

Why Go Custom -

5 Myths about Building Custom Software by Decision Design Corporation

If your organization has finally made the decision that it needs new software to fill a business need, congratulations! Most likely your next step is to decide if you will buy an off-the-shelf package or have the software custom-built to meet your precise needs. Since 1995, Decision Design has helped hundreds of clients trying to make this decision. Below are the 5 most common myths we see regarding building custom software:

Myth 1 It will be more expensive

REALITY – Custom-built software is cost competitive – Most off-the-shelf packages charge you a per-seat or per-license cost. A custom-designed software product will serve as many users as you need for the same initial development cost. Additionally, because the software is tailor-made for your business, you won't spend extra money changing processes and procedures to fit with the software package and you won't need to retrain people how to do their jobs. Custom-built software fits your organization. It doesn't require your organization to fit to it.

Myth 2 It will take a long time

REALITY – In the end, a custom-built product can save you time – Because the software will be tailored to your company's needs, you won't waste time trying to make something that doesn't meet all of your needs work for your business. With the right software development team, building a custom product that precisely meets your company's needs can go very quickly. Our average project takes about 6 months, some even less, depending on the nature of the application.

Myth 3 Custom software will have more bugs because it has never been used before

REALITY – Custom software is tested specifically for your business – All software has some bugs. It's the reality of the software world. What is important is that bugs in critical functionality are addressed before the product is released. Off-the-shelf products are tested generally, but not necessarily the way your business will use them. If a bug is found in an off-the-shelf product, you will have to wait until the next release before it will be fixed. And that's only if it affects enough of the developer's clients, or if you are a top-paying client. In contrast, custom-developed software is tested specifically for your business scenarios, often with the help of your end users. This ensures that the key functionality you are counting on works the way you need it. The personal attention that each client gets from a custom software vendor also means that mission critical bugs are fixed immediately.

Myth 4

Getting support for custom software is expensive and difficult

REALITY – Custom software is often cheaper and easier than off-the-shelf maintenance because you have direct access to the developers who built it – When you buy an off-the-shelf product, in addition to the cost of the software, you will most likely pay for help with installation and pay more for on-going support and maintenance. Additionally, you will be jockeying for attention with the rest of the distributor's clients and you will have to explain your problems to people who do not necessarily understand your business or how you are using their software. When you choose to have your software built specifically for your needs, the vendor becomes your partner, learning your business and how the software will operate. The developers who build it are often your support team, meaning issues get resolved quickly. Decision Design's support model averages less than a 1 day turn around on issues.

Myth 5

Custom software projects often fail

REALITY – Actually, this is true. But Off-the-shelf installations fail at the same rate. Because of difficulties with integration of an off-the-shelf product into an organization, off-the-shelf products are equally vulnerable to failing. Choosing the right vendor and the right product for your situation is the key to success of any software implementation. Decision Design has successfully developed custom software to address all types of business problems across a wide variety of industries. One of our biggest areas of service is Software Remediation, fixing failed installations of other vendor's custom and off-the-shelf products. We know what can go wrong and how to fix it. That makes us better when we build custom software from scratch.

Choosing between buying a software package and building something that meets your needs is a big decision that will direct the course of the project and ultimately decide its success. While off-the-shelf products often look easier and cheaper, for many businesses the opposite is true. Decision Design is committed to helping organizations choose the right path. To find more resources on outsourcing your custom development build, choosing a vendor, learning what to do if your custom project isn't going how you planned, or to learn about other clients that Decision Design has helped, check us out on the web at www.decisiondesign.com.



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