5 Entrepreneurs Share Their Secrets to Ecosystem Success

salesforce appexchange

Table of Contents

Introduction

Salesforce and its ecosystem of customers and partners will drive nearly 1.9 million new jobs and more than $389 billion in new GDP impact worldwide by 2020, according to a recent IDC report.* This data underscores strong momentum from the community of Salesforce customers, partners, and developers who power the "Salesforce economy" worldwide.

The cloud is now broadly recognized as a global economic engine underpinning new innovations, business models, and industries. According to the same IDC study, cloud computing generates jobs by fostering an increase in IT innovation, which in turn supports business innovation and increased revenues in local markets. Even more positive for long-term economic impact, IDC reports that spending in the public cloud accounts for less than 5% of total IT spend and 15% of total software spend today, but is expected to grow at six times the rate of overall IT spending from 2015 through 2020.

In addition to the direct jobs and GDP contribution created by Salesforce and its ecosystem of partners and customers, IDC also predicts that by 2020, for every dollar Salesforce makes, the company's ecosystem will gain $4.14.

To dive deeper into the ecosystem and the value it can provide, we've identified five companies that truly understand how to leverage an ecosystem for swift innovation, limitless reach, and frictionless collaborative selling – not to mention some truly impressive results. These are their stories, and their secrets to success.

Innovation

Build and innovate – without reinventing the wheel.

From the moment that you conceive of a product until long after it's launched, innovation is a key component in any business plan. Top companies are leveraging platforms to build and iterate quickly on their products in order to go to market faster, scale as they grow, and constantly innovate to stay ahead of competing products.

See how Propel leveraged the ecosystem to go from idea to launch in six months. >

"Our previous companies were Salesforce partners, so we knew that Salesforce could help Propel build, sell, and grow faster."

Ray Hein
FOUNDER & CEO
PROPEL

SEE HOW PROPEL
INNOVATES IN THE ECOSYSTEM

Propel redefines innovation – and speed.

How Propel leveraged the ecosystem to go from idea to launch in just six months

How would you like to launch a new product, take a lunch break, and return 30 minutes later to find that you already have a new lead? Sound too good to be true?

Not for Miguel Tam, VP of Marketing at Propel, a modern product lifecycle management (PLM) solution that aligns a company's employees, customers, products, and services to help drive innovation and build great products. The Propel team is a leading example in innovation itself, going from idea to launch in just six months – and from launch to leads in a mere 30-minute lunch break.

Propel's founders came from other Salesforce partner organizations, so they knew firsthand that building on a trusted and proven platform would allow them to launch and iterate faster, focusing on innovation without getting caught up in code.

Propel leveraged the ecosystem to prototype its product, incorporate initial market feedback, and launch on AppExchange in record time. And its story is just beginning: With tremendous growth in its first year, Propel has already expanded from three to several dozen employees and closed $4.2 million in funding.
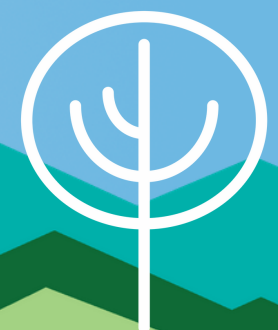
Propel

LEARN MORE

Credibility

## Increase credibility to open new (and bigger) doors.

By building on a trusted platform, a business instantly gains the credibility and visibility needed to open doors to customers of all sizes and across all industries – even those with household names. For instance, imagine if a product you thought up today could add Coca-Cola as a customer in a matter of months. Joining a trusted ecosystem and building on a platform with compliance standards makes this instantly possible – regardless of how big a business is or how long it has been around.

See how CloudCraze opened doors to Fortune 100 companies. >

"We have instant credibility with customers because we built our application on App Cloud and partnered with Salesforce."

Chris Dalton
CEO, CLOUDCRAZE
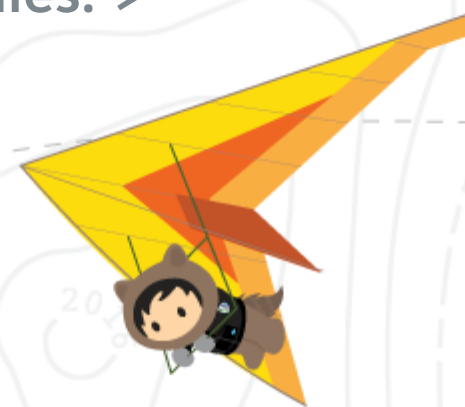
SEE HOW CLOUDCRAZE
BUILT CREDIBILITY IN THE ECOSYSTEM

CloudCraze snags Fortune 100 customers.

How CloudCraze leveraged a trusted ecosystem to add top names to its customer base

CloudCraze, an ecommerce application that enables companies to deploy mobile storefronts and scale quickly, has gained visibility with some of the biggest brands in the Fortune 100. Backed by a trusted ecosystem, CloudCraze has been able to build out an impressive set of customers, ranging from mid-market businesses all the way up to household names.

CloudCraze chose to build on Salesforce App Cloud, not only for immediate credibility with prospects but for the development environment and existing infrastructure. By leveraging the tools available to it in the ecosystem, CloudCraze could focus its energy on building out the product and gaining visibility with top-tier brands.

The efforts have paid off massively: As a lead-generation channel, AppExchange brings in 200–300 qualified leads per month. And with a foundation of trust, no customer is too big (or too small) for consideration.

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

✓ Choose a proven platform and a trusted name that will help you establish instant credibility with prospects.

CloudCraze

LEARN MORE

Reach

Extend reach with an entire ecosystem at your fingertips.

Much in the same way that ecosystems can open the doors to larger and more well-known brands, they can also help bring down geographical barriers. With an ecosystem at hand, businesses instantly have access to a massive audience of qualified customers, and even better, that audience is able to seek them out as well. This allows businesses to effortlessly access a global audience – without hiring an army of sales reps across the globe.

See how Sage People reached customers in over 20 countries. >

"We have customers headquartered in 20 different countries, and AppExchange helps us reach that global audience."

Adam Hale
EVP, SAGE PEOPLE

Sage People goes global for exponential growth.

How Sage People leveraged an ecosystem to reach customers across 20 countries

Sage People (formerly called Fairsail prior to its acquisition by Sage, another partner in the Salesforce ecosystem) has achieved 1,000% revenue growth in a three-year period, with customers headquartered across 20 countries and end users spanning 130 – and with sales reps in only two countries.

Sage People is a comprehensive HR system built on App Cloud to help mid-size international businesses deliver exceptional workforce and customer experiences. Sage People found that building on the platform provided the trust and scale it needed to service international companies with expansive international users – and protect their most important and sensitive information.

By plugging into the existing platform, Sage People also found that it didn't need to invest in building out its sales force – instead it doubled down efforts on developing a differentiated product, delivering a 25%–80% increase in HR productivity for customers and receiving a 99.5% license-renewal rate.

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

An effective ecosystem means a wealth of qualified new customers who can access information on your app regardless of geographical location.

fairsail

Sage People (Fairsail)

LEARN MORE

Collaboration

Work together to sell faster and reduce friction.

Collaboration is key in helping everyone win – including your customer. With customers already using products that complement yours in an ecosystem they trust, there's far less friction in the sales process and greater time to value for reps. In addition, you can collaborate with other businesses that sell complementary products, gaining access to experts across the company to close deals faster, increase deal sizes, and solve complex problems for your customers.

See how SpringCM used collaboration to sell faster and reduce friction and costs. >

"We grew 400% year over year after going all in on our partnership with Salesforce."

Greg Buchholz
FOUNDER & CEO
SPRINGCM

SpringCM reduces sales cycles – and costs.

How SpringCM leverages the ecosystem to close six-figure deals in as low as 23 days

One day, a Salesforce consulting partner contacted SpringCM about a customer with a major contract and document management problem. A week later, the customer was on a call with a SpringCM rep, the SI partner, and two other Salesforce ISV partners with complementary products. Before the month was up, SpringCM had a signed contract for a half-million dollar deal.

It's not just an example of collaborative selling at it's best; it's how deals work at SpringCM, an AppExchange partner that offers contract and sales content management solutions.

SpringCM leaders invested in the Salesforce ecosystem because they estimated a $900-million market opportunity for their company, which would only continue to grow over time. Furthermore, SpringCM found that selling in an ecosystem dramatically reduced friction, meaning it could sell faster and reduce customer acquisition costs.

The revenue impact of these adjustments was huge: SpringCM saw a 400% year-over-year increase in new business, and the cost to acquire recurring revenue decreased by 66%. Additionally, deal cycles dramatically shortened, with six-figure deals closing in as little as 23 days.

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- An effective ecosystem not only connects you with customers but also other ISVs.

- Embrace collaborative selling to lower costs.

SpringCM

LEARN MORE

Agility

Adapt intelligently with the right resources.

As any business owner knows, your work isn't done once a deal closes. Businesses have to constantly adapt based on customer feedback, and ecosystems play a critical role in that process. Not only can building on a proven platform make the process of iterating on your product easier, but resources within an ecosystem help businesses figure out what those iterations should be. With easy access to user feedback and expert training and advice, businesses can leverage ecosystems to keep constant tabs on customer preferences.

See how Fingertip leveraged its ecosystem to drive optimal customer satisfaction. >

"Salesforce enables us to push the limits of how we can innovate without needing to reinvent the wheel."

Jaakko Pellosniemi

FOUNDER & CEO
FINGERTIP

SEE HOW FINGERTIP
LEVERAGED RESOURCES TO ADAPT FASTER

Fingertip optimizes customer satisfaction.

How Fingertip tapped into its ecosystem for insightful (and crucial) customer feedback

What would you give for expert advice on how to improve your product from the people who matter most?

Fingertip, a decision-management app that helps organizations facilitate collaboration, commitment, and delivery in the decision-making process, knew that businesses across every industry could benefit from its product – it just needed a way to scale across all market segments and verticals to reach them.

Leveraging AppExchange gave Fingertip a way to reach these businesses, and even more significantly, it gave Fingertip's leaders a way to discover opportunities to improve their application and go-to-market approach.

Fingertip came away from Dreamforce with over 1,000 leads as well as valuable product feedback from customers, and that was just the start. It found Salesforce events and AppExchange-sourced leads to be very high quality, with 80% to 90% taking a follow-up meeting after the initial pitch, and has since been able to achieve 400% year-over-year growth in pipeline.

Fingertip has also used its access to Salesforce technology to continually innovate and optimize user experience, most recently using the Lightning Component framework to componentize the Fingertip app and unlock more platform potential for its customers.

KEY TAKEAWAYS:

- Choose a platform that allows you to leverage training resources, expert advice, and customer feedback.

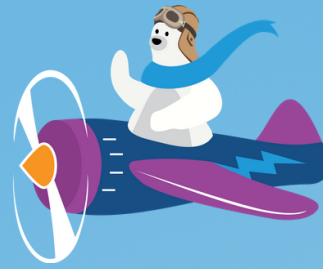- Access to an ecosystem is key to effectively improving your product.

Fingertip

LEARN MORE

Conclusion

Get started now

With the support of the Salesforce ecosystem, you can build and innovate on a trusted, proven platform, reduce friction in the sales cycle, lower costs and increase time to value, and gain direct access to your power users.

Best of all, getting started is easy. Join the Salesforce Partner Community today to learn more.

GET STARTED