SALESFORCE CUSTOMER SUCCESS: ROADBLOCKS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Survey results show that most companies have plans to expand their Salesforce ecosystem, but many are struggling to execute daily work and secure skilled people for improvements. We detail the findings and provide recommendations for maximizing Salesforce ROI and achieving customer relationship management system objectives.

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SPINNAKER SUPPORT

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Salesforce is one of the most complex and extensive enterprise software ecosystems. Our survey results pin down common challenges and goals among Salesforce customers. The following key findings are covered in more detail in the Analysis.

Five Key Findings

FINDING 01

Many companies are struggling with the administration and maintenance of their Salesforce ecosystems: only 40% of respondents said their organizations are very good at handling these daily tasks, while 60% reported delays or confusion.

FINDING 02

Even more companies find it challenging to implement new Salesforce functionality: 38% reported only marginal success, and only 8% gave their organizations the top mark for this work.

FINDING 03

There's a lot of groundwork to be done, with integration (30%) and optimization (29%) of existing systems among the top reported Salesforce goals for 2021. Implementing new cloud services was also picked by 29% of respondents.

FINDING 04

Most companies want to expand their Salesforce ecosystem but report a lack of the right personnel or expertise to achieve the specific goals they have in mind (62%). This was followed by lack of time to research new solutions (23%).

FINDING 05

The right managed service provider (MSP) can make a difference: Only 45% of companies we surveyed are engaged with a Salesforce MSP, and they report an average satisfaction rating of 3.2 on a 5-point scale, indicating both high potential value and the need to pick your provider with care.

3.2

Average MSP Satisfaction Rating
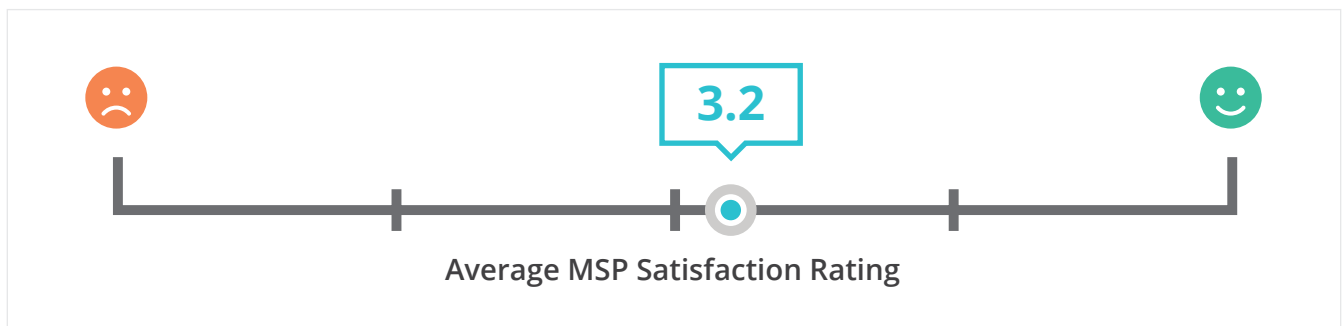
Given the complexity of the Salesforce ecosystem, the pace of releases, and the disruptions facing all industries in 2020, it's crucial that companies establish clear strategies for optimizing their Salesforce systems and maximizing their ROI.

See page 13 for 5 recommendations for creating the best return on your Salesforce investment.

SALESFORCE IN CONTEXT

Salesforce began with customer relationship management (CRM) software 20 years ago, and has grown to become one of the most expansive enterprise software ecosystems on the market today. The company employs roughly 50,000 people and holds almost 20% of the global CRM market, according to Forbes[1]. To put that into perspective, the same report allocates SAP an 8–9% share.

But Salesforce didn't stop at CRM. The company has steadily developed a cascade of offerings to cover all aspects of business. Their current portfolio includes a dizzying array of applications, integrations, levels, programs, and user resources, and the company is known for no less than three major releases a year. In a word, the Salesforce universe is complex:

- There are four primary editions of Salesforce tailored to company size and business complexity.

- Apps can be assembled à la carte or purchased in pre-packaged bundles such as the Salesforce Starter Kit.

- Mainstay offerings are 10 and counting, including the well-known Sales Cloud, Service Cloud, and Marketing Cloud, as well as Einstein (for analytics) and half a dozen other major applications.

- More than 12 industries have dedicated Salesforce apps, including manufacturing, health services, consumer goods, philanthropy, and financial services.

- The Salesforce marketplace, AppExchange, hosts approximately 5,000 apps that extend the functionality of Salesforce across almost every process and industry.

- The AppExchange also lists more than 1,700 consultants/managed service providers that help companies implement new Salesforce technology or improve existing environments.

- Separate programs such as Trailhead, the official Salesforce training platform, and MuleSoft, a 2018 acquisition for advanced integration, further expand the Salesforce brand.

Despite this complexity, the company's success is built largely on a simple idea: software needs to be easy, efficient, and adaptable, or people just won't use it. But keeping systems optimized and users engaged after implementation is no easy feat.

As the Salesforce ecosystem continues to broaden, many companies have established dedicated Salesforce budgets to engage skilled partners or hire full-time experts to provide much-needed support. Others are struggling with fewer financial and human resources. One way or another, maximizing investment and continuing innovation are essential for any company that has entered the fast-running Salesforce stream.

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[1]Forbes: "Salesforce Now Has Over 19% of The CRM Market", June 22, 2019, Accessed October 26, 2020, https://www.forbes.com/sites/louiscolumbus/2019/06/22/salesforce-now-has-over-19-of-the-crm-market/#489f634c333a.

Salesforce's relentless expansion of its ecosystem provides businesses with exciting opportunities for innovation. But companies struggle to keep up. Working with the right Salesforce managed service provider to maintain and improve a Salesforce environment is a proven approach for success. Companies that integrate the latest offerings will improve customer engagement programs, close more deals, and separate themselves from those that do not.

– Chad Stewart, Vice President, Global SaaS Support Services at Spinnaker Support

SURVEY GOALS

We were curious about how Salesforce customers are faring with this effort to not only maintain their current apps but also optimize and extend their Salesforce capabilities, all while running their businesses during a global pandemic.

We wanted to know:

- Are Salesforce user companies keeping up with the administration and maintenance of their systems, or are they struggling to manage fixes and updates?

- How well equipped are they to implement new functionality, add solutions, and optimize workflows?

- What are their plans for 2021, and is their emphasis on optimizing current Salesforce systems or expanding their Salesforce footprint?

- What are the biggest challenges to maximizing their Salesforce investments?

- How many businesses are engaged with a managed service provider for their Salesforce work, and what's the level of satisfaction among those that are?

METHODOLOGY

We partnered up with Spinnaker Support to survey more than 130 companies using Salesforce products, eliminating those with fewer than 100 employees, and accepting responses from only those staff who are centrally involved in the administration of their organizations' Salesforce systems.
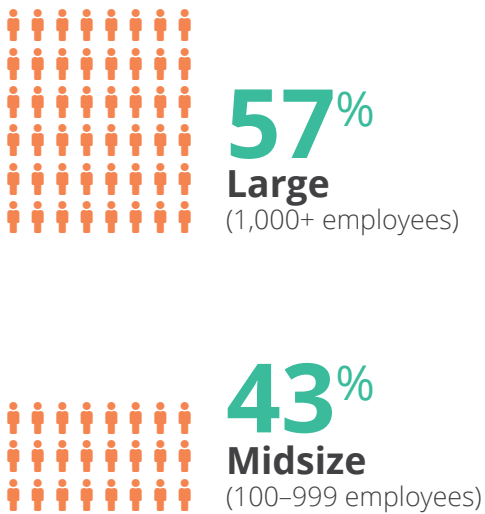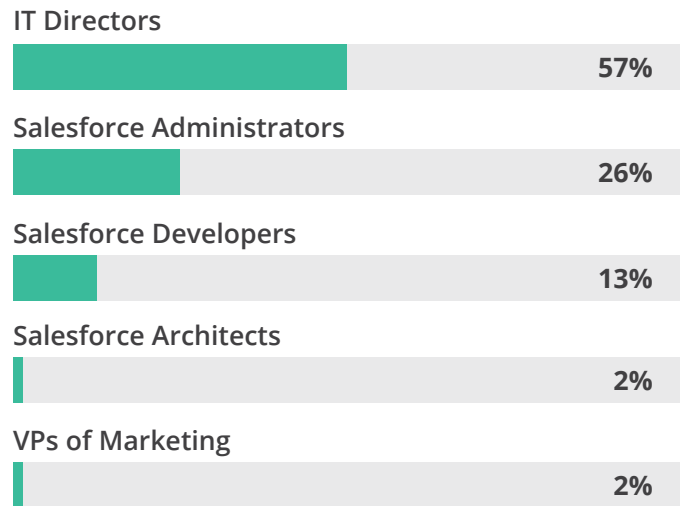
Survey Respondents By:

Fig. 1 | **Company Size**

57% **Large**
(1,000+ employees)

43% **Midsize**
(100–999 employees)

Fig. 2 | **Job Titles**

IT Directors
57%

Salesforce Administrators
26%

Salesforce Developers
13%

Salesforce Architects
2%

VPs of Marketing
2%

Fig. 3 | **Number of Salesforce Users**

29%
51–100 Users

33%
101–500 Users

38%
500+ Users
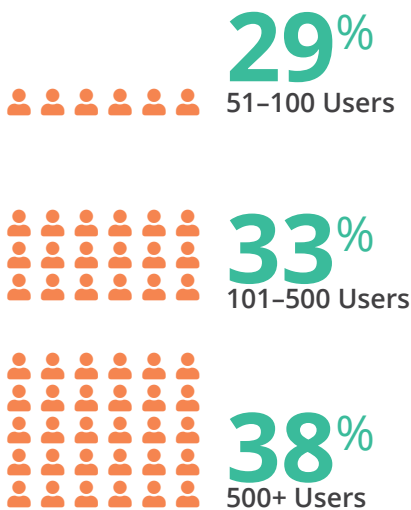
Fig. 4 | **Top 5 Most Common Salesforce Apps in Use***

Sales Cloud
40%

Service Cloud
30%

Marketing Cloud
27%

IoT Cloud
13%

Einstein (Analytics)
11%
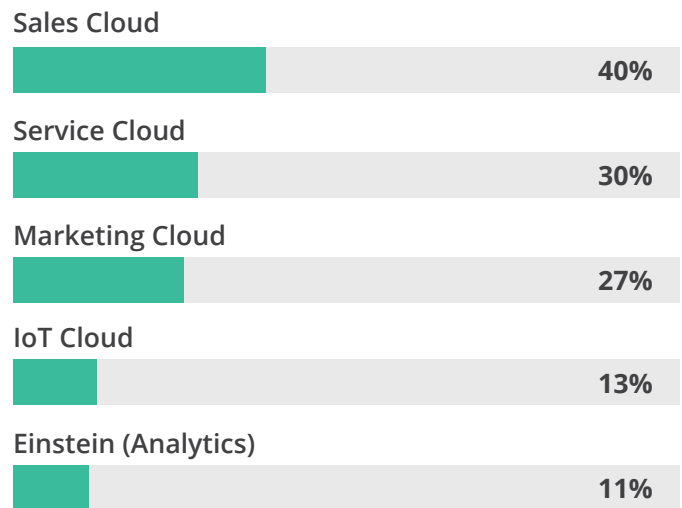
*Respondents were asked to indicate all Salesforce solutions in use by their organizations. Beyond the top 5, all others, including Salesforce Support, industry-specific apps, Trailhead, and Lightning were indicated by 2–10% of respondents.

ANALYSIS

Many companies are struggling with the administration and maintenance of their Salesforce ecosystems.

Only 40% of respondents reported that their companies are very good at the day-to-day work of adding new users, addressing bugs, and handling seasonal releases. The remainder—60%—cited slow response times or confusion on these administration and maintenance tasks (figure 5).

Which statement most closely describes the state of your company's administration and maintenance of your Salesforce ecosystem? For example, adding/removing users, addressing bugs or small fixes, and working with seasonal releases.
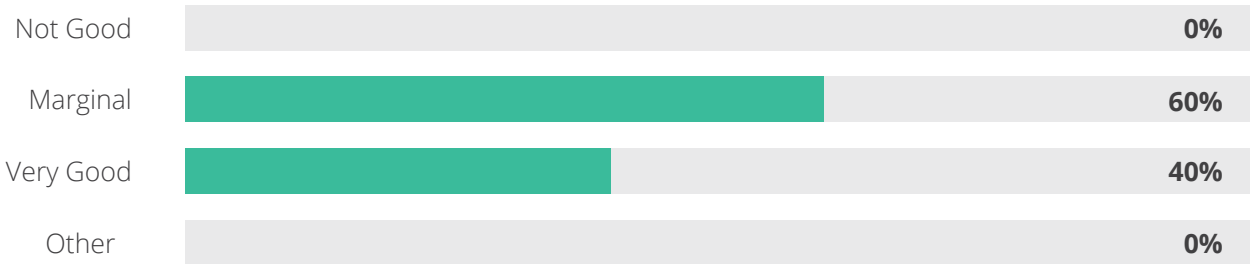
Not Good	0%
Marginal	60%
Very Good	40%
Other	0%

Fig. 5

Midsize companies (100–999 employees) are struggling even more than larger enterprises to manage the maintenance of their Salesforce solutions. While 64% of large-company respondents said their companies are only marginally good at handling day-to-day administration and maintenance (figure 6), that proportion jumps to 72% among midsize businesses (figure 7).

These challenges may be due to fewer staff, smaller budgets, and significantly less engagement with managed service providers.

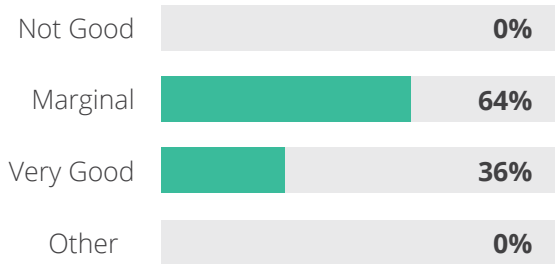**Large Companies Only**

Not Good	0%
Marginal	64%
Very Good	36%
Other	0%

Fig. 6

Small Companies Only

Not Good	0%
Marginal	72%
Very Good	28%
Other	0%

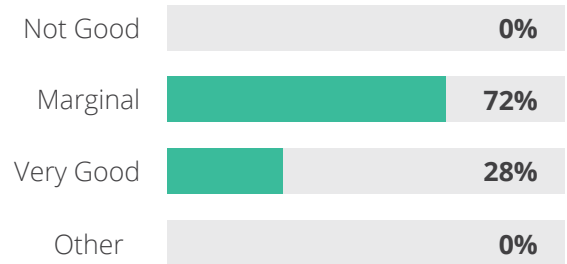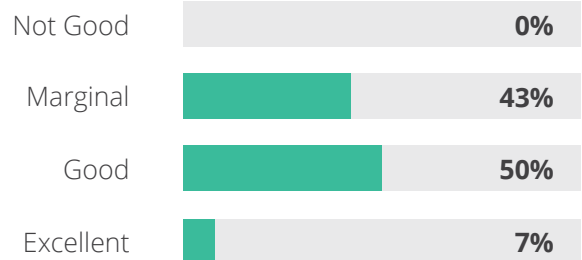**Fig. 7**

Even more companies find it challenging to implement new Salesforce functionality.

As many organizations find the day-to-day maintenance of their Salesforce systems a challenge, it's not surprising that implementing new functionality, adding new apps, and making strategic workflow changes represent a bigger problem. While roughly half of respondents reported decent success on this measure, only 8% gave their companies an excellent rating, and 38% said their organizations' capabilities on this are marginal (figure 8).

Which statement most closely describes your company's ability to implement new functionality, add solutions, and make workflow improvements to your current Salesforce offerings or ecosystem?

Not Good	0%
Marginal	38%
Good	54%
Excellent	8%
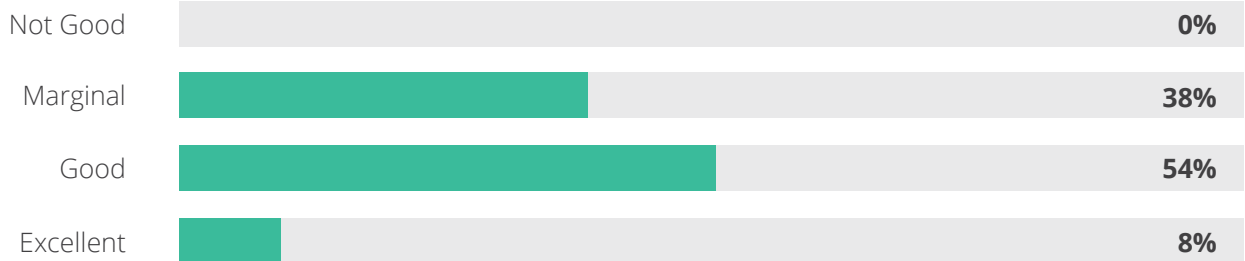
Fig. 8

Again, midsize companies are struggling even more than large ones with this work. While 34% of large-company respondents reported their organizations are only marginally adept at adding new functionality, solutions, and workflow improvements to their Salesforce ecosystems (figure 9), 43% of midsize-company respondents said so (figure 10).

Large Companies Only

Not Good	0%
Marginal	34%
Good	57%
Excellent	8%
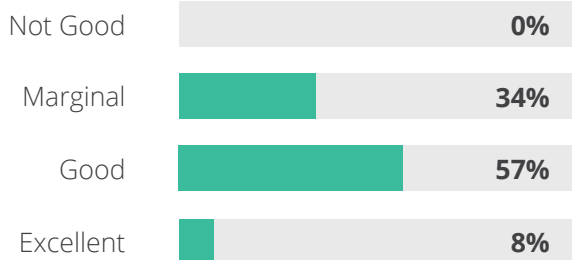
Fig. 9

Midsize Companies Only

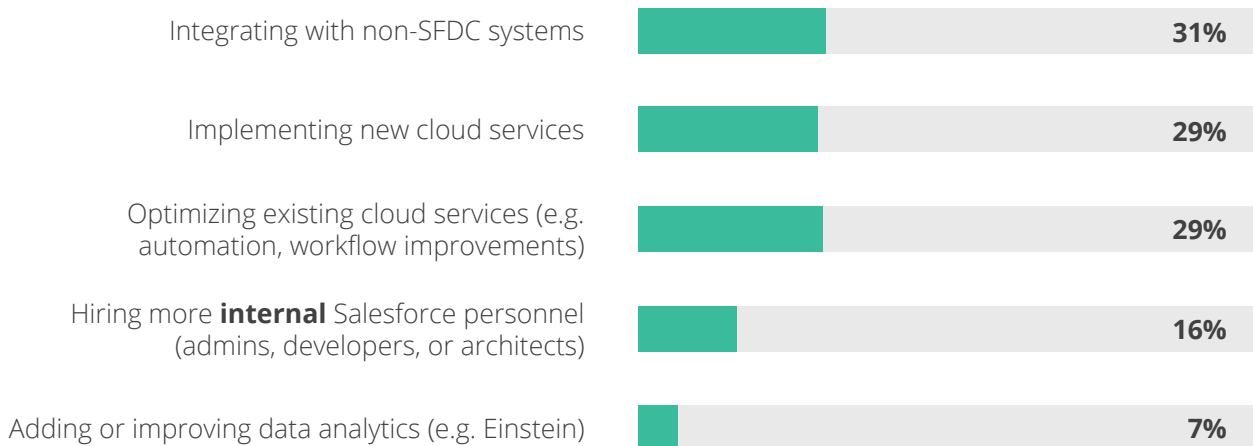|	
Not Good	0%
Marginal	43%
Good	50%
Excellent	7%

Fig. 10

There's a lot of groundwork to be done, with integration and optimization of existing systems among the top reported Salesforce goals for 2021.

We asked respondents which Salesforce improvements or enhancements their company has in sight for the next year, referencing a broad range of options. Some respondents picked only one, while others picked up to three in order of priority. In raw numbers alone, integrating with non-Salesforce systems was the most frequent pick, and more than 80% who chose it placed it in top priority (figure 11).

Close behind were optimizing existing cloud services—another ground-level task—and adding new cloud functionality, both on the list of 29% of respondents. Hiring more internal Salesforce personnel was next in line, which bodes well for those professionals and not so well for the many companies vying to land them. The top five was rounded out by plans to add or improve data analytics.

Top 5 Most Indicated Salesforce Enhancements or Improvements for the Next Year

|	
Integrating with non-SFDC systems	**31%**
Implementing new cloud services	**29%**
Optimizing existing cloud services (e.g. automation, workflow improvements)	**29%**
Hiring more **internal** Salesforce personnel (admins, developers, or architects)	**16%**
Adding or improving data analytics (e.g. Einstein)	**7%**

Fig. 11

Most companies want to expand their Salesforce ecosystems but report a lack of the right personnel or expertise to achieve the specific goals they have in mind.

Almost all companies said that adding new functionality and solutions to their Salesforce ecosystems is a priority for the next year—in fact, only a handful of respondents said their organizations do not have plans to expand (figure 12).

But businesses face several roadblocks on their path to expansion, starting with a lack of personnel (identified by 26%), lack of access to internal expertise (17%), and lack of access to external expertise (19%). This adds up to 62% of respondents having indicated that a lack of the right human resources is a barrier to expanding their Salesforce ecosystems.

A lack of time to research new solutions was also mentioned by 23% of respondents, highlighting the mixed blessing of working with a set of offerings as complex and varied as those of Salesforce.

What are the biggest challenges to your company expanding its use of SFDC products/ services? (Please choose as many as applicable)

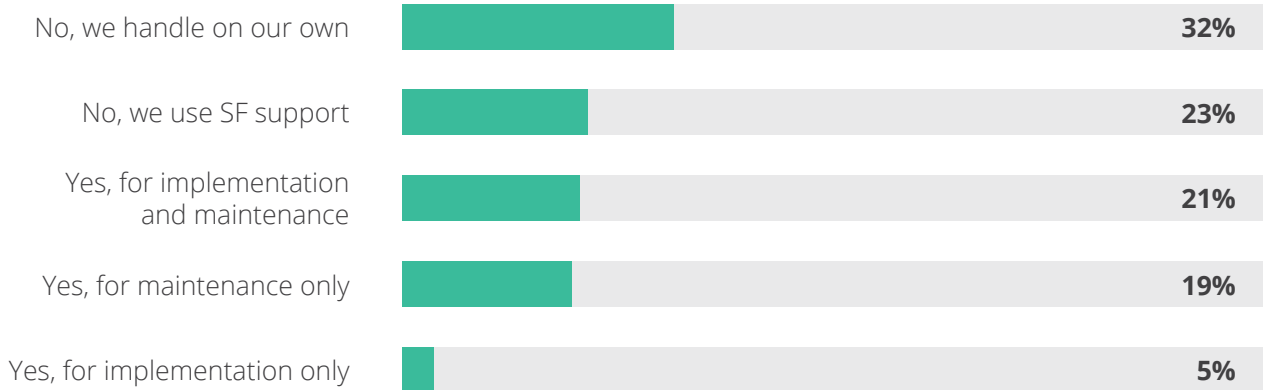|	
Lack of access to personnel to implement new solutions	**26%**
Lack of time to research new solutions	**23%**
Lack of access to external expertise	**19%**
Lack of access to internal expertise	**17%**
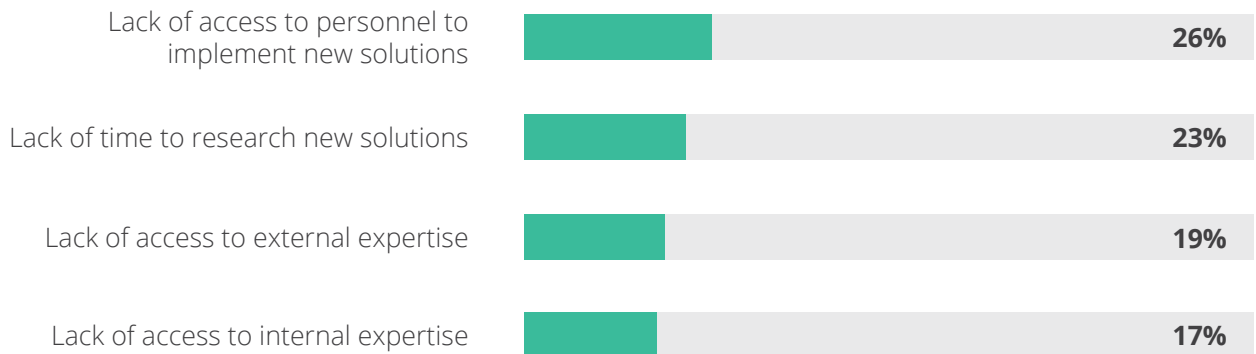
Fig. 12

The right MSP can make a difference on the implementation, maintenance, and innovation of Salesforce systems.

While 55% of respondents indicated their companies are not engaged with an MSP and are either going it alone (32%) or relying on Salesforce-only support (23%), 60 of the 133 organizations we surveyed are receiving various services from an MSP (figure 13).

Most have engaged their MSP for both implementation and ongoing maintenance of Salesforce systems, or for maintenance only. Just 5% are receiving implementation-only support, likely reflecting the shorter duration of those contracts and the need for ongoing expertise.

Are you using a managed service provider (MSP) to help with your Salesforce ecosystem?

No, we handle on our own	**32%**
No, we use SF support	**23%**
Yes, for implementation and maintenance	**21%**
Yes, for maintenance only	**19%**
Yes, for implementation only	**5%**

Fig. 13

Midsize businesses reported working on their Salesforce systems alone, without either an MSP or Salesforce-provided support, more often than larger enterprises (45% vs 23%).

We asked those companies working with an MSP (45% of survey respondents) how satisfied they were with the services they've received, whether for implementation and ongoing maintenance, or innovation and optimization. The average MSP satisfaction score was 3.2 on a scale of 5 (figure 14). Specifically, 60% reported being satisfied, and 30% more said they're quite satisfied. Of note: none reported being not at all satisfied or very satisfied.

These findings indicate the strong potential of Salesforce MSPs to bridge the skills gap and help companies achieve the most from their SFDC systems, while also emphasizing the importance of picking a solid provider.

Please Rate Your Experience With Your MSP on a Scale of 1 to 5, With 1 Being Not At All Satisfied and 5 Being Very Satisfied

3.2

Average MSP Satisfaction Rating

Fig. 14

FIVE RECOMMENDATIONS FOR MAXIMIZING YOUR SALESFORCE INVESTMENT

01 Plan for Post-Implementation Success

Companies often underestimate the amount of additional Salesforce work needed after launching a new cloud or solution. Only 8% of companies achieve excellent results at adding new functionality or solutions to their Salesforce ecosystem. If you manage or play an active role in your company's Salesforce environment, make sure you allocate sufficient internal and/or external resources for ongoing, post-implementation development.

02 Exploit the Salesforce Ecosystem

More than 80% of companies indicate that their lack of access to the right personnel or having the time to research solutions prevents them from adding innovation. Given the quickly changing nature of technology, best practices suggest you devote ample time to researching new offerings or work with a service provider that will provide guidance and expertise to take full advantage of the Salesforce universe.

03 Focus on Expectation Setting and Adoption Management

Implementing a CRM for the first time, upgrading to the Lightning Experience, or installing new functionality places a huge burden on internal staff. Research indicates that companies struggle to execute new project development. When you launch new projects, clearly define objectives across the organization and create a constant feedback loop from the end users to gauge adoption and to troubleshoot problems.

04 System Integrations Require Well-Designed Data Management and Process Rules

Research indicates that integrating Salesforce with other systems is a top priority. A poorly executed integration can have widespread negative impacts. For successful integration projects, you need robust data management and process rules to efficiently and accurately pass information between systems.

05 Find the Right Salesforce Partner

Salesforce provides countless ways to engage with customers and manage vital business functions—but most companies fail to achieve an excellent Salesforce experience on their own. The right partner (e.g. multi-cloud expertise, global presence, and/or experience with on-premise system integrations) will help you get the most out of your Salesforce investment. This research indicates that 90% of the companies that work with a CRM managed service provider indicate a high level of satisfaction with the assistance they receive.

ABOUT TEC AND
SPINNAKER SUPPORT

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Spinnaker Support is a global provider of on-premise and cloud-based enterprise software support services. Mid-size to Fortune 100 global enterprises and public sector organizations that run Oracle, SAP, and Salesforce software turn to us for third-party support, managed services, and/or consulting services. We currently serve nearly 1,200 organizations located in 104 countries.

As a Salesforce Partner, Spinnaker Support offers managed services to help organizations sustain, grow, and expand their Salesforce ecosystems. Our certified Salesforce administrators, developers, and architects assist organizations to increase the adoption and performance of their platform post-implementation. For over a decade, we have delivered high return-on-investment support for critical CRM and other enterprise software applications.

To learn more about our services and how we can help save you time and money on your next software purchase, contact us at selectionservices@technologyevaluation.com.

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