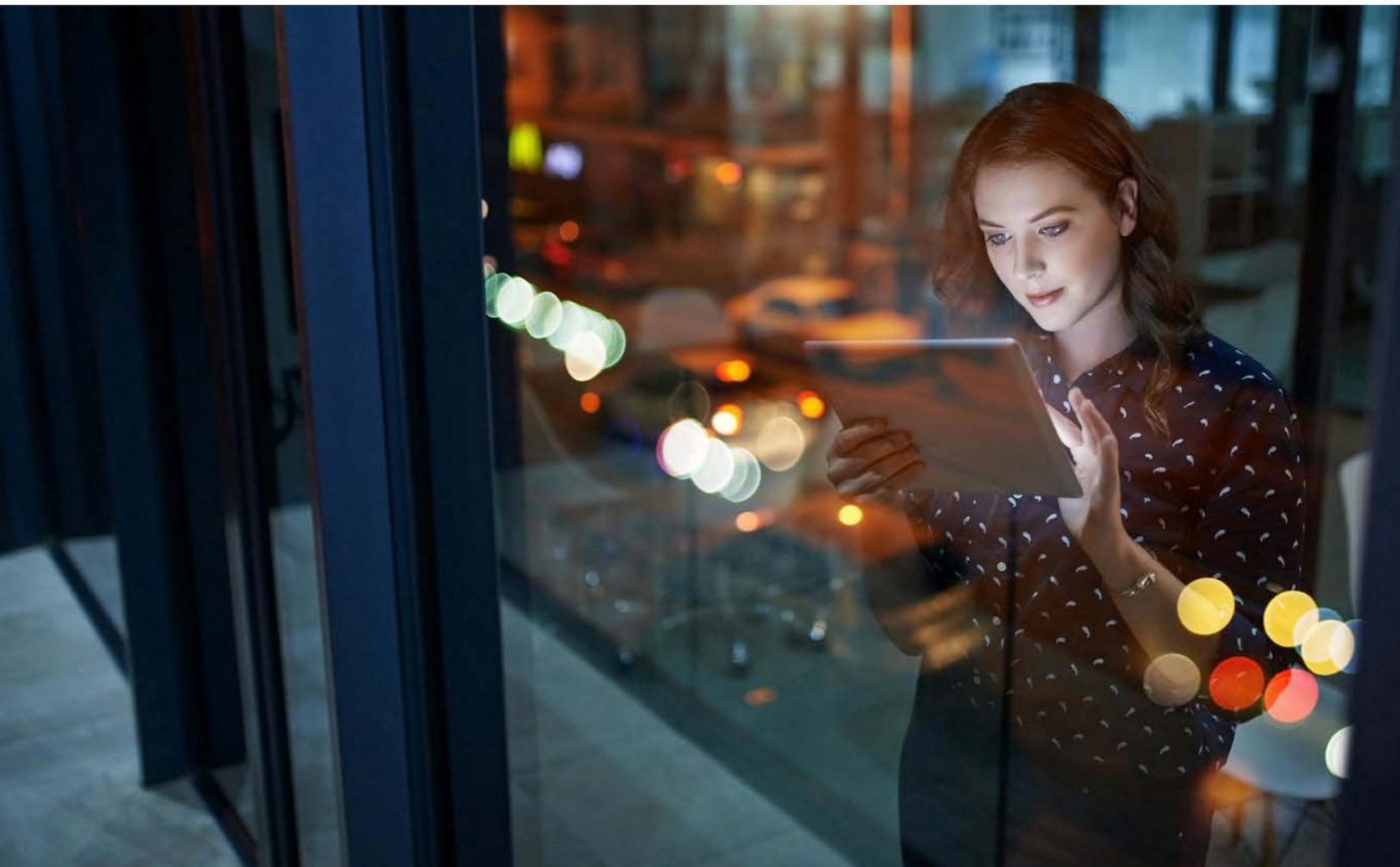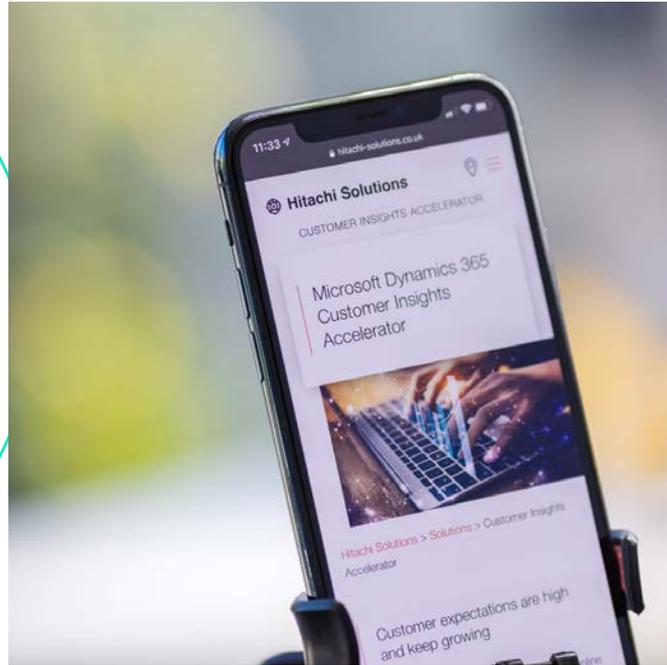**GrowCreate.**

Client handbook

Web design, development and support for serious businesses

Websites that **grow** with your business

We've put this handbook together to demonstrate how we work and how we deliver digital solutions for our clients.

Growing team

We're a pan-European web design and development agency creating thriving, long-term relationships with our clients.

With offices in the UK and Germany, we master digital challenges through clear communication, creativity, technical excellence and a shared culture. Where we differ from other agencies is in the value we place in our working relationship with you.

We're a friendly, professional team, working together to solve problems and create solutions for your business challenges.

GrowCreate is a solution partner for Microsoft, Invessed, Umbraco, Kentico, and Episerver. We help organisations achieve digital excellence by providing CMS platforming of the highest quality.

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Choosing an agency is hard

2. Our proposal

After our initial contact, a discovery call and a brief, we'll send you a proposal. The detail of the proposal will depend on how far our conversations have progressed but will always provide:

- a concise project summary
- the roles and responsibilities of key team members
- an overview describing the stages of the project and a timeline
- an outline of indicative costs

Your project deserves a highly trained team.

1. Contact

You have a good idea of who we are, what we offer and how we work. Your first contact will be with Adam, Theo or Polina where we will ask you about your project. Our goal from this call is to agree our teams are a good fit, as we believe that the better the relationship, the better the work.

3. Kick-off

The first step of the project is a kick-off meeting. We will establish lines of communication, set project roles and give the team a vision of how the project will move forward. The meeting takes place over Microsoft Teams.

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4. Agile development

Many agencies pay lip service to agile delivery. Not us!

We've had huge success embracing agile development. We use the SCRUM framework, the most used agile method in the world. It is lightweight and easy to understand.

Our delivery team is our superpower

The Scrum framework consists of teams and their associated roles, meetings, artefacts, and rules. Each component within the framework serves a specific purpose and is essential to Scrum's success and usage.

The Product Owner identifies product needs, where value can be delivered and decides the priority of what gets developed.

The Development Team oversees delivering the project requirements. The team may be all developers, but often include designers and testers, dependant on the Sprint needs.

The Scrum Master supports both the delivery team and the Product Owner by empowering the team to deliver the sprint goals. They are focused on unblocking and smoothing the way for the Development Team.

Artefacts support the development of your product

The Product Backlog is an ordered list of all project requirements. It enables the Development Team to have all the relevant information needed to deliver features.

The Sprint Backlog is the agreed list of User Stories from the Product Backlog. A Sprint is a basic unit for development and is timeboxed, typically to one week. A Sprint Release is the artefact produced in the Sprint and is all 'shippable' features completed.

Meetings support transparency and collaboration

The Daily Stand-up is the most frequent meeting and runs either at the start of each day. Individuals update team members on the tasks they've completed since the last stand-up, their upcoming tasks, and what's blocking further work. The Stand-up enables the group to deal with any blockers and improve Sprint velocity.

The Sprint Planning meeting is led by the Product Owner and is where we agree the User Stories for the upcoming Sprint. Once approved, the Development Team will break the User Stories into smaller tasks. Multiple team members can work on the tasks simultaneously.

The Sprint Review meeting occurs at the end of the Sprint. It is used by the Development Team to demonstrate the completed tasks to the Product Owner.

The Sprint Retrospective also happens in this meeting and is an opportunity for the entire team to evaluate what went well and what needs improvement. The retrospective results in actions for the team to help improve future Sprints.

Fast development solutions

5. Website maintenance

Sign up for priority bug fixing

We provide fixed-price technical support, governed by a Service Level Agreement (SLA). There are three options: maintenance, business and enterprise. The selected package will depend on the complexity of your solution.

Every month a Support Engineer will review your solution and ensure it is maintained. Tasks include, but are not limited to reviewing:

- SSL certificates
- Microsoft Insight and logs
- CPU and Disk space
- Uptime
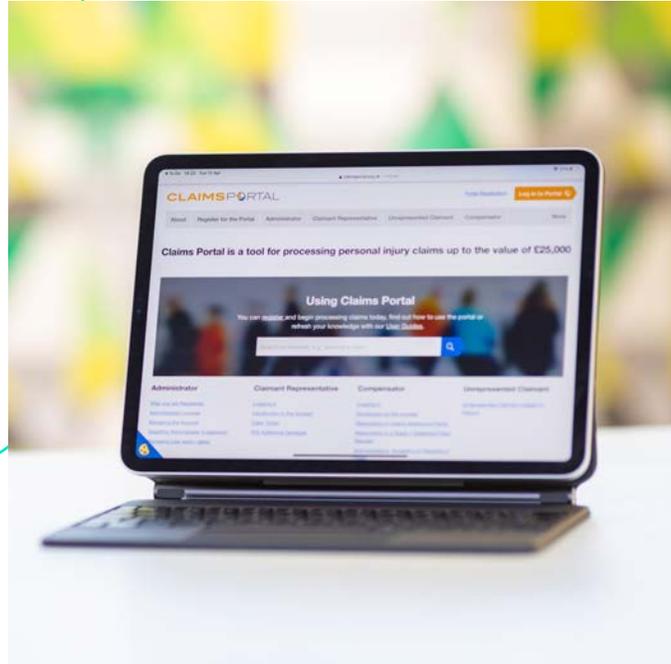- Permissions
- Windows Update Service
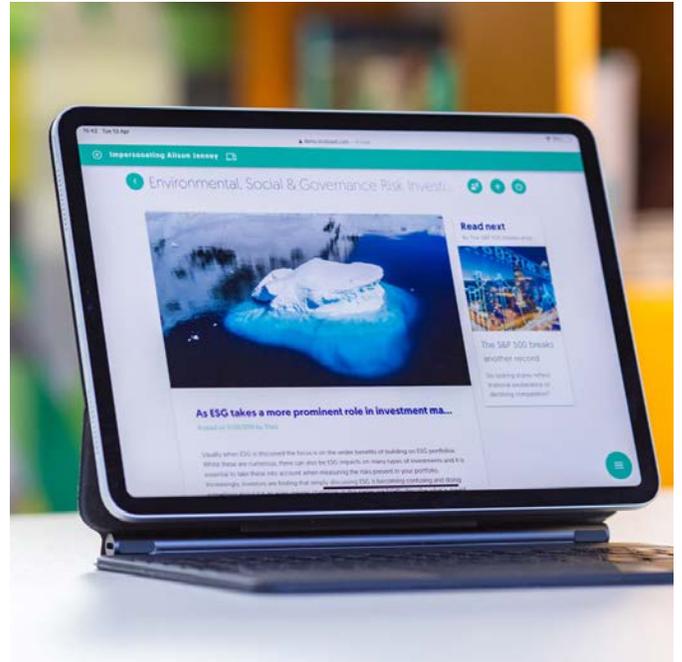
Design and develop new features

You can purchase retained hours alongside your support package. They are a flexible way to regularly design and develop new features. This approach gives you the peace of mind that retained hours are used only for feature improvements.

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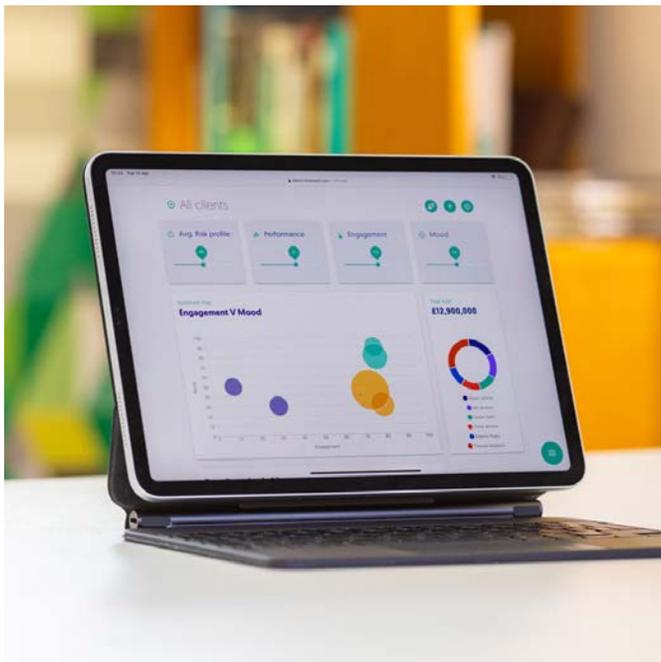
A **powerful** toolkit

6. Tools

Teamwork is our Project Management tool, we use it for:

- creating the project backlog
- assigning tasks to team members
- logging time
- communicating at task level
- tracking task status

You will be invited to Teamwork when your project begins.

Teamwork Desk is a ticket management tool from the same makers as Teamwork, and it is perfect for support. Unlike Teamwork, you don't need to be invited by a GrowCreate team member and can instead openly register. You can raise tickets by completing the support form. When your first ticket has been raised you'll be invited to register on Teamwork Desk to monitor the ticket status.

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Microsoft Teams is our main communication tool. Typical video calls are, but not limited to; Daily Stand-ups between team members working together on a task, Project Managers catching up with clients.

We also use Microsoft Teams as an Instant Messaging tool. We do this both informally between GrowCreate team members and through our more official arranged "Teams", clients can also be introduced to our Teams for collaborative instant messaging.

Finally, as part of our technical monitoring, there are various automatic notifications triggered through Microsoft Teams if any support solutions experience technical problems.

Microsoft Azure is our primary and recommended cloud hosting platform. It allows us to setup solutions quicker, scale hosting environments when required, and hook in with other Microsoft Tools like DevOps out-of-the-box.

We find Microsoft Azure is a great fit for clients. It offers the biggest portfolio of data centres in the world, trusted by 90% of Fortune 500 organisations. It allows us to set up solutions quicker and scale hosting environments when required.

Microsoft DevOps is an essential tool for our technical team. The functions it plays in our development processes are:

- to cloud-host source code repositories, which includes team collaboration with pull requests and branching
- to build, test and deploy solutions through our Continuous Integration pipelines and deploy continuously
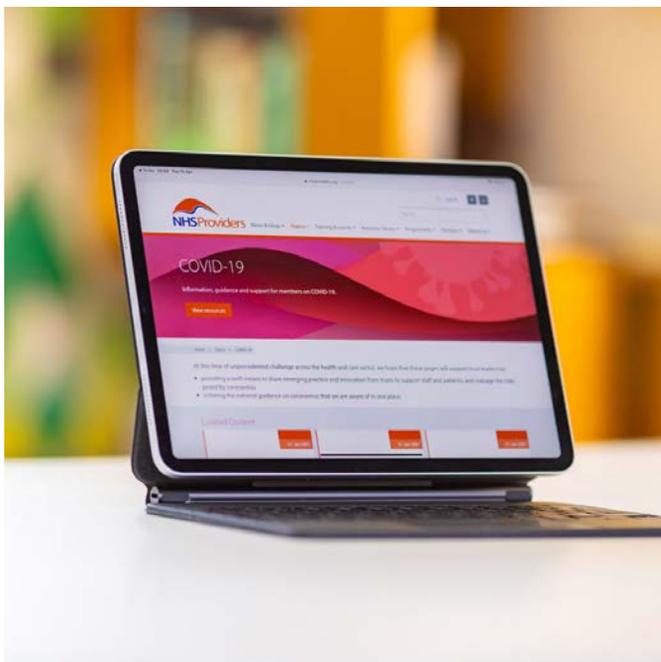
Microsoft Azure is a great fit

Strong technical background

To ensure everyone's ability to work effectively and efficiently, we enforce several standards across our code. Some of these are for performance and security in high-traffic, high-impact sites, while some enable us to collaborate more effectively.

We develop websites using browser technologies (HTML5, JavaScript and CSS) that comply with W3C standards. By avoiding most plugins, we ensure maximum device and SEO support, as well as compliance with accessibility and security requirements.

Continuous Integration & Deployment are the automated processes in building and deploying a digital solution onto a hosting environment. Apart from saving time, it can also prevent human error caused by manually deploying. Releases no longer need to be scheduled, and it reduces reliance on a single developer to implement critical releases.

7. Best practice

Many of our projects involve building complex web platforms that seamlessly integrate with third-party systems. Our solutions provide a more enjoyable user experience.

We don't standstill. We're excited about new technologies, experimenting with new languages, tools, and software. This culture has resulted in a team of early adopters in responsive design, cloud hosting, and Continuous Integration.

We use Microsoft DevOps for source control. We use this for Branching, which is the mechanism of allowing multiple developers to work on the same solution at the same time and Pull Requests which is a mechanism of peer-reviewing committed code. Once a developer merges their branch of code, it creates a Pull Request that is reviewed by a Senior Developer, helping to maintain quality and coding conventions.

Our Delivery Team uses four environments: Local, Development, Staging and Production.

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There is a goal to increase automated testing over time, although this is dependent on client budgets. Our manual testing falls into the following categories:

- Local testing by our Developers
- Quality Assurance Testing by a member of the GrowCreate team and focusses on testing each User Story against its acceptance criteria
- Regression Testing completed by the GrowCreate Project Manager per deployment to ensure new work hasn't broken existing functionality
- User Acceptance Testing by our clients on staging and typically being both User Story testing and Regression Testing

Security is always front of mind

Security first

Security is always front of mind.

- ISO27001 accredited
- Cyber Essentials
- Workstation audits
- "Security First" mentality

Style guides

Style guides include, but are not limited to:

- CSS which is compiled from SASS using Gulp, vendor prefixes are added for older browsers, source maps are created, and then the CSS is minified to provide the smallest possible file size
- Critical CSS
- Vue sites styled using the Bulma framework
- Bootstrap or CSS Grid and Flexbox are used for page layout
- All our websites are responsive, developed for mobile-first, and then further styles are added for tablet and desktop
- Websites are tested on the latest versions of Chrome, Firefox, Safari, Edge and Samsung Internet, with older versions of Internet Explorer catered for if required

Strong track record

Our team simplify the most complex solutions with flexible, intuitive and modern user interfaces

8. Grow Team

It's our team that has a strong track record of successful website and software launches.

Our Client Service Team consists of Directors, Project Managers, and Account Managers. It is the responsibility of the team to ensure your team is happy, have their requirements met, and understand the different services we offer.

GrowCreate have two Company Directors: Adam Weston and Theo Paraskevopoulos.

Adam is our Managing Director and leads GrowCreate's business in both the UK and German office on a day–to–day basis.

Theo is our Chief Executive Officer, he is an expert in CMS and digital technology, oversees the entire workflow, and orchestrates relationships with key clients and partners.

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Project Management

Your Project / Account Manager will be your primary point of contact. Their responsibilities include, but not limited to:

- Working with you on your solutions and defining a backlog of User Stories
- Sending and discussing end of month reports where applicable
- Acting as an escalation point for any support issues

Development

Your Development Team deliver your requirements, make technical recommendations to continuously improve solutions, and ensure their work is developed to technical best practices. Members of the Development Team are also Solution Experts and Specialist Matter Experts.

Specialist Matter Experts focus on a specific skill sets like security, payment gateways or CRM integrations

Solution Expert

Every solution that we work with has a Solution Expert. They are often, but not always, a Senior Developer involved in either the creation or long-term management of the digital solution.

The responsibilities of a Solution Expert are to guide future requirements and manage the impact they have on a solution. They may also suggest requirements, based on their experience.

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About GrowCreate

GrowCreate is a web design and development agency specialising in Content Management Systems and Digital Experience Platforms. We're a friendly, professional team, working together to create solutions that solve real business challenges. Our platform, integration, and design experience coupled with our industry experts, will help you to achieve digital excellence.

Kentico Xperience.
Gold Partner

GOLD
UMBRACO PARTNER

Discover how you can deliver better results. **Schedule a call today.**