SALESPAD®
DESKTOP

From Here to There:
How Custom Software Can Transform Your Business

Introduction

If you're a business owner, you're a dreamer by nature. You know how to take an idea and turn it into reality — how to be creative, resourceful, and persistent. But maybe you've hit a wall, or you've established certain boundaries for your dreams because you think that there's no way you can afford that next big step. Maybe you fear that what you're envisioning for your warehouse or storefront simply isn't possible.

What many business owners don't realize is that there are always multiple paths to the same destination. If you dream of a fully automated warehouse but assume that it will cost you a million dollars and that it has to look like an Amazon fulfillment warehouse, dream again. If you assume that you've saved all the time that there is to save, and that there are certain steps in your process that simply have to be completed manually, take another look.

Your business processes can always improve, and you're not bound by the limits of what has been done in the past or what out-of-the-box solutions can offer you. Through the power of software customization, you can take your business to the next level and beyond.

If the term "software customization" sounds expensive or risky, we encourage you to reconsider. Software customization has come a long way in recent years. What used to cost a fortune is now affordable for many, and "solutions" that break immediately are no longer the norm. Remember how unreliable navigation tech used to be just a few years ago? How many cities weren't accurately mapped and the software had no way of knowing if a road was closed or there were traffic problems? Or (gasp) having to print out the directions beforehand?

Just as navigation, cell phone service, data storage, and so many other technologies have improved by leaps and bounds over the past few years, so have software customization capabilities.

In this ebook, we'll walk through a handful of "from here to there" examples of how, by implementing some creative problem solving, imagination, and software customization, companies can realize their visions without breaking the bank.

Explore your options

Let's say that your dream is to create that fancy automated warehouse in order to decrease the amount of time it takes for your company to pick and pack an order and increase your picking accuracy. What are your options?

Option one is to follow the well-established (and quite expensive) path. You could hire a crew of engineers, mechanics, and designers to create and install your fully automated warehouse bots. To do that, you'd likely spend upwards of one to two million dollars. A warehouse outfitted with these bots would certainly improve your overall efficiency and accuracy once it was up and running, and it would probably pay for itself in time. Such a steep point of entry, though, makes it difficult for most companies to consider implementing such a solution when looking for ways to improve their warehouse performance.

If your goal is to improve your warehouse efficiency and accuracy, option one is certainly not the only course of action available to you. Let's take a look at option two.

Evaluate what you have

Instead of investing a lot of money into new hardware and machinery to power your automated warehouse, what if you added a little something to the forklifts you already have?

This is a solution that SalesPad suggested to one of our customers who wanted a more efficient warehouse. By writing software that integrated SalesPad Desktop (our ERP solution) to the software that ran their automated forklifts, inventory data from orders, transfers, receiving documents, etc., could be sent directly to the forklift, which would then fulfill the transaction without human involvement.

Instead of forking (get it?) over a million dollars or more for a fully automated warehouse, this solution cost our customer only $30,000, and it's a great example of how a little creative thinking and software customization can save you a lot of money in your day-to-day business operations.

Skip the middleman

Here's another example of how a custom software solution can help you get from here to there:

One of our customers was struggling with how long it took to run certain tests on hardware used to run water pumps. They design and install ponds, which frequently require water pumps, and measuring the voltage running through these pumps proved to be a significant challenge. The process for doing this was time-consuming, to the point where it was disrupting their assembly process. Additionally, their process of manually testing the component, reading the results, and entering that data into their ERP solution came with an uncomfortably high potential for user error.

On first glance, it seemed there were no options for improving this process — they would have to chalk it up as just another cost of doing business and adjust their prices to cover the extra labor required to perform these hardware tests.

But that, of course, is not the end of their story. Rather than resign themselves to the way it was, they came to us and asked us to help them figure out a better way to run these hardware tests. And once again, a custom software integration was the answer.

By creating an integration that allows our customer to plug their hardware components directly into SalesPad Desktop, the test results are written directly into the data fields that need it. There's no risk for user error, and the entire process takes significantly less time than it did prior to implementing this solution.

Cut the cord

Then there's the "here to there" story of a customer working in agriculture — a field of work where the field is the work. This customer needed to conduct tests on their products and record that data into SalesPad Desktop.

Initially, it seemed as if this customer had only two options, both of which added time and money to their process. They would have to either write down test results manually while out in the field, then go back inside to input the data into a computer, or they would need to hire a third party to do the testing for them. Neither option was ideal.

Instead, they came to us for help. Our solution was to develop a mobile app that records all of the testing data for them, removing the need for manual input later. Hiring an outside party to conduct their testing would've been an ongoing expense that ran the risk of bogging them down, and manually taking notes only to input them into a computer later felt behind the times, as well as time-consuming. A custom mobile solution, built specifically for their needs, was just the money-saving ticket they needed to give them some added momentum.

Look to alternative technology

For our final "here to there" example of customers who were able to elevate their business processes through software customization, let's head back into the warehouse.

If you're not familiar with a pick-to-light system, it's pretty cool — essentially, it eliminates the need for warehouse workers to carry pick lists with them by using a series of different colored lights, along with numbers and letters, on storage bins or shelves to instruct workers what to pick. It's a high-tech picking interface that can really improve a warehouse's accuracy and efficiency, but it's also quite expensive, to the tune of up to $100,000 for a 100-light system.

One of SalesPad's customers was interested in a **pick-to-light** type system, but came to us to explore their options. Their current picking process involved workers loading items onto a conveyor belt, then scanning the boxes, marking them as picked in SalesPad Desktop, and finally scanning the box once more before packing the order.

Our team of software developers put their heads together and presented the customer with a solution that only cost $75,000 and halved the number of scans required to process each order. By pairing RFID scanners with SalesPad's **DataCollection** application, which scans barcode information directly into SalesPad Desktop, orders on the conveyor belt could be sent directly to the packing department after a single scan. This gave their warehouse efficiency rating a huge boost.

Think big (or small)

We could go on, but we think you get the point. There are so many ways that customized software can revitalize your day-to-day operations without costing a fortune — the sky's the limit. We haven't even touched on the numerous "small" customizations you might install that would have an outsized impact on your company's performance.

If, for instance, you use SalesPad's **Case Tracker** module in SalesPad Desktop, what if you added software customization that allowed you to track email history with a customer? How much time would that save your customer service reps, and how much more impressed would your customers be with your dedication to communicating effectively with them?

Maybe you use SalesPad's **Dispatch** module and find it difficult to keep accurate maintenance records for all of the trucks in your fleet. A little bit of software customization on your fleet's GPS systems coupled with an integration into SalesPad Desktop could provide you with easy, instant access to data on truck mileage, oil change schedules, tire rotation needs, and more.

Software customization can be as complex or as simple as your business needs it to be. Whether you need a big, sweeping change that will revolutionize your warehouse performance or you're just looking for a little tweak to your current setup to make your day-to-day life that much easier, software customization can provide that for you.

Our team of **software developers** is dedicated to working closely with you to create the perfect solution for your company — **get in touch today** to learn more about how they can help take your business from where it is now to where you never dreamed it could go.

And once they help you get there, take a moment to breathe and enjoy the view, then get to work dreaming up your next big adventure! We're rooting for you.

SALESPAD®

We can handle your inventory management struggles because we've been there. Built from a partnership between a small business owner and a developer, SalesPad knows ERP. It's why we exist, and why more than 15,000 people trust SalesPad to manage their distribution operations.

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SalesPad Desktop is a full front-end order entry, purchasing, sales, and inventory management solution that fully integrates with Microsoft Dynamics GP to be the complete package for distribution and manufacturing companies.

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Curious about custom software development? Reach out to us! Our team is happy to answer any questions you may have about the process, or even get the ball rolling on a business process review.

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