

“ The Open APIs are fundamental to our API-led connectivity design principle that unlocks data from systems, composes data into processes and delivers them as an experience to the final user. ”

Abhi Sur, Senior Director, Communications Industry, Salesforce

Tell us about yourself and your job.

As a global lead for communications industry solutions at Salesforce, my primary focus is to design solutions with our latest technologies that enable communications service providers (CSPs) to move beyond connectivity into new apps and business models. It's a privilege to partner with CSPs and help them create a more agile business with friction-free and streamlined processes to increase revenue and decrease cost to serve. Collaborating with TM Forum members has given me opportunities to lead industry hackathons, work with diverse companies in award winning Catalyst projects, and contribute thought leadership to the Open API and Customer Experience Management tracks.

Why do you believe in TM Forum's Open API program?

Our recent 2020 Connectivity Benchmark report mentions that integration challenges are slowing digital transformation initiatives for 85% of IT organizations across all industries. We strongly believe that TM Forum's Open APIs provide a generic, standardized and extensible framework that can be used by CSPs to ensure a friction-free integration with multiple BSS/OSS systems. As we help CSPs evolve their BSS/OSS systems and get ready for a 5G world, we feel TM Forum Open APIs will help CSPs partner with other players from other verticals, offering new services in a 5G ecosystem. Salesforce has recently signed the Open API and Open Digital Architecture Manifestos, with a strong commitment to enabling CSPs accelerate their deployment of industry standard, modular, cloud applications built on the Salesforce platform.

What TM Forum Open APIs are most valuable to your company?

We have been certified on three Open APIs - TMF 620 Product Catalog Management API, TMF 621 Trouble Ticket API, TMF 629 Customer Management API. Our Open API roadmap is aligned with the priorities and needs of our customers. Our current priority is to expose our platform capabilities in the Customer, Service and Product API Collection domains through the Open APIs. The Service Ordering API (TMF 641) is of particular interest to us.

Why did you choose to highlight those APIs?

CSPs are evolving their BSS platforms to provide new 5G services in an ecosystem with multi-party service delivery, account management and payment solutions. Service Order Management provides a standardized mechanism for placing a service order with all necessary technical attributes for the order. The Service Order API along with APIs from Product API collection enable us to implement a catalog-driven commerce and fulfillment process. Ultimately, it would help CSPs using Salesforce to deliver fast, agile and differentiated business, consumer, and wholesale experiences.

How do you use the APIs?

Our approach is to treat TM Forum Open APIs as modern APIs - considering them more as a product with its own SDLC (Systems Defined Life Cycle), and not just a block of code. The Open APIs are deployed to be discoverable by developers in a self service fashion. Our emphasis is as much on consumption and reuse of APIs as much as it is on production and exposure. In order to fully operationalize these APIs for CSPs, the implementations are extended, using tools available within the MuleSoft Anypoint platform, to enforce enterprise security and governance. TM Forum Open APIs are fundamental to our API-led connectivity design principle that unlocks data from systems, composes data into processes and delivers them as an experience to the final user.

How have you benefited from using these APIs?

Using the Open APIs as a part of the connective tissue for integration provides an architecture model guaranteeing business agility and interoperability with multiple BSS/OSS systems. An enterprise API strategy built on industry standard APIs such as TM Forum Open APIs can help CSPs build reusable integration assets that ultimately save time and money in the long run. Furthermore, we have seen an API governance model that treats APIs as products has helped business stakeholders to align API program workstreams to business KPIs, ultimately generating most business value to an organization.