

Unleash the Transformative Power of APIs and Integration

Contents

- 2 / Introduction
- 3 / API Transformation
- 5 / Accelerate Innovation and Unlock the Value of IT Systems Through APIs
- 8 / Next Steps in the API Transformation Journey





Introduction

Uber, Airbnb, WhatsApp, and Instagram exemplify modern business success—forerunners of the sharing economy, digital disruption and \$1B+ valuations with teams of fewer than 60. But how did they do it?

As startups, they were seen as more agile, able to adapt faster and better at adjusting to changing market conditions than their large enterprise competition.

But the reality is these companies succeeded because of their approach. They chose to compose applications and leverage APIs rather than writing code from scratch for every part of their offering.

Instead of using resources to create maps and define directions, Uber calls the Google Maps API—and in less than a second—incorporates the geographic details that drivers and customers need right in the app. This means fewer resources were required to bring a solution to market that indelibly disrupted taxi and limousine industries. Plus, their team could focus on developing the business, not developing code.

The concept of composing applications versus writing code has allowed small startups to dominate their markets through innovation.

But why hasn't this level of success translated to the enterprise yet?

Businesses don't have an easy or fast way to create APIs from their existing technology. For Uber, many of the APIs needed to compose the app already existed, but for most enterprises, the APIs needed to compose compelling apps don't exist, either because data is locked in on-premises applications, or it's too costly and time consuming for developers to code thousands of APIs from scratch.

The key to enterprise-level API creation is leveraging an API integration platform. To understand why, it's important to know the history of integration and how APIs are transforming the landscape.



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API Transformation

The use of APIs is transforming not only the way businesses run, but also the very foundation of integration, because today APIs and integration are two sides of the same coin.

Stage 1 | 1990 through 2000: Enterprise Application Integration (EAI) and the “Bus”

In the beginning, all data lived on-premise, tucked away behind corporate firewalls. As specialized applications, like SAP for back-office data and Siebel for customer data, arrived, it was critical to connect these systems and databases in a consistent and repeatable way for business processes to run smoothly. Point-to-point integrations through EAI solutions and “connect once, connect anywhere” Enterprise Service Buses (ESB) were born, and for nearly a decade, they worked great—integration was solved! ...Until applications started to appear outside of the firewall.

Stage 2 | 2000 through 2010: Software as a Service (SaaS)

When SaaS applications like Salesforce and NetSuite came on the scene in the late 1990s, companies that invested heavily in their EAI and ESBs hit a roadblock. These legacy integration technologies were stuck behind the firewall alongside the systems they had connected—but reaching securely outside the firewall to these new SaaS apps proved difficult. A new breed of SaaS integration solutions were developed to connect SaaS apps to on-premise systems.

However, basic point-to-point connections—Salesforce to SAP; NetSuite to Siebel—remained the focus of these integrations. With heavy investments in existing on-premise systems, the business world was still anchored behind the firewall, but soon there would be a massive gravitational shift.

Stage 3 | 2010 through now: APIs & Integration Platform as a Service (iPaaS)

While SaaS opened up a whole new frontier, it doesn’t compare to the massive clouds like Amazon AWS, Google GCP, IBM’s SmartCloud and Microsoft Azure that now dominate computing. At first, these clouds were used mostly for inexpensive storage, but now a majority of new apps and services run on these massive clouds.

The gravitation shift from on-premise to the cloud creates a cloud-first imperative for today’s modern enterprise. Throughout its history, integration has lived where the critical mass of applications are, so as new technology is increasingly built on the cloud, modern Integration Platform as a Service (iPaaS) solutions also must be born on the cloud and connect on-premise, SaaS and cloud apps via APIs.

Stage 4 | Now through the future: Machine Learning and Artificial Intelligence

The digital transformation imperative doesn’t stop with simply connecting the cloud.

Intelligence and machine learning have come of age in the cloud, and the incredible promise of these technologies is now more accessible than ever. A modern iPaaS solution that is born on the cloud can infuse ML and AI into any business process via APIs and is flexible and scalable enough to adapt as the technology changes.

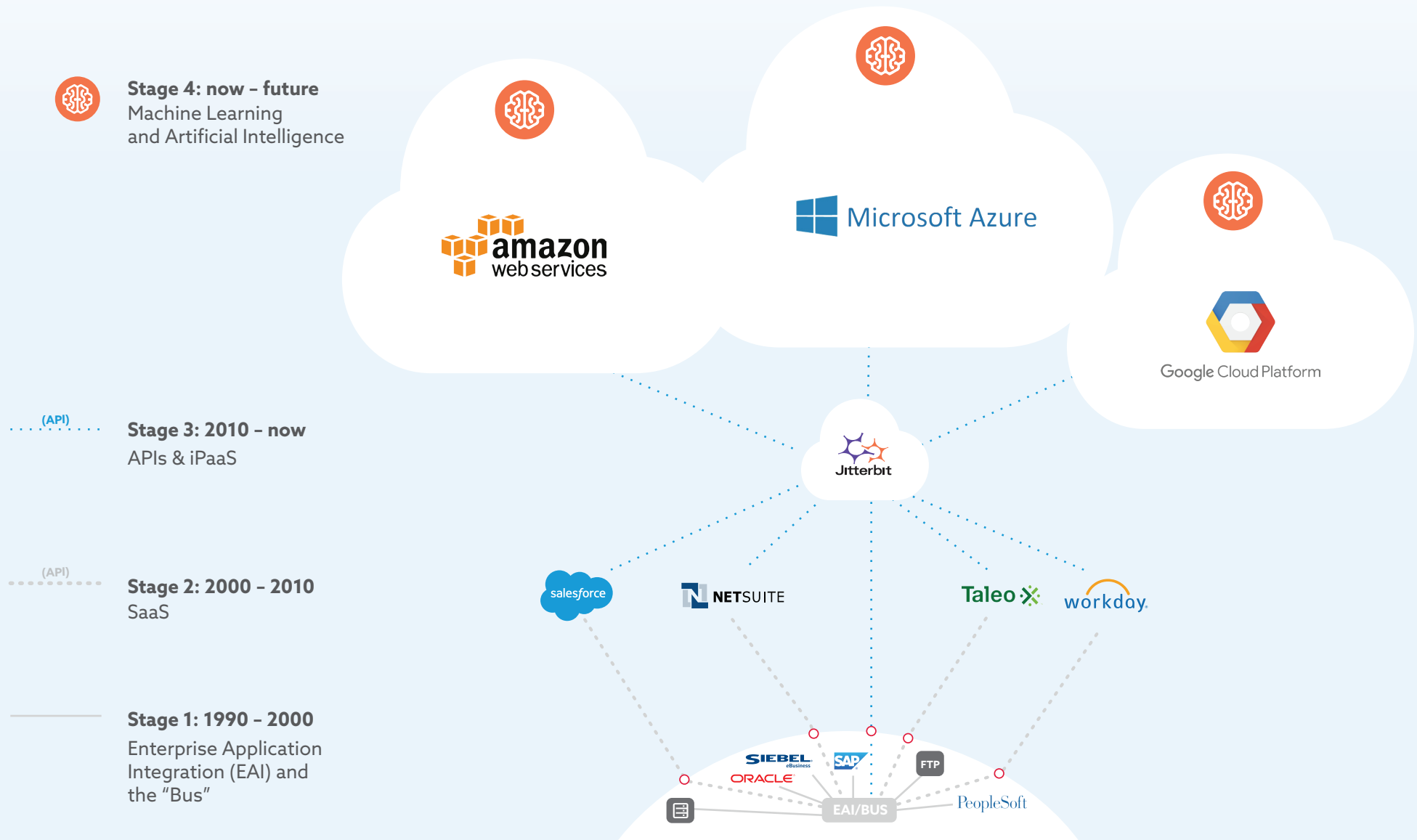
Imagine you could instantly translate support tickets from any language into English in real-time, enabling one customer support representative to service anyone in the world. Or infuse sentiment analysis into social media channels, so representatives can prioritize and proactively address customer concerns based on their attitudes.



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JITTERBIT | UNLEASH THE TRANSFORMATIVE POWER OF APIS AND INTEGRATION

The Rise of “Born on the Cloud” iPaaS





Accelerate Innovation and Unlock the Value of IT Systems Through APIs

APIs are key to accelerating innovation, and they can be used in many different ways.



Consume Although most companies consume APIs on a regular basis, integrating them to create a single view of data is still a huge challenge. SaaS apps, for instance, use APIs to communicate information within the app, but connecting the APIs in meaningful ways to existing apps and services that aren't SaaS, or even other SaaS apps, can be complicated and need constant IT monitoring.



Create Creating APIs is where most enterprises get stuck, because creating an API from scratch has traditionally been the domain of developers furiously writing code. This makes API creation difficult, costly and time consuming. It also means every API is unique and not necessarily built to industry standards, making it just as difficult to consume by other partners, customers and internal resources.



Publish Enterprises can publish APIs internally behind the firewall or externally to customers and partners. Publishing APIs opens the door to new revenue channels, increased customer retention, faster time to market and the ability to attract new partners to your ecosystem.



Manage It's important for companies to manage all their integrations as well as APIs in one place. Having one place to create, manage and monitor APIs sets up companies to leverage them as strategic elements of business success.



Monetize Once an API is created and published externally, it's possible to monetize it. This means charging directly for an API, usually by call or via a premium subscription, and—most importantly for the enterprise—adding incremental revenue.



Compose Composing new applications or solutions is possibly the most transformative use of APIs. By leveraging existing technology and newly-created APIs, enterprises can open new channels faster and easier than ever before.



Here are a few examples of how enterprises can unleash the transformative power of APIs and integration.

1. Real-time language translation to improve customer service, reduce operating costs and beat the competition by bringing differentiated ideas to market faster.

Global call centers rely on customer service reps that can speak multiple languages, which isn't cheap, is often difficult to fill these highly specialized positions and creates the need for many office locations. Not to mention the fact that multilingual customer service reps aren't often also capable of answering challenging technical questions.

By using an API integration platform that can automatically call an AI API and translate communications in real-time to a service or support rep's native language and back to the customer's language, call centers can centralize operations, reduce staff costs and differentiate from the competition—in one step.

2. Attract a new ecosystem of electronic trading partners for increased revenue.

Retail and ecommerce organizations have incredibly valuable demographic, purchase and behavior data that can be exposed to partners via an API.

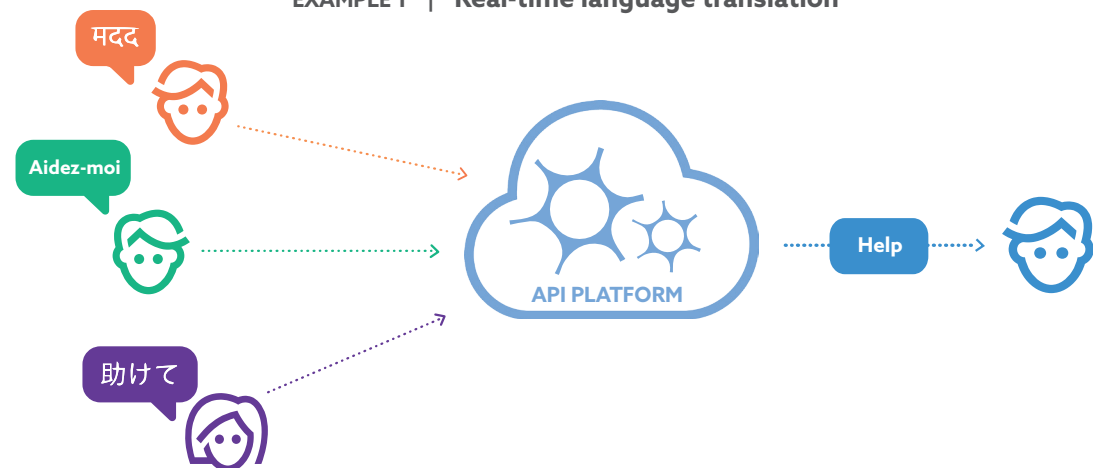
In this example, the API is the IP, so by publishing it and exposing it for partners to consume, companies can create new services, which will attract new partners looking for more valuable services and can generate revenue sharing, upsell and cross-sell opportunities.

3. Close more deals faster by automating sales workflows and consolidating data.

An API integration solution for sales teams can automate processes and bring together data from any source to create better, more actionable prospect and customer insights.

Integration eliminates time-consuming busywork, such as logging sales activities, while APIs infuse intelligence, like information to help prioritize leads better, recommendations to help close deals faster and important news and data that affects specified customers, into the entire sales process.

EXAMPLE 1 | Real-time language translation





4. Expose on-premise systems as APIs for a competitive advantage and further monetize IT assets.

By publishing APIs that can be consumed by their partners to provide value-added products and services to customers, companies can further monetize their IT assets.

For instance, a financial services firm can share information on its high-net-worth customers to its investment banking partner, so that they can pitch appropriate investment products (as long as the customer has given permission to share their personal information). The same information could also be used by a partnering credit card company to market attractive credit card options suited to the individual's income and lifestyle.

Information is shared securely by creating and publishing APIs or exposing relevant customer information as a microservice using an API integration platform.

In this example, the financial services company can not only provide value add to its customers, but also monetize their existing customer data by sharing information with partners and third-party companies.

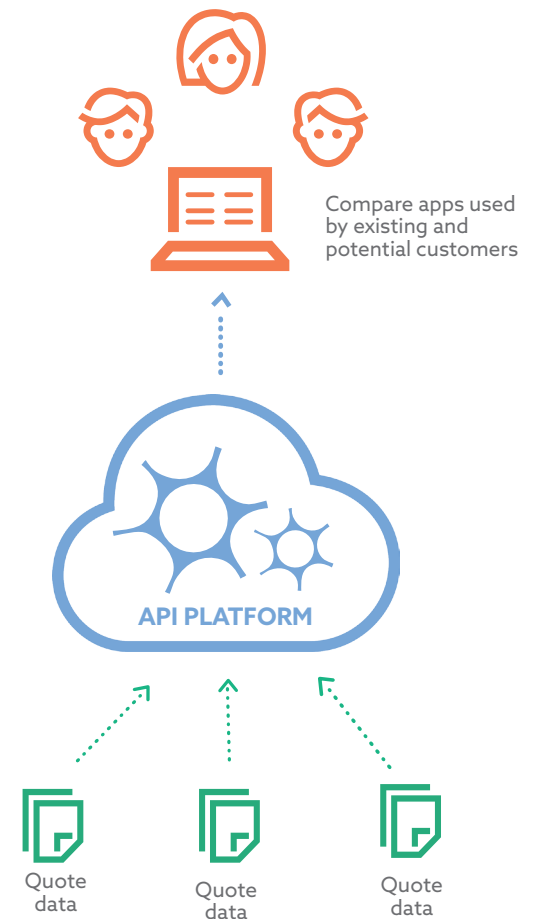
5. Maximize tech investments and IT time to increase ROI and reduce risk by leveraging existing technology investments.

Insurance companies rely on quotes to generate business, but as “compare apps” and aggregation websites become the easier, more convenient quoting option for consumers, insurance companies without an external API to talk to these new options will be left behind.

With an API integration platform that already has access to the quoting engine and data needed to generate accurate quotes, insurance companies can easily create APIs to expose to compare apps, as well as compose value-added apps like additional coverage estimates for customers and revenue-generating apps like real-time process updates for partners.

APIs created from existing technology investments allow companies to address rapidly changing technology and consumer behavior while generating new avenues of growth and additional revenue.

EXAMPLE 5 | Leveraging existing data to fuel “compare apps”





Next Steps in the API Transformation Journey

The power to accelerate innovation with APIs is here now, but defining an API integration strategy first is key. Here are a few steps to consider:

1. Identify your current infrastructure.

Most enterprises are running hybrid architectures, some in the cloud, some in SaaS and some on-premise. Before defining an API strategy, it's important to know how (if) all of these systems and apps fit together and how (if) the company is gaining real value or return on investment from them.

2. Build your vision for where you want to take your business.

The possibilities are almost endless, but part of defining an API integration strategy is knowing what business goals and targets you want to achieve beforehand and how creating and publishing APIs can help accomplish them.

For instance, are you looking to create new channels of revenue through your partner ecosystem? Or are you looking to accelerate innovation with new offerings that your team can create with access to all your business data

via an API? Perhaps you're looking to provide customers with a mobile experience or to infuse intelligence such as image recognition into your business processes? The type of outcomes you're looking for in your business will determine your API integration strategy.

3. Determine the required capabilities of a platform to achieve these outcomes.

Enterprises need a way to create APIs from existing integrations with no need to replace the applications or connections that already work, so they can begin to unlock the value of IT systems, compose value-added applications and rapidly open new revenue channels.

Integration platforms understand enterprise data and have secure access to on-premise, SaaS and cloud apps. A modern iPaaS that combines two sides of the same coin— integration and APIs—can help enterprises create APIs from existing connections, enabling them to unleash the power of existing systems, amplify SaaS and cloud applications and even infuse artificial intelligence into all business processes and decision-making.

By using a single API integration platform, enterprises can automatically create APIs based on existing integrations with back-end systems as well as publish those APIs internally or externally and manage integrations and APIs—all in one place.

With the ability to create, publish and manage APIs in one platform, enterprises can begin to use IT resources, developers and technical business users to compose new applications, just like the Ubers of the world—and make good money doing it. Composing applications versus writing code will ignite enterprise innovation, and it all starts with integration and APIs.

The last thing to keep in mind when determining an API integration strategy is to take advantage of API integration platform experts that can help every step of the way, from deploying the first integration to monetizing an API.

If you need help with next steps or want to learn more, **contact an API integration expert now.**



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