

The logo for ZUDY, featuring the word "ZUDY" in white uppercase letters on a dark grey square background. Below "ZUDY" is the tagline "No Code Apps" in a smaller, orange font.

Zudy VINYL

Review From A Customer



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From IT Central Station, the leading review site for enterprise technology solutions.

Review by a Real User

Verified by IT Central Station



CFO of the Markets Group at a media company with 10,001+ employees

Jon Pederson

WHAT IS OUR PRIMARY USE CASE?

We use it to build applications that help us facilitate moving data between different systems, and also for pulling together disparate data sources into one place where so that it is easy to look at.

HOW HAS IT HELPED MY ORGANIZATION?

We have a lot of events. With our Jingle Ball events we have 12 concerts all over the country over the Christmas season. There is a lot of advertising across those and sponsorships as well. It's really complicated, operationally, to manage. It was historically managed in spreadsheets and Google Docs. We were able to move everything into a VINYL application and it's helped us understand more. It has helped us standardize some processes that were very haphazard. It has helped us put some more rigor and clarity around certain things that were done very manually on Excel spreadsheets regarding processes. Now we know what local markets versus national might be selling in terms of assets against the events. And it just gives us better business intelligence. The key thing is not that it did anything that you couldn't do another way. It was more the fact that it was very easy to get this built up and running quickly, and it's not a headache to maintain like a lot of other traditional IT platforms are. In some cases, it's not a question of whether VINYL does something that other software doesn't do, it's a question of how it does it and the ease with which it does. With Zudy's consultancy, we were able to go from an idea to having a proof of concept in a couple of weeks, to let everybody see what we were going to do. That would have taken a lot longer using traditional coding technology.

WHAT IS MOST VALUABLE?

The Lite Integration is really the key thing. You're able to attach the VINYL software to a variety of different systems very easily and pull data together in a way that is really difficult to do using traditional technology. That's really the key, core functionality that really makes the software very useful. Also, the fact that it's a no-code platform also makes it easier for people to understand and deal with internally, to continue to build applications and modify existing applications.



WHAT NEEDS IMPROVEMENT?

When we started with them the platform was brand new. There were - I don't want to say deficiencies - just things they didn't have yet. We worked a lot with them on security and some other things. And they've continually updated the platform to include new features and functionality. One of the things that was lacking for a while, although it continues to get better, is the user interface. It was built more "functionally." It was better for functionality than it was for being pretty, from the standpoint of the user. They've done a lot of work there, but I think there's probably a little more work to do, continually. Also, while some of the reporting functionality is adequate, reporting needs to continue to be worked on, given the fact that there are a lot of really good reporting tools out there. But, for a product of its age and life cycle position, they are super-responsive to what the clients need. And as they add more clients, certain clients will say, "Hey, I really need this feature functionality," and they'll build it into the suite. Then everybody has access to it, which is great.

FOR HOW LONG HAVE I USED THE SOLUTION?

One to three years.

WHAT DO I THINK ABOUT THE STABILITY OF THE SOLUTION?

Stability is not an issue. We run it in AWS and we've never had any stability issues with it at all. We haven't had instances of it going down. It's possible that has happened, but nothing has been brought to my attention. Typically, if there was a problem, I would hear about it.

WHAT DO I THINK ABOUT THE SCALABILITY OF THE SOLUTION?

We have not pressure-tested it enough. The applications that we have in it are not super heavy in terms of bandwidth and we haven't had any issues. I don't think we're pushing enough volume through the app to test the scalability.

HOW ARE CUSTOMER SERVICE AND TECHNICAL SUPPORT?

Tech support has been super-responsive. We've generally had a retainer agreement for consulting hours, so we get what we need really quickly. In full disclosure, I have a strong relationship with senior management. One of the reasons we were an early adopter is that I know the owners of the company. I know the CEO. He brought us in. I have direct access to the owners and the senior management team whenever I need to. If we have a problem, I get whatever I need. But the team and the consultants underneath have been really responsive. At this stage, I'm really outside the process now because the IT team runs it and they deal with it. I'm hearing no complaints, so I assume support is what it needs to be. People would come to me if there was something that was an issue. But it's been running really smoothly for quite a bit of time.

WHICH SOLUTION DID I USE PREVIOUSLY AND WHY DID I SWITCH?

For this particular type of requirement, we mostly built apps in .NET with our application development team. This is a departure from that, as a way to build apps. But we haven't used any of Zudy's competitors. We were just using traditional methods and this is our first foray into the no-code sort of platform. It was one of those things where we had some needs and this was a very low-cost option. We were one of their earliest customers so they did invest in some consulting time for free to help us build a couple of things, to prove out conceptually that the system could do what we wanted. That helped us. But part of it was the fact that it was a low-cost option. With the Lite Integration, I wasn't going to have to disrupt my entire organization to do something. We haven't had to disrupt IT and the business organizations to keep them up and running. It's a nice product from that perspective because it allows you to gain some efficiencies without having to rip apart your IT organization to actually install something; sometimes, moving to new platforms can be really complicated.



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HOW WAS THE INITIAL SETUP?

The setup was pretty easy. Initially, they did the setup for us. They hosted it in their own AWS instance. And somewhere around 12 to 18 months ago we moved it over to our own AWS instance, and that was fairly seamless from what I was told. We really haven't had any issues with it at all. The technical setup was pretty clean. We were up and running pretty quickly. We got in and they merged everything into our single sign-on process really well. There were no issues that I know of. From what my people have told us, it's easy to learn. We've had some Finance people learn it, as well as some people on the IT side.

WHAT WAS OUR ROI?

It's hard to say what our ROI is, but VINYL has certainly helped us. Our investment has been limited and we've gotten good process benefits out of it. I can't really say in dollars and cents, but it's certainly helped us improve rigor and process in a number of areas. We haven't done the calculations because this wasn't one of those things where I said, "I'm going to go spend this money and then I'm going to save some money somewhere else." This was more about fixing a broken process than it was about trying to save money.

WHAT'S MY EXPERIENCE WITH PRICING, SETUP COST, AND LICENSING?

Pricing was actually one of the things that drew us to the product initially. At the time there was another platform called OutSystems that we looked at. At the time, because OutSystems was a little more mature, there was a thought from our IT team that they would have preferred to use OutSystems vs VINYL. But the way it was licensed at the time, I got a flat monthly fee from Zudy for the VINYL product, which allowed me to basically have unlimited use of it. That was really helpful. I know that some of the competition or competitor sites or products were priced on the number of seats, the number of people accessing it at any given time. Given that I have a company that is north of 10,000 people, those sorts of licensing issues can get prohibitively expensive, especially if you have a product that's going to hit fairly widely across the enterprise. So the pricing mechanism from a licensing perspective was very attractive. We have an annual license, we pay monthly. It's very competitive and very worthwhile given the return we get out of it. I don't know if my pricing is different or better or worse than other customers', considering we were an early adopter. The key thing here is that the pricing is just one price. We can do as much or as little with the product as we want to which is very attractive. I don't have to worry about if I build a new app, I have to pay more. Or, if I put 20 more people logging into the app, I don't have to pay any extra for that either. That makes it really easy for us to use internally, without having to worry about that sort of thing.

WHICH OTHER SOLUTIONS DID I EVALUATE?

We looked at OutSystems. There were a couple of other tools out there that we looked at. As a Finance person, all I can say is anecdotally what I've heard from the IT people. Overall, we're happy with the tool. I have not had people come to me and say we should drop this and do something else. But I couldn't really comment deeply on how it compares to the competition. All I know is that we're happy with what we have.

WHAT OTHER ADVICE DO I HAVE?

You need to have buy-in from both the business team and the IT team. Anytime you implement a new platform like this, if you don't have people internally who are going to embrace the product, it's going to fail. I'd call VINYL an eight out of 10. It does what it's supposed to do. It continues to improve. We're getting good usage out of it, and I think it's a great value for the price.

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