# CUSTOM VS READY-MADE SOFTWARE:

## THE ADVANTAGES OF BESPOKE DEVELOPMENT

Every business sooner or later faces the need of some sort of the software to facilitate the workflow and improve efficiency. The first questions that comes up is "Should I buy a ready-made product or order a development of a bespoke app for my company?"

To start with, let me make sense of the terms:

- **Ready made or out-of-the-box software** is something you can buy, install and begin to use immediately, like MS Office, Photoshop or Adobe Acrobat Reader. Such programs are made for general use and can not be modified according to your wishes.
- **Bespoke software** is a program that created by the development team specifically for your business, based on your company requirements. Additional functionality and modifications can be added at any stage of the product life in order to meet changing business demands.

## How is Bespoke Software Different from Ready-Made Software?

- Framework: The core difference between custom and off the shelf software lies in the fact that ready-made products are targeted at a wide range of consumers and, as a consequence, have a unified design and a standard build. The main disadvantage of ready-made software is that it might not meet your company's unique needs. On the contrary, bespoke software gives you an opportunity to customise your application according to your wishes in order to internalise your work process. As a result, you will not have to change your workflow and will easily adjust to the new software. Moreover, you will be able to modify it over time to maintain a high productivity rate.
- Cost: Prices for ready-made software are usually significantly lower than for the development of bespoke software. The reason is that the cost for ready-made apps is divided among a number of businesses that are willing to buy the software, while bespoke solutions are built exclusively for one enterprise.

- Updates: In the case of ready made software you will normally have to pay for future updates. Unfortunately, such updates can be limited and over time you will have to pay again and again if you do not want to end up with an outdated product. On the other hand, bespoke software updates are released according to your budget and needs.

# The Pros and Cons of Ready-Made Software

Ready-made software, also called commercial software, ranges from Microsoft Office suit to large enterprise applications that perform such tasks as accounting, manufacturing and selling company's products and services.

**Let the experts decide for you.** Ready-made software incorporates all the features experts think you need. For example, an off the shelf accounting app will provide you with an opportunity to write cheques and keep accounting records along with other functions. The experts will also define the user interface, menus, windows, screens and other features. For example, a standard search in a ready-made system will include five filters: location, rating, price, date and the number of orders. But if your criteria is delivery speed, you will never be able to apply it to sort out the search results. Have a look at Salesforce: there are 2 options for setting the client's statement: leads and opportunities, but how convenient it could be to add a couple more statements to complement the ones available. No chance. It's not possible with ready-made software.

**Split the cost.** The cost of development is split between companies that are going to buy and use the software. However, there might be "hidden" costs. For example, be ready for the following additional expenditures with a large ready-made application.

- *Service fees:* The price for various services like software installation, data import or training may be as high as 200% of the initial purchase.
- *Maintenance fees:* Most developers charge yearly fees of 15-30% of the software cost.
- *Employee licenses:* In some cases, you will need to pay for each employee who uses the software. As a result, the more you grow, the more you pay.

**Customisation:** Often, companies are used to their existing workflow: they want to be able to store data in the format of their preference, to transfer information about employees and customers from a mail client to their CRM, to build analytics matching their specific criteria and to integrate it with corporate products and services, as well as the reporting system. If your company goes for a ready made app, it is likely that you will not be able to do all the above-mentioned things. Otherwise, expect paying the developers of the software a lot of money,  because they are the only ones authorised to introduce changes to their product. However, you will have an opportunity to consult other companies that have customised their apps earlier to learn about their experience.

**Save time.** You will not have to wait for your app to be designed, built, tested and launched. You can install it instantly after the purchase. However, you will likely spend a lot of time choosing between the different ready-made applications and estimating which one suits you best.

**Share the experience.** Bug reports and performance suggestions are submitted by all the businesses that use the app. You can also easily get additional documentation or training.

## The Benefits and Disadvantages of Bespoke Software

Now let us speak of the pros and cons of bespoke app development:

- The product is developed according to your needs, based on your business goals and budget.
- Bespoke applications are tailored exclusively to meet your demands. A bespoke app keeps up with the needs of your business as it can be modified and updated according to the company's performance and development.
- Custom solutions are easy to use because they work exactly as you want them to. You are the only one in charge of all the changes to the software, which significantly reduces the number of errors that may appear and does not require too much supervision. You can also increase efficiency by automating repetitive tasks.
- Bespoke software gives you a competitive advantage. A good developer not only provides you with valuable information and advice, but also helps you to improve your company's performance and opens up new possibilities.
- Applications tailored for your business provide additional security for your corporate data. You will not have to worry that your correspondence history falls into wrong hands or is accidentally deleted, as it often happens with Skype, notorious for its instability and vulnerability.
- Whereas the cost may be pretty high, you will not have to spend extra money on licences, updates and annual fees. The software will always be up to date because it can be developed non-stop.
- One of the risks of bespoke software is that you may be solely dependent on the developers. Of course, ready-made apps expose businesses to similar risks, but you must be particularly careful when choosing a developer to build a custom application for your business. Read our tips on choosing a web and app developer here.

## Which Option Suits You Best?

To sum up, the best way to choose between the two options is to define your business scale and prospects. If you run a startup with a limited budget, which is likely exposed to future risks, ready-made software will be your best choice.

Meanwhile, bespoke software development has major financial and commercial benefits, provides you with an opportunity to stand out among competitive businesses and evolves along with the business.

Bear in mind, that despite the fact that you will probably have to spend more on a bespoke application than for a ready-made one, it will definitely pay for itself. And do not forget that the quality of your future

software depends on the developer you hire. Have a look at Magora bespoke software examples. Feel free to contact our experts if you have any questions related to software development for your business.