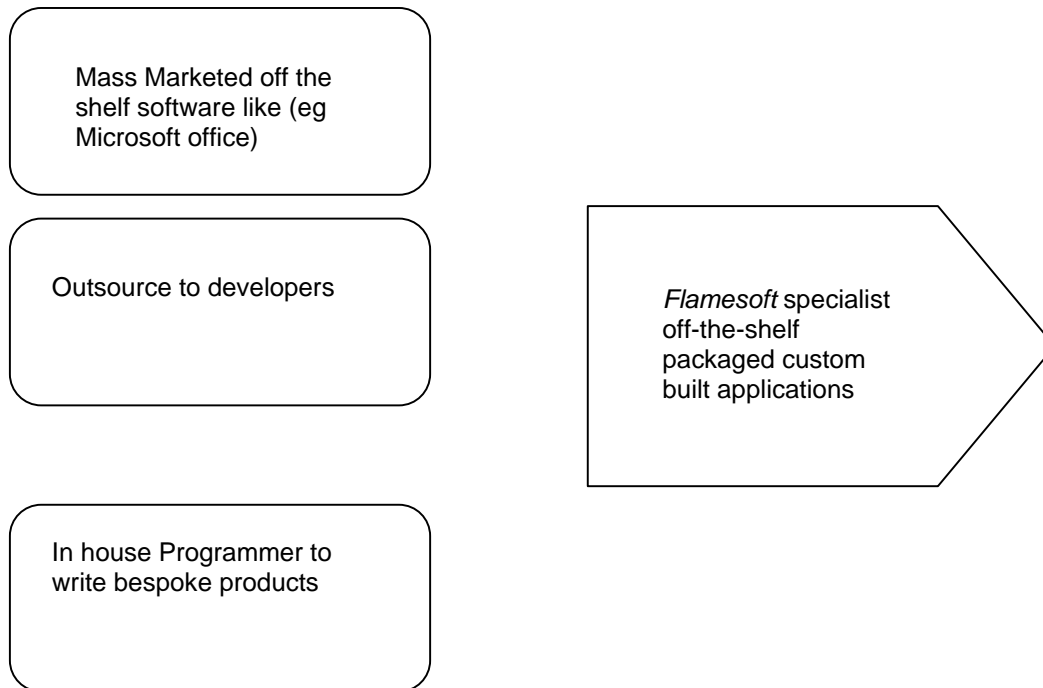


A GUIDE TO BUYING SOFTWARE: SOFTWARE PRODUCT ANALYSIS AND CONSULTANCY

Background

Many businesses are faced with complex and expensive choices when it comes to buying software products. The choices are;



Mass Marketed Products	
Pro's	Cons
Inexpensive	Licensing prohibitive
Resources of a multi national corporation	Impersonal, often poor service delivery and after sales support
Power of Research and development	Serves a mass market and is often too generic to be useful in it's original format.

OutSource to Developers	
Pro's	Cons
Expertise	Expensive
Bespoke products produced which deliver required results	Lack of knowledge about your business resulting in often over developed applications
Many choices in the market place	But which choice would produce the greatest value for money?

In House Programmer	
Pro's	Cons
On hand and personal relationship	Competing demands on their time
They know your business	Cannot communicate or translate this into the application
You can evolve software and fix bugs quickly	One person cannot be an expert in all aspects of software specification and programming

Flamesoft as the viable alternative

Flamesoft can provide a solution to the often difficult choices outlined above. All businesses need to ensure value for money in everything that they do. *Flamesoft* does not *sell* or advise on the sale of products and services to clients without first establishing your requirements. We can do this because we are a low overhead business which seeks to build long term relationships - our clients are our friends. We are not just a provider of software products. We look not just at the bigger picture – but your bigger picture and our experience in consultancy to small and medium sized enterprises allows us to add value in this way.

So what really makes a difference? What constitutes value for money in software products and is there a viable alternative to the three obvious choices when sourcing software applications?

How can Flamesoft achieve this?

The only way to ensure that sufficient knowledge of and in your business connects with your choice of software is to spend time investigating possibilities. The starting point is to find out whether your existing products can be redeveloped to answer your needs, thereby avoiding unnecessary expenditure. *Flamesoft* can help you do this and will always investigate a proposal free of charge. Following this initial appraisal we look at possible mass market or *Flamesoft* products, that can be utilised off the shelf or customised to meet your actual needs. If they do not, perhaps a bespoke solution may be required to deliver what you require. We find that many businesses waste a great deal of time and money systemising existing processes which are not actually delivering effective results. Sometimes it is necessary to re-engineer those processes before considering systemisation and the use of software tools.

The larger corporations producing mass marketed software are impersonal and in our experience offer poor service delivery and after sales service. Products are written for a mass market and are often over developed i.e. there are many features that you wouldn't ever use and some missing that you desperately require. The number of features increases the size of the application, a consequence of which is that it makes it difficult to learn how to make the product do what you want it to. One of our stated business aims is to develop relationships with our clients. First and foremost they are our friends. We support them to improve their business effectiveness after all that is

what software products are meant to do – keeping things simple is a good way to do this.

Off the shelf products are attractively priced but can come with prohibitive licensing costs. The recent Microsoft license restructuring caused many businesses financial hardship. *Flamesoft's* policy on licensing is to ensure that the prices are set at a reasonable level which will facilitate the use of their products by all your users.

Whether you have an in house programmer or outsource function, there will always be competing demands on their time. *Flamesoft* does not promise to meet unrealistic deadlines but we do promise to work with you so that everybody understands what is involved and when this can be realistically achieved. We then commit to making the necessary resources available to achieve this.

In house programmers and outsource specialists who offer technical solutions often find it difficult to communicate or describe the link between their solution and your need. *Flamesoft* utilises personnel who have a wider business perspective and the necessary capability to be able to do this.

A solution is often described as expensive when the solution delivered does not satisfy the original requirement. The situation can become worse when ongoing development and management time is needed to gain value from the application. We see the issue as not so much about expense but value for money. A key factor in the success of *Flamesoft* is that our clients leverage the investment made in a product or solution to maximise results. When we commit to you we keep this issue in focus and is the cornerstone of our relationship.

Even if a business has excellent in house resources, one person cannot be an expert in everything and sometimes it is wise to consider the views of others. *Flamesoft* can partner with you to deliver an innovative solution for your business.

Flamesoft can show you how to describe return on investment for software products and services - this is a phrase that is often heard or seen in print but infrequently delivered in practice. That is what's makes us different.....