

Market to Me: A Case Study on the Marketing Efforts of Salesforce Software Company

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## ABSTRACT

MARKET TO ME: A CASE STUDY ON THE MARKETING OF SALESFORCE

SOFTWARE COMPANY

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Social media platforms constitute outstanding channels for fostering relationships with consumers. Recently, there has been a drastic shift towards social media marketing and away from traditional marketing. Marketers are beginning to understand the importance of social media opportunity and are implementing social media marketing strategies and initiatives into companywide marketing practices. Companies cannot afford to lack presence on social media, as competitors could outpace them with marketing efforts of products and services to the public. Social media has become a necessary tool when marketing and advertising. The purpose of this study was to examine social media marketing practices of Salesforce Software Company. Data for this study was gathered using a case study guide established by the researcher, which highlighted the social media marketing efforts for Salesforce. Results indicated the need to recognize social media marketing as a fast-growing phenomenon, as it is a highly effective tool when engaging with consumers. It is vital that Salesforce continues to advance its social media marketing efforts to reach and build relationships with consumers.

Keywords: Salesforce Software Company, social media, marketing, opportunity, strategy, relationships

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## Chapter 1

### INTRODUCTION AND REVIEW OF LITERATURE

#### Background of Study

"A brand is no longer what we tell the consumer it is - it is what consumers tell each other it is" (Cook, 2017). Throughout the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, there has been a shift with the use of marketing strategies in order to outpace the competition. Social media marketing is a powerful way for businesses of all sizes to reach a vast amount of people. Businesses are beginning to identify the importance of creating and implementing new social media marketing strategies through new followers, content, engagement, interaction, and reach.

Marketing strategies play a vital role for companies because they provide the groundwork for developing plans and achieving objectives. These strategies help to focus companies' resources toward the best opportunities and chances to maximize profit. This is because marketing strategy begins with marketplace research, understanding the optimal target, the competition, and analyzing emerging trends. Correspondingly, strategies drive business decisions. By understanding the strengths and weaknesses of marketing within a company, effective strategy helps to determine where efforts should be optimally spent.

Salesforce Software Company offers several products and services, and the most effective way to reach audiences is through social media outlets. Salesforce is known for pushing the envelope with controversial yet creative marketing strategies. Salesforce teaches their employees to think big when it comes to developing new marketing

strategies, because growth only goes so far without a fresh strategy. These decisions enable a profitable and sustainable future for a company. The purpose of this study was to analyze the social media marketing strategies of Salesforce Software Company.

### Review of Literature

All research for the review of literature was conducted online through Robert E. Kennedy Library at California Polytechnic State University, San Luis Obispo. The specific resources and databases used came from Academic OneFile, Academic Search Premier, and Google Scholar. This review of literature discusses the best practices in social media marketing and includes the following subsections: marketing and its evolution, social media marketing, engagement and interaction, and reach.

#### *Marketing and its Evolution*

Businesses use marketing as a tool to advertise their goods and services to the public. The bottom line of most businesses is to make a profit. For companies to do this, marketing becomes an essential channel used to reach this end goal. For businesses to market successfully, they must begin by understanding their audience. Without customers, there is no business (Terech, 2018).

Marketing is the process of planning and executing the conception, pricing, promotion and distribution of ideas, goods and services to create exchanges that satisfy individual and organizational objectives (Brunswick, 2014). For the last 50 years, it has been generally agreed that marketing relates a company to both its current and potential customers (Kohli & Jaworski, 1990). The relation of marketing to customers is seen through research strictly dedicated to market orientation. Because of this, marketing as a

phenomenon represents the customer focus of an organization (Kohli & Jaworski). Marketing is a customer focus that permeates organizational functions and processes (Grönroos, 2006). It is geared towards making promises through value proposition, enabling the fulfilment of individual expectations created by such promises, and fulfilling such expectations through support to customers' value-generating processes (Grönroos). This supports value creation in companies as well as its customers' and other stakeholders' processes (Grönroos).

Several traditional marketing practices have been used by businesses to market goods and services to consumers. Traditional marketing relies heavily on offline marketing. This includes direct sales, direct mail (brochures, letters, fliers), print advertising, referrals (word-of-mouth), radio and televisions. It views consumers as rational decision-makers who are more concerned with the product's functional features and benefits (Qadar, 2013). Traditional marketing is based on the principle that consumers act rationally in the purchasing process and pay special attention to the features and benefits of a product before making a purchasing decision (Qadar). By understanding customers desires and interests, products and services can be tailored specifically towards buyers. In the 21<sup>st</sup> Century, there has been a shift in the evolution of marketing as people are turning away from traditional marketing strategies because it does not emphasize the true quality or functionality of products and services (Zineldin & Philipson, 2007)

It is crucial that businesses market in a purposeful and meaningful manner. Marketing helps to show how a business competes and manages their brand in a way that differentiates them from its competitors and matches the values of its target market. It

requires delving into an analysis of an organization's values in order to match them with the values of a target market (Terech, 2018). Terech notes this process to be "abstract and intellectual" because it tries to determine how an organization's product or service can bring value and opportunity to a consumer (p. 45). By marketing a product or service in a meaningful manner, true authenticity helps to win over customer loyalty.

### *Social Media Marketing*

Social media is an assortment of different initiatives. Social media is a collection of software-based digital technologies—usually presented as apps and websites—that provide users with digital environments in which they can send and receive digital content or information over some type of online social network (Cimcek, 2018). Social media is known for its major platforms and features, such as Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, and Snapchat. In practical terms, social media is a type of digital marketing channel that marketers can use to communicate with consumers through advertising (Cimcek). But social media can be thought of more broadly. Not only is it a digital media and technology service, but it is a digital place where people share content and participate in social networking in regard to their personal lives. The shift towards social media marketing has become more influential than any other type of marketing due to the convenience and the many resources it offers (Lamberton & Stephen, 2016).

Social media marketing helps to drive success for businesses. Online users connect with their preferred brands in social media and demand interactive experiences. Social media platforms help to connect businesses with customers, increase brand awareness, and help to boost sales and leads. Social media is increasingly important as a marketing tool, and large businesses need to know how to use it efficiently. After

investigating the impact of social media, research indicates a strong correlation between the social media outreach efforts and both brand awareness and online sales (Momany & Alshboul, 2016).

The branding literature has long recognized the power of storytelling to provide meaning to the brand and businesses have used storytelling to enhance consumers' connections with brands. Singh and Sonnenburg (2012) bring to light the importance of understanding current trends within social media marketing and conclude that social media marketing is a form of telling a story. They propose the premise of brand storytelling has been that the story and its content, production, and distribution are the brand owner's realm and the consumer primarily a listener. Singh and Sonnenburg propose that storytelling through social media marketing brings forth a creative process which helps to engage followers with business values, brands, purpose, and products. Utilizing social media platforms for marketing and storytelling is a key way to connect with an audience.

Social media marketing data and statistics should be taken into consideration by businesses when marketing their products and services to consumers. DEI Worldwide examined the impact of social media on customer behavior. It noted 70% of consumers have visited social media sites to get information, 49% of these consumers made a purchase decision based on the information they found through social media sites, 60% of people in the study said they are likely to use social media sites to pass along information to others, 45% of people who searched for information via social media sites engaged in word of mouth compared to 36% who found information on a company or news site (DEI Worldwide, 2008). By understanding social media marketing's impact on the public,

strategies can be tailored in a purposeful manner. Businesses must factor in future purchases and reach through social media.

### *Engagement and Interaction*

Engagement refers to a psychological state and process that drives customer loyalty (Brodie et al., 2013). In marketing, the underlying conceptual foundation of customer engagement lies in relationship marketing and service-dominant logic, which highlights the consumers' proactive contribution to value co-creation (Vargo & Lusch, 2008; Kasouf et al., 2008; & Brodie et al., 2011) For any business to succeed, engaging with customers is a vital piece for marketing. Successful marketing depends on creating an optimal customer experience that is integrated across platforms, and that includes leveraging social media engagement as a means of reaching customers (O'Brien, 2018). Social media has fundamentally changed the way that communication works between businesses and their customers, essentially creating a public forum for communication between the business and all of its customers (O'Brien).

In the race to understand social media, researchers mistakenly equated social media usage with the more cognitive and emotional involvement of social media engagement. Whereas the former represents the broad daily activities that occur online, the latter refers to the absorption and immersive state of social media usage that may not always accompany social media usage (Smith & Gallicano, 2015). The difference is important, as research has shown that social media engagement mediates social media usage and communication behavior (Paek et al., 2013). Researchers have defined engagement as “the progression from interacting with the interface physically to

becoming cognitively immersed in the content offered by it and then onto proactively spreading the outcomes of this involvement” (Paek et al., p. 25).

By definition, social media activities like viewing, commenting, and even sharing social media content, is not the same thing as engagement. Engagement is a state of mind and emotion, a level of involvement that comprises social media activities, but is distinct from them. Engagement is underscored by emotional attachment, dedication, and passion (Bennett, 2000). Individuals who feel a sense of engagement from social media undergo feelings of energy, enthusiasm, drive, and excitement. When businesses engage and interact with customers, the customers begin to feel valued and heard. Bennett (2000) states that customer engagement is a highly emotional connections made between customers and the brand. Customers who engage more with social media tend to buy from and promote the company more. By providing high quality customer experiences, customers become loyal to the company, and in turn, benefit from many facets of the business.

### *Reach*

Market reach is the number of people who could see a specific campaign or marketing medium (Lipsman et al., 2012). Soares, Pincho and Nobre (2012) surveyed university students to understand how social interactions may predict marketing interactions. They reported that social relationships are a positive predictor of information disclosure and word of mouth, while they are a negative predictor of attitude toward advertising. They also report that trust is not a predictor of attitude toward advertising. They propose that this may be because social network users’ trust of advertising may involve a complex model of trust; one that separates trust toward their interactions with

friends in the social network from their trust of the content on the social network.

Companies need to gear efforts towards creating positive marketing and interactions towards consumers to make those individuals seek out company content and tell others to follow the company as well. By predicting future marketing interactions, businesses can tailor their marketing strategies in such a way that increases brand awareness to a variety of consumers. Marketers must understand these factors to effectively reach a vast variety of social media users.

In addition to predicting future marketing interactions, businesses must understand the impact of posting time on the public to maximize reach. Patel (2020) indicates the importance that when a company shares content both the what and where are just as important. By posting on the right day and at the right time, companies can increase likes, shares, and clicks. Many marketers do not know when to post content on social media accounts. With a deep knowledge of peak times for specific audiences, businesses can maximize the impact of every post and reach audiences around the world.

Businesses need to understand who they need to reach to be successful. Many generations, especially millennials and post-millennials, feel more sensitive towards how companies do business. Companies perceived to be unethical will be punished by a loss of power and respect by consumers (Jayaram et al., 2015). Millennials and post-millennials are heavily dependent on social media and technology access. The most educated generation to date, millennials, are estimated to comprise 75% of the global workforce by 2025 (Dews, 2014). Because of this, millennials will become the lead creators of social media for businesses. Millennials have a desire to create lasting improvements in the workplace that can help promote transparency, equality,

unconventional thinking and non-traditional diversity. As millennials take over the workplace, they continue to think outside the box and market towards people who think similar to them and in innovative ways to reach a larger audience. By focusing efforts on younger generations, a larger reach will be met, as needs and interests are met as well.

It is important for businesses to focus on reaching younger generations with their content because millennials and post-millennials are more likely to expect social media marketing (The McCarthy Group, 2019). A recent study noted that 84% of millennials dislike traditional marketing and advertising (The McCarthy Group). However, they do not mind digital advertising and marketing. In fact, 57% would view sponsored content from a brand, such as written articles or pre-roll videos. The content must, however, feel authentic and be entertaining and useful (The McCarthy Group). Understanding consumers' online access and needs can help to drive the success of reaching new audiences efficiently and help to increase sales.

### Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to examine social media marketing practices for Salesforce Software Company.

### Research Questions

This study attempted to answer the following research questions:

1. What are the social media marketing practices of Salesforce Software Company?
2. What are the practices in content creation of Salesforce Software Company?

3. What are the practices with customer engagement and interaction?
4. How effective are the social media marketing practices that Salesforce Software Company uses to market products and services?
5. How effective is social media content variety?
6. How effective is Salesforce Software Company with customer engagement and interaction?

## Chapter 2

### METHODS

The purpose of this study was to examine the social media marketing practices of Salesforce Software Company. This chapter includes the following sections: description of organization, description of instrument, and description of procedures.

#### Description of Organization

A case study was conducted on Salesforce Software Company. Salesforce is an American cloud-based software company, headquartered in San Francisco, California. It is San Francisco's largest employer. Salesforce has 62 office locations across 28 countries. It provides customer relationship management services (CRM) and sells a complementary suite of enterprise applications focused on customer service, marketing automation, analytics, and application development. The company was founded in 1999 by Marc Benioff (CEO), Parker Harris (Co-Founder), Dave Moellenhoff, and Frank Dominguez. They pioneered cloud-based CRM software and have helped 150,000+ companies run more effectively. As of 2020, there are over 35,000 employees and more than 150,000 customers that trust Salesforce to help drive results for sales, service, and marketing. Their largest customers are Spotify, Amazon Web Services, *The New York Post*, The American Red Cross, U.S. Bank, Toyota, and more. Salesforce ranked 240, on the 2019 Fortune 500 list, of the largest United States companies for revenue (Salesforce, 2020).

### Description of Instrument

The instrument utilized was a case study guide developed by the researcher (see Appendix A). It was designed to analyze the social media marketing practices of Salesforce Software Company. The instrument consists of elements that were designed to analyze the organization's activity on three of the seven most used social media sites: Facebook, Instagram and LinkedIn (Kellogg, 2020). The instrument assessed social media engagement for Salesforce based on the following criteria: followers, frequency of content, content, post type, post times, and customer/company interaction.

A pilot study was conducted on the Pipedrive Customer Relationship Management Company's social media accounts, one of Salesforce's largest competitors, to ascertain the instrument's effectiveness. After testing the pilot, instrument questions and criteria had been adjusted to best reflect the research questions. One major adjustment was adding in "past 5 days of posts" to clarify the time interval of how far back the accounts were accessed. In addition, three sections of "description" were added to gather additional qualitative data.

### Description of Procedures

A case study was conducted on Salesforce Software Company. The instrument utilized was a case study guide developed by the researcher. The qualitative and quantitative data collected for Salesforce was accessed off of its Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn accounts. In addition to the platforms accessed, the researcher utilized Salesforce's official website to gather more information on Salesforce's history and

current employee information to gather information for the Description of Organization. More specifically, the “About Us” and “Home” tabs were accessed on Salesforce’s official website to gather statistical data. Additionally, photos, videos, and featured posts were used on Salesforce’s Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn to take a closer look at media content. To understand Salesforce’s customer engagement and interactions, comment sections on all posts uploaded during the study were analyzed. The study was conducted between October 23, 2020 and October 27, 2020.

## Chapter 3

### PRESENTATION OF THE RESULTS

The purpose of this study was to examine the social media marketing practices of Salesforce Software Company. A case study was utilized to examine its social media marketing practices. This chapter includes the following sections: social media marketing techniques, content creation, and customer-organization engagement and interaction. This chapter also includes the following subsections: followers/following, frequency of posts, posting time, type of content and media, and content descriptions.

#### Social Media Marketing Techniques

##### *Followers / Following*

Salesforce Software Company utilizes a variety of social media marketing techniques when advertising to the public. One of their strategies is to focus efforts on finding the right audience and the right customers. To find the right audience and customers, Salesforce defines the ideal customer and then decides which social media platforms they are most likely to use. Salesforce is active on Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn, as well as several other social media platforms such as Twitter, Google+, and TikTok. Salesforce had the greatest number of followers and followings on its LinkedIn page. Additionally, Salesforce had the least number of followers and followings on its Instagram account. As of October 27, 2020, on Facebook, Salesforce had 761,000 followers and 760,000 accounts who liked the page. On Instagram, Salesforce had

122,000 followers and follows back 92 accounts. On LinkedIn, Salesforce had 2 million followers. For a complete presentation of these findings, see Table 1 and 2.

Table 1

Number and Percentage of Followers - Salesforce

Social Media Account	Followers	%
Facebook	761,690	23.16
Instagram	122,000	3.71
LinkedIn	2,404,523	73.12

Note: Due to rounding of numbers, percentages may be less than 100%

Table 2

Number and Percentage of Accounts Salesforce Follows

Social Media Account	Following	%
Facebook	761,690	24.05
Instagram	92	00.00002
LinkedIn	2,404,523	75.94

Note: Due to rounding of numbers, percentages may be less than 100%

### *Frequency of Posts*

Consistency is key in regard to posting schedule. The most frequently used platform Salesforce posts on was its LinkedIn account. The least frequently used platform was Instagram. It is common for Salesforce to post three to four times per week. This frequency ensures that followers regularly see new content. However, Salesforce does not post content on a consistent basis on all accounts. As depicted in Table 3, Salesforce

posts the most on its LinkedIn account and has the most followers on its LinkedIn account. Table 3 reports the average number of posts per day Salesforce added content to its social media accounts.

Table 3

Average Number of Posts - Salesforce

Social Media Account	Average Posts Per Day
Facebook	4
Instagram	1
LinkedIn	6

*Posting Time*

Correct posting time is a vital piece of Salesforce’s marketing strategy. Each network channel has its pros and cons. Strategy regarding correct timing for social media posts is determined by posting on the right day at the right time to increase likes, shares, and clicks. Facebook, having billions of members and a strong market dominance, has a Facebook Insight feature to determine when the majority of users are online and active on the page. Here, Salesforce can determine when its customers are active online. However, Instagram posts have a longer life expectancy than Facebook and LinkedIn combined. It is noted that when posting on Instagram, half of the comments are made during the first six hours of the post being uploaded.

Between the three social media sites, Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn, post time typically fell on the hour. The post time of the day on Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn varied. Out of the three social media platforms, Salesforce posted on Instagram

the earliest in the day, whereas posted to LinkedIn the latest in the day. Salesforce’s most viewed content, shared content, and liked content was posted at approximately 2:00 pm on LinkedIn with 108 likes and three comments. For a complete presentation of these findings, see Table 4 and 5.

Table 4

Average Time of Day to Post - Salesforce

Social Media Account	Average Time of Day
Facebook	12:00 pm
Instagram	11:00 am
LinkedIn	2:00 pm

Table 5

Time of Day to Post - Salesforce

Social Media Account	Facebook	Instagram	LinkedIn
October 22, 2020	6:01 am 7:02 am 9:56 am 10:25 am 12:00 pm 2:00 pm	11:00 am	12:07 pm 1:00 pm (2x) 3:00 pm 4:02 pm
October 23, 2020	11:00 am 3:00 pm 5:41 pm	12:00 pm	12:10 pm 1:01 pm (2x) 3:02 pm 4:00 pm
October 24, 2020	9:38 am 11:00 am 2:00 pm 5:00 pm		1:00 pm 2:00 pm (2x) 3:00 pm 4:00 pm

October 25, 2020	11:03 am 1:00 pm 2:00 pm 3:00 pm		1:11 pm 2:00 pm (2x) 3:00 pm 4:02 pm
October 26, 2020	9:02 am 12:56 pm	11:03 am	12:00 pm (2x) 1:09 pm (2x) 2:03 pm (2x) 4:06 pm (3x)
October 27, 2020	11:00 am 12:00 pm	10:16 am 11:00 am	6:04 am 1:08 pm (2x) 2:00 pm

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## Content Creation

### *Type of Content and Media*

Salesforce focuses most of its marketing strategy efforts on content type. To stand out from the competition, Salesforce focuses on content type and the types of content and media posted on all three platforms are very similar. All three platforms use a mixture of types of posts: photos, videos, weblinks, textboxes, and original articles.

On Salesforce’s Facebook page, posts are about what Salesforce is currently implementing and what the clients should begin to think about. Salesforce’s posts on Facebook includes articles, short videos, weblinks, images and graphics, photos, and textboxes. On Salesforce’s Instagram page, the posts are strictly marketing efforts of Salesforce to its clients and potential leads. The posts consist of short videos, photos, graphics, Instagram stories, and charts. The charts depict Salesforce CRM earnings per year and current updates on Coronavirus cases. Salesforce posts most of COVID-19 related information on its Instagram. On Salesforce’s LinkedIn page, they upload most all of the media content, from professional to personal information, about Salesforce and its

employees. Professional information encompasses Salesforce Marketing Cloud, advertising myths versus truths, digital transformation in the midst of a pandemic, and more. Personal information includes influential quotes, speakers, re-posts of articles, welcoming new employees and clients, and words of affirmation from the CEO. The posts consist of shared articles, shared graphics, short videos, articles, and photos.

### *Content Descriptions*

Salesforce's social media content is largely the same across the three social media platforms. Primarily all posted content consists of the same images and videos that promote upcoming events and news about Salesforce. The majority of these posts are original content created by Salesforce. These posts usually contain the Salesforce mascots- the trailhead characters. The characters names are Appy, Astro, Blaze, Cloudy, Codey, Earnie, Einstein, Hootie, Koa, Max, Meta, and SaaSy. In addition to the characters, the posts tend to follow a light blue aesthetic, similar to the Salesforce logo.

Salesforce also posts a small amount of promotional video content on Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn. Most of the video content includes graphic videos, made by Salesforce, to promote and market upcoming events, news, and information happening within Salesforce. In addition to graphic videos, Salesforce posts videos of current employees speaking about Salesforce or about influential messages they want their clients and potential leads to hear.

All of the organization's social media content, both event and non-event oriented, is posted on its LinkedIn account. Both the Facebook and LinkedIn pages upload images and photos to the "Video" and "Photo" tabs. Here, users can directly access all video and photo updates, instead of having to scroll through the "Home" page to find current

information. When using the LinkedIn and Facebook page, users can directly access an “Event” tab to be directed to upcoming events. One addition to the LinkedIn page is the “Product” tab. This tab links users to the several different products and services that Salesforce offers clients.

### Customer Engagement and Interaction

Social media is not strictly a numbers game. Although follower counts are a starting point for measuring presence and reach, engagement is a vital piece of the marketing strategy. Salesforce's interaction with users is minimal on their social media platforms. On Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn, interaction is limited to user comments on posts. Salesforce does not reply to its users on any of these three platforms. On Facebook, there is a direct link at the top of the page that gives users the option of subscribing to receive the Salesforce Weekly Brief as well as marketing communications regarding Salesforce's products, services, and events. On the Salesforce Weekly Brief sign up tab, users are able to directly receive free Salesforce information by registering an email and listing the country they live in. To measure social media marketing success, Salesforce focuses on engagement metrics, such as likes, shares, comments, and retweets.

On each platform, there is a link to the official Salesforce website in its bio or at the top of its page. Here, users have a direct link to the Salesforce Home Page which highlights a “Contact Us” option. On both the Facebook page and the Instagram page, there is direct message availability. On Instagram, there is a direct message box at the top of the page. On Facebook, there is a telephone number and a send message option, via Facebook messenger, linked to the left side of the page. Salesforce does not interact directly with its customers on its social media platforms; however, the company

highlights several ways to get in touch with them for more customer-organization engagement and interaction. Followers are encouraged to interact on posts and reach out with questions or inquiries.

## Chapter 4

### DISCUSSION AND CONCLUSIONS

Salesforce Software Company has been continuously gaining popularity since its inception in 1999. It is important to review the social media marketing techniques of the company to determine what they are doing right and what areas they can improve on. Chapter 4 includes the following sections: discussion of major findings and implications, limitations of the study, conclusions based on the research questions, and recommendations for the organization, industry, and future research.

#### Discussion

The end goal for most businesses is to make a profit. In doing so, marketing becomes the essential channel used to sell products and services to consumers. Salesforce Software Company uses Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn to market to the public. Through these three platforms, Salesforce has been able to market its products and services in a meaningful and authentic manner, building customer loyalty and brand awareness along the way.

Utilizing Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn, Salesforce Software Company is able to increase social media followers and potential customers. This happens specifically by increasing the frequency of postings, posting at strategic times, determining the best type of content and media to post, as well as focusing on what is portrayed through the content. As indicated by Lamberton and Stephen (2016), social media marketing is the

most influential way to market strictly due to its convenience and the many resources it offers to consumers. Because so many consumers have access to social media platforms, they now, more than ever, expect marketing strategies to be strong, innovative, and bold. Social media marketing has become a primary source of marketing, and consumers view this strategy as an essential way to learn about a company and its products and services. The researcher recommends Salesforce continue its social media marketing efforts to strengthen brand awareness to all consumers

Salesforce has capitalized on strategic marketing techniques to increase brand awareness. In regard to the frequency of posts, Salesforce posts the most on LinkedIn and the least on Instagram. Correspondingly, Salesforce has the most followers on LinkedIn and the least on Instagram. Salesforce posts all of its content on LinkedIn, and because of this, this platform is the most popular to the public. Moving forward, Salesforce needs to improve its frequency of posts on both Instagram and Facebook, as well as the other social media platforms that are not utilized as much, such as Twitter, Google+, and TikTok. Dews (2014) acknowledges that millennials and post-millennials are heavily dependent on social media technology access. Millennials divide their time the most across a wide range of platforms, making social media presence necessary for companies on multiple accounts. Businesses need to understand who they need to reach to market successfully. By understanding how popular Instagram is to post-millennials, it can ultimately help Salesforce increase brand awareness, simply by posting more on platforms that are integral to specific generations. The researcher recommends Salesforce increase efforts to understand social media as a phenomenon and its impact on people of every age.

In addition to frequency of posts, Salesforce posts at relevant times. Salesforce varies in the time of day they post, which is ideal given users from all over the world access their accounts. In general, post times fall on the hour, typically in the early afternoon. Post time matters based on the target audience and time zone. Because Salesforce posts begin around 6:00 a.m. PST and end close to 4:00 p.m. PST, Salesforce is able to reach all time zones in a relevant manner. Salesforce does not need to focus efforts on improving post times. As referenced by Patel (2020), when you share can be just as important as what and where. With the internet being accessible at all times, people go online and browse for content to consume at all hours of the day. By understanding the importance of post time, Salesforce can post at the most opportune time and achieve the farthest reach and have its biggest impact on the public.

In regard to content creation, Salesforce Software Company is moderately effective. Indicated by Soares, Pincho and Nobre (2012), consumers trust companies when consumers and the company form trust with content on social media. Salesforce uploads similar content on all social media platforms. However, the content is posted for different purposes. To improve posted content, Salesforce should post content with similar purposes on all three platforms. To find specific information on Salesforce, consumers have to go to specific platforms to receive certain information. By posting the same content on all social media platforms, a larger audience can be reached, and information can be easily accessible. It is important to note that not every customer or client uses every social media platform, so by posting similar content on all outlets, consumers are able to stay up to date with Salesforce. Cimcek (2018) brings to light the need to communicate effectively through all social media platforms to meet people with

different needs. The researcher suggests that Salesforce post similar information on all its social media platforms. By doing so, all of Salesforce's media accounts will deliver the same content to consumers. This can help to build trust with consumers strictly through social media as consumers can rely on all Salesforce's media accounts to post relevant information.

Salesforce utilizes a wide variety of content types when posting information. Salesforce uses personalized and individualized content to market through the unique presentation of videos, blogs, photos, infographics, weblinks, and textboxes. With such a variety of content types, users can access content that best benefits their needs. The McCarthy Group (2019) highlights the shift from traditional marketing to digital marketing and advertising and supports a variety of content types. By understanding consumers' needs for social media marketing, Salesforce is able to reach a vast audience efficiently, and in turn, increase sales and brand awareness. The researcher recommends Salesforce stays up to date on the latest social media trends to help improve the type of content they currently present to the public.

Salesforce is highly effective with storytelling and branding. As noted by Singh and Sonnenburg (2012), storytelling has the power to give meaning and purpose to a brand. Salesforce story tells and communicates their brand through the Salesforce trailhead characters. The characters, SaaSy (the original Salesforce mascot), Chatty, Astro, Einstein, Codey Bear, Cloudy, Appy, Blaze, and many more, are the trailhead characters. They were created with the sole purpose of differentiating Salesforce from competitors by doing the unusual. They were crafted to embrace the fun side of Salesforce and inspire employees and customers to be their authentic, best selves. By

branding themselves as unique, solely based on digital cartoon characters, Salesforce is able to sell their products and services to the public through the eyes of the characters, creating a story and narrative for consumers to follow and engage with. On Salesforce's social media platforms, the trailhead characters are posted on a regular basis, adding to the brand that Salesforce has created for the public. Salesforce focuses efforts on marketing the trailhead characters, which helps to add to the overall brand. This ability to story tell through animation has continued to allow Salesforce to connect with its audience in a unique way, differentiating itself from the competition.

Salesforce is moderately effective in regard to customer engagement and interaction. Salesforces' interaction with users is minimal on their social media platforms. After analyzing all three platforms, Salesforce does not respond to user comments. It is likely Salesforce does not respond to user comments because they receive so many, but not acknowledging users' questions and comments can feel uninviting to customers. As indicated by O'Brien (2018), successful marketing depends on creating an optimal customer experience that is integrated across platforms, and that includes leveraging social media engagement as a means of reaching customers. Because Salesforce does not respond to customers, they are not fully creating an optimal customer experience. As indicated by Bennett (2000), customers who are engaged with by companies begin to create emotional connections to brands and tend to promote companies and become lifelong customers. If Salesforce was to improve its customer engagement, they would evolve their marketing techniques to facilitate lasting relationships and experiences with consumers. The shift in focus with customer engagement and interaction will help to excite consumers and foster deep relationships by offering new possibilities of

engagement. Customers would then feel heard and valued, and in turn, Salesforce would begin to create substantial relationships with people through online access. The researcher highly recommends Salesforce makes customer engagement and interaction a focal point moving forward as it will skyrocket company success through social media marketing.

Although Salesforce does not respond directly to users, they do a good job of offering many different ways for users to get in touch with the company. Salesforce has a few options available for users to connect with Salesforce in regard to becoming a client or asking questions. Salesforce has made it easy to connect with them through links on their social media sites, but the likelihood of receiving a personalized response from a worker at Salesforce is very unlikely. Salesforce should implement better ways for customers or potential candidates to get in touch with Salesforce.

Several limitations may have impacted the results of this study. First, resource and information access had been limited to strictly online access. Because all of the resources used were obtained online, there is a chance that the sites used had implicit biases. A lot of resources want to highlight information in a positive nature and do not always offer speak different opinions. This can leave room for error in the research. Additionally, on Google Scholar, there was limited access to PDF articles and journals. With limited access to specific journals, the researcher had to redesign and restructure research in different ways. Lastly, the researcher can have personal biases. The researcher is an avid follower of Salesforce and tends to see Salesforce in a positive light. Because of this, there is a tendency to see the good in Salesforce rather than seeing the bad. Limitations

are a vital piece to understand when placing research findings into context, interpreting scientific work, as well as ascribing credibility to conclusions of published research.

The results of this study showcase the social media marketing techniques and practices Salesforce Software Company uses. Although the current best practices Salesforce uses are highly effective, trends in the industry will continue to shift, leaving room for Salesforce to fall behind or be passed by its competitors. Salesforce needs to move forward and be proactive in understanding social media marketing strategies as times change. By doing so, Salesforce will maintain consumer's desires, interests, and needs. The researcher of this case study references knowledge and professional tips as a starting point for future advancements made within the company. It is imperative that Salesforce progresses its social media marketing practices as technology and customer interaction and engagement continuously advance. Salesforce will be able to create and maintain substantial relationships and experiences with consumers.

### Conclusions

Based on the findings of this study, the following conclusions are drawn:

1. Salesforce Software Company utilizes Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn as social media marketing techniques to market to consumers.
2. Salesforce Software Company uses personalized and individualized content to market to consumers through the unique presentation of content type.
3. Salesforce Software Company does not interact directly with customers on social media platforms but highlights several options of ways to get in touch with Salesforce through separate links posted on its Facebook and Instagram pages.

4. Salesforce Software Company uses highly effective social media marketing strategies to advertise its products and services by posting an assortment of information on different media platforms.
5. Salesforce Software Company is moderately effective with its social media content variety, by actively posting on different social media platforms such as Facebook, Instagram, and LinkedIn.
6. Salesforce Software Company is somewhat effective with customer engagement and interaction, by giving consumers options as to ways to engage with the company aside from user comments.

### Recommendations

Based on the conclusions of this study, the following recommendations are made:

1. Salesforce Software Company should continue to understand target reach to capture millennials and post-millennials through social media marketing strategies.
2. Salesforce Software Company should begin to utilize all social media platforms in an active manner to market to consumers, such as; Snapchat, TikTok, VSCO, Tumblr, Pinterest.
3. Salesforce Software Company must align all of its social media accounts to deliver the same content.
4. Salesforce Software Company should begin to post more frequently on all social media sites to increase brand awareness by reaching new audiences.

5. Salesforce Software Company should implement a position that is dedicated to responding to valid questions, comments, and concerns on all of its social media sites to increasingly engage with consumers on an emotional level through social media.
6. Salesforce Software Company should create a forum or space for customers and clients to be able to type pressing questions, and have an employee respond in a timely manner.
7. Future research should examine a large number of social media marketing strategies globally to determine the value of active social media presence and its impact on the following base and reach.

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## APPENDIXES

Appendix A

Instrument

	<u>Facebook</u>	<u>Instagram</u>	<u>LinkedIn</u>
1. Number of followers the company has.			
Salesforce Software Company			
2. Average number of posts per week.			
Salesforce Software Company			
3. Time of day – past 5 days of posts.			
Salesforce Software Company			
4. Description of content – past 5 days of posts.			
Salesforce Software Company			
5. Description of the type of media (images, texts, videos, etc.) posted on all social media accounts – past 5 days of posts.			
Salesforce Software Company			
6. Description of companies’ engagement – past 5 days of posts.			
Salesforce Software Company			