

5 deceptively simple steps to success

CEOs like to follow well-established practices to operate efficiently and pursue strategy. From using organizational charts to tracking key performance indicators, they favor certain structures to impose order.

When Marc Benioff co-founded Salesforce.com in 1999, he jotted a tidy strategic model on an envelope—and it became the template for the enterprise software company's explosive growth for years to come.

Benioff called his five-prong model V2MOM. It stands for vision, values, methods, obstacles and measures.

Guided by the V2MOM process, Benioff led his team through a series of critical decisions. Here's how it works:

Vision: What do you want to do?

Values: What's most important about that vision?

Methods: How do you get the job done?

Obstacles: What problems might interfere?

Measures: How will you know when you've succeeded?

Benioff credits this simple framework for helping his team identify and implement strategic initiatives. He's used it from the very beginning. The vision is usually expressed in one sentence, while the other four elements include a numbered list of answers to each question.

For example, Benioff's first V2MOM encapsulated Salesforce's vision to "rapidly create a world-class internet company/site for sales force automation." Then he filled in each of the other four areas with up to six succinct entries. (One of his measures: "We are all rich.")

The streamlined planning process has worked wonders. Within 15 years, Salesforce was worth \$35 billion and became the largest tech employer in San Francisco.

— Adapted from ["These are the five questions Salesforce asks itself before every big decision,"](#) Eugene Kim, www.businessinsider.com.

A model for giving back

Benioff introduced the 1:1:1 pledge, in which companies donate 1% of their equity to charity, 1% of their employees' time to community service and 1% of their product to nonprofits and higher education.

In 2015 he instructed his HR team to look into the compensation of female staffers to ensure their salaries were aligned with their male counterparts. He then authorized \$3 million in pay adjustments.