Transforming a Business Without Reinventing the Wheel

APIs Keep Sensis Relevant

Transforming a Business Without Reinventing the Wheel

APIs Keep Sensis Relevant

sapi
POWERED BY (sensis)

Company Size
Enterprise

Industry
Data Services

API Program TYPE
Internal + Partner + Public:
developers.sensis.com.au

Goals of API Program
Transition the business from paperbound directories to digital with APIs

Market APIs to developers and make Sensis data the de facto standard for business data in Australia

Quickly and easily onboard partners

Results
Mashery's hybrid API management solution allows for security and flexibility

More than 15 external partners run exclusively off SAPI's search engine

Reporting and analytics give insight into API usage, equating to increased ROI for advertisers and partners

Sensis, the Australian company whose vast network includes directories like the Yellow Pages and White Pages, turned to APIs to help make the transition from a print-based to a digitally led business. With API management, Sensis is thriving among big-name competitors and enabling innovation that keeps consumers engaged and customers happy.

A Leap of Faith

Sensis connects businesses and consumers through the Yellow Pages and White Pages, enabling people to find the most up-to-date and relevant information to suit their needs. The Australian company historically sold advertising products in paperbound directories. However, as consumers began turning to the Internet and mobile devices to satisfy their business search queries, so did the advertisers that were the lifeblood of the business. Sensis knew it needed to do more than just build out a technology add-on—the company had to take the bold but necessary measures to adapt the business to remain relevant in a rapidly changing market.

"Sensis needed to quickly transform its business strategy and access consumers anytime, on any device," says Norbert Herrmann, Senior Manager of Sensis API (SAPI) and Search at Sensis. "To go from print to digital, APIs would be key to our success and survival."

The team at Sensis looked to APIs to not only easily extend advertisers' reach via strategic partnerships, but also to open its data so external developers could build innovative new SAPI-powered products. This revolutionary shift diametrically opposed traditional thinking, but was necessary to extend the Sensis brand to the digital arena and compete with already strong search competitors in the space.

"Maybe we weren't the first ones in the game, but we thought it's better to be a part of it than watching from the sidelines," says Herrmann. "Why not enable the creation of better tools not necessarily by building them, but by opening our content?"

A Hybrid Approach to API Management

The company began building SAPI to give advertisers broader reach delivered via a custom relevancy-focused search. As the internal engineering team built a small API program, Sensis understood that in order to scale the API and make SAPI a conduit to Sensis becoming a digitally led business, it would also need a management layer to provide a single platform powering all API-based experiences.

"The market in Australia for API management was starting to mature," says Herrmann. "It was pretty compelling for us to not reinvent the wheel and instead eliminate the technical and business overhead to our digital transformation efforts."

When evaluating other solution providers in the marketplace, Herrmann notes, "We had a lot of time and capital constraints. Mashery was the fastest and easiest solution to get us up and running quickly with the least amount of integration into our enterprise infrastructure."

Furthermore, Mashery offers truly distributed API management with its hybrid solution. Sensis has traffic running simultaneously through on-premise Mashery Local in its datacenter, as well as through Mashery's enterprise-grade cloud infrastructure to power mobile experiences. Coupled with a global caching system for maximum response speed and four levels of failover, Sensis felt confident that Mashery could serve its API management needs despite an ocean between them. "The closest competitor would've cost a lot of time and effort for us," adds Herrmann.

Implementing a Digital Strategy

Sensis also valued the unwavering support from Mashery's Professional Services team. During the journey from purchase to implementation to going live, "they handheld us the whole way through, answering our questions and assuring SAPI's success," says Herrmann.

When Sensis launched SAPI, instead of being bound by legacy closed-door policies, Sensis chose to be as open and transparent as possible with developers. The company organized and attended as many hackathons as possible to push Sensis' new image and integrate itself with the developer community. "We knew it was important to understand developer needs in order to keep SAPI competitive," notes Herrmann. "We added a business to developer (B2D) strategy to our API program to focus on developer engagement and foster innovation with Sensis data, wherever it leads."

Herrmann exclaims that the API program has "gone gangbusters," with more than 3,500 registered developers and over 50 productized applications. Developers are more and more going to Sensis to power business search, proving that the company made the right choice in turning to APIs and in turn enhancing its credibility, making it the de facto source for business information in Australia.

This success is also seen in the new commercial opportunities SAPI has brought to Sensis. The company has forged relationships with several large international search companies, plus it has more than 15 external publishers running exclusively off SAPI's search engine. These integrations have expanded the capabilities of Sensis' product offerings, using the API to aggregate both Yellow Pages and White Pages business and government listings, Yelp reviews, Points of Interest, restaurant bookings, and more into its search tool.

With these growing relationships and capabilities comes increased SAPI usage, which is a key differentiator for Sensis to market to current and prospective advertising customers. And having an API management platform allows Sensis to show these advertisers first-hand how far they can reach, and to their target audiences, with deep reporting and analytics.

"Traditionally, advertisers would purchase an ad that would be limited to a single presence in a book or website " says Herrmann. "Now, our value proposition to advertisers is that they get a listing and have an extended network where Sensis exposes them, tracks them, and provides them with analytics."

"Plugging into the cloud that could be largely configurable, plus integrating with the Intel® Services gateway, has produced huge ROI for us."

–Norbert Herrmann
Senior Manager,
SAPI + Search, Sensis

A Single Pane of Glass

APIs have helped lead Sensis into a digitally led future that has already seen success with developers, partners, and customers alike. With API management, Sensis can securely run traffic through an on-premise datacenter and flexibly run it through the cloud.

The platform provides Sensis with a single pane of glass that gives the company access and insight to that distributed traffic with reporting and analytics, as well as a single partner experience via a comprehensive developer portal so that partners, customers, and developers all gain entry to the API from the same place, no matter what twists and turns it takes to get there on the backend.

"APIs have helped Sensis to transform our business without disrupting our business," says Herrmann. "Sensis is well prepared to take on anymore challenges and opportunities that come our way."