

Q&A

# Front Office Transformation

## Q&A: Adam Spearing, Salesforce

PwC and Salesforce have a longstanding alliance, working together to guide customers through transformation. We provide the deep industry and transformation experience; Salesforce the customised digital solutions. Together, we help our clients to drive their competitive advantage in the fast-evolving digital economy.

We caught up with Adam Spearing, Salesforce's EMEA Field CTO & SVP Solution Consulting UKI, to get his view on what's happening in the market when it comes to Front Office Transformation (FOT) – the process of aligning the sales, marketing and customer service functions in order to improve the customer and employee experience.

### **FOT covers a wide range of topics. What does it mean to you?**

I see Front Office Transformation happening in two very distinct ways. The first is around how companies represent themselves to their customers. The second – and this is the one that I think a lot of people forget or don't really concentrate on enough – is around the employee experience.

The best examples I have seen are where those two things happen together.

### **That's an interesting point. How can companies transform the front office in a way that serves both employees and customers?**

The challenge that companies have is that they focus on one or the other. If they focus on customers, they often put things in place that can improve the customer experience – like a concierge-type service – but this puts the burden on employees to deliver it. And organisations that focus their FOT on employee productivity tend to push the responsibility on to the customer, with things like self-service and automated call-tree systems.

The answer is to strike a balance. Loyalty comes from a combination of low effort and good experience, and this applies equally to customers and employees.



**Once companies understand the parameters of their FOT, the next step is to invest in making it happen. What trends are you seeing in the market when it comes to making FOT investments?**

Often, I find there's strong willingness from the business to invest in Front Office Transformation for the customer experience. But companies underestimate just how much of a change it needs to be, because it's not just changing the technology – you've got to change the company processes too.

But on the employee side, often there is no willingness to invest in tools to improve productivity. We've been grappling with the concept of productivity since the 1970s and arguably there has been little improvement.

What I can tell you is that companies that have low employee turnover typically have higher value and more satisfied customers. But what drives lower employee turnover? It's not just having a lovely office with a great coffee machine, it's about giving them technology that's really easy to use and helps them to get their work done.

Satisfied, happy employees deliver satisfied, happy customers. Employees need to see the same thing as the customers.

**Once companies have invested in FOT, what must they do to ensure it's successful?**

A good Front Office Transformation is where the executives of the business remain engaged in the transformation. Bad is where they say, 'We've got a plan, we've got a strategy. CIO here, you've got to go fix it'. That's not a transformation or improvement. It's a fundamental mistake.

Enablement is another really important factor, and you really have to look at the way people learn today. I come from a generation where if there's a new technology capability, you get a one-day training class. But nowadays we're all flying around so fast and people's attention spans have reduced, so we need to look more at micro-learning moments. You need to think about different ways of learning. The same is true with FOT.

**What's your number-one tip to anyone starting a FOT?**

Start with a bit of research into the art of the possible. I meet with organisations that think they have a clear idea of what they want to achieve, and they have a ringfenced budget for it and want to just get going. But we say, that's great, but look at these other elements you haven't yet considered. So the advice would be: don't try and do this on your own.

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