Requirements of Enterprise CPaaS: What Retailers Need to Get Started

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This probably isn't the first time you've read about communications platform as a service (CPaaS) or how communications APIs can improve multichannel marketing campaigns, customer service, and overall customer experience. CPaaS has been around for 10 years, but many retailers have yet to adopt this technology — likely because they're concerned about the complications or infrastructure requirements of enterprise CPaaS.

By adding just a few things to your existing business, you can meet the simple requirements of enterprise CPaaS.

Thanks to advances in communications platforms and cloud technology, though, implementing CPaaS is far less complicated (and usually less costly) than building your own custom communication features for each individual channel. As for infrastructure requirements, they're minimal. In fact, you likely have everything you need to get started.

So, what are the benefits of CPaaS for retail, and what are the requirements? Let's dive in.
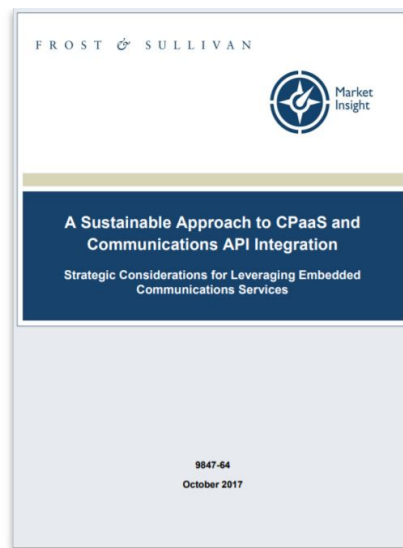
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Learn about a sustainable approach to CPaaS and communications API integration.

CPaaS — What It Is and Why You Want It

CPaaS has taken a while to reach widespread adoption, but it's no longer just an emerging tech trend to watch. It has quickly become an essential enterprise technology, especially for consumer-facing industries like retail. The global CPaaS market was worth $2 billion in 2017, but IDC predicts it will top $10.9 billion by 2022. That's a compound annual growth rate of 39.2 percent.

What's all the fuss about?

CPaaS is a cloud-based delivery service that lets businesses integrate real-time communication (RTC) features, including voice, video, and text communication. Using CPaaS APIs, your development team can add these features to your websites and mobile apps. This way, customers can reach out with questions or service requests directly from their preferred channels, and services reps can manage these multichannel communications from one platform. No one has to toggle back and forth between apps to start a conversation or find the information they need. That goes for your customers and your employees.

Better yet, the system can recognize individual customers regardless of channel, so it can provide your team (or a chatbot API) with contextualized insights to expedite service and personalize the customer experience. The same data and tools can then be used to personalize marketing messages, trigger just-in-time marketing campaigns, and nurture sales leads throughout their buying journey.

CPaaS can empower your marketing, service, and customer experience teams to interact with customers in more seamless and personalized ways.

3 Requirements for Enterprise CPaaS

Synchronizing RTC features across the ever-growing list of channels sounds complicated — like the sort of undertaking that would drain resources and consume a lot of bandwidth. That's true, for the CPaaS vendor.

But the situation is vastly different for the organization. Leading providers have already done the heavy lifting and established global carrier networks capable of handling the heavy traffic. They provide your developers with the APIs, software development kits (SDKs), and hosting support they need to easily build RTC features into any mobile app or website you want.

What do you need to make CPaaS work for your organization?

1. **A fast, reliable network (the provider's or your own).** Enterprise-grade CPaaS solutions remove the complexity of managing the telecom layer with its gateways, complex routing, and numerous interconnects to carriers. The platform hosts the infrastructure and manages the traffic, ensuring high-quality video, voice, and messaging at scale. If you're already using cloud infrastructure, you likely already meet the bandwidth and speed requirements for enterprise CPaaS. However, in the event your developers would be running their own platform from their own network, fast internet access would be required in order to prevent throttling with the increased traffic.
2. **Skilled developers.** A good CPaaS solution is designed to be developer-friendly and easy for programmers and engineers of all skill levels to use. That said, more experienced developers can create more robust and engaging apps, with more intuitive RTC integration and more advanced functionality. Ideally, you want developers with a good understanding of the JSON-based Restful API and expertise at coding applications leveraging WebHooks and WebSocket technology. To fully exploit the power of the API and SDK offerings, developers should be familiar with frameworks like Angular or languages like JavaScript or Python. A strong understanding of cloud technologies is also a plus, as CPaaS is cloud-based and thus easier to consume from cloud-based applications ran on cloud infrastructures.
3. **Creativity and an investment in customer experience.** The list of requirements for enterprise CPaaS is short. Fast internet and experienced developers are really all you need to get started. Beyond that, the only limitation is your team's creativity.

CPaaS can empower your marketing, service, and customer experience teams to interact with customers in more seamless and personalized ways. Then you need relevant messaging, innovative campaigns, and knowledgeable service reps to take it from there.

If you've been waiting for the right time to implement CPaaS, you've waited long enough. Today's top CPaaS providers have built out the infrastructure, set their sights on innovation, and made it easy to deliver the omnichannel customer experience that modern consumers have come to expect from retail brands.