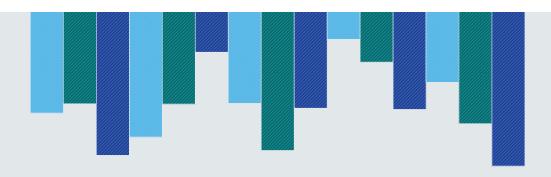# Preparing for a Future Powered by Generative AI

The Impact on IT

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The race is on for companies to harness the power of generative AI (gen AI) and translate the potential of this revolutionary technology into real results. As the CEO of Slack from Salesforce, I'm privileged to witness and contribute to this remarkable evolution. Every week, I meet with C-suite leaders who are on the front lines of this transformation, determining how their company can securely leverage artificial intelligence (AI) tools to take their business to the next level—whether that's unlocking efficiencies, driving growth, or empowering their people to be more productive.

One question I've heard time and again from business leaders is: What should I prioritize as I'm developing my organization's blueprint for AI? My answer: business value. At Salesforce, we believe that AI tools must be deeply trusted, intuitively embedded in the flow of work, and grounded in your business's unique data and metadata in order to really transform business outcomes.

That's the approach we've taken with Slack's own AI capabilities. Earlier this year, we released native generative AI experiences in Slack—including AI-powered search, channel and thread summaries, and daily recaps—that empower our customers to access the collective knowledge they've built up in Slack so they can work smarter, move faster, and spend their time on things that spark real innovation and growth. They can also easily integrate leading generative AI apps from our partner ecosystem into their Slack workspace or build custom generative AI apps tailored to their business needs on the Slack platform.

And this is just the start. We're designing Slack to be the AI-powered conversational platform for work. With Slack and Salesforce, our customers can connect every part of their business in an intelligent command center that surfaces insights, prioritizes tasks, automates workflows, and drives key actions across all their people, apps, and systems—including their most valuable customer data.

The possibilities are thrilling, but the real value of generative AI hinges on whether these tools can be trusted. Trust is our core value at Salesforce, which is why we're building Slack's AI capabilities within our secure infrastructure. Our customers control their data—period.

While we've seen immense innovation in the past year, it's clear that we've just scratched the surface of AI's potential. In this white paper, you'll hear from executives across a variety of industries, including some Slack and Salesforce customers, who are seizing this unprecedented moment and using generative AI to boost productivity, innovation, and customer success. Read on for insights and examples that will help you develop a blueprint for your own AI strategy.

Denise Dresser
CEO
Slack from Salesforce

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By analyzing massive amounts of data, automating complex tasks, and acting as a smart assistant, generative AI (gen AI) is single-handedly reshaping the world of IT. Capable of recognizing new and evolving cybersecurity threats in real time, gen AI tools are helping IT teams "improve digital defenses to detect when a breach has occurred and to be more responsive in turn," says Scott Steinberg, CEO of FutureProof Strategies, a New York-based consultancy, and author of *Think Like a Futurist*. IT service desk chatbots can respond to employee queries and resolve cases faster than ever. At the same time, gen AI-powered software programming solutions are empowering employees with minimal technical expertise to perform basic software coding functions.

But gen AI's impact on IT is not without its fair share of technological and cultural hurdles. "Generative AI opens up a world of possibilities, but with a world of opportunities comes a world of new challenges for IT leaders," says Steinberg. Chief among these obstacles, he says, is data management. "Gen AI is trained on huge preexisting sets of data, and that data may contain technical and factual errors that can replicate and proliferate very quickly in subsequent creations of generative AI programs." In response, IT teams must establish stringent data cleansing, integration, and compliance processes to guarantee accuracy, consistency, and currency, and they must review the responses generated by gen AI to ensure accuracy.

Establishing best practices can also position IT teams to derive greater value from gen AI initiatives. Here are several practical tips to consider:

Rethink the role of IT. IT has always played a pivotal role in helping organizations transform the way they work through the adoption of new tools. As gen AI increasingly allows IT teams to offload mundane tasks to AI assistants, IT leaders also must begin to rethink their role not only as a source of technical support but as "creative and innovative thinkers," says Steinberg.

For instance, he says that rather than simply churn out software code or issue help desk tickets, IT leaders must find new and innovative ways to identify gen AI use cases, integrate gen AI tools within a company's existing IT stack, and capitalize on the unique insights generated by gen AI solutions.

Adopt a new approach to collaboration. As business leaders learn to work with gen AI, the need for "more coordination, oversight, and interconnectedness between team members" will only increase, according to Steinberg. Consider, for example, gen AI tools that allow business leaders to add new capabilities to existing applications or chatbots that lower call volumes for IT help desk agents. These use cases promise to alter the work required of IT teams and how they collaborate and pool resources with their non-IT colleagues.

Educate employees on cybersecurity. Although gen AI can be used to defend against cybersecurity threats, it can also create security vulnerabilities. For instance, some gen AI solutions collect crucial user data, such as IP addresses, that can be shared with unauthorized third parties. And gen AI solutions can extend a company's entire attack surface, providing bad actors with more targets to exploit. To minimize risk, IT teams must not only update software and install antivirus programs but also play an active role in "teaching employees to have a healthy sense of skepticism" about gen AI, says Steinberg. He adds that penetration testing, which involves performing authorized simulated attacks on computer systems to evaluate their security, can also ensure hackers "aren't able to slip in between the lines and get past your digital defenses."

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