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Top 5 reasons to move Lotus Notes apps to the cloud with Force.com



Contents

5 reasons to move Lotus Notes apps to Force.com	1
1. Force.com apps are easier to use.....	1
2. Force.com apps are faster to develop than alternatives like .NET.....	1
3. Force.com apps are easier to integrate.....	1
4. Force.com apps are less expensive to run and administer.....	2
5. Force.com apps are easier to govern.....	2
Rebuilding Lotus Notes applications in Force.com	2
1. Create a database table	2
2. Create a data entry form	3
3. Build business logic.....	3
Next steps: getting acquainted with Force.com	3

“Moving from Lotus Domino to Force.com was the smoothest migration I’ve ever experienced.”

Neale Wooten
Manager of Information Systems
Perceptive Software

First released in 1989 and revolutionary in its time, Lotus Notes first became popular as a corporate email system, then evolved as a development environment for creating collaborative applications—the kind now commonly found in intranet applications. The program’s uniqueness contributed to its popularity: Through the 1990s, few technologies matched Lotus Notes’ ability to enforce business processes and handle workflow without also requiring considerable coding effort.

But two decades after its original release, Lotus Notes has really begun to show its age. With the popularity of Web 2.0 and cloud computing architectures, customers have become less tolerant of unintuitive interfaces that frustrate users, disparate databases that defy integration, and siloed data that resists consolidation.

5 reasons to move Notes apps to Force.com

- Force.com apps are easier to use
- Force.com apps are faster to develop than alternatives like .NET
- Force.com apps are easier to integrate
- Force.com apps are less expensive to run and administer
- Force.com apps are easier to govern

5 reasons to move Lotus Notes apps to Force.com

For many Lotus Notes customers, it’s not a matter of “if” but “when” their applications will be migrated to a modern Web infrastructure. Here are five key reasons that more and more customers are choosing to move their Notes apps to the cloud with Force.com:

1. Force.com apps are easier to use

Force.com delivers the responsive, intuitive, and even fun experience that users have grown accustomed to with consumer websites such as YouTube, Amazon, and Twitter. Adding functionality like forms, search, reports, social feeds, and mobile support to your apps is a matter of a few clicks. In fact, ease of use is the #1 reason decision-makers select Force.com, according to an independent survey of more than 1,700 business executives.¹

2. Force.com apps are faster to develop than alternatives like .NET

With Force.com, you can modernize your legacy Lotus Notes apps 5x faster and for ½ the cost of traditional development platforms like .NET. Just open your browser, build your app, and let us take care of the rest. We take care of the infrastructure, the operations, and all the components your business apps need like user management, workflow, mobile, and reporting. All you need to bring are your best ideas.

3. Force.com apps are easier to integrate

Force.com makes integration easy, with certified adapters for most popular integration middleware tools and a proven Web Services API that drives more than 200 million integration transactions every day. All the functionality built on Force.com, including custom objects that you build, is automatically available via the API, without any extra development effort.

¹ “Salesforce.com Customer Relationship Survey,” conducted in June 2009 by independent third party, MarketTools, Inc.

4. Force.com apps are less expensive to run and administer

Unlike on-premises platforms like Lotus Notes or .NET, with Force.com there's no software to manage or servers to maintain—everything runs centrally in the cloud and is easy to manage and report on with just a browser. Executives report ease of administration second only to ease of use among the top reasons they selected Force.com².

5. Force.com apps are easier to govern

The distributed architecture of Lotus Notes databases and the proliferation of “rogue apps” often creates a governance nightmare for IT organizations. Most centralized alternatives greatly limit the ability of end users to customize their apps, however. In comparison, Force.com features like fine-grained access control, hierarchical sharing rules, and delegated administration let companies maintain control over their apps and data without limiting employee innovation.

Rebuilding Lotus Notes applications in Force.com

Most Lotus Notes applications include a database, simple forms for entering and accessing data, and perhaps some basic workflow. These types of applications can be built quickly on Force.com without any code or developer support. Moving these applications to Force.com is essentially a three-step process, in which you successively build the:

- Data model
- User interface
- Business logic, including workflow and approval rules

Let's consider how to rebuild a common Lotus Notes application: vacation request processing. Build times vary, of course, but a Salesforce administrator should be able to build the core of this application in about 2 days.

1. Create a database table

The first step is to create a database table, the row-and-column listing that's at the heart of every Force.com application. The table (called a “custom object” in Force.com) might track all requests by employee, correlating each by his or her vacation balance—the number of days owed. “Fields” in your custom object represent the details you need to track, such as the requester and the start/end dates. Creating your custom object and fields is a simple matter of pointing and clicking through a few wizard screens. Even sophisticated data security features, such as which objects will show up in search results for different types of users, are just a click away.

“We're blown away by how we built a healthcare app on Force.com with one person in just 4 days. The same app built in .NET would have taken over 3 months.”

Dick Escue
CIO, RehabCare

“Our staff of four moved 20 applications and 20+ databases from Lotus Notes to Force.com, built our customer portal, and integrated our financial back end—all in only 4 months.”

Neale Wooten
Manager of Information Systems,
Perceptive Software

²“Salesforce.com Customer Relationship Survey” conducted in June 2009 by independent third party, MarketTools, Inc.

2. Create a data entry form

The next step is to re-create an entry request form in Force.com comparable to the one in Lotus Notes. Force.com automatically generates data entry forms based on the objects and fields you create, so all you need to do is customize them. You can rearrange the location of fields, show different fields to different classes of employees, and even add history tracking to log changes to a field. In most cases, the Web forms generated by Force.com will easily surpass the ones you had in Lotus Notes (see Figure 1). But with Force.com pages, you can also create highly customized rich user interfaces that incorporate popular Web technologies like Adobe Flash, CSS, HTML, and JavaScript.

3. Build business logic

The final step is to build a workflow to approve the request, that is, an action that's triggered by inserting or changing a data record. A workflow can trigger a task, send an email alert, update a data field, or send an outbound API message. You can use any or all of these actions to make sure supervisors are aware of the vacation request and have given it the green light. Using the data table, the workflow might first validate that the employee has accrued enough vacation time for the requested time off. From there, it initiates the request. A specialized type of workflow called an "approval" can route information to one or more people, each of whom can approve the information, sending it on to the next recipient, or decline the approval. For example, you could create an approval process to require only manager approval for time-off requests of less than a week in duration, but also require VP approval for longer requests. If the request is approved, the vacation days are deducted from the employee's vacation balance. If it's rejected, the request is marked accordingly.

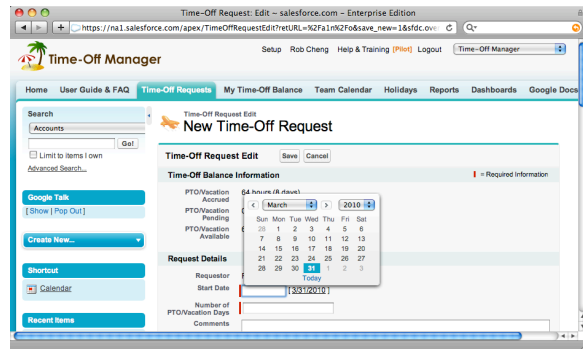
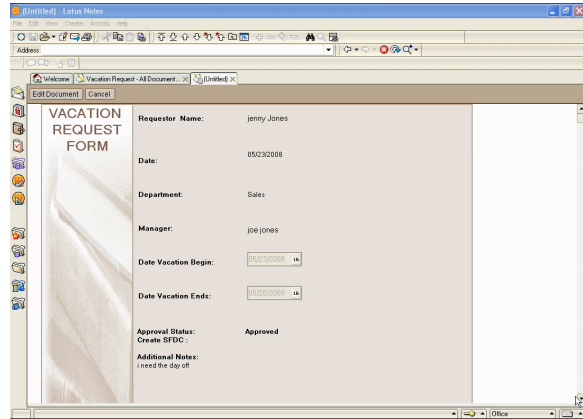


Figure 1: Lotus Notes (top) and Force.com (bottom) versions of a vacation request app

Next steps: getting acquainted with Force.com

The best way to understand the benefits of cloud computing with Force.com is to try it out for yourself. Getting started is easy. Just visit <http://www.force.com/lotusmigration> for demos, training, and other Lotus Notes migration resources, plus a free 2-hour assessment with a [Force.com](http://www.force.com) expert.



For More Information

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