

An architect's checklist

Selling the value of a modernized B2B integration architecture to your organization

The six-step checklist

Companies are modernizing their B2B platform for a number of reasons, such as consolidating multiple gateways and upgrading capabilities to stay competitive. Deploying a modern B2B integration architecture is not a decision you want to take lightly. As you develop the IT and business case for making B2B integration a competitive differentiator, here is a six-step checklist with items to consider. You can think of it as your checklist to success.



1. Deploy the right capabilities

The B2B integration platform you deploy is at the heart of your business operations. Best-in-class companies can use their capabilities as a competitive differentiator,

so you should consider including these essential elements of a modern B2B architecture.

- A single, scalable B2B integration gateway.
- DMZ-based security, multi-factor authentication and data encryption.
- Simplified onboarding and partner management.
- An always-on B2B platform and communications.
- Capabilities that are easily adaptable to changing operational requirements.
- Process visibility and analytics.
- Hybrid deployment models that can include a mix of public, private and local cloud options.
- Data transformation and standards to support industry-specific requirements.
- Workflow automation that includes partner processes.
- REST APIs and the extensibility they offer.





2. Demonstrate the value of B2B integration

To sell your recommendation to stakeholders, you need to highlight the value of modernizing your B2B platform from both an IT and a

business perspective. Here are points to consider for both IT and the business.

For IT:

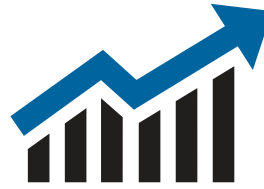
- A single integration architecture that supports both file and message-based use cases.
- The opportunity to reduce cost of ownership of your B2B integration platform.
- Reduced time to onboard a partner and centralized management of contact data and certificates.
- Zero downtime to your B2B integration platform from a planned or unplanned outage.
- Out-of-box support for most communication protocols.
- End-to-end process visibility.
- Never having to say “no” to an onboarding request.

For the business:

- Reduced cycle times for order-to-cash and procure-to-pay.
- The ability to automate processes with trading partners and eliminate manual intervention.
- Improved inventory visibility that reflects a reduction in cycle times and automated processes.
- Trading partner self-service for onboarding and contact management.
- No operational downtime due to a B2B integration outage.
- Industry data standard compliance that improves operational processes.
- Improved customer satisfaction.

In a 2015 Vanson Bourne research study, 42 percent of respondents indicated that initiatives to improve order-to-cash and procure-to-pay processes will drive investment in B2B integration and EDI solutions.

This [video](#) offers a line-of-business perspective on the value of adding B2B integration to your business.



3. ROI

When you are spending money from your capital budget to fund new software, you always need to look for places you can save money. IBM offers these tips on where to look:

For IT:

- Reduction in hardware expense by consolidating gateways.
- Lower staff costs to operate and maintain a single gateway.
- Reduction in the number of software licenses required.
- Less person-hours required to onboard partners.
- Less person-hours required to troubleshoot B2B integration-related operational issues.

For the business:

- Reduction in the number of accounts receivable days outstanding
- Reduction in downtime related to SLA penalties.
- The potential for lower inventory carrying costs by reducing cycle times.
- Quicker time to value from new partners.
- The ability to create new documents from existing ones.
- Reduction in documents lost when an outage occurs.

Load your company’s data into this [calculator](#) to determine your ROI opportunities.



4: Check out what your peers have to say

Testimonials from your peers provide real-world insight into the value other organizations have received from deploying a modernized B2B architecture from IBM.

- **Rabobank**

[An international bank increases](#) business-to-business file transfer connections by 200 percent a year while accommodating rapid growth.

- **Coastal Pacific Food Distributors**

[A United States-based distributor of food and related products](#) for military forces simplifies and streamlines collaboration with customers.

- **Florida hospital**

[A hospital in the United States](#) gains real-time visibility into insurance transactions, reduces manual paperwork and human error, and decreases operating costs.



5. Listen to the analysts

Independent validation of your choice in technology vendors is an important consideration when soliciting permission to move to contract negotiations. The following analysts offer vendor assessments, market share analysis and their own points of view on B2B integration technologies and vendors.

- **IDC Research**

For capability assessment and vendor rankings, [read this IDC Research Marketscape report](#) on B2B integration and share it with your constituents.



6. Why IBM?

Your decision to select a particular software vendor not only includes the points discussed here, but also intangibles that can vary from one B2B integration vendor to another.

IBM offers:

- A single vendor for all your B2B integration use cases
- Flexible deployment options
- A variety of financing options
- Analyst validation of our technology and capabilities
- Self-hosting IBM's SaaS offering
- Financial stability
- Award winning after-the-sale support
- Globally based operations

[Click here](#) to learn more about IBM's financing options.

Learn more

Find out more about deploying a modern B2B integration architecture at ibm.com/b2bcommunications.

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