

Bring Cloud Computing to the Entire Company with Force.com AppExchange

Abstract

With hundreds of applications—ranging from dashboards that extend Salesforce CRM to full-featured Financials applications—the Force.com AppExchange makes finding and deploying new applications fast, easy, and secure.

Welcome to the Force.com AppExchange, the world's first marketplace for business applications that run in the cloud. It's been called the "ebay of business software" by Forbes magazine because it brings application sellers and buyers together.

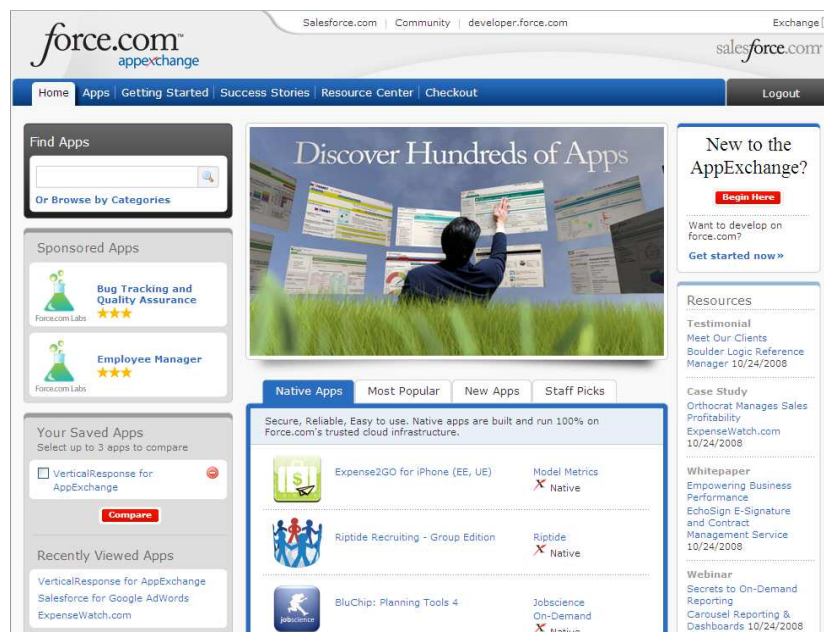
If you're a developer or a company that builds software-as-a-service (SaaS) applications, the AppExchange lets you reach thousands of potential customers and benefit from salesforce.com's reach and resources. You can make any applications you create available on the AppExchange for free.

If you're a customer, you can use the AppExchange to expand the functionality of Salesforce CRM, with popular applications to integrate your campaigns with keyword marketing, email and direct mail solutions, and contract and proposal management, to name just a few. But that's not all. Many of the solutions on the AppExchange are enterprise-grade apps that go far beyond CRM. These applications bring the benefits of cloud computing to all departments in your company, including Finance, HR, and IT. Many of these apps are free, others are fee-based. All of them give you the benefits of cloud computing.

What's Different about the AppExchange?

To answer that question, consider the traditional process of selecting a new business application. First, you research available apps in publications and at trade shows. Then you narrow down the pool of potential vendors. You create an RFP, send it out, and evaluate the responses. You invite the short list of vendors to give demonstrations. You do a pilot and, with luck, the pilot is successful and you license the software and start the implementation process.

Compare that process to getting apps from the AppExchange, where everything you need to discover, evaluate, and test applications is in one place. You can compare available apps side by side. See what other customers say about them. Try them out. And then install them with a few clicks and you're ready to go. This paper describes the 5 steps to getting apps for your business needs.



1. Discover

The AppExchange makes it easy to find and evaluate applications. You can search for apps by keyword or browse various categories, including native apps built on the Force.com platform, the most popular apps, newly added apps, and apps our staff particularly likes. You can also save up to 3 apps to create a side-by-side summary of important features for easy comparison. Forget exactly how you found an app? The Recently Viewed Apps area makes it easy to find it again. Want more? The Apps tab further categorizes apps by type, industry, and other attributes such as whether the apps are free or fee based, how they're rated, whether they're supported, and so on.

2. Evaluate

There are three steps to evaluating an app—finding out all you can about it, trying it yourself, and possibly getting advice.

The AppExchange makes the first two steps easy. First, you can display a summary of any app for important information at a glance. You can even display up to 3 summaries side by side for easy comparison. You can also play demos, view screenshots, get technical details, and read customer reviews to benefit from the experience of other customers. Then try it yourself—just click the Test Drive button. Finally, talk to your account executive or CSM to get their recommendations.

3. Customize

An important key to the success of any kind of application is user adoption. The key to user adoption, in turn, is making sure the application works the way your users. Adjusting the application to the needs of your users typically requires changes to the user interface, such as deleting unnecessary fields, changing field names, or adding tabs.

Making such changes is easy with salesforce.com's point-and-click tools. One great thing about customizations—unlike with traditional on-premise software, your customizations aren't lost during upgrades or new releases. Note that the same limits that apply to your edition—such as the number of custom objects you can have—apply to any apps you install from the AppExchange.

4. Integrate

Integration—making different applications work together and share data—has been one of the biggest challenges in IT. Because all apps on the AppExchange are pre-integrated with Salesforce CRM, there are no integration issues. Instead, your new apps simply work. What's more, just as with customizations, you'll never have to recode integrations with new releases.

5. Deploy

One of the benefits of the cloud is that deploying apps doesn't require a massive IT rollout, with the need to configure individual machines, upgrades, and versions. As with Salesforce CRM, the IT infrastructure is taken care of. And for apps that were built on and run on the Force.com platform, you also get the same performance and reliability.

In Salesforce CRM, every org is ready for apps from the AppExchange. Although anyone can try an AppExchange app, installation is limited to Salesforce CRM administrators, who are trained on the security aspects of deploying new applications. We suggest that you download apps to a production or Sandbox environment before making them available to all users. We also recommend you train your users on how to get the most from your new app.

For More Information

Contact your account executive to learn how we can help you accelerate your CRM success.

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