



Moving towards  
effective cloud-based  
B2B integration

enterprise business integration



**Y**ou can never tire of examining the world of e-commerce for trends and innovation and then using those examples for your must-do technology agenda. Think about large online retailers like Amazon, eBay, Walmart, Staples or Alibaba – these massive retail powerhouses onboard trading partners and suppliers of all sizes from across a variety of geographies. Many of their partners invest only on internet connectivity to integrate with the B2B gateway. And yet, they can easily and quickly integrate with the back end ERP systems that these giants run. How do these giants enable complex onboarding processes for partners without handholding each partner? The answer lies in simplified self-service models that are centrally monitored. These models also lead to a reduction in onboarding time and costs.

As industries begin to expand their markets and their partner networks, the need to simplify Business to Business Integration (B2Bi) is becoming more urgent. There are several reasons that are pushing B2Bi to the top of the enterprise agenda: Regulatory mandates require faster and more extensive reporting; customers want visibility into every aspect of a transaction; and new business models are being catalyzed in the crucible of integration. The pressure is considerable and businesses can no longer afford to work in siloes. The ability to exchange data between multiple incongruent channels and devices—as a precondition to onboarding—is becoming critical to running a business.

### Why integration matters

The Healthcare industry presents a classic example. Regulatory compliances to ensure the controlled movement of drugs and to minimize counterfeit drugs requires pharmaceutical companies to adopt mechanisms to track and record the end-to-end movement of their products from the manufacturing plant to a wholesaler, hospital, doctor who prescribes the drug, the pharmacy selling the drug and the end user (patient). This means integrating manufacturing units, logistics, hospitals, doctors, pharmacies and the end user.

**“Organizations that will adopt the strategy of simplifying B2Bi on Cloud will be able to quickly reduce time-to-market, keep pace with regulatory changes, lower the costs with standardized industry-specific integration processes and be able to take an omni-channel / multi-device approach.”**

In the Automobile industry, IoT, new risk algorithms and mobile technologies are driving usage-based insurance models. These new models can't function without tight integration between OEMs, underwriters, owners and regulators.

The Energy industry is similarly required to ensure secure data exchange between market operators and trading partners using standard protocols and standard file formats as per the guidelines laid down by regulatory bodies.

### A simplified cloud-based solution

Mandates and compliance requirements are becoming a key trigger across industries to go digital. They are pushing enterprises to integrate systems that manage data exchange (products, agreements, contracts, etc.), workflow and transactions using the convenience, availability, scalability and security of cloud.

The key is to ensure that cloud-based integration is simple and robust – almost to the point of being plug-and-play so that even the smallest and most technologically challenged business partner can be brought into the ecosystem with the help of just a secure Internet connection. In addition, a competent cloud-based B2Bi provider would ensure that infrastructure costs are minimized while eliminating licensing barriers on software.

## Success factors

How quickly and efficiently a business onboards new partners and customers, adds channels and is able to integrate smart devices and appliances defines its success. The practical approach is to use canonical frameworks to minimize repetitive process and standardize all data formats and protocols. Some of the leading factors to consider for an effective B2Bi implementation on cloud include:



**Automating end-to-end workflow:** Cumbersome, error-prone manual processes related to partner onboarding, data validation, map deployment and business process orchestration should be minimized using automation. Cloud alone won't solve the integration problem.



**Achieving elasticity:** It should be possible to scale B2B processes on-demand. This requires thoughtful selection of B2B products that can support such elasticity in the cloud ecosystem.



**Driving a cultural shift:** Leadership and the IT organization in the enterprise must have the willingness to upskill and empower cross-functional teams that can leverage cloud using Agile work management and Lean principles.



**Scaling incrementally:** B2B Integration processes are typically complex and tightly coupled with legacy systems in an enterprise. Therefore, incremental migration to cloud, rather than a big bang approach, is recommended. Vertical integration packs including canonical maps transforming any to any, standardized workflows and connectors for disparate endpoints will help achieve this.



**Integrating hybrid cloud:** This is necessary so that organizations move to cloud partially and integrate with on-premise legacy.



**Adopting microservices architecture:** Work with a solution provider who helps adopt a microservices architecture to integrate seamlessly with cloud. This will guarantee a true pay-as-you-use model for B2B interfaces.

Simplifying B2Bi on cloud is the logical strategy to opt into. Organizations that do this will quickly reduce their time-to-market, keep pace with regulatory change, lower costs with standardized industry-specific integration processes and be able to take an omni-channel / multi-device approach. They will quickly go beyond traditional interactions within the eco system.

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## About the authors

**Jyoti Kulkarni**  
Head – CoE & IPs  
BAS – EBI, Wipro Limited.

Jyoti has over 19 years of experience in the area of B2Bi, cloud and enterprise integration. She is involved in various consulting engagements with global clients defining strategic architecture, CoE solutions, PoCs and delivering cloud solutions hosted in SaaS model. She can be reached at [jyoti.kulkarni1@wipro.com](mailto:jyoti.kulkarni1@wipro.com).

**Surendra Singh Naruka**  
Senior Practice Manager – Cloud Integration  
BAS – EBI, Wipro Limited.

Surendra has over 16 years of experience in technical consulting, solution architecture & design, project management, development and implementation in the area of B2Bi cloud integration. He is also involved in delivery of mission-critical cloud-hosted integration solutions which handle large volumes of complex data and transactions using industry-leading B2B Integration/MFT products. He can be reached at [surendra.naruka@wipro.com](mailto:surendra.naruka@wipro.com).



## Wipro Limited

Doddakannelli, Sarjapur Road,  
Bangalore-560 035,  
India

Tel: +91 (80) 2844 0011

Fax: +91 (80) 2844 0256

wipro.com

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For more information,  
please write to us at  
**info@wipro.com**

