

## Post 3 - Entrepreneurial Lessons & Product Leadership

3:17 AM. Slack is exploding. Our biggest customer's integration just died.

This was 2017 at Siftify. Our "bulletproof" Salesforce connector had been humming along for months. Then suddenly – nothing. Zero data flowing.

The culprit? A single custom field their admin added that afternoon.

What followed was 6 hours of debugging, 3 emergency calls with their IT team, and a very uncomfortable conversation with our head of customer success.

But here's what that 3 AM incident taught me about building reliable integrations:

**Lesson 1:** Assume Everything Will Change Enterprise systems are living, breathing organisms. That "stable" API schema? It's more like shifting sand.

**Lesson 2:** Monitoring Isn't Optional We were tracking API response codes but missing the real signal: data quality and freshness. A 200 response with stale data is worse than a 500 error.

**Lesson 3:** Graceful Degradation > Perfect Uptime Instead of all-or-nothing integrations, build systems that can operate with partial data. Your users need to know what's working and what isn't.

**Lesson 4:** The Human Factor Every integration failure is ultimately a people problem. Someone's day just got harder because your code broke.

That incident led us to rebuild our entire monitoring stack and create what we called "integration health scores" – real-time visibility into data freshness, schema changes, and sync reliability.

It wasn't fun, but it made us better builders.

The best integration infrastructure isn't the one that never fails – it's the one that fails gracefully and recovers quickly.

What's your worst 3 AM debugging story? Let's commiserate in the comments 😊

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