

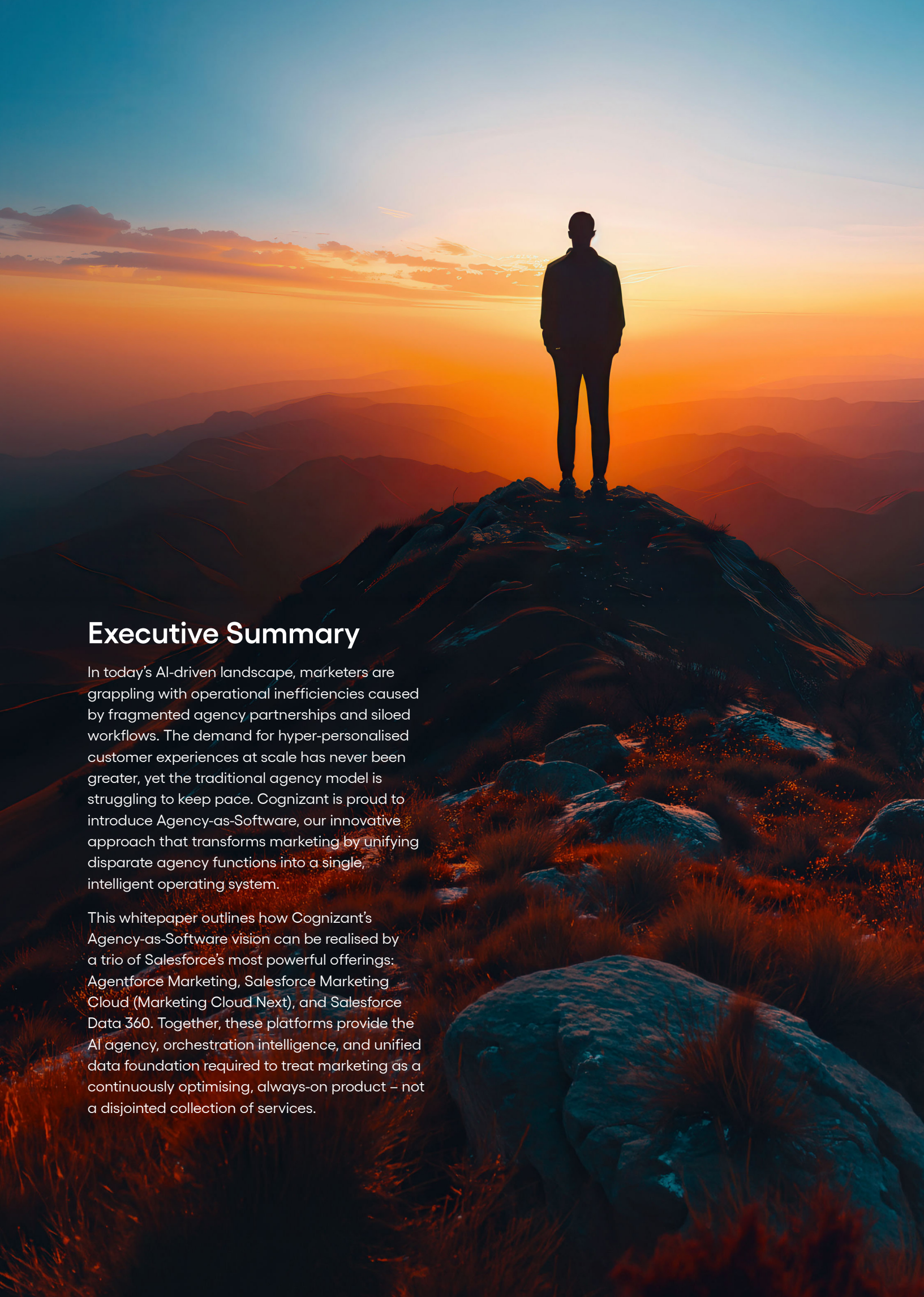


Agency-as-Software: The Future of Marketing

Powered by Salesforce – Agentforce Marketing | Salesforce Marketing Cloud/Marketing Cloud Next | Salesforce Data 360

A Cognizant Point of View | 2026





Executive Summary

In today's AI-driven landscape, marketers are grappling with operational inefficiencies caused by fragmented agency partnerships and siloed workflows. The demand for hyper-personalised customer experiences at scale has never been greater, yet the traditional agency model is struggling to keep pace. Cognizant is proud to introduce Agency-as-Software, our innovative approach that transforms marketing by unifying disparate agency functions into a single, intelligent operating system.

This whitepaper outlines how Cognizant's Agency-as-Software vision can be realised by a trio of Salesforce's most powerful offerings: Agentforce Marketing, Salesforce Marketing Cloud (Marketing Cloud Next), and Salesforce Data 360. Together, these platforms provide the AI agency, orchestration intelligence, and unified data foundation required to treat marketing as a continuously optimising, always-on product – not a disjointed collection of services.

The Modern Marketer's Dilemma: Navigating a Bloated and Siloed Landscape

We are in a transformative “AI moment”. For marketers, this has cast a spotlight on a long-standing challenge: the day-to-day reality of managing a complex ecosystem of specialised agencies, partners and internal capabilities. This often results in inefficiency where strategy, technology, data, and execution are ring-fenced from one another.

The consequences are significant:



Slower speed-to-market caused by approval chains, manual handoffs, and campaign lag



Inconsistent customer experiences across channels due to siloed data and disconnected tools

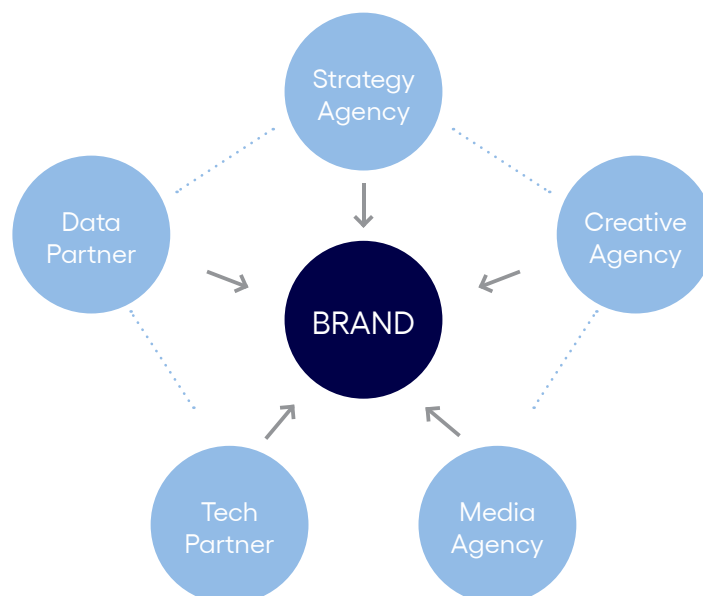


A frustrating inability to harness the full power of data and AI at the point of engagement

Today's leading Chief Marketing Officers are clear about their priorities. They require solutions that meet the ever-growing demand for hyper-personalisation at scale. They are seeking to break down the silos that inhibit agility and move towards a model of end-to-end orchestration.

The fundamental desire is for a single, unified offering that can seamlessly manage the entire marketing value chain.

The answer lies not in yet another point solution – but in an AI-native marketing operating model. That is precisely the vision of Cognizant's Agency-as-Software and when realised with the Salesforce platform, it has the power to revolutionise the entire marketing experience.





The Solution: Introducing Agency-as-Software by Cognizant Moment™

Cognizant is proud to introduce Agency-as-Software, a groundbreaking approach to marketing that unifies disparate agency functions into a single, powerful operating model. By integrating best-in-class Salesforce capabilities, a full-stack, modular marketing capability is created with the Salesforce ecosystem serving as the intelligent layer enabling real-time, AI-driven campaign orchestration, decisioning, and personalisation at enterprise scale.

Agency-as-Software solutions are more than just an integration of services; they are a fundamental shift in perspective. We treat marketing as a product, composed of:

- Cross-functional marketing teams augmented by AI agents
- Technology-integrated capabilities built on a unified data foundation
- Real-time orchestration that adapts to every customer signal

All of this is infused with AI, governed responsibly, and built to plug directly into your existing enterprise architecture.



It's like having an agency of AI agents at your side – planning, segmenting, personalising and activating campaigns across every channel.

Salesforce, on Agentforce Marketing (2025)

The Intelligent Backbone of Agency-as-Software

1. Agentforce Marketing – The AI Agency at the Core

Agentforce Marketing can represent the agentic intelligence layer of Agency-as-Software. It transforms the traditional marketing team into an always-on, AI-augmented operating unit – eliminating the manual bottlenecks that have historically slowed marketing to a crawl.

Key Capabilities and Their Role in Agency-as-Software

- **AI-Powered Campaign Co-Creation:** Agentforce co-creates campaigns from brief to launch. AI agents generate a full campaign brief, determine audience composition, draft email and SMS content against brand guidelines, and configure Campaign Flow – ready to review and activate. Campaigns that once took 7+ weeks can now be deployed in hours.
- **End of ‘Do Not Reply’ Marketing:** Agentforce Marketing transforms one-way broadcast emails into live, two-way customer conversations. Whether via email, SMS or WhatsApp, AI agents interpret responses in real time, personalise replies, and route interactions across marketing, sales and service – without human intervention.
- **Adaptive Web Personalisation:** Every visitor’s web experience is tailored dynamically based on live agentic conversations, with no manual rules or setup required. The site adapts in real time to reflect the individual’s journey, intent and context.
- **Always-On Performance Optimisation:** AI agents continuously monitor campaign performance and self-optimize against the marketer’s goals, eliminating the need for manual reporting cycles and reactive adjustments.
- **Prebuilt Marketing Agents:** Salesforce provides pre-configured agents for campaign planning, content generation, segmentation assistance, and orchestration support – accelerating time-to-value for Cognizant’s clients.

In the Agency-as-Software model, Agentforce Marketing functions as the “AI creative and production team” – the intelligent layer that handles the operational execution while human marketers focus on strategy, brand, and innovation.



2. Salesforce Marketing Cloud (Marketing Cloud Next) – The Orchestration Layer

Salesforce Marketing Cloud, now evolving into Marketing Cloud Next, can be a powerful orchestration backbone of Agency-as-Software. It is the single, connected engagement platform through which every channel, every journey, and every customer interaction is managed – replacing the fragmented agency stack with a unified execution layer.

Key Capabilities and Their Role in Agency-as-Software

- **Unified Multi-Channel Engagement:** Marketing Cloud Next consolidates what were previously nine separate Salesforce marketing acquisitions – including ExactTarget, Pardot, Datorama, and Evergage – into a single application. Email, mobile, social, advertising, and web engagement are orchestrated from one platform, eliminating channel silos.
- **Campaign Flow & Journey Orchestration:** Built natively on the Salesforce core platform, Marketing Cloud Next replaces the legacy rule-based Journey Builder with flow-based orchestration powered by real-time data signals. Journeys assemble and adapt dynamically, responding to customer behaviour as it happens.

- **B2B and B2C Convergence:** Marketing Cloud Next supports both B2B and B2C marketing from a single platform, removing the historical need for separate Pardot and Engagement environments. This is particularly powerful for enterprise clients operating across multiple customer segments.
- **Two-Way Conversational Email:** The Spring 2026 release introduced Conversational Email, enabling Agentforce to manage replies to mass marketing broadcasts in real time. Customers querying about products, shipping or support receive instant, contextually personalised responses – turning promotional sends into high-intent conversion events.
- **Content Intelligence & Insights:** Datorama capabilities are embedded natively, providing a single pane of glass for marketing performance analytics, media spend intelligence and ROI attribution – aligned to the Insights & Data Foundation pillar of Agency-as-Software.

In the Agency-as-Software model, Salesforce Marketing Cloud can serve as the “Orchestration Layer” – the platform through which every agency function, from creative to campaign deployment to performance measurement, is unified and executed at scale.



3. Salesforce Data 360 – The Insights & Data Foundation

Salesforce Data 360, formerly known as Data Cloud and reintroduced at Dreamforce 2025 as an AI-native intelligence platform, is the connective tissue that makes the Agency-as-Software vision possible. It is the single source of truth that powers every AI agent, every personalised experience, and every intelligent decision across the platform.

Key Capabilities and Their Role in Agency-as-Software

- **Unified Individual Profile:** Data 360 ingests data from CRM, ERP, marketing platforms, commerce, service, and external sources, harmonising it into a single, trusted “Golden Record” for every customer. Identity Resolution rules match and merge data across systems, eliminating duplicates and delivering a true 360-degree view in real time.
- **Zero-Copy Architecture:** Data 360 connects directly to external data platforms including Snowflake, Databricks, BigQuery and Redshift via zero-copy federation – querying data where it lives without duplication, movement, or compliance risk. This means Cognizant clients can activate the full breadth of their enterprise data estate without costly migration or latency.
- **Real-Time AI Grounding for Agentforce:** Data 360 is the memory layer that grounds every Agentforce AI agent in factual, trusted, up-to-date customer context. Using Retrieval-Augmented Generation (RAG), agents access live customer profiles before taking any action – dramatically reducing AI hallucinations and ensuring personalised, compliant responses.
- **Calculated Insights, Segments & Predictive AI:** Marketers can build segments, predictive models and calculated insights directly on unified profiles. These activate across campaigns, AI agents, personalisation engines, and paid media in real time – moving from “data as reporting” to “data as operational intelligence.”
- **Data Clean Rooms & Secure Collaboration:** Data 360 Clean Rooms use the Zero-Copy architecture to enable secure collaboration with media and data partners, matching audiences without ever exposing raw data. This is critical for enterprise clients operating in regulated industries such as financial services, utilities and healthcare.
- **Sub-Second Real-Time Processing:** Profiles update continuously, enabling Agentforce agents to act on “hot” data – a website click, a cart abandonment, a tariff query – the moment it occurs. This transforms Agency-as-Software from a batch-driven model into a genuinely real-time marketing operating system.

In the Agency-as-Software model, Salesforce Data 360 can be the “Insights & Data Foundation” – the platform that ensures every creative decision, every journey action, and every AI agent response is grounded in the most accurate, comprehensive and real-time understanding of the customer.



Key Capabilities of Agency-as-Software: Powered by Salesforce

The following table maps the four core pillars of the Agency-as-Software operating model and shows how specific Salesforce enablers can bring each to life:

Capability	Description	Salesforce Enablers
The Creative Engine	AI-powered content generation and personalisation at scale, adapting messaging in real time based on live customer signals.	Agentforce Marketing's Campaign co-creation, generative content drafting, brand-safe personalisation with Einstein AI.
The Orchestration Layer	Managing and automating complex customer journeys across all channels, ensuring seamless and personalised interactions at every touchpoint.	Salesforce Marketing Cloud (Next); Campaign Flow, Journey Builder, two-way conversational engagement across email, SMS, WhatsApp and web.
The Insights & Data Foundation	An AI-powered data and insights layer creating a comprehensive 360-degree view of the customer to drive intelligent decisioning.	Salesforce Data 360's Unified Individual Profile, real-time segmentation, Calculated Insights, Predictive AI, Zero-Copy federation.
Integration & Governance	Seamless integration with existing MarTech and data stacks, wrapped within a robust governance and trust layer for responsible AI.	Data 360 Zero-Copy architecture + Agentforce's Trust Layer + Cognizant's integration expertise (MuleSoft, APIs, enterprise connectors).

The Cognizant Moment™ Advantage: Your Partner in Transformation

When Agency-as-Software is powered by Salesforce, Cognizant removes the burden of architecting a complex, end-to-end marketing operating model from scratch. Our deep expertise across the Salesforce platform – spanning Marketing Cloud, Data 360, Agentforce, and enterprise integration – means we bring both the strategic vision and the technical depth to accelerate your transformation.

For clients seeking a turnkey solution:

Simply define the desired marketing capability and the outcome metrics that matter. Cognizant will handle the rest – from assembling the right cross-functional talent to configuring, integrating, and managing the underlying Salesforce technology. Your marketing function operates as an always-on, AI-native product from day one.

For clients with existing Salesforce investments:

If your organisation already owns Marketing Cloud Engagement, Account Engagement, or Data 360, Cognizant can help you unlock their full potential within the Agency-as-Software operating model. We unify your existing assets, layer agentic intelligence across them, and deliver the outcomes your CMO is demanding – without requiring a costly rip-and-replace.

Cognizant's Agency-as-Software Deployment Models

Turnkey (Greenfield): Full operating model design, Salesforce platform configuration, team build-out, and managed service.

Accelerated (Brownfield): Agentforce and Data 360 overlay on existing Salesforce investments to unlock agentic capability without migration.

Advisory (Strategic): Architecture blueprint, roadmap, and governance framework for CMOs planning their AI-native marketing transformation.



The Future of Marketing

The traditional agency model, with its focus on individual delivery layers and services, is difficult to scale and is not inherently designed for the real-time, AI-driven marketing that the current landscape demands. Our team at Cognizant is breaking this paradigm by building all the necessary layers into a single, composed product – powered by the world’s leading CRM and AI platform.

With Agency-as-Software, the future of marketing is not about managing a roster of agencies. It is about building an AI-native marketing operating system. It is about moving from siloed services to a unified product. It is about achieving agility, intelligence, and scale – and delivering the hyper-personalised experiences that build lasting customer relationships.

The Salesforce platform – Agentforce Marketing, Salesforce Marketing Cloud, and Salesforce Data 360 – provides one of the most powerful architectures on which this transformation can be built. Cognizant provides the expertise, the methodology, and the delivery confidence to make it real.

Realising Agency-as-Software with Salesforce in three statements:

1. Marketing is a product, not a service – always on, continuously optimising, AI-native by design.
2. The Salesforce platform is the operating system – Agentforce as the agency, Marketing Cloud as the orchestration layer, Data 360 as the intelligence foundation.
3. Cognizant is the implementation partner – bringing the strategy, architecture, and delivery expertise to realise the vision at enterprise scale.

About the Authors

This paper was developed by the members of Cognizant Moment™ practice:

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Anirban Mitra, MarTech Architect, Cognizant Moment – and their experience-led capability within Cognizant that brings together MarTech architecture, CRM strategy, AI engineering and digital delivery.

Cognizant is a global professional services company and a Salesforce Platinum Partner with deep specialisation across Agentforce, Marketing Cloud, Data 360, MuleSoft, and the broader Salesforce Customer 360 platform.

For more information, please visit www.cognizant.com



