Impact Report

Dell Boomi extends its iPaaS with an API lifecycle management release

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Dell recently announced that its Boomi team has extended its integration PaaS (iPaaS) with a set of API lifecycle management capabilities. Dell Boomi API Management now offers features that enable users to create, publish and centrally manage APIs on-premises or in clouds. The news affirms the continued convergence of various data and application integration technologies into a new uniform platform for the integration of hybrid clouds, mobile devices and the Internet of Things (IoT).

The 451 Take

Dell is reacting to both the explosive use of APIs by enterprises and the actions of its rivals. Indeed, enterprises now need to extract data from and expose data to all manners of integration endpoints. Drivers include social media, mobile devices, proprietary applications, cloud services, big data, IoT and the so-called 'API economy' that links business partners. Several of Boomi's rivals have taken similar steps (see below).

While Boomi had some capabilities to handle Web services and APIs as part of its evolving AtomSphere iPaaS platform, it lacked the comprehensive capabilities and messaging that it now brings to market with its API Management release. This will help the vendor maintain its market leadership position as iPaaS and API management market continue to converge into common frameworks for hybrid and multi-cloud integration and management. It also exposes the larger Dell group to new opportunities in hybrid cloud management, mobile application integration and connected device (IoT) projects.

Context

In our last report on Dell Boomi, we discussed the spring 2014 release of its AtomSphere iPaaS. For the most part, the enhancements addressed issues of integration process execution. They included a collection of analysis and resolution capabilities that improve the reliability of Boomi's AtomSphere platform as well as the performance of integration processes that run within it. The new features also included message queuing and an XML-JSON conversion tool.

Since then, Dell Boomi reports that use of its AtomSphere iPaaS is growing. It added 1,100 new paying customers since the close of its fiscal year ending January 31, bringing the total to roughly 2,800 today. The vendor reports a 95% renewal rate, attributing the low customer churn to its predictive analytic tools that alert Boomi's service team when customer usage patterns change, which in turn triggers a proactive customer service response.

Strategy and products

Dell entered the API management market in 2010, offering Web services publishing capabilities. In 2012, the company introduced Atom Worker, which helped ensure predictable performance levels for real-time data transfers. This was followed in 2013 with capabilities to monitor, measure, secure, throttle and scale published APIs. Dell's most

recent offering extends its API management capabilities to enable API lifecycle management – features that control the phased evolution of APIs (e.g., design, develop, test, integrate, deploy, manage, monitor and archive/retire).

Overall, Boomi's new API Management release enables developers to create version-controlled APIs to expose a set of REST or SOAP endpoints. Once created, an API can be attached and deployed to Atoms (Boomi's term for an integration process) in the same way that Atom integration processes are deployed. The AtomSphere iPaaS platform automatically generates a WSDL for each deployed SOAP API, as well as a Swagger specification file for each deployed REST API.

API Management also includes features that enable developers to create, publish and centrally manage APIs. To create APIs, Boomi crafted a set of service development and design tools. They extend its existing visual interface for integration process designs, which enables APIs to be configured rather than coded. Notable API Management enhancements include API Design, which enables developers to quickly design APIs from an existing set of Web services with features that aggregate them so they can be centrally managed; it includes version control to ensure backward compatibility to prior designs. Developers can create APIs from new or existing Boomi integration processes (Atoms). API Generate can modernize legacy Web services for centralized management. It enables developers to import legacy SOAP service descriptions and turn them into Web services that can be added into any API and exposed to consumers. Boomi claims that this capability can be executed by developers in less than 30 minutes.

To publish APIs, Boomi designed capabilities that enable developers to expose any endpoint as a Web service, including HTTP (SOAP/REST), FTP sites, databases, legacy applications, cloud and mobile applications. As with Boomi's existing Atom integration process deployments, APIs can be deployed either on-premises or in clouds. To manage APIs, the company equipped its AtomSphere iPaaS with features to control traffic, monitor response times and respond to errors. APIs can be deployed and monitored in any cloud service or on-premises platform via a single-pane-of-glass management console. Boomi also developed a new API gateway that provides a centralized method for authentication and accessibility for services. The API Management release can be purchased alone or be combined with other offerings.

Boomi notes that one of its core competitive differentiators is that it avoided acquiring third-party technology that can create compatibility and integration challenges. Its technology was built organically, offering a common look and feel and consistent navigation between products that can capitalize on what the vendor refers to as 'economies of skill' that increase developer productivity.

We believe that Boomi can pay greater attention to API testing. Like several other API lifecycle management providers, it does not include API testing as part of its current offering. This is a capability that can be quickly remedied through partners. The cost of the API Management release was not disclosed, but we expect the pricing model to be similar in structure to most of its rivals. Boomi feels that the maturity of its offering and its proven track record enables it to justify slightly higher prices.

Customers

Dell Boomi reports that since 2010, the number of customers using its AtomSphere iPaaS to enable and manage APIs in various ways has grown to more than 650. It notes several unnamed reference accounts for the latest API Management release in the pharmaceutical, insurance and telecom industries.

The company is also positioning API Management as a means to develop mobile apps and establish a secure and scalable environment for analyzing and acting on real-time information generated by various devices as part of IoT strategies. It is partnering with Deloitte to expand into various IoT-connected device markets.

Competition

The rivalry in the iPaaS and API management sectors is growing. In recent months, we have published several reports on vendors making similar strategic additions to their respective product portfolios. These include: WaveMaker's container approach to rapid application PaaS includes API management; Talend is readying its data-integration platform for the cloud with its own iPaaS that will also include API management in future releases; Informatica defines a framework to include API integration in its iPaaS Cloud; and Cloud Elements may be the missing link between iPaaS and API management.

Dell Boomi will also face rivals that specialize in API management, among them 3scale, Akana (formerly SOA Software), Apiary, Apigee, CA Technologies' Layer 7, Mashery (Intel), MuleSoft and WSO2. In addition, Oracle's new API Catalog and API Manager will be launching shortly.

SWOT Analysis

Strengths

Dell Boomi was among the early entrants in the iPaaS market that links SaaS to on-premises systems. Its mature platform enjoys a broad and growing customer base, with high renewal rates and low churn.

Weaknesses

Like many other API management vendors, Boomi does not provide comprehensive API testing as part of its lifecycle management offering.

Opportunities

Boomi's API Management brings to market the features and messaging that were lacking, and should expose the company to new deals and strong upsell opportunity.

Threats

Many enterprises are seeking a comprehensive integration platform that includes an on-premises enterprise service bus – something Boomi does not offer. ESB rivals with iPaaS and API offerings may be able to edge out Boomi in such integrated platform deals.

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Company: Dell

Other Companies: 3scale Networks, Akana, Apiary, Apigee , Boomi, CA Technologies, Cloud Elements, Deloitte, Informatica, Intel, Layer 7, Mashery, MuleSoft, Oracle, Talend, WaveMaker Software, WSO2

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Cloud

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