

Andrew Hoffman

Can Salesforce Compete in the Carbon Accounting Market?

Riley Gomezⁱ had always loved solving problems. A mechanical engineer by trade, she started her career designing commercial high-rise buildings. After moving to the sustainability team of a data center company, Gomez realized that the data management process was ripe for innovation. It became clear to her that spotting and optimizing inefficiencies led to huge financial savings and could also lead to large environmental benefits.

When Gomez came to Salesforce in 2015, she applied her experience to the challenge at hand: modernizing an incredibly intricate carbon accounting process. Gomez was all too familiar with the complexity of carbon accounting—the various third parties, the numerous touchpoints from data, the multiple spreadsheets. It did not matter how advanced the company was; the process was always complex and painful. Gomez worked with a company accountant to build a custom sustainability app called Sustainability Cloud to streamline Salesforce’s environmental data collection process and better manage the company’s environmental footprint.

After recognition of the value the app provided internally to Salesforce, Gomez set out to do what Salesforce is best at—creating an enterprise-level market for a product. With the help of product marketing experts, Sustainability Cloud 1.0 was made generally available in January 2020.

Gomez, vice president of sustainability at Salesforce, was heading to a board meeting with Salesforce CEO Marc Benioff where she would defend the continued investment in Sustainability Cloud, working to launch a 2.0 in the next year. Staring out from her 55th floor office in the Salesforce Tower in San Francisco in November 2021, Gomez was concerned about the future of the young product. Although the current carbon accounting software market was valued at 10.93 billion USD in 2020,¹ this was a play for Salesforce to move into the growing environmental, social, and governance (ESG) standards market, which would be worth an estimated 53 trillion USD by 2025.² Despite the need for carbon emission measurement and ESG

ⁱ Riley Gomez is a fictional character.

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