



Bespoke Software
Versus
'Off The Shelf'

Business Database Software
Specialists



Bespoke Software Versus Off The Shelf

Many business owners and directors debate the pros and cons of purchasing off the shelf software rather than having their own, tailored, made to measure database software developed for their business.

Bespoke software gives you a creative opportunity to automate, streamline and integrate systems that just doesn't come "out of the box".

Bespoke software these days is much more affordable than people realise when you look at the bigger picture! We have therefore put together a quick sheet outline the main points that you should be looking out for when going for bespoke or off the shelf.

As a rule of thumb we have found that businesses with over 10 employees\users should definitely be exploring the bespoke software route.

Off The Shelf Advantages

- ✓ It is often available quicker.
- ✓ It may solve some of your problems.

Off The Shelf Software Disadvantages

- ✓ You (and other users) have to learn how to use the software which takes time (per user!!)
- ✓ The software will dictate to you how to run your business rather than the other way around.
- ✓ There will be costs per user and possible annual licence fees.
- ✓ Your competitors can also use this so can replicate what you are doing and you have lost an opportunity to gain the competitive advantage!

Bespoke Software Development Advantages

- ✓ You can add functionality that off the shelf packages do not offer giving you a competitive advantage.
- ✓ You can make changes on an on-going basis as your business develops and grows to stay ahead of the game!



- ✓ It is custom built for your business and will therefore reflect your business process requirements and integrate with existing systems.
- ✓ You say how the software works so there is a shorter learning curve.

Bespoke Software Development Disadvantages

- ✓ There is a perception that bespoke software costs more but the comparisons over a longer period can highlight that this is not always the case.

I hope this helps but if you need any further information just give us a call on

07857 189383 or 0161 881 1139!



Why Use Firswood Solutions

In the current climate we know that companies are striving to cut costs whilst still wanting to retain the quality of products or services that they are getting currently. We aim to offer more than what you are currently getting, for less cost!

Very Competitive Rates – Our hybrid approach maximises the benefits of having UK based in-house, local resources for all things relating to your business software developments, whilst still having the flexibility and skills to utilise off shore personnel on a limited, occasional basis. This allows us to keep our prices competitive whilst still retaining control of your system design, documentation and source code.

Advanced Analysis and Design – With over 10 years in the commercial software development industry our analysts can quickly identify issues in your existing systems whilst also looking for the return on investment for your company. This allows us to maximise the positive impact of your web based solution.



The Company

Firswood Solutions is a software house based in Old Trafford, Manchester, UK offering services in web and windows based bespoke software. With over 15 years experience in the software development industry, our experience spans various sectors and business systems.

Our method combines a logical, structured and project planned approach, with a creative and innovative approach to problem solving and systems development to provide the most cost effective solution for your business needs.

We work closely with our clients to understand their business processes and particularly focussing on the areas needing improving, automating or re-engineering in addition to new ventures, campaigns and developments.

About Us

Passionate about delivering quality, cost effective solutions to your software development needs, or business problems we offer software services spanning the full software lifecycle including:

Systems Analysis

Software Design

Feasibility Studies

Functional Design Specification

Consultation

Web Software Development

Project Management



Technologies

We are capable of delivering software in a diverse range of technologies including:

Web Based Development

ASP, .NET, PHP, JAVA, JavaScript, VB Script, Classic ASP

CSS, XML, DHTML, HTML

Databases

SQL Server, MySQL, MS Access, Oracle, Visual FoxPro

Windows Software Development

.NET, Visual Basic, C, C++, C#, Visual FoxPro

Servers

MS Windows Server 2003, MS Windows Server 2008, IIS,

Operating Systems

MS Windows (All Versions)

Project Management and Business Analysis

Project Management

Agile – We utilise an iterative, cyclical approach consisting of development phases and client/user feed back to improve quality.

Prince2 –We have in-house qualified practitioners and can fit into your structured PRINCE2 environment.

Tools : MS Project, OpenProj



Project Development Overview

Firswood Solutions always aim to deliver *on time* and *within budget*. We aim to specify projects as part of the development process so that the client knows in advance what they will be getting.

Initial Consultation

Firswood Solutions offer a free, no obligation consultation. We listen closely to ideas and issues before proposing the solutions available. If we can introduce new proposals that will enhance revenue or streamline processes then, if feasible, we will.

Solution Overview

Following the initial consultation, we draft a design document outlining the proposed solution and its delivery. We also provide a ball park estimate and project timescale.

Client Authorisation

On exchange of contracts Firswood Solutions begins the specification process.

System Specification

To ensure continuity from the offset, Firswood Solutions appoint a development team for the life cycle of the solution. The team then undertakes detailed requirement gathering, liaising closely with clients to ensure all requirements are satisfied. Once the formal specification has been drafted we submit it to the client for design approval.

Approval of Specification

Once the client has approved the formal specification, Firswood Solutions begin the development cycle.

System Development

Firswood Solutions will assemble a development team who will build the system in phases and in an iterative fashion, getting regular feedback from clients. This cyclical approach raises the quality of the system in terms of meeting and often surpassing client expectations.

User Acceptance Testing (UAT)

Once developed, the end users will be required to partake in using the system to thoroughly test all parts.

Delivery and Deployment

Once the system has been approved and signed off against the specification by the client, the system is deployed to 'Live' status.

Technical Support and Maintenance

We believe that a solution does not end at implementation. To enhance the effectiveness of your solution we offer support and maintenance of the system in addition to full training.



Contact Details

Have you been inspired by something that you have seen in our portfolio? Perhaps you can see something that your business can benefit from? Perhaps you have an idea for a web based system and are not sure how to get it off the ground, or maybe you want to extend your existing website services or product range?

Whether you have a specific or general enquiry in all of these cases we are here to help, please do not hesitate in calling us for a free consultation.

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