



# Salvation Army Accelerates Automation By Reducing Development Cycles Up To 80%

When the time came to modernize its decades-old Lotus Notes infrastructure, The Salvation Army moved to Microsoft Office 365, SharePoint and AgilePoint, a general-purpose low-code/no-code platform that empowers both professional and citizen developers to build a range of applications, from simple internally-facing apps to complex workflows and externally-facing mobile applications for corporate-wide use.

## The Challenge

Two decades ago, the western region of the Salvation Army USA standardized on Lotus Notes, adding myriads of applications since then. When it became clear that migrating to modern technology was mandatory, the non-profit needed a cost-effective and future-proof approach, one that would not require another expensive migration a few years down the road.

The IT group decided to implement Microsoft Office 365 and SharePoint to modernize its communications infrastructure. Microsoft technologies alone, however, did not provide the low-cost flexibility for building future applications.

For example, SharePoint-based applications required too much rework every time Microsoft released a new version. The western region of the Salvation Army also used an accounting system from a smaller vendor, which would require customization to integrate workflows.

## The Solution

Since Microsoft technologies alone did not afford the organization a cost-effective way to build applications that would meet the diverse needs of the people it served, the Salvation Army turned to AgilePoint to add a low-code, and low-maintenance applications development solution to its digital transformation. They wanted something that would work with and extend SharePoint, Office 365 and Microsoft SQL standards, as well as other applications like Salesforce. They also wanted to build workflows that interacted with various other applications, including on-premises apps and cloud-based ones.

“AgilePoint brought us a part of the project we could now do ourselves,” said David Brown, director of applications. “A number of times we were able to develop the entire solution in AgilePoint. The alternative would have been traditional development, even on the Office 365 platform.”

Karl Larsson, director of software development at The Salvation Army’s western region added, “AgilePoint takes care of all the common challenges, freeing us up to concentrate on those things unique to The Salvation Army.” This enabled the team to tackle more difficult applications right out of the gate.

## Empowering Citizen Developers

One of the team’s most important priorities was to empower non-technical people to build applications. These citizen developers would help the organization reduce the cost of development and maintenance of its applications while simplifying its application portfolio.

The team’s first citizen developer was Jonathan Funk, originally hired as a helpdesk professional. “When we went with AgilePoint, we decided to make Jonathan a developer, even though he didn’t have any formal education or training as a developer,” Brown said. “He was great at helpdesk but he also liked automating his tasks to be more productive.”



Supporting citizen developers is one of the strengths of low-code platforms like AgilePoint, which also provides capabilities for professional developers.

**“Building apps on AgilePoint has allowed me to be more focused and more proficient, I can leverage AgilePoint as the one interface to work with other key technologies. AgilePoint has taken me from creating a few apps a year to dozens. It’s definitely achieved our goal of rapid development.”**

Jonathan Funk  
Citizen Developer at The Salvation Army

## Streamlining Workflows

Another urgent need for The Salvation Army was creating an invoice workflow application for its churches. When local churches receive invoices, they need to sign off on them and send them to headquarters to get paid. Many employees scattered around the region were also using corporate credit cards.

“AgilePoint was in the mix because we wanted to have a repeatable process for handling corporate credit cards, including enabling users to sign off on expenses,” Larsson explained. AgilePoint solved this problem without requiring a complete rework of an Angular app that the team developed prior but without workflow. “We could take 70% of the code and turn it into a workflow-enabled credit card approval system with AgilePoint.”

When the team compared the cost of using AgilePoint to hiring a third-party developer to custom code the credit card reimbursement workflow on SharePoint, they found a substantial difference in cost. “We’re getting real bang for our buck with our AgilePoint investment,” Brown added.

## Bottom-Line Results

Since the Salvation Army chose to license AgilePoint by shared concurrent seats, not by how many named users access the application, costs were manageable. “We can deploy apps to all of our 6,000-user base with a small number of concurrent licensed users, without buying 6,000 licenses,” Brown explained.

But the benefits went well beyond simple savings. The organization was able to demonstrate how both citizen developers and professional developers could work in parallel to implement sophisticated workflow-based apps with front ends for both internal and external consumption.

As they ramped up, these small teams were able to build new applications at an increasing rate, without maintenance of the developed applications slowing them down. This low-maintenance aspect is a core benefit of AgilePoint’s unique low-code approach, as it helps organizations avoid the legacy problem.

“For most of our applications, we have experienced a 70-80% reduction in our application development lifecycle,” Brown said. The cost savings didn’t mean that the organization budgeted less for application development. Instead, they doubled the number of applications they were planning to create.

By using AgilePoint, the Salvation Army has also future-proofed its technology. For example, if the organization decides to migrate or expand to another cloud platform down the road, they will only need to reconfigure existing applications, not conduct a costly complete rebuild.

**75-80%**

reduction in application development lifecycle

**200%**

doubled the number of applications to be developed with the same budget

**The low-maintenance aspect is a core benefit of AgilePoint’s unique low-code approach, as it helps organizations to create future-proofed applications and avoid the technical debt problem.**

