What can I expect during my CPQ project?

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Introduction

Congratulations! You've decided to bring on a consultant to help with your upcoming CPQ project, and your team is rearing to go. Before your project kicks off, how can you get organized and prepare your team for a successful engagement?

You've come to the right place. OpFocus knows a thing or two about what goes into a successful Salesforce CPQ project. Our Salesforce CPQ ninjas have led over100 CPQ projects for SaaS companies, so take it from them!

This guide will educate you on the essential stages of a CPQ project, covers the steps you will want to take to avoid project delays, and provides an action plan for generating internal buy-in from key stakeholders.

Ready to jump in?

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What does a CPQ project typically look like?

Once your team is aligned and prepared for a CPQ implementation, it's vital to understand the steps and processes involved in a CPQ project. Although timelines vary from vendor to vendor, these project phases are consistent. Ensure all relevant stakeholders are aware of each step and the time associated with each. This alignment reduces the chance of confusion during the project and ensures everyone is on the same page.

Phase 1: Prework

Time: 2 weeks
Team Members: all relevant stakeholders
Involvement: complete information templates and share stakeholder availability

Pre-work begins with an introductory meeting to assess initial stakeholders and assign templates for your team to complete. These templates include current products, pricing, approval process, and a spreadsheet that identifies and organizes products and bundles.

Phase 2: Discovery

Time: 1-2 weeks
Team Members: all stakeholders
Involvement: 5-10 calls with all relevant stakeholders, about 8 hrs in total

Discovery calls for a Salesforce CPQ implementation are when the magic happens. These calls will include our CPQ engagement team and the team members you chose above. Each call covers a discussion on a topic of your CPQ solution such as your:

- Products
- Pricing and discounting
- Bundling
- Business rules
- Approval process
- Amendment process and rules
- Renewal process and rules
- Quote documents and order forms

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Phase 3: Build and Unit Tests

Time: 2-3 months
Team Members: all stakeholders
Involvement: availability for communication and validation on progression build by topics

Once discovery is complete, and CPQ consultants gather all the information we need, we'll begin building and unit testing. This stage requires involvement from relevant stakeholders for check-ins to review topics and progression of the build by topics covered in discovery.

Phase 4: User-Acceptance Tests

Time: 3 weeks*
Team Members: all stakeholders
Involvement: power user will lead pilot group replicating the enture transactional lifecycle of 3-5 contracts

The final testing stage—user acceptance testing (UAT) involves ensuring a CPQ solution to improve and optimize the workflow for sales and marketing users. That's why we ask you to bring on that power user from sales that we met with earlier to lead the pilot group. They can help with building internal buy-in and break-testing.

Phase 5: Admin Knowledge Transfer and Deployment

Time: 2 weeks
Team Members: all stakeholders from the discovery stage
Involvement: One 2-4 hour call for admin knowledge transfer + time to approve the deployment

The final stage of a Salesforce CPQ implementation is admin knowledge transfer and deployment. This stage helps you get your team online and ready for action.

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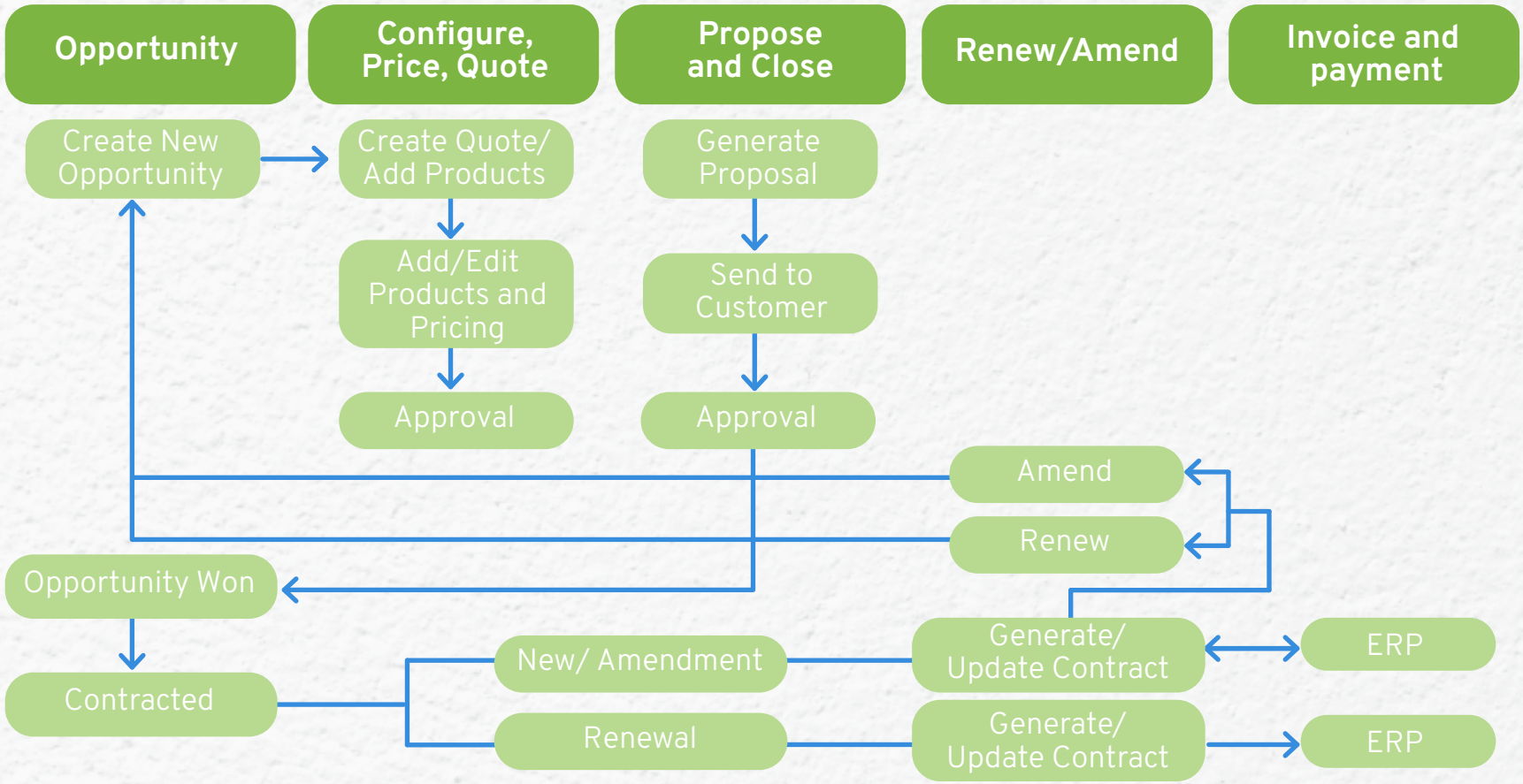
Salesforce CPQ Transaction Flow



SALESFORCE OBJECTS AND INTERGRATIONS

Account, Contact Opportunity, Opportunity Products	Products Pricebooks Quote Quote Lines Approvals	DocuSign Quote Document Quote Terms	Assets Subscriptions Contracts	ERP integration Invoices Payments

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How can my team prepare to implement Salesforce CPQ?

In preparation for implementing or optimizing Salesforce CPQ, you must align your team, outline your objectives, and prepare documentation. Use the checklist on page 8 to determine your readiness for Salesforce CPQ in 4 key areas.

Determine if your team has accounted for the directly responsible people and bandwidth, processes, system(s), and data to meet this need. Connect with your team and determine who will be responsible for each role or task, then identify roles not currently covered.

If you prepare the items outlined in the checklist before your project's discovery process begins, then you are in position to run a project as efficiently as possible.

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Is your team ready for Salesforce CPQ?

Is your Data ready for Salesforce CPQ?

Clean product catalog: Salesforce CPQ works best with a clearly defined set of products and pricing. CPQ often reduces the number of offerings required to manage your business. ☐

Product selection and configuration rules: CPQ simplifies and eliminates configuration errors. Any product selection criteria need to be well-documented. ☐

Integration points with other systems: Identify and document all external systems or applications integrations. ☐

Are your Systems ready for Salesforce CPQ?

New or existing Salesforce implementation: Identify any configuration, integration, and customizations that could potentially impact the quoting process. ☐

Sandbox available for development: A full sandbox is ideal, but a partial sandbox is a minimum requirement. ☐

Are your Processes ready for Salesforce CPQ?

Clearly defined business rules: Create any missing or incomplete documentation, then review and challenge any documented processes. ☐

Established pricing rules: Your pricing rules, discount policies, and any customer-specific or custom pricing should be well-documented and approved. ☐

Defined approval process: Efficient exception management is critical. Document the exceptions that require approval and who will be authorized to approve them. ☐

Approved document templates for Proposals: Decide on and be prepared to review any templates for any customer-facing documents. Finance should also approve these documents. ☐

Well-defined renewals process: Your approach to renewals and contract management must be well-documented as with any other process. ☐

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Which stakeholders do I need to include in a CPQ project?

Salesforce CPQ touches multiple processes and departments in the company. For this reason, a successful project starts with identifying the key internal stakeholders. These stakeholders participate in implementing the goals and strategies of the project. **This article on internal stakeholders** outlines the following information in more detail.

Stakeholders include:

Project Manager

The PM oversees the project and keeps communication active between internal and external members.

Product/Pricing Expert

This individual understands your product offering, product pairing options, product limits, and product pricing.

Sales Users

It's crucial to involve representatives from the Sales division to provide an end-user, daily quote creation perspective on the system.

Sales Process Expert

This individual needs to understand how transactions are entered today and the process from opportunity generation to an opportunity close.

Finance/Accounting/Legal

These individuals ensure that key financial data and metrics are visible and captured correctly if required.

IT and Business Operations

Sometimes, you have other systems in your business you want to integrate with CPQ objects. Involving the IT team ensures everyone's on the same page.

Marketing

The marketing department plays a role in creating the customer-facing document.

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How do I generate buy-in from my key stakeholders?

Actively involving stakeholders at the beginning of a project ensures that we've identified business processes and needs when designing a Salesforce CPQ project. User acceptance hits unnecessary roadblocks that can create frustration and delays in becoming fully functional. To streamline your project, address stakeholder concerns at the beginning of the project.

Stakeholder concerns typically relate to:

- Product pricing cannot be adjusted where needed
- Product offerings cannot be customized to fit a business need
- Approval processes cannot be reviewed for key quotation reviews
- Quote templates don't present all desired information in needed formats for particular offerings
- Key financial calculations required for internal reporting are not present

Below you'll find stakeholders and the CPQ benefits each role typically values most. These points should help you speak to each stakeholder and convey the value CPQ brings to their positions.

CFO & Finance Leadership

- ASC 606 compliance - CPQ provides accurate and reliable information for ASC 606 compliance reference
- Clean data - CPQ becomes your single source of truth for the renewal pipeline
- ROI - it's essential to frame CPQ not as an expense but as an investment with a concrete return on investment

CRO & Sales Leadership

- Productivity increase - for your Sales team
- Order size increased, upsell & add ons are made easier, and structured pricing control
- Improved pipeline visibility - including renewal pipeline

Legal

- Standardized terms and conditions & contracts

Operations

- Cleaner deals that require less oversight from operations
- Letting the system enforce rules
- Improved data quality for reporting

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A Salesforce CPQ implementation/optimization project's cost?

A Salesforce CPQ implementation/optimization's cost depends on the complexity of your CPQ instance and your company's pricing model. To get a sense of what your project will cost, we recommend meeting with a member of our CPQ team for a scoping call. Typical projects range from $80k-$120k. Larger projects with complex customizations will result in higher estimates.

Some factors that increase the price include the following:

- MDQ (Multi-Dimensional Quoting)
- Renewal uplift
- Amendments not ALWAYS Co-termed
- Early Renewal Process
- Expansion Calculations
- Conga Composer for Templates
- esignature
- Admin Documentation

Meet with a member of our team to speak about your specific needs and receive a customized quote.

"High-growth SaaS businesses that need to be agile but can't exponentially grow their internal Salesforce team would be wise to consider OpFocus."

Toby Carrington
VP of Revenue Operations at Seismic

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Success stories to inspire you

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red canary

The Problem

When it came to their own business, the company used Salesforce in an attempt to accomplish similar goals. According to Lynn Thayer, VP of Revenue Operations for Red Canary, "There was a lot of maturity in our Salesforce system. But the high rate of growth within our teams and processes made it clear we needed a stricter workflow. Data wasn't accurate enough. Order processing was time-consuming. And key employees were burdened with manual work."

For instance, Red Canary's co-founder had created a shared pricing tool in Google Sheets. The co-founder had to manually update this eight-tabbed spreadsheet every time there was a change. Salespeople would cut and paste information from the tool into Salesforce's pricing field. This resulted in data integrity issues.

Solution

To close the gaps in its Salesforce implementation, Red Canary decided to use Salesforce CPQ (Configure Price Quote). "I had used CPQ in the past and knew that, because it's built for subscription businesses, it would be great for us," said Thayer.

"Our investor, Summit Partners, recommended OpFocus. After meeting OpFocus, it was clear they were right," Thayer said. "OpFocus' team was incredibly refreshing. They were extremely knowledgeable about Salesforce and CPQ and understood exactly what we needed to accomplish. Unlike other consultancies, they were also very easy to communicate with and didn't try to upsell us during the project."

OpFocus kicked off the project in October 2019 and completed it four months later, after what Thayer described as "impressive post-implementation support." Today, Red Canary has salespeople, CSMs, and finance staff that all use CPQ.

"We have complete visibility and a single view into our customers... This makes it much easier to understand many aspects of our business, including Monthly Recurring Revenue,"

Lynn Thayer
VP of Revenue Operations
Red Canary

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CPQ Results:

Data accuracy turns Salesforce into source of truth

- Salesforce has become Red Canary's one source of truth.
- Lynn's team has accurate information about order creation, one-time orders versus renewals, special terms and discounts, approvals, and more.
- Red Canary has complete visibility and a single view into our customers, contracts, and subscriptions.

Reduces complex renewal creation by 94 percent

- CPQ automated all of Red Canary's order creation.
- Complex orders are drastically accelerating since CSMs don't have to do investigative work and sort through old opportunities.
- Instead of taking eight hours to create an order, it takes only 15 to 30 minutes.

Freeing up finance staff time

- Manual subscription tracking no longer burdens the finance team.
- Instead of two full-time people taking two to three weeks to do monthly billing and invoicing, it will take one person only one week.

Self-sufficient CPQ management

- OpFocus built substantial knowledge transfer into activities as they happened and after go-live.
- The process for getting enhancements done and issues remediated was extremely organized and simple during post-launch support.

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CentralReach

The Problem

CentralReach sought to spend less time on operations and more time on what matters most. Their clients. They needed an easier, faster, and more accurate way to understand and stay current on customer accounts. They needed to see and align the customer journey with CentralReach's product journey to provide better solutions and services to customers.

This optimization is what CentralReach was attempting to enable when Ben Bryer joined the company as Director of Business Operations. CentralReach used Salesforce and had recently hired a consultant to implement Configure Price Quote (CPQ).

Solution

Bryer knew he couldn't do the build-out himself. He didn't have the expertise or the time and bandwidth to learn what would be needed. "CPQ is too complicated. I needed someone who was experienced, proven, and CPQ-certified," he said.

Deciding which vendor to switch to was relatively easy. "The moment I realized the other vendor wasn't cutting it, I knew I had to engage OpFocus. I had worked with OpFocus in the past. They have a deep understanding of CPQ. They also have an inherent sense of the data and insights a SaaS company needs. Their experience and knowledge made the decision a no-brainer."

"OpFocus is encyclopedic about CPQ. They have a very deep knowledge of what it can and can't do. They knew exactly how to implement what we needed in order to get the most value out of CPQ."

Ben Bryer,
Director of Business Operations,
CentralReach

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CPQ Results:

Creates trustworthy, reliable data, all in one place

Before their Salesforce CPQ implementation, CentralReach sales reps couldn't see everything in one deal. Now they see and do everything in one place. And they're confident the data is reliable. CPQ has many benefits, not the least of which is making commissions much easier to determine.

Simplifies and accelerates processes

CPQ's data accuracy and automation deliver time savings across the board. CPQ automatically creates renewals. And to make amendments, the reps can press a button. CPQ then creates the opportunity and a quote and takes them to the line selection screen. The finance team processes deals 75 percent faster. They no longer do a lot of manual investigation since they trust the information in the deals.

Provides new insights into the state of the business

CentralReach confidentially looks at an account to see what the client has subscribed to. They can see where business is growing and dropping can measure product churn but didn't have a clean way of discerning this information before.

Enhances the ability to meet clients' evolving needs

CentralReach's ABA clients are making changes to adjust to COVID-19 realities, such as shifting to telehealth. CPQ increases their visibility into what our clients currently have and what additional solutions can make it easier for them to serve their customers

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What are the consequences of not using Salesforce CPQ?

Some teams say something along the lines of "I see the value of Salesforce CPQ, but now isn't the right time." You can put off implementing Salesforce CPQ, but it's an inevitability for many teams. There are interim solutions you can consider that might lessen the pains you're feeling now until you can get CPQ implemented. Still, to solve all your issues, you'll eventually need Salesforce CPQ.

In the meantime, your team will continue suffering from the same bottlenecks affecting your team today:

Lack of visibility

It's crucial to which accounts are up for renewal when this takes place and how which upsell or cross-sell opportunities are available. It's nearly impossible to scale without this visibility.

Efficient MRR and ARR Forecasting

Your team needs confidence that your data is clean and accurate when forecasting the renewal pipeline.

Continued manual and messy quoting

Automating manual processes is vital to long-term scalability. Without CPQ, your quoting process continues taking time and effort away from other initiatives.

Difficulty with compliance

CPQ enables your team to showcase relevant documentation and address compliance head-on.

Ongoing friction has on your customer's experience

Streamlining the renewal process and increasing customer retention is the key to growth. CPQ equips your team to ensure a seamless experience for customers.

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What's Next?

After reviewing this guide, you're in one of two situations—either you've reviewed the information and determined your team isn't in the right place to pursue CPQ, or your team's ready to begin, finish, or optimize a CPQ implementation.

Meet with a CPQ consultant

If the latter is accurate, your next step is to schedule a call with a CPQ Expert. They'll discuss your organization's specific needs and discuss the best solution to accommodate them. This call confirms CPQ is the right solution for your team and lays the groundwork for the discovery process. When you're ready to take the first step towards a streamlined order and renewal process, **connect with a CPQ specialist.**

Alternate solutions are available

If you truly don't have the budget or the buy-in, you can use some interim solutions until you can implement Salesforce CPQ. Talk to us about your options.

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What can I expect during my CPQ project?

Your Rocket Fuel for ARR Growth

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