EGM

EGM Family Holdings Ltd

Do not build

Most businesses that ask us for software do not need software built. They need a product that already exists, a process written down, or a spreadsheet done properly by one person. This test takes three minutes. It will tell most people not to hire us, and it will tell a few people what to ask us.

A THREE-MINUTE TEST · SEPTEMBER 2026

Tick one answer per question. Each answer carries a word: **build**, **buy**, **configure** or **wait**, and a weight of 1 or 2. Count the weights for each word at the end; the verdicts are on the back. The same test runs at egmfamilyholdings.com/do-not-build, where the count is done for you and nothing is stored.

1 Is there a product for this already?

Somewhere, a product exists that does most of what you want, is used by many businesses like yours, and costs a monthly fee. Have you looked?

- ☐ Yes, and none of them fit how we work. — BUILD 1
- ☐ Yes, and one fits well enough. — BUY 2
- ☐ No, I have not looked. — WAIT 1

2 Is the way you do this stable?

- ☐ It has been the same for two years or more. — BUILD 1
- ☐ It changes every few months. — WAIT 2

3 Is the problem particular to you?

- ☐ Most businesses in our trade have this problem in the same form. — BUY 1
- ☐ It is specific to how we run, and we run this way for a reason. — BUILD 1

4 Would a well-built spreadsheet, kept by one person, solve it for the next two years?

- ☐ Probably, if someone owned it. — CONFIGURE 2
- ☐ No; the volume, the number of people or the errors are past that. — BUILD 1

5 What does the problem cost?

Count the hours a week spent re-keying, chasing and correcting, the money collected late, and the mistakes that reach customers.

- ☐ Less than one person-day a week, and no lost money to speak of. — WAIT 2
- ☐ More than that, and it is growing. — BUILD 1

6 Do the people who would use it agree what it should do?

- ☐ Yes, and it is written down. — BUILD 1
- ☐ Yes, in conversation. — WAIT 1
- ☐ No. — WAIT 2

7 Does it need to talk to systems you already have?

Your accounts package, a booking system, a management information system, a bank feed.

- ☐ Yes, and no product we have found does that with those systems. — BUILD 2
- ☐ Yes, and a product can. — BUY 1
- ☐ No. — CONFIGURE 1

8 Do you need to own it?

Your own copy of the code, no monthly fee, data that stays on your premises, no supplier who can switch it off.

- ☐ Yes, for a reason we can state. — BUILD 2
- ☐ It would be nice. — BUY 1
- ☐ No. — BUY 1

9 Is there someone in the business who will run it after it is handed over?

- ☐ Yes, a named person, and it is part of their job. — BUILD 1
- ☐ Not yet. — WAIT 2

10 Can you say what changes on Monday morning, in one sentence?

- ☐ Yes. — BUILD 1
- ☐ Not yet. — WAIT 2

The count. Add the weights for each word. The highest count gives the verdict. A tie between build and anything else goes to the other.

Build ☐ Buy ☐ Configure ☐ Wait ☐

The verdicts

Buy.

A product already does most of this, for businesses like yours, for a monthly fee. Buy it, configure it properly, and put one person in charge of it. If you would like a second opinion on which one, the twelve questions we publish for choosing a supplier apply to products too. We do not sell products and we will not build you one.

Configure what you have.

The problem is real and it is not yet a software problem. A spreadsheet built once, properly, with one owner, will hold this for a year or two, and the process you write down in order to build it will tell you what the software should do if you ever need it. If you want that spreadsheet built and documented, ask; it is a day's work, not a project.

Wait.

Something is not settled: the process, the agreement between the people who will use it, or the sentence that says what changes on Monday. Software built now will be built on the wrong thing. Write the process down, get the people to agree it, and take the test again in three months.

Build.

The problem is stable, particular to how you work, costs more than it should, needs to talk to what you already have, and you need to own the result. That is the case for building. Ask us. We will want the answers to these ten questions in writing, and a fixed fee follows from them.

Published by EGM Family Holdings Ltd.