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# HITCHHIKER'S GUIDE TO CUSTOM SOFTWARE

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# WELCOME TO THE GOLDEN AGE OF SOFTWARE DEVELOPMENT

**Software.** It's a word that most people recognize today. Software runs people's lives, business enterprises and shapes industries. Everyone from SMBs to COIs are trying to make their SAP work for their corporations. Software development is making its mark on the world through transforming every aspect of business operations from mobile application development to robotics.

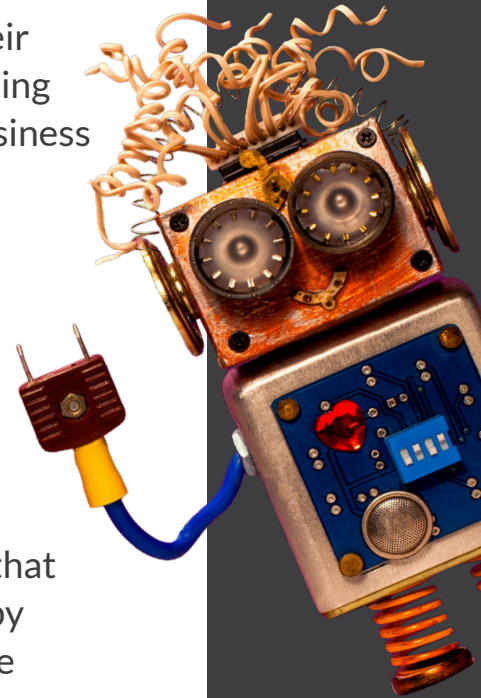
Sometimes though that mark is totally missed. How many times have you wanted to chuck your laptop out a window? Or maybe you've had the desire to smash the screen while working on a project cost report? If it says "Waiting for Sync" one more time...

You aren't alone. Every day, people are frustrated by software that doesn't work the way they need. Businesses are losing money by purchasing ineffective software or software applications. These ineffective pieces of software cut into profits and impact ROI every day that passes. Tech companies try to call them "solutions", but, more often than not, these software "solutions" turn into a lesson in futility.

There ARE good solutions out there, right? A software product that meets your team's, clients', and business's specific needs. Software that not only saves you time and cost, but also cuts back on frustration while earning more revenue than ever before. A product you could design and develop that offers real time solutions that justify the ROI. As business leaders, finding the right software tool for your team to best serve your clients can be daunting.

Before donning your floaties and diving into the pool of ready-made software solutions, consider another option:

**CUSTOM SOFTWARE.**



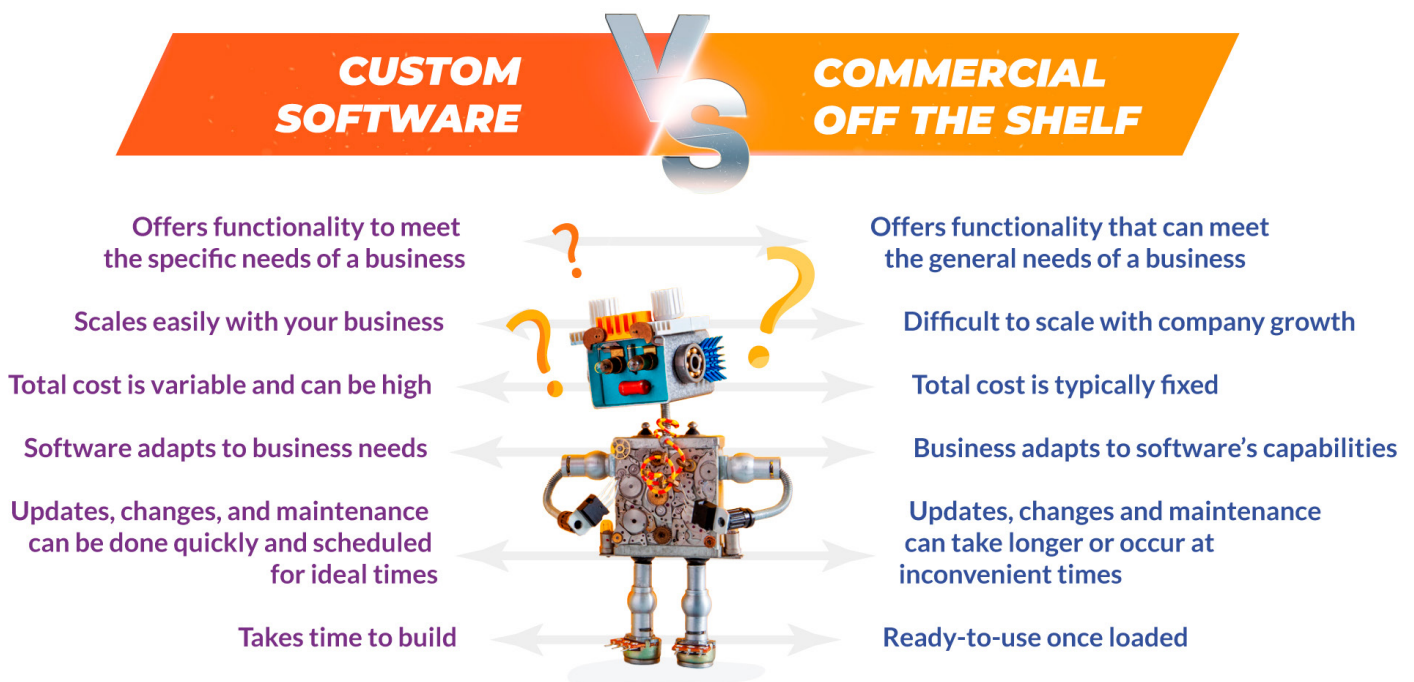
# WHAT EXACTLY IS CUSTOM SOFTWARE?

We've all been there. That frustrating moment when you have a piece of data you need to enter, but the program you're using doesn't have a field for it. Out of frustration, you decide to run a report instead, but it too is exasperating because the report doesn't include data you know is critical to your company's success. Don't these software developers know how important the data management is regarding the number of dolphins observed doing a jump flip out of the ocean under the full moon is?

This is where custom software is the solution. Custom software is coded to meet the specific, detailed needs of people and their companies where any requirement can be met and everything is customizable. Your team has the right information at their fingertips from the user interface to the fields stored on the backend. Everything from towel locations to flipping dolphins.

## CUSTOM VS OFF THE SHELF SOFTWARE

Custom software could fulfill your business needs, but commercial off the shelf software (COTS), might be the best option. In this guide, we examine the differences so you can decide which option is right for your business.



# ADVANTAGES & DISADVANTAGES OF CUSTOM SOFTWARE

We break down the advantages and disadvantages so you have all the information available to make an educated decision. This guide examines your business needs can be met from using a customized product that fits all of your team's needs without the complication of programming languages and jargon getting in the way.

From reviewing updates and features for your project to utilizing the latest technological advances for data management, you'll can thank your old Excel spreadsheet for its service and retire it. Technology built around your knowledge can create proprietary procedures which can lead to licensing revenue from other industry players. Be the "Big Fish" when it comes to proprietary technology.

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If I had a nickel for every time I've heard that "there are pros and cons to everything", I'm pretty sure I'd have almost a hundred bucks. Custom software is no different. The key is understanding both advantages and disadvantages of custom software.

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## CUSTOM SOFTWARE ADVANTAGES

### Completely Customized Software to Meet Your Business Needs

From specific data fields to robust reports, you can have exactly what you want. Your team will be happier, more efficient and able to do what you hired them for: being experts in their field. This level of customization is especially helpful if you have multiple clients requesting different data from you.

### Full Ownership of Product

New updates or changes are prioritized by YOU. Modules and features can be created to meet growing business needs in a timely manner. The days of waiting on creators to add a feature you need are gone.

### Benefit from the Latest Technological Advances

When new tech gadgets are announced we all 'oooh' and 'ahhh'. So why wouldn't we want it in the business programs we use every single day? Custom software provides the latest and greatest so you can retire your old Excel spreadsheet.

### Software that Scales with Your Business

As your business grows, off-the-shelf programs can feel like a boat anchor in this situation, lacking functionality. However, the flexibility of custom software offers seamless adaptation as your business model evolves. Congratulations. You just expanded from dolphins to orcas and your custom software can support you with ease.

### Software that Best Serves Your Customers

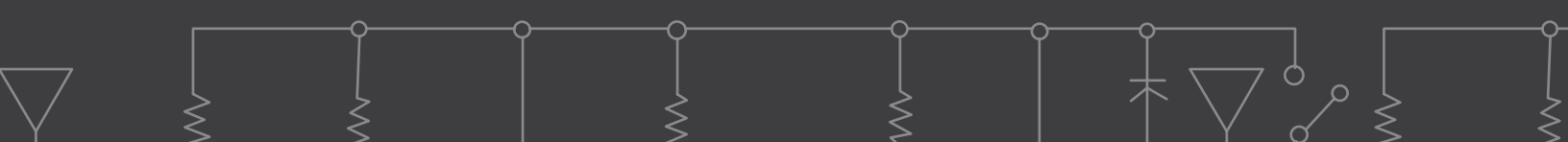
Give your clients what they want. You can provide custom reports with custom data regardless of what is requested.

### Create Proprietary Technology

Technology built around your industry knowledge can create proprietary procedures which can lead to licensing revenue from other industry players. Be the "Big Fish" when it comes to proprietary technology in your field.

### Control Over Confidential Data

Choosing how your business data is stored gives you more control so you can avoid data breaches. It also avoids possibilities of a commercial software vendor going out of business and turning off data servers you rely on. Keep everything in-house or through a cloud-based system for optimal results.





## CUSTOM SOFTWARE DISADVANTAGES

### Greater Time Investment

From initial requirements to completion, custom software requires a larger time investment. Remember; good things come to those who wait.

*Tip: Flesh out your user, client, and overall business needs before contracting with a development team. Knowing exactly what you need and want can cut back hundreds of hours.*

### Staff Support Required

Technology workers will be needed to maintain the software and associated servers. Custom software also needs the support of inner-business leaders in order to continue providing features and functionality that best serve customers. Multidivisional alignment within the business is necessary for the customized project to succeed.

*Tip: Consult with team leaders throughout your company to ensure everyone's voice is heard and needs are met. Make the new solution a win-win for everyone and you'll find support for the project comes easily.*

### High Financial Investment

Custom software has a higher upfront cost than commercial software.

*Tip: Create three or more proposals for your custom project: good, better, best. Add or remove requirements and get estimates for several cases. Starting with a smaller project in the beginning and building on that over time can lessen the upfront financial impact.*


### Discipline and Documentation is a Must

To avoid custom software becoming a Blackbox, or any other big unknown, discipline in documenting software functionality and changes is very important. Blackbox software can become expensive to maintain.

*Tip: Add a requirement that documentation must come with the software solution or plan to assign a team member to working with the developers to document features and changes.*

### More Risky than Commercial Software

From choosing the right development practices to managing resources, custom software has more points of failure that lead to greater risk.





# MAXIMIZING VALUE FROM CUSTOM SOFTWARE

Choosing the custom software route is exciting. It's new tech made just for you and your business! Due to all the options and possibilities, there are three points worth considering to maximize the value and generate the return on investment you're looking for.

## Use it where it makes the most sense.

Do we really need custom software for storing our grocery list? Probably not. Likely certain aspects of your business don't need custom software either. There are many commercial software options out there that might fit your basic needs very well. Save the custom software solutions for aspects of your business that are challenging and unique – like the average size of a dolphin belly button.

## Start small.

A massive custom suite of solutions might sound amazing but starting out on a large scale could easily become overwhelming. Select a smaller, specific aspect of your business that could use a custom solution. Then, build from that.

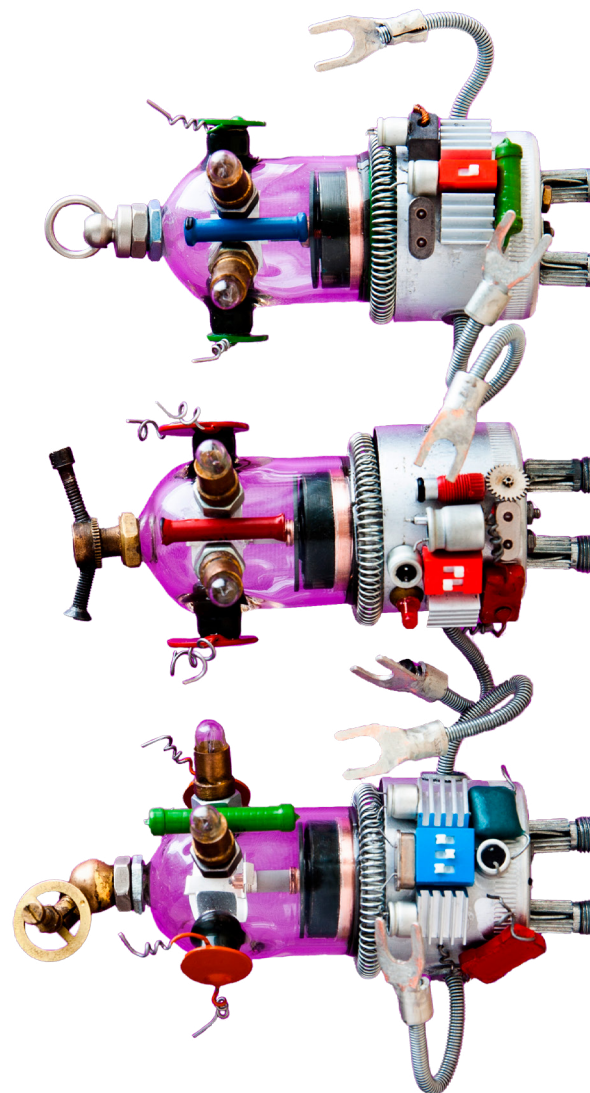
## Choose the right vendor.

Selecting the right vendor to create your custom solution is vital. The right team will understand and share your vision. Together you will build a solution that maximizes your business's potential.

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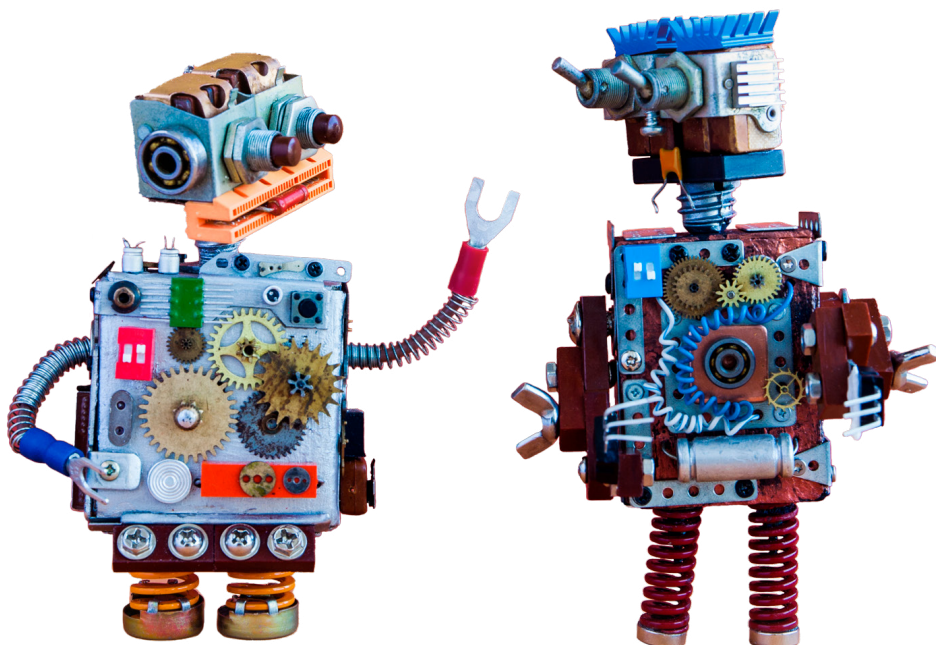


# THE PRICELESS VALUE OF TRUST

Want to know the ultimate gamechanger when it comes to creating a custom software solution for your business? [Trust.](#)

Trusting your chosen vendor is vital. We've all had experiences where the hired expert is less than enthusiastic, doesn't care about your opinions, and constantly tries to upsell you on features and services you don't need.

When a relationship is built on trust it can grow to its fullest potential. The same goes for the trust between you, your business and your chosen development team. Trust leads to a better solution that can be fast tracked and lower risk.







In the end, custom software provides better control on how you run your business and offers results that keep you, your customers and your stakeholders happy. Elevate your business to the next level with a custom solution that's right for you.

# CUSTOM SOFTWARE AND YOUR BUSINESS

THE JOURNEY OF CHOOSING CUSTOM SOFTWARE FOR YOUR BUSINESS IS BOTH CHALLENGING AND EXCITING. HERE ARE A FEW IDEAS TO GET STARTED:

**Custom Dashboard:** Get a quick overview of how your business or project is doing. Revenues, expenses, inventories, labor numbers, and more can be viewed at a glance.

**Custom Invoicing Module:** Invoicing your clients is crucial and the last place you want errors to show up. With a custom invoicing module rules and procedures can be put in place to your specifics to ensure accurate billing and faster payments from your clients.

**Custom Expense Tracking:** From fish food to high tech equipment, know exactly where your business expenses are going, find inefficiencies, and streamline spending.

**Custom Forecasting:** Base forecasts on your business's specific data, revenue, and expenses. Know exactly what direction your business is going.

Interested in kickstarting your custom software solution and saving on your projects? [Book time with GCS today to get started.](#)

...and if the answer to your problems is 42, we won't charge you for your time. Let us be the [babel fish](#) to talk you through the custom software jargon.