Future of Work Collection for Unions

Application Integration Provides Seamless Experiences

Software applications are critical for modern unions – from dues management, member engagement through to business intelligence to support decision making and more. When introducing technologies, it is common for organizations to acquire point solutions to solve specific business problems (e.g., communication broadcasting platform, accounting system, membership management system). While point solutions tend to cost less and easier to implement, unions approaching software applications this way tend to result in a fragmented technology ecosystem, resulting in issues such as multiple and inconsistent copies of members records, duplication of processes, and a lack of standardization.

To fully take advantage of technology, modern unions should consider an integrative technology ecosystem where data across different software programs are able to interface and flow from one program to another. When done correctly, it is really what allows modern unions to realize the full benefit of their software investment and use data to its full potential.

As your union moves towards an integrative technology ecosystem, here are the benefits and challenges for your consideration:

Single Source of Truth and Information Sharing

Creating an integrative technology ecosystem (or sometimes referred to as enterprise application integration) enables the flow of information between separate software programs within a union or local, as well as from external sources seamlessly. For example, locals update member records internally through different activities such as dues management and organizing. Locals also regularly receive worker data from a myriad of external sources, such as employers or benefit providers, all with different data formats.

Application integration can consolidate such data collection efforts, eliminating the redundancies of having each application collect and store data for its own purposes. Integration can also create a single source of truth and a single point of access to data for the people who need it. That means staff spends less time searching for information – and the data they get is often more complete and up to date. Integration also enables more effective collaboration between individuals and departments as operations are no longer siloed in separate applications and departments.

Process Automation

Application integration can also streamline processes that include data or activity from multiple software applications. For example, data from a membership management system can be integrated with a member engagement platform to deliver targeted messages to members based on their prior behaviour or demographics. That effort could then be coupled with an analytics package to measure the success of the engagement campaign.

Business Intelligence to Better Inform Decision Making

One of the highest business benefits of application integration is that it allows unions to recognize and respond to opportunities more quickly. Application integration can help unions address shifts in its membership, identify administrative bottlenecks and more – all from a single interface.

The Challenges

While the promise of seamless application integration offers several benefits to improve productivity, increase connectivity, and more, there are some challenges unions should be aware of as well:

Complexity

While connecting a union's applications and streamlining business processes do sound appealing, it can be quite complex. Stakeholders across the organization need to be aligned with what the end goals of an application integration plan consist of before proceeding. With planning, unions can identify priority areas to invest in and deprioritize or even forgo areas where low value will be achieved with integration.

Control (Or Lack Thereof)

Integration developers have a limited range of control over the many different business applications. Legacy applications and packed applications may not be easily changed or connect with an integration solution.

Standards

The challenge with integration is that most messaging systems and applications use different data formats. Within an enterprise integration platform, for example, existing XML Web Services are only responsible for a small portion of integration challenges. Standardizing all data exchange to XML may not always be feasible. So, ensuring that all pieces of your integration environment are supported requires advanced data transformation capabilities.

Looking Ahead

In summary, a seamlessly integrated technology ecosystem allows an organization to have a single source of truth when it comes to critical business data (e.g., membership records). It also encourages information sharing across the organization, streamlines business processes, and enables staff to make data-driven decisions with holistic and reliable data. In other words, an integrated technology ecosystem is a critical foundation that enables staff to be productive and provides them the ability to identify and act on issues or opportunities in a timely manner.
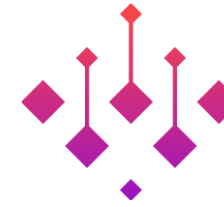
About Bursting Silver

Bursting Silver works with North America's leading associations, regulatory bodies, and unions. We specialize in digital transformation. Our unique ability is in finding the simplicity in the complex. We are nimble, responsive and client driven.

Want to learn more?
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About WeRise

WeRise is a software platform that enables unions to efficiently administer all aspects of their memberships and provides a platform for organizers to rally union members.

WeRise is 100% cloud-based with security, accessibility, and scalability built-in to future proof your operations. The solution has been architected to provide a cohesive software solution across all locals, while keeping local data segregated and secure.

With a powerful platform as a foundation, WeRise is multifaceted with the member information at its core. Clients can use the out-of-the-box capabilities as they are released and participate in product development plans through feedback or take a more direct role in specific engagements to expand the system to meet organizational goals.

Some key features include:

❖ Membership Data Management
❖ Dues Management
❖ Dashboard & Data Visualization
❖ Member List Segmentation
❖ Email/SMS Blast to Members