The Importance of Using a 100% Native Salesforce App

Security, Dependability, and Scalability

upland

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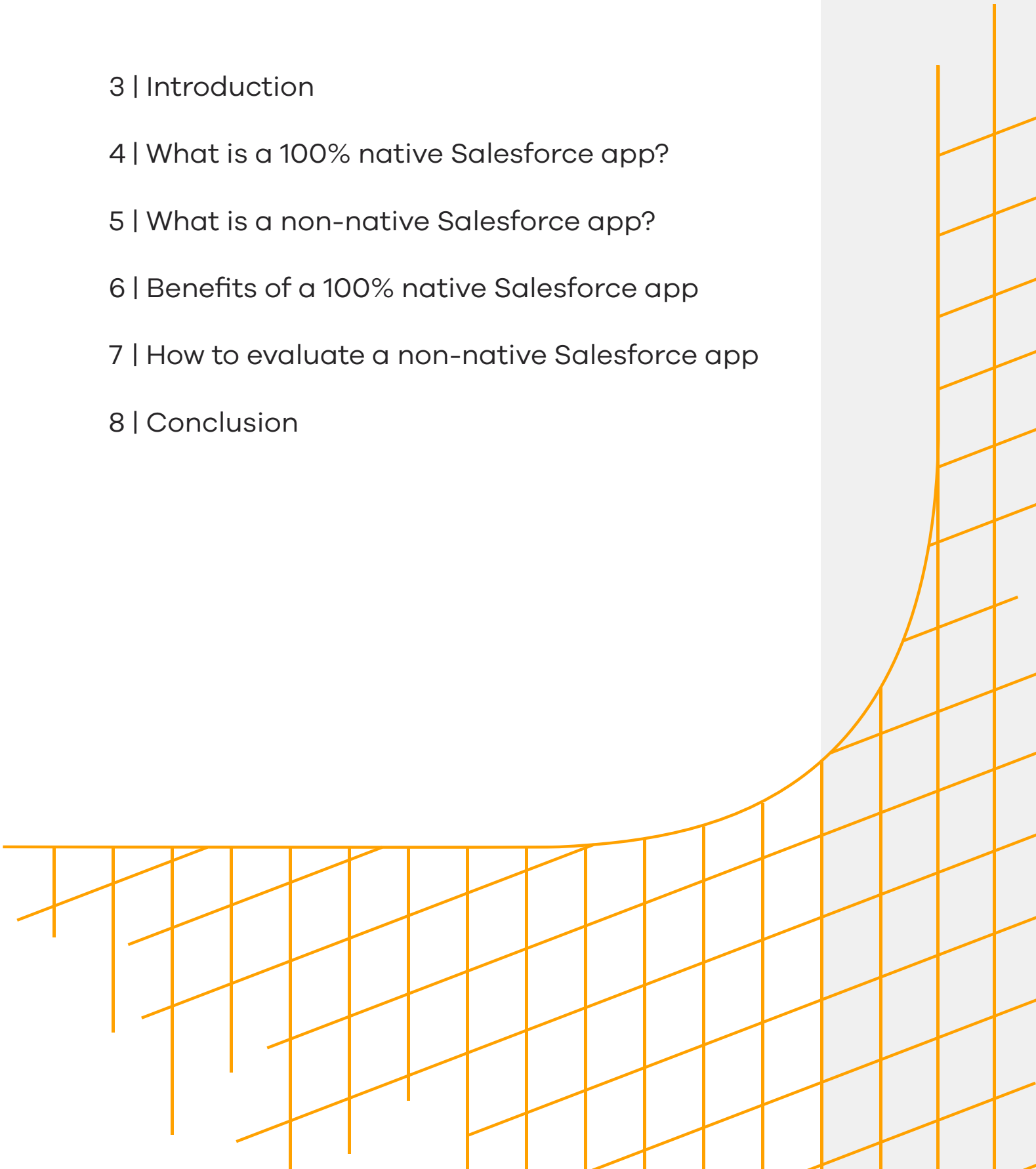
Introduction

If you've ever considered enhancing your Salesforce instance with one of the many applications available on the AppExchange, you've probably noticed that some are designated as "native" apps, while others are not. This distinction might seem minor, but the gulf between native and non-native apps is vast.

As a Salesforce customer, you have already entrusted Salesforce with your most sensitive data. And you've made a good choice: By working with Salesforce, you benefit from the considerable investments the company has made in infrastructure, data management, controls, security, and certifications, including ISO 27001, GDPR, HIPAA, FedRAMP, and beyond.

All Salesforce customers also have access to Trust.Salesforce.com, a set of web pages that give cloud users 24/7 transparency into the status, security, and compliance of their cloud computing environments.

To extend the power of Salesforce and maximize the effectiveness of your sales organization, it's only logical to invest in trusted applications from the Salesforce AppExchange.

But are all apps created equal?

> "
> Nothing is more important than the privacy of our customers' data.
>
> **Parker Harris**
> Co-founder,
> *Salesforce*

Some apps rightfully claim the prestigious title of "100% native to Salesforce." In contrast, other apps admit that they're "composite" or hybrid, which means that only a portion of the application is hosted on Salesforce, while the rest is hosted somewhere else entirely.

In this eBook, we'll dig into what makes an application 100% native to Salesforce, what doesn't make the cut, and why that matters. And, if you are considering a non-native Salesforce application, we'll walk you through the questions to ask up-front to avoid potential future headaches and unforeseen obstacles.

What is a 100% native Salesforce app?
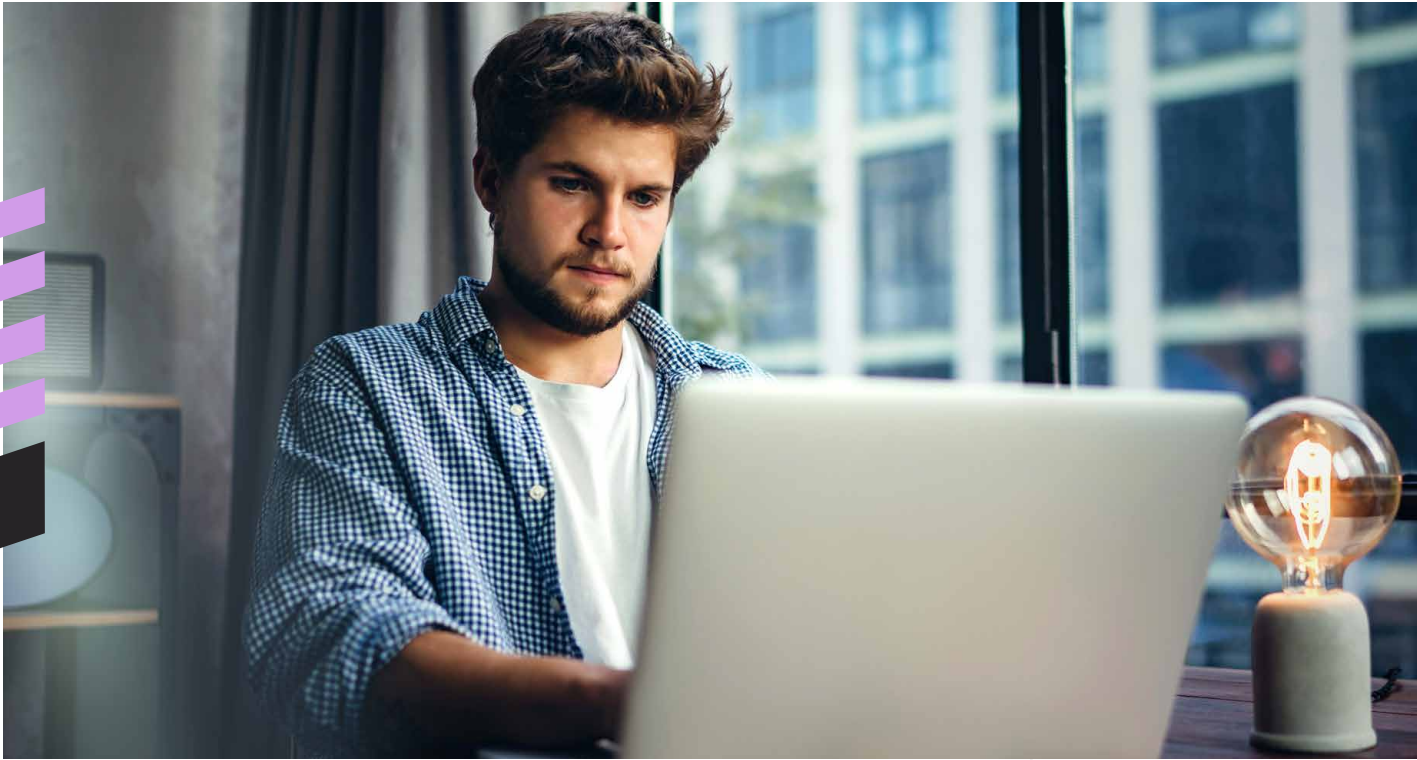
A 100% native Salesforce app resides entirely within the confines of your Salesforce instance. This means that all data and business logic is stored within Salesforce. The app and its data can be customized, automated, and reported on using the same Salesforce tools that you already use, such as workflow rules, dashboards, new fields, and more.

A native Salesforce app is, in effect, a part of Salesforce. And that's the beauty of it. In most cases, a native Salesforce app simply works, and with the ease and simplicity of Salesforce itself.

What is a non-native Salesforce app?

A non-native Salesforce app does not live 100% within the Salesforce platform. Elements of the application may be within Salesforce; however, the app itself might be hosted elsewhere, and data might leave and enter from–and be stored on–outside, third-party servers.

If you select a hybrid or non-native app, typically:

Your data leaves the Salesforce platform.

- There is no guarantee that your data is secure and protected from hackers because Salesforce's security rules aren't applied automatically.

- There is also no promise that your data is protected from colleagues who do not have permission to access it because Salesforce's sharing rules aren't applied by default.

Interacting with the app counts against Salesforce API usage limits.

- If you reach those limits, the app will become unusable until the limits reset.

The app may go down even when Salesforce is up.

- Salesforce is known for its dependability and up-time, but when an app extends beyond Salesforce's reach, those commitments and expectations don't necessarily apply.

Consultant or IT involvement is typically required for set-up and maintenance.

- In most cases, getting started with a hybrid or non-native app is considerably more difficult than simply clicking "Install Now, " like you would for a native app. You'll need to ensure you have your Salesforce admin or IT team on call to help you get everything running smoothly.

Caution:

In some cases, an app that is not 100% native to Salesforce may be listed as "native" on AppExchange. Organizations sometimes check that box when only a portion of the app is truly built on Force.com. In these cases, it's more accurate to call the app "hybrid."

Benefits of a 100% native Salesforce app

When given a choice, 100% native Salesforce apps are the go-to option for most organizations. In fact, many companies have policies that outright bar the use of non-native and hybrid Salesforce apps. But why is that? Let's check out some of the primary benefits of 100% native Salesforce apps.

Security and privacy

With a 100% native Salesforce app, all of your data remains yours and always stays within Salesforce (unless you export it, of course). This means you never have to give the app's vendor access to your data, your data is never sent to or stored on external servers, and new data never enters from external servers. In short, the app vendor has no access to your data. This degree of security and privacy means that you need to do little to no due diligence beyond what you've already conducted for Salesforce itself.

You've already taken advantage of Salesforce's sophisticated internal security model to protect your data. A native Salesforce application conforms to the same security settings and sharing rules you defined within Salesforce. With a non-native app, Salesforce's trusted security and sharing setting rules may not be applied, leaving your data vulnerable. What's more, there are no additional Single Sign-On (SSO) or provisioning requirements for native apps.

Familiar and easier to learn

Native Salesforce apps have a similar look and feel to Salesforce itself, allowing sellers to onboard faster and start realizing value sooner than they might with a potentially confusing non-native app. After all, they spend most of their day working within Salesforce, so there's a low learning curve for anything built on the platform.

Performance, availability, and disaster recovery

Since truly native apps reside 100% within Salesforce, they will always be up and running when Salesforce is. Non-native and hybrid apps depend on external servers, which may not have the same enterprise-class infrastructure as Salesforce. Will a non-native app scale to serve all users, defend against cyberattacks, and provide robust disaster recovery? Maybe, but not definitely, and that degree of uncertainty can pose an unnecessary risk.

Hosting and data storage in particular jurisdictions

Native Salesforce apps are hosted in the same geographic region as your Salesforce instance. For example, if your Salesforce instance is based in Canada, your native apps are hosted in Canada too—along with all your data. On the other hand, non-native apps may be hosted in geographic regions and jurisdictions beyond your Salesforce instance, which could introduce privacy and legal concerns. To guarantee you'll know where your data is stored at any given time, a 100% native Salesforce app is the best option.

Customization

Native Salesforce apps can be customized to your needs by adding new fields, workflow rules, and more. For example, workflow rules and alerts can be generated in response to collaboration on opportunity and account plans. When it comes to non-native apps, the degree of customizability varies wildly depending on the vendor.

Reports & analytics

Native Salesforce apps store their data in Salesforce custom objects. This means that Salesforce's reporting infrastructure applies, making all objects reportable by default. You can also easily roll out advanced features, such as field trending. All the app's data lives in your Salesforce account and can be reported on directly from Salesforce. Non-native apps may provide some degree of reporting, but there's no guarantee.

Easy integration with other apps

Enhancing native Salesforce applications is as easy as integrating with any of the thousands of other applications that use or are compatible with the Salesforce platform. This flexibility makes it simple to adapt and expand your environment to better meet changing business needs.

Integrated mobile strategy

Native Salesforce applications provide mobile users with a seamless experience. This way, no matter where you travel and whether you're working from your laptop, tablet, or phone, you're never far from your critical business tools. Non-native apps offer varying degrees of mobile friendliness, and may not be optimized for mobile use at all.

Future-proofed

Native Salesforce applications naturally evolve with the underlying Salesforce platform. For example, if Salesforce releases a new interface or substantial change to its platform, native apps will continue working by default. The same is not guaranteed for non-native Salesforce applications. Non-native apps can become unusable or less valuable if they can't keep up with Salesforce enhancement and updates.

Support the "Salesforce way" for UAT

Because native Salesforce applications are hosted within Salesforce instances, by default, they are also part of any "sandboxes" organizations create for customization, development, and User Acceptance Testing (UAT). Non-native applications may not have similar capabilities to sync to both production and UAT Salesforce instances.

How to evaluate a non-native Salesforce app

When you choose a 100% native Salesforce app, Salesforce has already completed nearly all of the due diligence work for you. Apps cannot be listed on the AppExchange until they clear Salesforce's rigorous reviews, and a 100% native app will deliver the same dependability and security you count on from Salesforce itself.

If you're considering a non-native Salesforce app, you're facing an entirely different situation. It falls on you to conduct your own due diligence and thoroughly vet third-party apps to verify they can live up to your standards. To get started, consider the following questions:

Quick tip:

With any non-native Salesforce applications, be on the look out for situations where the app asks for permission to send data outside of Salesforce. This means the app relies on third-party servers, and your data will likely be shared with those third parties. That's not always a deal-breaker, but you'll want to thoroughly evaluate all third-party organizations that might have access to your data.

- How secure is my data? What certifications does the app's provider hold?

- Who might have access to my data, and how is that access controlled?

- How scalable is the app? Will pages load slowly for my users?

- How reliable is the app? Can I find uptime numbers, and are they acceptable?

- What is the app's disaster recovery capability?

- Are Salesforce's security models and sharing rules enforced?

- Does the app support single sign-on (SSO)?

- What customization options are there?

- What are the reporting and analytics capabilities like?

- How integrated/compatible is the app with other Salesforce apps?

- Does the app run seamlessly on mobile devices?

- Is the app's roadmap aligned with Salesforce's roadmap?

- Can you run a deep technology audit of the organization offering the app?

- How does the app handle updates and maintenance?

- Will the app potentially put the security of my greater Salesforce environment at risk?

Conclusion

As with any software decision, the answers you receive to technical questions, considered alongside customer reviews, success stories, pricing, and technical documentation, should inform your final decision. But the critical choice between a 100% native Salesforce app and a non-native or hybrid app warrants careful consideration.

For a Salesforce customer, in nearly every case, 100% native Salesforce apps should win the day thanks to their security, dependability, and scalability.

To further explore the benefits of native Salesforce apps, reach out to the experts at Upland Altify.

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