Improv + iPaaS

QUICK START INTEGRATION GUIDE

Integration is the word on the minds of most every IT leader today. And their two most pressing questions: Is an iPaaS solution right for us? And, how do we even start the process?

Even without taking a deep dive into your organization, the answer to the first question is probably yes. That's because most companies — from SMBs to large enterprises — operate from a mix of applications and data sources and sorely need to streamline. The more complex your system architecture, the more value you will gain from a centralized iPaaS (Integration as a Platform).

An iPaaS moves your organization from fragmented data silos to shared data and faster, more intelligent decision making, which translates to a faster time to market.

According to a Dell Boomi study conducted by Vanson Bourne, 89% of businesses have experienced business drawbacks due to poor integration. Another 41% say poor integration has cost them time and money and 35% report the integration deficit has delayed new product rollouts.

Do these numbers have you nodding? Then an iPaaS solution is likely in your future. Wrangling scattered data sources in to a single ecosystem can feel like a daunting, even impossible task. Here's an abbreviated guide to help you get your integration journey underway.

10-Step iPaaS Quick Start Guide

1. Define It

Your first step is to define why you need iPaaS integration and what you want to achieve with it. To do this, identify the specific pain points fueling the need to integrate. Write down a short, simple sentence to launch your process.

For example: We need an integration solution to give us a 360 view of our supply chain so we have the data we need to improve customer response time.

Following our merger, we need all systems to communicate in real-time to ensure transparency and visibility into all business information.

2. Make the Business Case

Making a strong business case for an iPaaS investment isn't difficult but will require you to gather some IT metrics. One way to approach the case is to tie the need to connect disparate data sources like SaaS, hybrid cloud architectures, mobile integrations, and legacy systems to the current cost (in dollars and time) of hard-coding integrations. Also, factor in resources. Do you have an internal iPaaS-certified integration specialist, or do you need to outsource this expertise?

Other metrics to consider:

- Reduced resources (number and time) needed to build and maintain the integration platform (iPaaS: no hard-coding + auto-updates).
- Cost savings in redundant integrations and software across enterprise.
- An estimate of reduced downtime, improved quality of service, and reduction of IT tickets.
- Improved efficiency, agility, time to market.
- Cost savings in legacy integration and API reduction.

3. Inventory & Map All Enterprise Apps

Which applications are you using and where are they based — on-premises, in the cloud, or both? Is this mix likely to change? Be sure to get a complete view of your business systems and a true understanding of the business processes involved.

4. Decide What to Integrate

The next step is to begin re-imagining your workflow and the ideal way it should operate. Make a list of what apps and systems need to connect and what data will they share. For example: In a perfect world X would be able to talk to X to make customer data quickly accessible.

5. Address Privacy & Security Protocols

Decide early on in the process what security protocols you need to build into integrations before you begin your build out. It's important that only the right stakeholders can access certain information. It will be time consuming to retrofit fraud detection and alert settings.

6. Define User Groups

Understand who will use the platform and what their needs are. iPaaS benefits are two-fold: Integrations that connect company users (internal) and integrations that integrate processes for customers (external). When creating your integration map, consider these two goals

7. Define Technical Specs

Gather as much technical specifications as possible. Meet with your integration team and start by answering these critical questions:

- What data formats are our systems using?
- What formats are our partners using?
- How will we make sense of our new collection of data?
- Will we sync historical data between systems or start this new integration from scratch?
- How much data will we synchronize, and how often?
- How will we test the integrations?
- How will we log our data?

8. *Evaluate Your Platform & Impact*

Roll out your integration platform in phases. Start with simple integrations that are not mission-critical, fix issues, document, and advance to more strategic applications. Evaluate the speed and reliability of integration as you go and how the iPaaS will impact and change business processes.

9. *Test Integrations & Deploy*

Don't skip this step. Testing is critical to any new technology. Interface testing confirms integration paths between systems function properly.

10. *Plan for Maintenance*

Data integration isn't a one-time task. Maintenance is critical to peak integration power. The best maintenance route: Choose an iPaaS-certified integration specialist to develop, test, deploy, and maintain your platform.

According to Gartner, very few iPaaS vendors have been able to successfully deliver genuinely hybrid integrations or complex integrations. However, in Gartner's Magic Quadrant for Enterprise Integration Platform as a Service — the firm names Dell Boomi as one of the few iPaaS vendors currently leading the pack.

At Improv, we feel so strongly about the Boomi iPaaS solution that we've partnered to become certified Boomi integration specialists. If your organization is lost in a sea of disconnected data sources, we can help you unlock data silos and get your entire enterprise talking and working more efficiently today.

Give us a call TODAY for a FREE Dell Boomi integration consultation.

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