

9 Pro Tips to Get Started with Low-Code App Development

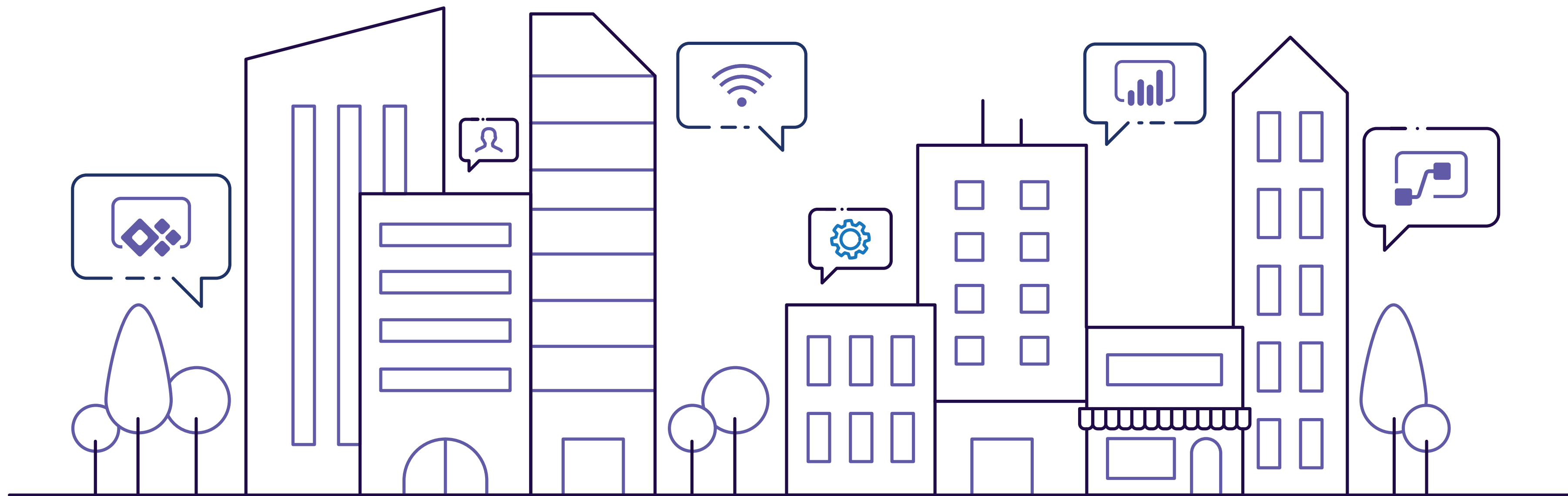


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Developing apps is often seen as complex, costly, and timeconsuming. However, using an innovative approach known as low-code development, anyone can create powerful business apps without requiring traditional coding skills.

The low-code approach is simple enough for beginners to build high-value apps—and sophisticated enough to meet the needs of professional developers tackling complex challenges. In both scenarios, it dramatically reduces the amount of work involved in getting an app up and running. Through a simple user interface, you can create apps that digitize paper processes, collect and share important data, and streamline the workflow—without learning to code.



Welcome, citizen developer!

If you build low-code apps, you're a part of an emerging group of passionate and engaged business professionals called "citizen developers." Citizen developers can come from any area of the business: operations, marketing, customer service, finance, and so on. It's just someone who uses low-code tools to solve business challenges without the need for professional development expertise.

Microsoft Power Apps, part of the Microsoft Power Platform, provides a complete low-code app development solution. In this e-book, we'll share tips for entry-level Power Apps users to get started building their first business apps.

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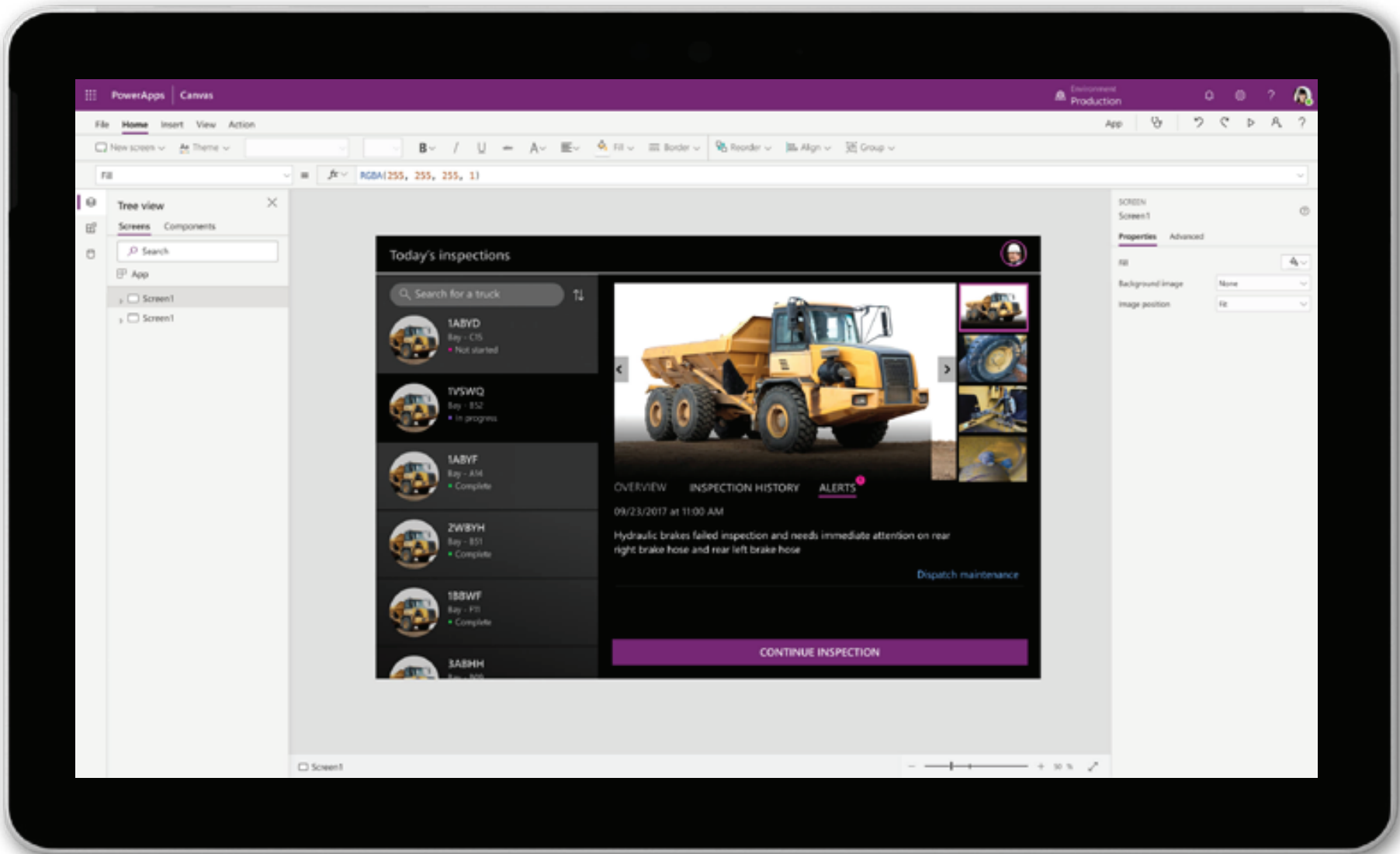
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TIP 1

Get to know the tools of the trade

Power Apps helps you turn ideas into organizational solutions by enabling you to build custom apps that solve business challenges. If you're familiar with tools such as PowerPoint, Excel, or SharePoint, you've already got a head start—you'll find working with Power Apps to be a similar experience.

With Power Apps, you can easily create useful business applications through a user-friendly interface, no coding required.



Power Apps is intuitive and easy to get started with.



POWER TIP

If you have an Office 365 or Microsoft 365 subscription, you might already have access to Power Apps for Office 365. The solutions will appear right alongside your other Office 365 apps when you log in online.

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TIP 2

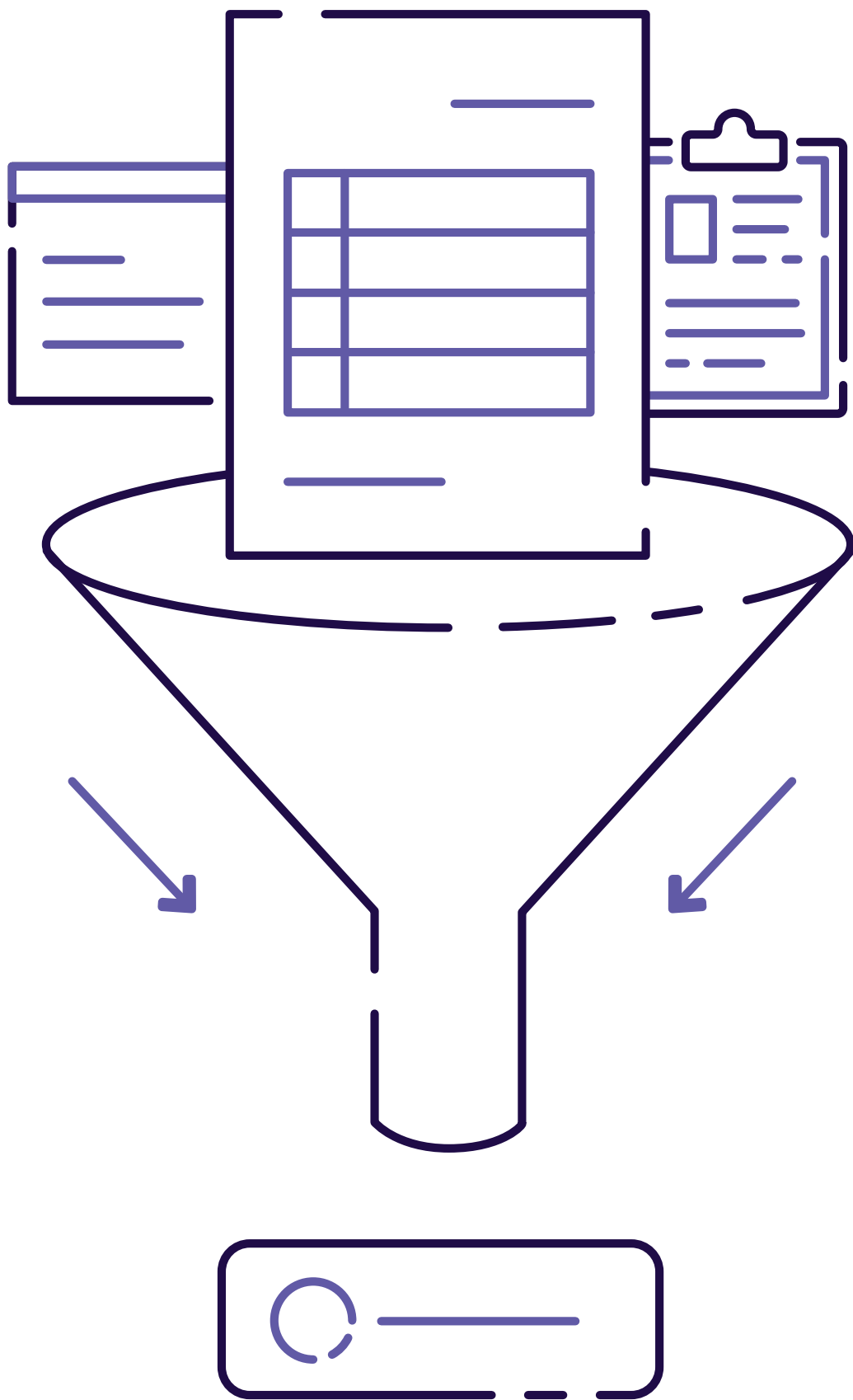
Small is beautiful

When building your first app, smaller is better. Choose a well-defined task for your app to perform and get clear on what success looks like. Creating a solution is a lot easier when you have a clear idea of what the problem is. This will allow you to dive in and start exploring while staying focused. For example, an app that displays information from a spreadsheet or a SharePoint list is easy to build and customize.



POWER TIP

Discover Power Apps templates, a terrific way to get inspiration for your first app.



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TIP 3

Know your audience

Understanding the problem you’re going to solve and the data you’re going to use are important first steps to creating a great app. The final piece of the puzzle is knowing who is going to use your app and how. By starting with a challenge that you’ve experienced yourself, this process is made much simpler.

If you and your team will be the users, it’s easy to figure out whether you’re more likely to access the application through a mobile phone or a tablet, for example. Choices like these will influence how you build your app.

If you are not the target audience for your application, take some time to understand the needs of those who are. What devices do they use? What’s their day like? What value will your solution provide? Putting yourself in their shoes will help your app be more successful.



POWER TIP

Power Apps can be made responsive, or you can publish them for specific screen layouts such as a phone, tablet, or browser. It’s helpful to decide which types of devices will access your app before you start creating.

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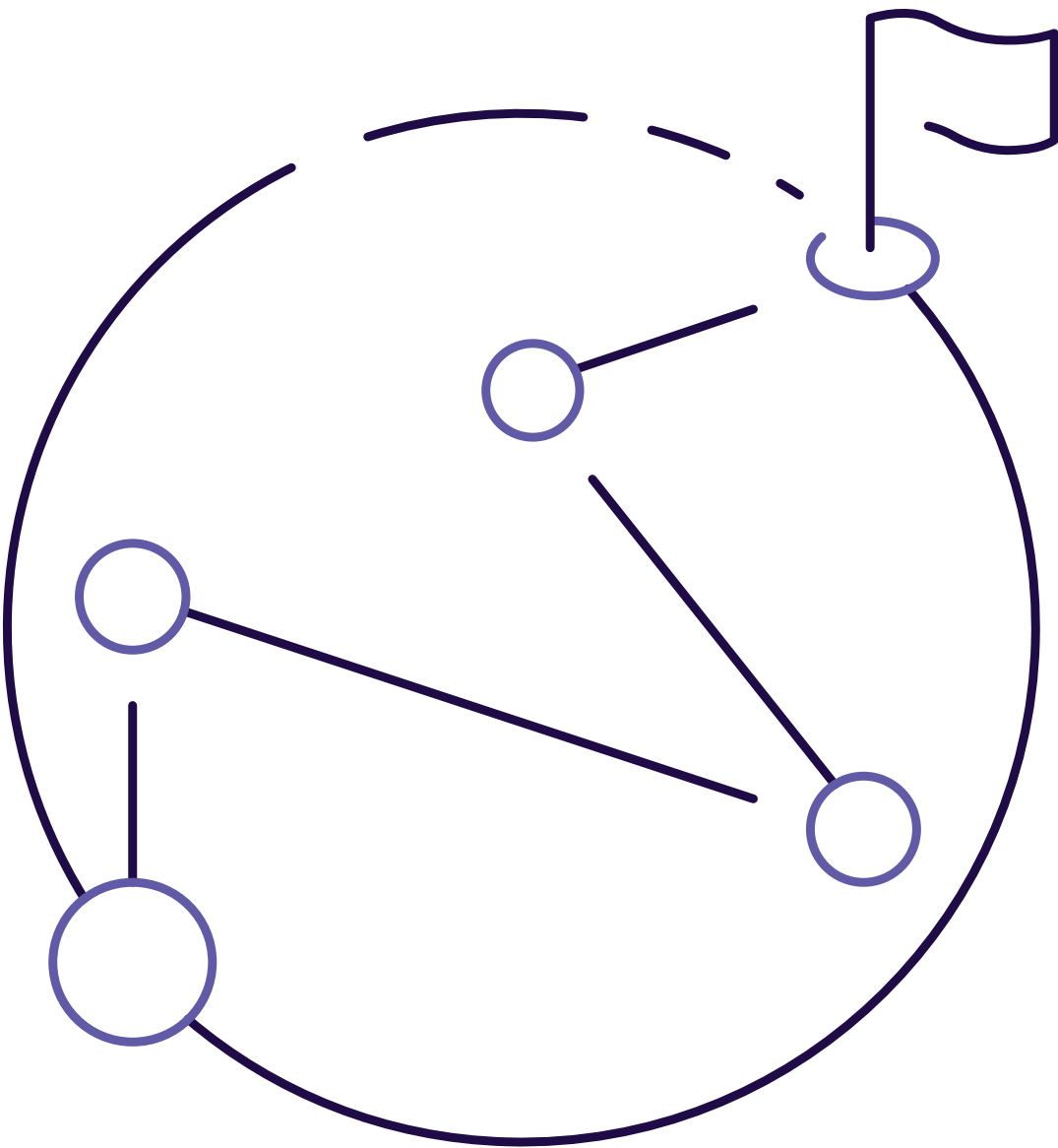
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TIP 4

Take a well-marked path

Familiarizing yourself with the fundamentals will help you get off to a great start. Microsoft has created clearly defined learning paths for Power Apps that start with the simplest concepts and work up to more advanced capabilities.

The best place to start is with the learning path called “Create a Canvas App in Power Apps.” It will guide you from Power Apps fundamentals through creating and customizing a sample app in just a couple of hours.



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TIP 5

Don't go it alone

People make the citizen developer community great. Power Apps has a fantastic community of engaged users who are eager to help with any question. Make the connection.



POWER TIP

You can stay up to date by checking the Announcements section of the Community site.



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TIP 6

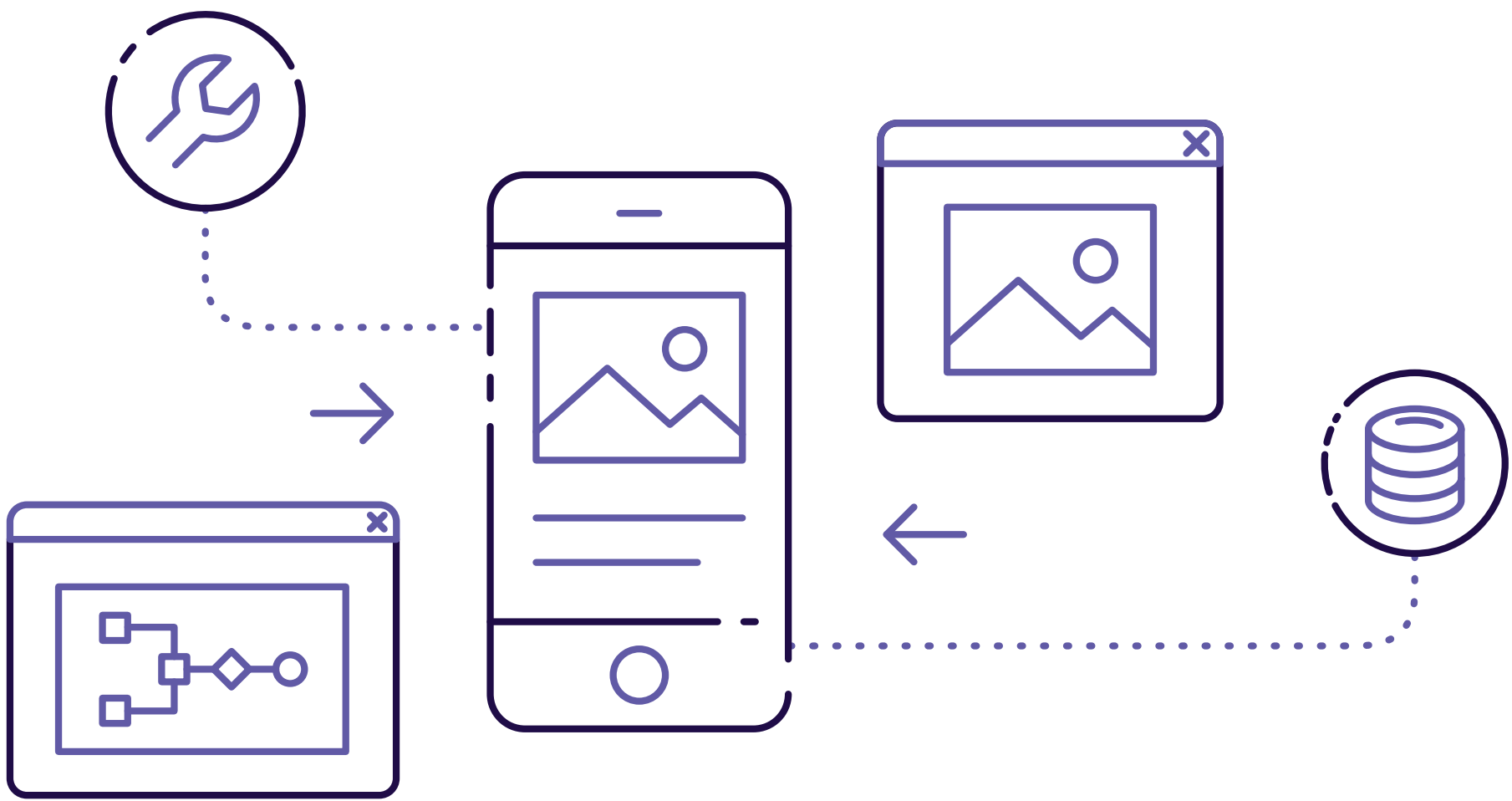
Use what you've got

Power Apps is designed to work seamlessly with Office 365, Dynamics 365, and many external apps and data sources. When you're first starting out, it pays to build your solution based on something you know well.

STARTING WITH OFFICE 365

An Excel spreadsheet stored in One Drive for Business makes a great basis for a Power App. You can do the same thing using a SharePoint list. Once your app is published, you can embed it in Microsoft Teams to drive usage and adoption.

Or, let's say you're a salesperson who works with Dynamics 365 CRM. From the Power Apps menu, you can automatically generate a new app that uses your Dynamics 365 data in just a few clicks. By starting with data that's familiar, you'll get to a working app faster.



POWER TIP

Your Microsoft Office 365 skills will come in handy when building on Power Apps. The design interface is like PowerPoint, using a drag-and-drop approach to build the user experience. Plus, adding functionality to your app uses formulas like those in Excel.

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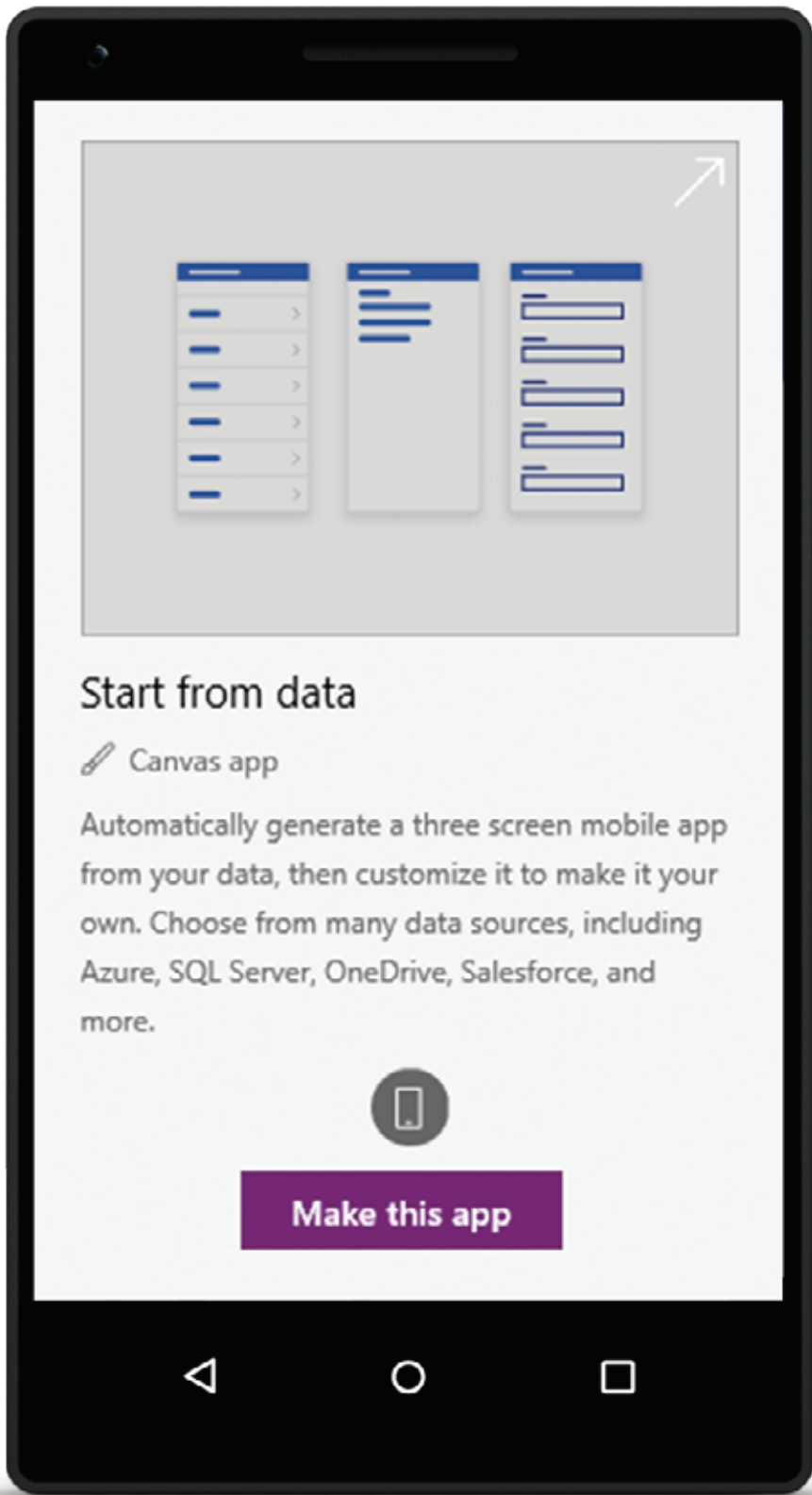
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It's easy to create an app from an Excel spreadsheet.

STARTING WITH AN EXTERNAL SOLUTION

Power Apps uses prebuilt connectors to access a wide range of popular applications, platforms, and data sources. For example, you could connect an app to Twitter and tweet, search Twitter, and trigger tweetbased workflows from within your app. There are a few more steps involved, but connectors make it much easier.



POWER TIP

Power Apps features connectors to more than 250 common applications and platforms, from Salesforce to Slack. Check out some of your options.

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TIP 7

Keep data privacy top of mind

When you use Power Apps, you’re building on a highly secure and governed platform created by Microsoft. It is designed for enterprise use, with built-in controls governing data access, security, and compliance. Microsoft is a trusted partner to IT departments.

Nevertheless, it’s important to consider whether any of the data captured or displayed by your app could be considered sensitive or proprietary and to take appropriate precautions. Talk to your IT department if you need help navigating this aspect of your application.

The Power Apps governance documentation is a good page to share with any IT professionals who have questions or concerns. It shows how the platform supports enterprise-grade security and control.



POWER TIP

Starting your journey as a citizen developer with low-risk data can help you demonstrate the value of low-code development inside your organization while alleviating concerns around data privacy.

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TIP 8

Get inspired

It’s exciting to learn how many people just like you have made big improvements in their organizations using Power Apps. They can also provide inspiring ideas and helpful guidance as you begin your journey.



POWER TIP

For the latest stories, tips, and content, follow @PowerApps on Twitter.

WHAT ARE CITIZEN DEVELOPERS SAYING ABOUT POWER APPS?



Everyone is looking to automate processes. Using Power Apps is going to help save money, assist technicians, and boost employee engagement. The possibilities of Power Apps are endless!”

MARTIN LEE
TECHNICAL POWER APPS SOLUTION EXPERT,
AUTOGLASS, PART OF BELRON GROUP



The apps we’ve developed with Power Apps make it easier to complete our daily tasks, while having everything in one place so everybody has complete visibility.”

PHILIP GERHARDT
GENERAL MANAGER,
ARRIVA LONDON



Power Apps has created a way for us to easily share important information about customer requests for new products with our stores and senior management staff.”

LYNN MARTINUSEN
CUSTOMER SERVICE MANAGER,
NORTH STATE GROCERY

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TIP 9

Keep learning

Power Apps is constantly being updated with new features and capabilities. With learning paths and comprehensive resources, you have the tools you need to keep increasing your skills. Stay on top of the latest developments by reading our blog and visiting the learning center often.



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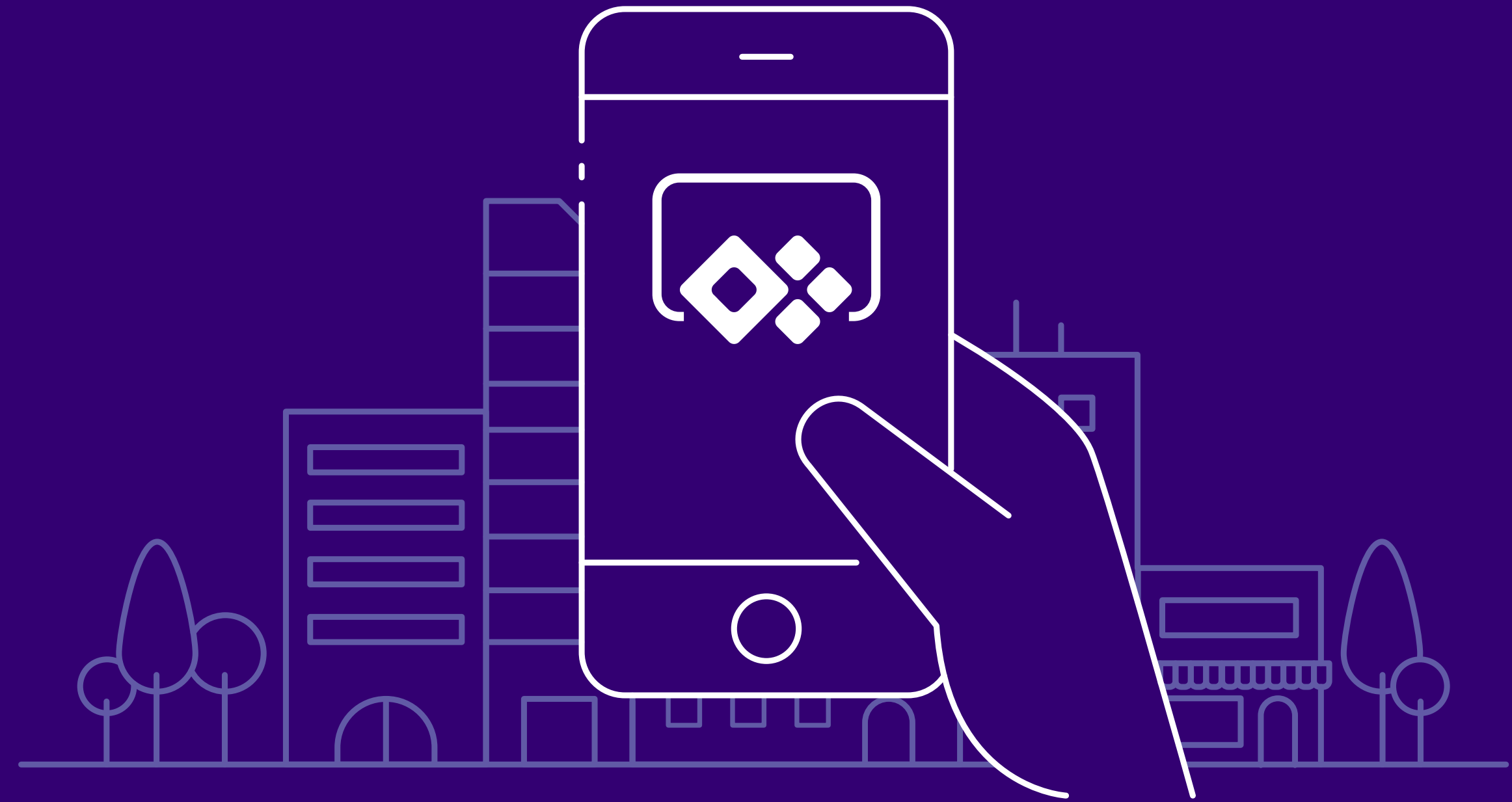
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Get started with Power Apps

LET US HELP YOU GET STARTED

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