

Upgrade, modernize part, or modernize **all of it?**

A decision worksheet for the people who own a PowerBuilder application and its budget

Appeon shipped PowerBuilder 2025 R2 in June 2026. It is a solid release from a vendor that is clearly investing, and it makes staying on PowerBuilder a real option again. It also puts a decision on your desk that many companies have deferred for years.

This worksheet gets you to an answer you can defend. **You do not need to read code. You need five answers, and your team can gather them in about a week.**

HOW TO USE IT

1. Fill in the five questions with your technical lead and the person who owns the business process.
2. Under each question, tick the box that matches your answer. Each box carries a letter: A, B or C.
3. Count the letters on the last page and read where they point.

YOUR APPLICATION

Application		Completed by	
Business owner		Technical lead	
What it does for the business			

THE THREE OPTIONS

OPTION		WHAT KIND OF DECISION IT IS
A	Stay and upgrade	An operating decision. You pay subscriptions and a regression-test cycle now, and again every few years. You get a supported, more secure application, and time.
B	Modernize selected components	A contained project for a specific gap, such as an integration or a customer portal. You also take on the ongoing cost of running two technology stacks.
C	Modernize the full application	A capital decision. It is the right one when the problem is the platform itself and no upgrade will fix it.

Each of the three is the right answer for somebody. Companies get into trouble when they approve the upgrade because it is inexpensive and call the platform question settled, or fund a modernization to solve a problem an upgrade would have fixed.

1

Which version are we on, and when does its support end?

Version in production		Mainstream maintenance ends	
End of life		Upgrade regression-test estimate (days)	

APPEON SUPPORT DATES, CHECKED OCTOBER 5, 2026

POWERBUILDER VERSION	MAINSTREAM MAINTENANCE ENDS	END OF LIFE
2025 R2	Not yet published	Not yet published
2025	June 3, 2027	June 3, 2028
2022 R3 (long-term support)	No sooner than January 8, 2029	No sooner than January 8, 2031
2022 and 2022 R2	Ended May 7, 2026	May 7, 2027
2019 R3 (long-term support)	Ended January 22, 2026	January 22, 2028
2021, 2019 R2, 2019, 2017 R3 and earlier	Ended	Ended

Source: Appeon Product Availability Matrix, appeon.com/update. Dates change, so confirm them before you budget. After end of life, technical support stops.

WHERE IT POINTS

This question does not choose between A, B and C. It tells you whether an upgrade is due whatever else you decide.

- ☐ Our version is in mainstream maintenance. No upgrade is forced on us this year.
- ☐ Our version is past mainstream maintenance. An upgrade and a regression-test cycle need a line in next year's budget, even if we go on to modernize.

The license is the small number in an upgrade. Regression testing every screen and report the business depends on is the large one.

2 How many people can safely change this application, and how long will they be here?

Count names. Include contractors. “Safely” means they can make a change, build it, release it, and fix it when it fails at month end.

NAME	EMPLOYEE OR CONTRACTOR	CAN CHANGE THE CODE	CAN BUILD AND RELEASE	HERE THROUGH (YEAR)

WHERE IT POINTS

- ☐ **A** Three or more people, and they will be here for as long as we plan to run the application.
- ☐ **C** Fewer than three, or one of them has a retirement or contract end date before the application does. A number below three is a business continuity risk. A new PowerBuilder release does not add PowerBuilder developers to the job market.

3 What did our last three change requests cost, and how long did they take?

Then find a comparable change from about three years ago. The trend matters more than any single figure.

CHANGE REQUEST	YEAR	ELAPSED TIME	EFFORT OR COST	A COMPARABLE CHANGE THREE YEARS AGO TOOK

WHERE IT POINTS

- ☐ **A** About the same as three years ago. Change requests are few and the application is stable.
- ☐ **B** Rising in one area. One module changes every month while the rest has not been touched in years.
- ☐ **C** Rising across the application. Each change costs more and takes longer than it did a few years ago.

4 What has the business asked for that we declined or deferred because of the platform?

This list is the cost of staying, and it never shows up on an invoice.

WHAT THE BUSINESS ASKED FOR	WHO ASKED	YEAR	WHY THE PLATFORM MADE IT EXPENSIVE

WHERE IT POINTS

- ☐ **A** Nothing of substance. Our users work on Windows desktops and nobody is asking for anything else.
- ☐ **B** One or two specific gaps. Another system needs the data, customers want a portal, or some users need remote access.
- ☐ **C** A growing list. The business needs browser access for every user, integration with modern systems, or AI features built on the logic inside the application.

5 How many more years does this application need to run?

Get a number from the business owner, with their name beside it.

Years it needs to run		Number given by	
Planned replacement, if any		Replacement go-live date	

WHERE IT POINTS

- ☐ **A** Fewer than about five years, or a retirement date is set, for example an ERP rollout that replaces it.
- ☐ **C** Seven to ten years or more.
- ☐ **C** The application is a product we sell, and buyers or acquirers ask about the stack during diligence. Tick this as well as one of the boxes above if it applies.

If the answer falls between five and seven years, leave this question unticked and let the others decide.

Where your answers point

Count the letters you ticked in questions 2 to 5.

	A	B	C
Number of ticks			

MOST TICKS

WHAT IT MEANS AND WHAT TO DO NEXT

A

Stay and upgrade. Upgrade, keep your money, and get on with your year. Put a name on the decision, set a date to revisit it, and write down what would change your mind.

If this is you, do not let anyone sell you a migration. That includes us.

B

Modernize selected components. Appeon gives you tools for this: automatic REST API creation from existing DataWindows, and PowerServer for deploying the application as an installable cloud app. You can also move a single module to .NET and run it beside the PowerBuilder core.

Before you approve it, ask whether the project shrinks the PowerBuilder footprint or only adds to what you maintain. Two-stack arrangements tend to outlive the plan that created them, so put an end date on this one or accept in writing that it is permanent.

C

Modernize the full application. The problem is the platform, and an upgrade will not fix it. Whoever you talk to, hold them to four things:

1. A fixed price, quoted before work starts.
2. A written definition of what “done” means at delivery.
3. Evidence that the business logic survived, in a form your team can check.
4. A clear answer on what happens to your source code.

No clear lead

Give the most weight to questions 2 and 5. The people who can change the application and the years it has to run are the two answers an upgrade cannot alter.

Before you fund anything: two numbers on one page

Whichever way the answers point, put these side by side. With both in front of you, you can defend the decision either way.

NUMBER 1: FIVE YEARS OF STAYING	AMOUNT
PowerBuilder and PowerServer subscriptions, five years	
Upgrade and regression-test cycles in that period	
Change requests, at the trend from question 3	
People you will need to hire, replace or retain (question 2)	
Requests you will keep declining (question 4), where you can price them	
Total cost of staying	

NUMBER 2: THE PRICE OF LEAVING	AMOUNT
Fixed price for the modernization, quoted from an assessment	
Finishing work: testing, stabilization and release hardening	
An upgrade to a supported release if question 1 calls for it. A modernization takes months, and the system running the business should have vendor support while it happens	
Total price of leaving	

Your team can produce the first number. A modernization provider should be able to produce the second before you commit to anything.

WHAT COMES NEXT IN THE KIT

Step 2 is the application inventory worksheet, which records what the application is made of. Step 3 turns the two numbers above into a business case.

If you want the second number, start with an assessment of your PowerBuilder code at gapvelocity.ai/migrate/powerbuilder. You get a scope report and a fixed-price quote to set beside your cost of staying.

