



Case Study

How tourism giant Bourne Leisure enabled more agile decision-making in software procurement with Zoho Creator



www.bournecareers.co.uk

About Bourne Leisure

Bourne Leisure Holdings, Ltd. is one of the United Kingdom's largest privately owned leisure and tourism companies. Through a number of subsidiaries, it operates some of the UK's best known holiday brands, including Haven Holidays, Butlins, and Warner Leisure Hotels, and welcomes millions of vacationers from all walks of life every year.

Solution summary

Zoho Creator enabled not only rapid development of apps custom-built for complex workflows, but also a valuable prototyping tool to help determine when to bring in third-party tools, pin point core requirements, and perform vital end user research. The drag-and-drop interface let Bourne's Director of Product, Neil Hobbs, produce mockups in just a couple of hours while Deluge scripting offered full control for precise customization.

Two of the features that I really like are at opposite ends of the spectrum: The absolute simplicity of the drag-and-drop form design, and the power of Deluge scripting, which gives you complete control over every element of the application



Neil Hobbs,
Director of Product (Digital), Bourne Leisure

The Challenge

Bourne Leisure faces many layers of operational complexity, as each of its brands functions as an organization in its own right. Hobbs explains that for holiday park brands like Haven, "each site is like a small town, which means we have all the challenges involved in running a small town." This complexity presents difficulties when sourcing and deploying software, from ensuring that the tool fulfills end-user requirements, to training staff across disparate locations.



When you've got a fairly complex organization like ours and complex operations, off-the-shelf tools don't always get the job done.

Here are a few of the challenges Hobbs has faced overseeing IT operations at Bourne Leisure:

- 1** Most prebuilt apps lack the flexibility to accommodate complex workflows and varied requirements. For instance, off-the-shelf booking apps haven't always worked well across Bourne's varied restaurant setups and operators.
- 2** Delivering accurate safety information is vitally important, but can be challenging, especially at scale. For example, sharing allergy warnings is often difficult due to the way that ingredient databases are structured.
- 3** Responding rapidly to short-term and urgent needs requires agility. This was never more apparent to Bourne than when planning to reopen sites in 2020 while prioritizing safety and compliance with new and changing track-and-trace and social distancing requirements.
- 4** Speed and clarity are often lacking in software procurement discussions and processes at larger organizations. Without anything concrete to focus on, it's easy to lose momentum and difficult to pin down pain points.

The Solution

An early adopter of low-code, Hobbs knew it could meet his needs. Creator stood out for its ability to meet a developer at any point on the low-code spectrum, offering very quick app setup through an extremely simple drag-and-drop interface, backed by the power of Deluge scripting for more control and granularity when needed. He was soon deploying a wide variety of custom Creator solutions.

Solution highlights:

- ✔ Bourne saw early success by building a custom restaurant booking app. Intended as a stop gap solution, the app worked so well on the ground that it stayed in use for 7 years.
- ✔ When Haven Parks was reopening in 2020, Hobbs was able to develop and deploy a custom app within 9 days to meet the deadline for compliance. It was so intuitive that no formal staff training was required and Haven was saved from hiring an extra 70 full-time staff to administer extra safety processes.
- ✔ Hobbs built a custom, user-friendly interface for allergen information. Staff input a customer's allergies and the app displays a list of safe dishes and color-coded warnings for specific dishes the customer asks about.
- ✔ In cases where low-code isn't the best tool for the job, Hobbs often uses Creator for prototyping. When a new software requirement is raised, he's usually able to create a mock-up on the same day and a more substantial prototype within 24 hours. This quickly moves discussion from concept to the more concrete, and enables end-user research to inform development or procurement.



We turned to Zoho as one of our go-to tools, mainly because of the speed it gave us. I experimented with Zoho Creator for six months and found it easy and reliable to whip up solutions

Benefits and ROI

For Hobbs, the true test of software is real-world usability. The high adoption rates and low incident rates for his low-code solutions have been "the most rewarding thing to see." Scalability is also covered: "I have absolute confidence in the reliability of Creator's back-end database. I know that however many users we had, we would see the same performance."

The agility offered by low-code doesn't stop at app development. With Zoho Creator, Hobbs has also brought it into the boardroom. Sharing low-code mock-ups and prototypes within hours allows Hobbs to drive more productive discussions right from the start.

Here's what Bourne Leisure Studios achieved with Zoho Creator so far:

2 hours

Typical TAT for app mock-up

24 hours

Typical TAT for app prototype

30+ apps

(both production and prototypes) built

1000+

lines of custom Deluge code



Great solutions really start with great conversations about the why: Why are we doing this? How will this work? And I've found Zoho Creator invaluable in enabling those conversations.

Zoho offers a suite of intelligent enterprise business software, including an award winning CRM suite, the industry's only comprehensive analytics and BI platform, and a powerful low-code development ecosystem.

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