



CUSTOM SOFTWARE BUDGET WORKSHEET

Scope your build, set a realistic budget, and match it to a plan.



Custom Software Budget Worksheet

Setting a budget for custom software is hard because the deliverable is invisible until it exists and the range of “what it costs” is enormous. The good news: cost isn’t random. A handful of decisions — what you’re building, how much of it, how it connects to other systems, and how fast you need it — drive nearly all of it. Get clear on those and a wide range narrows into a real number.

This worksheet walks you through those decisions in order, then helps you translate them into a monthly budget and a plan that fits. At **QOS Software** we price custom development as flat monthly plans that bundle a senior developer with supervised AI development capacity, starting at **\$4,875/mo** — so once you know the size of your build, matching it to a budget is straightforward. Fill this in before your next conversation and you’ll walk in knowing what you can afford and what you’re asking for.

1. What Actually Drives the Cost

Before you can budget, know what moves the number. Almost every dollar in a custom build traces back to one of these six factors — and each one is something you can decide, trim, or phase.

- **Scope** — how many features, screens, and user roles the software has. The single biggest lever.
- **Integrations** — every other system it must connect to (payments, CRM, ERP, third-party APIs) adds work.
- **Data complexity** — how much data it handles, how it’s structured, and whether it must migrate from an old system.
- **Users and scale** — a tool for a five-person team is a different build than a platform for thousands.
- **Security and compliance** — regulated data (health, financial, personal) raises the bar on how it’s built.
- **Timeline** — how fast you need it, and whether the work can be phased or must land all at once.

2. Define What You're Building

You can't budget what you can't describe. Answer these before you price anything — the clearer your answers, the tighter any estimate you get back.

Answer for your project:

- What problem does this software solve, and who uses it every day?
- What are the three or four things it absolutely must do to be worth building?
- What would be nice to have, but could wait for a later phase?
- What existing systems must it talk to on day one?
- Roughly how many people will use it, inside or outside your company?
- Does it handle sensitive or regulated data?
- Is there a hard deadline — and what happens if it slips?

3. Buy Capacity, or Buy a Deliverable?

There are two honest ways to pay for custom software, and the right one depends on how defined your project is.

A monthly plan (ongoing capacity):

You buy a steady amount of weekly development capacity — a senior developer plus supervised AI development capacity — for one flat monthly fee, and you can scale the plan up or down as your roadmap changes. This fits an evolving product, a roadmap that isn't fully drawn, or a build you want to start now and shape as you go. QOS plans run from **\$4,875/mo**, month-to-month or 12-month (save 10%).

A fixed-scope project (a defined deliverable):

You buy a specific, well-bounded deliverable for a single quoted price. This fits a project with clear edges and a fixed end — a defined tool, a rebuild with a known target, or an idea you're validating before committing to a plan.

4. Match Your Build to a Plan

Once you know the size of your build, matching it to a monthly plan is simple. Use this as a starting point, not a rule — you can move between plans as the work changes.

If your build is...	A good starting plan
A first product, a focused tool, or one clear project	Build — \$4,875/mo
An active roadmap with steady feature work	Grow — \$9,750/mo (most popular)
Multiple workstreams shipping in parallel	Scale — \$17,050/mo

Every plan includes the same commitments: a senior developer directing the work, supervised AI development capacity, senior code review, QA on every release, our standard AI development model, and full ownership of your code and IP. Commit to 12 months and each price drops 10%.

5. Your Budget Worksheet

Fill this in for your project. Bring it to your first conversation and any partner can give you a straight answer instead of a guess.

Line item	Your project
The problem this software solves	
Must-have features (the 3–4 essentials)	
Nice-to-have features (phase two)	
Systems it must integrate with	
Number and type of users	
Sensitive / regulated data? (Y/N — which)	
Target launch or deadline	
Monthly budget range you can commit	
Internal owner / decision-maker	
Best-fit plan (Build / Grow / Scale / fixed-scope)	



6. Don't Forget the Cost of Running It

The build is one line; running the software is another. Budget honestly for what lives outside the development plan so nothing surprises you after launch.

- **Hosting and infrastructure** — where the software runs, billed by your provider.
- **Third-party services** — any paid APIs, licenses, or subscriptions the software depends on.
- **Ongoing maintenance** — updates, fixes, and improvements after launch (a monthly plan covers this while it's active).
- **Internal time** — your team's hours for testing, feedback, and rollout.

Because you own the code and the documentation on every QOS plan, none of this locks you in — you can run, move, or extend your software however you choose.

Next Step

Fill in the worksheet above, then bring it to a scoping call. We'll help you right-size the scope, pick the plan that fits, and give you a straight monthly number — before anyone talks contracts. Talk to **QOS Software**, the custom software development company in the QOS family, building since 2007. Call **877.800.7672** or visit **qossoftware.com**.