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**A CFO Roundtable:
Investing
In A Resilient
Clean Energy
Future**

APIs: The Timeless Debate of Build Versus Buy

Which Approach Is Right for Your Organization?

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John Budala is a seasoned technology and innovation leader and recognized change agent. He has built, delivered, and maintained many mission-critical SaaS products and solutions designed to help companies operate seamlessly and efficiently.

Working in the electric power industry, you know how important it is for energy to be provided reliably, safely, affordably, and at scale.

When your customers turn on a light, they don't need to be experts in the transmission and distribution lines it took to power their house or business. They only expect that their outlet will work and that the light will turn on.

For IT teams serving users of third-party software, software-as-a-service (SaaS)-based application programming interfaces (APIs) are the feeds that power end-users with the data they need to complete analysis or reporting in their tool of choice. When faced with the challenge of drawing company data out of a platform to feed your data warehouse, business intelligence, or analysis tool, many IT teams may try to tackle it themselves to save money and time.

Given how much is on the plate of most IT teams, is this where they should focus their time and energy?

Build Versus Buy

If your organization goes down the DIY route, you will need to support third-party systems. This may save time for your organization by reducing some of the back-and-forth communication with your solution provider. It also can save money, by not outsourcing to third parties. This may work well for your organization if you are supporting only a handful of well-known solutions with a very stable workforce. However, it can create a great challenge for your team when you are supporting dozens of solutions, as each individual is expected to support and maintain expertise in a given solution. Additionally, if you have a lot of solutions to support, there is a risk of losing all your expertise when you promote a team member internally or they choose to take a new opportunity. The DIY route becomes harder to support and will become cost-prohibitive when moving solutions to the SaaS cloud.

An alternative is to use APIs provided by your solution partner. These APIs are designed to support your business needs comprehensively. They may cost your company a one-time fee or subscription for access, as well as a one-time fee to a third-party expert to set up the initial feed between your solutions. However, you will save time and money and reduce risks of breaking integrations in the future. The solution provider maintains the consistency of the APIs they provide, so your data feed integrations won't break with product updates and upgrades. This can help your organization avoid bottlenecks or gaps in data and prevent delays and inconsistent reporting—which cost you time and money and impact your credibility as well.

The Right Path for Your Organization

Whatever you choose, you need a sustainable way to keep pace. It can be tempting to remain in the business of API management, but it's important to consider vendor-provided solutions that let you make integrations with minimal effort and leave your team open for whatever else the business may demand.



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