API usage, and the need to govern it, is increasing rapidly driven by remote working, platforms, ecosystems, innovations, digital transformations and regulations. Application leaders should use this Magic Quadrant to find the right API life cycle management vendor for their organization’s needs.

Market Definition/Description

Gartner defines the full life cycle API management market as the market for offerings that support the planning, design, implementation, testing, publication, operation, consumption, versioning and retirement of APIs. It includes:

- Developer portals for targeting, marketing to, and governing ecosystems of developers who produce and consume APIs
- API gateways for runtime management, security and gathering of usage data
- Policies for operational management, security, format translation and collection of business
- Analytics to collect technical metrics associated with the usage of APIs

For full life cycle API management, we consider these four functional categories as core. They correspond to one or more of the four stages in an API’s life cycle:

1. Planning and initial design
2. Implementation and testing
3. Deploy and run (basic)
4. Versioning and retirement

Vendors in this market might offer advanced deploy and run functionality, which is highly differentiating but optional.

Detailed descriptions of functionality can be found in the Evaluation Criteria section later in this Magic Quadrant.
Magic Quadrant

Figure 1. Magic Quadrant for Full Life Cycle API Management

Amazon Web Services (AWS) is a Challenger in this Magic Quadrant; in the last iteration of this research it was also a Challenger. Amazon API Gateway reflects AWS’s growing serverless agenda. It is frequently used in conjunction with other serverless AWS products, such as AWS Lambda, Amazon Cognito (for identity management), Amazon Kinesis (an event-streaming managed service)
and the Amazon suite of container services. In May 2020, Amazon released the HTTP API, which it positions as a simpler, less expensive and lower-latency alternative to the AWS API Gateway’s REST APIs. AWS is continuing to invest in a developer portal, the offering’s administration interface and Kubernetes integration. According to Gartner estimates, API Gateway’s customers are primarily in the U.S., but AWS also has significant presence in Europe and Asia.

**Strengths**

- **Product:** Amazon API Gateway is well-integrated with many AWS products. This enables developers to efficiently deliver APIs in front of their AWS-based applications and services.

- **Performance:** Amazon API Gateway performs extremely well. For example, it supported the FOX Sports website during the 2020 Super Bowl, which received over 600,000 requests per second and had over 3 million livestreaming viewers.

- **Customer demand:** Amazon API Gateway is a pure pay-as-you-go offering — customers only pay for the API traffic they use. This has helped drive strong customer demand, with AWS’s API management revenue growing by 54% in 2019, to almost $100 million (according to Gartner’s estimate). That made it the fifth-largest vendor, despite its comparatively low prices.

**Cautions**

- **Focus on AWS:** Amazon views API management as a type of middleware, as opposed to a platform for digital transformations, so it focuses on supporting the AWS platform in the cloud only. API Gateway, by itself, may not be suitable for enterprises with both cloud and on-premises applications or for enterprises with multicloud deployments. However, in conjunction with other services, such as Direct Connect and Virtual Private Cloud, API Gateway can support some multicloud and hybrid scenarios.

- **Support for business models and use cases:** The simplicity and low cost of Amazon API Gateway means that it is not designed to stretch to support platform business models serving complex API ecosystems and marketplaces and industry trends like open banking and Fast Healthcare Interoperability Resources (FHIR).

- **Innovation:** Amazon API Gateway lags behind offerings from other vendors in this Magic Quadrant in terms of features and innovation. For example, its developer portal lacks functionality to support an API ecosystem, and some advanced deploy and run capabilities (such as monetization) are not supported.

**Axway**

Axway is a Leader in this Magic Quadrant; in the last iteration of this research it was also a Leader. Its AMPLIFY API Management offering includes API Builder, API Gateway, API Manager, API Portal, the AMPLIFY Central management layer and Unified Catalog. It is part of Axway’s broader AMPLIFY platform, which offers B2B, edge gateways, service mesh, mobile back-end services, managed file transfer (MFT) and content services capabilities. The event-driven API capabilities within AMPLIFY Streams result from Axway’s acquisition of Streamdata.io in 2019. Axway’s offering is available as
SaaS and in an Axway-managed cloud. It can be deployed in private, public and hybrid clouds or on-premises. Axway’s platform is evolving to support more hybrid/multi-cloud/multi-vendor gateway configurations, event-driven APIs and advanced ecosystem enablement. Axway’s offering has midsize and large corporate clients worldwide.

**Strengths**

- **Execution and product diversity:** Axway AMPLIFY scored well for most Ability to Execute criteria. Its product portfolio is diverse, with products suitable for everything from traditional integration requirements to transformational initiatives. Application leaders looking for a comprehensive portfolio of products can take advantage of its offerings, and the expertise of its Catalyst team can provide strategic API guidance.

- **Multicloud vision:** Axway wants to enable customers to run their data, APIs and services across different cloud environments and vendor technologies, while managing and governing them centrally using Axway’s administration interface. AMPLIFY Unified Catalog and AMPLIFY Central are beneficial to organizations adopting multicloud and multigateway strategies, especially at the beginning.

- **Partnerships:** Axway has several notable OEM and reseller partners for its offerings to improve its portfolio’s overall positioning and increase choice for customers. Examples are Cloud Elements, Ping Identity, SmartBear, Stoplight and API Fortress.

**Cautions**

- **Sales execution:** Although Axway returned to revenue growth in this market in 2019, Gartner believes this growth was below the market average, which may raise some concerns. However, this situation is normal when a provider is transitioning to subscription-based pricing across its portfolio, as Axway is.

- **Marketing execution:** Despite its efforts to boost its mind share, especially in key industries, and its broad capabilities, Axway had a relatively limited presence among the competitive bids shown to Gartner in 2019, and the number of inquiries Gartner received about Axway was also fairly low. There is a risk that Axway may be overlooked by buyers for which it would be a good choice.

- **User experience:** Axway’s partnerships with various vendors to support different stages in the API life cycle expands options for its clients, but also often results in a less-than-seamless user experience, compared with that of offerings which are fully developed by a single vendor. Axway’s SaaS API management version partially addresses this issue, however.

**Boomi**

Boomi is a Niche Player in this Magic Quadrant; in the last iteration of this research it was also a Niche Player. Boomi is a wholly owned subsidiary of Dell Technologies. Its API management offering is part of its AtomSphere solution, which provides integration platform as a service (iPaaS), master data management (MDM), B2B integration and low-code development capabilities. Boomi's offering is sold globally, and most of its customers are midsize or large organizations. It supports hybrid/
multicloud and private cloud deployment of the Atom runtime, but the administration experience is purely cloud-based.

Strengths

- **Operations**: Boomi has mature operations practices and is compliant with major security standards, such as SOC 1, SOC 2, PCI, HIPAA and FedRAMP. It also claims to be GDPR-compliant. Its SaaS offering runs primarily on AWS and has a wide presence all over the world for both operations and disaster recovery.

- **API consumption**: Boomi includes support for B2B and electronic data interchange (EDI) standards, such as ANSI X12 and UN/EDIFACT (the United Nations’ rules for Electronic Data Interchange for Administration, Commerce and Transport). This means that its platform can be used to enable APIs alongside traditional B2B protocols. In addition, Boomi provides prebuilt connectors to popular applications in the cloud and on-premises.

- **Geographic strategy**: Boomi has expanded its international sales operations and now sells directly in North America, Western Europe, Australia, Singapore, Hong Kong and Japan. It has a strong and growing network of over 320 global and regional partners, thanks to the reach of Dell Technologies’ channel.

Cautions

- **Product**: Boomi’s offering is at an early stage of evolution in terms of supporting the full life cycle of APIs. Although Boomi plans to add JSON Web Token (JWT) authentication, enhanced filtering and chargeback mechanisms to the developer portal, and IP-based filtering, it lacks features to support microservices, API monetization and customization of its developer portal (enhancements for which are on its roadmap).

- **Market understanding**: Boomi focuses on the integration aspects of API management, so it is not best suited to API programs with simple, nonintegration-specific APIs. However, by providing API management as part of an overall platform as a service (PaaS) that also has integration, MDM, low-code development and B2B capabilities, Boomi enables customers to manage APIs in the same platform in which they create APIs.

- **Industry strategy**: Boomi does not provide API program accelerators tailored to any industry. However, its in-house product and solutions group is working on developing frameworks and reference architectures, together with external implementation partners.

Broadcom

Broadcom is a Challenger in this Magic Quadrant; in the last iteration of this research it was a Niche Player. Its Layer7 API Management platform includes an API-provider-facing administrative interface, a developer portal (API Hub), API Gateway, Live API Creator, Mobile API Gateway and SDK, OAuth Toolkit, Rapid App Security, BlazeMeter for API testing, AIOps APM (application performance monitoring) for API monitoring and transaction tracing, and AIOps OI (operational intelligence), which provides threat analytics and anomaly detection. The Layer7 team will continue
to focus the current offering on Broadcom’s top 1,000 strategic enterprises and public-sector agencies. Broadcom has a strong team of partners supporting other commercial enterprises. Broadcom’s operations are worldwide and its clients tend to be large multinationals.

**Strengths**

- **Business model:** Broadcom has impressive size, broad geographic coverage and a highly consolidated way of addressing its top 1,000 global accounts. Using a solid business model, it sells to these accounts via a Portfolio License Agreement for enterprise software that prioritizes successful portfolio adoption and enables synergies across product lines.

- **Product/service:** Broadcom’s comprehensive full life cycle API management offering and the power of its security features (such as API access control and API protection) set it apart from many of its competitors.

- **Geographic strategy:** Approximately 40% of Layer7 API management sales are outside Broadcom’s home market of North America, and its strategy is to keep it that way. All products are internationalized and support non-English character sets at both design time and run time.

**Cautions**

- **Customer experience:** Broadcom’s acquisition of CA in November 2018 brought significant changes to CA’s API management clients in terms of customer focus and licensing models. Some customers are still dealing with these changes. New customers should be aware of Broadcom’s new, subscription-based pricing models.

- **Product strategy:** Although Broadcom’s developer portal, which had been very basic since the CA days, has improved, it still lacks fundamental features (such as a standard developer experience) that are common in competing offerings. Furthermore, many of the features on the roadmap for the rest of the offering are already available in competing products.

- **Innovation:** Broadcom’s offering is likely to evolve to meet the needs of its top 1,000 global accounts, rather than the more innovative requirements of smaller, more dynamic companies.

**F5 (NGINX)**

F5 (NGINX) is a Niche Player in this Magic Quadrant. NGINX was acquired by F5 in March 2019. NGINX sells both its full life cycle API management solution — NGINX Controller API Management Module — and NGINX Plus as a stand-alone API gateway. NGINX Plus is a software load balancer, web server and content cache built on top of open-source NGINX. The open-source version of the proxy server is the foundation of several other offerings from, for example, Kong, Red Hat, Axway and Google (Google Cloud Endpoints). NGINX Controller API Management Module is available for deployment across various public clouds and on-premises, but is not available as SaaS. Key product developments on NGINX’s roadmap concern the developer portal, more advanced policies for the gateway, and API security. NGINX serves a variety of technology buyers, in organizations of all sizes, worldwide.
Strengths

- **Deploy and run (advanced) stage of API life cycle:** NGINX’s core technology has a proven track record for providing low latency for high API volumes. F5 claims it can provide sub-10-millisecond latencies at the 99.99th percentile when processing 30,000 API calls per second on a single API gateway. It also can provide peak processing of 2 million API calls per second with 10- to 30-millisecond latency.

- **Innovation and market acceptance:** NGINX has a track record of producing innovations on which to build API management offerings. It was one of the first providers to separate the data plane and control plane to deliver high performance.

- **Overall viability:** Following the acquisition by F5, NGINX has access to global sales, marketing and technology resources to strengthen its market position. With the help of F5’s professional services, NGINX has started to develop a “code to customer” journey, with a view to helping companies identify ways to increase the speed, security and effectiveness of app delivery.

Cautions

- **Market understanding:** NGINX focuses solely on the technical aspects of API management, such as application development, infrastructure and operations, and DevOps. It does not acknowledge the role of APIs in establishing ecosystems or enabling digital transformation initiatives.

- **Product:** NGINX Controller API Management Module is focused on the deploy and run (basic) stage of API management, with standard features such as traffic throttling and load balancing. It is not intended for API programs that require support for other stages of the API life cycle, such as planning and initial design and implementation and testing.

- **Industry strategy:** NGINX does not provide accelerators tailored for any industry to help customers accelerate their API programs.

Google (Apigee)

Google (Apigee) is a Leader in this Magic Quadrant; in the last iteration of this research it was also a Leader. The core Apigee API management platform is available for public cloud, private cloud or data center and hybrid (customer-managed runtime and Google-managed control plane) deployment. Apigee Sense (for bot protection), Apigee API Monetization and Apigee Advanced API Ops (which is in beta at the time of writing) are also part of the Apigee platform. There are also adapters for Envoy and Istio to enable API management features in both. Google’s roadmap for Apigee includes delivering a fully managed API platform for multicloud and hybrid deployments, building ecosystems of citizen developers, integrating with marketplaces, and extending Google technologies such as artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning (ML) to API management. Most Google (Apigee) clients are located in the U.S., Europe, Australia, New Zealand, India and Southeast Asia. The Apigee team markets its offering as a cross-cloud API platform and as a platform for digital business.
Strengths

- **Market understanding:** Google continues to differentiate Apigee through its support for customers pursuing digital strategies. It was one of the first API management providers to clarify and capitalize on the importance of an API program in the execution of digital transformations.

- **Customer experience:** Users of Gartner’s client inquiry service and Peer Insights forum often have a positive view of Google’s Apigee team as a strategic partner that understands their business requirements for digital transformation, not just as a provider of technology solutions. In this market, the ability to act as such a partner can provide a significant competitive advantage, and be very beneficial to customers.

- **Product:** Users of Gartner’s client inquiry service and Peer Insights forum frequently identify ease of use as a key benefit of the Apigee platform.

Cautions

- **Integration strategy:** Although Google is moving toward addressing integration use cases, it remains to be seen how it will compete on these terms against API management vendors for which integration is a strength.

- **Sales execution/pricing:** Google’s Apigee platform offers more functionality than most vendors’ API products, which results in higher prices than for other closed- or open-source offerings. At the entry level, Google offers the much simpler, low-cost Cloud Endpoints API gateway under a freemium model.

- **Private cloud (on-premises) version:** Google positions its API management offering as a hybrid solution. Although Apigee is simple to use as a cloud service, the private cloud (on-premises) version can be complex to install and configure, depending on customer requirements. The potential for rapidly rising costs for an on-premises installation is another caveat.

IBM

IBM is a Leader in this Magic Quadrant; in the last iteration of this research it was also a Leader. IBM introduced its first offering for this market, IBM API Management, which used the IBM DataPower Multi-protocol Gateway, in 2012. Since then, IBM has acquired Red Hat and its API management offering, but the two offerings are still marketed separately and therefore evaluated separately in this Magic Quadrant. The current IBM product, IBM API Connect, uses a lightweight OpenAPI-based API gateway service, architected for much higher performance and multicloud scale. API Connect is available both on-premises and as cloud SaaS. IBM’s plan for the near future is to focus on autonomous API management at the edge, secure cloud-native interactions and AI for API management. IBM sells worldwide, generally to midsize and large organizations.
Strengths

- **Offering and product strategy:** IBM has a strong vision for its product and plans to focus on supporting governance of non-REST interfaces (such as AsyncAPI, GraphQL and Apache Kafka). This will enable API management at the edge, support for service mesh across multiple cloud environments, and the use of AI to simplify the security and monitoring of APIs.

- **Hybrid and multicloud deployment:** IBM API Connect allows for deployment of any component in any cloud or on-premises, and for mixing of locations. It can also be deployed on Kubernetes in any cloud and on-premises in any Red Hat OpenShift instance. Further, API Connect is supported by IBM Cloud Pak for Integration, which comes prepackaged with the OpenShift Container Platform.

- **Geographic presence:** API Connect benefits from IBM’s global presence in over 170 countries through its own local staff and those of partners. This offering supports the following languages: Chinese (Simplified Han and Traditional Han scripts), Czech, Dutch, English, French, German, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Polish, Portuguese (Brazilian), Russian, Spanish and Turkish.

Cautions

- **Sales execution:** IBM has a sound understanding of the market and a robust product, but customers should recognize that it also includes API Connect in other offerings. Gartner believes this may contribute to stand-alone product growth below the market average.

- **Monetization:** Although IBM has been a leading proponent of ecosystems, API Connect has yet to provide flexible, business-oriented monetization and reporting features for customers wanting to quantify APIs’ value in terms of more than usage.

- **Platform upgrades:** Although IBM is investing in upgrade tools, depending on the product versions and gateway policies used, migrating API volumes from the established DataPower Multi-protocol Gateway service to the latest version of API Connect might not be a fully automated process.

Kong

Kong is a Leader in this Magic Quadrant; in the last iteration of this research it was a Visionary. Kong’s open-source API gateway for REST APIs is based on an NGINX proxy server with OpenResty. Its solution also includes Kong Vitals (for monitoring the Kong platform itself), Kong Brain and Kong Immunity, which use AI and ML to help automate the API and service development life cycle, and Insomnia (an API design, documentation and testing tool). Kuma, an open-source project created by Kong, is a platform-agnostic control plane that uses Envoy. Shortly before the publication of this Magic Quadrant, Kong donated Kuma to the Cloud Native Computing Foundation (CNCF) and released Kong Mesh, an enterprise service mesh built on top of Kuma and Envoy. Kong’s solution is available both on-premises and in the cloud. Kong has a vision that its Service Control Platform will intelligently broker information between all services. Kong has over 250 paying enterprise customer accounts in North America, Western Europe, Japan, Australia and Singapore.
Strengths

- **Market understanding:** Kong has shown a strong understanding of customers’ API management needs at both a business and a technical level, including support for API ecosystems and marketplaces, service meshes and distributed gateways.

- **Deploy and run (advanced) stage of API life cycle:** Kong offers great deployment flexibility, with support for AWS, Google Cloud Platform, Docker and Kubernetes.

- **Operations:** Kong’s API gateway has a small footprint and delivers high performance, and can be configured and deployed either as a lightweight API gateway or an enterprise gateway. This contrasts with more heavyweight and single-gateway-centric API management solutions. Through its Kuma offering, Kong has added an Envoy-based open-source service mesh.

Cautions

- **Implementation and testing:** Although Kong offers Insomnia for API design and Mockbin (to generate custom endpoints to test, mock and track HTTP requests and responses between libraries, sockets and APIs), these lack specific API implementation capabilities and wider API portfolio testing features.

- **Industry strategy:** Kong’s top industries are financial services, high tech and e-commerce, but its accelerators for open banking and FHIR lag behind those of other vendors.

- **Sales execution and pricing:** Kong offers its open-source gateway for free, but Kong Enterprise (with a full set of capabilities, including, for example, a developer portal, an administrative UI and advanced traffic control plug-ins) is available for free only as a 15-day trial version. Unlike many other vendors, Kong does not publish its solution pricing on its website.

Microsoft

Microsoft is a Leader in this Magic Quadrant; in the last iteration of this research it was a Niche Player. Microsoft’s API management offering is Azure API Management. Previously available for the cloud only, this product can now also be used in a hybrid architecture following Microsoft’s addition of a self-managed API gateway to the product in April 2020 (albeit with some limitations in relation to, for example, Transport Layer Security [TLS] support and certificate authorities). Azure API Management is available in four main tiers — Developer, Basic, Standard and Premium (which permits multiregion deployment) — for which users are charged a fixed hourly fee, based on allocated resources and feature set. For the future of this offering, Microsoft will focus on API design, event-driven and service mesh support. Azure API Management is available in public cloud regions in the Americas, Europe, Asia, Africa and Australia, as well as for use by the U.S. Government and Department of Defense.

Strengths

- **Deploy and run (basic) stage of API life cycle:** Microsoft Azure API Management provides a relatively simple and straightforward administrator interface. Users report strong satisfaction
scores during inquiries and in Peer Insights reviews, but also remark on the standard nature of the features offered.

- **Geographic strategy:** Microsoft has a strong global strategy for Azure API Management. The Azure portal interface is available in 18 languages and documentation is available in over 50 languages.
- **Performance:** Microsoft Azure API Management is successfully used in several high-performance user scenarios.

### Cautions

- **Marketing execution:** Microsoft’s marketing and go-to-market activities for Azure API Management are not focused on API management only, being mainly conducted in the context of other Microsoft Azure products, such as Microsoft Azure Logic Apps. There is a risk that Azure API Management may be overlooked by buyers for which it would be a good choice.
- **Reporting of business value:** Azure API Management’s reporting capability is limited to technical metrics, such as API usage and response times. It does not extend to business key performance indicators (KPIs).
- **Azure focus:** Azure API Management is best suited to managing APIs within Azure infrastructure, although it can be used to manage external APIs.

### MuleSoft

MuleSoft is a Leader in this Magic Quadrant; in the last iteration of this research it was also a Leader. MuleSoft, which Salesforce acquired in 2018, offers the Anypoint Platform as its full life cycle API management offering, which combines API management and integration capabilities in a single platform. A packaged option providing only API management is also available. In 2019, MuleSoft introduced Anypoint API Community Manager to create and grow an ecosystem of API consumers and drive adoption of API products. MuleSoft offers Istio support via Anypoint Service Mesh. MuleSoft sells its platform both directly and through an ecosystem of partners. It has midsize and large customers worldwide.

### Strengths

- **Market understanding:** MuleSoft displays a strong understanding of the market through its early support for graph APIs, management of developer communities (inside and outside an organization), and awareness of regulatory requirements such as data residency in the EU.
- **Planning and design:** MuleSoft and its implementation partners work closely with customers to set up Center for Enablement (C4E) teams. These teams help businesses adopt the organizational best practices that will support their product investment, and thus ensure customers unlock the full value of MuleSoft’s products.
- **Marketing execution:** MuleSoft provides API strategy thought leadership through white papers, blogs and events. It draws on the expertise of its Global API Strategy team, led by API industry
evangelists and solution consulting experts who advise MuleSoft customers about best practices for API programs.

Cautions

- **Geographic support:** Relatively high prices, plus a lack of widespread presence, have limited MuleSoft’s direct reach beyond its core markets of North America, Western Europe, Singapore and Australia. This is beginning to change, however, as MuleSoft uses Salesforce’s geographic reach to enter new markets around the world.

- **Implementation and testing:** MuleSoft’s Anypoint Platform supports a variety of potentially complex use cases. As a result, implementing or registering an API can involve steps more complex than those required by other, more streamlined products. Although MuleSoft supports API mocking and testing frameworks, customers seeking a full API testing toolset will need to procure a separate solution, as MuleSoft does not provide one natively.

- **API monetization:** MuleSoft does not currently provide out-of-the-box billing and pricing solutions to create subscription plans and support sophisticated API monetization schemes. However, it does provide the ability to connect to a billing API or to integrate with Salesforce CPQ or other third-party billing and pricing solutions, as well as frameworks for evaluating and applying different indirect API monetization approaches.

### Perforce (Akana)

Perforce (Akana) is a Niche Player in this Magic Quadrant. The Akana API Platform includes API Gateway, Community Manager (the developer portal), OAuth Authorization Server, Lifecycle Manager (an administration facility for the full life cycle of APIs) and Envision (for API analytics). The platform is available in a variety of deployment options, and also on a SaaS basis. Perforce offers a fairly wide product portfolio, including agile management, code management and collaboration, application management and components (the product line in which Akana is placed), and automated testing. Its operations are worldwide and its clients tend to be large companies in regulated industries. Akana was acquired twice in the past four years (first by Rogue Wave, which was then acquired by Perforce). Perforce is now investing in integrating Akana with Perfecto (its mobile and web testing platform), enhancing its analytics and open banking.

### Strengths

- **Product:** Akana is an established vendor in this market, and its offering has a wide range of deployment options and a solid set of basic policies for both REST/JSON and SOAP/XML (including Web Services Security). The platform recently received an effective set of usability improvements.

- **Overall viability:** With over 20,000 customers and more than $300 million in annual revenue, Perforce is one of only a small number of companies of medium to large scale focused on the DevOps market. It gives the Akana offering good financial stability.

- **Geographic strategy:** Perforce is a global company with customers in over 80 countries, which gives Akana a geographic breadth it did not have before. However, Akana might need to rethink
its strategy of leaving localization to partners, in order to have national versions readily available to clients worldwide.

Cautions

- **Industry strategy:** Akana has been strong in the banking and financial services sector, but it lacks an articulate, published strategy to stay strong there, specifically one that addresses this sector’s deep business transformation trends.

- **Customer experience:** At the time Akana was acquired, it was focusing its efforts on keeping its largest clients, and evolving its product according to their needs. Smaller clients felt their needs were not being addressed, and some of them moved to competitors. Perforce is in the process of correcting this bias, however.

- **Product strategy:** As a consequence of the acquisitions, the loss of key personnel, and the focus on a small number of clients, Akana’s platform falls short of competitors’ offerings in terms of functionality. Also, its roadmap features functionality (such as GraphQL support) that is already widely available in the market.

Red Hat

Red Hat is a Niche Player in this Magic Quadrant; in the last iteration of this research it was a Visionary. IBM has acquired Red Hat, but for API management the two offerings are still marketed separately and therefore evaluated separately in this Magic Quadrant. Red Hat 3scale API Management is positioned as part of the company’s Red Hat Integration solutions. It is typically deployed in a hybrid architecture, with on-premises API gateways and cloud administration. The entire solution can also be run on-premises on Red Hat’s OpenShift container management platform. Future messaging will be based on “API management as code,” which might not square with API management’s importance in digital transformations, and moving beyond APIs to support GraphQL and new protocols like gRPC. Red Hat 3scale API Management is marketed worldwide and has customers worldwide.

Strengths

- **Integration focus:** Red Hat has a strong presence in the application infrastructure market. Its 3scale API Management product is a key part of the Red Hat Integration set of products, which includes Red Hat Fuse (a code-based integration platform) and AMQ (a messaging platform).

- **Deployment flexibility:** Integrated with the popular OpenShift container platform, Red Hat’s container offering, Red Hat 3scale API Management, effectively supports multicloud and hybrid-cloud solutions.

- **Developer community:** Red Hat’s completely open-source solution has a strong focus on developers, with effective implementation and testing tools, over 200 policies, plus extensibility via Red Hat Fuse, and a worldwide community of experts.
Cautions

- **Support for all APIs in digital transformation:** Some APIs needed for digital transformations and the development of ecosystems will require sophisticated integration technologies, but others will not. Red Hat’s support for API programs is mainly for those requiring advanced integration.

- **Product strategy:** Red Hat has a broad portfolio, including hybrid cloud infrastructure, middleware, agile integration, cloud-native application development, and management and automation solutions. 3scale API Management is a small part of it (within Red Hat Integration) and will evolve along the lines of the rest of the portfolio.

- **Overlap with IBM’s offering:** IBM has an overlapping API management offering in the form of IBM API Connect. Red Hat and IBM currently operate as separate companies, with distinct product roadmaps, and there are no indications this will change. Customers should, however, check that Red Hat has the capability they need and that it can deliver long-term support.

SAP

SAP is a Niche Player in this Magic Quadrant; in the last iteration of this research it was also a Niche Player. SAP has a long history in the application infrastructure market, in which it sells middleware and integration tools and platforms. Its Cloud Platform API management offering is part of the SAP Cloud Platform, a broad PaaS that also has integration, portal, mobile app development and data management capabilities. SAP uses an OEM version of the Google (Apigee) Edge API gateway as the runtime component within its cloud-only offering. SAP has built its own full life cycle API management capabilities around this gateway, including analytics and an out-of-the-box developer portal. SAP plans to deliver API Mesh, an Envoy-based solution to support multiple external API gateways. SAP API Management is available to all customers, regardless of whether they have a prior relationship with SAP.

Strengths

- **Product:** SAP’s product is fully featured. It has solid security, versioning and retirement, and monetization features, along with good coverage of the full API life cycle.

- **Planning and initial design:** In addition to various programs to help with the setting up of an API program, SAP provides a set of policy templates for download from the SAP API Business Hub (a central catalog of APIs from SAP and its partners). This points customers to best practices and helps them scale up their API programs quickly.

- **Operations:** SAP markets its API management offering worldwide as part of the SAP Cloud Platform, and provides many integrations with the wider SAP ecosystem, analytics, billing services, identity services and SAP Cloud Platform Integration Suite (an iPaaS).

Cautions

- **Sales strategy:** Although users can run SAP Cloud Platform API Management on a stand-alone basis, SAP aims to sell API management technology to its customers as part of a larger digital
transformation platform. Customers looking for only API management capabilities might find competing solutions more suitable.

- **Deployment flexibility:** SAP no longer offers on-premises deployment of gateways, though it continues to support existing on-premises deployments and plans to release an on-premises version in the first quarter of 2021. In the cloud, its offering is available on AWS, Microsoft Azure, Alibaba Cloud and AWS’s government cloud.

- **Innovation and product strategy:** Apart from an Envoy-based alternative gateway (planned for the first quarter of 2021 for on-premises hosting and the cloud), most of the generic, non-SAP-specific API management improvements highlighted in SAP’s product roadmap are features also available from other providers. Implementation methodology and innovations are mainly driven by demands from existing SAP customers and partners.

**Sensedia**

Sensedia is a Visionary in this Magic Quadrant; in the last iteration of this research it was also a Visionary. Sensedia’s full life cycle API management platform is composed of API Studio Manager, API Gateway, Dev Portal and API Analytics. Sensedia also offers a set of out-of-the-box connectors, based on Apache Camel and Quarks, for connecting to backends; Sensedia Mesh to enable and control mesh architectures; Events Hub to enable event-driven architectures; and Adaptive Governance to address API governance scenarios. Sensedia is moving toward a single-user experience and developer portal across its products. Sensedia’s roadmap focuses on analytics and storage enhancements and integration with identity management offerings. Sensedia sells primarily to organizations in Latin America, but is increasing its operations in Europe and North America.

**Strengths**

- **Planning and design:** Sensedia’s playbooks are useful for customers who need assistance with API strategy and the implementation of API management. Sensedia also offers API economy workshops and conferences through its API Strategy Services practice.

- **Focus on customer solutions:** Sensedia treats APIs not as just another technology issue, but as a business driver — it views them as central building blocks of digital transformations. The company’s emphasis, reinforced by its professional services practice, is on the use of APIs in digital transformations, partner ecosystems and open innovation.

- **Packaging and pricing:** Sensedia offers a simple pricing model with recurring fees based on the number of API calls per month, whether deployment is in the cloud, on-premises or hybrid. The company’s API gateway, developer portal and microgateway (a lighter version of its API gateway) are sold together, which keeps pricing simple and predictable.

**Cautions**

- **Geographic coverage:** Sensedia has presence in Latin America and has started operating in Europe and North America. However, its clients are still predominantly based in Latin America.
Industry strategy: Sensedia has out-of-the-box support for open banking, but lacks specific FHIR functionality. It relies on its professional services for its support.

Free/limited trial version: Sensedia offers only a 30-day trial. By comparison, other vendors offer limited-use trials for one year or unlimited periods (some start by offering a free open-source solution and then offer limited trials of their higher-value capabilities).

Software AG

Software AG is a Leader in this Magic Quadrant; in the last iteration of this research it was also a Leader. Its offerings for full life cycle API management are the webMethods API management platform (for on-premises deployment) and the webMethods.io API (for the cloud). The API management platform and its cloud equivalent comprise gateway, portal and microgateway. Software AG also offers CentraSite (a registry and repository), the webMethods CloudStreams connection framework, a service mesh and a cloud-based engagement platform. Software AG plans to focus more strongly on microservices and a service mesh, the developer user experience and multicloud. Software AG is headquartered in Germany and sells to large companies and government clients in Europe, North America, Australia and Japan.

Strengths

Product offering: A well-integrated suite of products that offers broad, unified capabilities is the hallmark of Software AG’s full life cycle API management solution. It includes application integration, iPaaS, streaming analytics, Internet of Things (IoT) and in-memory computing capabilities.

Market understanding: Software AG’s solution addresses the diverse priorities of users of full life cycle API management solutions. Its offering and vision are broad, covering areas such as digital transformations, API-led digital business, connected customers, B2B ecosystems, integration, the IoT and microservices-based application modernization.

Product capabilities: Software AG’s platform is one of the most functionally rich, and has a long history in the field of integration. It is particularly liked by customers who use event-driven and consumption patterns.

Cautions

Brand identity: The company’s maintenance of dual brands (Software AG and webMethods), frequent adoption of new corporate slogans (such as “freedom as a service” and “living connections”), and different names for cloud and on-premises solutions may confuse prospective customers.

Sales execution: In 2019, Software AG registered revenue growth below the average for this market and substantially less than that of other Leaders in this Magic Quadrant. Additionally, Software AG lost a moderate amount of market share. Although this might prompt some concerns about the company’s focus on this market, the visibility of API management inside Software AG is increasing, and so is investment in the offering.
Marketing execution: Software AG appears very infrequently in competitive bid scenarios known to Gartner, despite its marketing efforts in 2019. This could cause prospective buyers to overlook its powerful and versatile platform features.

TIBCO Software

TIBCO Software is a Challenger in this Magic Quadrant; in the last iteration of this research it was also a Challenger. TIBCO is a well-established global vendor that offers such products as API-led integration, event-driven applications, data management and analytics. TIBCO’s API management offering is TIBCO Cloud Mashery, an integrated solution within the TIBCO portfolio that is available as a fully on-premises, hybrid or cloud service offering. TIBCO’s roadmap includes more features for DevOps, productivity and discovery of APIs. TIBCO, which is headquartered in California, U.S., sells its products in every region of the world to midsize and large organizations.

Strengths

- **Geographic strategy:** TIBCO has maintained a global presence for years. It has sales offices in over 30 countries and a large partner ecosystem of over 900 system integrators and value-added resellers.
- **Customer experience:** TIBCO’s customers have expressed strong satisfaction with TIBCO Cloud Mashery. They gave it high marks for ease of use, user-friendliness, rich features, performance and ease of deployment.
- **Product:** The core features of TIBCO Cloud Mashery, and its general product functionality, remain strong. Especially notable are its event-driven architecture support with a microgateway and a service mesh, and its API consumption with API security features such as bot detection and protection.

Cautions

- **Sales strategy:** TIBCO’s API management revenue grew by much less than the market average in 2019 (21% versus 36%), despite its offering’s good features. This raises questions about the offering’s future in a highly competitive market.
- **Industry strategy:** TIBCO Cloud Mashery does not currently offer industry accelerators. However, TIBCO plans to release in 2020 an Open Banking Accelerator and a Healthcare Interoperability HL7 FHIR Accelerator.
- **Product offering:** At present, TIBCO Cloud Mashery does not offer service mesh integration and AI-enabled capabilities. However, TIBCO plans throughout 2021 to provide a service mesh as a service with Istio and Envoy, and AI-enabled capabilities for Smart Traffic Shaping. TIBCO does not have product plans to offer advanced monetization capabilities beyond its integrated AWS Marketplace billing option.
Torry Harris

Torry Harris is a Niche Player in this Magic Quadrant; in the last iteration of this research it was a Visionary. Its offering, which comes under the DigitMarket umbrella, comprises a spectrum of efforts to define and realize the end objective of an API-driven digital strategy. Within the offering, the DigitMarket API Manager product has four components built on an open-source foundation: API Publisher Portal, API Developer Portal, API Gateway and OAuth server. The SaaS version runs on AWS. Torry Harris’ DigitMarket family offers an out-of-the-box marketplace product with integrated API management capability, strategy and consulting services, system integration and implementation. With DigitMarket, Torry Harris will continue to target open digital ecosystems and API-driven digital strategies in the short term. Torry Harris mainly sells large consulting and implementation engagements to large corporations. Torry Harris markets its products in Europe, the U.S., the Middle East, India and Latin America.

Strengths

- **Business model and consulting:** Torry Harris offers a unique combination of professional services and products aimed at helping customers devise API strategies and get them up and running quickly. In particular, it holds individualized strategy workshops, performs effective customer journey mappings and offers other IT consulting services.

- **Industry accelerators:** Torry Harris offers accelerators for its primary vertical markets, namely the telecom, finance and energy sectors. These include tailor-made templates, starter packs, ready-to-integrate frameworks, reference API specifications and data models.

- **Sales execution:** With its strong focus on consulting and industries, Torry Harris achieved above-average revenue growth in this crowded market in 2019. With reported growth in both group and consulting revenues, Torry Harris represents a viable alternative for organizations looking for a broad range of product and consulting services from a single vendor.

Cautions

- **Product roadmap:** Torry Harris uses open-source software, where available, as part of its strategy to deliberately avoid closed proprietary code. Its product roadmap factors in what the company considers necessary for the clients it is committed to serve, but might not feature the latest innovations.

- **Marketing execution:** Torry Harris is not highly visible in this market, and it has a relatively small but loyal customer base consisting of top-tier firms in Europe that require API management. However, its offering is powerful, so this lack of visibility should not stop potential users from considering it.

- **Geographic presence:** Although Torry Harris was founded in the U.S., most of its clients are in Western Europe and the Middle East. However, it now intends to target large enterprises and the small and midsize business segment in the U.S.
Tyk

Tyk is a Visionary in this Magic Quadrant; in the last iteration of this research it was a Niche Player. Tyk offers an open-source API gateway and API analytics, and a closed-source developer portal and API management dashboard. Tyk’s roadmap focuses on delivering universal data graph capabilities, a more functional developer portal and a service mesh. Tyk is successful in the financial services sector and has clients of all sizes throughout the world, with even coverage of the U.S., EMEA and Asia/Pacific.

Strengths

- **Simplicity**: Tyk has a simple open-source API management offering that is extensible through plug-ins. It represents an attractive proposition for users with basic requirements who want an initial platform that they can enrich as they progress in order to build modern REST-based applications. It also suits organizations that have formal development pipelines.

- **Sales strategy and pricing**: Tyk targets developers with a free, open-source gateway, as well as a free, limited-use SaaS version. These versions can be upgraded to enable more calls, more nodes, greater support and additional capabilities with a Pro License or Enterprise License.

- **Developer focus**: Tyk positions itself and its offerings as being “by developers for developers.” It takes a best-of-breed approach for developers who want a best-of-breed environment.

Cautions

- **Company size**: Although Tyk is growing well, its revenue and market share remain quite small. Additionally, its track record is shorter than those of other, much larger and more diversified providers.

- **Industry strategy**: Although many of its customers are in the finance and healthcare sectors, Tyk lacks specific optimizations or support for industry standards like the revised Payment Services Directive (PSD2) and FHIR.

- **Developer focus**: A focus on developers works well for technically oriented customers, but Tyk’s technical emphasis understates its usefulness to customers looking for digital transformation and API-enabled business models.

WSO2

WSO2 is a Visionary in this Magic Quadrant; in the last iteration of this research it was also a Visionary. WSO2 provides an open-source integration solution that includes API management, as well as identity management and analytics. WSO2’s API management offering is available in two versions: the on-premises WSO2 API Manager and the cloud-based WSO2 API Cloud, which is managed by WSO2. Both versions feature API publishing, life cycle management, rate limiting and analytics in one integrated system. The solution’s evolution is likely to be around API integration, with support for Envoy proxies and service meshes. It is available for free download, with a paid
subscription level providing support and updates. WSO2’s product is available worldwide, and is used by customers of all sizes with a strong open-source orientation.

Strengths

- **Implementation and testing:** WSO2 provides diverse options for creating APIs, including in an automated fashion using continuous integration/continuous delivery (CI/CD) tools. Several approaches to implementing APIs in front of existing infrastructure are provided, including wrapping existing data sources, and, through WSO2’s integration platform, using adapters.

- **API access control:** WSO2’s API access control functionality is strong, and is optionally augmented by its Identity Server product, which enables a strong set of authentication and authorization options for API access control.

- **Modern API environment:** The October 2019 release of WSO2’s platform introduced API product creation and monetization, GraphQL for data-rich APIs, a native Kubernetes operator for APIs, enhanced hybrid environment support via gRPC, and expanded microservices and serverless support.

Cautions

- **Customer experience:** Customer feedback during client inquiry sessions and comments on Gartner’s Peer Insights highlight closures of local WSO2 offices, on account of COVID-19, and consequent delays in support. However, WSO2 reports that it has realigned its remote teams to customers’ time zones in order to speed up responses.

- **Support for ecosystems:** WSO2 provides capabilities and architectural best practices for API marketplaces, and its focus is on developers building a platform. However, its offering does not address the business and organizational aspects of building and engaging a partner ecosystem in order to drive usage.

- **Top management changes:** Since 2017, WSO2 has changed its CEO three times. Such top-level changes typically result in a different focus for the operation and long-term strategy of a company, which takes some time to settle down.

Vendors Added and Dropped

We review and adjust our inclusion criteria for Magic Quadrants as markets change. As a result of these adjustments, the mix of vendors in any Magic Quadrant may change over time. A vendor’s appearance in a Magic Quadrant one year and not the next does not necessarily indicate that we have changed our opinion of that vendor. It may be a reflection of a change in the market and, therefore, changed evaluation criteria, or of a change of focus by that vendor.

**Added**

- **F5 (NGINX):** F5 acquired NGINX in March 2019. NGINX was for years the platform used by several API management offerings, but in 2019 it decided to go to market directly with an API management product.
- **Perforce (Akana):** By acquiring Rogue Wave in February 2019, Perforce also purchased the historical capabilities of Akana.

**Dropped**

- **Oracle:** This vendor is assembling a brand-new API management offering, based on the Oracle Cloud Infrastructure API Gateway, and did not meet the inclusion criteria.
- **SEEBURGER:** Its focus on integration use cases did not enable it to reach the minimum revenue threshold for inclusion (according to Gartner’s estimates).
- **SmartBear:** This vendor does not provide an API gateway. An API gateway is a new requirement among this year’s inclusion criteria.

**Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria**

For a vendor to be included in this Magic Quadrant it had to satisfy certain criteria. It had to:

- Market any subset of the full life cycle API management capabilities defined in the Product or Service section of this Magic Quadrant (below), both in the cloud and on-premises, or in the cloud only. An offering might be part of a more comprehensive platform, such as a PaaS or a platform to support digital business. Vendors offering only on-premises solutions did not qualify for this Magic Quadrant.

- Have been marketing an offering that was generally available or in beta testing as of June 2019. The cutoff date for products to be evaluated as generally available was April 2020. Products scheduled to be available after April 2020 were evaluated as part of their vendors’ roadmaps.

- Have a comprehensive, general-purpose offering — that is, one not specific to one industry or limited to an adjacent market (such as iPaaS) — for full life cycle API management that covers at least two of the API life cycle stages (planning and initial design; implementation and testing; deploy and run; and versioning and retirement). This offering had to be available either directly from the vendor or via publicly announced agreements with partners. Vendors not offering an API gateway and a developer portal — either directly or via a publicly announced partner agreement — were excluded from this Magic Quadrant.

- Generate revenue of at least $18 million (or the equivalent in another currency) per year from full life cycle API management. Vendors pursuing an open-source or open-core business model had to generate revenue of at least $5 million (or the equivalent in another currency) per year from full life cycle API management. These figures include revenue from software, cloud-managed services, support and professional/consulting services relating to the full life cycle API management offering. The figure for open source is lower to reflect the different business model (based on cloud subscriptions and/or support fees, instead of licenses and/or cloud fees).

- Have grown in terms of full life cycle API management revenue or total number of full life cycle API management customers by at least 20% in 2019.
Honorable Mentions

For this Magic Quadrant, Gartner surveyed more than 70 vendors, of all sizes, both open-source and closed-source. Many of these vendors did not, however, meet the inclusion criteria, frequently having only a fraction of the market share of some of the extremely large competitors. Vendors with a regional focus, a vertical specialization or cloud-only platforms are often less well known than their larger rivals, which have broader functionality, business models and packaging; these smaller vendors were frequently excluded because they generated too little revenue.

The following vendors did not meet the inclusion criteria, but each has notable market presence nonetheless (with the exception of SmartBear — see the Dropped section above):

- Constellant
- Datawire
- Fiorano
- Nevatech
- Oracle
- OpenLegacy
- Postman
- SEEBURGER
- SmartBear

Evaluation Criteria

Ability to Execute

Gartner analysts evaluate vendors on the quality and efficacy of the processes, systems, methods or procedures that enable theirs performance to be competitive, efficient and effective, and to positively impact revenue, retention and reputation.

The weightings assigned to the criteria in Table 1 are unchanged from the previous Magic Quadrant.

Product or Service: This criterion considers core goods and services that compete in and/or serve the defined market, with consideration of current product and service capabilities, quality, feature sets and skills. Products may be offered natively or through OEM agreements/partnerships.

For full life cycle API management, we consider providers’ capabilities in five subcriteria, which correspond to one or more stages in an API's life cycle:

- Planning and initial design: This subcriterion assesses:
- Providers' ability to help clients, especially API product managers (see The Evolving Role of the API Product Manager in Digital Product Management), plan and design the right APIs for their business purposes, frequently to enable the execution of digital strategies.

- The workshops and tools that full life cycle API management providers frequently offer to business managers, innovation managers, agile or fusion groups tasked with executing a digital transformation, and application managers.

- The presence and use of API evangelists.

- The business model for the APIs (see Choose the Right API Monetization and Pricing Model Model).

**Implementation and testing:** This subcriterion assesses:

- Once the data and functionality that an API should give access to has been identified, how the API must be implemented in light of organizations' requirements in relation to agility, time to market, budget and other parameters. This goes beyond the initial stubs that some toolkits offer.

- How providers package into their full life cycle API management offerings the functionality to ease identity management or hasten the implementation of multiexperience APIs.

- Design policies when implementing an API. There is a wide variety of design policies and, in general, the bigger the API provider, the more design policies apply. Implementation may involve providing an API style guide used by an API center of excellence or an API platform team (see Federate, Rebrand and Recharter Your API Center of Excellence to Enable an API Platform Team).

- The availability of toolkits, accelerators or specific extensions to ease the implementation of APIs according to the few API “standards” present in some sectors. This is considered highly important.

- API testing. With the widespread growth of digital transformations, effective API testing is of paramount importance, both at design time and at runtime when an API has been deployed. Hence this subcriterion also assesses generic functionality for API testing, whether offered directly or through partners.

**Deploy and run (basic):**

- This subcriterion rates providers' capabilities in basic API management, which is mainly about the packaging, operation, runtime and maintenance of APIs. It is generally divided into three functional areas:

  - A developer portal for API discovery, access provision, testing and collaboration. Ease of use and the ability to support self-service — for the developers who will develop apps that consume the APIs — are fundamental.
Policy management and analytics: policies relating to operational management, monitoring, throttling, security, format translation, simple data transformation and the collection of metrics associated with the usage of an API.

An API gateway that enforces the policies mentioned above, and that collects data to provide basic analysis of API traffic.

**Deploy and run (advanced):**

This subcriterion assesses abilities that go well beyond basic API management and help organizations achieve or improve the strategic maturity of their API programs (see Gartner’s API Strategy Maturity Model):

- **API access control:** The ability to use API keys and standards such as OAuth 2.0 and OpenID Connect to control access to APIs, through authentication and authorization.

- **API protection:** Support for the OWASP API Security Top Ten, detection of suspicious API usage and defense against attacks on APIs in general (see API Security: What You Need to Do to Protect Your APIs).

- **Deployment flexibility:** The ability to surface APIs in the cloud, on-premises or both. Includes support for common hybrid deployment patterns, such as on-premises API gateway with cloud-based management and reporting.

- **API creation and design:** The ability to create new APIs or new versions of APIs using generation tools or a design studio. Includes support for designing APIs (for example, where an API-first policy is in place) from scratch and for generating APIs from infrastructure such as databases, including support for OData and GraphQL.

- **High performance:** High throughput, low latency and the ability to scale quickly to cope with high traffic. Includes different architectural approaches to scaling, such as distributed gateways, in-memory databases and caching.

- **Developer portal customization:** Users frequently need to customize API developer portals for look and feel, developer constituency and workflows, and to add widgets such as forums. Developer portals may also be used as the basis for creating API marketplaces (see How to Derive Value From APIs Using API Marketplaces), which require further customization and extensibility.

- **API monetization:** Monetization of APIs involves not just a selection of billing options, but also the ability to manage usage plans and a variety of pricing models that are potentially different for different consumers of the same API.

- **Business value reporting:** The ability to measure and report the business value of APIs. Includes support to define metrics, collect data and report on business metrics, along with API quality, technical and operational metrics (see How to Use KPIs to Measure the Business Value of APIs).

- **API testing:** Support for a broad range of API testing scenarios, including, but not limited to, automated, functional, A/B testing scenarios and support for CI/CD pipelines.
- **Free/limited trial version**: A free or function-limited offering that enables evaluators to engage more quickly and buy more safely.

- **Support for ecosystems**: Organizations building externally facing APIs can engage a developer and partner ecosystem to drive usage. API ecosystem engagement must have clearly defined goals and may involve running hackathons or enabling developer relations (“DevRel”).

- **API consumption**: Many organizations consume public APIs and/or private APIs. API consumption capabilities (sometimes called reverse or outbound gateway capabilities) involve managing how these APIs are consumed, including monitoring, SLAs and API key management (see Managing the Consumption of Third-Party APIs).

- **Industry accelerators**: Prebuilt mappings, configurations or API definitions for particular industries or business scenarios (open banking or payment directives in force around the world, or Office of the National Coordinator for Health Information Technology [ONC] interoperability rules for the U.S. healthcare sector).

- **Microservices and service mesh**: This capability involves management of microservices in addition to APIs, as well as integration with service mesh (see How a Service Mesh Fits Into Your API Mediation Strategy).

- **Event-driven and streaming support**: Support for event-driven APIs and streaming APIs through mechanisms such as webhooks, WebSocket, AsyncAPI and server-sent events (see The Impact of Event-Driven IT on API Management).

- **Provision (directly or through partners) of AI APIs**: The provision of APIs that allow access to AI features, and usage of AI techniques within a platform, such as predictive analytics on API usage patterns, bot detection (of good and bad bots) and assistance for developers browsing through APIs (with a chatbot, for example).

- **Versioning and retirement**:  

  - Mature API programs have to deal with several versions of the same API. Specific usage policies (simple data transformations) aimed at specific types of API consumers can greatly reduce the need for different versions of the same API.

  - Support for API providers and API product managers for governance decisions to limit the number of versions.

  - Support for API retirements, beyond the simple deprecation of APIs. Managing these cases is largely a complex organizational endeavor, involving many negotiations that only humans can carry out, especially when the API provider offers no alternative API.

**Overall Viability**: This criterion includes an assessment of an organization’s overall financial health, as well as the financial and practical success of the relevant business unit. It considers the likelihood of an organization continuing to offer and invest in the product, as well as the product’s position in the current portfolio.
Once API programs mature, depending on how standard policies for the gateway are, API providers might incur relatively high costs to switch full life cycle API management vendor. Also, the degree of change that occurs in API consumers’ requirements (and the potential impact of that change) can be significant. For these reasons, we consider a vendor’s relative size (in terms of customers, revenue, and the scale, strength and resilience of its ecosystem), the impact of past, present (and potential future) acquisitions, financial stability and continuity of management in this market.

Because of the breadth of full life cycle API management functionality, some vendors partner with other providers to complete their offerings. Some vendors partner to multiply sales opportunities. These partnerships and their perceived effectiveness are of interest when evaluating a vendor’s viability. We also consider the size and quality of a vendor’s active user community, relative to its target market, and the availability of professional and consulting services.

**Sales Execution/Pricing:** This criterion assesses an organization’s capabilities in all presales activities and the structure that supports them. This includes deal management, pricing and negotiation, presales support and the overall effectiveness of the sales channel.

For this criterion, we track revenue growth, including the number of clients a vendor has, the number and business impact of the projects it has implemented, and how and whether professional and consulting services have eased implementations. We also evaluate whether pricing models — on-premises, multicloud, hybrid and in the cloud — are expressed with clarity and predictability, and track their changes in time. A vendor’s ability to handle large and complex deals comes into play here, too. Particular attention is given to which options are offered to end users when prices climb with increasing API volumes, and to whether a volume-independent pricing model is offered.

**Market Responsiveness/Record:** This criterion assesses a vendor’s ability to respond, change direction, be flexible and achieve competitive success as opportunities develop, competitors act, customers’ needs evolve and market dynamics change. It also considers a vendor’s history of responsiveness to changing market demands.

The dynamic nature of API programs, the furious pace of change that the execution of digital transformations increasingly demands, and the rapidity with which a vendor responds, adapts and takes advantage of changes, are key factors. We also look for evidence that a vendor responds well to rapidly evolving conditions in the full life cycle API management market.

**Marketing Execution:** This criterion evaluates the clarity, quality, creativity and efficacy of programs designed to deliver an organization’s message in order to influence the market, promote a brand, increase awareness of products and establish a positive identification in the minds of customers. This “mind share” can be driven by a combination of publicity, promotional activity, thought leadership, social media, referrals and sales activities.

We assess the degree to which a vendor has captured mind share, demonstrated thought leadership and gained a solid reputation in this evolving and growing market. We also evaluate how effective a vendor’s go-to-market strategies have been, and how often a vendor appears on shortlists for full life cycle API management projects. Effectiveness in marketing and partnership programs is evaluated, too.
Customer Experience: This criterion assesses products, services and/or programs that enable customers to achieve desired results with the products evaluated. Specifically, this assessment covers the quality of supplier-buyer interactions, technical support and account support. It may also include ancillary tools, customer support programs, availability of user groups and SLAs.

We track the specificity and quality of support (domestic and international), contracts and SLAs for the availability of full life cycle API management functionality. API management issues are roughly the same worldwide, and across industries, but the types of policies organizations implement first vary considerably by culture, API program maturity, geography and project, even within the same company. Specific attention is given to the customer experience through acquisitions and outside a vendor's home market.

Operations: This criterion assesses an organization’s ability to achieve its goals and meet its commitments. Factors include the quality of the organizational structure, skills, experiences, programs, systems and other vehicles that enable an organization to operate effectively and efficiently.

We consider a vendor’s track record in meeting SLAs and its privacy certifications. We assess the scope (in terms, for example, of people and data centers) and reliability of its hosted service platforms (for cloud offerings). We also evaluate the scalability and adaptability of its software platforms (for on-premises deployment), including metrics for efficiency, speed of change, implementation of new features and scale.

Table 1. Ability to Execute Evaluation Criteria

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation Criteria</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Product or Service</td>
<td>High</td>
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<tr>
<td>Overall Viability</td>
<td>High</td>
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<tr>
<td>Sales Execution/Pricing</td>
<td>Medium</td>
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<tr>
<td>Market Responsiveness/Record</td>
<td>Medium</td>
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<tr>
<td>Marketing Execution</td>
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<td>Customer Experience</td>
<td>High</td>
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<tr>
<td>Operations</td>
<td>Medium</td>
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Source: Gartner (September 2020)

Completeness of Vision

Gartner analysts evaluate vendors on their ability to convincingly articulate logical statements. The assessment covers current and future market direction, innovation, customer needs and competitive forces, in light of Gartner’s view of the market.
The weightings assigned to the criteria in Table 2 are unchanged from the previous Magic Quadrant, except for that for Vertical/Industry Strategy (see below).

**Market Understanding:** This criterion assesses a vendor’s ability to understand customers’ needs and to translate that understanding into products and services. Vendors that show a clear vision of their market listen, understand customers’ demands, and can shape or enhance the market.

End users need to run API programs effectively, frequently as part of digital transformations, build platforms and develop ecosystems on top of them, as well as manage day-to-day API issues. We evaluate vendors according to the degree with which they show understanding of these needs and anticipate or drive new ones. We also assess how effective for the future a vendor’s partnership with other technology and service providers (for example, API security and bot protection providers) are likely to be. Additionally, we evaluate how well a vendor understands on-premises, hybrid and cloud (private, multicloud and public) requirements for small, midsize and large projects in various industries, and in different geographies, with support for nascent standards (when available). In short, we assess how well a vendor understands the full life cycle API management market, and how powerfully its vision will drive this market forward.

**Marketing Strategy:** This criterion looks for clear, differentiated messaging consistently communicated internally, and externalized through social media, advertising, customer programs and positioning statements.

For this criterion, we look for plans that a vendor has developed to clearly articulate its value proposition (for example, helping end users progress a digital transformation) and consider how its offering (together with those of any partners) will create new business value for end users. In this evolving market, a vendor must understand and monitor its competitors, clearly differentiate itself, and exploit an effective marketing channel to reach its target audience (segmentation of the target market and clear identification of buying centers, personas and roles are fundamental).

**Sales Strategy:** This criterion looks for a sound strategy for selling that uses appropriate networks, including direct and indirect sales, marketing, service and communication networks. It also considers any partners that extend the scope and depth of a vendor’s market reach, expertise, technologies, services and customer base.

For this criterion, we look for evidence that a vendor uses the right balance of direct and indirect sales vehicles. We also assess whether it has a plan to target the right mix of small, midsize and large customers for its target markets, geographies and industries. Even more than for Marketing Strategy, we look for clear identification of a target market (for example, companies in a specific industry with time-critical transformation efforts). We assess any free or trial pricing tiers. We also look for evidence of a sound business plan and an effective strategy that uses presale activities, evangelists, activities that demonstrate thought leadership, and professional and consulting services (with related templates, accelerators, blueprints and best practices), where appropriate.

**Offering (Product) Strategy:** This criterion assesses a vendor’s approach to product development and delivery, with an emphasis on market differentiation, functionality, methodology, and features as they map to current and future requirements.
For this criterion, we ask specifically for a vendor’s offering plans and roadmaps, together with dates, and we assess how complete and effective the full life cycle API management offering is likely to be in years to come. We also examine the offering’s overall design concept and architecture, whether based on technology or managed services, to assess how future-proof it is and how easily it could be integrated with users’ future application infrastructure. When a vendor uses third-party functionality from partners to extend its offering (for example, to cover more stages of the API life cycle), we assess a number of things: how effective and seamless the extension is for the user; how solid and helpful support practices are likely to be; how viable the partner is; and whether inclusion of this functionality as part of the vendor’s direct offering would make more sense.

**Business Model:** This criterion assesses the design, logic and execution of an organization’s business proposition made with a view to achieving continued success.

For this criterion, we examine how a vendor targets or maintains profitability through its pricing models and sales strategy, and how the models work in cloud, multicloud, hybrid or on-premises environments and for partner sales (including when multiple copies of the same gateway are sold to different business units within the same company). In some cases, especially for smaller vendors, profitability might not be an immediate objective: We evaluate on a case-by-case basis how that approach will work for the vendor and its customers in the short term. Because of the breadth of full life cycle API management functionality, some vendors must partner to complete their offerings. These partnerships, their effectiveness and their viability, from a user perspective, are central to our evaluation of a vendor’s business model. We assess the breadth of a vendor’s professional and consulting services, how it recognizes revenue and capitalizes on investments in R&D, and its growth strategy (including mergers and acquisitions) across geographies.

**Vertical/Industry Strategy:** This criterion assesses a vendor’s strategy to direct resources (sales, product, development), skills and products to meet the specific needs of individual market segments, including industries.

For this criterion, we look at the industries a vendor focuses on, any industry-specific solutions it offers, and how successful or differentiating those solutions are (or are likely to be). The rules by which an API program are run are frequently industry-specific, even if core API policy requirements do not change much across industries. We assess industry-specific blueprints, support for API standards and starter kits, if there are any.

The weighting for this criterion has been raised from low to medium to reflect the increased importance of nascent, vertically focused API standards and frameworks.

**Innovation:** This criterion looks for direct, related, complementary and synergistic layouts of resources, expertise or capital for investment, consolidation, defensive or preemptive purposes.

In the full life cycle API management market, innovation is not a desirable option. It is a necessity for survival. Innovation occurs in relation to technology, business, industry and society (see Digital Disruption Profile: APIs and the API Economy). We assess how a vendor plans to innovate in this regard, and how effectively and systematically innovative ideas are filtered and funneled through
product development. We also look at a vendor’s track record of anticipating or leading new trends in the market.

**Geographic Strategy:** This criterion evaluates a vendor’s strategy to direct resources, skills and offerings to meet the specific needs of geographies outside its “home” or native geography, either directly or through partners, channels and subsidiaries, as appropriate for that geography and market.

API programs are now running in many parts of the world. We look for evidence that a vendor is engaging, or planning to engage, with the most promising locations for its capabilities, and whether further opportunities might exist in geographies not explicitly addressed at present. Our evaluation assesses a vendor’s nondomestic project fulfillment capacity, support centers, sales offices, partner networks, and ability to support complex international requirements and features (such as compliance with local laws and regulations).

**Table 2. Completeness of Vision Evaluation Criteria**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluation Criteria</th>
<th>Weighting</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Market Understanding</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Marketing Strategy</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sales Strategy</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Offering (Product) Strategy</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Business Model</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vertical/Industry Strategy</td>
<td>Medium</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Innovation</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geographic Strategy</td>
<td>High</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Gartner (September 2020)

**Quadrant Descriptions**

A Magic Quadrant reflects Gartner’s judgments about vendors’ Ability to Execute and Completeness of Vision in a market — in this case, the full life cycle API management market. The Ability to Execute criteria reflect the staying power and record of execution of vendors in this market. The Completeness of Vision criteria reflect vendors’ abilities to understand the market’s trends, to lead and influence them, and to follow them with agility and consistency.

A word of caution. A vendor assessment process naturally tends to favor comprehensive offerings and powerful sales and marketing strategies. A tightly focused product, even if exceptional, typically will not score as well as a comprehensive offering. This, in turn, frequently favors the larger vendors, because their extra resources enable them to allocate substantial sales and marketing investments
to support their API management products, and to offer more comprehensive collections of functionality.

Our conversations with clients indicate that they often focus only on the Leaders when starting a vendor selection process. That is not the best approach. The variety of use cases for APIs (see Critical Capabilities for Full Life Cycle API Management) means that the best vendor for a particular type of company, industry, project or geography is often found within the Magic Quadrant, but not among the Leaders. This is especially the case outside the U.S. Clients often wrongly fear that non-Leaders just aren’t good enough. But the breadth of functionality in API management platforms means that it takes considerable investment and a sharp focus on this market just to appear in this Magic Quadrant. We therefore recommend that clients start their selection process by considering a subset of the vendors in this Magic Quadrant, one that includes non-Leaders. Furthermore, it is potentially worthwhile to consider vendors not mentioned in this Magic Quadrant, if they could prove particularly effective locally, or if they specialize in a particular type of API or are already well established in your company. You can then narrow the field further as the evaluation becomes more focused on specific requirements.

Leaders

Leaders are vendors that execute strongly and that lead and influence the market. Recent entrants to this market that have a limited record of execution are less likely to be Leaders. The same applies to strongly executing vendors that are overly risk-averse or that do not effectively exploit innovation trends.

The most distinctive attribute of Leaders is that they can address the widest variety of API use cases: mobile and multiexperience, integration using APIs, data as a service, B2B interactions, and open banking (for further details, see Critical Capabilities for Full Life Cycle API Management).

The need to prepare for life after COVID-19, the splitting of the API economy into sweeping digital transformations and the rise of the platform/ecosystem business model have put API programs on the agendas of CIOs and some CEOs. Leaders make sure their offerings can help clients thrive in this dynamic environment.

There are two main ways of becoming a Leader in this market:

- By acquiring another Leader or Visionary, integrating it into a wider application infrastructure offering and keeping up with the pace of API management innovation.
- By addressing digital transformations and their challenges head-on, with thought leadership and product functionality, and offering widely deployable, well-supported API management solutions across a number of geographies. Both of the new Leaders in this year’s Magic Quadrant did that at scale in 2019, albeit with very different visions.

Leaders understand the market trends that will benefit them and their clients’ business strategies by enabling them to restructure their business operations or advance digital transformations. Leaders see the business potential of API programs, communicate this potential to business units and help their clients realize that potential.
Challengers

Challengers generally execute well for the types of work for which they offer functionality, but they have a blurred or incomplete view of the market’s direction, sometimes due to a lack of innovation, marketing and sales focus on API management.

Traditionally, this Magic Quadrant has had few Challengers, on the basis that, in this market, if a vendor’s vision is below average, its execution is likely to be so, too. Also, if a vendor doesn’t show thought leadership, most users are unlikely to buy from it.

The future of these providers depends on how aggressive and proactive they are in addressing their current shortcomings. If they innovate to fulfill the pressing requirements of today’s API programs, and market their offerings effectively, it is likely that they will become Leaders. Otherwise, they may become Niche Players or Visionaries, or drop out of the Magic Quadrant altogether. Of course, they may also remain Challengers, but this market’s strong dynamics and fast evolution over the past 18 months indicate that even maintaining their current position will require them to evolve.

Visionaries

Visionaries approach this market with a fresh view from an innovative angle. Although they are typically smaller, or offer an incomplete set of functionalities, they have the power and mind share to grow their capabilities, often in a different way from established Leaders.

2019 was a quiet year of stabilization and growth in the full life cycle API management market. As a group, and with some notable exceptions, Visionaries did not come up with compelling visions in this market. A few vendors have taken advantage of this situation, and improved or stabilized their vision, crossing subquadrant boundaries; a few others have stabilized possibly too much, and lost some momentum.

Visionaries generally make good acquisition targets for established, larger players that want to buy their way into the Leaders quadrant. Acquisitions are continuing, but the number of vendors with effective vision is reducing.

Niche Players

Niche Players focus on a segment of the market. That segment is typically defined by a specific application or application infrastructure ecosystem, or by another characteristic, such as industry, client size (and spending power), geographic area or open-source orientation.

Unsurprisingly, especially given the relatively large number of Niche Players in this Magic Quadrant, some of the vendors classified as Niche Players fit this description better than others. Niche Players either have an effective strategy but a focus on a particular market niche, or they become Niche Players because of shortcomings in terms of execution or a lack of innovation.

Within their niche, these vendors’ offerings may be more functional than those of Leaders. An improved position on the Magic Quadrant might indicate that a Niche Player is maturing or that it is extending its offering.
Niche Players’ Ability to Execute is limited to their focus areas. It is therefore partial and is assessed accordingly. Their ability to innovate and, to a greater extent, survive in this market is limited by their narrow focus, but they often tend to move much faster than vendors in other quadrants. Improving marketing strategy and fostering innovation is the safest route to graduating from the Niche Players quadrant.

Context

All enterprises are working to find their own path to a “new normal” (see The Postpandemic Planning Framework). The most successful will have started rescaling and reinventing themselves during the COVID-19 crisis, but the bulk of enterprises will start when it ends, which will be at significantly different times in different countries. Rescaling and reinventing an enterprise requires decomposition and recomposition of operating practices, and enterprises now have to compose their future.

This is a task in which the role of an API platform is paramount, because it is hard to imagine any technological environment within a midsize or larger business that does not utilize APIs. Furthermore, their use is growing. Getting APIs right — and doing so quickly — therefore matters more than ever. The more effective an API program is, the more extensive the API platform will be — and the quicker and easier rescaling and reinventing can be accomplished.

API programs cannot run effectively without full life cycle API management.

Full life cycle API management involves the planning, design, implementation, testing, publication, operation, consumption, maintenance, versioning and retirement of APIs. It also involves a developer portal through which to target, market to and govern communities of developers who embed APIs in their applications, webpages, apps, chatbots and more. Also crucial for API management are the ability to estimate APIs’ value (see How to Use KPIs to Measure the Business Value of APIs) and analytics to understand patterns of API usage.

The number of APIs within organizations is growing rapidly in IT departments, but also within lines of business (LOBs). Every connected mobile app, every website that tracks users or provides a rich user experience, and every application deployed on a cloud service uses APIs. APIs form the connection points between platforms and ecosystems.

Expect the already widespread usage of APIs to increase even more rapidly in future.

During COVID-19 lockdowns, when usage of remote applications and devices increased, API platforms experienced, on average, 1.5 times as many API calls as normal. At the time of writing, remote working remains widespread, so that figure will increase.
LOBs view APIs as a way to compose new applications (see Application Leaders: Master Composable Enterprise Thinking for Your Post-COVID-19 Reset) and innovate quickly. This enables them to change operating processes, introduce new offerings and use new channels (see Digital Disruption Profile: APIs and the API Economy).

APIs are deployed to obtain different business benefits. A company may, for example, provide free (but often not public) access to its APIs in return for quicker, more efficient execution of a business process, such as day-to-day customer care. Or it might do so to facilitate or increase sales of a traditional product — insurance companies, for instance, get more policies if they are able to offer them online in situations where a potential customer might need them.

API management products are evolving to meet the more sophisticated needs of users.

API management platforms have matured considerably in the past few years. They now have more sophisticated API security features (see API Security: What You Need to Do to Protect Your APIs). They can also work with, and take advantage of, microservices in mesh app and service architectures (see Ensure Your API Management Solution Supports Modern API Trends Such as Microservices and Multicloud).

Market Overview

The full life cycle API management market is healthy, having grown at 36% year over year to over $1.7 billion in 2019 (see Market Share Analysis: Full Life Cycle API Management, Worldwide, 2019). This growth made it the third-fastest growing segment of the application infrastructure and middleware market. It attracts technology providers because of its past high growth rates and the prospect of further growth — Gartner forecasts that it will grow at solid double-digit rates over the next five years.

2019 was a year of stabilization and growth for the full life cycle API management market. Some acquisitions still took place — Perforce acquired Rogue Wave, which included Akana, and F5 acquired NGINX — but the wild CEO turnover of 2018 did not continue. Some functionality became more prominent (see Ensure Your API Management Solution Supports Modern API Trends Such as Microservices and Multicloud), but no major trends rocked the market. It was almost like the calm before the storm of COVID-19, which would strike at the heart of people's lives and of the global economy.

Although acquisitions continued in 2019 as digital transformations multiplied and deepened API programs' execution, further acquisitions of midsize, growing and reasonably established players will not be possible for a while. This is because no acquisition targets matching that description are left. Instead, the market now has larger, more mature and decidedly more expensive players — some with considerable technological "baggage." There are, however, also much smaller, immature and narrowly focused vendors that offer far leaner, frequently open-source, API management platforms and that are improving very fast. We expect to see a few acquisitions of such vendors by
large competitors. Compared with last year, there will probably be a higher number of smaller, more focused acquisitions to plug holes in existing offerings (for example, in relation to API security) and to maintain innovativeness and, therefore, ultimately, competitiveness.

A sizable number of full life cycle API management solutions are still bought for installation on-premises, not in the cloud. Most banks outside the U.S. prefer on-premises deployments to comply with payment regulations (more than 50 countries have payment service regulations, with more to come) or to run an open banking strategy. As most cloud providers are based in the U.S., privacy concerns (real or perceived) still prompt non-U.S. companies to run full life cycle API management solutions on-premises.

Full life cycle API management solutions are bought for a wide variety of deployment scenarios: on-premises, cloud/hybrid, public cloud or fully outsourced (sometimes called SaaS API management). Since 2018, some vendors have deprioritized on-premises requirements, or even scrapped on-premises offerings altogether, in favor of better scaling options, more flexible hybrid deployment models, more powerful API analytics and simpler product lines. Certainly, the cloud enables all that. But that is to overlook the value of on-premises deployment in terms of trust in enforcing local privacy rules. We believe deprioritizing on-premises deployment is a mistake because on-premises full life cycle API management is not disappearing — its share of total API management market revenue actually grew from 37% in 2018 to 43% in 2019, according to Gartner estimates. Not having an on-premises solution will therefore impair a vendor’s sales execution, prevent participation in major API programs and “leave a lot of money on the table.” Customers wanting an on-premises-only solution will have to choose from a reduced number of vendors.

Full life cycle API management capabilities are still generally sold on their own. But, increasingly, API management capabilities are bundled as part of more comprehensive cloud service platforms, as in the case of large cloud players like AWS, Google and Microsoft.

API management is finding a place in “as a service” variants, such as infrastructure as a service (IaaS) and PaaS. Its first coupling with iPaaS was to form a hybrid integration platform and to meet the needs of complex API designs. This trend for “integration APIs,” furthered by many of the integration vendors in this Magic Quadrant, will increase in the short term as clients that need application integration, in the cloud and on-premises, consider API management solutions first (as part of an “API first” approach). Additionally, offerings generically presented as “platforms for digital business,” based on technology and system integration services, are proliferating and regularly feature API management capabilities, as the Leaders in this Magic Quadrant demonstrate.
The Evolving Role of the API Product Manager in Digital Product Management

Choose the Right API Monetization and Pricing Model

Federate, Rebrand and Recharter Your API Center of Excellence to Enable an API Platform Team

Gartner’s API Strategy Maturity Model

API Security: What You Need to Do to Protect Your APIs

How to Derive Value From APIs Using API Marketplaces

How to Use KPIs to Measure the Business Value of APIs

Managing the Consumption of Third-Party APIs

Evaluation Criteria Definitions

Ability to Execute

**Product/Service:** Core goods and services offered by the vendor for the defined market. This includes current product/service capabilities, quality, feature sets, skills and so on, whether offered natively or through OEM agreements/partnerships as defined in the market definition and detailed in the subcriteria.

**Overall Viability:** Viability includes an assessment of the overall organization’s financial health, the financial and practical success of the business unit, and the likelihood that the individual business unit will continue investing in the product, will continue offering the product and will advance the state of the art within the organization’s portfolio of products.

**Sales Execution/Pricing:** The vendor’s capabilities in all presales activities and the structure that supports them. This includes deal management, pricing and negotiation, presales support, and the overall effectiveness of the sales channel.

**Market Responsiveness/Record:** Ability to respond, change direction, be flexible and achieve competitive success as opportunities develop, competitors act, customer needs evolve and market dynamics change. This criterion also considers the vendor’s history of responsiveness.

**Marketing Execution:** The clarity, quality, creativity and efficacy of programs designed to deliver the organization’s message to influence the market, promote the brand and business, increase awareness of the products, and establish a positive identification with the product/brand and organization in the minds of buyers. This “mind share” can be driven by a combination of publicity, promotional initiatives, thought leadership, word of mouth and sales activities.
**Customer Experience:** Relationships, products and services/programs that enable clients to be successful with the products evaluated. Specifically, this includes the ways customers receive technical support or account support. This can also include ancillary tools, customer support programs (and the quality thereof), availability of user groups, service-level agreements and so on.

**Operations:** The ability of the organization to meet its goals and commitments. Factors include the quality of the organizational structure, including skills, experiences, programs, systems and other vehicles that enable the organization to operate effectively and efficiently on an ongoing basis.

**Completeness of Vision**

**Market Understanding:** Ability of the vendor to understand buyers' wants and needs and to translate those into products and services. Vendors that show the highest degree of vision listen to and understand buyers' wants and needs, and can shape or enhance those with their added vision.

**Marketing Strategy:** A clear, differentiated set of messages consistently communicated throughout the organization and externalized through the website, advertising, customer programs and positioning statements.

**Sales Strategy:** The strategy for selling products that uses the appropriate network of direct and indirect sales, marketing, service, and communication affiliates that extend the scope and depth of market reach, skills, expertise, technologies, services and the customer base.

**Offering (Product) Strategy:** The vendor’s approach to product development and delivery that emphasizes differentiation, functionality, methodology and feature sets as they map to current and future requirements.

**Business Model:** The soundness and logic of the vendor’s underlying business proposition.

**Vertical/Industry Strategy:** The vendor’s strategy to direct resources, skills and offerings to meet the specific needs of individual market segments, including vertical markets.

**Innovation:** Direct, related, complementary and synergistic layouts of resources, expertise or capital for investment, consolidation, defensive or pre-emptive purposes.

**Geographic Strategy:** The vendor’s strategy to direct resources, skills and offerings to meet the specific needs of geographies outside the "home" or native geography, either directly or through partners, channels and subsidiaries as appropriate for that geography and market.
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