



- Daniel Newman: Hey everyone. We're back here at the six five summit. It's day three. We are in the modern work and devices track. Very excited for this next conversation talking to Sateja Parulekar from Salesforce. Sateja, welcome to the Six Five Summit. This is your first time, right?
- Sateja Parulekar: Yeah, this is my first time. I'm super excited to be here, talk about the future of work and get into some of the new trends we've been seeing.
- Daniel Newman: Oh my gosh, so let's start there. The new trends we are seeing. Okay, rewind seven months. It's like October, 2022. You're playing with a lot of generative AI?
- Sateja Parulekar: Nope, not even on my radar then, but I don't think it was anyone's radar then.
- Daniel Newman: It's pretty amazing, isn't it? I mean, I think maybe there were a few apps that were kind of doing generative text in emails, but we certainly weren't calling it generative AI.
- Sateja Parulekar: No. I think the first time it really hit me was during Thanksgiving last year, I was with my husband's family and my brother-in-law was telling me about this new thing, ChatGPT. "You've got to check it out. I'm writing bedtime stories to my kid on it." And it was fascinating, but it didn't hit me at yet. And then two weeks later, everything started to explode in our world. It's crazy.
- Daniel Newman: It's so crazy. And I'll be candid, I am sort of a global fortune teller. I'm joking, but my job is to look at the future, provide my perspective on it. I've done so many TV spots about generative AI, looking at trend lines. And the really interesting thing was it did sneak up on me. Now, I went back to mid last year when people were calling for the doom of technology, and I was very bullish that AI was a trend line that would take us out of somewhat of this tech rack that was going on, at least in the markets. Because the thing is productivity, driving gains, getting more from less, we've all seen companies are working on a more streamlined manner. Hiring has slowed down. We need to get every employee to be driving meaningful productivity, and AI was such a logical tool to help do that. But I'd just love to maybe start here by getting your general perspective on the drivers and barriers with this and all the other big trends that you see in terms of productivity creators.
- Sateja Parulekar: It's interesting, when it comes to AI, and I remember when AI was starting to come up, especially as we were starting to talk about Einstein at Salesforce many, many years ago, and the biggest barrier to adopting technologies like AI was having the data. And obviously being in the business of CRM data at Salesforce we're very, very connected to our customers about that. But as we started to see generative AI, I mean this is in the last six months, start to creep up, the concept of conversational data has come up. And that's where with Slack we see this tremendous opportunity, or anywhere that you have conversational data to, start to leverage things like generative AI.
- And you mentioned doing more with less. Of course we get this all the time. How do I do more with less? How do I get my team to be more productive? And generative AI plus that conversational data you have in a system like Slack starts to pay off that vision of, "Oh my gosh, I have this wealth of company information, this corpus of data about my business that is trusted



within this walled garden. How can I leverage that to do my job faster?" And that's when it gets really interesting. We actually did a big announcement recently, SlackGPT just a few weeks ago, where we've completely evolved our AI strategy with our Slack product to really harness the power of generative AI to make things just faster for every employee. So that trend of, "Well, how do I do more with less?" Productivity gains are just phenomenal when you apply generative AI onto that.

Daniel Newman: And I'd love to talk a little bit more about that. There is big productivity gains to be made. And Slack, sorry, SalesforceGPT, SlackGPT is very interesting. I have long been a purveyor that Slack has so much more potential than just being a chat app. Having said that, there's a pretty big continuum out there. And by the way, slack has an amazing loyal following. But at the same time, there are people in the market that kind of look at Slack as it's the cool youthful young hip chat that Salesforce bought. And then there's other people that look at that and say... I think Marc Benioff, your CEO being one of them, saying, "No, this is kind of the next digital headquarters. This is going to be the interface that people at work are going to interact with to automate tasks, to use AI, to drive data visibility, to centrally launch meetings and bring productivity together, to share documents and edit things, and even build apps, even building apps."

And yet at the same time, it's like... I don't think everyone's fully gotten onto that yet. How much do you see this shifting in this next era? How much is generative AI going to be maybe the thing that helps finally break this through so the whole world can see what work is going to look like and where it's going to start?

Sateja Parulekar: You brought up a really great point. I think the introduction of Slack to many people is through messaging. That is the first barrier of entry, first part of entry for Slack. But underneath Slack has a tremendously powerful platform where it's probably one of the only platforms out there that enables end user automation. That means folks like you and I can create our own workflows through point and click. We don't need an admin to do it to make our work and our processes go faster. And of course there's a wealth of capabilities for developers to build apps, like you said, or build more sophisticated workflows with external systems with code or no to low code. So there's a big platform that's powering all of this. And I think a lot of folks don't realize that on a daily basis because they're just interacting with the app, but it's really a productivity platform underneath.

So when you think about layering generative AI on there, the fact that it is an open platform like that allows our partners in our ecosystem to build apps on top. So actually OpenAI and Anthropic were two of those types of partners which have already built apps to integrate their generative AI technology into Slack. So actually you can... I mean if you're a Slack customer right now, you can actually download the cloud app from Anthropic, and I believe the ChatGPT app is in beta, coming out soon. So these partners have just been building massive innovation on the platform and we've seen just a massive uptick of I think over 4,000 now generative AI apps that have been built on the Slack platform.

Daniel Newman: Yeah, super interesting, Sateja, is the platform itself, 4,000... What do you think are the drivers of adoption? What have been the barriers? One of the things that generative AI is really accelerating is language to code. So I know even low code for less technical people was probably



a barrier for really creating apps. But I guess I see a future, everything's going to be about aggregation. So Slack, it sounds like with 4,000 apps and the connectivity to whether it's third party ERPs or first party within Salesforce, is that you should be able to almost use Slack as this very broad aggregation layer to be this work repository. Do you think something like generative AI's capability to generate code or to take language to app is going to be a driver to speed the adoption and speed the utilization of the bigger capability sets?

Sateja Parulekar:

Absolutely. I mean, just the use cases that our customers are coming up with are amazing. And obviously a lot of this is in the works. We just announced our next generation platform, which is AI ready, so we'll be able to now bring generative AI apps into, say, a workflow. So a really great example of this is if you're building a workflow to... I'm a marketer, so my team writes a lot of content. If we want to start generating drafts of content, we could build a workflow that prompts us to say, "Hey, what are the main points and data points we want to put in this post or this piece of content?" It'll prompt us and then I'll call out to, say, ChatGPT, and then spit out a draft that we can then get going with. So that's a workflow that I could build without code just by plugging in the right applications and the right data sets.

Now take that, and that's just today you could do that. Fast forward six months and the fact that generative AI is being able to not just generate content but code, help us with web development, help us with app development, that's going to be huge. And then I think about how Slack ends up being that engagement layer across your CRM data, your backend data, other systems in your company, just bringing it all together into one place, and it's the place you're having conversations, the conversational data set there is just huge for companies. So really sky's the limit. We're just finding new use cases for this every day. It's a little overwhelming, but it's really exciting.

Daniel Newman:

Well it certainly has the potential, Sateja, to be a really big growth driver. I want to pivot as we wind down this conversation and talk a little bit about hybrid work. For a long time we saw this massive digital transformation wave. Initially it was fueled by the unfortunate pandemic circumstances. We got to a point as a society where we said we may never go back into the office again, and it was like for the first several months after we had seen most of the rules loosen up for mobility for people and workers. And now you're starting to see some companies are mandating back to office. Some companies are going to three day policies in the office. Some companies remain steadfast that remote and work anywhere are the best.

Slack is, for instance, one of the great enablers. It was one of the great enablers that helped companies. But just I guess as it pertains to the future of work and you as an industry leader, just how do you see that playing out? How do you see work shifting in the next few years with all the live events? Are we going to just end up back to normal? Is it just going to be like it was in '19 with cooler tools, or do you think some of what happened over the last few years is going to be more permanent?

Sateja Parulekar:

It's interesting. I live in San Francisco and you can feel the change from before the pandemic, during the pandemic, being in a major city, and now what it looks like today is it's a bit of that hybrid, like you said. There's a lot of folks going into the office, but there's also a lot of workers that are at home. And I think with just the shift, it really just depends on the company and your appetite. There's a lot of thought of that connection, and I think Sam Altman had a great



interview recently where he was talking about the connection that fueled a lot of the startup culture 5, 10 years ago and how we need to get back together to regain it. Now, I don't know that going back into the office every single day, punching in and out is that connection, but that concept of in-person connection with other humans, I think really we really missed out on that during the pandemic.

So every CEO is going to have their own opinion of how much they want their teams to come in, what makes sense. But the concept of human connection, coupled by enabling work to get done no matter where you are, I think is going to be the big driver. And obviously things like automation and generative AI play a big role, but something that we really value at Salesforce is being able to connect with our customers directly, whether it's in an office at a meeting with our customers or going on site, and something like live events, we've gone full force and brought our live events back. It just brings so much joy to actually be able to interact with your customers and have that human connection, versus in pocket. So I think it's going to be different. We're going to be connecting live for some things, but things like this, where we're able to connect virtually are much easier than taking a flight across and have a great conversation. I think we're going to see more of that too, but it's just going to expand the choice and the flexibility.

And actually something that you brought to mind was we just completed our state of work report for 2023, where we surveyed about 18,000 knowledge workers. So anyone that is logging in, and employees of various companies, and flexibility, rather than remote versus hybrid versus in-person, the concept of flexibility was the biggest trend there in terms of the future of work. Being able to be flexible on how to get your job done, whether it is traveling to another state to see a customer or being able to log on and manage your day based on your family schedule.

Daniel Newman:

Yeah, I think you bring up some really good points. And I think that's the whole continuum, Sateja, of how we perceive, implement, utilize, and then evolve with different technologies. And I'll say, collaboration, it was sort of a... We got forced to move very quickly. And then as we've figured out work patterns, then you see something like generative AI and you're like, "Wow, look how quickly something can get done." And there's been a lot of debate recently because you're kind of weighing more efficient productivity, meaning doing the same amount of work with less, and then there's also the opportunity where it's like, "We can do 10 times more with the same or a little bit more." And I think that's one of the big things that we're going to be debating for some time is how much more productive can we be?

Just like content, for instance. You're in marketing, I'm in a research company. I now do things like dictate my thoughts after a new product launch, and then I will have a generative tool organize my thoughts into a blog, and then I'll use something like Grammarly or something like a tool to clean it up. And I just took something that might've historically been a two hour activity and taking it down to 15 minutes. So that means in that same time, maybe you could do 6, 7, 8 of that content and it's like wow.

I guess one of the big things, and maybe this is a good place to end, is just your take on where does it lead as a whole and how do we get society to see the positive? Because I think there's so much positive, and while we have a lot to learn, there's going to be security, there's going to be risks, there's going to be displaced work that's going to likely be augmented with new work, but it's more positive than it is bad. I mean, there's so much good in what's being built that's going to help companies and people do more interesting things.



Sateja Parulekar: I mean, it's a generational, a huge technological shift that we probably haven't seen for a few years. The rate of technology is moving so fast, just a few years is a long time these days. And the shift with generative AI is so interesting in that some of those use cases, like you mentioned, something that may have taken you many hours is now taking you maybe 20 minutes and an hour, and how much more productive can we get? And it's a combination, sometimes, I think about what are the administrative tasks that we were doing before? The promise of, this is something that gets me very excited, after we have a meeting, not having to transcribe my notes. I'm an old school, I write notes in a notebook with a pen, and not having to transcribe those and read them out into to the group. It's already done for me. The action items are taken, they're already posted, say, in a channel or whatever tool you're using, say with Slack, it's in a channel.

And you can get on with your day after a meeting. You don't have to do that administrative task, and it just makes things work faster. But also there's the concept of there's still a human involved that's still trusted and secure. It's within the walls of your organization. Those two things I think are really important to keep in mind of how we start to make people more comfortable with this technology is to create some of those safeguards, those best practices, those guidelines to ensure that this technology is used in the right way, and give that confidence. With any technology, it's scary, but with the right guidelines, the right best practices and trust, starting to build that confidence to make people more comfortable,

Daniel Newman: That's a great way to end, Sateja. I want to thank you so much for taking the time, not getting on a plane, but I know you would if I'd have asked. Next time I come to San Francisco I look forward to coming by Salesforce Tower and spending some time. Meanwhile, have a great day. Thanks for joining the Six Five Summit. Look forward to having you back next year.

Sateja Parulekar: Awesome. Thank you so much. We'll see you soon.

Daniel Newman: All right, there you have it everybody. For the Six Five Summit, I'm Daniel Newman. This is day three. We are in the Modern Work and Devices Track. Stick with us. More to come.