

SHAPE YOUR SALESFORCE ENTREPRENEURIAL JOURNEY

From Idea to First Client

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~100 people, Gurugram + Jaipur



THE CONFESSION

I did not sell my way to client one.

No cold call, no pitch, ever.

So your next 30 mins is **not yet another sales masterclass or playbook.**

The Usual Playbook

Landing your first customer



The usual playbook

- Cold calls, LinkedIn outreach and cold emails
- Events, booths, sponsorships
- Sales hires, marketing budgets, ads
- RFPs, AppExchange and marketplace listings, partner directories

Which of these have you already tried, and what did it cost you?

THE USUAL PLAYBOOK

| Where does that put your new service or product?

In the longest queue, chasing what everyone chases.



The usual playbook bill

This is the bill you get to skip. Keep the total in mind for the rest of the talk.

CHANNEL	STARTER TEAM	USA	INDIA
Direct sales	1 SDR + 1 AE	\$175-290k/yr	₹20-70L/yr (global-SaaS pay scales)
Digital marketing social media, content, ads, email, etc	Agency or 1-3 hires	\$2-10k/mo typical	₹25k-1.5L/mo
Events sponsorship booth, swag, hotel, travel, etc	2-3 staff	\$2-15k easily, minimum	Dreamin/community events a fraction of US costs
Subscriptions Semrush, ZoomInfo, LinkedIn Sales Navigator		\$5-20k/yr lean; \$40k+ with ZoomInfo-class data	Same tools, USD-priced: ₹4-17L/yr
Total 1st year (Approx)		≈ \$210-500k	≈ ₹30L-1.3Cr

Only the sales and marketing bill. Excludes dev/engineering, HR, operations, accounting, office rent, etc.

The `alternative` playbook

No queue, no bill. What worked for me instead.

Via reputation

Sales runs on trust. Trust comes from reputation.
Reputation takes organic time. No steroids here.

- Many ways to build trust
- What worked for me was **original research, shared without a paywall**

Rare then, rarer now

Then: Rare in 2010

Original, quality research for articles, whitepapers, and open-source solutions has always been rare in the market.

Back in 2010, blogs and open source were the absolute rarest of them all.

Now: Even Rarer

Harder today? Actually, the opposite.

As AI-generated content floods social feeds, genuine, high-quality research stands out significantly more than it did in 2010.

2010 → TODAY

My 1st blog: tgerm.com

2010 Launch

Blogging learnings, research, and technical findings from a Java/VC++ engineer landing in the Salesforce ecosystem.

Unintentional SEO

Google ranked the blog on page one for key terms with zero SEO investment.

At times outranking Stack Overflow and Salesforce's own sites.

The Pivot

Sadly, the domain missed renewals, but the writing didn't stop.

Active writing continues at:

- medium.com
- concret.io/blog

2010 → TODAY

Open source, the other rare space

Early Impact

Tolerado: featured by Salesforce Dev Relations (2010) & Handbook (2011).

Jeff Douglas ships Agent Force Vibes at Salesforce.

Apex Fast XML DOM: in official Developers Newsletter (2010).

Recognition

Lookup Rollup Summaries featured by Andrew Fawcett.

Andrew Fawcett went from FinancialForce CTO to Heroku CPO.

Proof that a quality project always gets noticed.

Active Today

Still shipping open source.
Recent VS Code Extension stats:

- 44 Global PRs
- 21 Forks
- 71 Stars

BEFORE THE PITCH

Let reputation-based trust arrive first

Sales runs on Trust

That entire bill on slide 6 is brands paying to manufacture it.

- If you spend a few years during the job building reputation (lately called a personal brand)
- Client one can arrive before the company even exists.
 - no pitch, no logo, just years of public work people already trusted. Mine did.

POSITIONING

Go deep, pick your niche

- India was full of agencies doing every technology in the world. We picked one.
- **Salesforce only, done properly**. Everyone said it was too narrow.
- 2026 is the same, but within Salesforce now: pick 1-2 clouds, or 1 industry, and be an expert
- AI still can't beat depth of real experience and expertise
- Salesforce Partner Ecosystem grew 5x in a decade (via 10K Research) 📌



2026: I am hoping it's above 4K partners in the Salesforce ecosystem. Find your niche and expertise.

Consultancy or product?

The answer depends on depth.

- Deep in an industry: **You already know the customer's pains**, and what existing SaaS/PaaS leaves unsolved.
- Products are born from unique domain pain points, the kind only deep vertical experience can spot.
- Consulting works the same way: know an industry well and you can package accelerators and solutions around it.

No depth yet? Expect a few wandering years before the niche reveals itself.

Pain still unclear
Sell services, observe.

Pain repeating and stable
Build product.

Already building a product?

Read the matrix as a diagnostic of your pain evidence, not a verdict to reverse course.

GOLDEN HANDCUFFS

They tighten exactly when you reach for the door

- For me, the hard part was never landing clients. It was leaving the job's cushion
- First entrepreneur in my family: no map, and no one at home to ask
- 2013: the moment word of my resignation spread, the lucrative offers grew

BEFORE YOU LEAP

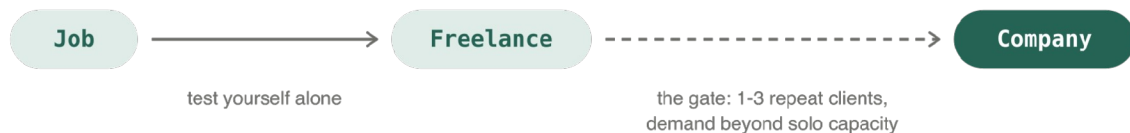
Is your family on this mission?

- Fed up with job politics and client pressure? A business is 10-100x that pressure
- Loans and family financial commitments: count them before the plunge, not after
- Spouse, kids, parents: how ready are they for the lean years?
- Working spouse + early days of parenting = a joint mission, not a solo play
- Readiness check: 6-12 months of expenses saved, spouse genuinely on board, no loan that panics at zero revenue

| Have you counted your runway, and has your family?

BE DOUBLE SURE, AND NO HARM IN TRYING

Freelance first: the test



- No leap of faith required: baby steps are fine
- Don't decide from the feed: pyjama workdays, multi-monitor desks, workations, thought leader pics
- Freelance first: test how you handle uncertainty when it's just you. One steady 6-12 month contract is a job in disguise; that test doesn't count

JOB → FREELANCE → COMPANY

When to incorporate

- Ready for a company when: 1-3 repeat clients, demand beyond your solo capacity, and hired freelancers you can keep billed for months on repeat
- The unbillable CEO: 5-10 unpaid hours a week on invoices, taxes, and chasing payments, and enterprise clients pay Net-45/60 (what independents across this ecosystem report)
- Order of operations: repeat demand first, then incorporate, then hire. The entity follows the revenue, not the other way round
- Good talent can always get the job back, unless you burned the bridges 🔥

The running-the-business half of this story: Vinay Chaturvedi's session, Aug 20, this same series.

2022, WEB3

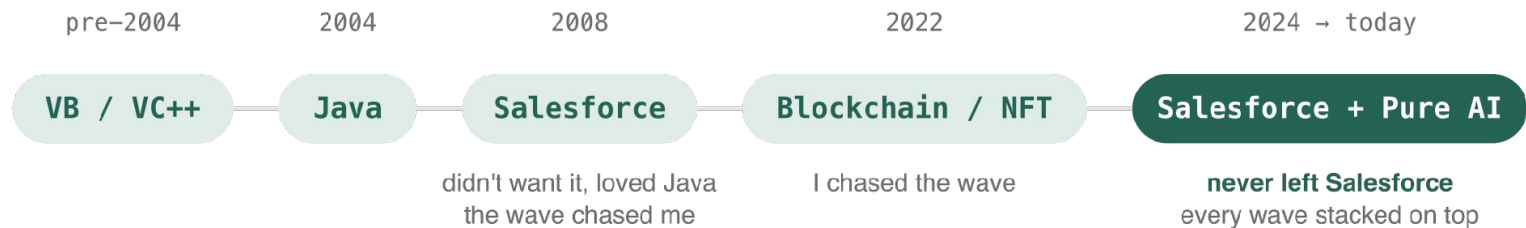
Not every idea works: execution cannot create a market

- 2022: I was all in on Web3. Blockchain certification from IIT Kanpur, many nights and weekends spent learning alongside the business
- Shipped Blockchain + NFT solutions on Salesforce before Salesforce shipped NFT Cloud: ahead of the platform itself
- Crypto market collapsed, so did the NFTs
- I wasn't lazy or late. I was wrong while executing well and being early: execution cannot create a market
- Pizza on the ceiling: throw many slices, a few stick

| Destiny plays its own part. No harm in trying.

MY JOURNEY, HARD COMPRESSED

My waves



- 2008: boss said deliver Salesforce projects. I said "I love Java". Guess who was right
- I've been early twice. 2008, Salesforce revamped my career. 2022 made a good story :)
- The difference? 2008 chased me. 2022, I did the chasing

THE MOAT

Depth is what's left to sell

- We billed hours for three things: discovery, code, documentation
- Discovery: clients ask AI first now. They arrive knowing what they want
- Code and docs: agents write both. Full builds already ship this way (Agentforce, Claude, agentic partners)
- So the money moves to results, not hours. Already happening, not a forecast

The moat: real technical or industry depth. Experience is the one thing you can't vibe-code.

BEFORE Q&A

One last thing

- Co-founders, since someone always asks: contrasting skills, and no friends untested in deep water
- Change is scary. It can also be a good adventure

Questions? 15 minutes, ask me anything · [linkedin.com/in/abhinavguptas](https://www.linkedin.com/in/abhinavguptas)