

# Laterooms.com

Accelerating Developer Innovation with APIs

apigee

"Simply put, APIs have drastically quickened the process of delivering new services and features," Hughes says. "We can now build mock-ups of new services in a matter of days, enabling us to trial a feature without building an entire app."

Stuart Hughes, chief technology officer, Laterooms.com



Since being founded as a hotel reservations website in 1999, LateRooms.com has become the UK's leading hotel booking specialist with over 1.4 million guest reviews.

## Challenges and Opportunities

One of the many great changes that the web has brought to our lives is the way that we book our holidays. Booking a holiday is no longer a chore, but, behind the scenes, it still depends on an ecosystem of travel companies working together efficiently. LateRooms.com is a perfect example of how a travel company is using technology to strengthen its own ecosystem, while delivering the best online experience to its customers.

Data and software has long been central to everything that LateRooms.com does, as the company's chief technology officer Stuart Hughes explains: "Our reputation is based on giving customers a fantastic experience, no matter where they are or what device they are using to browse the site," Hughes says. "We seek to make constant improvements to the site, the service, and to the experience of our users. We have small teams of agile developers, testers and

business owners and work on the quickest ways to deliver incremental change."

## Solution

Central to this philosophy of constant improvement is LateRooms.com's use of application programming Interfaces (APIs), which enables it to build a variety of complex and customized software for any variety of

### Opportunities »

- ▶ Strengthen its ecosystem of travel firms, while delivering the best online experience to customers
- ▶ Build new services mock-ups of new services quickly, enabling feature trials without building an entire app
- ▶ Add new features to the website or to an existing application very quickly

# Laterooms.com

Accelerating Developer Innovation with APIs

device. With a tech strategy led by Hughes, LateRoom.com is now pursuing an “API-first” approach to its software development.

“Simply put, APIs have drastically quickened the process of delivering new services and features,” Hughes says. “We can now build mock-ups of new services in a matter of days, enabling us to trial a feature without building an entire app. We’ve also created a set of micro-APIs—services that have a small and very specialized remit—to add new features to the website or to an existing application very quickly.”

The importance of APIs to LateRooms.com is not confined to the company’s own portfolio of apps and sites. Its business depends on global partnerships, from small bed-and-breakfast establishments to multi-national travel firms and price comparison sites. The key to building and maintaining these relationships is to make it as easy as possible to integrate LateRooms.com functionality—such as its hotel rooms feed—into their own sites and apps. One potential problem of this proliferation of developers, partners, APIs and micro-APIs is the increased complexity of managing them. LateRooms.com turned to Apigee to give it the capability to manage this complexity effectively.

“As APIs quickly became so central to our business, we realized that we needed to build an API management layer,” Hughes says. “It wasn’t sustainable to open up our data to any developer who came along: we would lose sight and control of our branding and our services. At the same time, Apigee Edge naturally enables us to control access to APIs and open it up to our trusted partners and developers but also, crucially, gives us real-time intelligence into the activity that’s going through the APIs.

We glean an enormous amount of valuable data, such as error rates and performance levels, and this gives our team the insight we need to give the best possible experience to our users.”

“Apigee Edge naturally enables us to control access to APIs and open it up to our trusted partners and developers but also, crucially, gives us real-time intelligence into the activity that’s going through the APIs.”

Stuart Hughes

## Results

Apigee Edge ensures that once an API for a particular app is exposed, other developers can use its specifications as the basis for their own apps. It also serves as a centralized management panel from where LateRooms.com can monitor and, if desired, integrate new features that are being developed by its wider community of partners.

“At LateRooms.com, we essentially offer the keys to 65,000 properties worldwide,” Hughes says. “We have customers—travellers, travel websites, and hotels—across the world. To think that we could manage this effectively on our own—to provide a great experience to everyone, from every culture and in every language—would be

# Laterooms.com

Accelerating Developer Innovation with APIs

apigee

hubris. Our brand therefore depends on a worldwide network of trusted partners who can access our data and applications through APIs.

“My vision for LateRooms.com is that external developers from all sorts of businesses will choose us for hotel room booking functions, because our APIs are the easiest to integrate and offer the best functionality. The strategy is as simple as that, and we believe it will serve us well through the next exciting period in our story,” concluded Hughes.

## Laterooms.com's Digital Journey

Accelerating Developer  
Innovation with APIs

- ▶ Enable LateRooms.com to control access to APIs and open them up to trusted partners and developers
- ▶ Provide real-time intelligence into API activity, such as error rates and performance levels, providing the insights to give the best possible experience to users
- ▶ Foster greater innovation internally, running all-business hackathons to work on new feature and function ideas