Axway Blog

News, trends and insights on hybrid integration.

Digital Transformation

Business and technology: The fallacy of the one-stop-shop

By **Uli Hitzel** – June 29, 2020

We are using an increasing number of tools that all do one thing extremely well – and the mix looks different for every team, department, and organization. Why do we keep wanting the huge, closed system that should do everything and hold every piece of information? And how can we stay in control when things are all over the place?

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The reality

A while ago I realized that one of my colleagues and I would use up to 10 different tools and platforms to communicate with each other. Work email and messaging, along with several productivity tools, but there would also be Twitter, LinkedIn, WhatsApp, and Instagram – each one having their own content and context.

I was genuinely stunned: 10 different communication channels for just two people. And the list would not be the same if you picked two other people and looked at what they are using.

The engineering team at your company has a different stack of tools than the salespeople or colleagues in marketing. From here, it's easy to take the entropy to the next level when we think about today's world of increased collaboration between teams, departments, and organizations where now everything connects with each other.

The problem

It's easy to lose visibility when information is spread all over the place and people use many specialized tools. Keeping confidential information safe, ensuring that privacy and retention policies are being met is just adding another layer of complexity to the problem.

Unfortunately, this is a point where we fall back to old habits, resorting to an approach that used to work well in the past: having this one web portal, that one CRM software that *everyone* would use to store and look up information.

Those would often be proprietary, closed systems that could somehow be rigged to do the job within an organization. In a distributed world with teams spanning across departments and companies including business partners and customers, this is no longer possible. The situation is like the story of how the internet became what it is today.

Back in the days when 99.9% of the users were sitting in front of Windows desktops with Netscape Navigator or Internet Explorer and websites were static HTML pages on FTP servers, you could still have closed systems such as AOL, or a Yahoo! front page of the internet, along with a catalog that listed almost anything you wanted.

As the web evolved and was becoming the operating system of our planet, this was no longer possible. Google didn't give us yet another portal but a new way of connecting information and creating smart, self-learning search. Your approach needs to take the new reality into account.

What you can do

The most important thing to start with is helping stakeholders understand that the world has changed and that there is no alternative to choosing the best tools for each job to keep your associates productive and create the best customer experience.

Should you use Zoom, WebEx, Microsoft Teams, Google Meet for meetings, events, and webinars? Is the cloud a good idea or should you use on-premise infrastructure? Yes, you probably need all of them, depending on the context. Be prepared for that list to change at any moment.

An increasing number of all those tools and services you would use will have APIs, support Single Sign-On, and come with software subscription models that allow you to put all the puzzle pieces together to a flexible and adaptable system.

A platform like AMPLIFY can help you establish connections with everything, securely expose the various data sources and functions for discovery and reuse, so you could combine them for building digital products, create dashboards and reports, while information is stored in a distributed fashion across systems inside and outside your corporate firewall. You may even create some of those one-stop shops again, the new way!

Digital Transformation is hard – let the Catalysts help you along your journey. It's not as much about which piece of software you should buy, but building out a strategy together for the things that really matter. You'll benefit from the proven frameworks, best practices, and essential techniques that bring your business to the next level.

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Uli Hitzel

Catalyst: Ecosystems & Collaboration / Innovation / Marketing & Events - As part of the Catalyst Team, Uli helps customers solve tricky engineering problems and build prototypes around API-driven innovation, application & data integration. Looking at things from a Developer Advocate perspective, he's also looking at building ecosystems across departments and organizational boundaries and achieving product adoption in the market.

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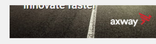

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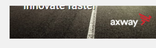

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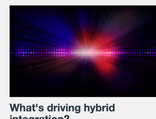

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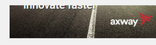

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