



Five Tips for Controlling Salesforce® Development Costs

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Tip # 1: Development vs. Administration

Many 'Development' tasks can be completed by an experienced Administrator

Job descriptions seeking Salesforce Developers often include a long list of tasks, many of which are not actually development activities.

Creating fields, objects, roles, profiles, workflows, reports and dashboards can be performed by a Salesforce Administrator (at much less expense) than hiring a Developer.

Developers are not necessarily System Architects

Most Salesforce Developers do not have the skills required to perform System Architecture planning and design.

While some Developers may also be System Architects, the System Architect is a distinct role with requires a different set of competencies.

Third-Party App Install and Configuration is not a Development Project

Installing and configuring tools such as Pardot® or CPQ (Configure, Price, Quote) applications are not typically development tasks and can be executed by an experienced *Administrator*.

Some individual applications (while easy to install) can be very complicated to configure and require specialized knowledge of the App, rather than development skill.

Tip # 2: Avoid Unnecessary Development

Use Standard Functionality First!

Before initiating custom development, explore Salesforce standard functionality to determine if it can meet your goal. Many new standard features within Salesforce have eliminated the need for custom development and coding.

Many Developers are Unaware of the Full Extent of Salesforce Standard Functionality

Salesforce continues to evolve the functionality included with your subscription. Developers used to customizing may be unaware of a newly released standard feature that that can fulfill your requirements. Too many users are too quick to resort to customizing when standard functionality will provide the solution.

Research Apps Relevant to Your Business Needs

There are now over 3,000 Salesforce.com Apps in the AppExchange. Many Apps have been built to solve similar problems or provide functionality you are seeking. Some Apps are free or available at a very low cost.

Identify Software with Pre-Built Salesforce Connectors

Hundreds of software providers have created standard connectors to Salesforce.

Technology with pre-built connectors provides a less-expensive, and often, more proven solution on the application side, than undertaking your own development on the Salesforce platform.

Tip # 3: Know Your Developer's Core Competencies

What does Your Developer like to do?

Developers have specific interests, skills and backgrounds. Some are programmers, while others like to troubleshoot; some enjoy data migration projects, others prefer to build Apps. Ensure that the personality and interest of the Developer matches the project you are undertaking. With development, the clock is always running, so finding a Developer with the exact experience you need for your project saves time and money.

Understand Your Stage in the System Lifecycle

There are multiple stages in the system lifecycle (Plan, Build, Test, Deploy, Maintain, Train, Support, etc.). Developers who may be experienced with building and testing may not be the best choice for the training and support stages.

A Variety of Skills can be Valuable

Salesforce credentials are essential in vetting potential Developers. But other attributes such as functional business experience, cultural fit and lifecycle familiarity can be critical to the success of your efforts.

A Developer with an actual understanding of the business can save a tremendous amount of cycle time and preempt many errors.

Communication skills are also important. Does your Developer listen to what you are saying? Does he or she actually understand the request? There is often an enormous communication gap between a business user's desired goal and the Developer's understanding of their task.

Tip # 4: Know Where Your Developer is Located

Are Developers Offshore?

Offshore Developers are based outside North America or Europe in countries such as India, China or South America but can also now include dozens of other places. Offshore Developers often have a high level of technical skill, but the distance can present other problems:

Cultural disconnect - your product or service may be completely unfamiliar to the person developing your application. How can someone provide an insurance solution if they don't know what 'insurance' as a concept is?

Communication challenges due to language and time-zones.

12 and 14-hour time-zone differences make real-time collaboration and conversation impossible. Not everything can be explained in an email. The back and forth required for clarification all adds to your development cost.

Are Developers Dedicated or in a Team Structure?

Many Developers work in teams to provide ongoing availability. But a dedicated Developer may be more effective than a team where each new person you encounter requires an explanation and may have a different approach to meeting the goal.

Be aware of the number of layers between you and the actual Developer doing the work such as Business Analysts, Project Managers, Techno Functional Consultants, etc. You are paying for the time each project participant spends discussing your work with a colleague.

Tip # 5: Hire a Techno Functional Consultant

Bridge the Divide between Business Analyst and Developer

A Techno Functional Consultant maps functional requirements into solution architecture. They are a bridge between Business Analyst and Developer.

A Techno Functional Consultant is an expert with knowledge of the code, coding standards and implementation life cycle whose role is to do customizations, extensions, modifications, localizations or integrations to the existing product.

They bridge the technical gap of an organization through their expertise and provide a level of insight that is different than that of the Business Analyst or Project Manager. A good Techno Functional Consultant saves you time, money and errors by providing precise documentation which will require less clarification time.



snowforce data

1875 Century Park East,
Suite 600
Los Angeles, CA 90067
1-855-SNOWFORCE
Tel: (310) 746-3883
www.snowforcedata.com

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