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A Buyer's Comparison of iPaaS Capabilities

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ABOUT CLEVERBRIDGE
Since being founded in 2005, cleverbridge has grown to 300+ employees in four offices around the world. They provide global commerce, billing and payment solutions for leading digital goods, services and SaaS companies across a variety of industries. Relying on their flexible platform and unique consultative approach, clients grow their digital businesses by building long-term customer relationships and maximizing global recurring revenue.

**The following is a comparison of various iPaaS products that is reprinted from Quora.
The comparison was posted by Israel Greene, business owner of success services at cleverbridge.
To see comments and the full discussion, click here .**

My company, cleverbridge, also recently went through an evaluation of cloud-based integration platforms, or iPaaS, products. We found that there are several products to choose from and the list is growing. That said, the major iPaaS platforms have been around for a number of years and are now considered "proven" solutions for integrating cloud applications.

PRIMARY CONSIDERATIONS

Some of the major factors driving the decision of which iPaaS to use are the following:

1. **Who will use the system?** - Until recently, only IT specialists handled integration projects, but some of today's integration platforms are accessible to so-called citizen integrators, business users who take on integration projects to automate and streamline their daily work. If you want to allow citizen integrators to build their own integrations, this will be a key factor in your decision.

2. **Will the platform cover my connectivity needs, including both the applications I use and the fields and workflow of my unique application configuration?** - Ideally, a cloud integration platform should give you the flexibility to handle your integration needs both today and into the future. You need connectivity to a certain set of applications, databases and files now, but you also want the ability to add new connections in the future as your business changes and grows. Don't discount this future element when you evaluate your options. Questions to ask: Can the iPaaS handle my custom fields and entities? How fast will my applications be changing and can the iPaaS help me keep up?

COMMON EVALUATION CRITERIA FOR IPAAS SOLUTIONS

To get started on the evaluation, I pulled together a comparison of iPaaS platforms. I looked at the major differences highlighted by analysts from Gartner and Forrester and by users on the review site G2 Crowd. The table below compares five of the top products that analyst firms often recognize as the leaders in the iPaaS market.

Product	Pros	Cons
Dell Boomi	• Flexibility to handle many integration scenarios • Crowdsourced mapping templates • Support team gets positive reviews	• Requires knowledge of query languages and XML - not a fit for citizens integrators • Weak documentation • Expensive
Informatica Cloud	• Reviewers like Salesforce integration with on-premise apps	• Lower customer satisfaction scores compared to the others • Complex integrations require adding Infomatica Power Center • Expensive
Jitterbit Harmony	• Support team gets positive reviews • Flexibility	• Fewer application connectors than the others • Outdated user interface
MuleSoft Anypoint Platform	• General-purpose connectivity • Allows deployment on premise or in the cloud	• Complex and requires developers for any meaningful project • Minor changes require development and re-deployment • Expensive
Scribe Online	• Ease of use - appropriate for integration specialists and citizen integrators • Broad and deep application connectivity • Less expensive than the others • Fast to develop, deploy, and update solutions	• Lacks the option of a code view of integrations for developers • Well-know in some markets, less so in others

Table: A comparison of advantages and disadvantages of major iPaaS products.
Sources: Gartner, Forrester, G2 Crowd reviews.

DETERMINING OUR OWN SELECTION CRITERIA

There are many other characteristics to consider in your iPaaS selection process and you need to have a firm grasp on how integration fits into your business to define your own critical criteria. At cleverbridge we spent well over a year researching the various iPaaS options and looked at every solution covered in the annual Gartner Magic Quadrant on enterprise iPaaS solutions. At the end of our search, we decided to move forward with Scribe. Our decision came down to four main factors:

1. Connectivity. We wanted the iPaaS to have a vast footprint of application connectors so we could support many applications in just a few weeks. We felt this would give us a real competitive sales advantage.

2. Support and Commitment of the iPaaS Vendor. Integration wasn't an after-thought to us. We viewed it as critical to our future business growth and we wanted to go with a vendor that treated our relationship as a true partnership. We paid attention to the interaction with the vendors during the "dating"/evaluation phase and we saw differences.

3. Training Resources. We wanted to make sure that our team had a library of self-paced courses to help our team get up to speed. We thought this was of great value as our team did not have lengthy integration developer experience.

4. International Support, Especially Around Security. Being a German-based company, we are extremely conscious of compliance and privacy laws as it relates to customer data. We wanted our vendor to have a European data center to allow us to address the security and privacy concerns of our European users.

FINAL THOUGHTS

In the end we found that iPaaS platforms can seem similar at first glance, but if you scratch beneath the surface the options can look quite different. Running a trial will help you narrow down your choices to a few that fit your specific integration experience, business objectives, and budget.

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