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Key Skills - Skilling up for Salesforce

John Kittle, contracts director at Eurostaff Technology, outlines this month's hot 'IT skill'

By John Kittle, Eurostaff Technology | Computerworld UK | Published 11:37, 23 November 12

What is the skill? We've seen demand for professionals that can implement Salesforce applications nearly triple in the past

couple of years. Salesforce, which is the enterprise cloud computing leader, offers customer relationship management and sales applications. Salesforce can be divided into four distinct job types that cover the different implementation stages of products: Salesforce Administrator, Force.com Developer, Implementation Expert and Architects.

The administrators keep Salesforce working on a day-to-day basis after the implementation team puts the right solutions in place. The architects and developers design and build the new applications that make businesses grow and stay at the forefront of technological advances.

Many existing developers and IT professionals will have the skills required to be able to perform in a Salesforce type role, but for experts to really achieve success (and the highest salaries) they need to become cloud certified. This consists of taking part in classroom training and/or self-study, as well as exams.

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As well as CRM, the top related IT skills that will help you are:

- Apex Code
- Java
- SaaS
- .NET
- Visualforce

Where did it come from? Salesforce was founded 13 years ago by former Oracle executive Marc Benioff and is best known for its customer relationship software. In the last three years, Salesforce has made over 15 acquisitions as it expands into the 'social enterprise arena' which has since created the six distinct products below.

What is it for? In its current form, Salesforce can be split into six pre-defined products (mainly driven by acquisitions). The first, and the original area, is **The Sales Cloud** which aims to boost revenues and productivity within the business. **The Service Cloud** is about connecting with customers from a service point of view via social media communities.

Marketing Cloud aligns the sales, service and marketing functions of a business by listening to social chat and connecting with customers.

Salesforce Platform is used by a wide-range of companies in order to build real-time apps for its customers. **Chatter** very much acts like a social intranet for businesses allowing colleagues across divisions, offices and countries to collaborate in real time, in context, from anywhere. Finally, **Work.com** is an internal sales performance management platform – it is designed to motivate the sales team and drive performance

What is unique about it? The intuitive, easy to use and well-designed

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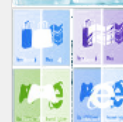
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aspects of the Salesforce platform means there are far more options from a development point of view. The Sales Cloud also offers features that are unique in the CRM sector. What is also unique about Salesforce is the fact that implementation is fast, and can be achieved with a relatively small team. Typically a medium-sized implementation could take around a year and only require half a dozen consultants. Those candidates with experience in implementing Siebel will be well suited to Salesforce roll-outs, although our clients that have requested Siebel roll-outs are usually large sized and the implementation takes a couple of years. Our clients requesting Salesforce are sometimes small, or medium sized and looking for a shorter term contract, This offers variety, but not necessarily long-term stability, for candidates.

Where is it used? Salesforce is not ring-fenced into any particular industry and is common across verticals such as Communications (Telefonica), Financial Services (ING), Government, Healthcare & Life Sciences, Hi-Tech (Dell & Cisco), Manufacturing (Toyota) and Retail (Burberry).

How do I acquire the skill, is it difficult to master? Salesforce offers a range of training programmes at different prices, for example the "Administration Essentials for New Admins" virtual class costs £3,125 for 25 hours. There are also free online resources and a range of books, but you will need to be motivated to teach yourself and invest the time (and sometimes money) to become certified and/or at least be able to demonstrate your expertise in the Salesforce platform. We also work closely with training providers and often put candidates in touch with consultancies to improve their skillset.

A knowledge of development/architecture is needed for the more advanced Salesforce courses, and the best approach for career development is to specialise.

The return on investment on your Salesforce training could be very attractive, as the cost of the training courses are relatively low, yet the day rates you can command are high.

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Pay and prospects? Salaries are up 10% on last year, averaging around £46,000 per annum (though do note that the salaries are sensitive to location). Application support can expect to get £30,000 up to two years' experience, rising potentially to £50,000 for those with five years. Database developers would look at similar levels with potentially a few thousand extra for those more experienced. Business Analysts take a bit more home, £34,000 at the start of their career, rising to £58,000 with five years' experience. Development Managers could potentially earn around £83,000 with five years of experience. From a contract side – typical daily rates for Salesforce developers (technical resources) with two-three years' experience would be upwards of £330 a day. Salesforce BA's / Architects can earn upwards of £410 a day with two-three years' experience and £450 or more with five+ years.

What's next/where does it lead? With so many acquisitions and a constantly changing IT industry, people with Salesforce skills will have to evolve with the company and platform to stay at the forefront of the market.

[\[See also Key Skills - Working with Workday\]](#)

John Kittle is Contracts Director at Eurostaff Technology, a specialist recruiters to the technology sector

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