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Custom-built software in 8 simple stages

There are many ways to manage a custom built software project. However, over the past 15 years we've narrowed down the alternatives to a simple 8 stage process that works well for us, and most importantly – our clients.

1 Discovery

It's essential that developers understand the business objectives behind a software project. This lets us keep an eye on the big picture while working through the technical details.

2 Define

Business requirements must be clearly specified. Agile methodology enables flexibility during the build process – but a clear vision of the end goal is essential. Users must also have a voice. Technical details such as architecture options and IT systems requirements are assessed i.e. what the software is supposed to do and how it will do it.

3 Budget

Cost and timings are based on business and technical requirements. A properly costed budget prevents the vendor from cutting corners or adding needless complexity to the program while a contingency plan protects against unforeseen circumstances.

4 Design

The solutions architect outlines the IT framework in which the solution will be built, assesses how it will integrate with existing systems and how users will work with the software.

5 Build

Production begins based upon the agreed design and plan. It's useful to include a quality assurance element to reduce the risk of errors, bugs etc. Good developers should be comfortable with all types of build process – agile, waterfall or anything else in between.

6 Test

A well specified project with good quality assurance will simplify this stage. The test plan must outline what to test, how, where and by whom. This ensures user acceptance and saves time and money in the deploy and support stages.

7 Deploy

Communication is critical to ensuring all parties understand their responsibilities. It's a delicate stage but a well thought out and executed plan keeps stress levels to a minimum.

8 Support

The software is deployed but the vendor shouldn't just disappear. A handover is required; where the client knows how to manage the software, users are trained and program knowledge is transferred. Good vendors will offer to monitor the software for an agreed time – and be on hand in case any problems arise.

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At The Information Factory our data driven solutions are focused on putting your data to work, refining raw, disconnected data and turning it into something that is actionable – giving you the power to know what to do.

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