Building a Cisco Connect Flow

In this lab, you'll learn how to create and configure a flow using Cisco Connect's Flow Builder. The lab will guide you through the process of setting up a webhook, parsing data from an API request, evaluating and processing that data, and finally making an outbound HTTP request based on the result of the evaluation. By the end of this lab, you'll have a clear understanding of how to create a flow from scratch, configure its components, and understand the interactions between these components. This will be a hands-on experience in integrating webhooks, parsing data, executing conditional logic, and communicating with external services through HTTP requests.

Activity Objective

In this exercise, you will create a Cisco Connect flow that is triggered via a request to a webhook.

- Create a Cisco Connect service and flow
- Configure a Cisco Connect flow
- Test Cisco Connect flow functionality by making an API request

Task 1: (task1)

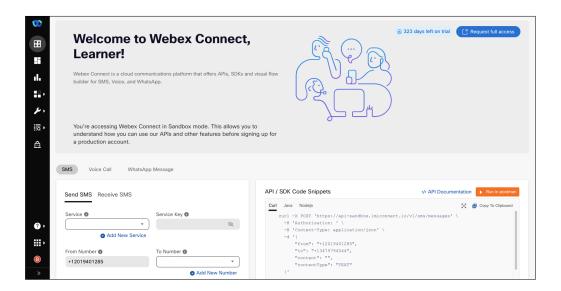
Activity Procedure

Step 1: Navigate to https://sandbox.imiconnect.io/ and log in with your Cisco ID.

Note:

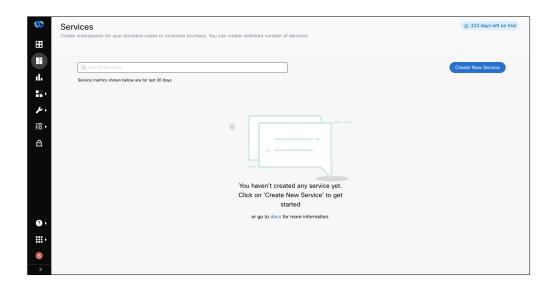
If this fails, contact your administrator to ensure your account has access to the developer sandbox. Alternatively, if you are allowed, you can head over to https://help.imiconnect.io/docs/getting-started-with-sandbox and sign up for free.



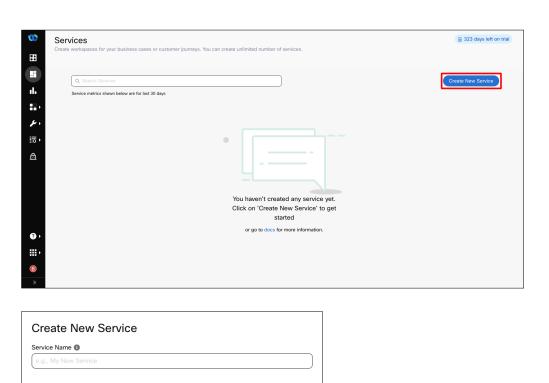


Step 2: Once logged in, locate "Services" in the sidebar and click on it. This will take you to the area where you can manage and create new services.





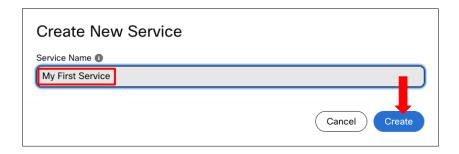
Step 3: In the Services section, find and click the button labeled "Create New Service". This action will initiate the process of setting up a new service in your environment.



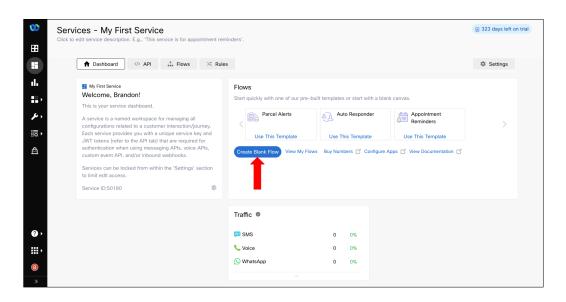
Step 4: When prompted to name your new service, type "My First Service" into the designated field. This name will help you identify and manage the service in future sessions. Click the "Create" button when you are done.

Cancel

Create

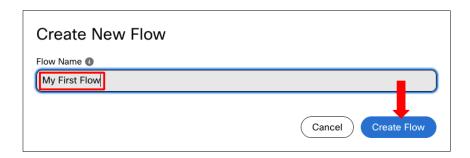


Step 5: After naming your service, select the option "Create Blank Flow". This allows you to start building a flow from scratch, giving you full control over its configuration.





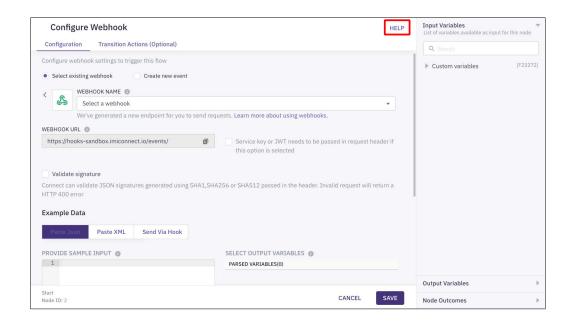
Step 6: You will now be prompted to name your new flow. Enter "My First Flow" as the name. This identifies your workflow within the service you just created. Click the "Create Flow" button when you're done.

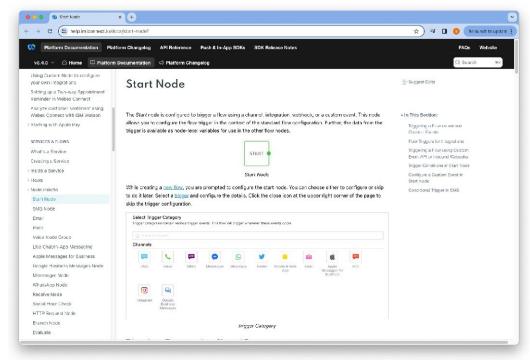


Step 7: For the trigger of this flow, select "Webhook". This choice sets up the flow to be initiated by an incoming webhook, which is a key component of this lab.

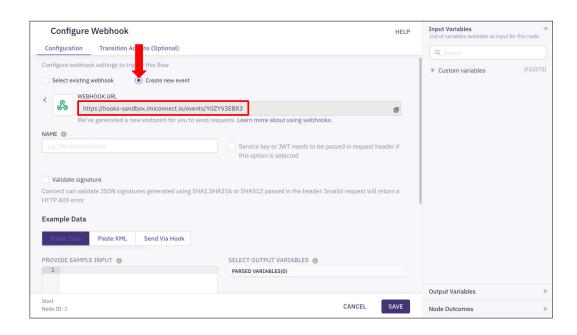


Step 8: Before proceeding further with configuring this flow, take note of the "HELP" link located in the top right of the modal. This link is an important resource, as it directs you to documentation specific to each node you will be working with in the flow builder.

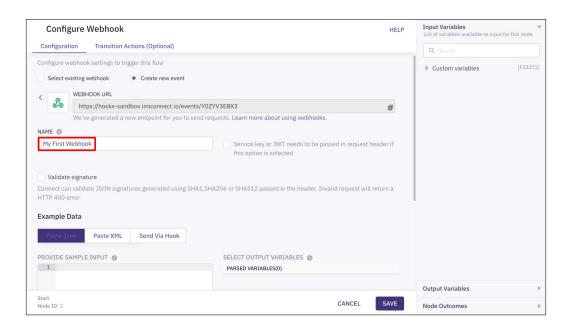




Step 9: Click on the "Create new event" button to start setting up the inbound webhook that will trigger this flow. Observe that Cisco Connect automatically generates a URL for this webhook, which is essential for its operation.



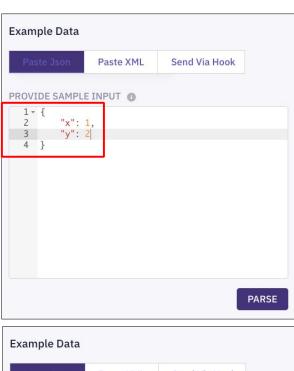
Step 10: Name the webhook "My First Webhook". This naming convention helps in identifying and referencing the webhook within your flow.

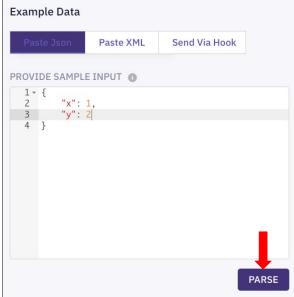


Step 11: In the section titled "Provide Sample Input", type the following sample JSON

```
{
    "x": 1,
    "y": 2
}
```

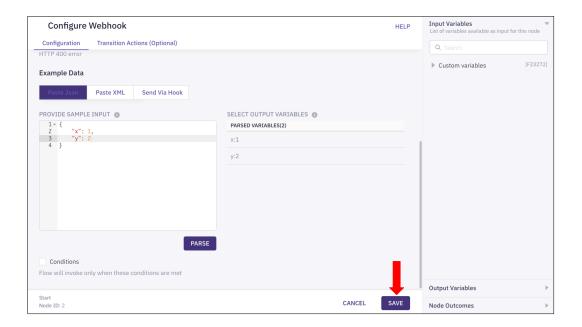
After entering this data, click the "Parse" button. Notice how the variables x and y appear as output variables to the right of the JSON sample. This indicates that subsequent steps in the flow can utilize these values using their variable names.



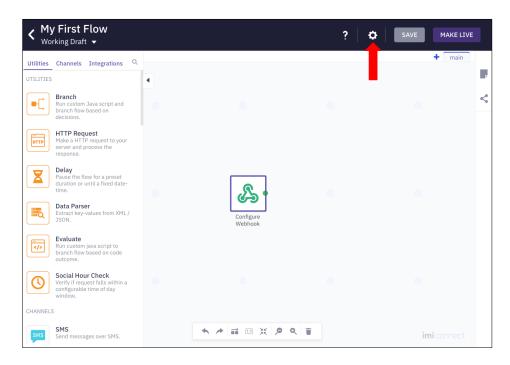


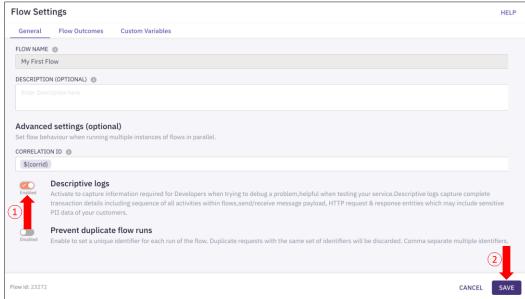


Step 12: To finalize your webhook configuration, click the "SAVE" button. This action confirms the settings and inputs you have entered for the webhook.

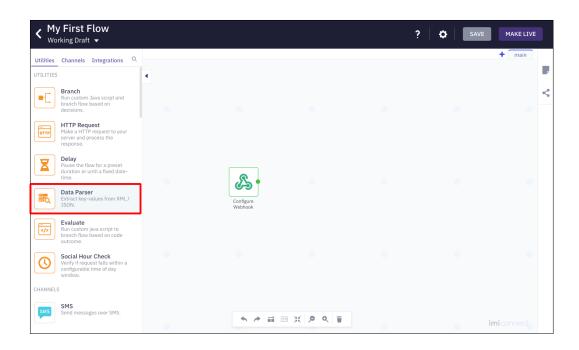


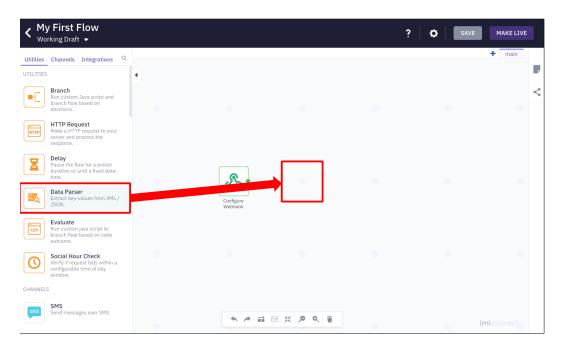
Step 13: Before moving on to the next configuration step, it's important to ensure the flow builder is optimized for debugging. To do this, click the gear icon at the top of the flow builder screen. This will open the flow settings. Here, enable "Descriptive Logs" by clicking the toggle next to it. This setting allows for detailed outputs, including data, to be included in the flow log. Once you have enabled this feature, click the "Save" button to apply these settings.

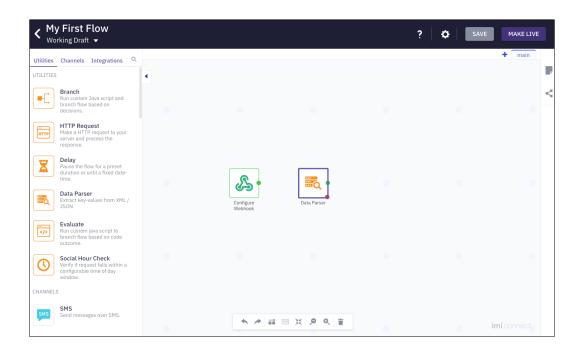




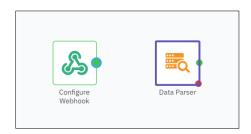
Step 14: Next, incorporate the "Data Parser" node into your flow. This node is vital for processing incoming data. To add it, drag the "Data Parser" node from the sidebar into the flow builder workspace, positioning it to the right of the webhook start node. This node's role is to locate data in the incoming JSON request and assign the located values to custom variables, which can be used later in the flow.

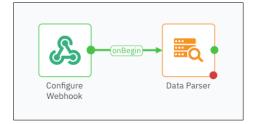






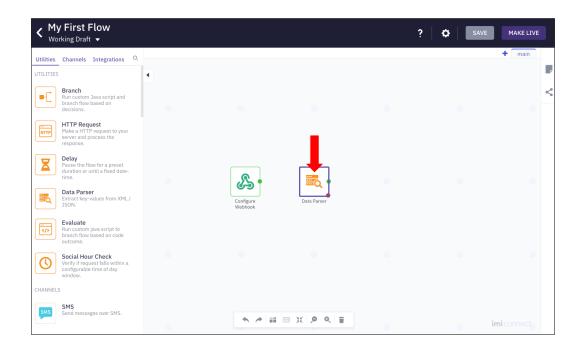
Step 15: To define the sequence of operation between nodes, use your cursor to create a connection. Click on the green dot on the "Configure Webhook" node, drag it to the "Data Parser" node, and release. This action connects these nodes, causing them to run in a defined order. Consequently, after the webhook receives an HTTP request, the output variables are assigned values, which are then processed by the "Data Parser" node to parse data and define custom variables for use in subsequent nodes of this flow.

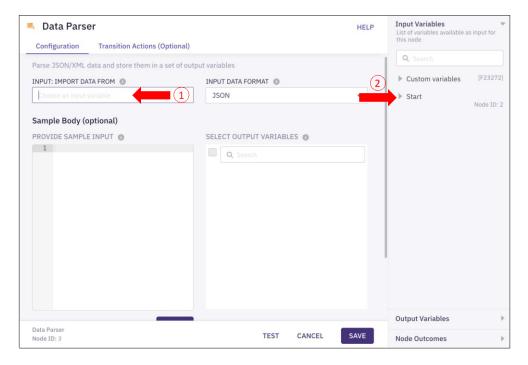


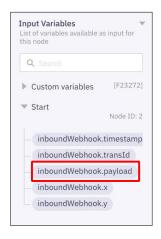


Step 16: Double-click on the Data Parser node to start editing its functionality. You'll need to specify the source of the input data for this node. Place your cursor in the text field labeled "Input: Input Data From". Then, using the sidebar on the right,

expand the "Start" section and select "n2.inboundWebhook.payload". This action will autofill the variable in the field. It's important to note that the variable name is enclosed within `\$()`, a syntax used within the flow builder to reference variable values in text and other input fields.





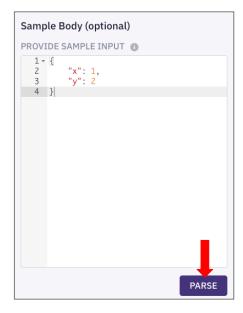


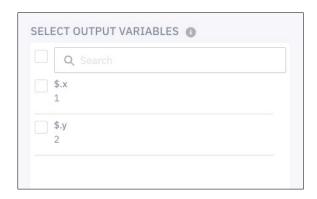


Step 17: In the "Sample Body" input field, type the same JSON you used earlier:

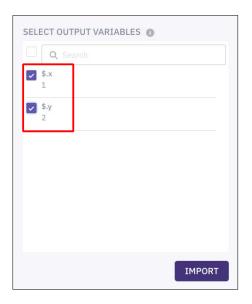
```
{
    "x": 1,
    "y": 2
}
```

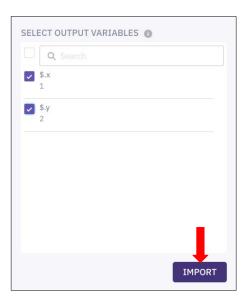
After entering this data, click the "Parse" button. This will cause variables to appear in the "Select Output Variables" section of the modal.

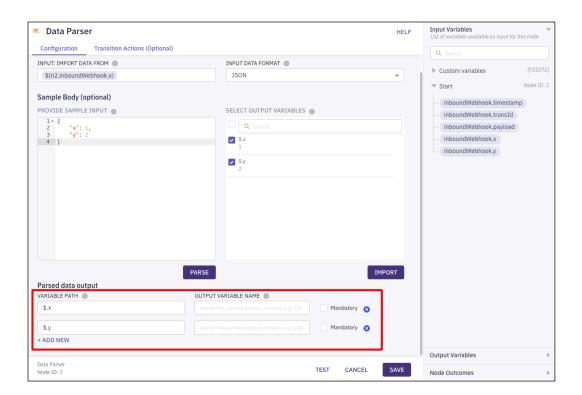




Step 18: In the "Select Output Variables" section, click the box to the left of each variable option. This action selects these variables for use in the flow. Next click the "Import" button. Note the "Parsed data output" section is populated partially.



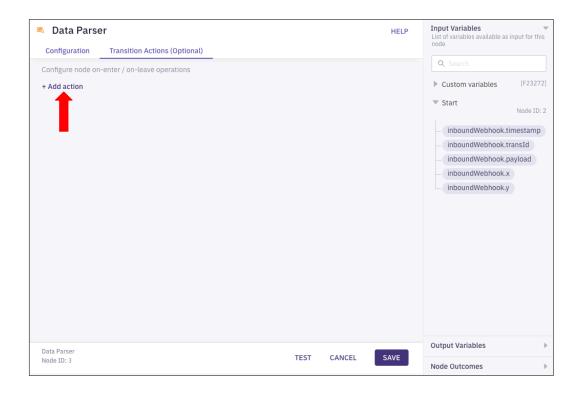


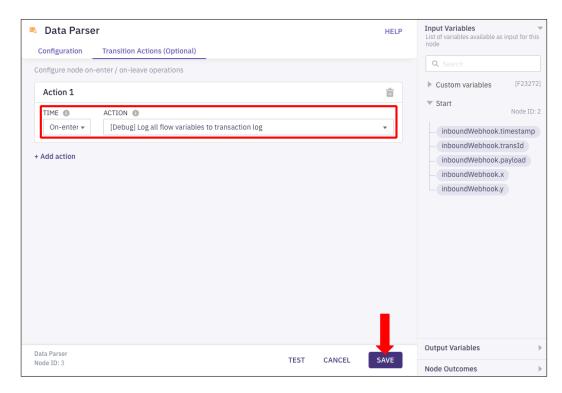


In the modal's "Parsed data input" section, edit the "Output Variable Name" text input field for \$.x and \$.y to be x and y respectively. This will make it so the local variables \$.x and \$.y are accessible as custom variables by all following nodes by the names x and y. Click the checkbox labeled "Mandatory" at the end of each row. This will lead to an error being raised if the keyword "x" or "y" is not present in the incoming JSON payload.

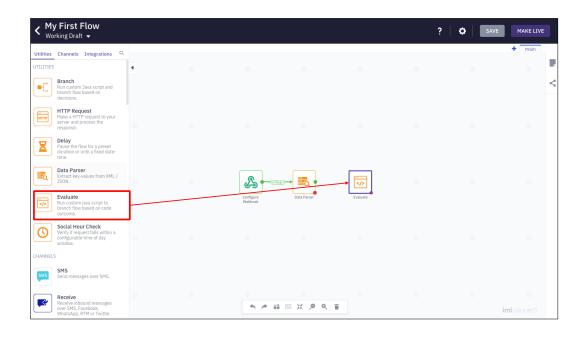
VARIABLE PATH	OUTPUT VARIABLE NAME	
\$.x	х	Mandatory 😵
\$.y	У	Mandatory 🗴
+ ADD NEW		

Step 20: To facilitate debugging, click on the "Transaction Actions" tab at the top of the modal. Click "+ Add action" to begin configuring an action that will run at some point during this node's execution. Set the value of "Time" to be "On-enter" if it is not already so. Next, select the action dropdown menu and choose "[Debug] Log all flow variables to transaction log". This setting is crucial as it aids in identifying issues if errors arise when developing your flow. Once these settings are configured, click the "Save" button to complete editing this node.

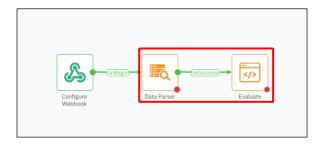




Step 21: Now, add the "Evaluate" node to your flow. Drag this node from the sidebar into the flow builder, positioning it to the right of the "Data Parser" node.



Step 22: Establish a connection between the "Data Parser" and "Evaluate" nodes. Using your cursor, click on the green dot on the "Data Parser" node, drag to the "Evaluate" node, and release.



Double-click the "Evaluate" node to begin its configuration. After your webhook receives an HTTP request, the output variables are assigned values, which are then utilized by the "Evaluate" node to perform JavaScript logic. In this node, you will input JavaScript code that adds the values of two variables from the API request that will be used to initiate this flow. This code checks if the variables x and y, which were defined in the previous node, are numeric in value or contain a number.

Note: It's important to understand the difference between numeric and string representations of numbers. For example, 1 is a number, whereas "1" is a string containing a number. The JavaScript function isNaN() (is Not a Number) will evaluate to False for both of these values. Adding an exclamation point (!)

before the function negates this value, turning it to True.

If both variables are numbers or contain numbers, the variable $\frac{\text{sum}}{\text{sum}}$ is created with its value set to the sum of $\frac{\text{v}}{\text{v}}$ and $\frac{\text{v}}{\text{v}}$ after they have been coerced into the

Number data type. Following the creation of the sum variable, the number 1 is returned. The returned value determines the branching that will occur after this node. In this case, 1 will represent success.

If one of the variables is not a number or does not contain a number, the variable sum is still created, but it is assigned the value 0, and then the number 2 is returned. In this instance, 2 will represent failure due to invalid data.

Enter the following code in the code entry input field:

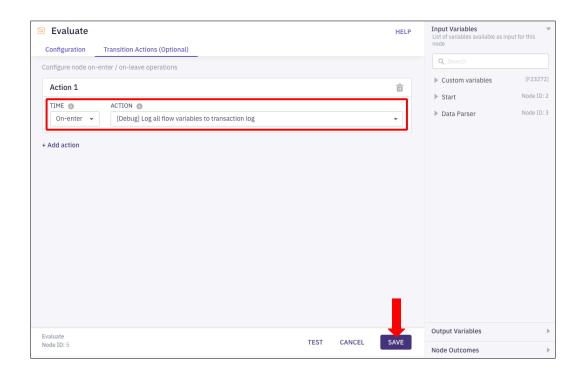
```
if (!isNaN(x) && !isNaN(y)) {
    var sum = Number(x) + Number(y);
    1;
} else {
    var sum = -1;
    2;
}
```



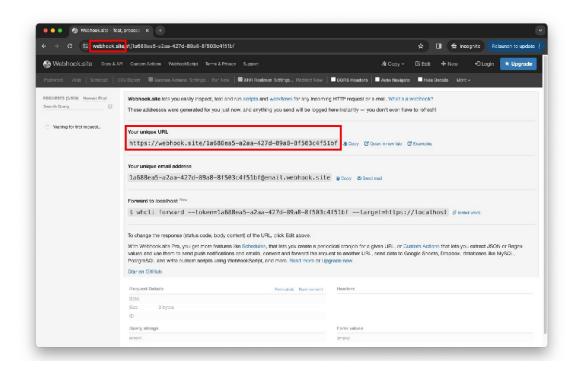
In the "Script Output" text box, type 1. Then, in the "Branch Name" input box, type onSuccess. This configures the branch for successful outcomes. Click "+ ADD NEW" to create another branch to handle error outcomes. In the "Script Output" text box for this new branch, type 2. Then, in the "Branch Name" input box, type onError. This configures the branch for error outcomes. When you are done, click the "Save" button to finalize the configuration of the "Evaluate" node.

Configure Script Output		
SCRIPT OUTPUT (1)	BRANCH NAME (I)	
1	onSuccess	8
2 + ADD NEW	onError	8

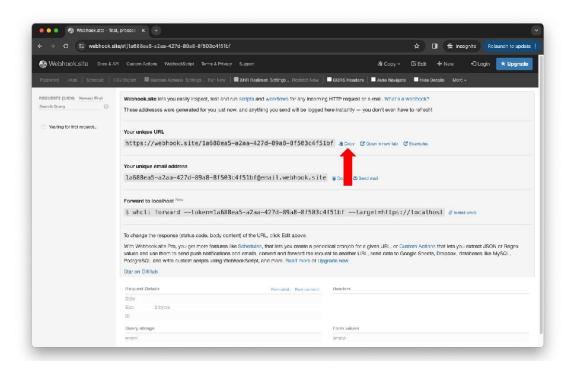
Step 25: Click on the "Transaction Actions" tab at the top of the modal. Click "+ Add action". Set the value of "Time" to be "On-enter" if it is not already so. Next, select the action dropdown menu and choose "[Debug] Log all flow variables to transaction log". Once these settings are configured, click the "Save" button to complete editing this node.



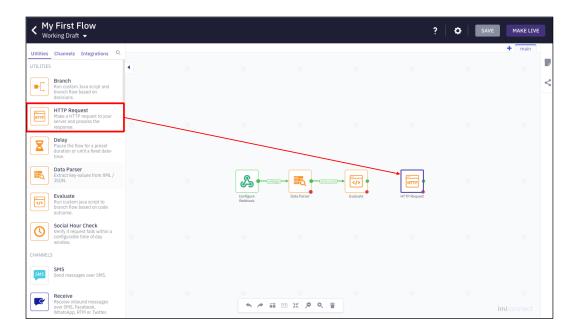
Step 26: Open a new tab in your web browser and navigate to https://webhook.site/. This step is preparatory for defining the completion logic of your flow. For any given event, whether it results in failure or success, you can make an HTTP request with data to another webhook. This could potentially trigger another programmatic process or simply log the results.



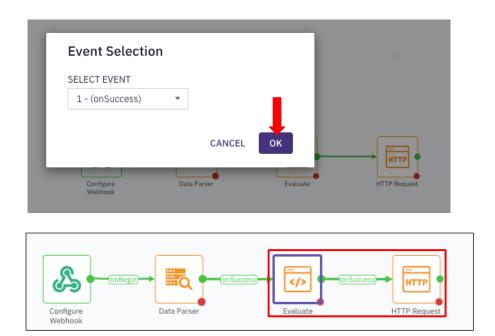
Step 27: Copy the value of "Your unique URL" from https://webhook.site for use in the following steps. Keep this tab open and return to the tab with the flow builder.



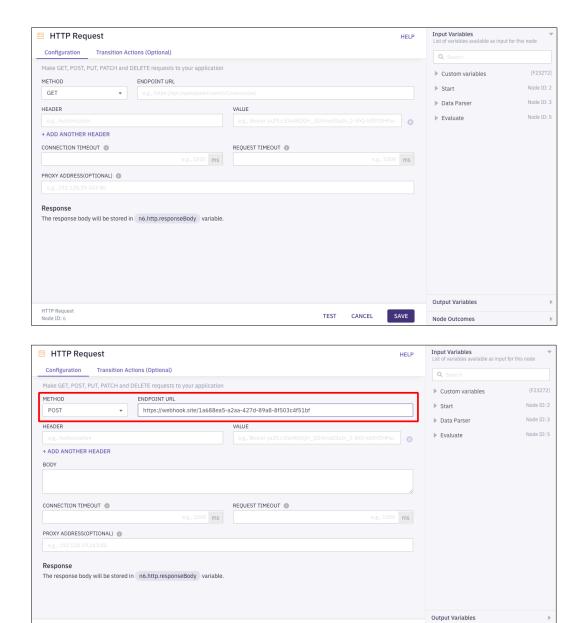
Step 28: Return to the Cisco Connect flow builder tab and add the "HTTP Request" node to your flow. To do this, drag the "HTTP Request" node from the sidebar and position it to the right of the "Evaluate" node.



Step 29: Now, establish the workflow connection between the "Evaluate" node and the "HTTP Request" node. Note that because there are numerous branches possible after the "Evaluate" node, you are now prompted to choose which branch should lead to the "HTTP Request" node. Ensure onSuccess is selected and click save.



Step 30: Double-click the "HTTP Request" node to begin configuration. Change the method to "POST" and paste the webhook URL you copied from https://webhook.site/ into the "Endpoint URL" input field.



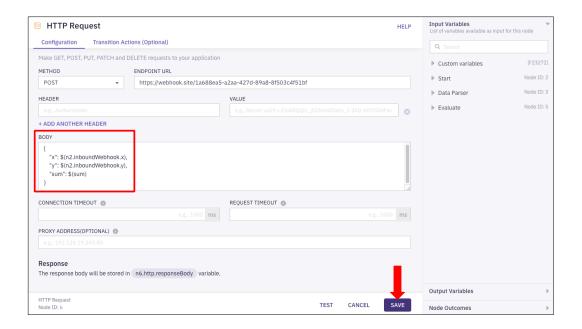
Step 31: In the "BODY" input field of the "HTTP Request" node, input the following JSON structure:

TEST CANCEL

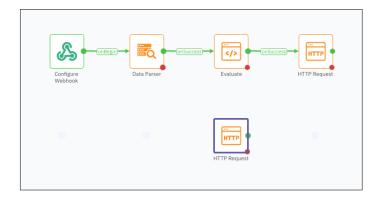
Node Outcomes

```
{
    "x": $(n2.inboundWebhook.x),
    "y": $(n2.inboundWebhook.y),
    "sum": $(sum)
}
```

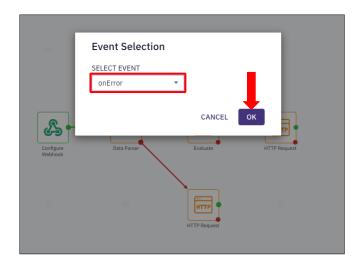
This format ensures that the values of x, y, and sum from the previous nodes are correctly passed as parameters in the HTTP request. When you are done, click the "SAVE" button to finalize the configuration of your "HTTP Request" node.



Step 32: Your flow could be deployed at this point, but if anything were to go wrong, there is no error handling to gracefully handle failures. Let's configure some more HTTP requests to the same external webhook to log errors. Drag another "HTTP Request" node to the flow builder, positioned below the "Evaluate" node.

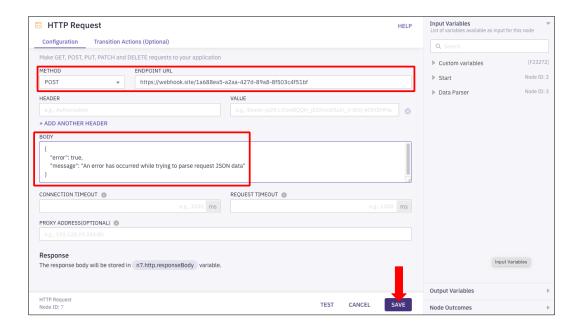


Step 33: Drag a line connecting the red dot on the "Data Parser" node to the new "HTTP Request" node. When prompted for the branch that should lead to this node, select onError and click "OK".

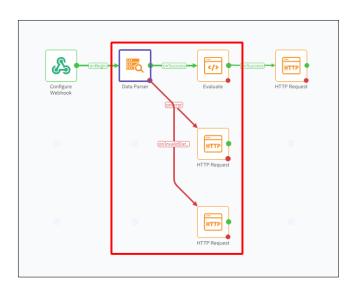


Step 34: Double-click the new "HTTP Request" node to begin configuring it. Select POST as the method, paste the webhook URL from https://webhook.site, and input the JSON below into the BODY text input field. When you are done, click Save to finish editing this node.

```
{
    "error": true,
    "message": "An error has occurred while trying to parse
request JSON data"
}
```

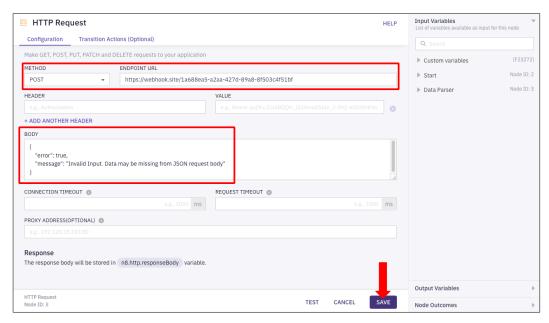


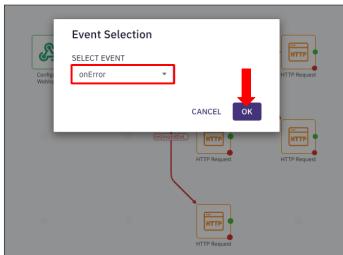
Step 35: Drag another "HTTP Request" node and drop it below the node you just configured. Drag another line from the red dot on the "Data Parser" node to the new "HTTP Request" node. Note that you are not prompted to select a branch, as there is only one branch remaining that could be selected, onInvalidData.



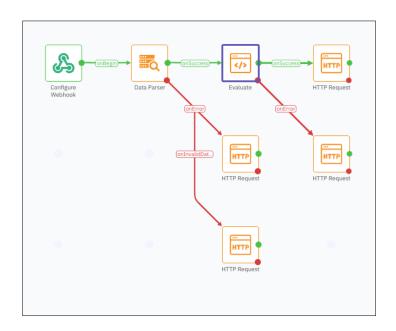
Step 36: Double-click the new "HTTP Request" node to begin configuring it. Select POST as the method, paste the webhook URL from https://webhook.site, and input the JSON below into the BODY text input field. When you are done, click Save to finish editing this node.

```
{
    "error": true,
    "message": "Invalid Input. Data may be missing from JSON
request body"
}
```

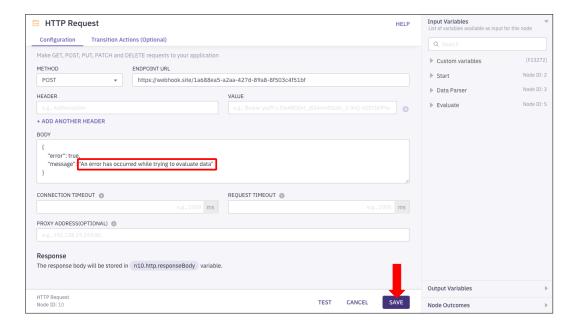




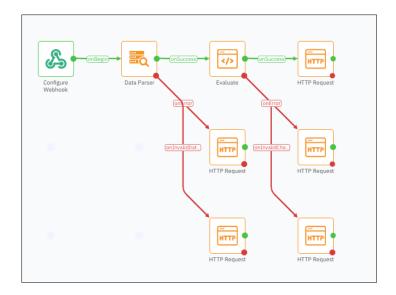
Step 37: Click the onError "HTTP Request" node and use a keyboard shortcut to copy this node and its configuration (Ctrl + C on windows, Cmd + C on mac). Paste the node into the flow builder and drag it to be positioned below the top "HTTP Request" node. Once positioned, drag a line from the red dot on the "Evaluate" node to the new "HTTP Request" node. When prompted for a branch, select onError and click OK.



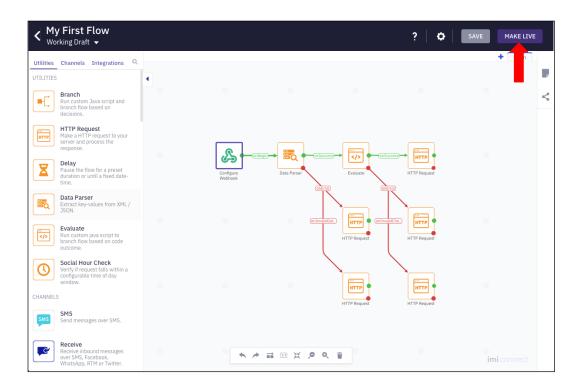
Step 38: Double-click the new "HTTP Request" node to edit, then change the value of "message" in the Body to be "An error has occurred while trying to evaluate data". Click Save when you are done.

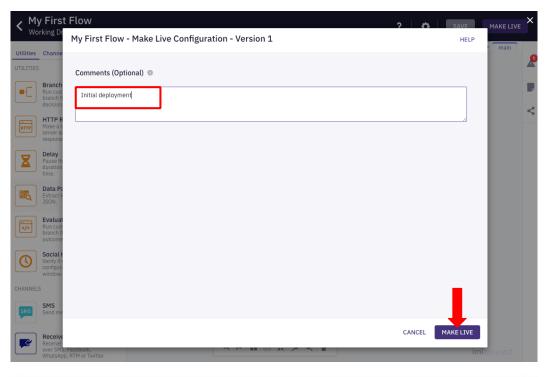


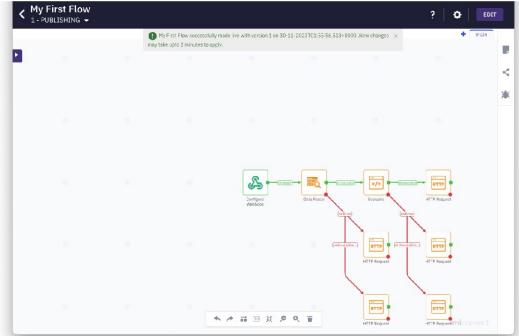
Step 39: Click the onInvalidData "HTTP Request" node, copy, and paste the node into the flow builder and drag it to be positioned below the last "HTTP Request" node you configured. Once positioned, drag a line from the red dot on the "Evaluate" node to the new "HTTP Request" node. This node will handle the onInvalidData node event that can be raised by the "Evaluate" node.



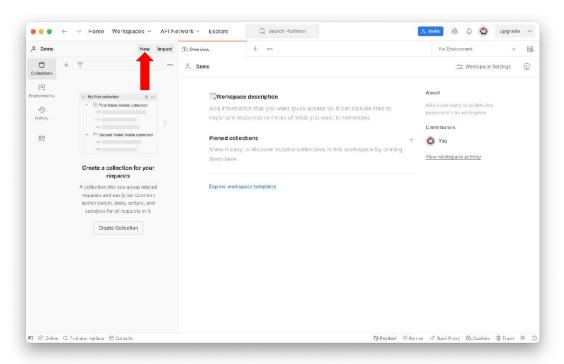
You are now finished editing this flow. We could go on to add error handling for the outgoing HTTP Requests, or we could even configure one node that all HTTP Requests branch to on failure, but we should be in a good place to deploy and test our flow now. Click "Make Live" to deploy your flow. In the next screen, type "Initial deployment" in the text input field and click Save. This action changes the status of the flow from a draft or development state to live, making it operational. Once this is done, your flow is active and ready to respond to incoming webhook events.

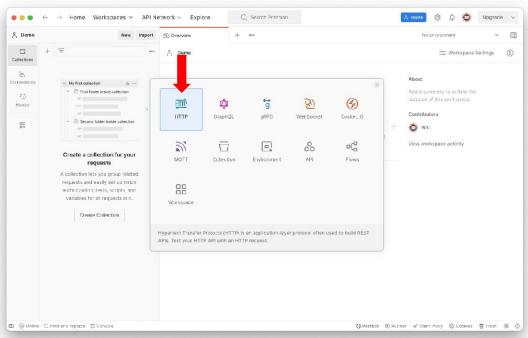


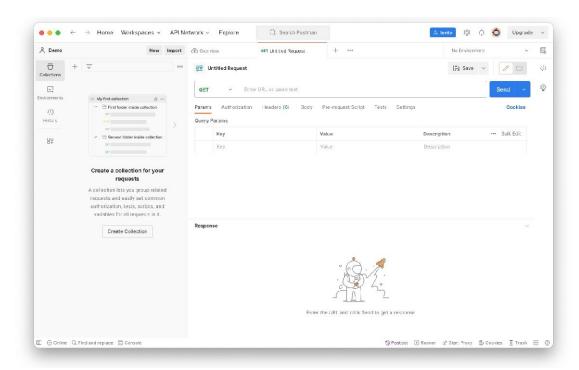




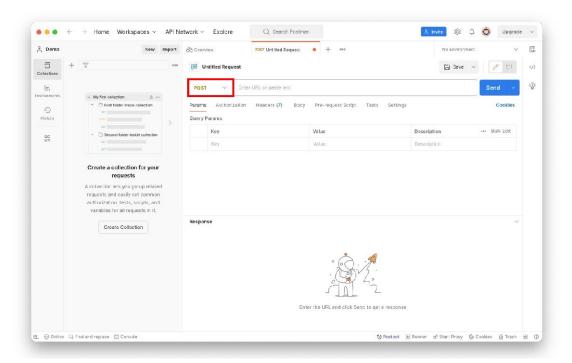
Step 41: Open Postman, a popular tool for testing and interacting with APIs. Once open, click "New", then click "HTTP" to create a new HTTP request.

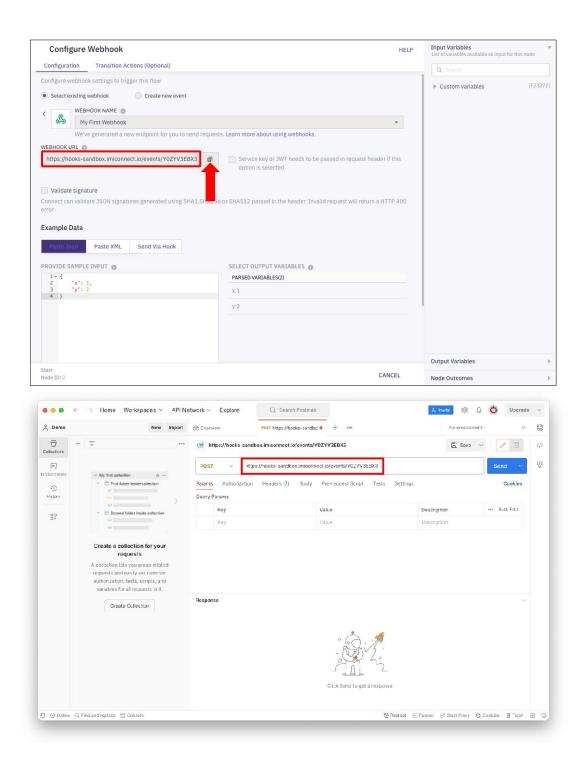




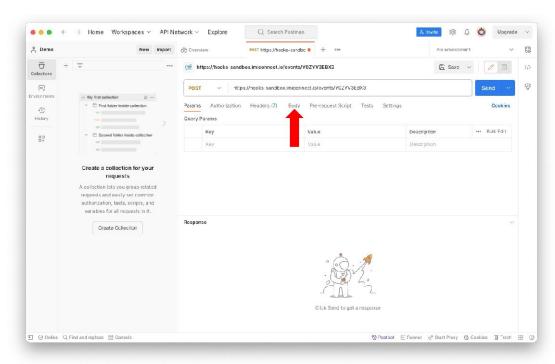


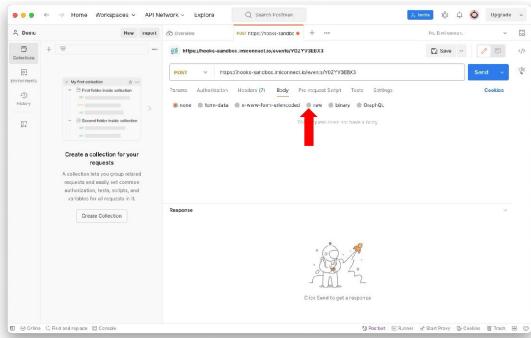
Step 42: Change the method to POST, as this is the method your webhook is configured to accept. Return to the flow builder tab, double-click the "Configure Webhook" node, and copy the webhook URL. Back in Postman, paste the copied webhook URL in the address field of the HTTP request you are building. This directs the request to the specific endpoint you have set up in your flow.

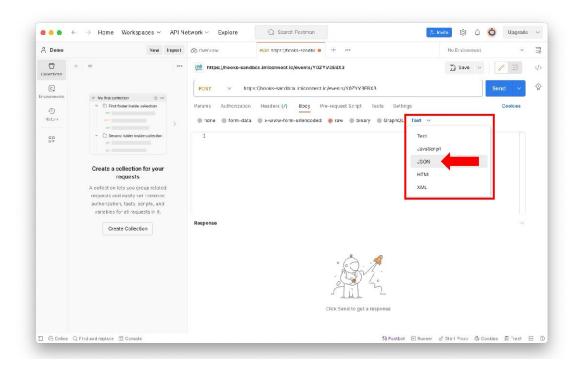




Step 43: Click body, select raw, then select JSON from the text type dropdown. JSON is the format in which your webhook expects to receive data.



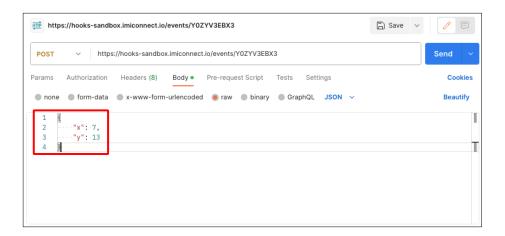




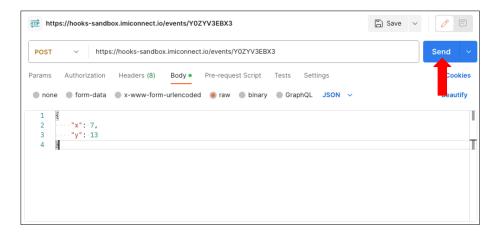
Step 44: In the body input field, type the following JSON. You can use the provided numbers or choose others:

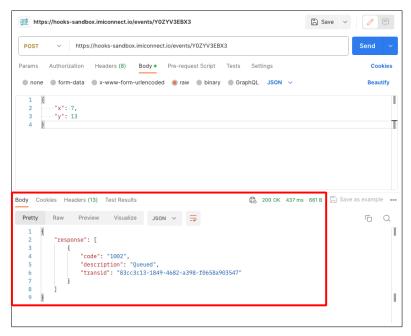
```
{
    "x": 7,
    "y": 13
}
```

This JSON payload simulates the data that your webhook will process.

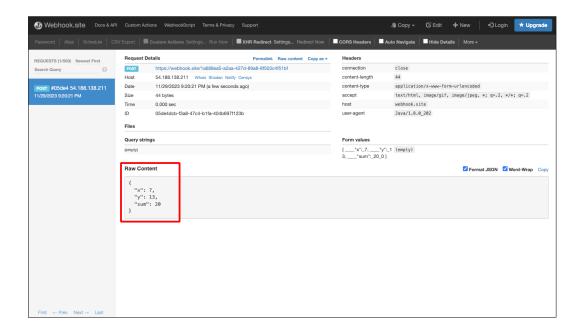


Step 45: Click the send button in Postman to execute the request. This action sends your test data to the webhook URL, triggering the flow you've just configured.





Return to the https://webhook.site tab and now you should see a message from your outgoing "HTTP Request" node. If you see JSON data which contains the "sum" keyword and the value is the sum of the values of x and y like in the screenshot below you have succeeded! If you see a different message in the webhook log, that message should indicate where the error has occurred, pointing you in the correct direction to begin debugging.



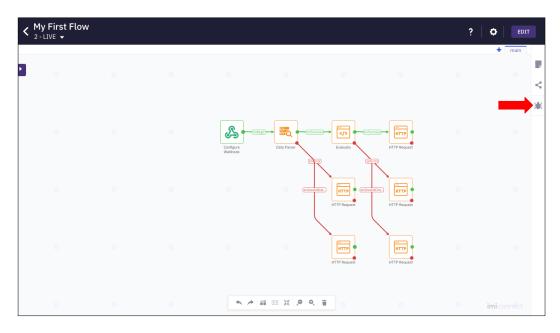
Activity Verification

You have completed this task when you attain these results:

■ Send an API request to the Cisco Connect flow webhook URL and receive the same message you sent, but with an additional attribute, the sum of x and y from the body of your request.

DEBUGGING

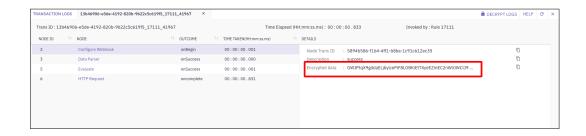
To debug this flow, you can start by reading the message in the JSON body in the webhook on https://webhook.site. In production, this log would be more detailed and make it easier for developers to debug. For a more granular inspection, you can use the flow debugger which empowered developers to inspect the values of variables and the result of each node in the flow. To open the debugger, click the bug icon in the right sidebar while viewing your flow.

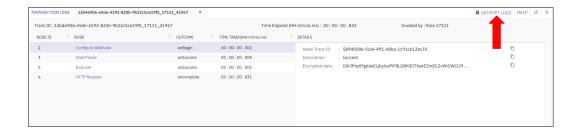


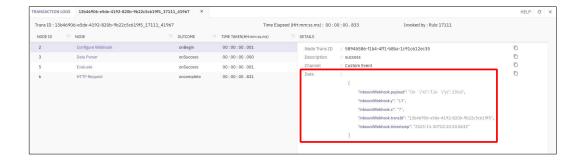


In the flow debugger, you can inspect the individual transactions that have run. Click the most recent link in the transaction log to begin inspecting that run of the flow. Currently, the log data is encrypted. You need to click "Decrypt Logs" in order to view the raw data values in each stage of the flow.









If any node had an error or failure, the "Outcome" column would indicate what the result of the execution was for that node. You can click that line item in the log to further inspect the data values at that node. If the output in the log is not detailed enough, you can return to the node, navigate to the Transaction Actions tab, and configure all available data to be written to the log on entering and exiting that node. By combining these approaches, you should be able to determine where your flow is failing, which should give you a good start on deciding what to do next to attempt to fix the error.