White Paper:

Solve Business Problems
with Mass Customization Software

What You Will Learn

- What is mass custom software?

- How is mass custom software more efficient than mass production software?

- What to look for when choosing a developer of mass custom software.

Xeo

Software. Your way.

Custom Software... what is it?

Computers are capable of almost anything, but they still need programmers to tell them how to do nearly everything. Custom software creates highly specialized applications with functions to meet specific business needs. Whether this means developing software from scratch, upgrading existing software, or centralizing your IT infrastructure with one full-service provider, custom software enables companies to command unique results from computers.

What is mass customization?

Mass customization is the method of "effectively postponing the task of differentiating a product for a specific customer until the latest possible point in the supply network."[1] Further, it is creating "... customized products with production cost and monetary price similar to those of mass-produced products."[2] Mass custom software utilizes commonly used code for core functionality, but allows for additional custom-developed code for creating functions specific to a particular business. This approach is both quick and cost-effective.

The word custom carries the idea of an expensive, time-consuming, and complex process. However, the opposite is true with mass customization software. Best practices for mass customizing software allow for lower production costs while still developing specific custom functions.

All businesses are familiar with standard office applications that include spreadsheets, text editors, and slide show software. These standard applications are used worldwide and are very effective for the intended use. Business inefficiencies occur, however, when businesses try to manage data, people, and entire business processes from a spreadsheet. It may work initially, but eventually becomes unmanageable as a company grows. Many times, companies are forced to use multiple software applications to achieve a particular result, or tracking data through numerous spreadsheets that are modified, saved, and shared by multiple people. Business continuity and efficiency is at risk when valuable data is put the hands of multiple people who edit and share the data. Custom software can eliminate that inefficient method by presenting the right data, to the right people, in the right way, every time, protecting and instantly backing up data. This is done by centralizing the process for accessing and manipulating data, delivering increased efficiency and simplicity.

Businesses realize the need for software that addresses their specific requirements. Some software companies attempt to modify off-the-shelf software packages and call it custom software. This method compromises functions the software was not designed to perform, but software created from scratch delivers the functionality and information your business needs because it's written to do so.

What are the possibilities?

As you might imagine, the possibilities are endless for what custom software can perform. Many businesses have specific, detailed

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requirements for their custom software, while others simply have an idea that would revolutionize their business performance if certain processes were automated. If you have an idea, a custom-software company can make it happen.

Businesses of all sizes benefit from custom software. Functions can range from tracking customer payments to managing all customer and employee information from an intuitive dashboard.

What are the advantages?

True custom software is designed from the beginning with the needs of your specific business in mind. There's nothing wrong with off-the-shelf software. It's designed to perform specific functions. However, businesses that try to force it to perform other functions only experience frustration, confusion, and inefficiency. Custom software allows companies to accomplish the tasks and goals specific to their business success, simply, and with the functionality options desired.

The true cost of custom software

The cost of developing custom software for your business must be weighed against the cost of inefficiency in your processes. What are the costs of duplicated efforts, miscommunication, or taking 15 hours to manually manage a process that software could accomplish in minutes?

Imagine efficiency that reduces phone calls, e-mails, and complex spreadsheets. Custom software can help you reduce costs and give your business a competitive advantage because you can accomplish more with less resources.

What to look for in a custom software developer

Listening and understanding: Much time is wasted when a software developer doesn't understand the requirements and desires of its customer. Be sure your requirements are clearly understood, documented, and delivered as expected.

Expertise: The best software developers will advise you on best practices for the functions you need in your software. Their experience will ensure you're not paying for functions you don't need, yet providing the functions you select with their guidance.

Error-free code: Xeo Software employs a Requirements Manager who defines business solutions, and communicates them to the programming team. This is achieved by clearly documenting the business requirements through Unified Modeling Language models, prototypes, and use cases. Xeo Software uses the ICONIX software development process. The method is an efficient way to design, test, and deploy custom software applications to meet demanding customer specifications.

Further, core coding is written by software itself, eliminating the possibility of typographical errors or other mistakes.

"The proven approach we take to manage requirements is at the core of what we do. Everything our clients want is documented, implemented, and delivered exactly as they expect, every single time."

Maurice McIver, CEO Xeo Software

Expandability: All software developed by Xeo is expandable. If you want to add additional modules or features in the future, you don't need an entirely new custom software package. ■

About Xeo

We solve business problems by executing the mass customization of business software. In the business software market today, most vendors still use the limited, mass-production, one-size-fits-all approach that Henry Ford pioneered over a 100 years ago. That production model is fine for cars, but very inefficient for business software.

At Xeo, we use proven processes that allow us to rapidly build completely custom solutions from scratch while using principles that made assembly-line manufacturing so productive. The end result is enterprise software that is perfectly molded to each client's business. Custom software functions range from improving business processes and streamlining manufacturing to increasing workforce communication and efficiency. These web applications are then hosted on a robust and secure hardware platform where employees, customers, and vendors can all access a fully integrated suite of customized portals. Your business is unique. Your software should be too.

From its beginning, Xeo Software has been different. Working with software companies can be complicated, confusing, and often brings disappointing results. At Xeo, it's not about us, but about you. It's software. Your way.

Contact Xeo

To see examples of how mass customization has fixed real world problems, view case studies by visiting: http://www.xeosoftware.com/CaseStudies.aspx.

To learn more about how Xeo Custom Software can develop computer-based solutions to your unique needs, visit www.xeosoftware.com or call 210-775-2172.

References

1. Chase, Richard B.; Jacobs, F. Robert; Aquilano, Nicholas J. (2006). Operations Management for Competitive Advantage (11th ed.). New York: McGraw-Hill/Irwin

2. Kaplan, A.M; Haenlein, M (2006). "Toward a parsimonious definition of traditional and electronic mass customization." Journal of product innovation management 23 (2).