



ENTERPRISE INTEGRATION

MuleSoft vs Digibee: Price, people, productivity

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KEY QUESTIONS

How do pricing
and licensing
models differ?

What is the
resourcing
commitment?

How is
productivity
supported?

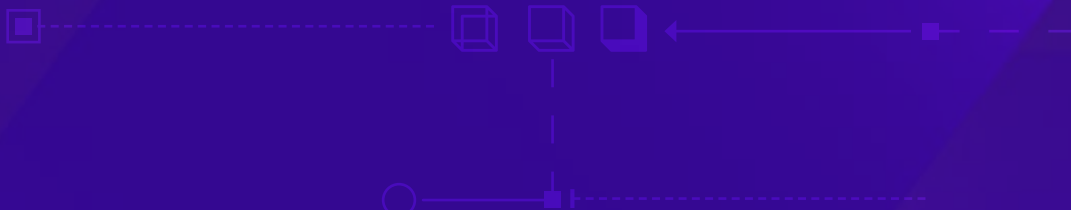


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Introduction

According to the [Gartner Glossary](#), Integration Platform as a Service (iPaaS) technology is a suite of cloud services that enable the development, execution, and governance of integration flows, connecting any combination of on premises and cloud-based processes, services, applications, and data within individual or across multiple organizations.

Today, iPaaS is used by organizations of all sizes, with [71% of enterprises actively planning to adopt, supplement, or replace their integration solutions](#). Most of these companies are transitioning from legacy systems that fail to deliver the composable infrastructure required to support a modern, digital-first business strategy.

This is certainly the case for many Digibee customers who had previously grappled with a long list of challenges and inefficiencies from old school, rigid, on-premises integration products. Incapable of supporting the innovation initiatives the company needs to be competitive and profitable, these legacy systems require ongoing investment in money and resources to support an ever-dwindling ROI. Vendor lock-in creates a “good money after bad” dynamic that can be a difficult cycle to break.

Through these customer relationships, we’ve become well-versed in the challenges presented with traditional integration products such as MuleSoft.

PREPARING FOR THE FUTURE

Often, Digibee customers choose to make a clean break from MuleSoft, enabling enterprise agility and enjoying much lower costs. Others deploy Digibee to work in tandem with the old system. This compromise allows the company to introduce modern iPaaS efficiencies within its existing environment, often focused on cleaning up whatever MuleSoft leaves behind; for example, unwieldy cloud integrations, [unresolved MuleSoft IT backlogs](#), and other innovation blockers.

As with most technology investments, value is quantified based on the price of the system, the people required to support it, and the impact it has on overall productivity.

This paper provides a fact-based comparison of MuleSoft’s legacy product suite versus Digibee’s modern iPaaS technology, including:

<p>Licensing/ subscription pricing models, maintenance and support</p>	<p>Resourcing requirements to build and manage each platform</p>	<p>Gains in productivity</p>
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The price

A BRIEF HISTORY OF SOFTWARE LICENSING & PRICING

Software licensing dates back to the early days of technology, with the first licenses serving as simple agreements between the software developer and the customer, providing terms of use including any restrictions. Software and hardware were distributed as one, with software components not yet recognized as protectable subject matter.

In the mid-1960s, an [IBM taskforce initiated a software unbundling process](#) that separated the hardware from the software, reportedly the first implementation of a software licensing system.

Since then, the practice of [software licensing](#) continues to evolve. The following table provides a general overview of how we arrived at software licensing as we know it today, highlighting the eras in which licensing models came to prominence:

Timeline	License type	License description	License pricing
1970s 1980s	Perpetual	Vendor maintains control over its code, and by extension, product features and use	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One-time cost • Maintenance & support at additional cost
Late 1990s	Open source	Vendor allows anyone to use, modify, and distribute its code without restriction	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No cost • Maintenance & support managed by the customer or at additional cost
2000s	Software as a Service (SaaS)	Vendor provides access to cloud-based infrastructure on public or private servers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Subscription-based, monthly fee • Maintenance & support variable by vendor

SaaS licensing pricing models

MuleSoft and Digibee both offer SaaS licensing, a model that supports three different pricing options:

PLAN
1 Flat rate pricing

A single product and set of features at a set price

PLAN
2 Usage based pricing

Correlates directly with product usage

PLAN
3 Tiered pricing

Combinations of features, each with different pricing

Before digging into each company's pricing and licensing models, it's important to note that there are many variables in software contracts. The following information is based on feedback received from Digibee customers that have used MuleSoft, and via primary research. Wherever possible, sources are noted.

MULESOFT

[MuleSoft SaaS product pricing](#) incorporates two different pricing models: usage-based and tiered. This hybrid mash-up is often a byproduct of legacy software pricing that's been adjusted to conform with the modern standard.

The pricing model is based on the provision of VCores, a unit of compute capacity for processing on CloudHub, the MuleSoft integration platform, that equals one virtual core. Up to ten Mule Applications can be deployed for every VCore purchased.

PAY FOR . . .

...a VCore

First, the customer must buy the number of VCores they will need to support production usage. VCores cost \$60K USD each.

...an edition

Then, the customer must select a Gold, Platinum, or Titanium edition. This tiered pricing model is based on features, functionality, and the depth of support the customer will receive.

...API management

Next, the customer must pay for API Management based on usage and determined by volume. Four different capability categories are available:

1. APIs managed
2. API requests
3. API governance, or
4. API access requests

Integration capabilities must also be purchased in addition to API Management.

... integration

Back to a tiered pricing model that provides the customer with three different tiers of integration capabilities from which they must select. The more capabilities, the higher the price.

... the API experience hub

To achieve full API Management capabilities, the customer must also pay for the [MuleSoft API Experience Hub](#) (aka the API management platform), often an excessive spend for tooling whether the customer needs it or not. The Hub is not included with the API Management component for which the customer has already paid.

... additional capabilities

These are broken down into segments:

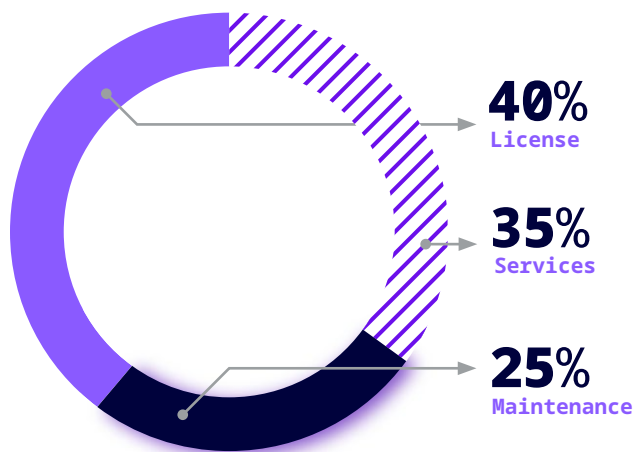
- Design, manage, and deploy APIs and integrations faster
- Enhance deployments and increase scalability
- Gain deeper insights in real-time with advanced monitoring and log management component for which the customer has already paid.

... add-ons

A range of baseline capabilities that most enterprises will want to leverage to optimize their integration strategies.

... maintenance, training, & certification

And then there are additional line items for ongoing costs associated with product support. These vary depending on the size of the customer's implementation and integration team. Based on feedback from Digibee customers, the MuleSoft investment breaks down into three basic segments: the cost of the product, implementation support, and ongoing maintenance.



Clearly, with MuleSoft, the customer pays. This hybrid pricing model deconstructs enterprise integration, applying a cost to each essential component of the technology. While this model is beneficial to MuleSoft, the customer must invest heavily to achieve a fully functioning iPaaS.

For example, API management is a baseline iPaaS capability. Without it, contemporary integrations are not possible. Within the MuleSoft pricing model, customers must pay for API management, and then pay again for an environment that will optimize how they carry out the work.

Additional capabilities are another redundancy and anti-theme to modern integration solutions. Why should customers pay extra to design, manage and deploy APIs and integrations faster? Why invest in a product that will only work optimally if the customer pays more? Why does scalability come at an additional cost? And why can't MuleSoft customers access deep real-time insights for free?

MuleSoft continues to promote pricing model changes that are "coming soon". But our primary research indicates that MuleSoft's promised flexibility does not result in lower costs. Often it is the opposite. This is due to MuleSoft's legacy suite pricing, which is overly complex, making it difficult to effect change across the model while maintaining margins and annual contract values (ACV).

DIGIBEE

In contrast, Digibee pricing reflects a contemporary "all in one" model that provides free access to ongoing innovations and capabilities. The pricing is incredibly simple, requiring only three SKUs with no limitations. Rather than charging for maximum potential usage, Digibee customers pay only for what they consume.

The pricing model is based on the provision of pipelines and Runtime Units (RTUs):

Pipeline

An integration pathway that uses a sequence of components to connect systems and establish data flow between them

RTUs

Runtime Units that support capacity requirements based on concurrent transactions and/or memory

PLAN 1 Get started bundle
10 pipelines,
20 production RTUs,
10 test RTUs

PLAN 2 Additional pipeline
Additional pipeline,
includes production/
test RTUs

PLAN 3 Additional capacity
More RTUs as needed
within production/test
environments

As the customer's integration strategy expands, additional pipelines and RTUs are added as needed. This ensures the customer only pays for what they use, with per unit pricing going down as the implementation grows.

Digibee customers access all features and capabilities at no extra charge.

A new customer can get started with SKU #1 for less than \$60,000 USD, including:



**Digibee-hosted
iPaaS**



**All support and
maintenance, 24/7/365,
including all new
features and upgrades**



**Continuous
education**



**Customer enablement
with direct Digibee
support to design, build,
test, and run integrations**

THE BIG DIFFERENCE

The big difference boils down to the bottom line.

While pricing for an average MuleSoft deployment is reputed to start at **\$80,000 USD**, most Digibee customers, prior to coming over, paid an average of \$250,000 annually for the MuleSoft product. And this doesn't include the costs of maintenance and support, and developer enablement.

In a recent Digibee customer onboarding where MuleSoft was ripped and replaced, the customer spent 40% less for Digibee than it was paying to MuleSoft in maintenance alone.

In comparison, Digibee customers pay less than \$60,000 USD to get up and running, with everything they need to quickly kick off their integration initiative. No extra costs.

With support and maintenance provided free of charge, the bulk of the investment is in the technology, which is where it should be.

Simplicity trumps complicated every time. An overly complex pricing structure reflects an overly complex product. When a customer must buy multiple components that span different pricing models, the experience becomes convoluted, and often they pay an unfair price.

Ultimately, technology pricing must be advantageous to the customer and their particular use case.

The People

Even the best IT environments are useless without the people to build, maintain, and grow them. However, it's equally important that the resource investment delivers a solid return. It certainly shouldn't constrain the business. Unfortunately, this isn't always the case.

MULESOFT

Before MuleSoft customers can begin implementing the software, they must first train their people so they can use the technology. This is a time-consuming and expensive process.

Time & cost commitment

There are currently [seven different MuleSoft certifications](#) for everything from a standard integration developer to an integration architect. Courses, studying, and the exam can take weeks and even months depending upon the certification (and the employee).

The exam costs up to \$500 USD to complete. If the employee is unable to pass the exam after two attempts they must re-enroll (at a discounted rate) to take the exam again.

Certifications are valid for two years, with developers required to take a maintenance exam before their existing certification expires (at an additional charge).

The other option is to hire developers already certified in MuleSoft. But this too comes at an expense due to high salaries and limited available talent on the market.

In fact, [the employment projections for MuleSoft developers](#) are staggering, with almost 600,000 jobs in the US in 2021, expected to increase by 50,504 jobs by 2031. An 8.4% increase.

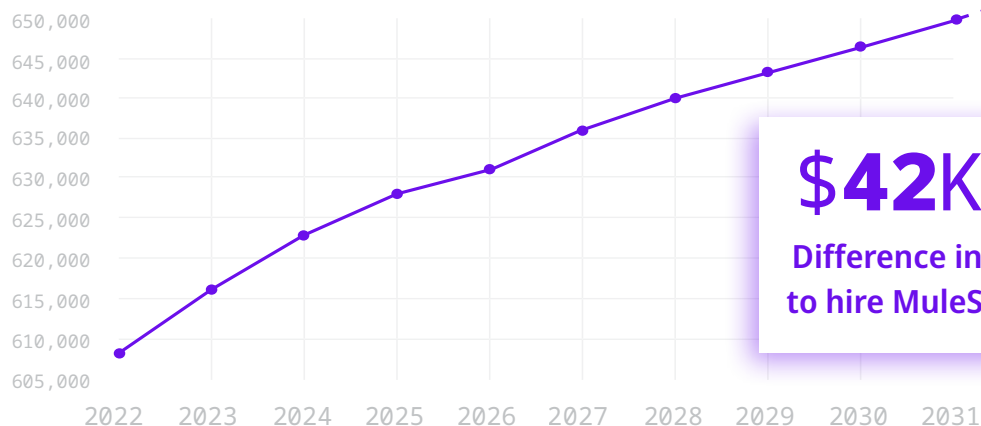
According to Salary.com, the average annual compensation for MuleSoft developers in the US is [\\$118,728](#), maxing out at around \$136,000. When you compare this to the average salary for software developers ([\\$76,290](#) maxing out at \$90,809), MuleSoft-certified developers cost about \$42K more per hire. If an enterprise chooses to hire 10 MuleSoft developers, it will pay almost half a million dollars more than the market average.

As a result, many companies choose to certify only a portion of their integration team. While this offsets the high costs of certification, it imposes significant limitations on the bandwidth of the team. Since only a subset of developers are able to perform the work, productivity is limited, resulting in a backlog of IT projects that quickly stalls the forward progression of critical innovation initiatives.

Unfortunately, MuleSoft customers do not have a choice. Without software engineers and developers certified in MuleSoft ("designated customer support contacts"), the customer is unable to engage with MuleSoft support technicians. In fact, MuleSoft dictates the number of certified workers you must have in order to engage with its Support team, based on the size of the implementation.

Once the necessary people are trained and in place, the team must prepare for the MuleSoft implementation before it can proceed, a months-long process. This is attributed to the steep learning curve and the complexity of working with the product.

Employment projections for MuleSoft developers



\$42K USD+
Difference in annual salary to hire MuleSoft developers

DIGIBEE

Digibee's modern iPaaS is purpose-built to enable software engineers and developers of all skills and experience to use the technology. The low code for pro coders model allows in-house teams to scale, monitor, and build integrations, with an easy to use drag and drop interface that is accessible to all.

Time & cost commitment

Digibee's learning curve is days versus weeks and specialized skills are not required. Plus it's free. Digibee customers never pay to learn.

During a Digibee implementation, the customer's team is supported with a [3-step onboarding process](#) for the fastest time to market possible:



we got you

The Digibee team delivers first integrations



together

Digibee / Customer work together to deliver



you got this

Customer is ready to create and deliver integrations

STEP ONE

The Digibee team builds an initial [set of pipelines](#), allowing the customer's integration team to experience the creation of [Digibee integration capsules](#) in real-time, using the customer's data.

STEP TWO

Additional integrations are built with teams from Digibee and the customer working together to increase comprehension and skills, a process that includes technical and non-technical stakeholders.

STEP THREE

The Digibee team hands off the creation of new integrations to the customer team where all members—including junior developers—help build, update, and run complex integrations. Throughout these steps and beyond, Digibee's dedicated customer success team is available to help the customer troubleshoot and achieve the best results from their integration strategy. Digibee provides the fastest iPaaS implementation time on the market. Instead of taking months (and sometimes even years), Digibee is up and running in weeks.

THE BIG DIFFERENCE

The big difference between MuleSoft and Digibee when it comes to people is the high cost of enabling (or hiring) developers to work with the MuleSoft product.

MuleSoft's certification and training requirements are expensive, time-consuming, and ongoing. If only a subset of developers are certified, then fewer people are able to do the work. Projects take longer to complete with developers focusing on only the highest priority initiatives. Although MuleSoft is willing to provide support, it comes at a price.

Digibee's modern and open design empowers all members of the integration team to support the work. We don't limit your capabilities by imposing that a certain number of workers be trained on Digibee before we'll support you. That's not how we work.

With a fully enabled resource base, the cadence of the work and overall productivity are optimized. Support is provided free of charge throughout the implementation and beyond.

Productivity

Once the technology is in place and operational, its impact to the enterprise becomes measurable. Attributes such as the ratio between productivity and expense, the cycle time of projects, and the company's ability to achieve specific milestones in its technology roadmap, provide hard numbers that help quantify the effectiveness of the new solution.

MULESOFT

A MuleSoft implementation requires a hefty investment in the product, its maintenance and support, and developer enablement. As a result, productivity expectations run high as the only measure to offset such a significant expenditure.

Unfortunately, productivity is impeded due to resource constraints rooted in the enablement issues we examined in the previous segment. Here are two examples:

EXAMPLE 1

IT project backlogs

According to a survey by The Economist Intelligence Unit, the average company has [a backlog of planned IT projects going back between three months and one year](#), a scenario all too familiar for MuleSoft customers.

A byproduct of too much work and not enough hands, MuleSoft-certified developers must dedicate the majority of their time to business-critical integrations. Typically, these are for organization-wide systems needed to maintain the status quo and keep the lights on. Meanwhile, innovation projects and departmental initiatives languish in the IT backlog, waiting for resources that may never become available.

EXAMPLE 2

End of Life (EOL)

For many customers, the [MuleSoft EOL process](#) is chaotic and expensive. No matter how well the product may work in the moment, the MuleSoft EOL clock is ticking away and before the customer knows it, another upgrade must be implemented.

The MuleSoft EOL dilemma impacts productivity in several ways:

Resources

The upgrade process is not a seamless experience, especially with updates required for every app the customer created. While touted as an automated process, there is still a lot of manual work required, forcing expensive MuleSoft-certified developers to abandon priority projects and focus on mundane, lower-value maintenance work instead.

Product

The system's capabilities are also impacted when a product is entering EOL. For example, when the Mule Runtime Engine devolves to extended support, customers are unable to create or restart apps in CloudHub, the MuleSoft integration platform. This baseline enterprise capability is denied until the customer upgrades, limiting functionality and ultimately, productivity.

It certainly doesn't help that MuleSoft product life cycles are shrinking. This forces MuleSoft customers to invest even more time and resources as they repeat these ongoing cycles of work over shorter cadences.

DIGIBEE

Built to support a composable IT infrastructure, the Digibee iPaaS enables agility and speed, providing significant productivity efficiencies versus MuleSoft.

EXAMPLE 1

IT project backlogs

From an integration perspective, IT project backlogs are one of the top impediments to productivity. Along with impacting the integration team's bandwidth in addressing innovation and departmental initiatives, overall business progression is stalled when strategic integrations are delayed.

Backlogs are a trigger for businesses to implement Digibee, either as a replacement to, or to work in tandem with, an existing MuleSoft implementation.

Digibee's modern iPaaS enables all members of the integration team to carry out the work. Developers who are not certified in MuleSoft, including those with minimal experience, can quickly knock down even a significant IT backlog in record time.



For a real-life example of resolving IT backlogs using Digibee within a MuleSoft environment, read the [Digibee integration use case: IT backlogs.](#)

EXAMPLE 2

End of Life (EOL)

There is no end of life with Digibee. The technology continually evolves and every customer has immediate access to new capabilities as they become available. Free of charge every time.

THE BIG DIFFERENCE

The big difference is the enduring value of modern platform-as-a-service technology, versus platform-as-a-service that's built on top of on-premises legacy products, pricing, and licensing models.

Sometimes a picture is worth a thousand words. [View the infographic](#) for a visual side-by-side comparison of how to access the most recent product version, MuleSoft versus Digibee.

Additional considerations

Of course, there are other aspects of an iPaaS, beyond price, people, and productivity, that merit further consideration. Case in point, the vendor's commitment to its product roadmap.

Although the MuleSoft product has always been complicated, after the Salesforce acquisition in 2018, the product roadmap underwent some big adjustments.

Take, for example, the MuleSoft Anypoint Platform. This component, which supports integration and API management, became a part of the Salesforce Integration Cloud, with a pre-built Salesforce connector added to the platform, a clear indicator of where the roadmap was headed.

Pricing and licensing models were expanded to incorporate a range of Salesforce products, reflecting a focus on the company's sales model versus its technology.

Since then, [Salesforce development efforts have focused on Salesforce integrations](#), with development requests from MuleSoft customers that don't use Salesforce assigned a lower priority.

Given the significant investment MuleSoft customers have (and continue) to make, finding oneself at the bottom of the customer hierarchy when it comes to product features and capabilities is a hard pill to swallow.

Even though MuleSoft has been around for almost two decades, the company's more innovative advances remain very much a work in progress.



The product is still developing, I'd like a simple approach to publish public APIs from DevPortal. For production concerns, there is no cloud support and no in-depth debugging tools.”

MuleSoft user review, [Gartner Peer Insights](#)

THE BIG DIFFERENCE

Born in the cloud and built for composability via microservices, the Digibee product roadmap is built on the following philosophy:

To continually, rapidly add features, functionality and value that empowers all software engineers. To democratize enterprise integration in a way that frees up resources to focus on the innovation that integration

is intended to enable. It's our goal to be the developer's choice for integration.

We continually see results born of our ability to be nimble, agile and to leverage today's technologies - in ways that companies born in the past simply can't execute.

Summary

At the top of this paper, we presented three key questions the research would address:



How do pricing and licensing models differ?

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Complicated and expensive• Multiple components required• Additional costs for maintenance and developer enablement• \$80K - \$250K USD for initial implementation | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• A simple "all in one" pricing model supported with three SKUs• Maintenance, support, and customer education included for free• Less than \$60K USD for initial implementation |
|--|---|

What is the resourcing commitment?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Time-consuming and expensive• Certification is a prerequisite (and an ongoing requirement) to use the product• MuleSoft-certified developers are difficult to source and expensive (annual compensation is \$42K more than the average) | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• An accessible to all technology model• 10-day learning curve (at no cost) enables even the most junior developers to build integrations |
|---|--|

How does the system impact productivity?

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inconsistent due to chronic resource constraints• Longer project timelines from limited resources• Slower innovation cycles due to ever-growing IT project backlogs• Expensive resources perform repetitive, time-consuming EOL work | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Optimized for efficiency• Expedited project timelines with a fully enabled resource base• Faster integrations (10X) with low code for pro coder platform• Reduced time to market by up to 70% |
|---|--|

The benefits of implementing a modern iPaaS, even in a rip-and-replace scenario where a traditional product is well-entrenched, are significant.

Shifting from complicated to simple where multiple components are replaced by a single, agile, cloud-based platform. Streamlining convoluted workflows and enabling all members of the integration team to contribute. Removing all of the impediments that stand in the way of innovation and growth.



Digibee's iPaaS technology is waiting for you. Visit [our resource center](#) for additional research on legacy (MuleSoft) versus modern (Digibee). Or [contact us](#) to schedule a demo.

