Unified Platform

The Silos Need to Come Down

100+ 30% of IT professionals report that their IT teams are responsible for over 100 applications[1]

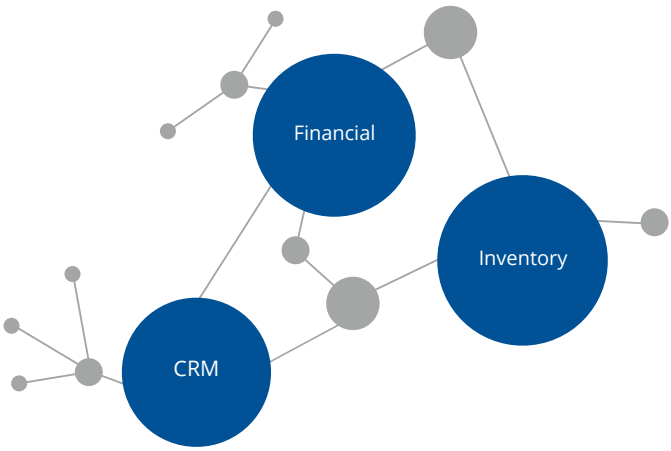
60% Nearly 60% of technology and business decision-makers indicated that it takes months to years for technology management to fulfill complex new business intelligence (BI) requests[2]

Historically, integration and data management teams in large IT organizations have operated in silos—and continue to do so today. But considering that both teams must work with the same varied data sources and APIs—notably creating connections, building maps, and ensuring data security—this approach introduces much inefficiency and redundancy, which is further exacerbated by the dramatic rise in the number of applications and data sources today's enterprises must accommodate. In addition to introducing inefficiency and redundancy, this siloed approach makes it extremely time consuming and expensive to mine data for critical business decisions.

Consider this simplified scenario: A company uses a CRM tool to capture leads, a financial system to oversee customer accounts, and an inventory system to store product SKUs. When a lead converts to a customer, a productivity tool "connects" these systems, automatically adding a record to the financial system and picking up the right product SKU along the way. This is the classic **application-centric** approach to integration. It is focused purely on moving data from one system to another and the data is left as is once dropped off at its destination.

Now imagine that this company's CEO wants to find out how many leads came in over the last month, what percentage of them were ultimately converted to customers, and what products drove the most and least amount of revenue. This is a data management challenge that involves a whole new set of tools to extract the data from the various systems (which are only growing in number), de-duplicate it, harmonize the different data points, and finally run the analysis to create the reports. If the company wanted to maintain a reference of this data or a single source of truth for, say, customer records, master data management (MDM) tools would come into play as well.

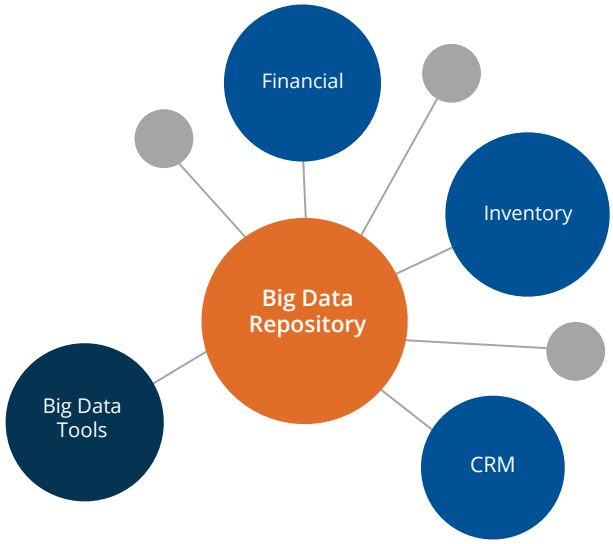
These two distinct processes of integration and data management currently require not only a considerable amount of disparate systems and tools, but different teams as well, adding cost, inefficiency, and redundancy. Worse, due to the manual nature of some of these tasks, the data required is often not available in time to be of use. If IT continues to head down this siloed path, more and more lines of business will continue to take matters into their own hands, building their own applications that inevitably cause other major issues not conducive to revenue growth and profitability.



A Unified Approach to Integration and Data Management Is Required

85% 85% of data professionals indicate that their top priority is to consolidate data management tools, platforms and instances

Continuing with the previous scenario, imagine now that the data, along with its metadata, is persisted in a Big Data repository at the point of integration, rather than merely being moved from one application to another. And that all the data cleansing and harmonizing takes place at the time the data is written to the repository. Now you have a repository of clean data at your disposal that can be modeled and analyzed on demand, in real time. This is a **data-centric** approach to integration and it requires a unified platform.



Advantages of a Unified Platform

To recap, there are three major advantages to a platform that unifies integration and data management functions:

- **Significantly lowered costs both in tools and resources**
- **Reduced resource redundancies and inefficiencies**
- **Reduced time to get to the data needed for critical business decisions**

ALLOY™ Is the First Unified Platform

The Liaison ALLOY Platform, as the industry's first dPaaS (Data Platform as a Service) solution, unifies integration and data management through a data-centric approach. ALLOY accomplishes this through its three highly cohesive modules.

Integration Module

The integration module is charged with the transformation and transmission of data across end points. It is built upon microservices, an architecture design pattern that breaks complex applications into small, independent, and focused processes. As a result, this module is highly flexible, supporting intricately tailored integration solutions that use complex pre- and post-processing rules, multiple communications protocols, patented mapping technologies, and delivery to distributed systems such as file systems and APIs.

Data Management Module

The data management module takes advantage of Big Data technology for limitless computing and storage scale. It persists the metadata and payload of messages that are transmitted between different end points, and also functions as a data lake for raw data of any form. APIs manage both the writing and reading of data to and from this module, and data can be replayed on demand at consumption time.

Data Visibility Module

The data visibility module offers a window into the other two modules. Using rich, out-of-the-box visual tools, it provides a high-level view into integration activities, both from a design-time and runtime perspective. This module also provides a launching point from which to view the data model and generate reports off the data model in an ad hoc fashion.

[1] Liaison Technologies survey of IT professionals, June 2015

[2] Forrester Research, Inc., Create A Road Map For A Real-Time, Agile, Self-Service Data Platform, February 2015