Athenahealth Disrupts the Healthcare IT Status Quo with APIs
Launches and grows a successful marketplace to reduce healthcare costs

CHALLENGE
“Athenahealth believes that innovation happens when you push the boundaries on what everyone else is doing,” says Lindsey Kempton, senior manager on the Marketplace development team. In 2012, the company had a bold plan to reduce the burden of legacy healthcare systems. It would open its infrastructure to the outside world using APIs—and enable partners to connect and use its assets to create feature-rich services that would drive revenue and reduce operational costs for healthcare providers.

The first big challenge would be attracting entrepreneurs and innovators. Healthcare is not known for forward-thinking technological innovation—in large part due to regulations, liability issues, complexity, and cumbersome systems with point-to-point interfaces. Developers looking for markets where they could innovate and create new solutions were put off.

SOLUTION
To create a marketplace for healthcare partners and innovators, the company would provide an API on its cloud platform, and attract the talent to deliver cutting-edge applications and services. With a three-month deadline including authentication layer, API documentation; and partner onboarding, signup, and testing, Athenahealth selected the TIBCO Mashery® API management platform to support its vision. The Mashery ease of developer onboarding, scalability, strategy services, authentication and data security, and ease of management sealed the deal.

DETAIL
245%
API call increase over one 18 month period

“We are modernizing healthcare IT in a big way with Mashery . . . Drawing developers to a healthcare platform has been a massive achievement.”
— Aaron Moronez, Senior Manager, Engineering for Athenahealth Marketplace
In April 2013, the company launched its Marketplace, an online destination where healthcare providers can explore innovative technologies addressing areas such as scheduling, digital check-in, and patient engagement. Both established and start-up IT companies can sign up as partners, creating a large source for innovative, third-party healthcare solutions.

“As an API gateway, Mashery enabled a quick activation of integration for our clients,” says Aaron Moronez, senior engineering manager of the Marketplace. “We just build it once and very quickly turn it on. We’ve also seen a reduction in internal costs due to reduced maintenance and fees for customer portals and data warehousing, and from retiring several interfaces.”

**BENEFITS**

**GROWING SUCCESS**

The Marketplace is thriving, with more than 180 partners creating innovative apps and solutions designed to work with Athenahealth’s products and services. With 200 API keys in production, initially API calls increased from 42 million to 145 million in 18 months, a 245% increase, and customer endpoints increased 192% in 18 months. Since those early days, API calls have increased to more than 500 million per month.

“We are modernizing healthcare IT in a big way with Mashery,” says Mr. Moronez. “It provides continued support of the Marketplace ecosystem, a core component of our partner’s go to market.”

“Mashery provides analytics on API usage and insight into how we can better drive revenue,” says Ms. Kempton. “We take a share of the revenue that our partners receive from clients. They provide over 30 capabilities, everything from digital check-in and scheduling to integrating front office scanners. It’s a very wide range of integrations, and it wouldn’t be possible without Mashery. It also supports our hackathons.”

**EASY DEVELOPER ONBOARDING AND ADMINISTRATION**

“Access to the APIs is easy,” says Moronez. “A developer has to agree to modest terms and conditions, but the process is fast, and there is no charge. Partners are onboarded in a quick, easy, seamless way through the developer portal. Mashery eliminates having to deal with all the hiccups that come with determining how to provision user accounts, how to deal with OAUTH and authentication. Thankfully, Mashery handles it for us and just forwards the call. We just handle the business logic of the APIs. Drawing developers to a healthcare platform has been a massive achievement.

**EASY SECURITY**

“We depend on Mashery to secure sensitive data, extremely important in the healthcare sector,” continues Moronez. “It enables us to support lots of different partners without having to think about authorization.”

**FUTURE**

“Our goal is to increase the audience and access to the API and Athenahealth—whether it’s third-party providers, direct-to-consumer companies, clients interested in building applications, patients, or the hackathon community,” concludes Kempton.