Approaching Your API Strategy

It should come as no surprise that the team here at Tyk love APIs. APIs fit a wide variety of use cases, with API design combining business, product and technology in order to deliver unique and effective solutions for companies of all shapes and sizes, across a huge range of industries.

A successful API programme can provide your business with:

- A clearly defined strategy for product growth and meeting business outcomes
- Well-designed, discoverable and properly documented APIs
- A clear path for developers to get started quickly
- Increased API adoption and reuse

Who wouldn't want all of that!

If you're new to the world of APIs, developing and implementing a strategy can feel quite daunting, but it really doesn't have to be. You just need to establish three fundamental points:

1. Why does your API strategy exist?
2. Who should be involved in the process?
3. How do you plan for ongoing development and maintenance?

By paying careful attention to the way that you communicate with stakeholders and establishing a training programme and governance model, you can deliver a long-term strategy that meets the needs of all concerned. You'll also need to adapt your governance approach as your API grows and build in API portfolio management.

By breaking your API strategy approach down into the five simple steps below, you can cover everything you need to in a clear and orderly manner.

Define your strategy

Define what you want to accomplish and why as a set of clear objectives. Consider how you're going to do it and whose budget it will come out of. Get your executive team on board at this stage – you'll need their enthusiastic commitment if your API strategy is going to succeed.

Create organisational alignment

Focus on creating an API product that can adapt with your business. This is not a standalone task. It's an evolvable digital asset that requires cross-functional team ownership. Train and support all those who need it to ensure that your API strategy becomes a central component of your organisation. Successful APIs involve everyone.

Manage your API programme

Your API programme should support your key objectives. Coach and educate your teams on how this will happen and define clear API standards, protocols and design patterns. Remain organised and focused on your company goals – the API is not the goal in and of itself.

Focus on API adoption

Your API programme relies on API consumers. To best serve them, document your API comprehensively and launch a developer portal. You'll also need to ensure that your onboarding process is clear and easy to follow.

Accelerate your API programme

Implementing your API programme should be the start of an exciting journey, not the end of a project. Keep a cross-section of your business engaged and you'll be able to grow your API with your company for years to come!
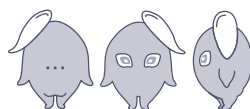
By following these five simple steps, you'll have a clear, effective API strategy that will serve your business well now and for years to come.