Personify


# The Future of Integrations

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# Scaling to meet the demands of the modern nonprofit

Today's organizations have dozens of applications being used in different departments across multiple teams. Cloud based apps, premise databases, flat files. Add to that list the internal tools and miscellaneous databases, with a number of requests to extract data, upload data and clean data in various places at various times.

To get these systems working together, your IT department is building and maintaining one-off integrations, manual file processes and in some cases – dual data entry. With requests coming in from across the organization, IT can become a bottleneck for mission critical data.

These systems may not inherently work together. Like apples and oranges, they're both fruit but don't exactly blend together well. Building connections between these systems can be difficult even with the benefit of a traditional architecture. But with this increased architectural diversity, traditional models may not work.

**Nonprofits today find themselves confronted with a sophisticated, continuously evolving set of needs:**

- How do I integrate cloud-based applications with my existing on-premise applications and data stores?
- How do I integrate the various independently-designed cloud applications with one another?
- How do I make my applications securely accessible or connect my applications with those of my partners' (again, both on premise and in the cloud)?
- Most importantly – how do I get disparate data into my system?

One approach is to leverage custom-code solutions based on a SaaS vendor's application programming interface (API). While a step in the right direction, the growing ecosystem of unique applications within an organization's environment introduces additional risk and complexity. Because they're authored by individual developers for unique applications from different organizations, there can be API inconsistency. There can be differences in the logic across multiple APIs, including how fields are mapped and data is transformed.

# iPaaS: a Path Forward

Integration Platform as a Service (iPaaS) solutions manage multiple integrations but also maintain the flexibility to embrace new technologies as they become available. You need an easy way to bring data together and ensure it will flow well into your system of record.

**Benefits of iPaaS include:**

- The ability to bridge the gap between data and action by connecting systems to the applications you use
- Streamlined processes, making it easier to query and communicate with APIs across systems and applications
- Greater speed, empowering IT teams to connect systems via an iPaaS solution instead of developing manual time-intensive integrations
- Increased cost efficiency when new applications are introduced or old systems are replaced
- Enhanced productivity, with end users able to use the technologies they want to do their jobs
- Greater visibility with shared information across systems for improved transparency and decision-making across the organization
- Ability to manage data mappings and transformations in a graphical interface with data validations, error handling and analytics on data transfers

iPaaS and APIs are two sides of the same coin. Consolidating APIs and integration projects into a single platform unleashes the transformative power of both. As Gartner notes, "APIs and integration technology are intimately correlated. Integration technology reduces the time to value of the APIs and APIs facilitate certain aspects of integration."

With the right iPaaS, one that allows you to do it all on a single platform and removes the obstacle of inconsistency, you can begin to innovate faster than ever before.

# Are you Ready for an iPaaS?

The decision to introduce an iPaaS solution doesn't have to be a difficult one. Taking the time to understand requirements up front can help ensure you have a full picture before exploring vendors and potential options:

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| **ARE YOU AN SMB OR LARGE ENTERPRISE?** | Are you growing? Do you want your integration platform to scale with you as you grow? |
| **WHAT ARE YOUR KEY PROJECTS?** | Do you need a tool to solve a tactical one-off integration challenge or one for a specific Line Of Business (LOB)? Or, are you looking for a robust platform to underpin more strategic, enterprise-wide integration initiatives? |
| **WHAT DOES YOUR APP AND DATA LANDSCAPE LOOK LIKE, AND WHAT ARE YOUR PRIORITY USE CASES?** | Do you have a mix of on-premise and cloud, or multiple clouds? Are you looking to streamline operational processes or load multiple data sources into a data lake for advanced analytics? Or do you have multiple and varied infrastructure, deployment and use-case requirements? |
| **WHO ARE THE TARGET USERS OF YOUR INTEGRATION PLATFORM?** | Are they skilled developers or are they team members from other departments with varying degrees of technical proficiency? |
| **HOW DO YOU PLAN TO MEASURE ROI?** | Are you looking beyond the initial up-front cost to the total deployment and maintenance over time? What about the number of people required to manage the integration platform and how quickly the users can create integration flows? |
| **IS PLATFORM INDEPENDENCE IMPORTANT TO YOU?** | Are you primarily a single-vendor shop (having organized around a primary cloud platform, ERP or database) and can cost-effectively benefit from their bolt-on integration tools? Or do you require an independent, feature-rich, best-of-breed solution? |
| **ARE YOU UPGRADING, CONSOLIDATING OR PURSUING A NET-NEW INTEGRATION PLATFORM?** | Are you moving from an older legacy integration platform, consolidating multiple platforms to a single standard or starting from scratch with a new platform built for a hybrid/multi-cloud world? |
| **DO YOU HAVE AN ENTERPRISE INTEGRATION AND GOVERNANCE STRATEGY?** | What are the processes, procedures and SLAs for implementing and maintaining cloud to on-premise, cloud to cloud as well as on-premise to on-premise integrations? What will they look like moving forward? How do you plan to address privacy, security and any downtime issues? |

# Which iPaaS is Right for You?

Some iPaaS solutions offer simple point-to-point cloud app integrations while others excel in moving and transforming large and complex data into an accessible pool for advanced analytics and intelligence. Some require extensive developer resources to hand-code APIs while others offer self-service, drag-and-drop offerings that can be used by IT and line-of-business stakeholders alike. Some are better options for specific, tactical projects while others are strategic, enterprise-wide platforms whose scope requires multi-year digital transformation.

To understand the full scope of a prospective solution and what it will look like day-to-day in your environment, ask vendors:

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| **WHAT USE CASE WAS IT BUILT TO ADDRESS?** | Some integration platforms evolved out of large, costly ESBs (Enterprise Service Bus) while others were designed to streamline the exchange of data in modern cloud-based applications. Choose an integration partner that matches your approach and your needs. |
| **ARE INTEGRATION PATTERNS POINT-TO-POINT OR ONE-TO-MANY?** | Point-to-point, or one-to-one integration patterns have limitations. With each new integration, you are forced to start from scratch. However, a one-to-many integration pattern, allows you to reuse a common virtual data resource for all of your integrations, reducing the development time for subsequent integrations but also allowing you to better manage the data you care about. |
| **WHAT IS THE DEVELOPMENT ENVIRONMENT?** | Easily accessible web-based platforms are preferred, allowing for transferability to other team members. Open specifications free of proprietary languages is also important in preventing vendor lock-in. |
| **HOW EASY ARE INTEGRATIONS TO CREATE AND DEPLOY?** | Implementing business logic at the API level allows developers to move complexity from the core application into a centralized, reusable resource that applications can consume on-demand. Look for an iPaaS with a robust orchestration engine capable of handling complex workflows. Low-code orchestrations can also increase speed and ease of building business logic. |
| **WHO WILL HANDLE THE UPDATES?** | APIs are fluid, with application providers continually enhancing endpoints for consumers. But who will make the updates in your integration? Is maintenance and versioning included or does the burden of upkeep fall to you? |

# About Personify

Personify is the market-leading Constituent Management and Engagement (CME) platform that empowers nonprofit organizations to better engage their constituents, maximize revenue and optimize operations. For over 20 years, Personify has served as the technology foundation for organizations of all sizes from the largest associations, charities, YMCAs and JCCs to emerging nonprofits. Nearly 25 percent of the U.S. population interacts with Personify through their involvement in nonprofit organizations. For additional information, visit www.personifycorp.com.

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