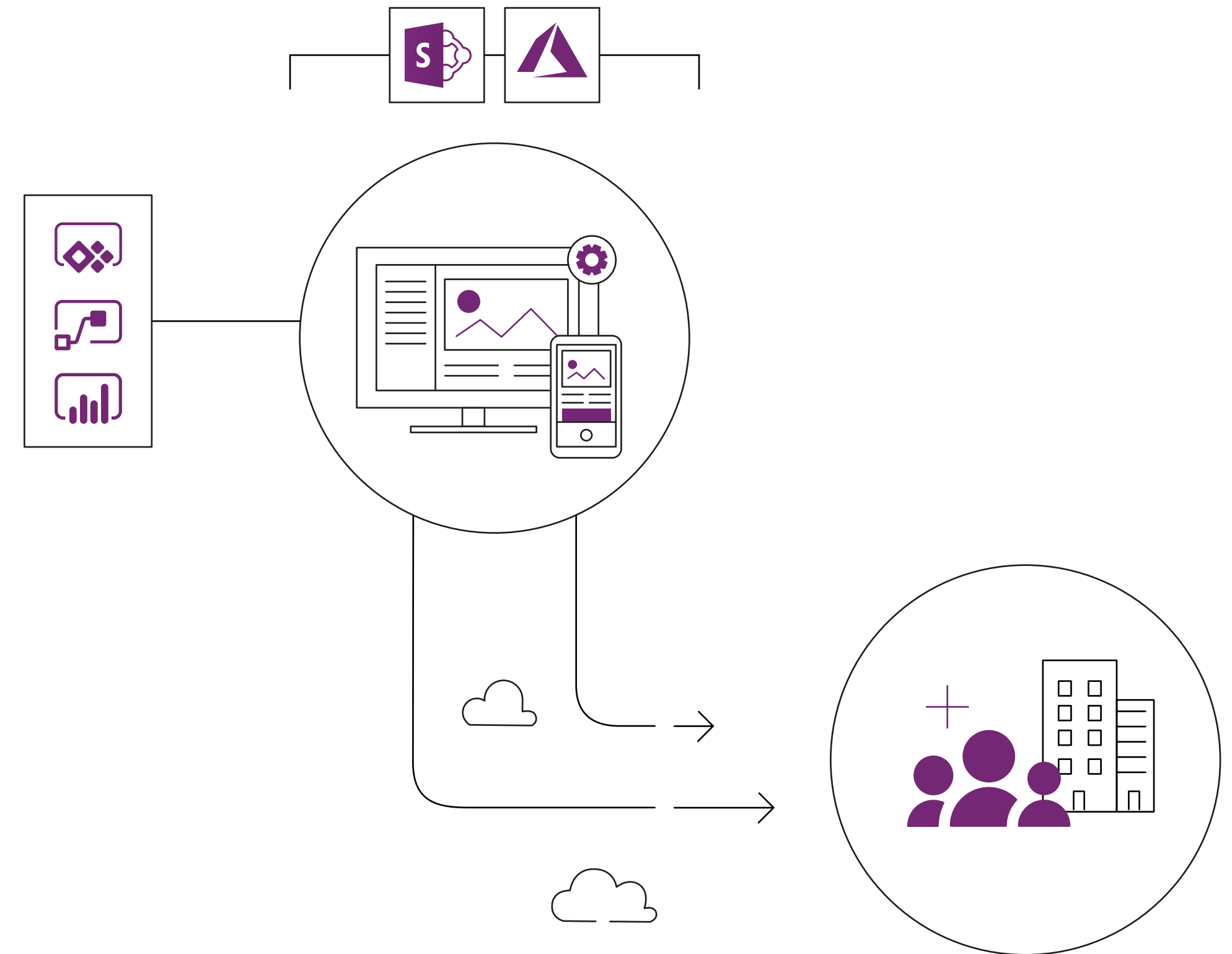


02.

Welcome, citizen developer

Ready to make your business ideas a reality? With Microsoft Power Apps and Power Automate, you can rapidly automate processes and build custom apps to meet your business needs. These solutions connect to a wide range of data sources for maximum flexibility, including Office 365 and SharePoint. And, the apps you build work seamlessly across the web, iOS and Android devices.

With Power Apps, it's easy to start small with prebuilt templates and in-app guidance to deliver quick wins. Then, you can work your way up to creating more feature-rich apps and automating more complex processes. If needed, pro developers can extend Power Apps for fully custom solutions. Your IT department can rest assured that you're using a platform backed by Microsoft – one they can govern to ensure security and compliance.



Once you know how to use Power Apps, you can turn your ideas into reality faster than you ever thought possible. This empowers you to contribute to the success of your team and your business in highly visible and measurable ways.

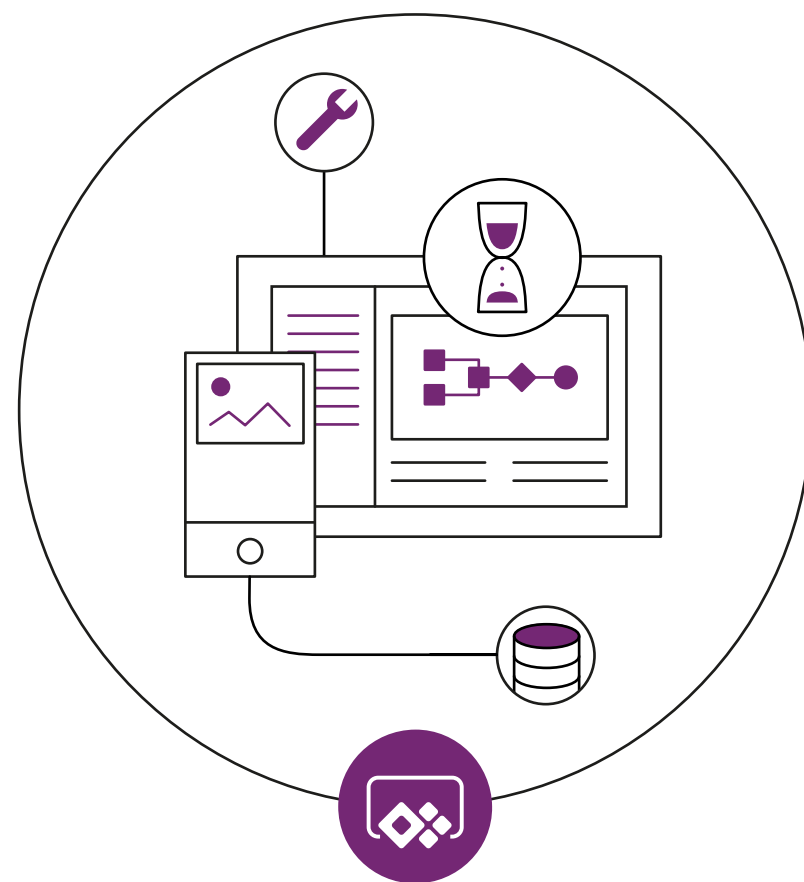
Discover how Power Apps changed the career path of Martin Lee, who has created over 40 apps for Autoglass so far.



03.

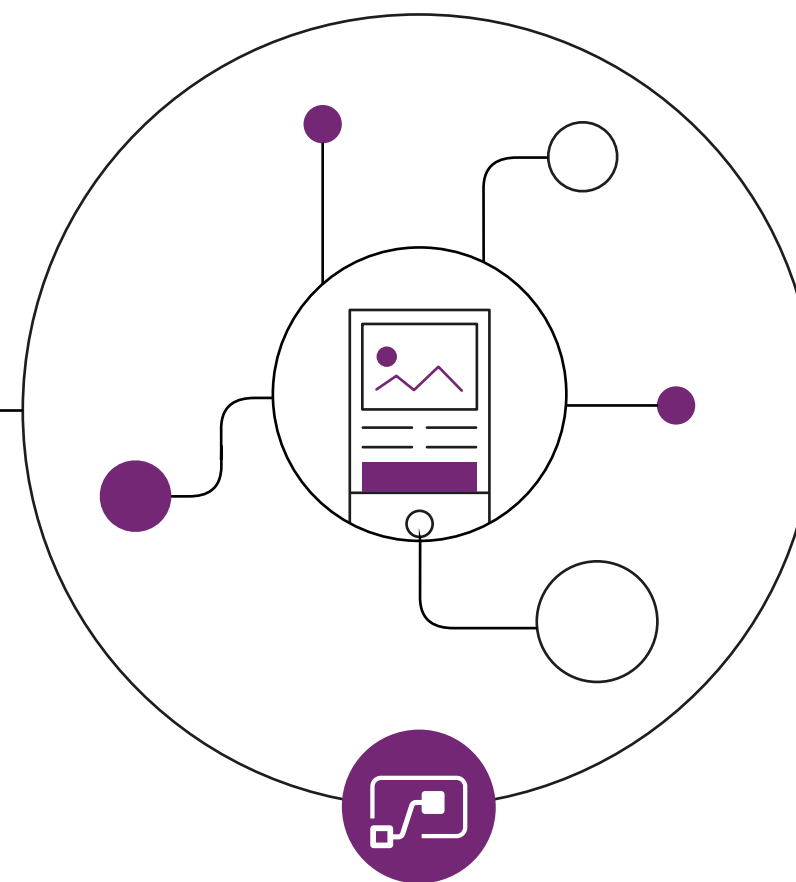
Introducing the Microsoft Power Platform

With solutions designed to work together, you can quickly and easily build custom apps, automate workflows to improve business productivity and analyse data for insights – no matter your level of technical expertise.



Power Apps:

Build apps in hours – not months – that easily connect to data, use Excel-like expressions to add logic and run on the web, iOS and Android devices.



Power Automate:

Automate workflows and integrate them directly in your apps with a no-code approach that connects to hundreds of popular apps and services.



Power BI:

Unify data from multiple sources. Create interactive, immersive dashboards and reports that provide actionable insights and embed them directly in your apps.

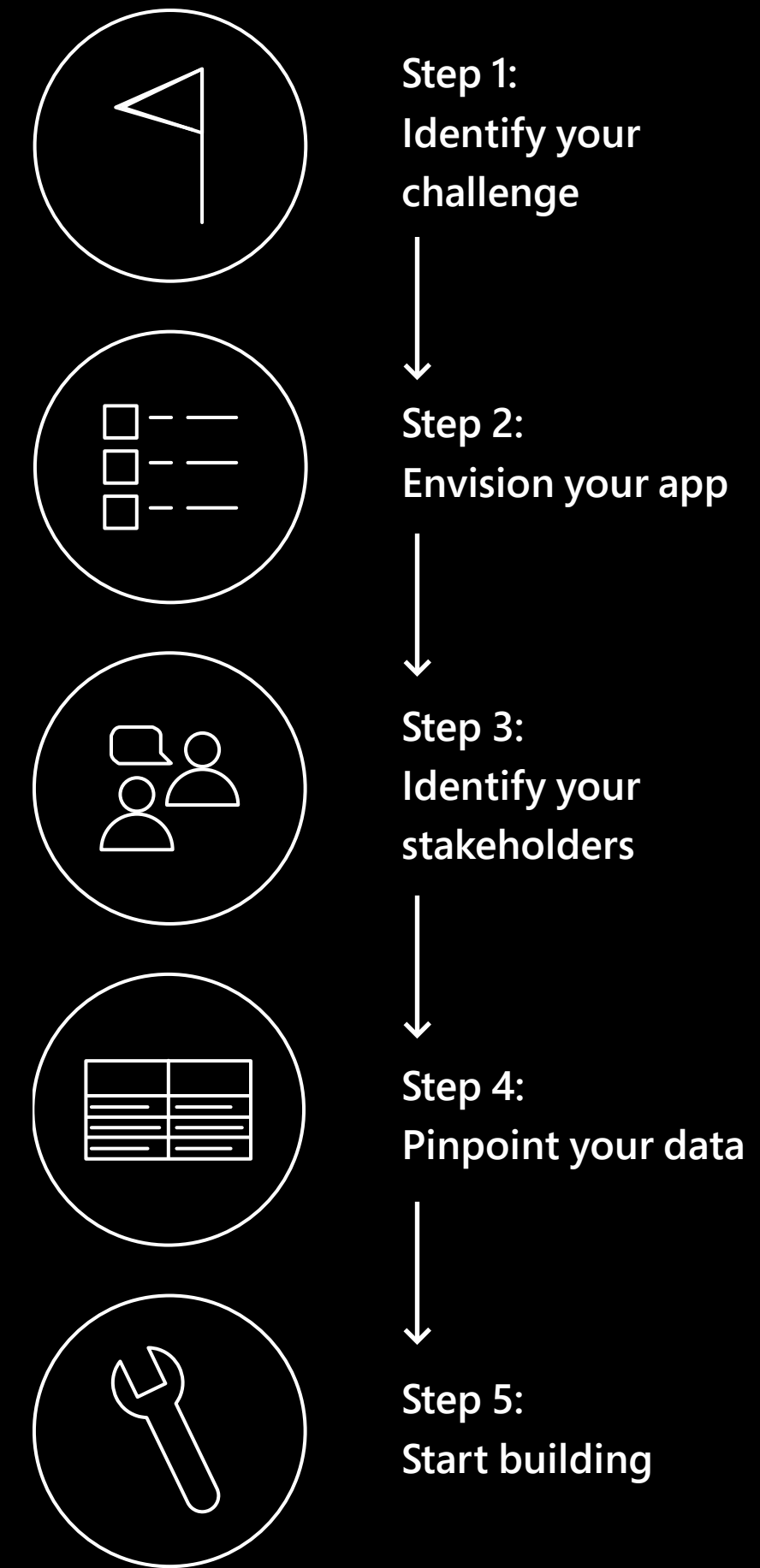
Assistant Principal Lauren Taylor used Power Apps to create an app for teachers and administrators to track student reading needs, reading levels and background info.



04.

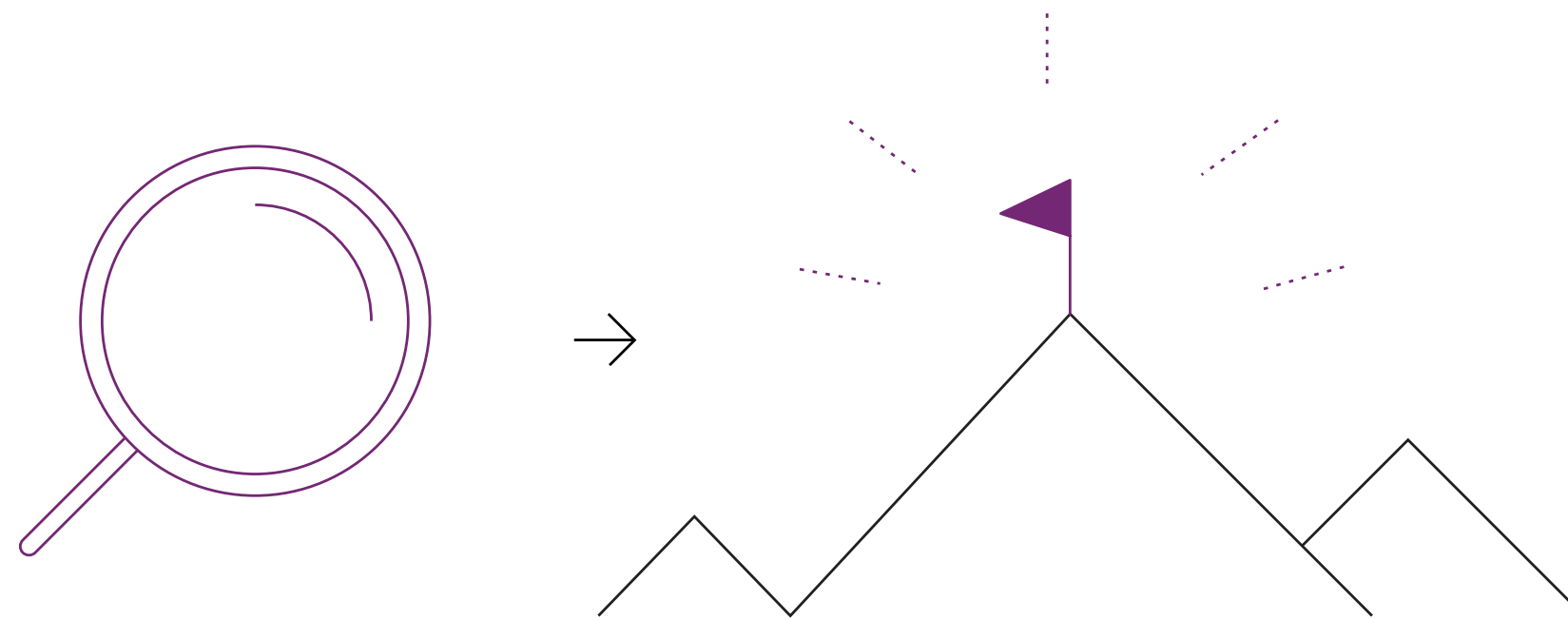
Get started with low-code apps in five simple steps

You've probably already got some great ideas for how you could use Power Apps in your business. So, where do you start? Let's go over some key steps before you begin building.



Step 1: Identify your challenge

To be successful out of the gate, it helps to clearly define the business challenge you're trying to solve – and to keep it simple. Choose a process you know well: how it works, who's involved and what is impacted downstream. It also helps to have a business outcome in mind. Faster process? Better collaboration? Real-time visibility? Knowing the end goal will help make the app you create effective.

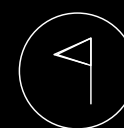


Power Apps in action

Keith Whatling, Senior Analyst at Arriva, envisioned an app to replace a paper-based incident reporting process. Engineers will be able to input data directly into the system, use GPS to identify the location of the incident, provide photos and even scan barcodes to identify parts. And it's all built using Power Apps.

Common uses for Power Apps

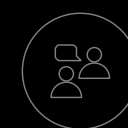
- ✓ Maintenance and repair processes
- ✓ Project management
- ✓ Proposal creation and workflows
- ✓ Incident reporting
- ✓ Training management
- ✓ Resource scheduling
- ✓ Asset tracking
- ✓ Quality control
- ✓ Appointment scheduling
- ✓ Customer experience management
- ✓ Interactive dashboards



Step 1:
Identify your challenge



Step 2:
Envision your app



Step 3:
Identify your stakeholders



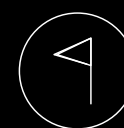
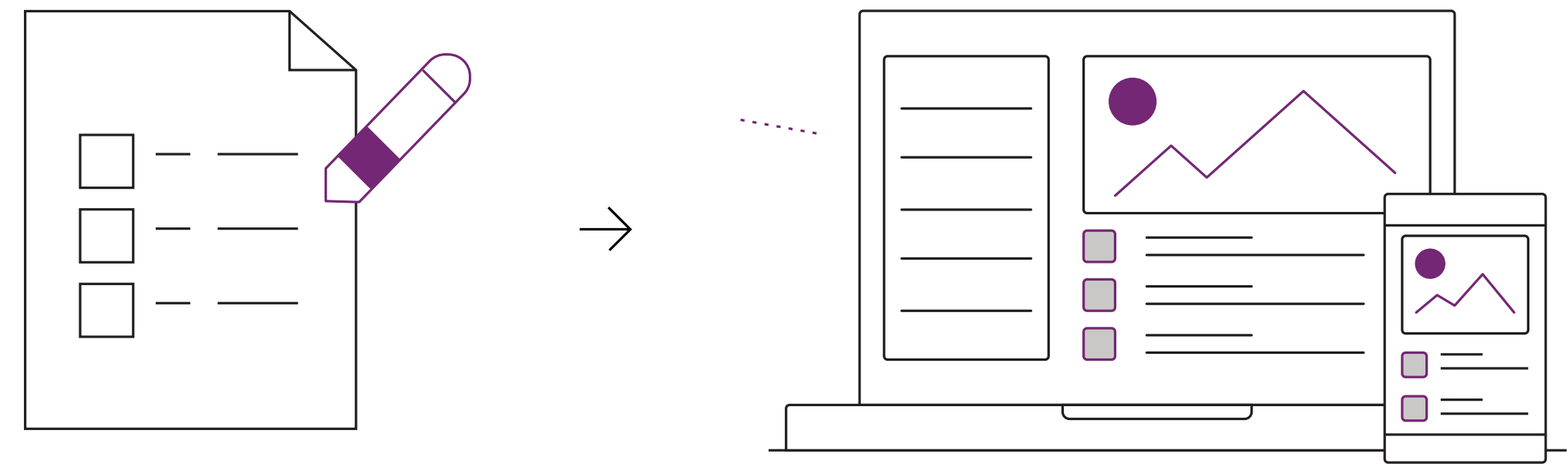
Step 4:
Pinpoint your data



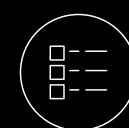
Step 5:
Start building

Step 2: Envision your app

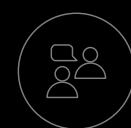
Take time to define your vision for the app. It doesn't have to be elaborate – just a few simple bullets about what you want it to do, who will use it and what the experience will be like, along with a mock-up of how the app could be structured. Getting a clear vision in your mind before you start will help you identify the functionality required to bring your app to life. You can update this document as you go through the process to further refine your ideas.



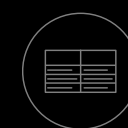
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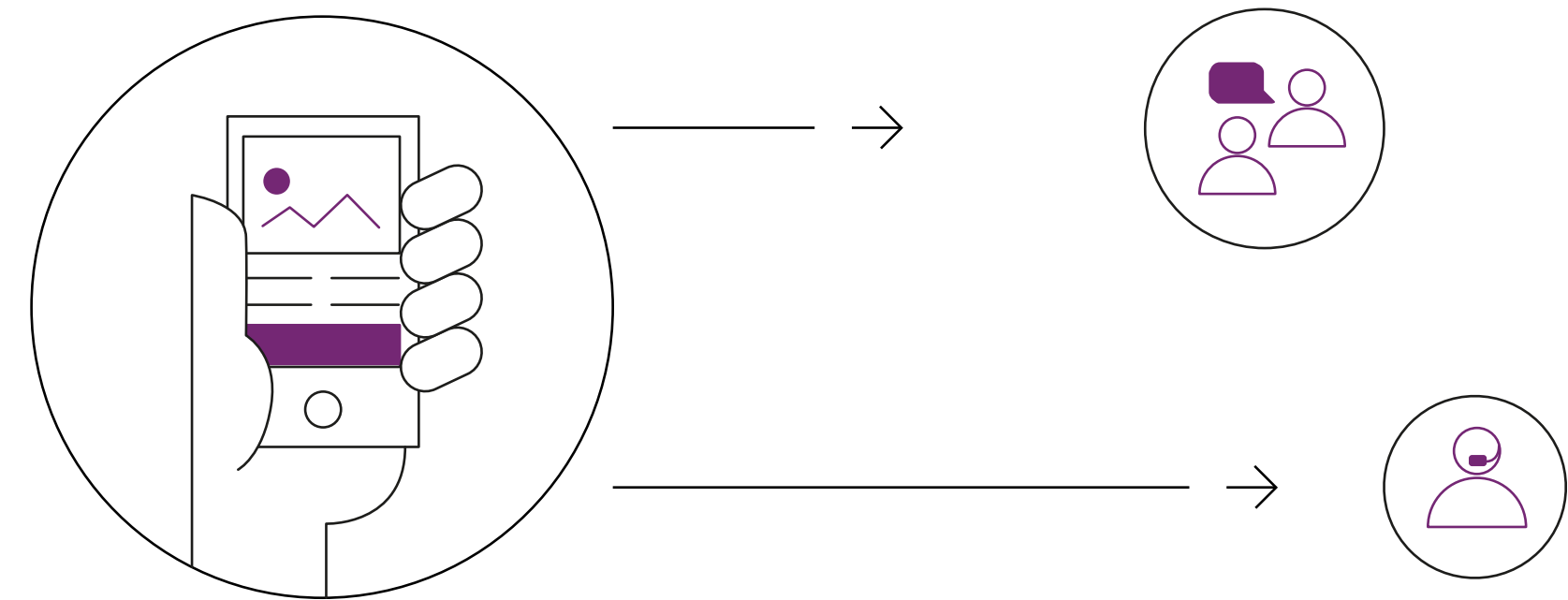


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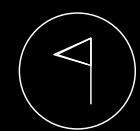
Step 3: Identify your stakeholders

The great thing about low-code apps is that they can be built by the same people who will use them. That means you and your team are likely key stakeholders, but who else will need to be involved? How will the app affect their daily work? What devices are they likely to use? Considering their needs early avoids surprises down the road and helps you deliver the greatest value. Here are some starting points:

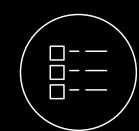
- ✓ **App user:** Who will interact with the application directly?
- ✓ **Data user:** Who controls or uses data related to the app?
- ✓ **Customer:** How will the application affect the customer experience?



You don't have to address the needs of every stakeholder all at once. In fact, you'll want to start small. However, it's best to understand early on who could benefit from your app or provide valuable input along the way.



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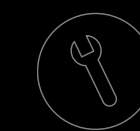
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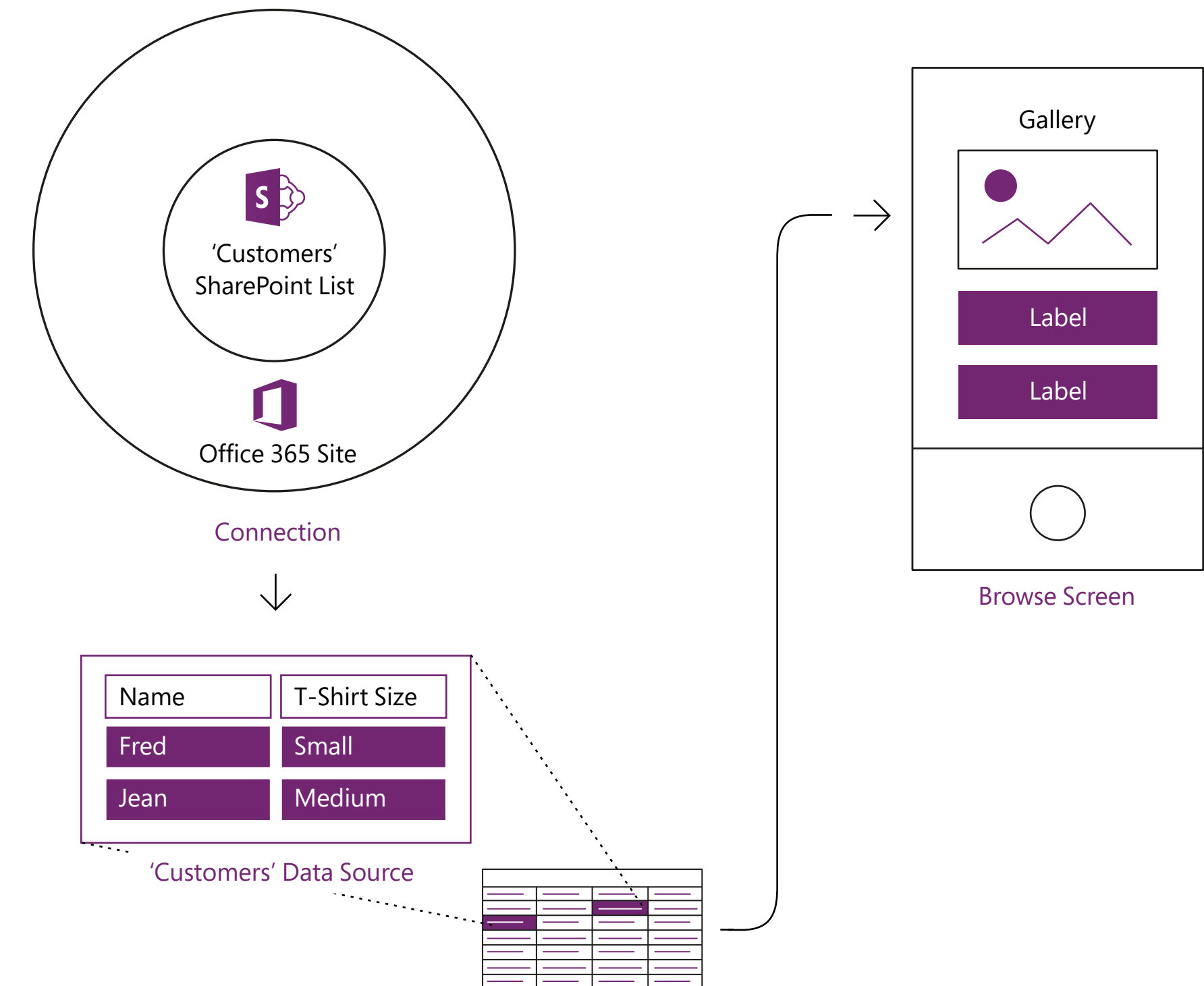
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Step 4: Pinpoint your data

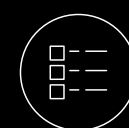
Apps rely on data to do their work. They can access existing data in a location such as SharePoint or a database. They can also be used to capture data, ranging from text to GPS location to video. If your app relies on external data, where will you source it? If you're collecting data, where will you store it? Knowing where data will live and how you'll manage it will help make your app a success.

One great thing about Power Apps is that it natively works with data in Office 365, SharePoint and Dynamics 365, and can connect to many other data sources. It's also important to consider whether the data might be sensitive or proprietary and work with the appropriate people in your organisation to keep it secure and compliant.

How a Canvas App pulls data from a source, in this case, a SharePoint list.



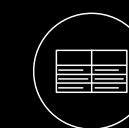
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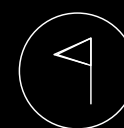
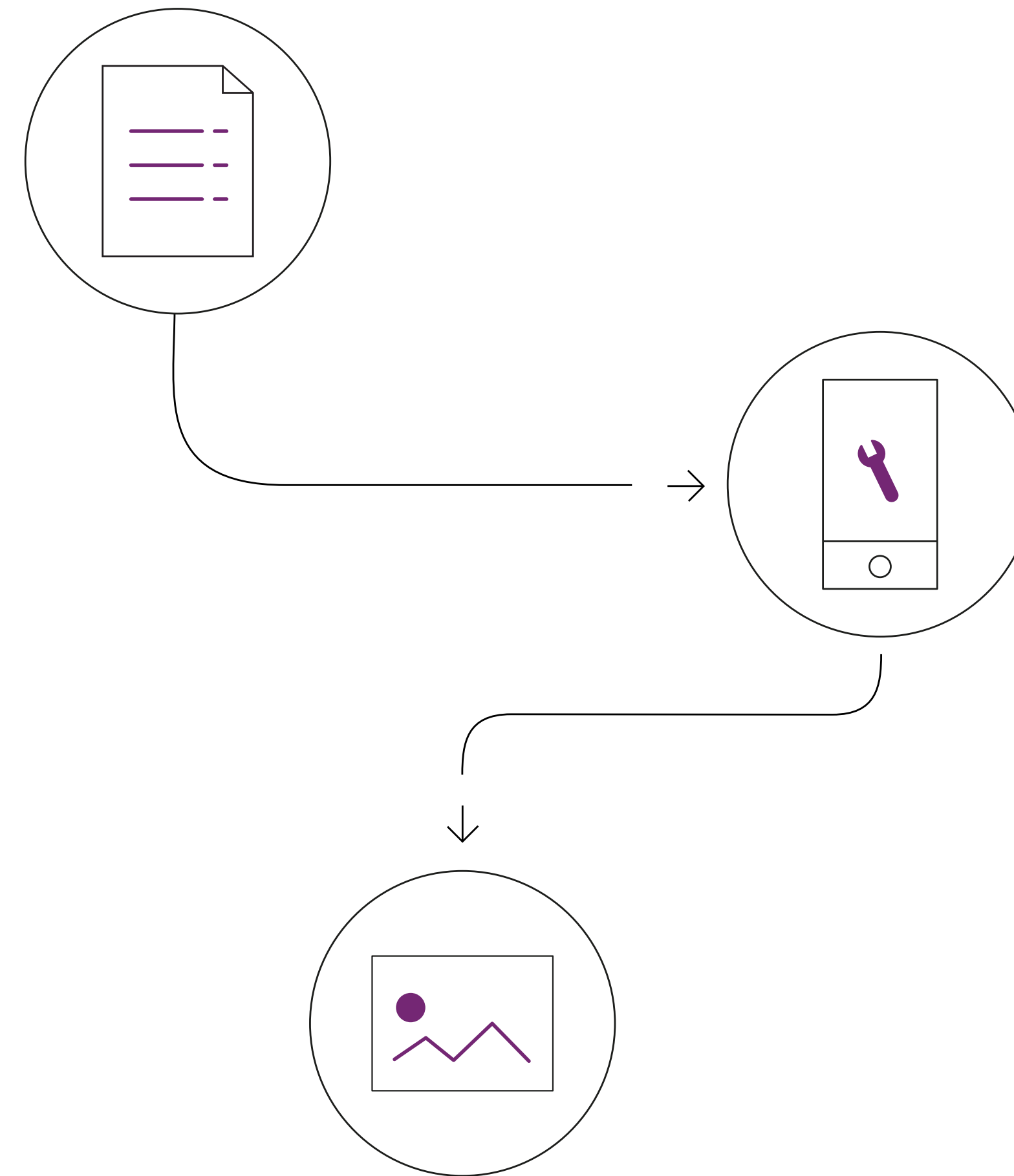


Step 5: Start building

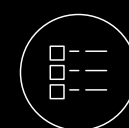
Step 5: Start building

With a clear vision of what you want to build, it's time to get started. Building with Power Apps is easy and intuitive, with a drag and drop interface. If you've ever made a PowerPoint presentation, the design experience will feel familiar.

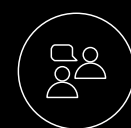
To help you accelerate your innovations, Microsoft provides a wide range of resources for learning how to use Power Apps and Power Automate, including:



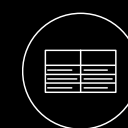
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Make your apps even smarter

Once you get the basics of Power Apps down, you can use it to do some pretty amazing things. For example, how about enhancing your apps with artificial intelligence (AI)? With [AI Builder](#), you can enhance your apps and business processes with AI that's easy to build and configure. Process forms automatically, detect objects in images or make predictions based on your data. It's all at your fingertips with Power Apps.

