

The Total Economic Impact[™] Of Acxiom Salesforce Practice

Cost Savings And Business Benefits Enabled By Acxiom

A Forrester Total Economic Impact[™] Study
Commissioned By Acxiom, August 2024

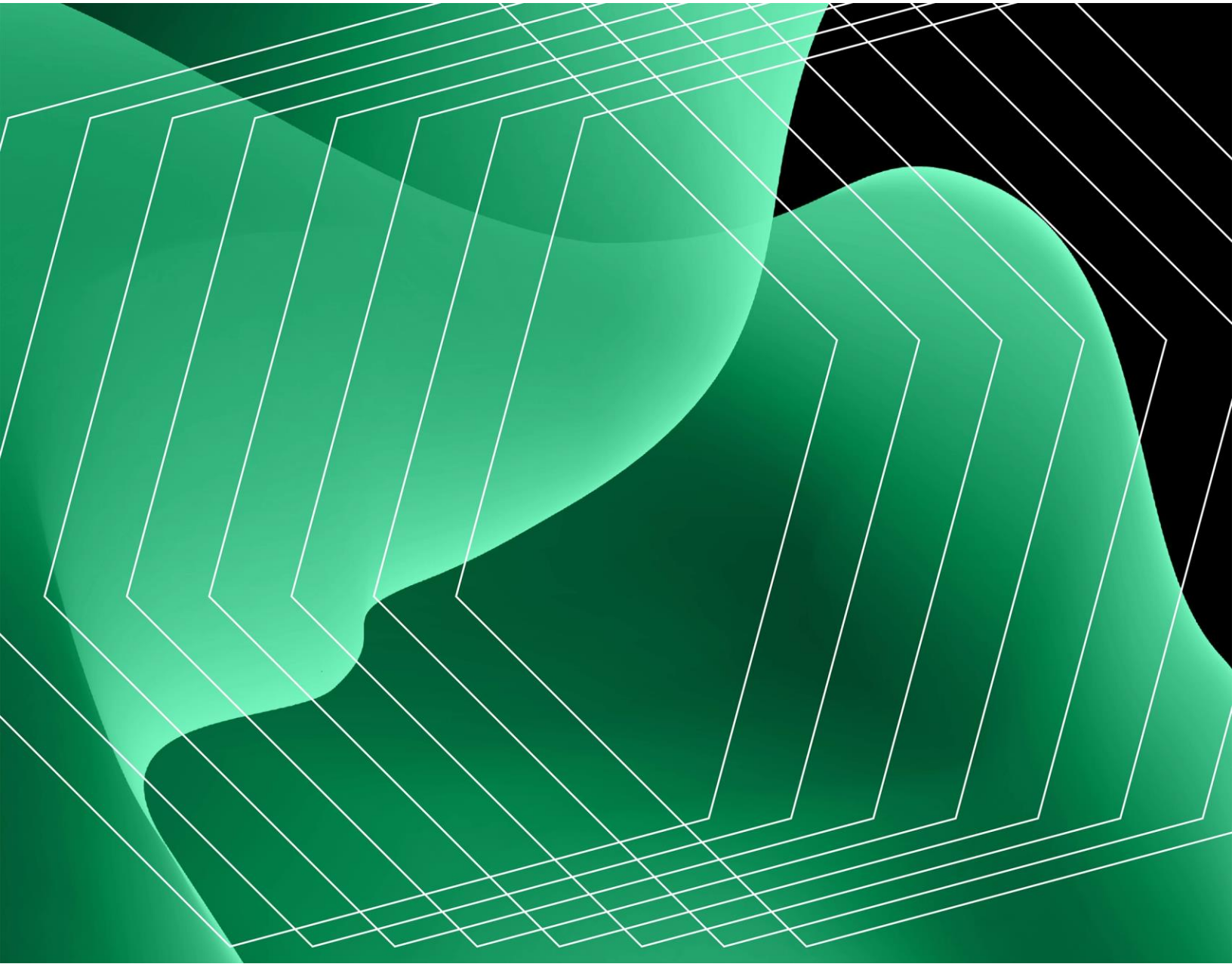


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Consulting Team:

Stephanie Slate

Kara Luk

ABOUT FORRESTER CONSULTING

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Executive Summary

Acxiom helps organizations maximize their Salesforce value and customer data while controlling costs and timelines for projects such as Salesforce implementations, database management, journey development, technical builds, troubleshooting, and ongoing strategy. Acxiom provides technical and strategic expertise to help organizations with projects that involve Salesforce Marketing Cloud, Salesforce Data Cloud, and customer data.¹

Acxiom commissioned Forrester Consulting to conduct a Total Economic Impact™ (TEI) study and examine the potential return on investment (ROI) enterprises may realize by working with Acxiom's Salesforce practice.² The purpose of this study is to provide readers with a framework to evaluate the potential financial impact of Acxiom on their organizations.



Return on investment (ROI)

107%



Net present value (NPV)

\$1.87M

To better understand the benefits, costs, and risks associated with this investment, Forrester interviewed four representatives with experience using Acxiom's Salesforce practice. For the purposes of this study, Forrester aggregated the interviewees' experiences and combined the results into a single [composite organization](#) that is an industry-agnostic organization with 3,000 employees and revenue of \$1 billion per year.

Interviewees said that prior to their organizations' Acxiom relationships, it was difficult to control costs related to their Salesforce environments given the level of expertise required to efficiently consolidate and maximize the value of customer data across several marketing communications channels and initiatives. Consolidating disparate customer data sources on one customer data platform (CDP) proved costly and near impossible in past efforts, while marketers lacked the technical expertise to efficiently build sophisticated and personalized customer journeys. Overall, interviewees shared

that Salesforce-related projects were difficult to manage internally and that using internal resources alone meant that projects tended to run over the needed timelines

They said Acxiom puts their organizations in the best position to maximize the value of their Salesforce investments and customer data while controlling the costs and accelerating speed to value in key projects related to initial implementation, customer journey development, technical builds, troubleshooting, and ongoing services to drive continuous improvement in customer engagement. Interviewees also noted that Acxiom keeps their organizations at the forefront of Salesforce features and updates, ensuring continued value from their Salesforce investments.

KEY FINDINGS

Quantified benefits. Three-year, risk-adjusted present value (PV) quantified benefits for the composite organization include:

- **Increase of 25% to the number of customers per campaign and open rate improvements of 10%.** Working with Acxiom, the composite organization consolidates several disparate customer data sources into Salesforce Data Cloud, providing a single view of the customer to improve the accuracy of customer data for better customer engagement. With Acxiom's support, the improved customer view allows the composite to create personalized journeys that boost engagement, revenue, and profitability. These campaign enhancements generate nearly \$1.3 million in profit for the composite organization over three years.
- **Faster speed to value and operational efficiency gains.** By working with Acxiom, the composite organization completes large-scale Salesforce Data Cloud projects (e.g., Salesforce Data Cloud implementations) faster and with significantly fewer personnel resources than previously required. It also completes ongoing Salesforce project work faster and on a controlled budget. These operational efficiency improvements are worth nearly \$1.5 million in reallocated personnel expense to the composite organization over three years.
- **Increase to velocity of support by 85%.** Working with Acxiom provides the composite organization with access to expertise that allows staff to resolve issues of any size related to the Salesforce environment faster than they could

before and with minimal involvement from internal personnel. Across the composite's Salesforce environment, these support efficiencies are worth nearly \$621,000 in avoided remediation labor over three years.

- **Avoided consulting costs for Salesforce project work.** Working with Acxiom allows the composite organization to avoid ad hoc consulting costs for Salesforce projects on a quarterly basis while establishing a long-term partnership with Acxiom. The composite avoids an average of \$30,000 per quarter in consulting costs, or a risk-adjusted value of nearly \$269,000 over three years.

Unquantified benefits. Benefits that provide value for the composite organization but are not quantified for this study include:

- **Unified customer data.** By consolidating several previously disparate customer data sources on Salesforce Data Cloud with Acxiom, the composite organization has a single point of visibility into its customer base, contributing to a better understanding of its customers.
- **Faster delivery to enhance customer satisfaction.** By working with Acxiom, the composite organization drives more personalization in its communications and product offers. This contributes to a better customer experience and increases satisfaction.
- **Continuous Salesforce optimization.** By working with Acxiom, the composite organization stays current with its Salesforce Data Cloud deployments, maintaining or increasing the value it receives from these investments over time while reducing the likelihood of falling behind on updates or accruing technical debt.
- **Improved employee experience for marketers and administrators.** As the composite organization's employees discover new Salesforce capabilities with Acxiom, their engagement in their work improves, leading to a more positive employee experience.

Costs. Three-year, risk-adjusted PV costs for the composite organization include:

- **Ongoing engagement costs with Acxiom.** The composite organization pays for Acxiom's services based on the scope and complexity of the work. For a Salesforce Data Cloud implementation and ongoing project work within the

Salesforce environment and customer database, the composite organization pays \$1.6 million over three years.

- **Internal labor to support Acxiom relationship.** The composite organization dedicates some staff to oversee the work with Acxiom. Tasks range from attending weekly meetings and facilitating and attending workshops to attending strategy and roadmapping working sessions with Acxiom. Over three years, the composite organization's internal labor costs are \$128,000.

The representative interviews and financial analysis found that a composite organization experiences benefits of \$3.61 million over three years versus costs of \$1.75 million, adding up to a net present value (NPV) of \$1.87 million and an ROI of 107%.

Personnel efficiency gains from accelerated Salesforce project timelines

\$1.45M

“Acxiom builds models for us for specific audiences. They can get strategic across the board and tweak the models and percentages for [these] audiences. They're also thoughtful on how we can incorporate website behavior into the content of the [messages].”

DIRECTOR OF MARKETING COMMUNICATIONS, AUTOMOTIVE



Return on investment
(ROI)

107%



Benefits PV

\$3.61M



Net present value
(NPV)

\$1.87M



Payback

<6 months

Benefits (Three-Year)



TEI FRAMEWORK AND METHODOLOGY

From the information provided in the interviews, Forrester constructed a Total Economic Impact™ framework for those organizations considering an investment in Acxiom's Salesforce practice.

The objective of the framework is to identify the cost, benefit, flexibility, and risk factors that affect the investment decision. Forrester took a multistep approach to evaluate the impact that Acxiom's Salesforce practice can have on an organization.

DISCLOSURES

Readers should be aware of the following:

This study is commissioned by Acxiom and delivered by Forrester Consulting. It is not meant to be used as a competitive analysis.

Forrester makes no assumptions as to the potential ROI that other organizations will receive. Forrester strongly advises that readers use their own estimates within the framework provided in the study to determine the appropriateness of an investment in Acxiom's Salesforce practice.

Acxiom reviewed and provided feedback to Forrester, but Forrester maintains editorial control over the study and its findings and does not accept changes to the study that contradict Forrester's findings or obscure the meaning of the study.

Acxiom provided the customer names for the interviews but did not participate in the interviews.

Due Diligence

Interviewed Acxiom stakeholders and Forrester analysts to gather data relative to Acxiom's Salesforce Practice.

Interviews

Interviewed four representatives at organizations using Acxiom to obtain data about costs, benefits, and risks.

Composite Organization

Designed a composite organization based on characteristics of the interviewees' organizations.

Financial Model Framework

Constructed a financial model representative of the interviews using the TEI methodology and risk-adjusted the financial model based on issues and concerns of the interviewees.

Case Study

Employed four fundamental elements of TEI in modeling the investment impact: benefits, costs, flexibility, and risks. Given the increasing sophistication of ROI analyses related to IT investments, Forrester's TEI methodology provides a complete picture of the total economic impact of purchase decisions. Please see [Appendix A](#) for additional information on the TEI methodology.

The Acxiom Salesforce Practice Customer Journey

Drivers leading to the Acxiom investment

Interviews			
Role	Industry	Region	Revenue
Director of marketing communications	Automotive	North America	\$8.3 billion
VP of database services	Financial services	North America	\$80 billion
CRM and loyalty manager	Transportation	Europe	\$275 million
CRM manager	Transportation	Europe	\$4 billion

KEY CHALLENGES

The interviewees noted how their organizations struggled with common challenges, including:

- **Inability to unify customer data.** Interviewees noted challenges specific to their organizations' environments that led to suboptimal usage of customer data in their marketing and personalization efforts. Some organizations were unable to unify disparate data sources into one single source of truth, while others could no longer onboard additional data sources without an overhaul of their Data Cloud.

The director of marketing communications from the automotive industry said that prior to working with Acxiom, their organization was unable to consolidate upwards of 30% of its customer database on a separate database onto its primary CDP. This hindered its ability to maximize the reach and impact of its campaigns. And a CRM and loyalty manager at a transportation company echoed that it was a struggle to unify customer data in Salesforce: "[For our team,] data schema was complicated within Salesforce. [Because we didn't have

anyone] who really was a coder, it was complicated to join data extensions together.”

- **Inconsistent data quality.** Interviewees said that because of the inability to consolidate and/or add disparate or additional customer data sources, their organizations often struggled with poor data quality because incomplete or duplicate customer information was pervasive across the environments. The VP of database services in financial services described how their organization’s previous partner was learning while building the environment, which led to poor data quality. They shared, “We did a diagnostic and identified what to focus on to improve data quality and accuracy [in Salesforce].”
- **Inefficient customer journey development.** In addition to challenges related to poor customer data quality, the interviewees’ organizations struggled to develop and build customer journeys due to a lack of consistent processes, automations, and predefined requirements. Journeys that were developed were often built from the ground up with redundancies, which contributed to more personnel cost, slower time to market, and the inability to reuse components for future journeys.
- **Staff augmentation to support existing expertise.** Several interviewees noted that their organization required significant investment in additional ad hoc outside expertise for projects related to its customer data platform and/or marketing automation solutions. This greatly increased the costs of these projects while still often delivering suboptimal results.
- **Expanded project timelines.** Technical debt and lack of personnel (or the need to bring on additional headcount) contributed to longer-than-expected timelines for Salesforce projects related to marketing automation or to customer data platforms. Campaigns often launched before the projects aimed to align customer data to support them, further limiting campaign performance.

INVESTMENT OBJECTIVES

The interviewees’ organizations searched for a partner that:

- Could understand their customers and vertical in order to support efficient journey development.
- Possesses data privacy expertise.

“Acxiom is an extension of our team. That’s the simplest way to say it. They go the extra mile to help us deliver in a timely manner.”

CRM AND LOYALTY MANAGER, TRANSPORTATION

“Acxiom has the subject matter expertise to be able to push the needle [on our KPIs] and onboard us in an efficient way. They’ve simplified our architecture and allow us to be nimbler.”

VP OF DATABASE SERVICES, FINANCIAL SERVICES

COMPOSITE ORGANIZATION

Based on the interviews, Forrester constructed a TEI framework, a composite company, and an ROI analysis that illustrates the areas financially affected. The composite organization is representative of the four interviewees, and it is used to present the aggregate financial analysis in the next section. The composite organization has the following characteristics:

Description of composite. The composite organization is a global, industry-agnostic organization with \$1 billion in revenue and 3,000 employees. The organization’s marketing team is responsible for executing several quarterly digital marketing

campaigns to engage its customer base by offering timely, personalized communications to drive revenue. Moreover, because of the complexity of the asks from leadership, the composite organization relies on ad hoc consulting services to augment Salesforce-related project work. Prior to working with Acxiom, the composite's limited technical and marketing personnel were responsible for manual reconciliation of customer data, and they were often unable to complete these projects. This led to campaigns based on incomplete or poor customer data.

Deployment characteristics. The composite organization engages with Acxiom to help consolidate its disparate customer data sources and implement Salesforce Data Cloud to support personalization to improve campaign performance while controlling the personnel and timeline costs associated with Salesforce-related projects. Acxiom resources also support the composite organization's existing Salesforce Marketing Cloud environment, assisting with customer journey development and refinement, use-case development, roadmapping, and technical strategy.

Key Assumptions

\$1 billion revenue

3,000 employees

36 annual digital marketing campaigns

Deploys Salesforce Data Cloud with Acxiom

Salesforce environment includes Salesforce Marketing Cloud

Analysis Of Benefits

Quantified benefit data as applied to the composite

Total Benefits						
Ref.	Benefit	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total	Present Value
Atr	Revenue and profit growth	\$443,760	\$513,722	\$590,604	\$1,548,086	\$1,271,711
Btr	Faster speed to value and operational efficiency gains	\$773,500	\$476,000	\$476,000	\$1,725,500	\$1,454,196
Ctr	Support desk savings	\$249,696	\$249,696	\$249,696	\$749,088	\$620,957
Dtr	Avoided consulting costs for Salesforce project work	\$108,000	\$108,000	\$108,000	\$324,000	\$268,580
Total benefits (risk-adjusted)		\$1,574,956	\$1,347,418	\$1,424,300	\$4,346,674	\$3,615,444

REVENUE AND PROFIT GROWTH

Evidence and data. Interviewees said Acxiom worked with their organizations to consolidate several disparate customer data sources on Salesforce Data Cloud, which brought previously unavailable customer data sources into the fold while greatly improving the accuracy of this data through ongoing active management. They also cited Acxiom's strategy work supporting campaign development, which they said makes personalization and triggered communications possible across a broader customer base or across specific verticals or customer subsets. This strategy work improved campaign effectiveness across several KPIs while simplifying journey-building, which expanded the organizations' flexibility for campaign design. Ultimately, the interviewees noted that the work their organizations complete with Acxiom supports more efficient campaigns brought to market faster that drive additional revenue and profitability.

- The director of marketing communications in the automotive industry explained to Forrester that Acxiom assists their organization with the development of personalized digital marketing campaigns that incorporate customer website behavior across desired subsets of customers. As a result, the organization

increased several marketing KPIs (e.g., open rate, click-through rate, click-to-open rate) across its campaigns.

- The CRM and loyalty manager in the transportation industry said that through their organization's campaign design and strategy work with Acxiom, campaigns are more targeted, segmented, and personalized than ever before. They explained that this resulted in double-digit percentage improvements to their organization's campaign email open rates and significantly improved its click-through rate.
- The VP of database services at the financial services organization cited customer database management and Acxiom's ability to support marketing teams through journey development as differentiators. They said that prior to working with Acxiom, these teams struggled to develop and build efficient journeys, and they developed fewer journeys with many decision splits that were often redundant. The interviewee said Acxiom helped streamline and simplify the organization's journey-building process, resulting in more efficient journeys with reusable components. This allowed the organization to be nimbler with campaign design than it was before. Since beginning work with Acxiom, the organization's annual journey development has increased more than tenfold.
- The CRM and loyalty manager at the European organization said that before working with Acxiom, their company did not have a single source of truth for customer data. But they explained that working with Acxiom allowed the organization to turn its Salesforce Data Cloud into a single pane of glass for customer data across all of its business units, which supports more engaging messaging and personalized offers and services for customers. The interviewee estimated that customer acquisition has improved by 1% to 3% each month from before, driving significant revenue attributable to Acxiom.

10x

Increase to annual journey development at one interviewee's organization

“[We're now able to] personalize, which allows us to put the customer at the heart of everything across all [channels,] and Acxiom is definitely aiding us on that journey.”

CRM AND LOYALTY MANAGER, TRANSPORTATION

“[With Acxiom,] when we run a campaign, we can segment the base even further to bring in additional personalization. Instead of one-size-fits-all, we might have 12 or 13 variations based on the customer.”

CRM MANAGER, TRANSPORTATION

Modeling and assumptions. For the composite organization, Forrester makes the following assumptions:

- The composite has 36 digital marketing campaigns in Year 1, and this increases to 40 by Year 3.
- In the previous environment, the composite targeted a baseline of 750,000 customers in each campaign. With Acxiom bringing additional customer data sources into Salesforce Data Cloud, this rate increases by 25% in Year 1, by 30% in Year 2, and by 35% in Year 3.
- The composite attributes 10% of its improvement in open rates to better personalization through its work with Acxiom.
- The composite has a 2.5% click-through rate with Acxiom.
- The composite has a 30% conversion rate.
- Forrester applied a 15% net margin to calculate profitability.

Risks. This benefit will vary among organizations based on:

- The baseline level of sophistication of the organization's customer database management and journey development as it relates to potential for improvement with Acxiom.
- The organization's industry and customer base as they relate to historical digital marketing performance, conversion rate, and margin.

Results. To account for these risks, Forrester adjusted this benefit downward by 15%, yielding a three-year, risk-adjusted total PV (discounted at 10%) of \$1.3 million.

25%–35%

Customer growth per campaign with Acxiom

10%

Open-rate improvement attributable to better personalization

“It took us a year to create four strategic journeys with a previous services partner. With Acxiom, after two years, we’re well upwards of 50 journeys.”

VP OF DATABASE SERVICES, FINANCIAL SERVICES

ANALYSIS OF BENEFITS

Revenue And Profit Growth					
Ref.	Metric	Source	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
A1	Digital marketing campaigns	Composite	36	38	40
A2	Customers included per campaign in the prior environment	Composite	750,000	750,000	750,000
A3	Additional customers per campaign with Acxiom	Interviews	25%	30%	35%
A4	Customers included per campaign with Acxiom	$A2*(1+A3)$	937,500	975,000	1,012,500
A5	New customers engaged per campaign with Acxiom	$A3*A4$	234,375	292,500	354,375
A6	Total customers engaged with Acxiom across all campaigns	$A1*A4$	33,750,000	37,050,000	40,500,000
A7	New customers engaged with Acxiom across all campaigns	$A1*A5$	8,437,509	11,115,011	14,175,014
A8	Open rate before Acxiom	Interviews	15%	15%	15%
A9	Open rate improvement with Acxiom	Interviews	10%	10%	10%
A10	Open rate with Acxiom	$A8+A9$	25%	25%	25%
A11	Click-through rate improved with Acxiom	Interviews	2.5%	2.5%	2.5%
A12	Conversion rate	Composite	30%	30%	30%
A13	Average deal size	Composite	\$100	\$100	\$100
A14	Subtotal: Revenue from improved campaign performance for existing campaign customers	$(A6-A7)*A9*A11*A12*A13$	\$1,898,437	\$1,945,124	\$1,974,374
A15	Subtotal: Revenue from newly engaged customers	$A7*A10*A11*A12*A13$	\$1,582,033	\$2,084,065	\$2,657,815
A16	Revenue increase attributable to Acxiom	$A14+A15$	\$3,480,470	\$4,029,189	\$4,632,189
A17	Net margin	Composite	15%	15%	15%
At	Revenue and profit growth	$A8*A9$	\$522,070	\$604,378	\$694,828
	Risk adjustment	↓15%			
Atr	Revenue and profit growth (risk-adjusted)		\$443,760	\$513,722	\$590,604
Three-year total: \$1,548,086			Three-year present value: \$1,271,711		

FASTER SPEED TO VALUE AND OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY GAINS

Evidence and data. Interviewees told Forrester that working with Acxiom allowed their organizations to complete large-scale projects such as a Salesforce Data Cloud implementations faster and with fewer expensive internal resources. They said that once implemented, Acxiom supports these deployments (along with those for Salesforce Marketing Cloud) through customer database management, journey development and technical work, ongoing strategy development, and troubleshooting. Collectively, the interviewees spoke to significant personnel cost savings by completing both large-scale and ongoing Salesforce-related projects faster beyond the benefits to campaign performance as quantified in Benefit A.

- The CRM and loyalty manager in transportation explained that working with Acxiom has greatly improved the velocity of their organization's Salesforce projects compared to with its previous services provider because completing various data extension and segmentation projects now takes several weeks less than before. The interviewee admitted that before working with Acxiom, triggered events in Salesforce weren't possible for their organization because the small team was "made up of marketers, not coders."
- The director of marketing communications in the automotive industry said Acxiom has taken on and accelerated many of the projects of their organization's previous service provider, including contact list management, data ingestion, and model development. The interviewee credited Acxiom's abundance of expertise on their team for these improvements.
- The CRM manager at a transportation organization estimated that the project work completed by Acxiom offsets the expense of six to nine full-time resources while delivering superior results.
- The VP of database services in financial services said that in order to control costs related to their organization's Salesforce environment, the company carried out an "aggressive cost-benefit analysis" to evaluate their decision to work with Acxiom or hire Salesforce talent internally. The organization ultimately decided the Acxiom relationship was the more efficient option because it would require more than 30 full-time staff members to complete the work that Acxiom provides.

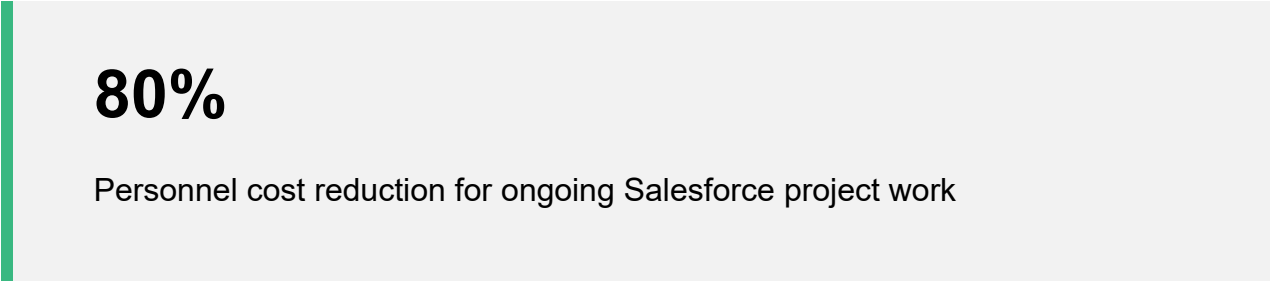
Modeling and assumptions. For the composite organization, Forrester makes the following assumptions:

- Acxiom reduces the time the composite requires to implement Salesforce Data Cloud with contracted internal resources by 60%.
- Acxiom reduces the composite's personnel requirements for ongoing Salesforce project work by 80%, allowing it to avoid the costs of additional marketing personnel or Salesforce administrators.
- The fully burdened annual salary for a Salesforce administrator or marketing staff member is \$140,000.

Risks. This benefit will vary among organizations based on:

- The scope, complexity, and frequency of large-scale and small-scale Salesforce-related projects as they relate to Acxiom's involvement and ability to accelerate and save costs on these projects.
- The skill and capacity of the organization's marketing staff or Salesforce administrators as they relate to the required level of involvement of Acxiom.

Results. To account for these risks, Forrester adjusted this benefit downward by 15%, yielding a three-year, risk-adjusted total PV (discounted at 10%) of \$1.5 million.



80%

Personnel cost reduction for ongoing Salesforce project work

“Because of Acxiom’s experience, I have the trust they will do it right. They don’t need to go back and fix things. They get it right the first time.”

CRM MANAGER, TRANSPORTATION

Faster Speed To Value And Operational Efficiency Gains

Ref.	Metric	Source	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
B1	Personnel required to implement Salesforce Data Cloud without Acxiom	Interviews	8		
B2	Faster time to deployment with Acxiom	Interviews	60%		
B3	Avoided temporary project headcount	B1*B2	5		
B4	Burdened rate for an implementation employee	TEI standard	\$70,000		
B5	Subtotal: Avoided implementation costs through faster time to market	B3*B4	\$350,000		
B6	Salesforce administrators/marketing staff required in the prior environment	Composite	5	5	5
B7	Efficiency gain with Acxiom	Interviews	80%	80%	80%
B8	Reclaimed capacity	B5*B6	4.0	4.0	4.0
B9	Burdened rate for a marketing staff member/Salesforce administrator	TEI standard	\$140,000	\$140,000	\$140,000
B10	Subtotal: Additional operational personnel capacity	Composite	\$560,000	\$560,000	\$560,000
Bt	Faster speed to value and operational efficiency gains	B5+B10	\$910,000	\$560,000	\$560,000
	Risk adjustment	↓15%			
Btr	Faster speed to value and operational efficiency gains (risk-adjusted)		\$773,500	\$476,000	\$476,000
Three-year total: \$1,725,500			Three-year present value: \$1,454,196		

SUPPORT DESK SAVINGS

Evidence and data. Interviewees highlighted the benefits of working with Acxiom for support and troubleshooting. They said the partnership provided their organizations with access to expertise, allowing staff to resolve Salesforce issues quickly and with less internal effort. Additionally, interviewees noted that Acxiom's implementation of customer journeys and ongoing Salesforce optimization is efficient and that it eased their concerns about potential issues in the future.

- The VP of database services at the large financial services organization cited the quality of Acxiom's work as a major deterrent to issues related to the firm's previous Salesforce environment. Three years into the firm's relationship with Acxiom, moderate to major Salesforce-related issues have nearly disappeared altogether. The interviewee explained that some issues — even those that customers have visibility into — would have taken weeks or even months to resolve with their own staff but that if these issues arise now, Acxiom, significantly decreases that time. They summarized: "Customer-facing issues could put the bank or the customer at risk. If we see an issue, it's fixed within hours now."
- The CRM and loyalty manager at a transportation organization explained that smaller issues that hindered campaign performance (e.g., email template rendering across different email clients, etc.) were common before engaging with Acxiom. The interviewee estimated that issues like these previously took a full 8 hours to resolve but that they are now resolved within an hour if they occur at all.

Modeling and assumptions. For the composite organization, Forrester makes the following assumptions:

- The composite experiences 50 minor to moderate Salesforce-related issues per month that would normally require internal intervention by Salesforce developers or IT support staff.
- In the previous environment, each issue required an average of 8 hours to remediate.
- With Acxiom, some issues are avoided altogether while others are resolved faster. Across all issues, the composite increases its resolution speed by 85%.

ANALYSIS OF BENEFITS

- The average hourly burdened rate for a Salesforce developer responsible for resolving these issues is \$72.

Risks. This benefit will vary among organizations based on:

- The scope and complexity of the organization's Salesforce environment as they relates to the number and complexity of any issues that arise.
- The skill and capacity of the organization's internal staff responsible for remediating these issues as it relates to the potential for improvement with Acxiom.

Results. To account for these risks, Forrester adjusted this benefit downward by 15%, yielding a three-year, risk-adjusted total PV (discounted at 10%) of \$621,000.

Support Desk Savings					
Ref.	Metric	Source	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
C1	Support cases related to Salesforce	Composite	600	600	600
C2	Time required to resolve an issue in the prior environment (hours)	Composite	8	8	8
C3	Accelerated speed to resolution with Acxiom	Interviews	85%	85%	85%
C4	Time saved per issue with Acxiom (hours)	C2*C3	6.8	6.8	6.8
C5	Burdened hourly rate for a Salesforce developer	TEI standard	\$72	\$72	\$72
Ct	Support desk savings	C1*C2*C3*C4	\$293,760	\$293,760	\$293,760
	Risk adjustment	↓15%			
Ctr	Support desk savings (risk-adjusted)		\$249,696	\$249,696	\$249,696
Three-year total: \$749,088			Three-year present value: \$620,957		

85%

Improved speed of resolution for Salesforce-related issues

“Acxiom provides white-glove service. At any given point in time — any day of the week, any time — they will make themselves available to do whatever needs to get done or what that ask is.”

VP OF DATABASE SERVICES, FINANCIAL SERVICES

AVOIDED CONSULTING COSTS FOR SALESFORCE PROJECT WORK

Evidence and data. Several interviewees who spoke to Forrester said their organizations worked with other Salesforce service providers prior to working with Acxiom. These relationships — both ongoing and/or ad hoc based on the project — are replaced by a relationship with Acxiom, and the previously incurred costs are offset. One interviewee also noted that their organization’s ad hoc project work with a Salesforce consultant was often inconsistent in quality from project to project, which was a symptom of the “per project” relationship rather than establishing an ongoing partnership. The cost of this consultant was between \$20,000 and \$30,000 per project.

Modeling and assumptions. For the composite organization, Forrester makes the following assumptions:

- The composite organization requires external expertise for one Salesforce-related project per quarter, or four annually.
- The average external consulting cost per project is \$30,000.

Risks. This benefit will vary among organizations based on:

- The scope, complexity, and number of Salesforce-related projects for which the organization requires external expertise as it relates to avoidable consulting costs once a relationship with Acxiom is established.
- The skill and capacity of the organization's internal staff.

Results. To account for these risks, Forrester adjusted this benefit downward by 10%, yielding a three-year, risk-adjusted total PV (discounted at 10%) of \$269,000.

Avoided Consulting Costs For Salesforce Project Work					
Ref.	Metric	Source	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
D1	Ad hoc Salesforce projects requiring external consulting services	Composite	4	4	4
D2	Average cost per external project engagement	Interviews	\$30,000	\$30,000	\$30,000
Dt	Avoided consulting costs for Salesforce project work	D1*D2	\$120,000	\$120,000	\$120,000
	Risk adjustment	↓10%			
Dtr	Avoided consulting costs for Salesforce project work (risk-adjusted)		\$108,000	\$108,000	\$108,000
Three-year total: \$324,000			Three-year present value: \$268,580		

“Acxiom is a trusted partner for us, and we work very well with them side by side. When we decided to align all of our technology on Salesforce, Acxiom was the obvious choice to help us implement and move forward with us.”

CRM MANAGER, TRANSPORTATION

UNQUANTIFIED BENEFITS

Interviewees mentioned the following additional benefits that their organizations experienced but were not able to quantify:

- **Unified customer data.** Interviewees said by reconciling all their customer data into one CDP, their organizations now have a single pane of glass visibility into their customer bases that can provide more benefit than campaign performance alone. One of the interviewees from the transportation industry said their organization is using its newfound customer visibility to determine the average customer lifecycle to inform future campaigns and/or customer acquisition efforts.
- **Faster delivery to enhance customer satisfaction.** With the work accomplished with Acxiom, interviewees said their organizations deliver higher degrees of personalization in their communications and product offers, contributing to a better customer experience as evidenced by improved engagement. Over time, this may contribute to greater levels of customer satisfaction and lifetime value.
- **Continuous Salesforce optimization.** Interviewees said that by working with Acxiom, their organizations are in position to stay current with their Salesforce deployments, which maintains or increases the value they receive from these investments over time while reducing the likelihood of falling behind on updates

or accruing technical debt. The CRM manager at a transportation organization noted that Acxiom is always encouraging their company to get the most out of its Salesforce investments.

- **Improved employee experience for marketers and administrators.**

Interviewees noted that by learning new and sophisticated capabilities within Salesforce, internal teams became more confident at work, and the organizations experienced greater employee engagement as a result. The CRM manager at a transportation company said employees “understand things better now [and have a voice] if we want to do something or not [in the Salesforce environment].”

“Acxiom is very proactive in introducing us to other tools with Salesforce. They’re trying to bring us onto the AI tools, for example. They’re making sure that we use more of Salesforce.”

CRM MANAGER, TRANSPORTATION

“Acxiom is a very supportive company to work with. Their team extends into our own and works as an extension of our team. They want to take you on the journey of doing more with Salesforce. Acxiom introduces us to new Salesforce capabilities [and] shows us how they work, but [they] always leave it up to us if we want to move forward. They are very technical and support us all the way through.”

CRM MANAGER, TRANSPORTATION

FLEXIBILITY

The value of flexibility is unique to each customer. There are multiple scenarios in which a customer might work with Acxiom and later realize additional uses and business opportunities, including:

- **Faster campaign iteration.** Through work with Acxiom, organizations are in a position to quickly develop, build, A/B test, and iterate on journeys and campaigns, which may result in additional value over time. The director of marketing communications in the automotive industry explained that their organization’s ability to pilot different campaign strategies rapidly gives it an advantage over competitors. And the VP of database services at the financial services organization added: “Every business evolves with new strategies. [Acxiom] allows us to move rapidly and execute with customer data and implementations.”
- **Consistency of expertise.** While each interviewee said their organization evaluated the cost of internal Salesforce talent against the cost of the Acxiom partnership from the onset, several spoke to the fact that Acxiom’s expertise will

remain consistent over time given its deep expertise and level of staffing. If internal staff were to leave the organization, this may result in expensive talent searches and hiring cycles. Interviewees explained that with Acxiom, their organizations are in the best position to avoid the risk of talent departures in the long run.

- **Optimization across the entire Salesforce ecosystem.** In June 2024, Acxiom holding company IPG consolidated all Salesforce cloud services under Acxiom, which gives organizations access to advisory, implementation, and operational services across all Salesforce Clouds from a single partner.³

Flexibility would also be quantified when evaluated as part of a specific project (described in more detail in [Appendix A](#)).

“We have a good team at Acxiom. If people leave, we are confident with any replacements. They are very good with handovers.”

CRM MANAGER, TRANSPORTATION

Analysis Of Costs

Quantified cost data as applied to the composite

Total Costs							
Ref.	Cost	Initial	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total	Present Value
Etr	Ongoing engagement costs with Acxiom	\$315,000	\$525,000	\$525,000	\$525,000	\$1,890,000	\$1,620,597
Ftr	Internal labor to support Acxiom relationship	\$57,750	\$28,301	\$28,301	\$28,301	\$142,652	\$128,130
	Total costs (risk-adjusted)	\$372,750	\$553,301	\$553,301	\$553,301	\$2,032,652	\$1,748,727

ONGOING ENGAGEMENT COSTS WITH ACXIOM

Evidence and data. Organizations pay Acxiom based on the scope and complexity of the contracted work. Interviewees who spoke to Forrester for this study reported that their organizations paid a range of annual engagement costs. Acxiom offers the following to its clients:

- **Standard service offerings.** Acxiom offers predefined packages of services that interviewees said are consistently delivered through well-defined processes and workflows, reducing the time and effort required to deliver the service, ensuring consistent quality while reducing risk. Across interviewees' organizations, annual fees with Acxiom ranged from the low hundred thousands to \$4 million.
- **Salesforce full-stack certified consultants.** Interviewees said that because Acxiom consultants are full-stack certified consultants, they understand the complete Salesforce ecosystem, including deployment, administration, and architecture. Consultants can design and implement solutions that minimize complexity to deliver a cohesive and comprehensive solution. Interviewees said Acxiom-supplied FTE resources at their organizations ranged from three to 30.

- **Agile team deployment.** Interviewees said Acxiom's agile team approach provides resources to meet the specific demands of a project, which allows their organizations to execute solutions more efficiently and effectively.

Pricing will vary. Contact Acxiom for additional details.

Modeling and assumptions. For the composite organization, Forrester makes the following assumptions.

- The composite's initial cost to implement Salesforce Data Cloud is \$300,000.
- The composite pays an ongoing annual cost of \$500,000 to run Salesforce Data Cloud and some aspects of Salesforce Marketing Cloud. This includes an average of one to five Acxiom resources, depending on the project.

Risks. This cost will vary among organizations based on:

- The scope and complexity of the organization's Salesforce deployment and project work.
- The skills and availability of internal resources who work alongside Acxiom-provided resources.

Results. To account for these risks, Forrester adjusted this cost upward by 5%, yielding a three-year, risk-adjusted total PV (discounted at 10%) of \$1.6 million.

"Acxiom stays on schedule and keeps us involved in the journey. Acxiom is very clear about costs, but also clear on exactly what we're going to get for them. There is never scope creep."

CRM MANAGER, TRANSPORTATION

Ongoing Engagement Costs With Acxiom						
Ref.	Metric	Source	Initial	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
E1	Acxiom engagement costs	Composite	\$300,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000
Et	Ongoing engagement costs with Acxiom	E1	\$300,000	\$500,000	\$500,000	\$500,000
	Risk adjustment	↑5%				
Etr	Ongoing engagement costs with Acxiom risk-adjusted)		\$315,000	\$525,000	\$525,000	\$525,000
Three-year total: \$1,890,000			Three-year present value: \$1,620,597			

INTERNAL LABOR TO SUPPORT ACXIOM RELATIONSHIP

Evidence and data. Interviewees explained that their organizations needed to dedicate some staff to overseeing the work with Acxiom. The scope of this work was primarily as an interface between the two organizations. Tasks ranged from attending weekly meetings, facilitating and attending workshops, and attending strategy and roadmapping working sessions with Acxiom.

Modeling and assumptions. For the composite organization, Forrester makes the following assumptions:

- One internal resource dedicates 75% of their working time to supporting Acxiom-led work over the six-month Salesforce Data Cloud implementation.
- One internal marketing resource serves as the interface between the composite organization and Acxiom, dedicating 32 hours per month to meetings, workshops, and strategy sessions.
- The average hourly burdened rate for a marketing resource is \$67.

Risks. This cost will vary among organizations based on the scope and complexity of the organization's Salesforce deployment and project work as it relates to required ongoing interaction with Acxiom.

Results. To account for these risks, Forrester adjusted this cost upward by 10%, yielding a three-year, risk-adjusted total PV (discounted at 10%) of \$128,000.

32 hours per month

Internal time commitment to support Acxiom relationship

“When we first engaged [with Acxiom,] we were in a time of change and needed to move the platform faster, more efficiently, and more accurately. They jumped in, mobilized the team, and grew with us.”

VP OF DATABASE SERVICES, FINANCIAL SERVICES

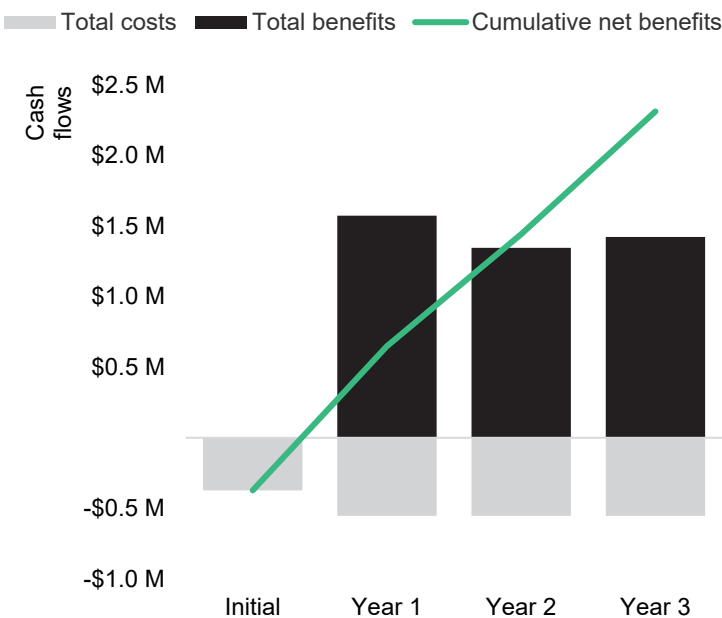
ANALYSIS OF COSTS

Internal Labor To Support Acxiom Relationship						
Ref.	Metric	Source	Initial	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
F1	Internal staff members required to support Acxiom-led Salesforce Data Cloud implementation	Interviews	1			
F2	Implementation duration (months)	Interviews	6			
F3	Percent of time on task	Interviews	75%			
F4	Average salary for an internal staff member involved in implementation	TEI standard	\$140,000			
F5	Internal staff implementation cost	Composite	\$52,500			
F6	Internal marketing staff members supporting ongoing Acxiom-related work	Interviews	0	1	1	1
F7	Monthly support time required (hours)	Interviews	0	32	32	32
F8	Average hourly rate for an internal staff member supporting ongoing Acxiom-related work (rounded)	Assumption		\$67	\$67	\$67
F9	Internal personnel cost for ongoing Acxiom relationship support	$E6 \cdot (E7 \cdot 12) \cdot E8$		\$25,728	\$25,728	\$25,728
Ft	Internal labor to support Acxiom relationship	$E5 + E9$	\$52,500	\$25,728	\$25,728	\$25,728
	Risk adjustment	↑10%				
Ftr	Internal labor to support Acxiom relationship (risk-adjusted)		\$57,750	\$28,301	\$28,301	\$28,301
Three-year total: \$142,652			Three-year present value: \$128,130			

Financial Summary

Consolidated Three-Year Risk-Adjusted Metrics

Cash Flow Chart (Risk-Adjusted)



NPV, and payback period for the composite organization’s investment. Forrester assumes a yearly discount rate of 10% for this analysis.

These risk-adjusted ROI, NPV, and payback period values are determined by applying risk-adjustment factors to the unadjusted results in each Benefit and Cost section.

The financial results calculated in the Benefits and Costs sections can be used to determine the ROI,

Cash Flow Analysis (Risk-Adjusted Estimates)						
	Initial	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Total	Present Value
Total costs	(\$372,750)	(\$553,301)	(\$553,301)	(\$553,301)	(\$2,032,652)	(\$1,748,727)
Total benefits	\$0	\$1,574,956	\$1,347,418	\$1,424,300	\$4,346,674	\$3,615,444
Net benefits	(\$372,750)	\$1,021,655	\$794,117	\$870,999	\$2,314,021	\$1,866,717
ROI						107%
Payback						<6 months

APPENDIX A: TOTAL ECONOMIC IMPACT

Total Economic Impact is a methodology developed by Forrester Research that enhances a company's technology decision-making processes and assists vendors in communicating the value proposition of their products and services to clients. The TEI methodology helps companies demonstrate, justify, and realize the tangible value of IT initiatives to both senior management and other key business stakeholders.

Total Economic Impact Approach

Benefits represent the value delivered to the business by the product. The TEI methodology places equal weight on the measure of benefits and the measure of costs, allowing for a full examination of the effect of the technology on the entire organization.

Costs consider all expenses necessary to deliver the proposed value, or benefits, of the product. The cost category within TEI captures incremental costs over the existing environment for ongoing costs associated with the solution.

Flexibility represents the strategic value that can be obtained for some future additional investment building on top of the initial investment already made. Having the ability to capture that benefit has a PV that can be estimated.

Risks measure the uncertainty of benefit and cost estimates given: 1) the likelihood that estimates will meet original projections and 2) the likelihood that estimates will be tracked over time. TEI risk factors are based on "triangular distribution."

PRESENT VALUE (PV)

The present or current value of (discounted) cost and benefit estimates given at an interest rate (the discount rate). The PV of costs and benefits feed into the total NPV of cash flows.

NET PRESENT VALUE (NPV)

The present or current value of (discounted) future net cash flows given an interest rate (the discount rate). A positive project NPV normally indicates that the investment should be made unless other projects have higher NPVs.

RETURN ON INVESTMENT (ROI)

A project's expected return in percentage terms. ROI is calculated by dividing net benefits (benefits less costs) by costs.

DISCOUNT RATE

The interest rate used in cash flow analysis to take into account the time value of money. Organizations typically use discount rates between 8% and 16%.

PAYBACK PERIOD

The breakeven point for an investment. This is the point in time at which net benefits (benefits minus costs) equal initial investment or cost.

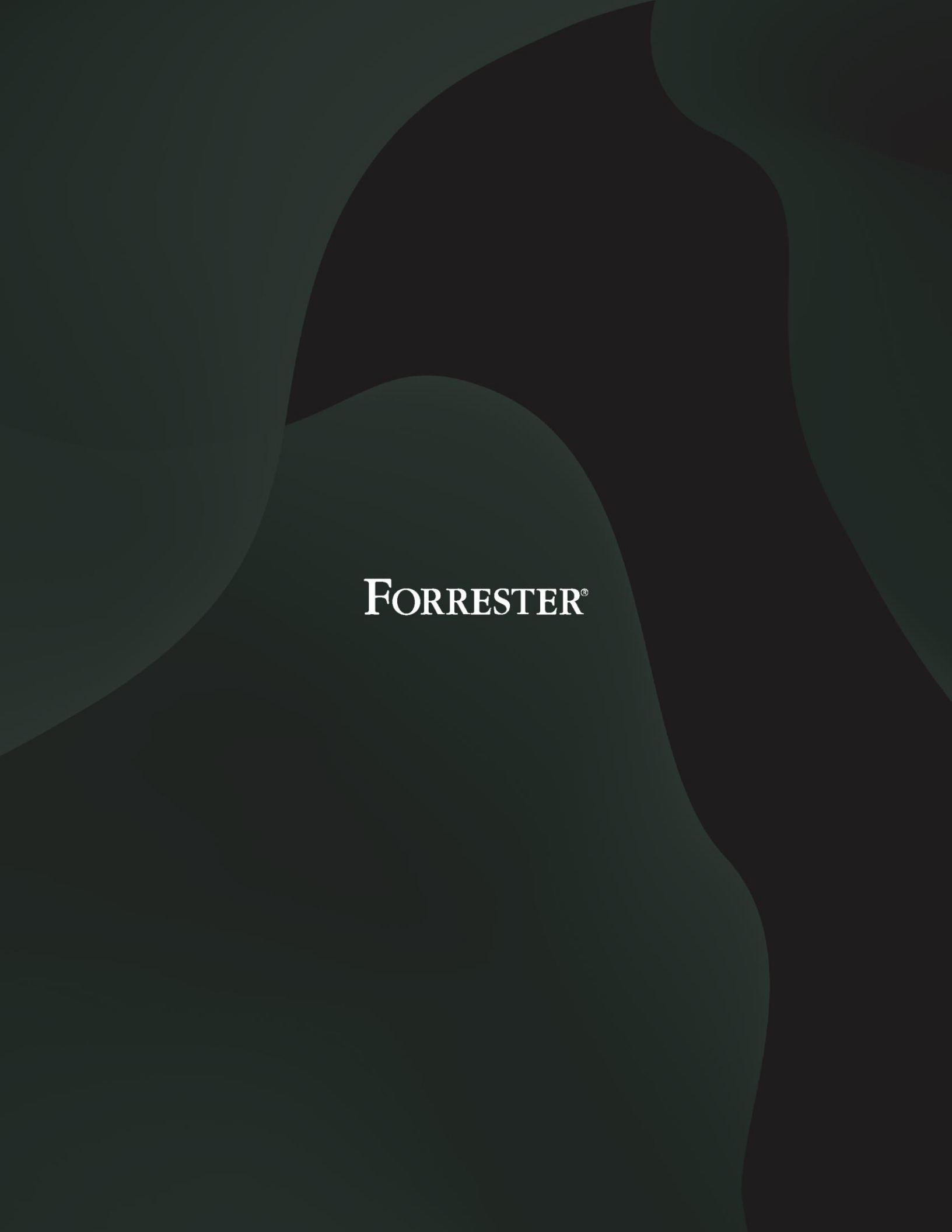
The initial investment column contains costs incurred at “time 0” or at the beginning of Year 1 that are not discounted. All other cash flows are discounted using the discount rate at the end of the year. PV calculations are calculated for each total cost and benefit estimate. NPV calculations in the summary tables are the sum of the initial investment and the discounted cash flows in each year. Sums and present value calculations of the Total Benefits, Total Costs, and Cash Flow tables may not exactly add up, as some rounding may occur.

APPENDIX B: ENDNOTES

¹ In June 2024, Acxiom holding company IPG consolidated all Salesforce cloud services under Acxiom. Source: [IPG Further Unifies Data, Engineering, and Tech](#), IPG press release, June 27, 2024.

² Total Economic Impact is a methodology developed by Forrester Research that enhances a company's technology decision-making processes and assists vendors in communicating the value proposition of their products and services to clients. The TEI methodology helps companies demonstrate, justify, and realize the tangible value of IT initiatives to both senior management and other key business stakeholders.

³ Source: [IPG Further Unifies Data, Engineering, and Tech](#), IPG press release, June 27, 2024.



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