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Three signs it's time to embrace AI and modernize traditional iPaaS

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Introduction

You're running a traditional integration platform (iPaaS). With enough developers at the helm, it gives you the functionality to tackle any AppDev or integration project. But how will you handle the spiraling requests for integrations from various teams across the organization? Can you keep up?

It's no secret that IT teams are under immense pressure to accelerate their integration delivery process. Why? Business teams in various departments such as marketing, sales, and finance are asking for integration solutions **right now.** Unfortunately, building these integrations using a traditional iPaaS can be a time-consuming and costly endeavor, often taking **several months** and costing **hundreds of thousands or even millions of dollars.**

Here's where the transformative power of AI comes into play. Imagine a platform that not only handles integration complexities but also intelligently assists in managing and automating these tasks. AI can offer intelligent suggestions, automate routing integration tasks, and optimize workflows, addressing the challenges of scalability and agility in traditional iPaaS systems.

In other words–there's a better way. Industry leaders such as Airbnb, Cisco, Netflix, and Reddit use an AI-powered **modern integration strategy,** and it's been proven to deliver exceptional results.

For example, **one large enterprise transformed an 8-week project, which they initially planned with an old-school integration platform, into a week's work and saved hundreds of thousands of dollars in development resources.**

In this guide, we'll identify three signs that it's time to think beyond a traditional iPaaS and embrace a modern, AI-driven approach that accelerates your IT and AppDev team's integration delivery process, reduces delivery costs, and achieves faster results. Who wouldn't want that?

Why traditional iPaaS can't keep up with modern demands

Right now, your team is likely receiving requests from various departments within your organization. It's probably something like Finance asking, "Can you help us integrate our CRM and ERP for that Order to Cash project?" Or HR pinging you wondering, "When will you get around to that employee onboarding project to link our ATS and HRIS systems together?"

You're not alone. And there are some fundamental reasons why the demand for integration and automation is at an all-time high.

First, there are more apps than ever before. They've skyrocketed, nearly doubling over the past few years. As a result, stack complexity across marketing, sales, finance, and services has increased exponentially. And many requests from these departments are to connect this labyrinth of apps so they can be orchestrated into business processes. However, traditional iPaaS solutions such as MuleSoft or Boomi were never designed to handle the sheer amount of apps that exist today. This means that there is an excess of code, complicated integration tools that require specialist knowledge, and too much maintenance. Ultimately, this creates a recipe for an increasing project backlog.

Data volumes have gone through the roof. IDC estimates that data volumes are set to double by 2026[1]. Whether it's eCommerce volume, social signals, machine data, log data, message streams, API requests, or just plain old bulk data loads from your ERP for analytics, data volumes just keep getting bigger. In fact, it can be a full-time job sizing and provisioning a traditional iPaaS to cope with it all. And that's not practical.

And there's one more. **The developer and integration expert shortage is real.** There aren't enough to meet the demand. Not just Java but JavaScript, Python integration experts, Enterprise Application Architects and ITOps to care for and feed it all. Not to mention the technical chops required for maintenance and change management.

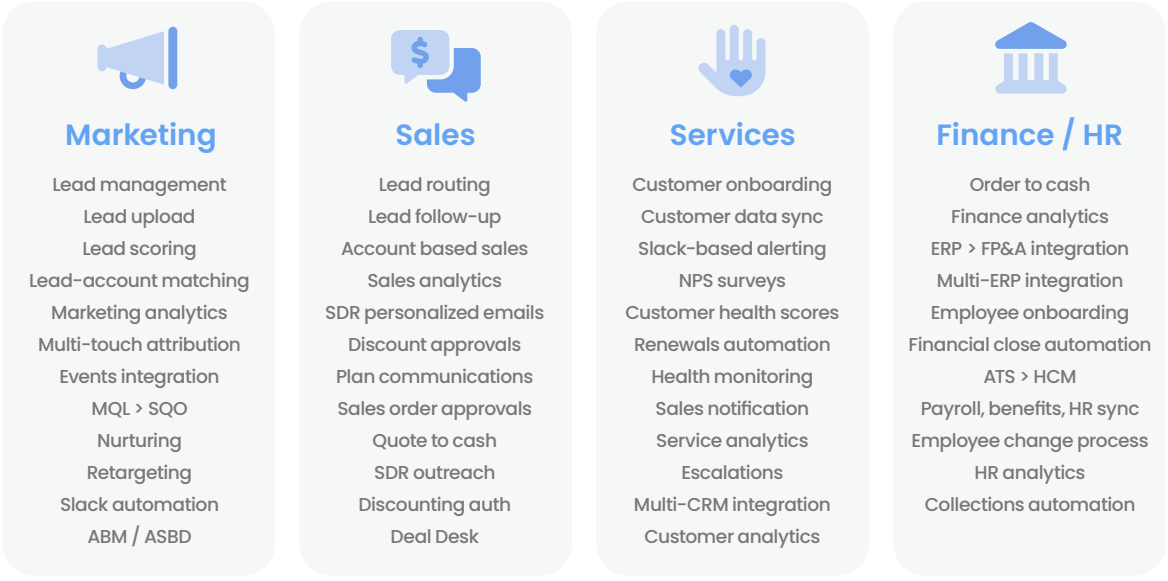
The three signs it's time to think beyond traditional iPaaS

Sign #1: Unsustainable project backlog growth due to complexity and code

If you're in IT, constantly addressing the needs of marketing, sales, or finance teams for projects means your backlog keeps growing. The complexity and coding requirements of these requests often lead to extended timelines, leaving other departments waiting. And waiting. And then waiting some more.

What's more, if you're on an integration delivery team in IT, then you know that there's only so much developer capacity to go around. You have to carefully choose which projects to prioritize and which to cull, leaving many requests unanswered.

And it's not slowing down. From HR and finance to sales, services, and marketing, every department has its own set of tools and systems to support its specific needs. As a result, there are now more departmental processes than ever before that require



Business integration and automation needs keep growing

1. Worldwide IDC Global DataSphere Forecast, 2022–2026. *Enterprise Organizations Driving Most of the Data Growth.* IDC, May 2022

integration and automation.

And there are clear consequences for having an ever-increasing project backlog. Marketing, sales, and finance teams become increasingly frustrated with delivery, while IT spends more and more time on integration maintenance. Developers burn out from working on non-strategic projects, and finding new talent to meet integration demand is nearly impossible. And with requests from business teams continuously backlogged, customer satisfaction plummets.

THERE'S A BETTER WAY: Flexible, AI-powered low-code platforms.

Low-code is critical for delivery. It's called democratization—opening up app development to teams beyond developers. There's a massive pool of talent in your organization right now, maybe Marketing Ops or in Finance, that could build integrations and business process automations. Analysts estimate that 40%+ of your workforce could develop apps if given the proper low-code or no-code tooling.

Now, with the integration of AI into these low-code platforms, even more of your workforce can connect systems and automate processes via AI-assisted workflow building or simply through a natural language interface. The barrier to entry has never been lower.

But here's the catch.

The tools you choose must be flexible enough to match the capabilities of code. After all, you don't want to hit a flexibility wall and have to flip the script to code—that defeats the purpose. In addition, these tools have to be able to connect to your whole stack, including all of those outlier marketing and sales apps (so you'll need more than a handful of connectors; otherwise, you guessed it, more code). AI plays a crucial role here, enhancing the platform's flexibility and scalability, enabling it to integrate multiple apps and handle complex business logic more effectively, without relying on developers.

It's best to avoid entry-level tools that offer only limited point-to-point connectivity, flexibility, and governance. Such tools might not support all the apps in your stack or handle complex business logic, making them difficult to monitor and debug. That's

a deal breaker.

The reality is that all low-code tools aren't created equal. To achieve tasks that are impractical with traditional iPaaS, it's necessary to equip your team with flexible, scalable low-code tools that leverage AI to better integrate multiple apps and achieve successful automation outcomes from the get-go.

Case study: $6BN travel and hospitality company

This online booking service, relied upon by tens of thousands of travel businesses in more than 100 countries, used a traditional iPaaS. But their growing project backlog included:

- Supporting new business units and geographical requirements
- Connecting payment processing to Salesforce and HubSpot
- New customer support issue resolution workflows
- Loading product usage data into their cloud data warehouse

They were at a crossroads: Deploy a team of engineers for several months to build out solutions using their monolithic iPaaS or choose a different solution to augment it.

The travel leader's search led it to the Tray Universal Automation Cloud, which enabled them to boost their delivery velocity, connecting their entire stack and also providing visual but flexible automated workflow functionality to enable businesses to take full ownership of their most significant data. Better yet, it includes API connectors that work with their existing in-house developed APIs.

"Tray's speed of innovation is astronomical. Once fully trained on the drag-and-drop interface, which requires no coding experience, the team could start directly integrating HubSpot CRM to Salesforce and Stripe, creating a bi-directional automated workflow that syncs the two CRMs. It turned an 8-week project into a week's work and saved us hundreds of thousands in development resources."

Sign #2: Operational headaches, licensing costs, and platform maintenance are becoming too much to handle

Everyone knows that traditional iPaaS can get unjustifiably expensive. Those licenses add up fast. But that's often just the tip of the iceberg—the whole setup needs a lot of care and feeding. And for smaller companies, it's often unsustainable.

For example, many traditional iPaaS users need extensive training and experience to operate the platform, and monitoring and resolving issues can require juggling multiple interfaces. Sound familiar? And it's not just the training that's a hassle - sizing and provisioning servers and capacity based on anticipated API and transactional throughput is often a black art, and dealing with API timeouts when capacity is exceeded can be a nightmare. It's no wonder that cost is often a major roadblock for traditional iPaaS users.

THERE'S A BETTER WAY: Serverless computing

Modern integration and automation workloads are subject to more significant demand spikes, unpredictability, and volume than ever. This puts IT in a tough spot: either plan ahead and pay for expensive Containers or Workers, such as vCores, to handle peak volumes, or risk processing failures and spend hours combing through logs to identify scalability bottlenecks.

And one more thing. The growth in AI means more data. If you think your old-school iPaaS wasn't scaling well before, just wait until the AI data tsunami hits.

> "By 2025, 60% of new event-driven applications will use serverless computing due to its rapid elasticity, cost agility, and low operational overhead."
>
> **– Gartner** [2]

2. *Modernizing Software Development is Key to Digital Transformation,* Gartner.

Serverless architecture automatically provisions the computing resources required to meet a workload on demand or respond to a specific event. There's no need to spend time and resources provisioning and sizing things like vCores as it's all completely dynamic.

They automatically scale those resources up or down in response to increased or decreased demand. And then automatically scale resources to zero when the application stops running. Serverless architecture offers the most efficient use of customer computing resources with the least operational overhead.

What it means for you–less effort, less cost, less headache.

Case study: Eventbrite relies on serverless-powered integration and automation

Eventbrite (NYSE: EB) is the global self-service ticketing platform for live experiences. The company needed to deliver integrations to its customers at a massive scale. With more than 650,000 creators, managing more than 4.6M events in nearly 180 countries, any integration Eventbrite rolls out can easily create a surge in demand on its integration platform.

By choosing the cloud-first, serverless Tray Universal Automation Cloud, Eventbrite enabled more than 59,000 active customer integrations in less than 12 months without adding any staff to its operations team. So, while it was able to **r**educe the number of engineers for each integration from six to one—more importantly, Eventbrite avoided the massive operational overhead from integrations at a scale that comes with older, non-serverless integration platforms.

Sign #3: Shadow IT is popping up all over the place

Shadow IT refers to the practice of teams building integrations and automations on their own, which can be a positive development. However, if you're running a traditional iPaaS, it means your teams have broken ranks, and they're using any low-code tools they can get their hands on to get the job done. And that's not a good thing.

Here's why: they're doing it without all the controls that IT needs in place. We'll call it "low-code laissez-faire," and if you have it in your company, you're not alone. This trend has emerged as a result of teams becoming increasingly frustrated with the limitations of their current integration technology. You end up with a low-code whack-a-mole scenario where everyone is using their own tools, there's an overabundance of disparate integration technologies, and IT stays up worrying about security and compliance.

THERE'S A BETTER WAY: Enterprise low-code platforms

When your team's gone rogue, the best way is to get them on a platform that both business and IT can agree on. Business teams want flexibility, low code, and something that connects with their stack, whether they're in marketing, sales, or finance.

But what about IT? For observability, many low-code tools provide log streaming to ITOps platforms like Datadog, while a centralized cockpit for workflow analytics around executions and usage enables centralized monitoring – which is essential as you scale. Versioning and audit trails around all your low-code projects ensure that all the controls, tracking, and change control mechanisms are in place when teams develop collaboratively. And the best low-code platforms also let teams reuse business logic within new workflows rather than having to recreate redundant logic. Additionally, role-based access control and team workspaces guarantee that everyone works securely together.

And, finally, security and compliance measures, such as SSO, 2FA and SOC 2 Type 2, ensure that your low-code platform supports enterprise security.

Hybrid integration. A fast way forward to modernization.

Here's the thing. You don't need to throw in the towel with traditional iPaaS to boost your velocity. Sure, if you're a smaller company where your current iPaaS is simply dragging you down, that's an option.

But you can use modern, AI-powered low-code integration and automation platforms with your existing investments. It's called Hybrid Integration.

Gartner estimates[3] that at least 65% of large organizations will take a hybrid integration strategy. And many of these organizations are often running traditional iPaaS.

In fact, Gartner sees hybrid integration become the new norm. But what is it?

It's simply using the best-fit integration and automation platform for the right project—that means multiple platforms built for the proper purpose but ensuring it all works together as a cohesive whole.

The convergence of integration modernization and AI presents a unique opportunity for IT leaders to unify their integration platforms and increase execution velocity. How?

Ultimately, it's about getting to the composable enterprise: Build and publish reusable APIs using API management platforms when you absolutely need to—for core proprietary business capabilities. But freeing your business teams and technologists to build their own orchestrations and integration using their preferred low-code tools that work with applications, databases, and, yes, consuming APIs from your apps, databases, and those you've built in-house.

3. *How to Deliver a Truly Hybrid Integration Platform in Steps,* Gartner, 5th August 2021

It's the way to blend best-of-breed low-code velocity with your existing deployments. One better option is if your modern low-code integration tooling supports strong governance, security, logging, and management, and you can plug it into all of your ITOps processes right alongside your existing investments.

Think beyond old-school iPaaS: Tray Universal Automation Cloud™

Businesses that rely on the Universal Automation Cloud put low-code power in the hands of their business teams, providing them with AI-powered low-code automation and integration all in one platform.

As flexible as code and able to connect your whole stack (even all those outlier marketing and sales apps), the Universal Automation Cloud offers a web-native builder for teams, making it possible to automate sophisticated processes like employee onboarding (and offboarding), lead lifecycle management, and quote-to-cash. Additionally, the platform offers data integration for integrating apps or loading data to your cloud warehouse, and it simplifies the process of enriching any data by providing built-in data storage for aggregation and lookups and a wide range of data transformation helpers. The Universal Automation Cloud is just as flexible as code, yet it's completely visual, making it a highly intuitive and efficient tool for business teams.

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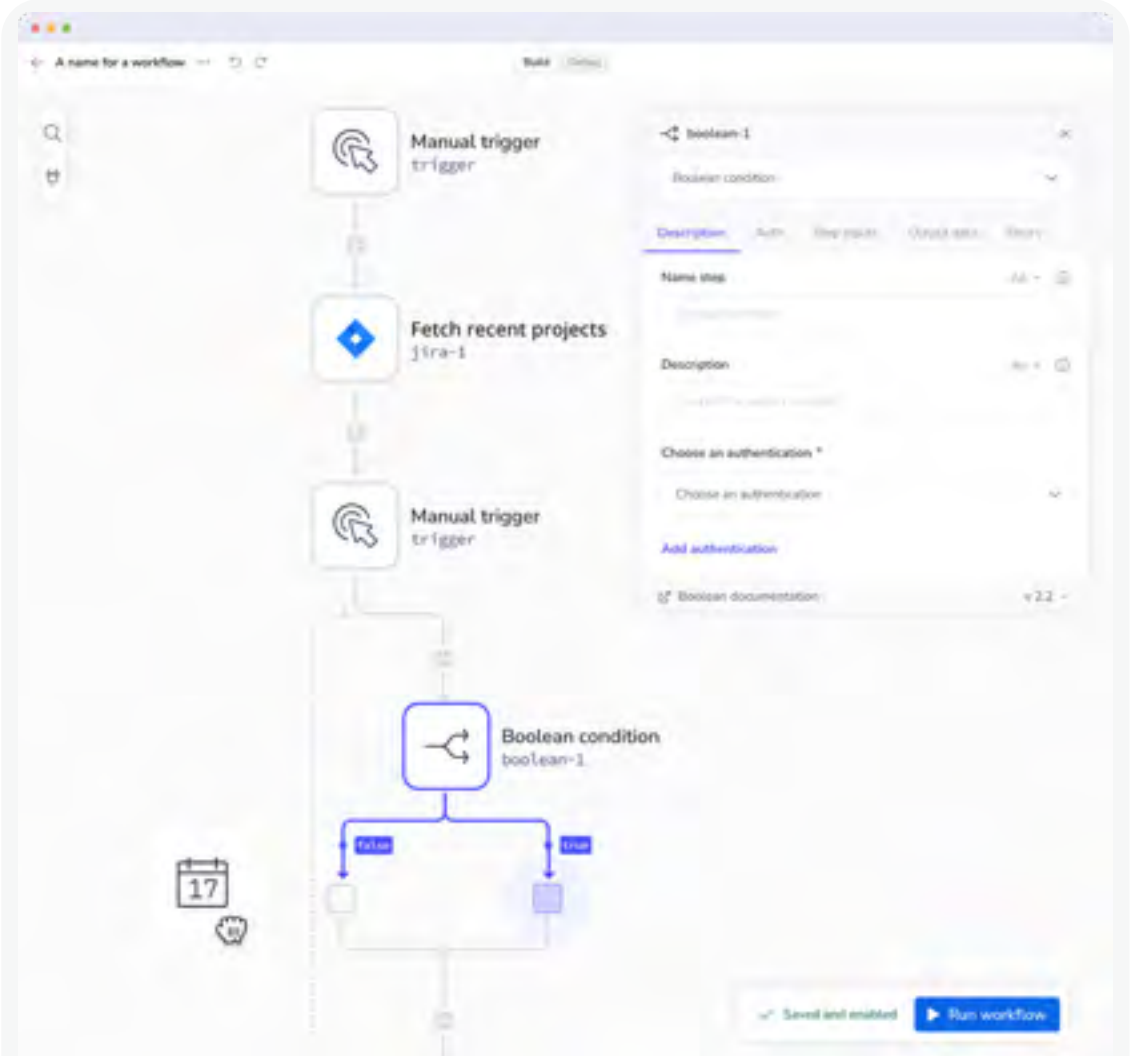


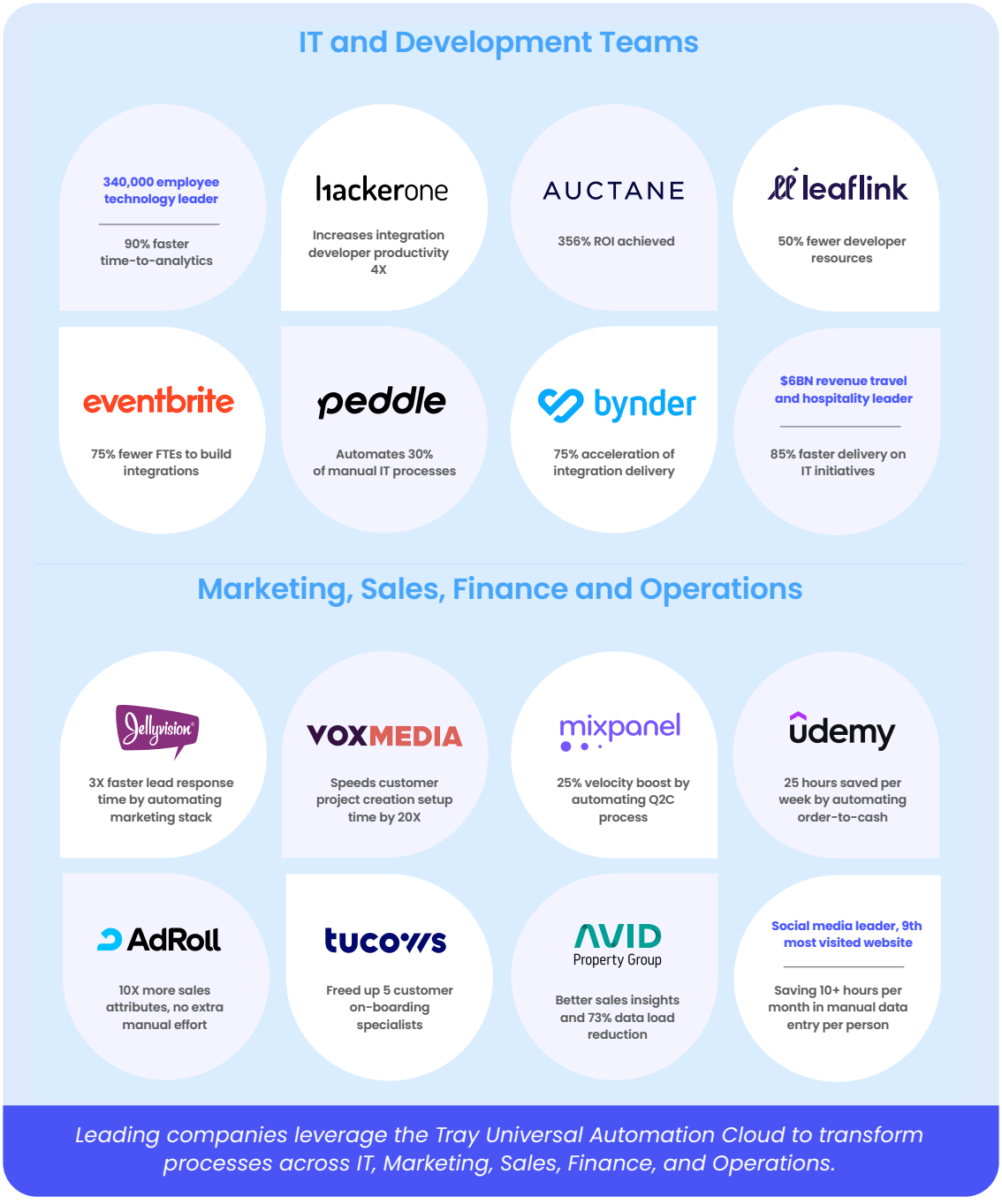
Tray's low-code visual builder lets you trigger specific functionality from any connector using flexible logical operators such as branches, loops, and Boolean If/Then conditionals as seen in this workflow designed to fetch recent projects in JIRA.

With Tray's single, composable AI integration platform, it's simple for teams to trigger any integration or automation on any app or database event or using webhook, native app, and database triggers, and even enable business teams to tap into event streams.

With hundreds of built-in connectors and the ability to work with any API, REST SOAP, or GraphQL, the Universal Automation Cloud makes it easy to connect to your existing homegrown APIs and enable a powerful composable hybrid architecture.

Built on a powerful serverless platform, with governance and security built-in, teams can easily and securely scale low-code projects.

Your teams can also accelerate integration and automation delivery 10X, drive powerful productivity outcomes with a fraction of the resources of building integrations using IT and developer-only tools, and get everyone on one easy-to-manage low-code platform. With three AI-powered experiences to choose from – Tray Build, Tray Code, and Tray Chat – anyone can build powerful integrations and automations in the way that best suits them.



Leading companies leverage the Tray Universal Automation Cloud to transform processes across IT, Marketing, Sales, Finance, and Operations.

About Tray.ai

Tray.ai offers a composable AI integration and automation platform that enterprises use to turn AI into standout business performance. The Tray Universal Automation Cloud is a single, AI-ready platform that eliminates the need for disparate tools and technologies to integrate and automate sophisticated internal and external business processes. From prototype to production, with Tray.ai, the development of integrations, the delivery of intelligent apps and the integration of trusted data anywhere is fast, flexible and safe.

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About this eBook

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