

# Why Your Company Needs an Enterprise Gearbox



Keeping back-end transaction systems humming as front-end digital interactions scale to billions

# Introduction

You are a captain of your industry: an established brand looking to grow in turbulent times. You have a digital strategy thought out and a well-funded team of skilled and passionate business and IT experts that “get” digital.

Yet you’re worried. A new digital competitor—a disruptive startup with a billion-dollar evaluation—is built to eat your lunch. It’s not their well funded tech pedigree or sky-high valuation that’s daunting. Of all their digital prowess, the most astounding (and vexing) is their ability to innovate in weeks what takes you quarters, and then scale massively, without hesitation. How do you compete with that?

## An “app coalition” against you

Born digital, companies from Slack to Stripe are poster children of disruption. They seem to be driving a car with an automatic transmission that accelerates without a slip, speeding around the racetrack while industry incumbents are still in the pit. With only a handful of employees, these new companies drive massive volumes of digital interactions through their well-designed apps, well-executed social channels, and well-managed cloud operations.

Delivering seamless digital experiences through systems of engagement is what they’re all about—it’s second nature. These systems are their apps, both native and web, connected to data, external and internal, and across any device—from a kiosk to a watch. They can connect their app and interactions with other similar disruptive apps and experiences, and, in effect, create a virtual “app coalition” against you.





So, what are you to do? Yes, you begin by building an app, a responsive website, an updated eCommerce platform, and a new social media channel for customer support.

These are all necessary means of increasing customer intimacy through greater digital interactions. But you're playing your competitors' game and, while these strategies are necessary, they aren't sufficient.

## Your competitive advantage

As established brand, you have assets that the newcomers don't: customers, partners, suppliers, and, in many cases, stores, warehouses, and inventory. All of these assets translate into your single most precious asset: **data**.

It's your competitive advantage against the nimble startups. But you have a problem: the data about your customers and their history and any insights you might derive from them are all mostly inaccessible in real time to your new engagement layer. These data are secured in your systems of record, built and protected over the years, and locked away from external use.

These enterprise systems don't change easily and run only in low gear with the agility of a shipping tanker. So your new systems of engagement—apps and websites—can't make use of your most precious data assets. The digital newbies don't have this problem because they built their systems of engagement first and then built new and agile systems of record alongside to support them.

## Throwing it into gear

So, you have a speed mismatch. You've got to deliver the apps and experiences that drive interactions with customers and partners with the speed and agility of the App Store. But how can you unlock the data from your slow moving systems of record to build those apps and experiences?

Gartner calls it **bi-modal IT**: an approach that enables an organization to protect the back-end systems and also drive rapid innovation. Think of it

as an enterprise gearbox that enables you to scale your interactions a million times beyond what your enterprise systems were designed to do.

This gearbox is an API tier of run-time services that ensures your back-end transaction systems don't stall as your front end digital interactions scale to billions. This gearbox takes in billions of interactions from the top layer and manages it to the the millions of transactions in the bottom layer.

With the API tier you can enable your newly minted apps and recently funded innovation centers to use any of your core app and data assets without security or scalability worries. You can even invite your partners to stitch together new digital interactions that use your data.

With your new gearbox, you'll clock laps around the track faster than before, and leave the upstarts in your rearview mirror.

The enterprise gearbox is an API tier of run-time services that ensures your back-end transaction systems don't stall out as your front-end digital interactions scale to billions.



	System of record (CRM or ERP)	Role of API tier as part of the system of engagement	System of engagement (mobile apps, Slack channels, Twitter feeds)
CONCERN	"FOR THE RECORD"		"IN THE MOMENT"
Source of	Truth		Conversation
Mode	Transactions	Grid for all interactions, above the transaction infrastructure	Interactions
Focus	Process	Allow people to access processes through self service	People
Scale	Thousands, millions	Scale up or throttle down, based on demands of each domain	Millions, billions
Change	Quarterly, yearly	Buffer change through separation of concerns	Daily, monthly
Developer role	Integrate back-end systems	Act as common language among app developers to access resources	Build apps
IT team role	Guardians	Separate centralized guardianship from self-service enablement	Enablers
Security	Point of each record	Add security at every interaction of user, app, and device around existing core protocols	Point of every interaction
Governance	Centralized, complex	Enable distributed governance around centralized practices	Distributed, light
Analytics	Separate	Allow visibility within and across systems	Integral
Where	Value is stored	Mediate value capture, exchange, and monetization	Value is generated



## About Apigee

Apigee delivers an intelligent API platform to accelerate the pace of digital business. We help companies – from disruptive start-ups to the Fortune 100 – use their enterprise data and services to create connected digital experiences for customers, partners, and employees. This is digital business.

## Where to go from here...

For more on the importance of an API tier as part of the engagement layer, download the eBook:

- ▶ Two-speed IT with APIs  
<https://pages.apigee.com/ebook-two-speed-it-agility-and-stability-with-apis-reg.html>
- ▶ For additional resources, visit  
<https://apigee.com/about/resources>

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