Salesforce Checklist

Audit Your Salesforce to Maximize Your Investment

Prepared by **Vetrus Solutions**

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Introduction

Are you underutilizing Salesforce? You know it is a powerful tool to help you improve customer relationships and grow your business. But, just like any other tool, it is only as useful as the person handling it. With a tool as powerful and complex as Salesforce, it can be difficult to know if you have set your team up for success and are getting the full value out of your implementation. This guide will provide an overview of critical components of a well-designed implementation.

Salesforce Sales Cloud tracks all customer information in one place to strengthen every customer journey from a single source of truth. Salesforce Sales Cloud supports your sales processes including providing lead management, contact management, account management, activity tracking, pipeline management, and contract management.

A successful Salesforce Sales Cloud instance will bring value to different departments and across a company's hierarchy. Executives will have the data necessary to guide organizational strategy. Sales leaders will have the insight to effectively coach their team and plan towards hitting quotas. Sellers will have the capabilities to organize themselves and understand how they are tracking towards goals. Marketing will have the information necessary to target appropriate prospects. Customer Success will have the customer data needed to nurture and grow relationships.

What differentiates Salesforce Sales Cloud from other CRM systems is its flexibility. Using Salesforce, customers can seamlessly and agilely build customized solutions that fit their unique organizational needs. While each Salesforce instance will be unique in its set-up, most Salesforce customers will want to ask the following questions while designing their instance to ensure that they are getting the most out of their investment.

With a tool as powerful and complex as Salesforce, it can be difficult to know if you have set your team up for success and are getting the full value out of your implementation.
This guide will provide insight on the critical indicators of a well-designed implementation.

Leads

At the beginning of any sales process, there is a lead. A lead is a person who has expressed some interest in your product or a person who your team thinks would be a good fit for your product. Leads are the first step in creating qualified sales opportunities that drive pipeline and ultimately revenue. Because leads are often unqualified, it is easy to lose track of leads when there is a high volume. It is important to optimally set-up leads to allow sales to focus on the best prospects and to capture important data that will facilitate the continued refinement and optimization of your lead qualification criteria and process.

☐ 1. **Have you defined your ICP and buyer personas?**
To make sure that you are targeting the correct leads, you must define your ICP and buyer personas. To see patterns in customers, start tracking company information (employees, industry, revenue, location, technologies used, etc.) and contact information (title, department, and seniority, etc.). Criteria for ideal customer profile and buyer personas can vary - who buys the most, which deals close the fastest, etc. Whatever your criteria, understanding which types of companies and buyers will be your best customers is important for both marketing and sales to identify and effectively cultivate qualified leads.

☐ 2. **Have you set up lead routing?**
Lead routing will quickly assign leads to the correct seller when new leads are created or modified. Buyers move quickly so sellers need to respond to leads in a timely, helpful manner. Lead routing will send the lead to the best seller so they can respond quickly and meet the lead's expectations.

☐ 3. **Have you set up lead scoring?**
Lead scoring will evaluate lead criteria to illuminate the best leads. Lead scoring will give sellers an easy way to know where to focus their time to optimize sales. Lead scoring will also allow marketing to understand how their work is performing across different channels.

☐ 4. **Do you have a proven lead qualifying process?**
A good process for qualifying leads will allow your sellers to quickly identify which leads have the potential to become customers. Identifying the qualifications needed to convert a lead into an opportunity will improve and standardize the quality of opportunities entering your pipeline. Tracking qualification criteria will provide insight into why leads are being qualified or disqualified.

☐ 5. **Are you tracking lead sources in a logical way?**
Tracking lead sources in a logical way will allow you to see at both a high level (inbound, outbound, referrals, etc.) and in detail (within inbound – website, chat, support, etc.) the source of your leads. Understanding these factors will allow marketing to better drive qualified leads and will improve your ability to create accurate lead scoring.

☐ 6. **Is Salesforce integrated with your marketing software?**
Integrating Salesforce with your marketing software will allow sales and marketing to work closely together to generate and work leads. If you are using a marketing system, integrating it with Salesforce can improve lead scoring and allow sellers to see which of their leads are engaging with important marketing material such as your website or marketing emails.

☐ 7. **Do you have a way to nurture leads that are not yet ready to buy?**
You will come across leads who are a good fit for your business but are not ready to make a purchase. When this happens, you need an effective way of following up with them using relevant sales and marketing content. Having a way to identify and nurture these leads will ensure your company is top of mind when they are ready to buy.

Accounts and Contacts

A key functionality of any CRM is the ability to manage customer relationships. You can best manage your relationships by storing important data about your customers on accounts and contacts in Salesforce. An account represents any company, organization, or partner that is involved with your business. Often, these companies are your prospects or clients. A contact represents any person who works at an account or is related to an account in another way. Tracking important information on accounts and contacts is crucial for maintaining good relationships with clients and prospects.

☐ **8. Are your accounts and contacts set up to capture valuable information about companies and contacts that will sustain long-term, successful relationships?**
To be effective in marketing and sales efforts, you must make sure you are capturing customer and contact information in your Salesforce instance. This will also allow you to be agile moving accounts and territories between sellers – if there is ample information about an account and contact in Salesforce, transitioning and maintaining the relationship will be simple.

☐ **9. Are you tracking important account and contact information such as industry, company size, location, revenue, title, and department?**
Tracking these important company and contact properties will allow you to create and refine your ICP and ideal buyer personas. Being able to see patterns in the properties of the companies and contacts where you see sales succeed will allow you to continuously improve your ability to find and work the best prospects.

☐ **10. Are you adding all qualified accounts and contacts to Salesforce?**
Adding all qualified companies and people to Salesforce will promote transparency, allowing sellers to see other employees' relationships that can be leveraged across different sales channels. As soon as you have a qualified prospect, you should add the account and contact in Salesforce.

Opportunities

Opportunities are the central place to track sales in Salesforce. Opportunities are past or pending deals related to an account. Setting up opportunities optimally is crucial for a successful Sales Cloud instance because you track booked revenue and potential revenue on opportunities. You can also see activity and properties related to ongoing sale transactions on opportunities.

☐ **11. Are your opportunities set up to capture all important aspects of a sale?**
Your sales process in undoubtably unique, and the fields and related lists on opportunities should reflect this. You will get the most out of your Salesforce investment when you are capturing the data that is important to your unique organizational needs. To do this, you must create custom fields and objects to capture data that can be easily identified and analyzed at later times.

☐ **12. Are sales reps entering data early in the opportunity lifecycle and keeping it updated?**
Sales reps need to enter information such as pipeline as early as possible so management can coach them to success. It is far better to strategize early in the sales process. Waiting until later in the sales process will impede your ability to pivot if needed.

☐ **13. Are your stages and probabilities accurately capturing the steps in your sales process?**
It is crucial to have stages set up that properly reflect the important steps in your sales process needed to close a deal. Your probability must similarly reflect the likelihood of an opportunity closing to properly forecast and plan.

☐ **14. Do your reps have a way to give sales leadership updates?**
Having a way that sellers can quickly denote and communicate their progress on a sale will allow sales leadership to stay informed so they can coach sellers and intervene as needed.

☐ **15. Are you able to track all your revenue and costs on opportunities?**
An opportunity may have multiple revenue and costs associated with it. You need a way to see all sources of revenue and costs so you can analyze your products' performance. Opportunity products are a great way to keep track of your revenue and costs, and they allow you to understand how different product lines are performing. Benefits of using products include better forecasting accuracy, improved pipeline management, superior analysis of sales performance, and streamlined processes.

Activities

Activities are a great way to see communications with prospects and customers, but they also can become a nuisance if not used correctly. Activities are where users can track tasks (reminders, emails), events (calls, meetings), and calendars. Tasks are to-do items that users can use to organize themselves, and managers can assign to users as reminders. Events are calls, meetings, and other meaningful interactions with prospects and customers.

☐ **16. Are you tracking only important activities?**

Activities in Salesforce can capture everything from a task reminder to an important in-person meeting. Tracking important activities are crucial for keeping your team informed on what is happening with a sale. You must decide what level of activities you want to be tracking and enforce this standard with your sales team. There is always a balance in Salesforce between ensuring that leadership is capturing necessary information and that sellers are not overburdened by administrative tasks. That is why it is so important to decide which valuable activities need to be tracked in Salesforce and which should not be tracked.

☐ **17. Do sellers have easy ways of tracking their activities?**

As mentioned above, your Salesforce instance should be set up in a way that incentivizes sellers to enter important activities instead of making them feel that they are doing pointless administrative tasks. Setting up integrations with your email software and possibly a call log software will go a long way in capturing important activities with prospects and customers without burdening your sellers with administrative tasks.

Forecasting

Salesforce's Collaborative Forecasting is a powerful, flexible solution for estimating how much revenue your organization will generate. You can use forecasts to manage sales expectations and to plan your company's sales cycle from pipeline to booked revenue.

☐ **18. Do you have Collaborative Forecasting set-up?**

Having a way to forecast is crucial for understanding your company's expected performance. Collaborative Forecasting will give insight into what your revenue will be by product. It will allow you to anticipate potential issues to hitting goals early, so you can take action to prevent them. Collaborative Forecasting allows you to be agile and tactical when planning how you will hit goals.

Reports and Dashboards

Salesforce has powerful analytics tools that allow you to understand and act on your data. Reports and dashboards aggregate data across records, highlighting trends and creating visual representations that will facilitate planning and strategizing.

- [ ] **19. Do your reports and dashboards allow you to accurately forecast?**
  Like Salesforce's Collaborative Forecasting feature, reporting should allow you to accurately forecast your revenue for different time periods to track towards hitting your goals.

- [ ] **20. Do your reports and dashboards give insight into your sellers' performances?**
  Knowing how members of your team are performing is crucial towards growing your business. Having the reporting and visualization to understand your sellers' strengths and weaknesses will give you the necessary insight to better manage your team and productively coach your sellers.

- [ ] **21. Do your reports and dashboards show you how each part of the sales process is functioning (generating leads, qualifying leads, creating proposals, closing business, etc.)?**
  Salesforce reporting is very robust and can give insight into each step of the sales process if you are capturing the necessary data. Having reporting set up to see the entirety of your sales lifecycle and multiple business lines will allow you to strategically plan where to focus your teams' efforts and make changes as needed.

Automation

Salesforce allows you to add automation that will save time, capture valuable information, and send updates, among other features.

- [ ] **22. Have you added automation to save users' time?**
  Salesforce offers many ways to add automation to save sellers' time so they can focus on selling and spend less time on administrative tasks. Adding time-saving automations will greatly improve your sellers' relationship with Salesforce.

- [ ] **23. Do you have automation to track important data for your company?**
  Adding automation will allow you to seamlessly track key data that will improve your sales process. For instance, if you want to understand the lifecycle of a sale, you can add automation to track the days when the Lead Status or Opportunity Stage changed to a new value. This will allow you to identify bottlenecks in your sales process that can be leveraged to better the process and shorten sales lifecycles.

- [ ] **24. Have you added automation to send important internal and external updates?**
  You can add automations to send updates to your team in real time when something worthy happens in Salesforce. For instance, you can send out email or slack alerts when an opportunity is won.

Administration

Because you are tracking so much important, confidential information in Salesforce, you must ensure that your Salesforce is set-up with privacy, user experience, and clean data in mind.

- [ ] **25. Do your users have the correct permissions and access to records?**
  You must ensure that your users can view and/or edit the records relevant to their work. You can set up unique user interfaces for different employees to allow them to focus on the most relevant information for them, while restricting access to information they do not need to view and/or edit.

- [ ] **26. Do you have processes in place to ensure that your Salesforce remains clean?**
  It is important to ensure that the data quality in your Salesforce remains high because you can only make valuable insights off good data. Having set processes and scheduled cleaning activities will go a long way in ensuring that your Salesforce data continuously remains clean and useful.

- [ ] **27. Are you preventing and cleaning up duplication?**
  You can use duplicate rules in Salesforce to prevent duplicates from occurring and identifying them when they do happen. Duplicate rules allow you to create unique criteria for identifying potential duplicates based on your own unique business needs. Once you have identified duplicates, you can use merging functionality to remove duplicates while retaining important data from the duplicate records.

Conclusion

Having the features above in place will go a long way in ensuring you get the most out of your Salesforce investment. These features will give you accurate visibility into the entirety of your sales process and your customer relationships. In conjunction with the items above, you must invest in training so your team will correctly utilize Salesforce. Finally, you should consider hiring a part-time or full-time Salesforce Administrator to help you innovate your Salesforce instance as needed and ensure that your team is properly using Salesforce.

Do you need a second set of eyes on your Salesforce implementation? We can help! We help companies update their Salesforce to work for their unique business challenges and sales processes. You can call us at (646) 481-8115, or email us at info@vetrussolutions.com.

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info@vetrus-solutions.com

www.vetrussolutions.com

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