

# Enable modern business applications

## Customer Solution Case Study



### BLUEGARDEN

## Payroll Services Firm Transforms its Product Into a Platform with API Management

**Customer:** Bluegarden  
**Website:** [www.bluegarden.dk](http://www.bluegarden.dk)  
**Customer Size:** 600 employees  
**Country or Region:** Denmark  
**Industry:** Professional services

#### Customer Profile

Bluegarden is a large supplier of payroll and human resources services in Scandinavia. Each month, more than 2.3 million people receive their paychecks through solutions provided by Bluegarden.

#### Software and Services

- Microsoft Azure
  - Microsoft Azure API Management

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“Using Azure API Management to manage our APIs helps us create exciting new products that meet our customers’ needs and expand our business.”

Jørgen Hemmer-Havnsgaard, Director of IT Architecture, Bluegarden Denmark

Bluegarden, a large Scandinavian payroll service, is using Microsoft Azure API Management to gain a simple, efficient, security-enabled way to share application programming interfaces (APIs) with partners. By publishing APIs for key product capabilities, Bluegarden can create an extensible product to fit every customer’s needs, expand its partners and consequently its business, and help keep APIs secure.

#### Business Needs

Bluegarden provides payroll and human resources (HR) services to approximately 80,000 companies across Scandinavia. Bluegarden takes data from these companies’ payroll, bookkeeping, time registration, and other business systems, processes it, and issues paychecks, benefits forms, and other documents to their employees. Each month, more than 2.3 million people receive their paychecks through Bluegarden solutions. The Denmark-based company employs 600 people.

Bluegarden grows by adding customers, introducing new products and services, and expanding the roster of third-party payroll and business software packages with which it can communicate. However, the latter was limited by the time-intensive

way in which Bluegarden exchanged data with vendors. “The payroll and financial services market is fairly conservative and has always exchanged data using a mostly manual process of shipping files back and forth,” says Jørgen Hemmer-Havnsgaard, Director of IT Architecture for Bluegarden Denmark. “We wanted to move to a more modern means of connecting to software partners to remove the bottleneck to our growth.”

That more modern means was publishing application programming interfaces (APIs) to authorized partners that granted access individual data sets. Many new web and cloud-based payroll and accounting software vendors had entered the market and used APIs for exchanging data. As more partner companies began to rely on these web-based services, Bluegarden

needed to be able meet those expectations.

"We didn't have a presence in the new cloud payroll services market and wanted to get an API out there to take part in it," Hemmer-Havnsgaard says. However, if it embraced an API application delivery model, Bluegarden needed a way to provision accounts for partner developers and manage incoming requests to those APIs. "We are passing around customer financial data, so any technology that we use has to be very secure," Hemmer-Havnsgaard says.

## Solution

Bluegarden decided to use Microsoft Azure API Management, a service that gives developers a way to easily distribute and protect their APIs with authentication, rate limiting, quotas, and caching. Organizations can specify that only authorized partners, developers, and applications access their APIs and in accordance with their policies.

"In the future, we want to use the Active Directory service to perform user authentication and authorization, and using Azure API Management would make it easy to do that because both services are Microsoft technologies that run in Azure," says Peter Birkholm-Buch, Enterprise Architect at Bluegarden. "We currently maintain multiple user directories for various software programs and want to consolidate them. Our plan is to integrate all of our directories using Active Directory and eventually to use Microsoft Azure Active Directory to simplify them."

Bluegarden created a REST-based API for one of its large mainframe-based payroll systems and exposed the API using Azure API Management. Several of its partners are testing it; meanwhile, Bluegarden is developing two more APIs that it will soon make available via Azure API Management. Bluegarden hosts its APIs in its own datacenter even though they are published and managed through Azure.

Managing APIs from the cloud service is easy. "The Azure API Management dashboard makes it very easy to see API utilization and transaction errors," says Birkholm-Buch. "It's very useful. It provides instant access to who is using which API, the top users, the most popular API operations, and the bandwidth usage of various API transactions."

## Benefits

By publishing and managing APIs with Azure API Management, Bluegarden can more easily expand its business by working with more software vendors and creating new products—all while protecting its APIs.

### Expand Partner Channel and Business

Bluegarden has removed the file-transfer bottleneck that previously hindered business growth. "We can now expand our business by using Azure API Management to more easily connect to the many new cloud and online software providers out there," Hemmer-Havnsgaard says.

Bluegarden is excited about where its API strategy might take it and the new products it will enable. For example, Bluegarden is developing a new app that will let small business owners manage their payroll systems from their smartphones. "We could not have created such a product without an API delivery model," Hemmer-Havnsgaard says. "Using Azure API Management to manage our APIs helps us create exciting new products that meet our customers' needs and expand our business."

### Create Better APIs More Quickly

Because Bluegarden has an easy way to share APIs, it can do so freely, which accelerates the development of high-quality APIs. "By using API Management, we can bring our development closer to our partners and set up test products that our partners can play with," Birkholm-Buch says. "Having closer partner involvement during the development stage helps us

exercise our code more rigorously than if testing was confined to our own staff. The sooner you get customer and partner participation in your products, the sooner you find out where the errors are.

### Help Keep Customer Data Safe

Azure API Management contains authentication mechanisms for ascertaining who is accessing an API and for auditing their use of the APIs. With these controls, Bluegarden can help keep connections to customer data safe. "With Azure API Management, we can make our APIs publicly available while keeping them well protected," Birkholm-Buch says. "Payroll contains extremely sensitive financial data, so we have to balance business agility and growth with trustworthiness. With API Management, we can connect to new and exciting software solutions and do so with security mechanisms in place."

"We've been really happy with Azure API Management and look forward to introducing our APIs and inviting new API consumers and partners to our payroll system," Birkholm-Buch concludes.