

# Philosophic thoughts on integration - Drills or holes?

Lessons learned after 25 years of providing integration solutions



# Marcel Grauwen - Professional Journey

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2024  
Digitect  
Innovation

EC-API-Design  
Co-founder

80's/ 90's

1998-2000

2000-2018

2018 -2022

2022-2024

2024

2026



Founder

Founder

Partner

UTL-X mapper

XBRL

XBRL

product  
solution  
focus



ABN-AMRO



GLOMIDCO

GLO integration



Deloitte  
Digital  
Integration

GLOMIDCO  
(rebirth)

wearefrank!

2025  
Co-founder

AI

Laava

Universiteit Twente  
de ondernemende universiteit

Electronics  
Computer Science  
Business Science

Ir. M.A. Grauwen



PROGRESS  
SOFTWARE



solace



apigee

25 years integration consultancy experience



# The bumpy road of 25 years of integration



**Integration is taken for granted,  
like water from the tap**



# What if the water runs out?



# Disruption can turn into a disaster!



**Did you ever send flowers  
to the water company?**



**What does the business really want?**

Does the business  
want integration?



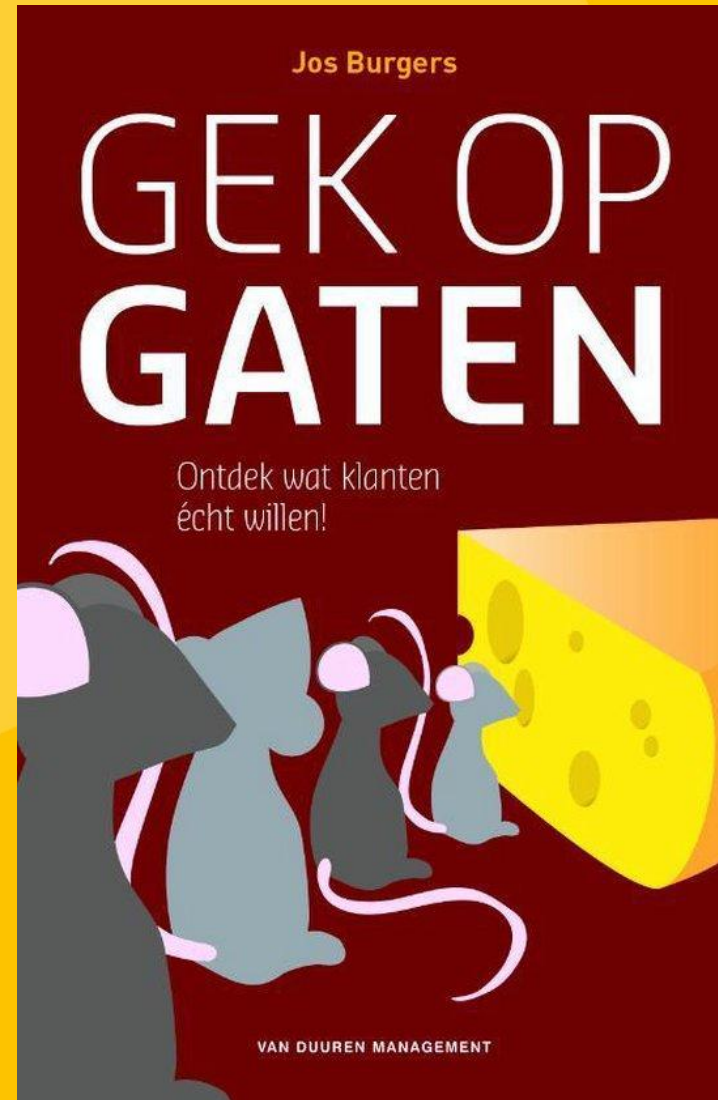
**What does the business really want?**

Does the business  
want integration?

**NO!**



What  
does the  
business  
really  
want?



The business  
doesn't want drills



They want  
holes



# The customer wants holes!



How?

The business just doesn't care.



# And what does IT provide the business with?

The best drills they can find



And the business was ordering holes.....



# Often customers do bring their existing solutions



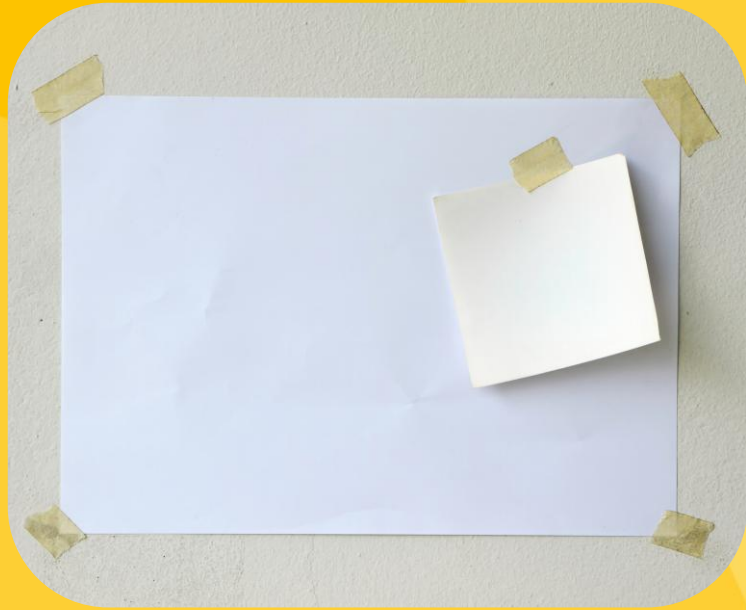
# And what do we do?



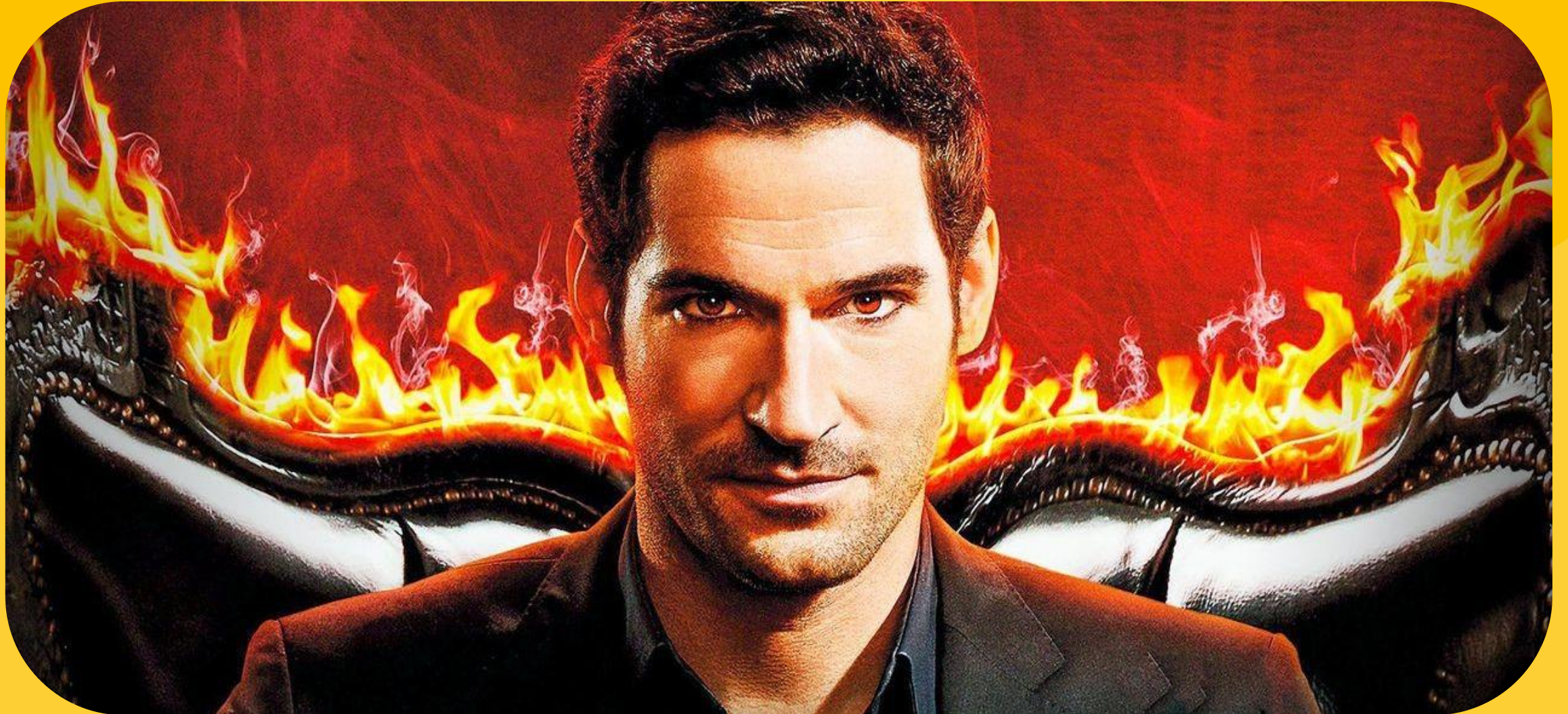
**KEEP  
CALM  
BECAUSE  
WE ARE NOW OPEN  
FOR ORDERS**



# What does the customer really want?



**What is your deepest desire?**





# STOP SELLING DRILLS

## START DELIVERING HOLES

KEY CONCLUSIONS FROM "GEK OP GATEN" BY JOS BURGERS



### Think in Holes, Not in Drills

01

Start from customer needs, not from your own offering. Reverse your thinking to create real value.



### Customer Focus Is About People

02

Employees are the bridge between drill and hole. Give them space, authority, and trust to act beyond the rules when needed.



### Small Things Make the Difference

03

Friendliness, genuine attention, respect, good listening, speed and convenience — they determine if a customer feels understood.



### Promise Less, Deliver More

04

Exceed expectations. An unexpected gesture has far more impact than a pre-announced bonus or grand promises.



### Make Choosing Easy

05

A huge assortment is a burden, not a service. Help customers choose instead of overwhelming them with options.



### Never Argue With Your Customer

06

You always lose — either the argument, or the customer, or both.



### Focus on What You CAN Do

07

Instead of explaining why something isn't possible, look for what you can do for the customer.

Shift from "no, because..." to

**"Yes, here's what we can do."**



### THE OVERARCHING CONCLUSION

Truly understand what customers want — and align your entire organization around it — to win in the long run.

# Take aways

Mutual Trust is key, become partners

Predictable time to delivery

Agree a process (model) to follow

At what level can the customer and

**WeAreFrank!** find each other?

How do we find each other?



# Key success factors for integration from 25 years of experience

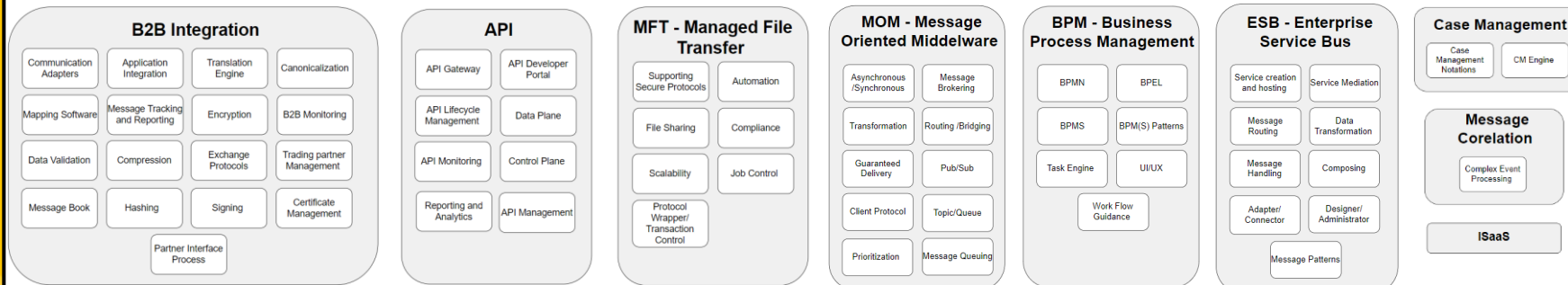
- ✓ Meta Data Management is the key success differentiator
  - Differentiate between relational and hierarchical meta data
- ✓ Check an integration capability matrix (create one)
- ⚠ Estimation is that 40% of integrations use the wrong solution
  - ✗ "You have to use our existing platform, because we have invested in it"
  - ✗ "Everything needs to be a synchronous API"
- ✓ A strategic approach to integration is an imperative, not a "nice to have"
- ✓ Be ready for the AI demand which will require 100x integration
- ✓ Engage before ordering holes!



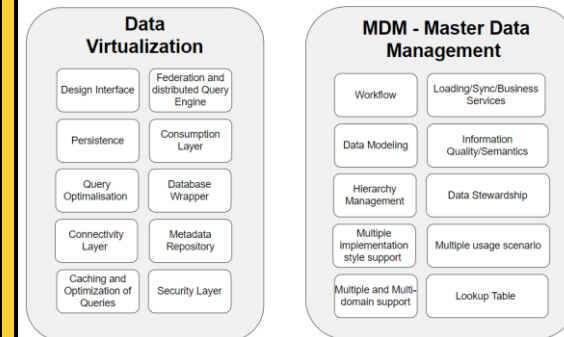
# Capability Matrix Integration Example

Group  
Technology Capabilities

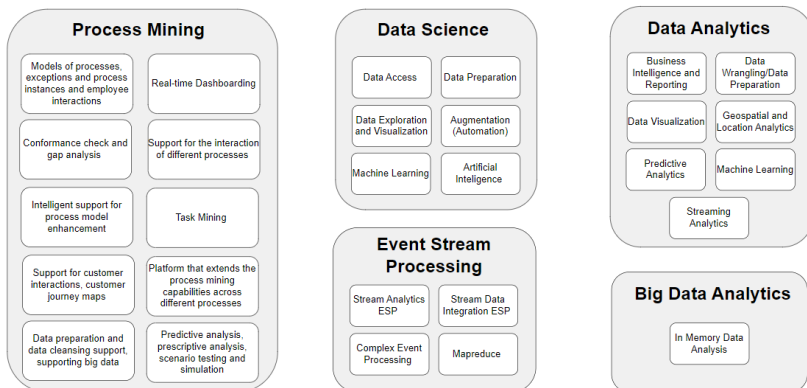
## Classic Integration



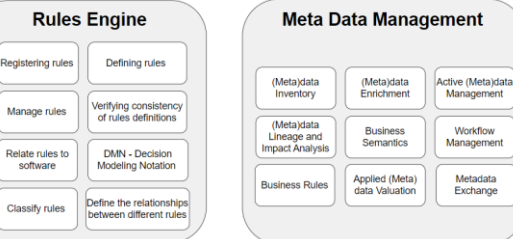
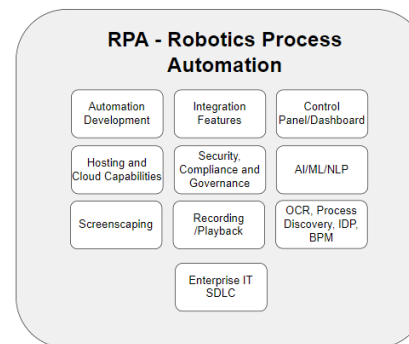
## Enterprise Data Management



## Predict



## Automation / Robotics



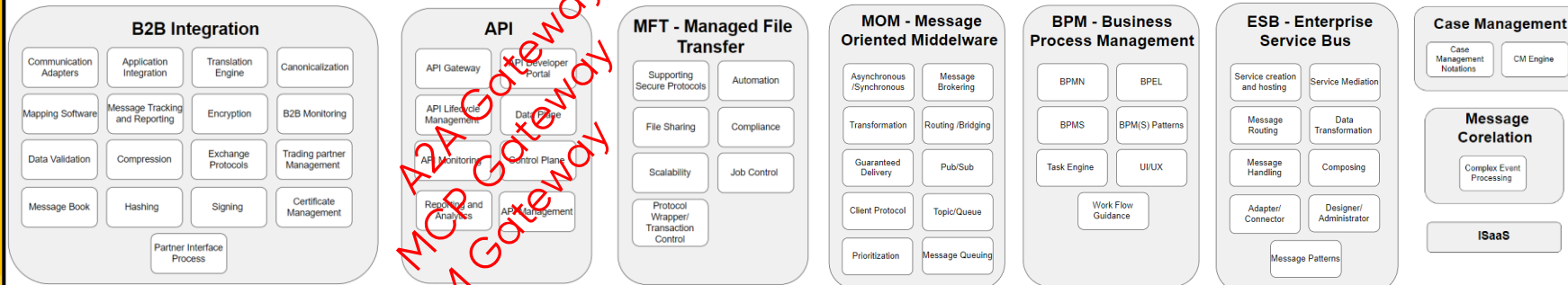
## Governance



# Capability Matrix Integration AI expanded

Group  
Technology  
Capabilities

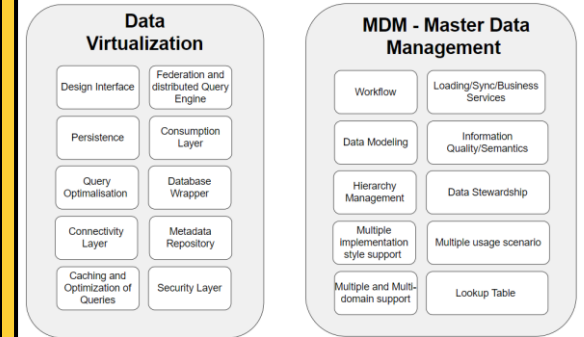
## Classic Integration



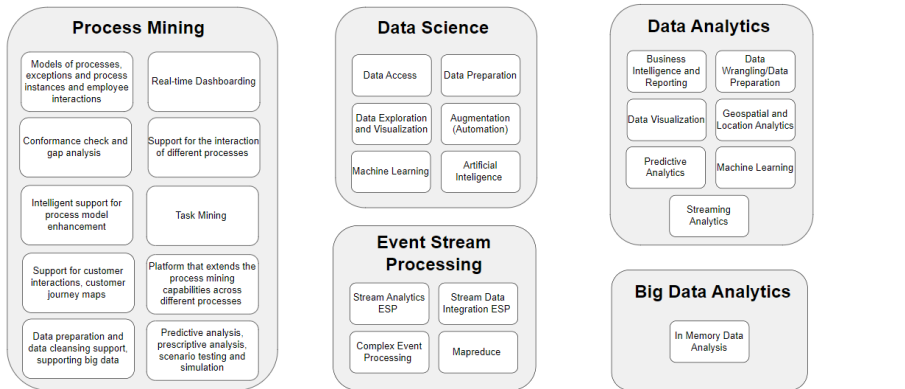
AAA Gateway  
MCP Gateway  
LLM Gateway

Agentic Workflow

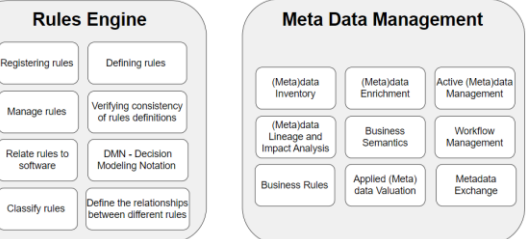
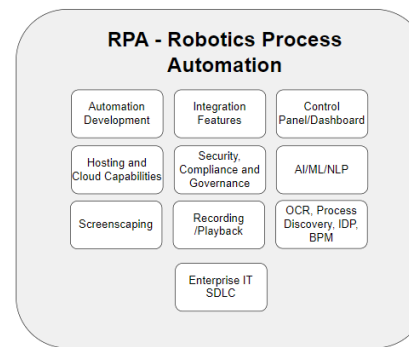
## Enterprise Data Management



## Predict



## Automation / Robotics



## Governance



# Questions?



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