

THE INTEGRATED ENTERPRISE

BUILD AN EFFECTIVE BUSINESS BY UNLOCKING
INFORMATION AND MAKING IT CONSUMABLE

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INTRODUCTION

The decade of technological advancement has brought with it a significant amount of power to our devices. For most of us, it is now normal that, through our mobile devices, we can connect with anyone, find anything, and work anywhere while we perform our daily tasks. However, if we critically look at the progress that has been made over the last couple of years, we have to conclude that we enjoy **greater digital freedom** in our private life than in our working life. In a single app, you can order a ride online, see when it arrives, and then pay with the click of a button when you get dropped off at your destination. Unfortunately, at work, you still have to email the reception if you want to register a visitor, who signs in on a piece of paper, and then have the receptionist call to tell you that the person has arrived and could be picked up.

The fact that our workplaces fall behind in the digitalization race is quite remarkable since it was not so long ago that most of us only came in contact with a computer via our employers. The office computer came before the personal home computer, the office phone was there before the personal phone, and you would always get the newest software via your employer. **Now the consumer market leads in usability and ease of use** in all these areas.

If we desire to change this new paradigm, we all have some work to do to **get the business environment back up to par** with the advancements we enjoy in our private life. The silver lining is that the popularity of personal apps shows that usability and ease of use are possible, and people are eager to embrace the new standard. All we have to do is encourage our colleagues to take the leap, and they will be lining up to enjoy the benefits. Advances in technology mean that companies are now in a position where they can catch up with the app world paradigm and provide power and freedom through an integrated workplace. The result is **a skyrocket of productivity** for organizations and their employees. As organizations bring together enterprise data and content from their premiere ERP, or CRM systems and make it readily available for consumption.

With the required elements in place to truly enable your integrated workplace, we offer this whitepaper to share a vision, outline the benefits when you do it right, and provide a way to start. So please indulge us when we tell you the story of **the Integrated Workplace**.

BREAKING DOWN SILOS

We, humans, tend to cling together, and when the group gets too big, we start our small subgroups. There are libraries full of books explaining how this behavior is in our DNA and how the 'us-versus-them' approach towards the outside world has kept many of us alive over the centuries. However, when you try to collaboratively reach a goal, you want to get rid of the politics, groups, and favoritism. We have all realized that, and almost all enterprises encourage their colleagues to **work, collaborate, and share cross-functionally.**

Collaboration takes place in the project teams, committees, boards, centers of excellence, scrum teams, guilds, and many other forms within the enterprise. There is a fundamental challenge to get people to step out of their comfort zone and freely collaborate with anyone in the company. Many organizations have already realized that they need an intelligent workforce to stay competitive. They have heard the gospel and are preaching it, putting most of us in very dynamic working environments where we jump from project to project, taking on different tasks within different collaboration initiatives.

In their quest to break down silos, organizations focus too much on effective collaboration between people and not enough on the information people need to get all those different tasks done. The silos of information - residing in various lines of business applications - are the enemy of many enterprises. And when the lines in the organization chart blur, but the borders between systems remain the same, we do not efficiently nor effectively support our colleagues and their collaborative process. So, while data plays a role of ever-increasing importance, most enterprises still suffer from data that has limited use, and that is of medium quality. It is time to **free business information and make it as approachable as your colleagues.**

IT HAS COME A LONG WAY

Not so long ago, you needed to make quite the investment if you wanted to integrate two different systems. There was infrastructure required for storage, connectors, and authorization certificates, and you needed to put some very skilled people in a room to work on it. Today, the world of integrations has drastically changed and integrating two or more systems is more a configuration-based networking exercise than custom development. This is because of **three factors**.

For one, many enterprise applications have found their way to the cloud and are offering **out-of-the-box APIs**. Which means we have already got half the bridge built when connecting systems. Even more than halfway built actually, because most of these APIs come with guides on how to consume them, so the blueprint for the other half of the bridge is already completed. This allows us to quickly connect a multitude of business applications in order to integrate with both the data and content that drive your business.

Second, there are multiple platforms available that offer **integration services on-demand**. Infrastructure for hire as some call it. Our platform of choice - being Microsoft enthusiasts - is Azure, which provides a wide variety of services

to integrate almost anything. In addition, Azure allows you to gradually increase your consumption of API services as required by the business. Making sure you only pay for what you use.

And thirdly, the **integration services have become very mature in handling different code languages or differences in database structures**. This means you do not need to get all your system architects to decide on only one storage container, or all your developers to decide on the only one true coding language. You can utilize a variety of languages and structures with all of their unique characteristics and have them be useful straight off the bat.

These three factors combined allow us to start small while integrating. And grow large while keeping the cost in line with the value that is being generated. No more big bang implementations or setting up costly servers that remain idle for the first couple of years. In today's world of integration, you make use of the infrastructure for hire possibilities and start driving business value based on connecting the different premier enterprise systems immediately.



3 factors have changed the world of integrations

- Out-of-the-box APIs
- Integration services on-demand
- Integration services can handle different code languages and database structures

THE MULTIPLIER EFFECT OF INTEGRATING

Building an integrated workplace within your organization is a gradual process. Organizations often **start small and incrementally move towards an organizational-wide implementation**. That may sound like the big win is at the end of the journey, but that is not the case. Along the way, organizations unlock chunks of value for their entire enterprise. How do we know that will also be the case for you? Because of one simple thing, we like to call it the multiplier effect of integrating.

When you take your first step of the integrated workplace journey, you will probably pick a small case (at least we would advise you to do so), which involves two systems that need to be integrated in one way or the other. Let's say that we connect your billing data to your marketing analysis database so that every invoice sent is automatically part of the analysis that marketing does to determine the target demographic for your product. When this case is completed, both the system that handles your billing process and the marketing database will have working connections used for integrating.

Now, imagine that the next case you pick up is feeding your billing data to the finance department quarterly reports so that they can use live data to track the performance against

the forecasted revenue. Your first benefit, in this case, is you already having a working connection to extract the billing data, so you only need to figure out how to feed it to the quarterly reports. Secondly, as soon as you have realized this connection to the quarterly reports, you can also use it to send data about gross and net margins to the marketing database. At this point they cannot only figure out where the most significant revenue generators are, but more importantly, determine which demographics contribute to the bottom line of the company.

When **we gradually build a network of integration connections**, there are more opportunities after every step is taken. In the example above, a logical next step would be to integrate the invoice documents that we receive, and automatically link them to the financial administration. That way we have both the revenue and cost stream integrated. With each step, we can reuse more and more existing connections to utilize the opportunities down the road. **As more of these bridges get built, we allow data to travel freely across the enterprise** and add value to the work of all colleagues.



TERMINOLOGY

THE INTEGRATED WORKPLACE & THE INTEGRATED ENTERPRISE

We want to make a small sidestep and talk about terminology. The topic of integrations has been one that is on the agenda for decades and is influenced by several trends, views, and surges in popularity. Not to mention the occasional buzzword that caught on. We do understand that while our story sounds crystal clear to us, you might be a little confused if you have different associations with the terminology used in this whitepaper. Allow us to elaborate.

You will see us use both 'Workplace' and 'Enterprise'. For us, these are not synonyms, but two sides of the same coin.

A 'Workplace' is personal. It consists of the physical and digital elements provided to individuals for them to do their job. The 'Workplace' is an individual's entry point into the organization. If we want to empower our colleagues and provide them access to the holistic view of the organization, we have to do so by improving their workplace. Both physically and digitally. So, when we talk about 'The Workplace', we mean the whole set of physical and digital elements that are available to a colleague to be able to connect with the organization.

The 'Enterprise' is the collective. It is the whole of people, processes, and systems that together make the organization into one group. This group creates and maintains information that does not belong to anyone in particular but is company





property. A sales representative may close the deal, but the purchase order is not his. It is part of the collective purchase order data set and is needed to trigger the process of fulfillment in which several other colleagues will act on the data to get the job done. Integrating the 'Enterprise' is required to connect the different data sets and to create a holistic view of what is happening. With this view, the Operations department can run the factories, the Finance department can keep the cashflow running, and the CEO can see if the current strategy is working out as it should.

The reason we consider the 'Integrated Workplace' and the 'Integrated Enterprise' as two sides of the same coin is that these two are intertwined. Connecting the sales wins with the factory planning and the invoices allows us to create an improved overview of the Enterprise. At the same time, the sales reps win automatically triggers factory orders, and the factory worker process automatically starts the invoice process when products have to be shipped. Integrating the 'Enterprise' works towards a holistic and connected view of the organization, which in turn can be brought to the colleagues through their 'Workplace'.

The tight connection between integrating the 'Enterprise' and the

'Workplace' is a critical consideration in being successful on your journey. It means that both executives and workers invest in the integration process. Executives await a wealth of insight based on a holistic company view, and the workers will enjoy more power and freedom to get the job done in the best possible way. Focusing on one side of the spectrum and disregarding the other will risk either the executives or the workers to disengage from the vision and halt progress because both groups are needed to unlock the real potential of the Integrated Workplace.

**THE DIFFERENCE
BETWEEN DATA, CONTENT
AND INFORMATION**



DATA AND CONTENT BOTH LEAD TO INFORMATION

While we are on the subject of terminology, there is one more topic we would like to address. We are all familiar with words like 'data', 'content' and 'information', but many of us have very specific ideas and references with these words, which seem like synonyms. Here is our take on it.

Talking about 'data' has become a fad over recent years. Big data was the most used buzzword a couple of years ago, and we saw everyone using it just to fit in. If you did not include a statement like "we are exploring the possibilities of big data for our business in the coming quarter", then you might as well file for bankruptcy because no one was going to give your enterprise a second glance. But what does data or big data mean? **Data is just a number.** My height, the number of steps I take to reach my desk, and the amount of coffee I drink during the day are pieces of data. Big data is just a lot of numbers: everyone's height, the number of steps everyone on the planet takes to reach their desks, and the entire amount of coffee consumed by all of humanity since the invention of coffee.

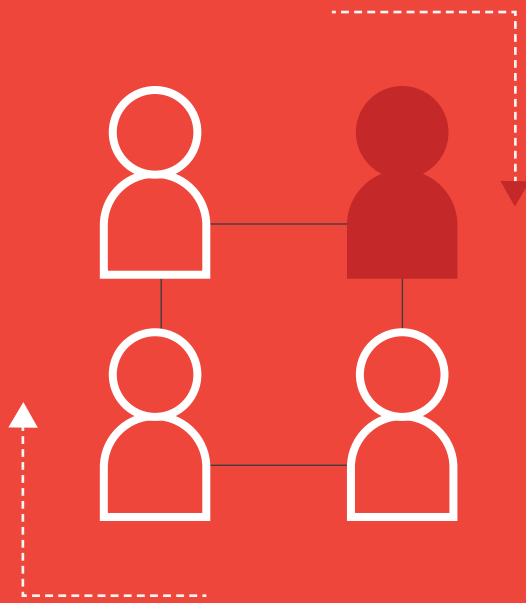
Where we often associate data with numbers, **we associate text with content.** For most people, the distinction between data and content is that simple. If I note down my height in centimeters in a table, it is considered to be data by most people, and if I describe how tall I am in a couple of lines of poetry, it would be regarded as to be content by most people. In this whitepaper, we are talking both about data and content. So whether your invoices are processed by automatic transactions fed from a table or by emailing a pdf document from a library, as long as you are getting paid and we can tap into the amount, billing information, and status of the invoice, we don't care. All we want to know is how we can connect the system that handles your invoices with the rest of your business. Whether we do that by pulling records from a table or scanning pdf documents is the least of our problems, because Microsoft offers us services to do both.

We are interested in both the data and the content that we need to tap into and channel through your very own integration layer. And by combining your business data and content in the right way, we get to the actual gem of this nomenclature discussion, which is information. Because **when we get smart with our data and content, we can reach conclusions that provide us with valuable information.** Going back to my height, if I know I am 3 meters tall, that is of little value to me. Only when I combine it with the heights of other people and ways in which people profit from their physique, I can conclude that my tallness of two meters offers me the chance of being a basketball player.

That means that when we discuss examples in this white paper, some might have you thinking of data, and some might have you thinking of content. That's fine. Just remember that for us, both are different means to diffuse information on which the business can act.

**THE JOURNEY TO
AN INTEGRATED
WORKPLACE**





THE JOURNEY TO AN INTEGRATED WORKPLACE

TACTICS TO REACH THE FULL POTENTIAL OF THE INTEGRATED WORKPLACE

1 KEEP SCORE

2 COMMUNICATE

3 LISTEN

4 CELEBRATE



4 TACTICS FOR REALIZING AN INTEGRATED WORKPLACE

Four key tactics make sure the benefits realized by each step on your journey are nicely balanced over the different stakeholder groups. They will help you stay the course and tap into the full breadth of the integrated potential within your organization.

1. Keep score - For each piece of the puzzle you add in your journey towards the Integrated Workplace, it should be clear who will benefit from it and in what way. Track those numbers to see if you realize the benefits that you aim for, but also to be able to keep score. Don't forget to include the groups that might be taking a temporary hit by the current puzzle piece. While overall the Enterprise API is a win-win journey, there might be tradeoffs. When that happens, make sure to bring benefits back to the disenfranchised as soon as possible, so everyone sees that team players are being rewarded.

2. Communicate - We truly believe in this vision, and we know many people will be enthusiastic about it. So, share the vision. A good story cannot be told enough and make sure

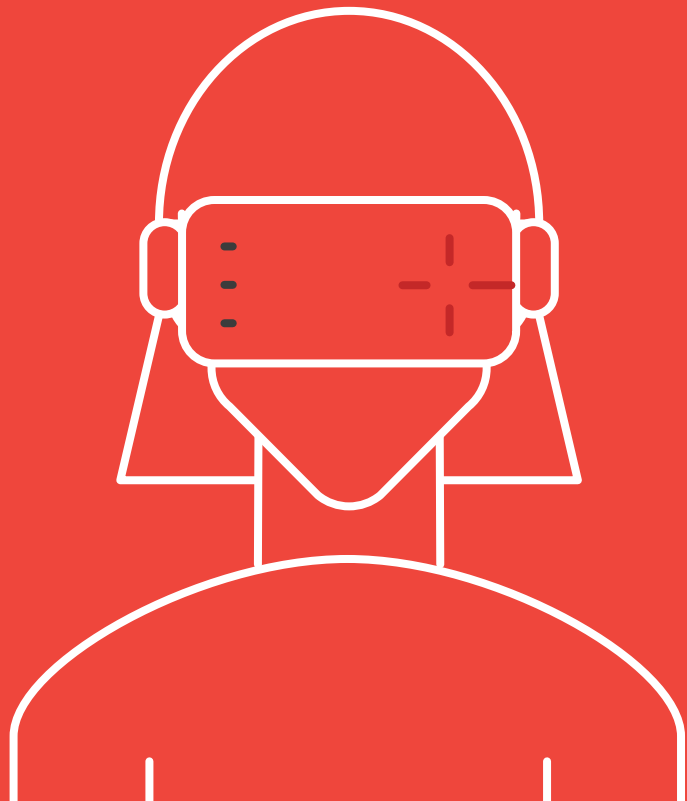
to share your vision and your progress. Clear and frequent communication will help tremendously in accelerating your journey towards an Enterprise API.

3. Listen - We envision that your Integrated Workplace will enable you to step up your game within every part of your organization. That means that everyone gets an opportunity to improve. But improving something means doing it differently and, as we all know, change is hard. There are legitimate reasons for why change comes at an inconvenient time. It is important to make sure you have the structures in place to listen to the organization and reserve capacity to be able to react to what you are told.

4. Celebrate - In line with keeping score, make sure to reward all colleagues when your journey is significantly improving the bottom line. And trust us, this will come sooner than later.

3

THE
INTEGRATED
WORKPLACE





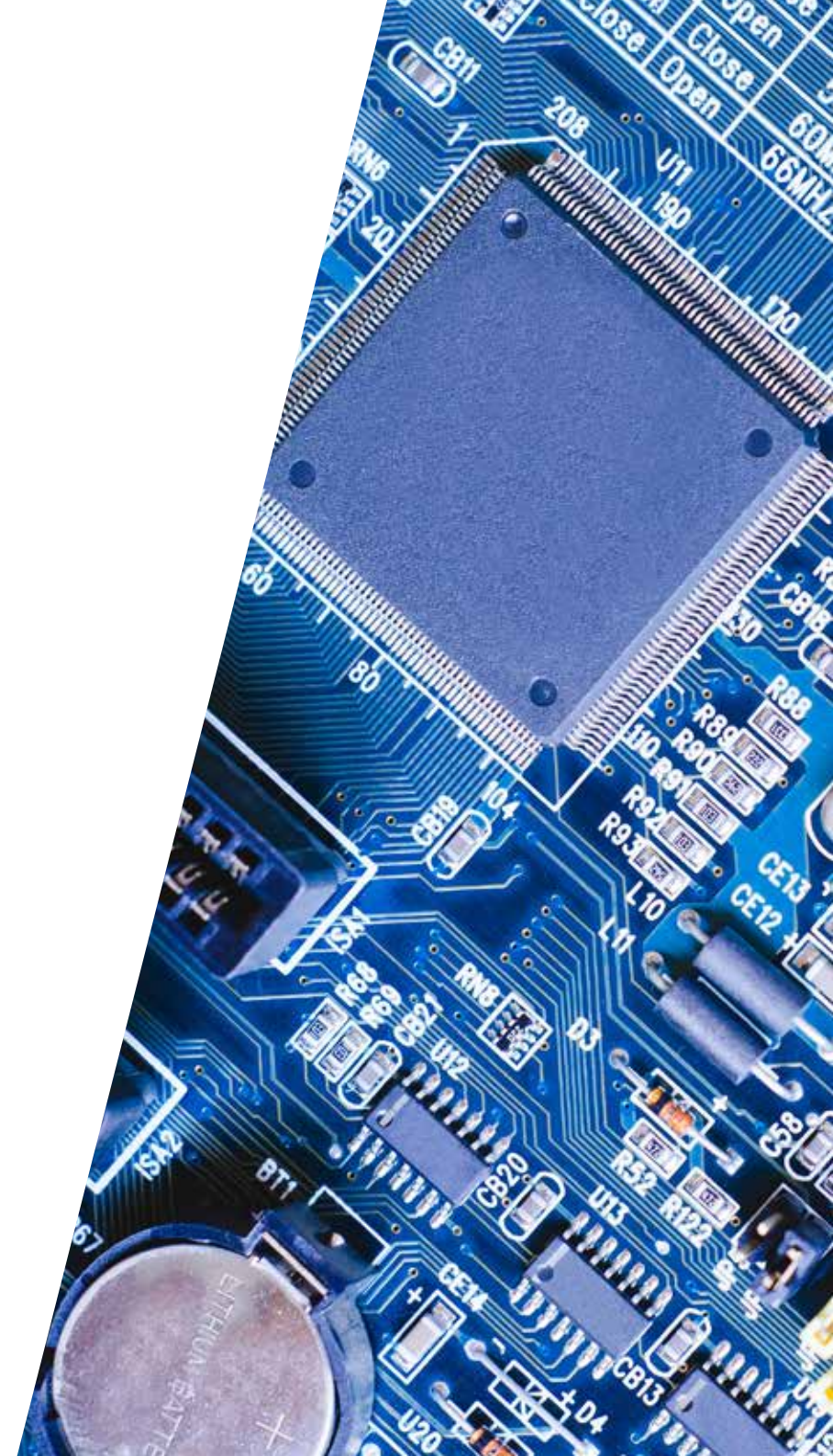
YOUR OWN ENTERPRISE API

When we take off on the journey to realize your integrated workplace, we will need to align on a couple of key principles to end up with a quality solution. The crucial element of our integrated workplace approach is an Enterprise API within your organization. **Modern applications require a standardized way of connecting with the enterprise.** This requires that organizations establish ground rules for connecting systems. The result is that your enterprise is thus no longer defined as the sum of all colleagues, data, and content, but by the node in the middle which is your enterprise API that connects to all the data and content needed to effectively run the business.

Consider your Enterprise API as being the air traffic control center for all the data and content that is consumed in running the business. Your Enterprise API is the set of rules that governs the way in which information comes in and goes out in a timely fashion. Starting with a small airstrip that the occasional charter flight makes use of and growing to a major hub that can handle planes of all shapes and sizes at any time of the day. The best thing about this analogy is that, just like planes, your Enterprise API can run on autopilot for the most part.

Your own Enterprise API does not only allow you to transfer information in and out of your company to any system that you please. It will also determine the ground rules for everyone that wants to add a connection. Both from within the company as well as from the outside. Just imagine the future benefits of how the next time you are selecting a new application for the business, you can require every vendor to offer integration in line with your own Enterprise API. That puts you in the driver seat of your systems management instead of your vendors. **You determine how data and content will flow between your business and a vendor's platform.**

Your very own Enterprise API puts you in full control of your business information and is the perfect base for the Integrated Workplace.





THE API ECONOMY

As the reach of APIs has grown, so has its importance to the business. Deloitte Consulting captures this well in its article 'API economy - From systems to business services':

"Application programming interfaces (APIs) have been elevated from a development technique to a business model driver and boardroom consideration. An organization's core assets can be reused, shared, and monetized through APIs that can extend the reach of existing services or provide new revenue streams. APIs should be managed like a product - one built on top of a potentially complex technical footprint that includes legacy and third-party systems and data."

Source MS white paper: Azure API Management Driving Digital Transformation in Today's API Economy

ENTERPRISE CONNECTIONS & WORKPLACE INSIGHTS

While we build up your Enterprise API, the number of systems connected to your central hub will grow over time. This growing number of Enterprise Connections will trigger the multiplier effect of integrating, bringing you more value at a faster pace.

Consider this more closely, each time you complete a piece of the integration puzzle, the benefit will be two-fold. On the one hand, this Enterprise Connection will take care of a part of the information exchange between two systems. Most likely, making the manual steps that used to manage the transaction redundant. On the other hand, the Enterprise Connection will be able to execute the exchange at more frequent intervals, because it is not bound to workday restrictions. **The Enterprise API can keep crunching numbers when colleagues focus on other value-added activities.**

So, every time we successfully add an Enterprise Connection, we eliminate a piece of manual error-prone work and increase the frequency at which we can offer insights to colleagues. Once you have tackled a couple of these cases, you will notice a change in mindset among the colleagues. As they get out of the rut of administration, they will start switching to an integrated way of thinking. Coming up with ideas like,

“every time I (fill in the blank), I always need to share it with those colleagues. Can we connect them to our source?” and “whenever I need to do (fill in another blank), I always wish that I had the most recent numbers on this and that. **Can we connect those sources to my dashboard?**” As the number of connections within the enterprise grows, the answer will more often be, “yes, we can”, instead of the old answer, “it’s complex and expensive”.

Offering more and more insights through the Integrated Workplace will unleash a flood of improvement ideas. All you need to do is make sure you have a plan to respond to all those valuable inputs and allow your colleagues to transform from number crunchers and content maintainers to business logic thinkers.

**The Enterprise API is the heart
and brains of all business
information exchanges.**



ENTERPRISE MONITORING & WORKPLACE STABILITY

Remember the analogy of the air traffic control hub for the Enterprise API? Like the control tower on an airfield, your own Enterprise API will become the control room for all your business data. It is the heart and brains of all information exchanges that support the business and thus becomes the place to monitor the health of your business.

The first level of monitoring will be the quantitative level. For each of your connections, you can monitor if there is traffic in the first place. Making sure the Enterprise Connection still works. Also, it will be quite easy to run constant analysis if the amount of traffic we see being exchanged fits within the expected bounds. When we see thousands of invoices being processed per day and all sudden, this drops to hundreds; we might be missing a part of the information. Having all this traffic flow through the Enterprise API makes it easy to keep track of the current status, and with the analysis services in Azure, you can easily set up triggers that indicate when things are amiss.





**ENTERPRISE
SECURITY &
WORKPLACE ACCESS**



The second level of monitoring will be the qualitative level. We know what kind of data or content we have connected and thus can check on the quality of the traffic we see coming by. Taking the example of invoices again, we will expect a couple of properties to be present in the messaging. When we see that invoices are sent without customer names, billing amounts or the product codes are not the usual 10 characters; we know that something is wrong. And it might be better to stop traffic for those invoices because we do not want to feed our business with incomplete or polluted information.

The fact that **we can monitor the data in transit and act when it seems out of the ordinary** allows us to bring the stability of the Integrated Workplace to a whole new level. Just imagine that you as a marketing analyst open up your dashboard in the morning, and instead of seeing the billing information of the last 12 hours, you see a message that due to quality issues with the invoices, the traffic to the marketing database has been put on hold. Granted, you might not be pleased about the outage, but at least you have not spent a single minute analyzing faulty data or making marketing decisions based on it. And you can take comfort in the fact that this error was spotted and is being fixed before it had a chance of polluting your marketing dashboard.

ENTERPRISE SECURITY & WORKPLACE ACCESS

During the construction of the Integrated Workplace, we will be building the Enterprise API gradually. With every connection added, you get a better grip on the total of data and content and increase its (re)usability. But we will also **get a very clear view of where the critical business information is stored and used.** For example, the information around your research projects, the profits projections, and the personal information of your colleagues. Bringing those sources into our Enterprise API framework allows us to step up the game in security.

For each connection we add to support the Integrated Workplace, we will need to determine the level of security we need to enforce for the data connection. Because we use the Azure stack for our Enterprise API infrastructure, we have our choice of multiple highly secure authentication and authorization models that we can enforce on the information exchanges. And with services like Azure Advanced Information Protection, we can add policies to certain pieces of data in order to make sure they stay secure wherever we connect them to. Just imagine the peace of mind if you as an organization know that the only way to access the Revenue Projections report, is when users are on a secure





network and users are identified via Multi-Factor Authentication. Even a downloaded copy on a USB stick would be rendered useless under such a policy.

Applying the right kind of security to your Enterprise Connections results in **the model for Workplace Access**, which makes it as easy as possible and as difficult as necessary to connect to certain pieces of information. Perhaps you might not think it is a good idea to check the personnel files on the local Starbucks WiFi on an unknown device, but you have no problem with colleagues checking that information at home on a managed device as long as they use Multi-Factor Authentication.

The essence here is to **apply the right level of security for the different kinds of information**. It is not the challenge of inventing as many hoops as possible for our colleagues to jump through before they are rewarded with a piece of information. It is a challenge of securing that what is worthy of protecting and opening up access for everything else. A couple of hurdles for the very secret stuff will not trigger pushback, as long as all other information is freely available for colleagues that need it to do their job. Allowing them to be productive at the time and place that works best for them.

ENTERPRISE LOGIC & WORKPLACE AUTOMATION

After you have created enhanced insights through the network of Enterprise Connections and tackled the flood of connection requests that will come from all corners of your organization, **it is time to unlock the real power of the Integrated Workplace: automation.**

With the second wave of requests, your colleagues will start inquiring if they can not only use those connections to look at information, but also to update the needed records and files. And that is when you can start tapping into the collective brainpower of your workforce and unleash an army of business logic thinkers. Because it will not take long before ideas start popping up. **Users will start thinking about practical applications.** For example, “If I update this field here, I always sent out a message to colleagues that the process is ready for the next step. Can we automate that, since we have already connected those two systems?”. Your answer will be: “Yes, we can do that. Surprisingly easy as well!”

As momentum builds, users will become passionate and seek continuous improvement. Continuing the example above, when you talk to the colleagues that will now receive that automated message, they will ask you something like “Oh, but when we get that message, we always do this and that. Are you saying we can

automate that as well?” And again, the answer will be: “Sure we can!”

Soon you will have unleashed a tidal wave of automation suggestions within the organization. This is an awesome, exciting and tricky time. The excitement comes from the enthusiasm that takes over within many departments, the awesomeness comes from realizing these automation improvements, but the trickiness comes from the amount of work that is bubbling up. Many colleagues can generate many ideas, and having the capacity to pick them up at a decent pace will **make the difference between riding the tidal wave like a boss or getting flooded in demand.** It is at this moment where a partner allows you to scale up and work with the different departments to help them add their puzzle pieces to the Enterprise API. Next to a surge in enthusiasm and integration demand, you will also experience a culture change. Influenced by the potential of radically improving their work, many colleagues will turn, albeit step by step, into business logic thinkers. For them to keep improving the work, they will demand a bit of support and a bunch of freedom. Be ready to allow them that freedom, because without it the organization will miss out on a lot of potentials.



ENTERPRISE AGILITY & WORKPLACE ADOPTION

The central hub aspect of your very own Enterprise API allows you not only to connect to the current landscape of systems but also to act quickly when the landscape of systems changes. And it will change, we all know that. Even changing out something as crucial as your ERP system will be much easier when you have already adopted the Enterprise API framework.

The new ERP system can be installed and tested while the current one is still connected and driving business. When it is time to make the change, we connect the new one to the Enterprise API and feed the data in all the directions that are already defined for the old ERP system. We could even have both systems connected at the same time and gradually transfer traffic from one source to the other. Putting in some logic that determines per message type which ERP source should be leading is no rocket science within an Enterprise API framework. Remember, **we are simply the traffic control center, making sure information is shared between the designated systems** in a way that makes sense for the Enterprise.

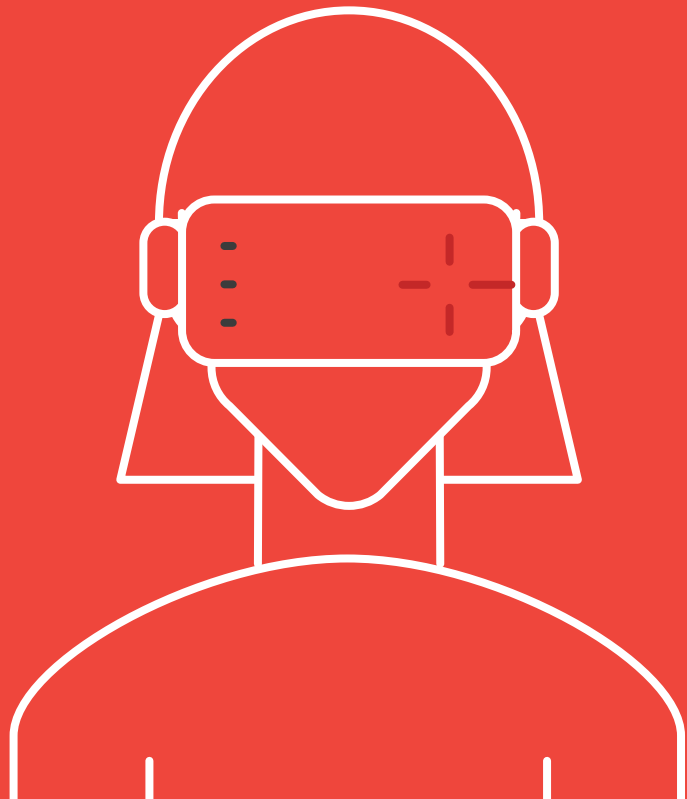
The flexibility we have in directing traffic from the source to the destination, means we are also able to connect a new source with

similar data to the same systems the old source was connected to. The invoice report still shows invoices, the sales targets are still tracked based on the sales, and the warehouse still sees what needs to be shipped when. **The dashboards simply get fed by the same information from a different source.** Other than that, nothing has to change. Allowing colleagues to keep being effective on a daily basis while the enterprise is going through something crucial as switching ERP systems.



3

THE TIME
IS NOW



THE TIME IS NOW

If there ever was a time to get serious about the Integrated Workplace, it is now! We see a trifecta of trends that will want you to move sooner than later in order to position yourself perfectly for the coming decade of business advancement.

1. Data is king.

Data is considered to be a company's most valuable commodity and it is only growing in size and value. The biggest and most successful companies today are data companies. Those who have perfected the art of distilling valuable information from the data and content gathered of their customer base have a clear edge over the competition. For most companies, however, data and content is scattered over multiple systems and is often so hard to combine that it is simply not being done. Certainly not in a real-time way that allows you to track today's events and predict the (near) future.

2. The world goes mobile.

The number of applications is growing explosively. Not only in our personal lives, but also at work we use more and more systems and applications to get the job done.

Where we are already suffering from scattered data and content, we need to expect that this will get worse over the

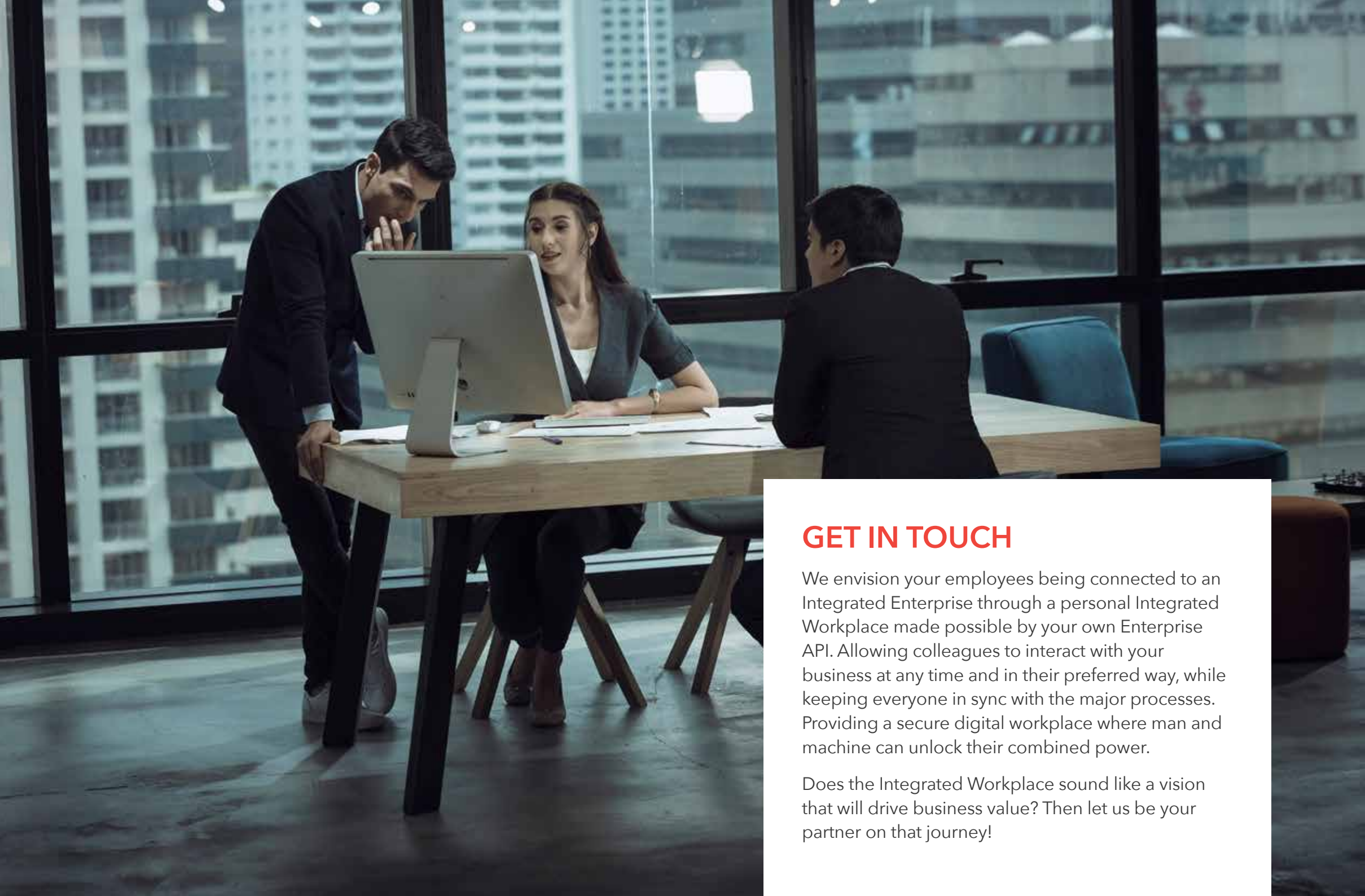
coming years when we are adopting more and more systems that contain parts of our business data and business content.

3. Computing power is for hire.

The resources needed to get serious about integrations and build your own Enterprise API are available. We can now do things we used to only dream about. Moreover, the resources are available through flexible subscriptions, allowing us to move fast while keeping investments low. No longer we need to make million-dollar investments before we even can get started. We pay as we go and make sure the benefits are realized before the credit card bill is due.

Simply put, we should do it, we want to do it, and we can do it.

The time is now to go do it!



GET IN TOUCH

We envision your employees being connected to an Integrated Enterprise through a personal Integrated Workplace made possible by your own Enterprise API. Allowing colleagues to interact with your business at any time and in their preferred way, while keeping everyone in sync with the major processes. Providing a secure digital workplace where man and machine can unlock their combined power.

Does the Integrated Workplace sound like a vision that will drive business value? Then let us be your partner on that journey!

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