Build vs Buy: How Should MNOs Monetize Network APIs?

Own the entire API stack – or accelerate commercialization with a ready-made platform?

	BUILD	BUY / PLATFORM
Time to Market	Months / years	✓ **Weeks / months**
Upfront Investment	High CAPEX + engineering	✓ **Lower initial investment**
Customization	Maximum control	✓ **Configurable / standardized**
API Development	Build APIs, gateways, SDKs & portals	✓ **Pre-built API enablement**
Operations	MNO manages infrastructure, upgrades & support	✓ **Platform provider maintains core stack**
Monetization	Build charging, rating & settlement	✓ **Monetization capabilities included**
Ecosystem	Recruit developers & partners yourself	✓ **Faster access to existing ecosystem**



MNO Network

5G Core • IMS
HLR/HSS/UDM • SMSC
Location • Identity



API Exposure Layer

Authentication • API Gateway
Security • Consent
Policy Charging



Network APIs

Number Verification
SIM Swap • Location
QoD Device Status



Consumers

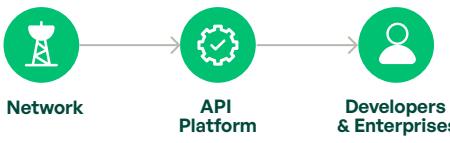
Developers • CPaaS
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AI Apps

BUILD Path to market



Build every layer, own every layer.

BUY Path to market



Connect the network, configure the product, go to market.

THE HIDDEN COST OF BUILD



AAA | OAuth | Consent | Fraud | Rate Limiting
Charging | CDR | Settlement | Observability
SLA Management Developer Portal | Documentation
Partner Onboarding | Version Management | 24×7 Operations

BUILD when:

- **Strategic differentiation** is in the platform itself
- You have **substantial API engineering resources**
- Maximum **architectural control** is essential

BUY when:

- **Speed to revenue** matters
- Network API **monetization is the objective**
- You want to **reduce development** and operational complexity