



# A Beginner's Guide to the AppExchange

## How to get started building on the AppExchange and working with Salesforce

Every day we talk with potential customers and our clients about Salesforce, the AppExchange, and what it takes to either improve an existing app or launch a new one. And more often than not, we find that business leaders are unsure of where to start or are looking for guidance on launching their app successfully.

To be fair, there is a lot to understand. Salesforce has its own jargon and process, and even for well-established SaaS companies, the journey of getting on the AppExchange and selling with Salesforce can still seem overwhelming.

That's why we've put together a quick-start guide that will provide some insights into the world of Salesforce and the AppExchange along with actionable advice to help you get started.



*Access the  
CodeScience  
Glossary.*

# The Great Separation and the Business Opportunity with Salesforce

The landscape for businesses has radically changed, especially in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic. Coupled with the fact that there are more options available for building and hosting applications than ever before, investing in the right platform is essential for success.

What the pandemic did is show the opportunity every business has to leverage the Salesforce ecosystem to accelerate product development and speed to market, even in uncertain times. Companies that have been able to quickly pivot in the wake of the unprecedented circumstances around the pandemic were presented with a unique opportunity. In our 4th annual State of the AppExchange Partners Report, we refer to this as The Great Separation — a time during which speed to market and product build quality allows businesses to outpace the competition. Salesforce's infrastructure and other inherent advantages are essential elements of this trend.

David Schmaier, CEO of Salesforce Industries and former Founder and CEO of Vlocity, a premier Salesforce ISV which Salesforce acquired in 2020, articulates this value proposition in our AppExchange Benchmarks and Predictions for 2021 Partner Panel.

“By going with Salesforce, we were able to ship our first product in 6 to 9 months. And we got a huge leg up with the Salesforce ecosystem,” he says. “We would have literally spent 3, 4, or 5 years and possibly 10s if not 100s of millions of dollars to build our platform.”

Furthermore, “It's a great platform where you can build anything. It accelerates your time to value and what is equally as important is the Salesforce world of customers that help you get your first customers to become successful.”



*Download our 2021 State of AppExchange Partners Report.*

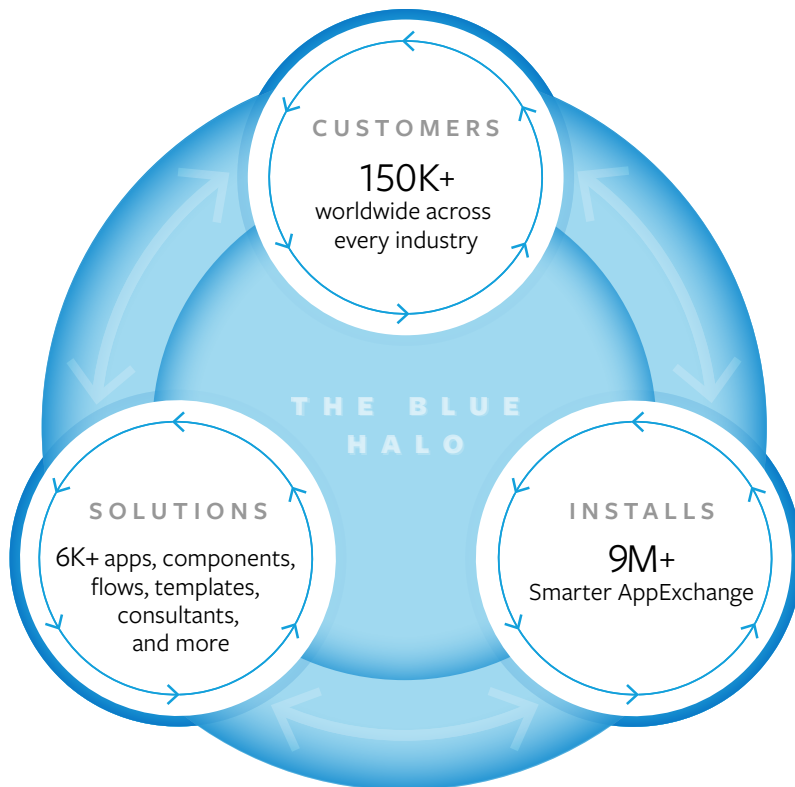


*Get instant access to AppExchange Benchmarks and Predictions for 2021 Partner Panel.*

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**David Schmaier, CEO of Salesforce Industries**

By building on Salesforce, you drive value to the Salesforce platform, and likewise, they drive value back to you. We estimate that there will be a billion dollars of investment from ISVs into Salesforce development. This creates a virtuous cycle where the money invested in your app drives a broader market which drives more customers back to you — a phenomenon nCino Chief Product Officer, Trisha Price, has coined “The Blue Halo.”



## The Salesforce economy

Since its founding in 1999, Salesforce has grown to a major powerhouse in the SaaS landscape. Now generating more than \$17B in revenue, Salesforce is expected to drive \$1.2T in new business revenue to local economies and drive growth in GDP.

Additionally, Salesforce is driving growth for their ISV partners, as we covered in our 2020 State of AppExchange Partners Report. Many ISVs are leveraging the AppExchange to bring multiple solutions to market and gain competitive advantage over their competition. In fact, 53% of ISVs stated that participation in the Salesforce AppExchange increased their revenue in 2020. And this growth isn't just near-term: 65% of participants with four or more years on the AppExchange state that participation in the Salesforce ISV program increased revenue.



Read 'The Salesforce Economic Impact' White Paper.



Download our 2021 State of AppExchange Partners Report.

With newly stated revenue goals, Salesforce has its eyes set well beyond the stated \$20B goal by 2022. The newly stated goal is to reach \$40B by 2028 and then \$60B by 2034. Salesforce is not shy when it comes to setting aggressive goals, and by all accounts, they continue to crush each milestone they set.



*Read a quick TechCrunch review of Salesforce goals.*

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## Don't take half-measures

The opportunity and advantages of building on Salesforce are clear. So how do you get started? Depending on your familiarity with Salesforce, you may be thinking to yourself, “Great; I’ll pull together an API, get listed, and reap the rewards.” There is a fatal flaw in this thinking. You are missing key features and functionality by building only an API integration.

Your app has an intrinsic value. Your competition isn’t building something half-baked and neither should you. When the best companies create the best applications, they win. Our most successful partners understand that their customers are using Salesforce and they need to be in the system that their customers are using. The biggest wins come from when ISVs look to Salesforce for both technology and distribution — again, this is the magic of the “Blue Halo.”

Salesforce continues to bet on its partner program. In a recent interview, J.C. Collins, Senior Vice President and COO of Industries and Partners at Salesforce, states that the greatest challenge the Salesforce channel is facing is not keeping its partners busy, but rather finding enough partners to satisfy the demand for services and support.

Collins says, “There’s a tremendous amount of opportunity to grow your business.” Research from IDC shows that the partner ecosystem will make \$5.18 for every dollar in licensing revenue collected by Salesforce itself.

Simultaneously, you need to get to market quickly. If you are thinking about getting on the AppExchange, we can guarantee your competition is thinking about getting on the AppExchange — if they’re not already there.



*Read our blog post: 7 Reasons Why a Salesforce API Integration Isn't Enough.*



*Read our blog post: Driving Value Through App Development.*

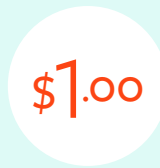


*Read the article on Channel Pro Network: Salesforce Thinks Big. Do You?*

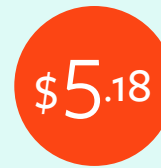


*Read our blog post: Six Reasons Why Time to Market Matters on the AppExchange.*

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SALESFORCE  
LICENSING  
REVENUE



PARTNER  
ECOSYSTEM

## Understanding the Process and Roles

You now understand the value and the importance of getting on the AppExchange, but what does this process look like, and who are the various players you need to know?

The best way to get started is by reading this series from our managed services team:

*Get Onboard with the AppExchange Part 1*  
Choose Your Path



*Get Onboard with the AppExchange Part 2*  
Utilize Your PAM



*Get Onboard with the AppExchange Part 3*  
Introducing Your Partner Success Manager



*Get Onboard with the AppExchange Part 4*  
Interfacing with your Technical Evangelist



*Bonus Track*  
Sales Engineers




*Click each segment to read the 5-blog series: Get Onboard with the AppExchange.*

# How to Build for Success


Understanding the process is the first step, now actually getting your app built is the next. When deciding how to build your app for the AppExchange, you have three major options — build it yourself, work with a Systems Integrator (SI), or work with a Product Development Organization (PDO).

There are important decisions to be made when you weigh out these options. For example, if you decide to build your application yourself, do you already have a team in place with Salesforce AppExchange experience? Or if you plan on creating a team, have you factored in the cost of sourcing the talent and bringing them up to speed with your business and the project?

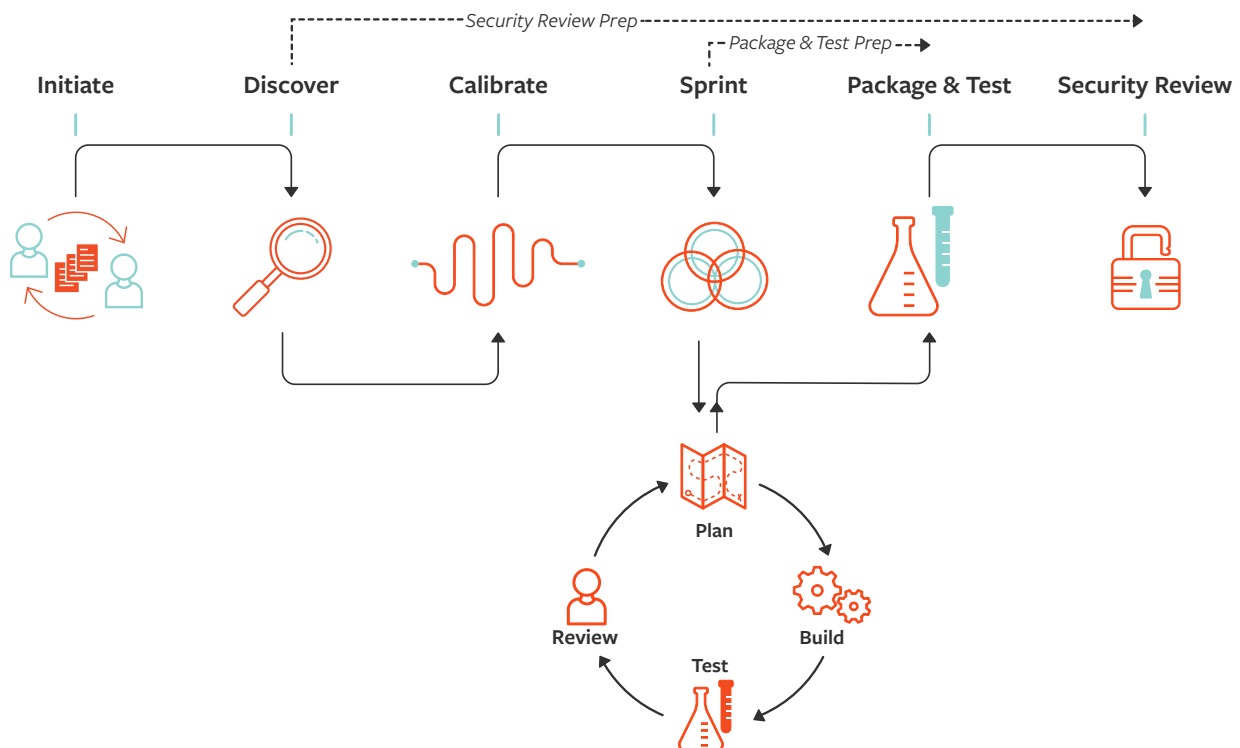
What about an SI versus a PDO? To quote our Product Manager, Kevin Houk, “At the highest level, PDOs have particular expertise in building commercial apps while SIs are more service experts that implement and configure Salesforce Clouds.” Check out this blog for an in-depth explanation.

 [Read our blog post: Why a PDO Is Different From Other Salesforce Consultants.](#)

Streamlining your product build is of the utmost importance for companies to maximize budget and get to market quickly. We’ve broken down the core steps of the AppExchange product lifecycle so you can better understand the stages involved and develop a strategy that makes sense for your organization.

 [Read our blog post: The AppExchange Product Lifecycle Explained.](#)

## Product Delivery Method



## Don't go it alone

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While we believe that everyone building for the AppExchange would benefit from working with a PDO, we understand this may not be the best fit for you. Regardless of the path you decide to take, there are several steps you must take before your app goes live.

Even before you start to build, you'll need to determine which type of partner license you will select to define your relationship with Salesforce: OEM Embedded vs. ISVforce. This decision will also impact how you'll architect your solution.

One of the most crucial steps that we help our customers complete is Salesforce's required Security Review process. Salesforce shares our obsession with security. One of the key features of the AppExchange is that the entire ecosystem is highly secure and all applications work as expected. Not only is Salesforce looking for adherence to security best practices, but they are also regularly updating what it takes to get through the process. It's not easy, and many companies struggle to get beyond this step.

One of the benefits of working with a PDO is that they have expertise in building code that will pass Security Review. CodeScience, for example, guarantees it. Having built and launched over 300 applications on the AppExchange, we know what it takes to pass SecRev and will ensure your app does the same — even if we didn't build it.



*Read our blog post: [Demystifying Salesforce Partner Licensing Types — OEM Embedded vs ISVforce.](#)*



*Read our blog post: [Conquering — and Passing — Salesforce Security Review.](#)*



*View the webinar: [How to Build a Plan for Submitting for Security Review.](#)*



*Prepare Your Application for Salesforce Security Review.*

Having built and launched over **300** applications on the AppExchange, we know what it takes to pass SecRev and will ensure your app does the same — **even if we didn't build it.**



## Understanding the journey


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Knowing what success looks like is paramount as you start building your app for the AppExchange. By working with a partner like a PDO, you can leverage their experience and knowledge of the Salesforce Ecosystem. We have a keen understanding of what it takes to build successfully on the AppExchange and beyond.


Even after getting their app listed on the AppExchange, many partners struggle to interface with Salesforce effectively. There are some tricks of the trade like signing up for the partner community and taking advantage of Trailhead to establish credibility with your Salesforce team, but there are over 6,000 applications on the AppExchange that Salesforce AEs must keep track of when discovering the best solutions for their customers. With the breadth of apps on the AppExchange, it is important to sell with Salesforce.

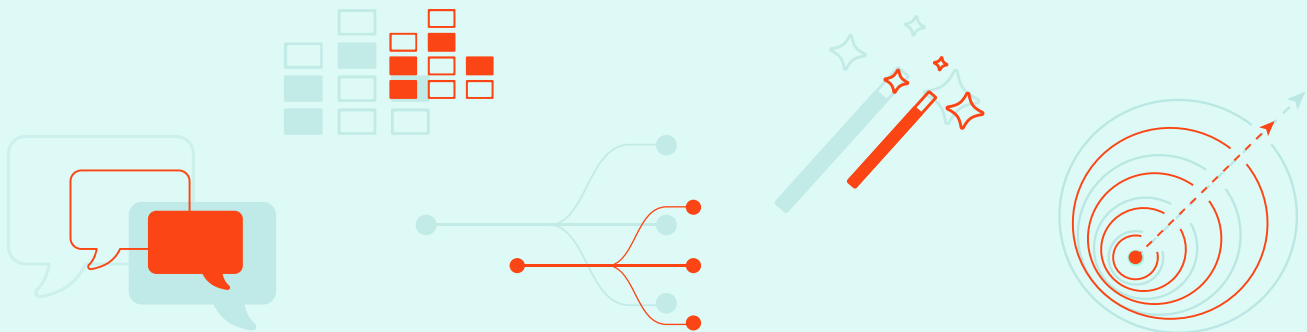
Selling with Salesforce is the most difficult non-technical aspect of fully leveraging the AppExchange. We've listed different strategies to capture your AE's attention, but it takes time. When you work with a PDO, they can expedite the process because the knowledge of the landscape is already established. The best PDOs know who to talk to and how to talk to them. Success for us is different than a body shop — it is important for us to see your business succeed rather than just building an app and pushing it out the door.

For insights and tips for partnering with Salesforce the way leading ISVs do, check out our Acting Like a Top 25 ISV webinar series. In the series, CodeScience CRO, Sean Hogan, teams up with leading sales, go-to-market, and alliances experts to share strategies and tactics any ISV can use to drive maximum impact in the Salesforce ecosystem.

 [View our webinar series: Road to the AppExchange.](#)

 [Read our blog: How to Sell to Salesforce: 4 Ways to Capture Salesforce AE Mindshare and Keep It.](#)


 [View our webinar series: Acting Like a Top 25 ISV.](#)



## What Success Looks Like

While the journey to the AppExchange can seem daunting, the results of correctly executing are substantial. Consider that in 2016, the AppExchange generated \$1.5B in licensing revenue. We've built apps that remain in the top spots of the AppExchange and watched how it continues to shape a company's trajectory.

 [Read the CodeScience success story: MailChimp.](#)

 [Download our 2021 State of AppExchange Partners Report.](#)





A cloud-based bank operating system, **nCino** has partnered with CodeScience to help bring its financial solutions to the AppExchange for more than four years. Over the course of this partnership, nCino has grown to become an industry leader, enjoying tremendous growth.

Most recently, CodeScience helped nCino build technology to process loan transactions as part of the federal Paycheck Protection Program throughout the COVID-19 pandemic. This solution processed more than \$50 billion in relief loans. This helped guide nCino toward a successful IPO in July 2020.

nCino Chief Product Officer Trisha Price sat down with CodeScience CEO Brian Walsh for a candid conversation to discuss partnership, the power of the Salesforce ecosystem, company culture, and more. The discussion is full of useful pieces of wisdom ISVs of all sizes can use to drive success.

“Maintaining a healthy relationship with Salesforce is incredibly important,” explains Trisha. “Understanding where they are going from a roadmap perspective, participating in pilots, and providing feedback as an ISV. Investing in our relationship with Salesforce at all levels has been fundamental for our success.”

*“Investing in our relationship with Salesforce at all levels has been fundamental for our success.”*

**Trisha Price, Chief Product Officer, nCino**



*Get instant access to the presentation: [A Conversation with nCino.](#)*



Managing healthcare data is no easy task. Salesforce’s answer to this challenge was to develop Health Cloud — a CRM specifically designed to meet the needs of healthcare organizations of all sizes. Learn how we partnered with two companies, one an international Bay Area-based healthcare nonprofit and the other a Fortune 10 healthcare provider, to leverage Health Cloud to deliver results like a 7x increase in patients served and to make care delivery more efficient and effective.



*Read the CodeScience success story: [Salesforce Health Cloud](#)*

# D&B Lattice

Lattice Engines is a predictive analytics company that was destined for the AppExchange, but when they came to us didn't have the experience of navigating the Salesforce ecosystem to build effectively. We developed one of the most complex apps that exists on the AppExchange. By focusing on quality and usability, Lattice Engines saw not only a record year but also watched their churn plummet and their customer acquisition soar. Lattice Engines has since been acquired by Dun & Bradstreet.



*Read the CodeScience success story: Lattice Engines.*

*“We are extremely proud to announce that our app is being used by 10,000 sales reps within the first 6 months of our launch, creating more pipeline for customers at a rate of 2x.”*

**Shashi Upadhyay, Ph.D, CEO, Lattice Engines**

# springcm

A DocuSign Company

What if you already have an app (or even a prototype) and you know that it could be functioning better? SpringCM had expert knowledge in development; however, their knowledge of force.com and the AppExchange was not as strong. This resulted in an app that wasn't taking advantage of the power of the Salesforce platform or providing the best customer experience.

By simplifying the onboarding process and product release cycle, they saw a 125% increase of close rates for deals that were three times larger than previous years. SpringCM has since been acquired by DocuSign.



*Read the CodeScience success story: SpringCM.*

*“We didn't know what we didn't know. CodeScience helped us prioritize our projects, showing us how to roll pieces out to get the most bang.”*

**Keith Litwin, Senior Director of Software Engineering at SpringCM**

## Final Thoughts

We help businesses thrive on the Salesforce AppExchange.

It is part of our mission statement, and it is why we are the first and only PDO to receive the PDO Master designation from Salesforce. Whether you are a customer or just looking to learn more about building on the AppExchange, we dedicate ourselves to building the best for those who want to be the best.

If you'd like to learn more about how to build for success on the AppExchange, get in touch. We are offering a complimentary ideation session to discuss how to get started or where to go next.

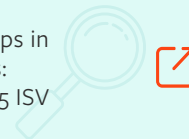


## Resource Highlights

Download our 2021 State of AppExchange Partners Report



Gain insights and tips in our Webinar Series: Acting Like a Top 25 ISV



Prepare Your Application for Salesforce Security Review



Get the tricks of the trade in our Webinar Series: Road to the AppExchange



Check out our library of CodeScience Client Success Stories



Discover additional relevant content on the CodeScience Blog



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Headquartered in Chattanooga, located across the US.

1401 Chestnut Street  
Chattanooga, TN 37402

423-954-7400  
www.codescience.com

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