A Guide to AI in Financial Services

For Southeast Asia

The AI opportunity

We've entered the next phase of AI: the agentic AI era. It's a shift as significant as the transition from analog to digital in the late 90s and early 2000s. At the forefront of this transformation is Agentforce, the agentic layer of the Salesforce platform for deploying autonomous AI agents across business functions, including in financial services.

Just as those who were slow to adopt digital technology found themselves outpaced, financial services organisations that fail to embrace AI agents risk losing their competitive edge. The stakes are high – losing star talent and customers, missing out on operational efficiencies, and falling behind in risk management and security capabilities are real challenges for institutions that aren't preparing for agent-first operations.

Conversely, the opportunities of AI and a digital workforce are significant. McKinsey insights reveal a notable potential uplift from AI adoption in the banking industry, estimating a productivity boost that could add $200 billion to $340 billion to annual revenue – a 3% to 5% increase. It's no surprise that 86% of financial services AI adopters say that AI will be very or critically important to their business's success in the next two years.
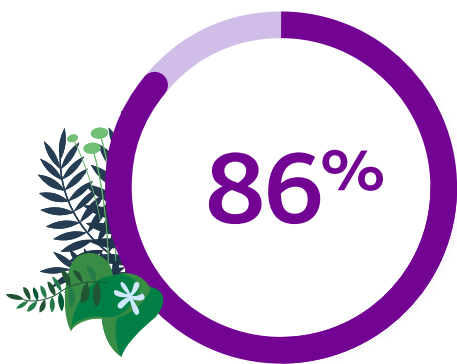
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Despite these promising projections and early successes, many in the financial services industry remain cautious about AI, largely due to strict compliance and security requirements. [54% of consumers](#) trust the use of AI agents in financial services, but there's still work to do. Business leaders must prioritise building trust and demonstrating responsible AI practices to move forward successfully.

The core message of this whitepaper is straightforward: AI adoption is no longer a future ambition – it's a present reality. The tools are here, and with [Agentforce](#), financial institutions can deploy AI agents safely, securely, and at scale. This is what AI was always meant to be – limitless, proactive, and ready to work alongside your teams. The financial services firms that embrace AI agents now won't just keep pace with change, they'll define the future of the industry.

The evolution of AI: From assistants to autonomous agents

AI in financial services has rapidly progressed from copilots and assistants to fully autonomous AI agents that are transforming how institutions operate. Unlike copilots, which require human input for every task, AI agents take initiative – executing tasks, reasoning through decisions, and continuously improving over time.

Agentforce for Financial Services is:

Agentforce

I'm traveling out of the country next week.

⚠ Travel Notification Activated

Your renter's insurance policy is due next week, would you like to set up auto-pay now so you don't miss it?

Specialised for financial services

Built to navigate industry-specific workflows, compliance requirements, and regulatory frameworks.

Powered by trusted data

Ensures accurate insights and decision-making by leveraging secure, enterprise data sources.
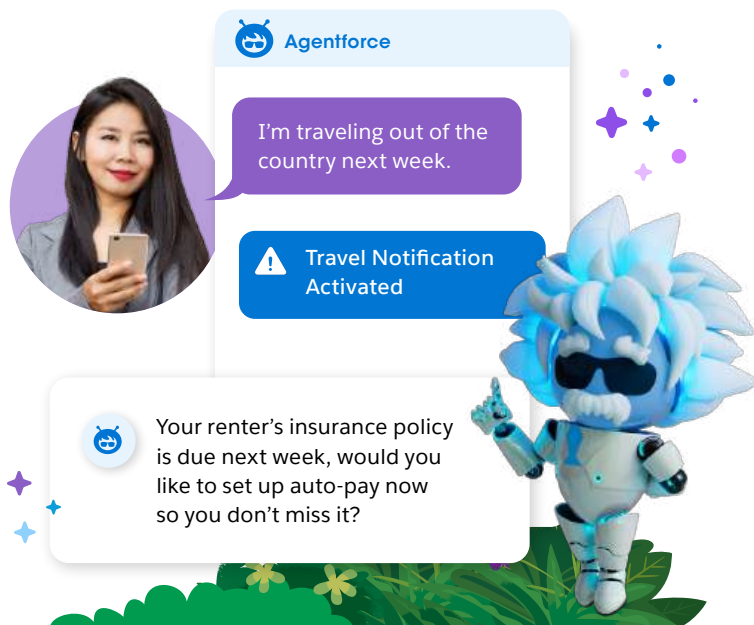
Secure by design

Operates within your organisation's security infrastructure, keeping sensitive data protected.

An extension of your team

Works alongside employees, providing automation and insights while keeping humans in control.

Three ways agents drive transformation

For financial institutions, AI agents represent a paradigm shift – from AI as a supporting tool to AI as a proactive, always-on extension of the workforce. Agentforce enables financial institutions to deploy AI agents securely and effectively, unlocking new levels of efficiency, customer engagement, and business growth.

Financial institutions can implement AI agents in three key ways, depending on their strategic priorities:

(1)	(2)	(3)
Automating existing workflows	**Reimagining operations**	**Powering new business models**
For institutions aiming to quickly realise the value of AI agents while building trust with employees and customers, starting with workflow automation is key. By automating repetitive tasks and reducing administrative burdens, AI agents free up employees to focus on high-value work.	Beyond automation, AI agents enable institutions to redesign core processes, embedding AI-driven decision-making into everyday workflows. This shift moves organisations from reactive to proactive, allowing for smarter, faster decisions.	At their most transformative, AI agents can unlock entirely new revenue streams and customer experiences. Financial institutions can scale hyper-personalised financial services, deliver embedded finance solutions, and build AI-driven digital experiences that redefine customer relationships.
For example, Agentforce can assist customer service teams by handling routine inquiries, generating summaries of customer interactions, and recommending next-best actions.	Imagine an AI agent in wealth management that could assess customer risk profiles in real time, identify investment opportunities, and autonomously draft portfolio recommendations based on market conditions.	Picture a digital banking AI agent that helps customers manage spending habits, recommends tailored financial products, and executes transactions – all seamlessly embedded into the customer's preferred communication channel.

AI use cases in Financial Services with significant impact

The banking sector comes second only to the high-tech industry when measuring the potential productivity impacts of AI. Key functional areas where AI is poised to make a profound difference include marketing, sales, customer service, software engineering, risk, security, compliance and legal operations. With industry-specific use cases now available, the potential for AI to increase productivity across functions in financial services has never been greater.

Compliance and IT

AI agents are transforming compliance and IT by reducing human error with features like automated call summarisations, verification checks, and improved auditing. AI could cut compliance costs by 6-10% by streamlining processes like identification, verification, and risk screening, while 77% of consumers are interested in AI that prevents and detects fraud.

6-10%
decrease in compliance costs

Service

AI agents enhance customer interactions by providing always-on, accurate responses across digital channels. Unlike basic chatbots, AI agents understand intent, access real-time customer data, and provide tailored recommendations. They support service representatives by handling routine inquiries, summarising interactions, and surfacing next-best actions – all within compliance guardrails. Done right, it can reduce service costs by 25%.

25%
reduction in service costs

Sales

AI agents transform sales by proactively engaging prospects, scoring leads, and surfacing data-driven recommendations. Instead of passively waiting for human direction, AI agents analyse customer signals, personalise outreach, and even automate follow-ups. It's no surprise that 61% of sales professionals say AI helps them better serve customers.

61%

say it helps them **better serve customers**

Marketing

AI agents power marketing automation that goes beyond segmentation. They predict customer preferences, personalise content in real time, and automate cross-channel engagement, ensuring every touchpoint is relevant. The impact is clear: high-performing marketing teams are 2.5x more likely than underperformers to have fully implemented AI in their operations.

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more likely to have **fully implemented AI**

Agent Workflow

✓ Send Email

✓ Answer Questions

✓ Book Meetings

✓ **Hand Off to Seller**

Chung wants to talk about home loans.
**View meeting prep...**

AI Trailblazers in ASEAN

We use AI to value condominiums based on data like location, floor, and size. This saves time and resources compared to having someone physically appraise the property and do manual valuation against parameters. AI can take into account factors like demand, proximity to facilities, shops, and schools. We've been using AI for asset valuation for quite some time, and it's helped us improve our operational efficiency with tangible business outcomes.

Fred Roteseree, EVP, Head of Enterprise Data and Analytics Group, Krungsri

At BPI, we are on this journey of customer obsession to delight our customers. We're empowering our employees with AI to make it easier for them to answer questions from our clients. And we're using Salesforce Einstein to optimise timely responses and to drive our A/B testing, with promising results.

Cathy Santamaria, Chief Customer and Marketing Officer, Bank of the Philippine Islands
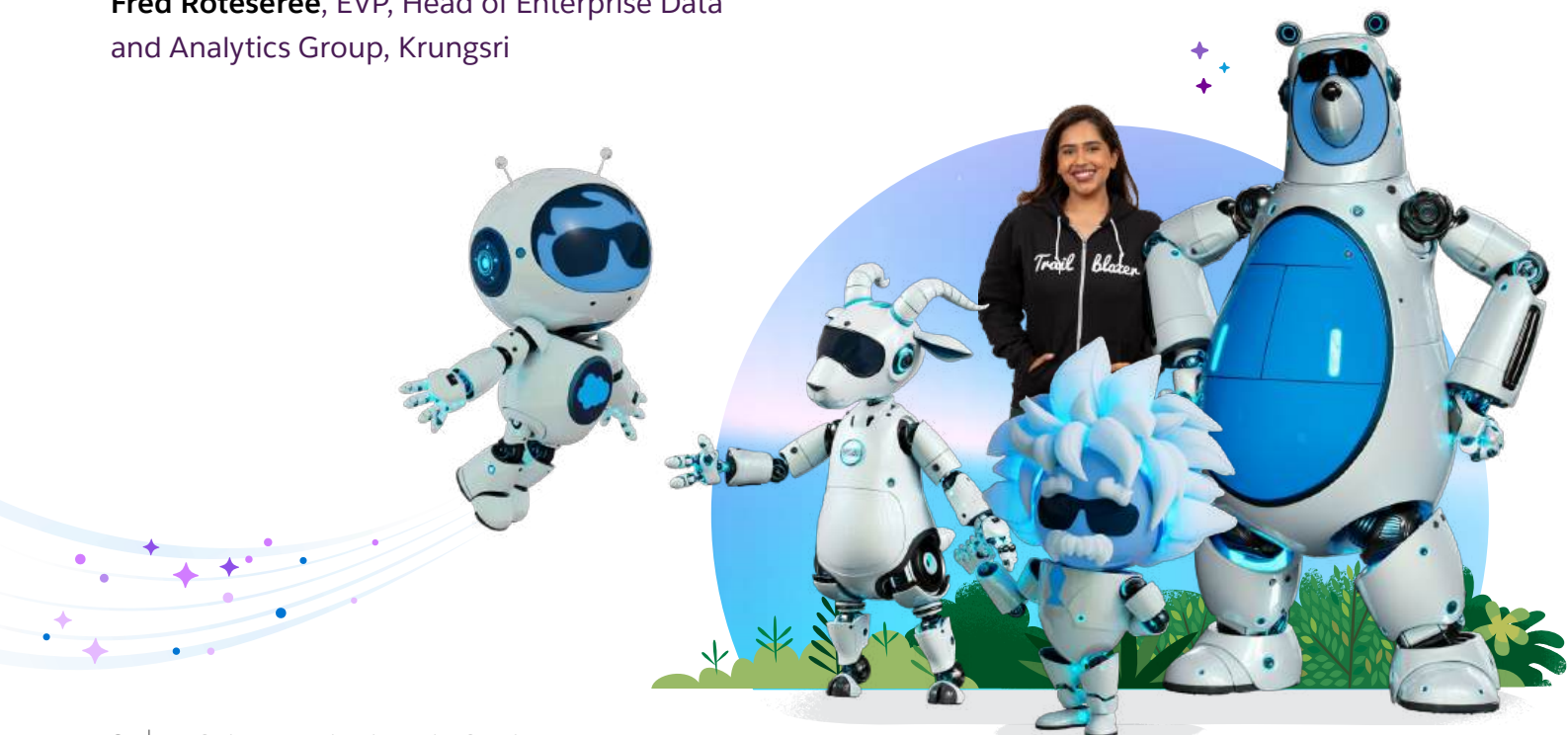
Fighting fire with fire: Reducing risk and increasing compliance with AI

The AI-first future is full of uncertainties, including for risk and compliance outcomes. AI presents significant new creative capabilities to cyber adversaries and defenders, necessitating that financial organisations understand both the offensive and defensive nature of AI.

Emerging risks

On one hand, AI enables the mass personalisation of attacks at an unprecedented scale. Two of the [ten new security risks identified by the Open Web Application Security Project](#) (OWASP) are prompt injections, where attackers manipulate AI inputs to provoke unintended actions, and insecure output handling, where software inappropriately trusts AI-generated content without proper validation.

Greater security

On the other hand, AI also equips security teams with enhanced capabilities, enabling them to do more with less and providing the scale needed to address complex security challenges. With AI, one person can achieve the security workloads of larger teams. This capability includes creating and using synthetic data to simulate potential attacks, allowing organisations to anticipate and mitigate these tactics effectively, essentially enabling them to 'fight fire with fire'.

Enhanced compliance

Beyond enhancing security, AI also plays a crucial role in compliance. By automating and refining compliance processes, AI can improve accuracy and efficiency in meeting regulatory requirements. It streamlines data management and analysis, ensuring financial organisations can more easily adhere to evolving laws and regulations.

Financial organisations must adopt a proactive approach, employing AI not just to keep pace with competitors but to stay ahead of potential threats. By doing so, they can not only safeguard their operations but also enhance their compliance frameworks, securing a competitive edge in the rapidly evolving financial sector.

# Building trust in uncertainty

Integrating AI agents into financial services isn't just about innovation – it's about ensuring security, compliance, and trust. Despite the potential for AI to strengthen security and compliance, nearly half of all executives and 59% of consumers harbour concerns about AI security.

Agentforce is built on trust. AI agents operate within enterprise security frameworks, leveraging the Einstein Trust Layer to enforce strict data governance, maintain compliance, and ensure customer information stays protected. These AI agents meet the stringent requirements of financial services, providing secure, auditable, and transparent automation that aligns with industry regulations.

To build trust with stakeholders, financial institutions can start with limited use cases, deploying AI agents in controlled, high-impact areas where human oversight remains in place. By gradually expanding use cases, businesses can demonstrate measurable benefits while maintaining stakeholder confidence, ensuring AI agents enhance – not replace – trusted human expertise.

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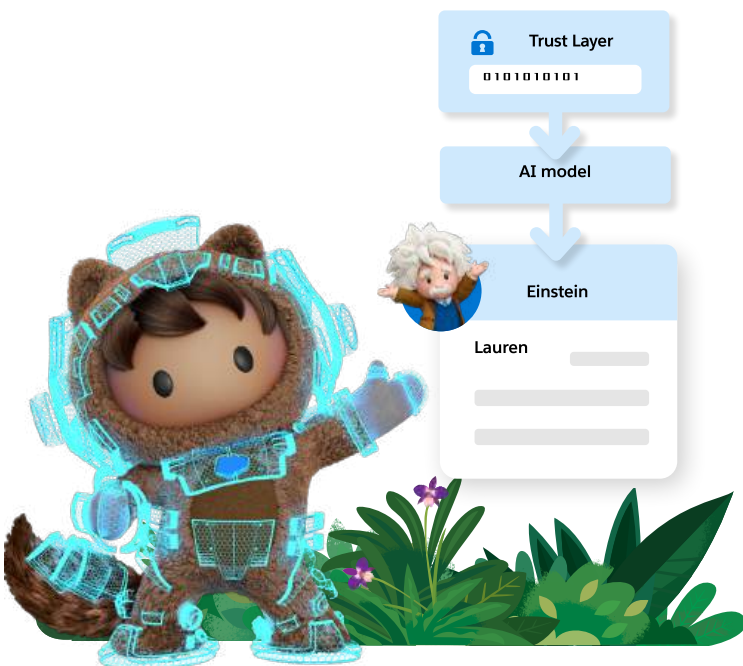
The next financial services disruptor

Salesforce has reengineered its platform to power the next wave of AI-driven transformation, embedding industry-specific AI capabilities that integrate seamlessly into existing financial ecosystems. The platform has been designed to support unstructured data, simplify data management, and embed AI seamlessly into workflows, while maintaining a high degree of transparency and accountability through a robust trust layer and referential integrity.

Besides providing out-of-the-box solutions for financial services, the platform's open architecture also offers the flexibility to tailor AI applications to specific customer and business needs while adhering to regulatory standards.

Expectations for AI are rising at an astonishing rate. 65% of consumers believe AI will speed up financial transactions – up from 46% in 2023. Agentforce makes it possible to live up to these expectations, introducing AI agents as a scalable, trusted, and transformative extension of your workforce. By accelerating the adoption of AI and enhancing trust and compliance, Agentforce is paving the way for the next disruptors in the financial services industry to emerge.

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Key contributors

The following report was produced in collaboration with Eran Agrios, SVP & GM, Financial Services at Salesforce, Gavin Barfield, Vice President & CTO at Salesforce ASEAN, and Adhunik Chug, Industry Advisor for Financial Services at Salesforce ASEAN.

Eran Agrios

Eran Agrios is the SVP & GM, Financial Services at Salesforce. She is responsible for the product and solution strategy and portfolio for Financial Services customers globally. Eran has over 20 years of experience in customer relationship management technology and brings a unique perspective on technology trends and transformation. She helps transform businesses by optimising for growth and impact while putting their customers at the centre of every interaction.

For the last 14 years at Salesforce, Eran has focused on Financial Services customers across Wealth Management, Banking, and Insurance. Over the last 6 years, her focus has been growing the Financial Services product & partner portfolio including launching Salesforce's first industry product, Financial Services Cloud.

Gavin Barfield

As Vice President and CTO for Salesforce ASEAN, Gavin Barfield leads a team of engineers across the region to develop and drive integrated solutions for customers. Gavin works closely with senior leaders on their digital transformation and technology strategy, bringing together the full value of the Salesforce platform to drive positive business outcomes.

A seasoned IT veteran with over 20 years of experience, Gavin has a deep technology background in areas such as IT infrastructure, enterprise architecture, cybersecurity and Cloud technologies, across a variety of industries. Prior to joining Salesforce, he held C-level positions managing IT and transformation for some of Southeast Asia's largest companies, such as Ayala Corporation and Meralco. Gavin also brings many years of experience in management consulting into his work for customers.

Adhunik Chug

As an Industry Advisor for Financial Services, ASEAN, Adhunik leverages his industry expertise to drive high-impact customer engagement across insurance, banking, and wealth management sectors. He collaboratively leads the design of Industry Go-To-Market plans, content creation, and pipeline generation initiatives. Working closely with sales teams, Adhunik brings industry knowledge, best practices, and expertise to customers, primarily in growth markets.

Adhunik brings over 25 years of experience in Technology and Financial Services, having worked for some of the largest technology companies (Microsoft, Salesforce) and financial institutions (JP Morgan, UOB, Bank of America). His career spans both the high-tech sector, focusing on software and services, and the financial services industry. As a technology leader, Adhunik has held global and regional leadership roles across various domains. His expertise encompasses product management, business applications, generative AI, data analytics, cloud platforms, infrastructure, and information security. This diverse background allows him to bring a comprehensive understanding of both the technology and financial sector to his current role.

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Give us a call.

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