

April 2014, HAPPIEST MINDS TECHNOLOGIES

DEVELOPER ENGAGEMENT SOLUTION KEY TO SUCCESS OF YOUR PLATFORM

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Table of Contents

Abstract	4
1 About API	4
2 Then, Now and Tomorrow	5
3 Hurdles	6
3.1 Building an engaged developer community	6
3.2 Providing a single knowledge repository for all product APIs	6
3.3 Streamlined product access	6
3.4 Resource sharing, code repository integration and API console	6
4 The Business Front	6
4.1 Elasticity and agility to the organization	6
4.2 Bring partners and customers closer	6
5 Our Solution	7
5.1 Key features of our solution	7
5.2 Benefits of our solution	8
5.2.1 Software as a Service (SaaS)	8
5.2.2 Extensive Product Features	8
5.2.3 Reliable & Scalable	8
6 Conclusion	8
7 References	9
About Happiest Minds	9

Abstract

This whitepaper talks about the API technology, its roots and evolution over the years. It explains how API affects businesses in present economy. It also addresses the hurdles that an organization would face while deciding to develop a Developer Portal Solution, highlights the solutions to overcome the hurdles and finally explains Happiest Minds' Developer Portal solution, its features and its benefits.

1 About API

What do companies like Expedia, Foursquare, VISA, MasterCard, Amazon and social networking companies have in common? – APIs.

APIs are altering their business into more successful organizations. The explosion of devices and the resulting demand for consumable data has changed opportunities of how, when and where consumers involve with you. Businesses that can stay ahead of these changing expectations are leapfrogging their competition with better reach, fresh revenue channels, lesser operating costs and quicker time to market. They recognize that a successful API strategy is one of the most powerful sources of competitive advantage in business today. APIs enable many channel marketers to interact with each other day in, day out, and empower simple, straightforward and fast development of effective tools that help market a company more creatively.

Organizations have begun to realize the benefits of sharing their essential data and services. They recognize that sharing their vital data with the world outside through a proper channel would accelerate ROI. For e.g. – Expedia, a travel booking company (train, plane, hotels, etc.) earlier performed web marketing through a HTML framed window and through this affiliates would embed in their website. But this approach did not help Expedia speed up their market reach. Hence, the company opened up an API for their affiliates to enable them to pick up bookings, photos, search results and user reviews, which resulted in smart access and improved performance. It allowed developers who needed access to Expedia database to seamlessly integrate their interfaces and improved experience. Today after opening up their APIs, Expedia Affiliate Network includes 10,000 partners and makes \$2 billion revenue per year; 90% of it generated through its API. ¹

“Gartner says 75% of Fortune 500 enterprises will open an API by 2014.”

Organizations have understood that the platform built to make their data and services available faster to the third party would need to be easy to connect for the developer community. As Developer Portals are meant only for developers, the main crux of developing the solution depends on how easily developers adapt to the solution and use its variant services.

¹ 6-reasons-why-apis-are-reshaping-your-business by Faber Novel, Dec, 2012.-
<http://www.slideshare.net/faberNovel/6-reasons-why-apis-are-reshaping-your-business>

2 Then, Now and Tomorrow

Customarily, organizations always considered their data as one of their core valuable assets and guarded them from the eyes of competitors. The idea of giving away access to their data appeared to be a threat to their business. In the beginning of internet era, businesses began to realize the prominence of having their own website; today, with APIs in the picture, there is a dynamic behavioral shift. Organizations are realizing the importance of sharing their core data and services and the benefits they can reap out of it. Many Fortune 500 enterprises have started using APIs to expand their reach to many industries. Businesses have come to realize that with the use of APIs they can not only improve operations, but also create new billion-dollar revenue channels, reduce development costs, speed up the time to market, scale partnership programs and tap outsiders for innovation. With the current API boom, the phase is suitable for companies to see what an API can do for them. Today, APIs are connecting mobiles, laptops, tablets and many other technological gadgets. Soon, every object will be able to exchange resources through APIs. An abundant amount of positivity exists on the future potential of APIs, which will benefit all the patrons: the creators and the developers who look for high quality experiences. The following graph shows the growth of API over the years.

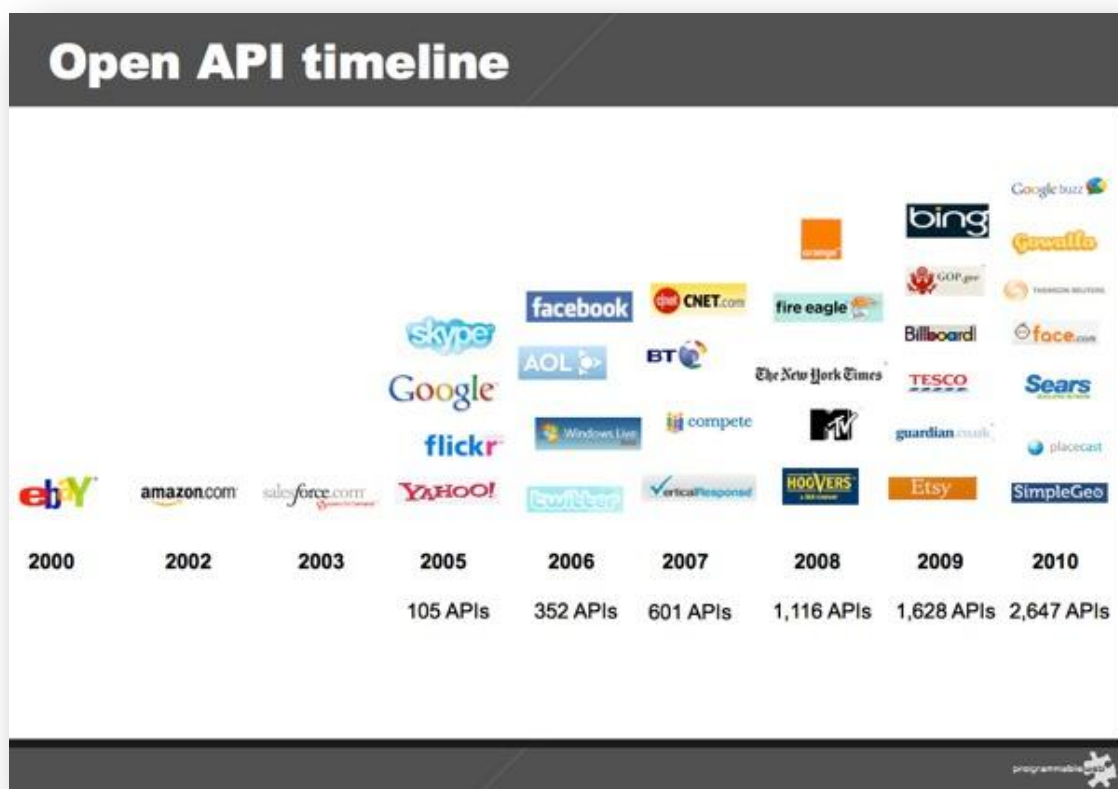


Fig 1: Growth of API over the years

Reference: API Growth Doubles in 2010, Social and Mobile Are Trends

3 Hurdles

When an organization decides to build a platform and share information with larger audiences, the idea looks lucrative and exciting but also comes with its share of challenges. There are disparate challenges that an enterprise should address in order to reach the goal of expanding the business. Some of the hurdles that organizations need to consider are:

3.1 Building an engaged developer community

It is very important for API providers to build a simple and easy-to-understand medium for developers. Being the provider, businesses would need a medium to make their APIs available to developers and offer a platform to learn rapidly, sign up easily and register their Apps flawlessly.

3.2 Providing a single knowledge repository for all product APIs

Along with building an engaged developer community, there is the challenge to provide a flexible medium from where developers will be able to access all the necessary details of product APIs that are required for learning and development.

3.3 Streamlined product access

API providers would also need to focus on providing a defined channel that would not only help them deliver access to their products in a structured manner, but will also simplify access to the product for developers.

3.4 Resource sharing, code repository integration and API console

The avenues for sharing various resources and accurate integration with code repository and API console need to be considered accurately; without which, it would be difficult for developers to learn, collaborate and contribute

4 The Business Front

4.1 Elasticity and agility to the organization

The ability to tap into APIs for various pre-built functions means cutting out countless hours of programming time to build such functions from scratch. It implies that capabilities are instantly available for inquiry, enabling faster responses to problems or opportunities. It also boosts association across business units, who may be sharing one another's APIs. Outside third parties can access, build and share within the enterprise the APIs via the cloud model.

4.2 Bring partners and customers closer

APIs open up applications within the enterprise to drive new business opportunities. Another approach is to make APIs available for third parties to leverage them and create innovative new ideas, combining core capabilities with other web-based content or capabilities. This can positively impact consumer experience and result in increased revenue.

5 Our Solution

Happiest Minds has developed a solution that will help businesses to collaborate and communicate with their developer community effectively. Our solution enables organizations to build an engaged developer community and faster user adoption fostering the following:

- Learn- Easy learning of provider's product and APIs
- Develop - Quick development of apps by applying the learning
- Contribute- Share the experience gained through learning and development among the developer community
- Collaborate- Fuel innovation by collaborating through various blogs and forums



Fig 2 : Developer Portal Parameters

5.1 Key features of our solution

Happiest Minds has developed the Developer Portal solution with a blend of distinctive feature sets that includes:

- Intuitive API testing console for REST APIs
- API Key management
- Track API usages
- Easy integration with API management platforms
- Showcase your applications
- Collaboration through Blogs & Forums
- Insights and many more

5.2 Benefits of our solution

We develop our solution, keeping in mind that our customers are able to obtain maximum benefits from it. Some of the benefits that our customers can obtain are:

5.2.1 Software as a Service (SaaS)

- Lower cost of ownership and faster time to market
- Customizable solution to meet unique business needs
- Improve accessibility and reachability

5.2.2 Extensive Product Features

- Continuous product improvements and availability of new features through easy upgrades.
- Multi sided, cloud deployed solution helps internal team to engage with partners and third party developers
- Co-creation of values through increased collaboration

5.2.3 Reliable & Scalable

- Built on proven platform, thoroughly tested integrated modules
- Built in support for failover, scalability, high availability and data backup

6 Conclusion

The transformation in technology industry, from its current levels, the API market, indicates that there is a long way to go for this segment. APIs will play a key role in the makeover of business environment and support. Developer Portal will provide businesses the opportunity to explore what valuable services they can expose or share with the outside world and how they can benefit out of it. Historically, APIs were dominated by larger enterprises due to eco-system complexity; hence there are still many APIs which are private and invisible to public. However, with gradual changes, more and more enterprises are going to open up their services and build up a strong market strategy with the support of developer portal platform. Businesses who will act faster will advance rapidly towards acquiring market leadership and building up a position for themselves. The developers develop the Developer Portal solution; hence, this platform will not only provide developers with a medium to develop more and more apps and upsurge their knowledge, but also make their end users happy.

7 References

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About Happiest Minds

Happiest Minds is a next generation ISO27001 Certified IT services company founded by Ashok Soota in 2011. The company is funded by Intel Capital, Canaan Partners and Ashok Soota.

Happiest Minds collaborates with clients to help them differentiate and win with a unique blend of solutions and services based on the core technology pillars of cloud computing, social computing, mobility and analytics. We offer customized, integrated services in the area of IT Services, Software Product Engineering, Infrastructure Management, Security, Independent Testing, and Technical Advisory Consulting

We combine an unparalleled experience, comprehensive capabilities in the following industries: Retail, Media, CPG, Manufacturing, Banking and Financial services, Travel and Hospitality and Hi-Tech with pragmatic, forward-thinking advisory capabilities for the world's top businesses, governments and organizations. Happiest Minds is privately held with headquarter in Bangalore, India and offices in the USA, UK, Singapore, Canada and Australia.

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