



boomi

Build or Buy? The Ultimate Guide to an Effective Product Integration Strategy



As a product leader, how do you meet the rising demand for integration? You're faced with a choice: do you build integrations from scratch in-house, or do you invest in an embedded integration solution? Our practical guide sizes up the mix of strategic, technical, and financial considerations.



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Product Integration: From Nice-to-Have to Non-Negotiable

The role of integration has fundamentally changed. For years, most software products could stand alone; customers didn't expect systems to talk to each other. With today's tech stacks made up of dozens — or even hundreds — of applications, that reality has changed. Your customers expect the tools they use to work together, and as companies lean further into automation and AI, that expectation will only grow stronger.



Avoiding SaaS Sprawl Disconnects

Sprawling tech stacks have heightened the need for integration. One [recent report](#) found that organizations use an average of 275 cloud applications. For enterprises with more than 10,000 employees, that number jumps to 660.¹

Customers are reluctant to invest in a new application without ready-made integrations for good reason:

- Time-consuming manual “swivel chair” work across disparate systems
- Risks of contradictory data in siloed applications
- Reduced efficiency, productivity, and job satisfaction

If a customer does buy an application that doesn’t readily integrate, user engagement with the system can be low. Users aren’t spending as much time as you’d like in your product. Instead of 5-star user reviews on G2 and Trust Radius, you’re getting negative write-ups over integration hiccups.

Ultimately, integration limitations can undermine efficiency as your customers try to manage a growing sprawl of disconnected applications. If your application becomes a sore spot, churn will rise as customers turn to a more integration-friendly alternative.

660+

Cloud applications at average large enterprise ¹

44%

of software buyers prioritize integration support during pre-purchase product evaluation ²

#2 reason

Integration capabilities are the second-most important factor when choosing a new application ³

Tech Complexity and AI Raise the Stakes

Integration needs are diverse. One customer might need a simple one-to-one connection between your app and a common platform, such as Trello or Slack. Another customer might need to connect your app to a more complex system such as NetSuite, or a more niche financial, operational, CRM, HR, data analytics, or industry-specific system.

With 44% of prospects prioritizing integration support² during pre-purchase evaluations, it's important that your software can integrate across scenarios of varying complexity. Otherwise, the appeal of your platform could be limited to smaller companies with minimal integration needs.

A decade ago, vendors could viably offer a handful of strategic integrations, leaving thornier connectivity to customers to figure out. That has changed. With the explosive growth of best-of-breed apps and tech stack complexity, vendors are expected to support dozens or even hundreds of applications.

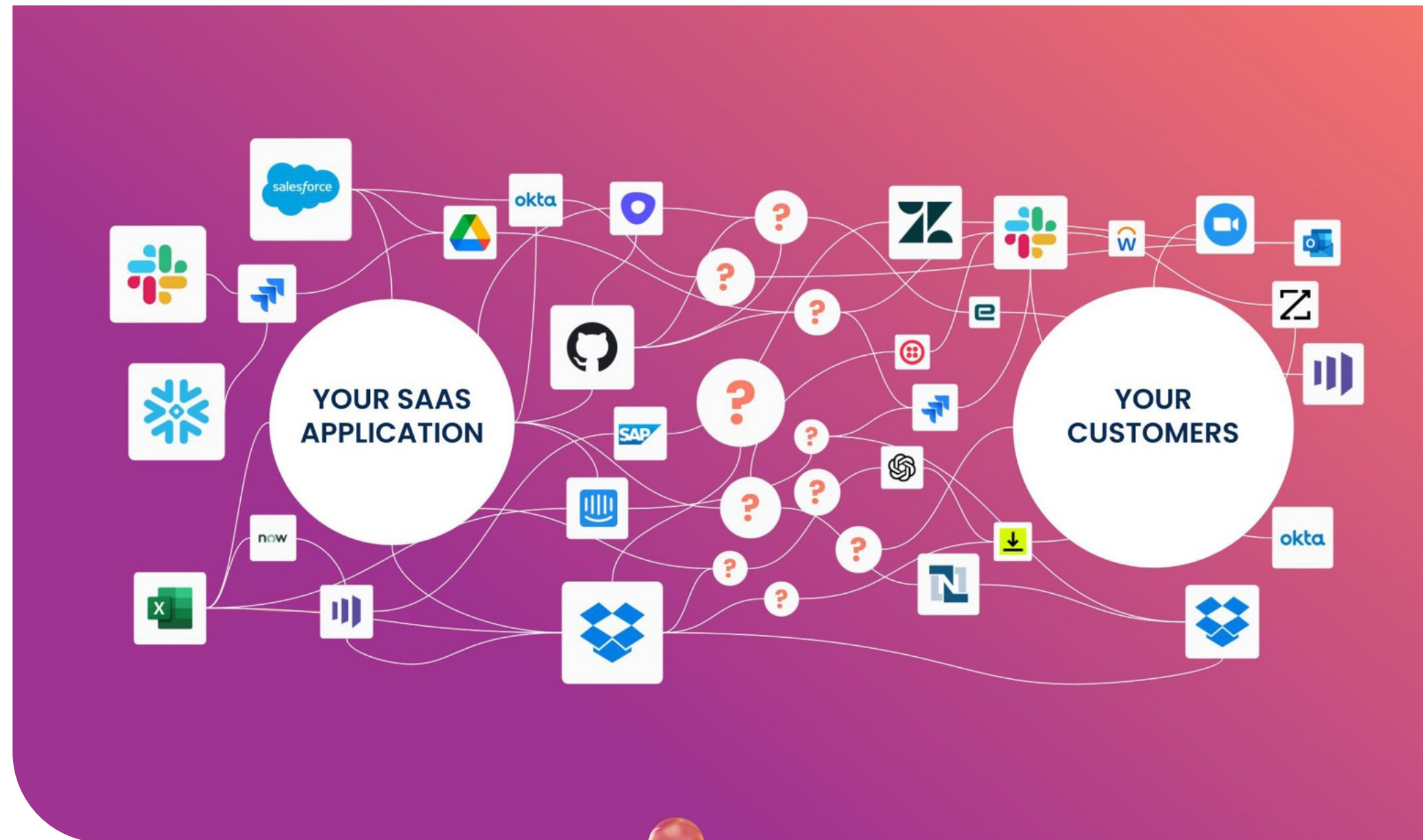
The rise of AI is raising the stakes further. AI depends on comprehensive, timely, consistent, and accurate data from multiple systems. Without robust and scalable integration, AI capabilities can be limited or counterproductive because a customer can't get data from one application to another.

The Challenge for Product Leaders

The need for high quality data and a flexible, scalable integration foundation to support it can be challenging for product leaders. As their customer's tech stacks grow, so do the number of integration requests. And the push for AI-driven innovation drives that number even higher.

Building those integrations from scratch isn't getting any easier, and a 4-6 month delay on delivering connectivity isn't ideal — and that's if you don't already have a backlog of customer requests piled up. Even if you estimate only one integration per customer (and that's unlikely), that's a lot of integrations to build.

Soon those requests turn into a backlog that's bottlenecking your engineering team. Your product innovation slows, customers are churning, and prospects are walking away. The question is no longer if integrations are a problem to solve — but how?



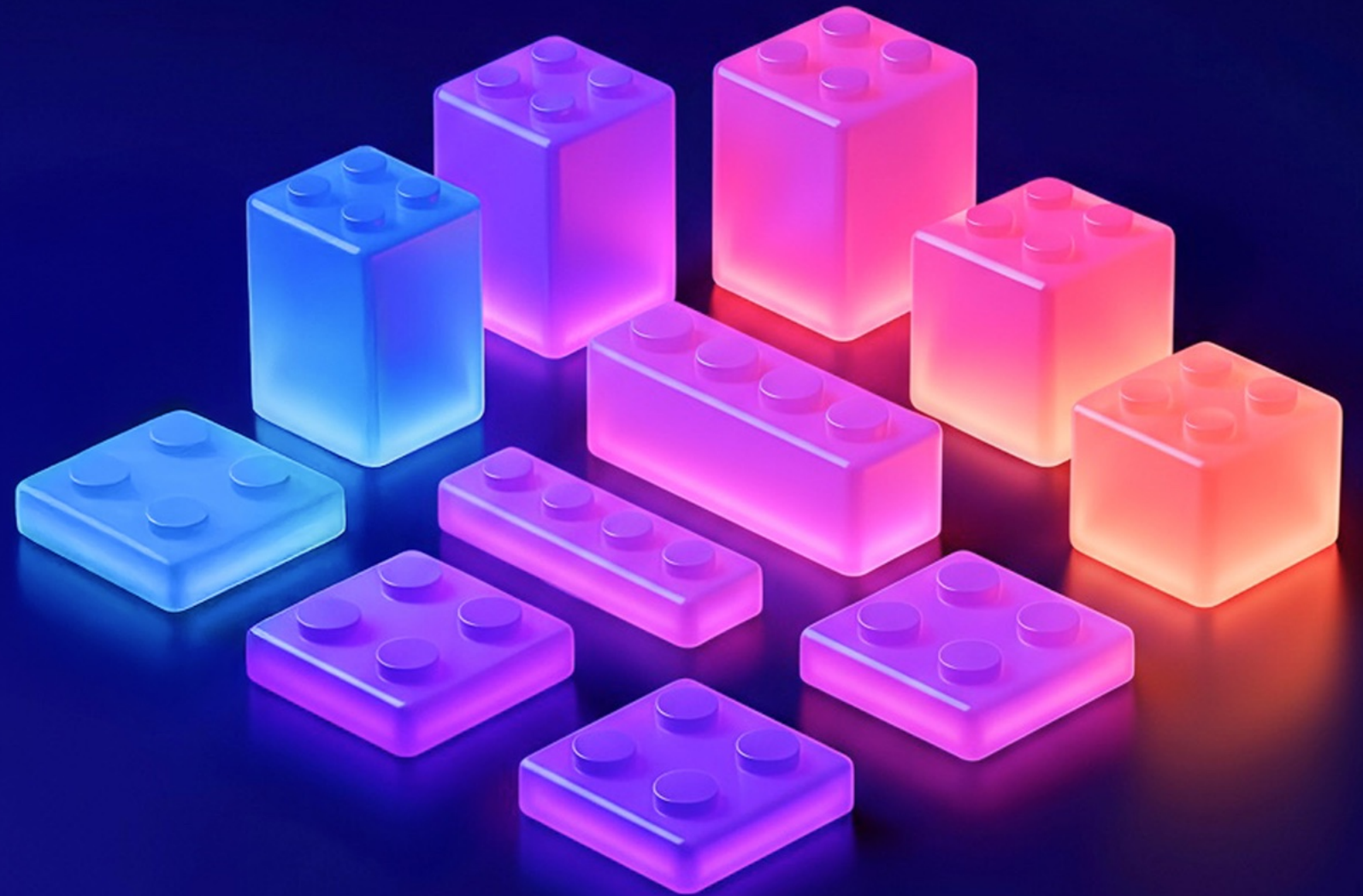


Build vs. Buy

There are two main options for delivering integrations to your customers. You can build them in-house, or you can leverage an embedded integration solution.

- 1. Build:** Your engineering team designs and codes integrations in-house, and then maintains those integrations through the entire customer lifecycle.
- 2. Buy:** You partner with an embedded integration platform to deliver integrations natively with pre-built, reusable connectors and a managed infrastructure.

There are advantages and disadvantages to both. The right decision is going to come down to what works best for your organization. Keep in mind the questions in the checklists as you learn more about the pros and cons of each.





Building Integrations In-House

Advantages

- **Control:** Building your own integrations gives you complete control over how connectivity behaves, how it's updated, and how it supports your product strategy. This control is especially valuable if integration is a key differentiator in your product strategy.
- **Customizability:** Some integrations may need deep customization, which can't be offered out-of-the-box by an embedded integration platform. In-house integration development allows for that deep customization. Your team can build custom mappings and specialized workflows that might not be available out of the box with an integration platform as a service (iPaaS) partner.
- **IP ownership:** The build approach lets you develop intellectual property (IP) that can become valuable over time. Internal IP can help grow your company's valuation, create strategic advantage, and open opportunities to monetize your integration IP with customers or partners.

Challenges

- **High costs:** Developing enterprise-caliber integrations gobbles up time and money. Assigning engineering resources to build one-off integrations leaves you with fewer development resources to focus on your core product. The job doesn't end after the build phase — you'll face ongoing customer support, bug fixes, API updates, and more.
- **Scaling development:** Building integrations to a handful of applications may be doable, but can you scale development to support 50 or 100 apps as your customer base grows? Each integration adds technical debt to your team, with risk of turning unwieldy and a drag on your business.
- **Slower time to market:** Creating integrations from scratch is time-consuming and labor-intensive, requiring you to reinvent the wheel over and over. Lost sales opportunities, customer churn, and negative reviews can ensue if you're unable to meet integration delivery dates promised to customers.



Using an Embedded iPaaS

Advantages

- **Faster time to value:** An embedded integration platform as a service lets you use pre-built connectors and drag-and-drop workflows to create integrations in days or weeks, far faster than a months-long ordeal common with custom coding. Result: You meet customer demands more quickly.
- **Access to developer tooling:** Most iPaaS providers maintain large libraries of connectors to popular applications and offer SDKs, visual workflow builders, and debugging tools. Developers can focus on customizing logic and the UI rather than worrying about connectivity or API quirks.
- **Future-proof scalability:** As your customer base grows and new integration requests come in, an embedded iPaaS can scale both in number of integrations and data volumes. The best platforms support multi-tenant deployments with capabilities like retries, queuing, throttling, and parallel execution.
- **Security, compliance, and monitoring:** An iPaaS will often have its own security certifications for standards such as SOC 1/SOC 2, PCI DSS, and HIPAA. The vendor typically offers monitoring, logging, and error handling tools. Built-in security and monitoring relieves operational burdens from your team.

Considerations

- **Vendor lock-in:** Relying on a third-party platform makes you dependent on the vendor's roadmap, uptime, and business health. If you want to switch vendors or bring integrations in-house, migration efforts could be substantial.
- **Flexibility limitations:** While many iPaaS vendors offer flexible tools, you may face limitations to how deeply you can customize an integration. Constraints around field mappings, transformation logic, or event triggers may complicate some complex scenarios.
- **Licensing cost:** Embedded iPaaS solutions typically operate on subscription or usage-based pricing models. While this reduces upfront engineering costs, it can introduce ongoing expenses that increase with growth. SaaS providers must weigh operational savings against long-term licensing expenses.



Summary of Key Trade-Offs

Factor	Build in-house	Embedded iPaaS
Control & customization	Maximum control and tailored UX	Some limitations, depends on vendor tooling
Time to market	Slower, resource-intensive	Much faster, especially for common connectors
Scalability	Hard to scale across high integration volumes	Built-in scalability with infrastructure and tools
Cost structure	High upfront and ongoing costs	Lower upfront cost, but recurring vendor fees
Security & compliance	Fully under your control	Dependent on vendor practices and audits
IP ownership	Full ownership of code and logic	Limited — vendor owns platform IP



A Decision Matrix To Guide Strategy

The decision to build or buy an embedded integration solution depends on a mix of strategic, technical, and financial considerations. Companies can use a decision matrix to assess their priorities across multiple factors:

- **Strategic control:** Is integration central to your company's differentiation or simply a supporting feature?
- **Speed to market:** Does the business need broad integration coverage quickly, or is tight control over a smaller set of integrations more valuable?
- **Development resources:** Does your company have experienced integration developers available, or can you afford to hire them?
- **Integration breadth:** How broad and deep should your integration catalog be to win and retain customers?
- **Total cost of ownership (TCO):** Beyond licensing or development costs, what are the long-term costs of maintenance, monitoring, compliance, and support?





Using a weighted scoring model, and scores for build versus buy options, in a simple decision matrix is a practical way to evaluate considerations and reach a conclusion. For example:

Criteria	Weight	Build score	Buy score
Strategic control	20%	8	6
Speed to market	25%	3	9
Development resources	15%	4	8
Integration breadth	20%	3	9
Total cost of ownership	20%	5	7
Weighted score	100%	4.6	7.8

For our sample SaaS vendor, “buy” scores higher because speed, breadth, and resource efficiency outweigh the advantages of strategic control. Each company should adjust weights and scores to reflect its unique priorities.



Build vs. Buy: Questions to Guide Your Decision

Capacity

- ☐ Do we have the engineering bandwidth to take on integrations?
- ☐ What high-priority work will slip if engineers spend time building integrations?
- ☐ Is building integrations the best use of our team's talent and expertise?

Maintenance

- ☐ Who will own the ongoing monitoring, updates, and fixes once integrations are live?
- ☐ Do we have enough resources to manage the long-term support load?
- ☐ How much technical debt are we creating by adding more custom integrations?

Speed

- ☐ How long would it realistically take us to build the integrations customers are asking for?
- ☐ Can we deliver them fast enough to keep up with sales promises and customer expectations?
- ☐ Will a growing backlog slow us down or frustrate stakeholders?

Scale

- ☐ Can our current architecture support dozens (or hundreds) of integrations?
- ☐ How complex will it become to manage security, authentication, and versioning in-house?
- ☐ Are we setting up the team for constant firefighting instead of innovation?

Cost of Building

- ☐ What is the true cost of building integrations in-house (development, QA, infrastructure, support)?
- ☐ How many engineers (and how much engineering time) will be tied up both initially and in ongoing maintenance?
- ☐ What's the opportunity cost of pulling engineers away from core product features that drive revenue?

Cost of Buying

- ☐ What is the total cost of licensing an embedded integration platform?
- ☐ Does the platform reduce costs (less custom code, fewer support tickets, fewer engineering resources, faster onboarding)?
- ☐ How predictable and scalable are vendor costs compared to fluctuating internal resource needs?

Long-term ROI

- ☐ Over 2-3 years, which option creates more sustainable value: building and maintaining internally, or buying and scaling externally?
- ☐ Does the buy option enable revenue expansion (upsells, new markets) that offsets licensing cost?
- ☐ Will building internally create hidden costs (technical debt, backlog, customer churn) that erode ROI over time?



The Hybrid Alternative

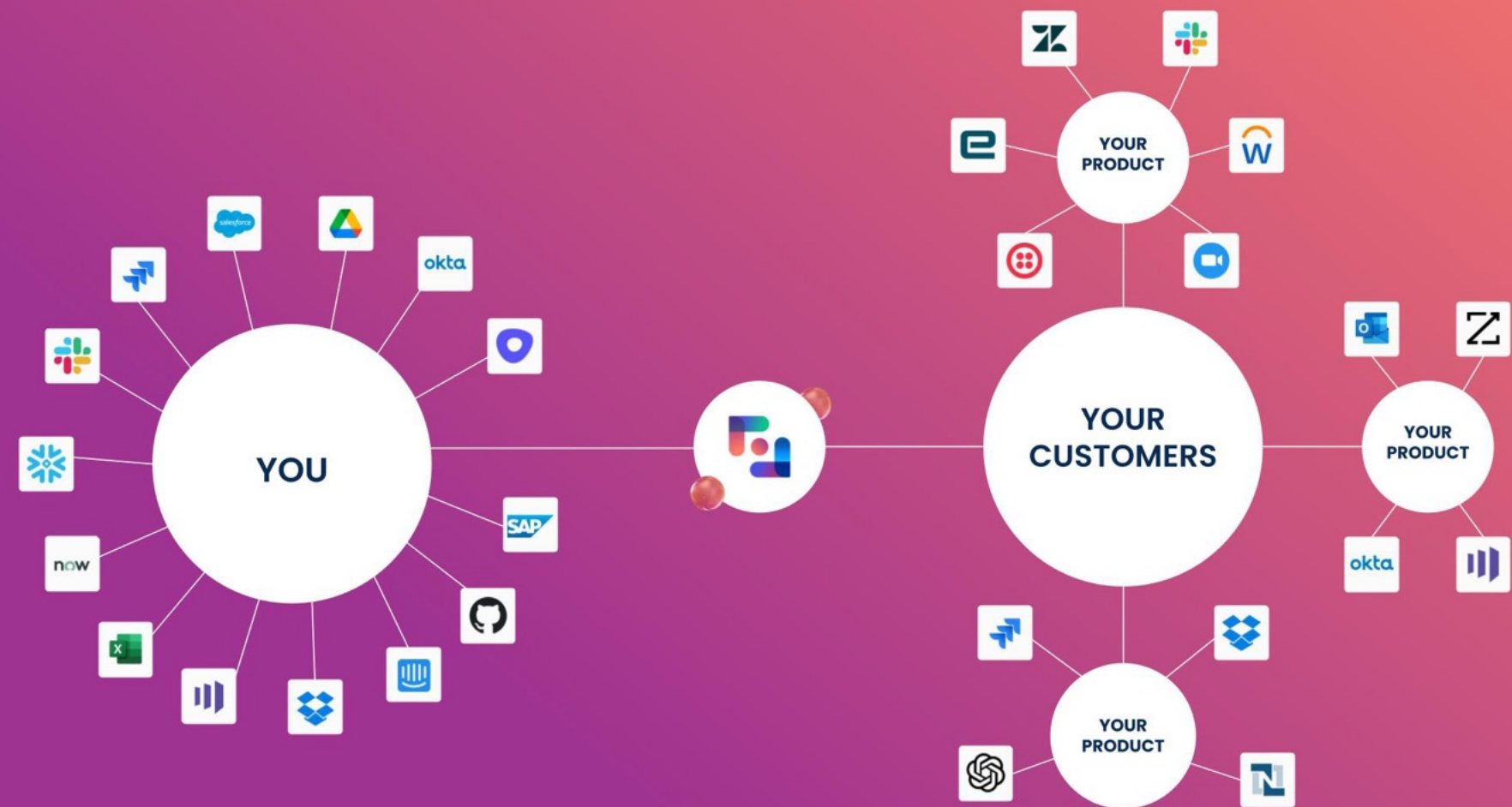
Choosing an integration strategy doesn't need to be an either-or decision. It may be worth evaluating a hybrid approach that combines the best of both worlds — using an embedded iPaaS for breadth and scalability, while building select integrations in-house if deep customization or competitive differentiation is required.

For example, a SaaS provider might use an embedded iPaaS for the most common connections, but dedicate development resources to build a proprietary integration with a niche system used by high-value customers.



A hybrid approach lets SaaS providers deliver rapid time to market for the majority of customer requests while retaining control over strategic or competitively differentiated integrations. Over time, a hybrid model can provide flexibility to shift workloads based on evolving customer needs and product strategy.

Whether hybrid, embedded iPaaS, or custom-coded in-house, your integration should equip customers to connect your application to others quickly and easily, providing real-time data exchange, process orchestration, and high reliability.





If iPaaS, Which iPaaS?

The iPaaS market has grown substantially since Boomi introduced the world's first cloud-based integration platform in 2008 — as has Boomi itself. Today, Boomi has than 25,000 customers and 800 global partners, and along with several other iPaaS vendors, offers embedded integration partnerships to SaaS companies.

Boomi was named a Leader in the 2025 Gartner® Magic Quadrant™ for Integration Platform as a Service in 2025 — the 11th consecutive time.⁴ The Boomi Enterprise Platform is trusted across industries for its flexibility, reliability, speed of development, 99.99% uptime, and more than 15 security certifications.





[Boomi Embedded](#) lets you offer your customers integrations natively within your product. Unlike in-house integrations that can take developers months to build, Boomi's pre-built connectors and drag-and-drop interface let you create integrations far faster — in as little as a few hours or a few days.

Boomi Embedded offers SaaS providers unmatched capabilities that help speed development, win sales, increase retention, and deliver tangible customer value:

- **An extensive library** of 1,000+ pre-built connectors, recipes, and AI agents usable in a low-code integration designer
- **An embeddable UI** that can be customized to your native UI, with a fully configurable developer toolkit using JavaScript components
- **Platform APIs** to create embedded integrations within your application and build custom front-end user interfaces, with full control over design and build
- **Flexibility for complex integrations** that allows incorporating custom code with low-code tools in one-off use cases
- **Scalable multi-tenant architecture** to serve customers from a single integration environment that isolates unique customer data and configurations
- **Reusable templates** to define core logic once and share across multiple customers, and give customers flexibility to define unique properties and mappings
- **Enterprise-grade security** with compliance audits and certifications including FedRAMP, SOC1, SOC2, PCI, and ISO 27001/27701/27017/27018/42001

QAD Grows Its Business With Boomi Embedded

QAD customers need to connect QAD ERP and workforce solutions to diverse applications across their tech stacks. The software vendor's use of Boomi Embedded makes that possible.

Growing to serve manufacturers in more than 100 countries since its founding in 1979, QAD first partnered with Boomi as an embedded solution in 2013. That expanded in 2025 with a [strategic alliance that empowers manufacturers](#) to speed implementations, streamline operations, and accelerate time to value through seamless, intelligent connectivity.

"The flexibility and ease of use that Boomi provides helps our customers quickly connect to different systems," says Carlos Garcia, QAD senior director for interoperability strategy and solutions. "With integration from Boomi, we can ensure customers have the best possible applications and IT architectures for running their businesses. "

[Learn more in our QAD case study](#)

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The speed to develop and deploy integrations is one of Boomi's biggest benefits — what took two months can be done in two weeks, or sometimes even hours.

Jens Sorensen, Business Systems Architect, QAD

Start Your Boomi Embedded Journey

- [Explore Boomi Embedded capabilities and value](#)
- [Take our Boomi Embedded guided tour](#)

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ABOUT BOOMI

Boomi, the leader in AI-driven automation, enables organizations worldwide to connect everything, automate processes, and accelerate outcomes. The Boomi Enterprise Platform — including Boomi Agentstudio — unifies integration and automation along with data, API, and AI agent management, in a single, comprehensive solution. Trusted by over 25,000 customers and supported by a network of 800+ partners, Boomi is driving agentic transformation — helping enterprises of all sizes achieve agility, efficiency, and innovation at scale. Discover more at boomi.com.