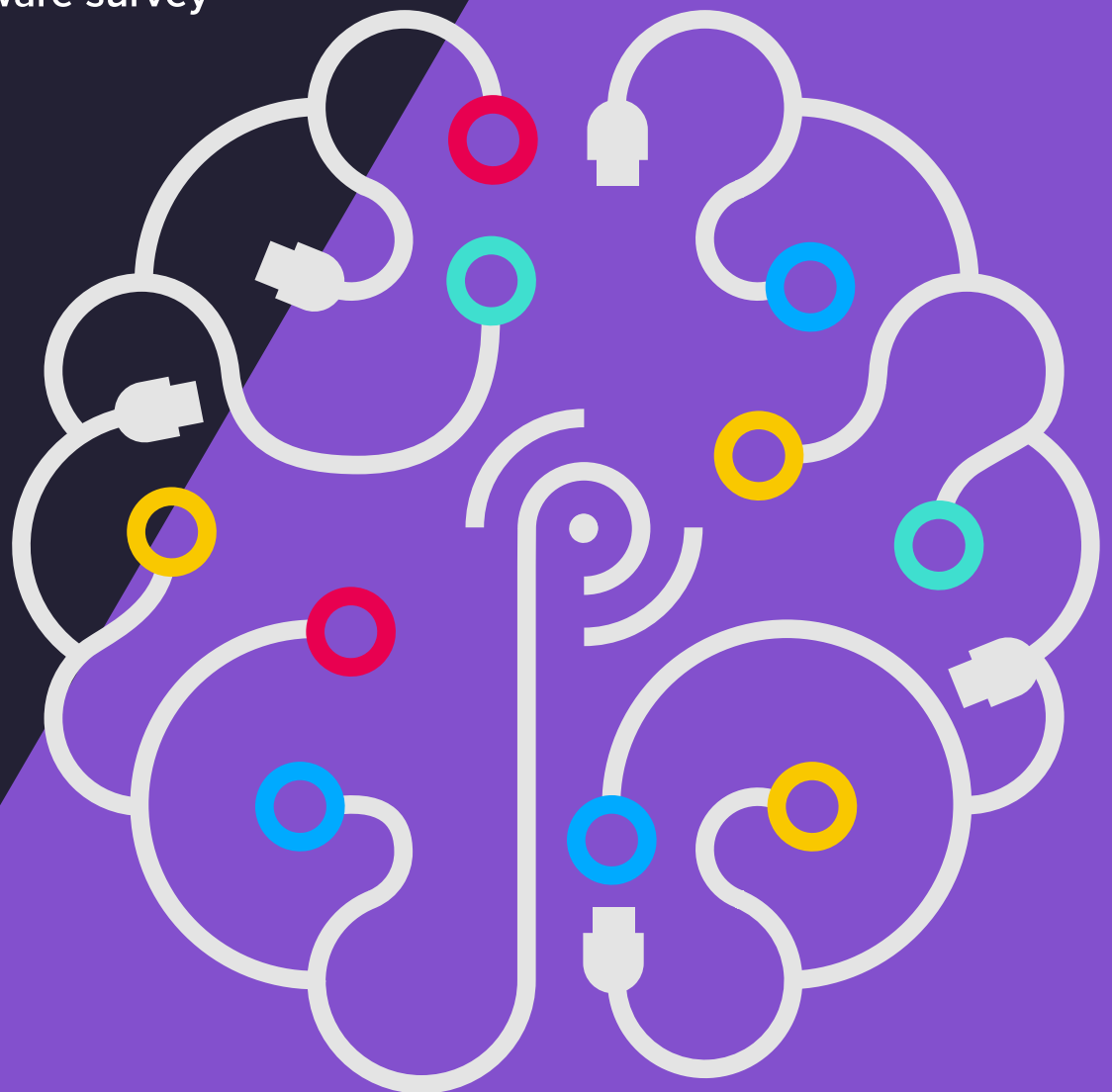# propel
Tech made possible

2025 guide to the future potential of software development

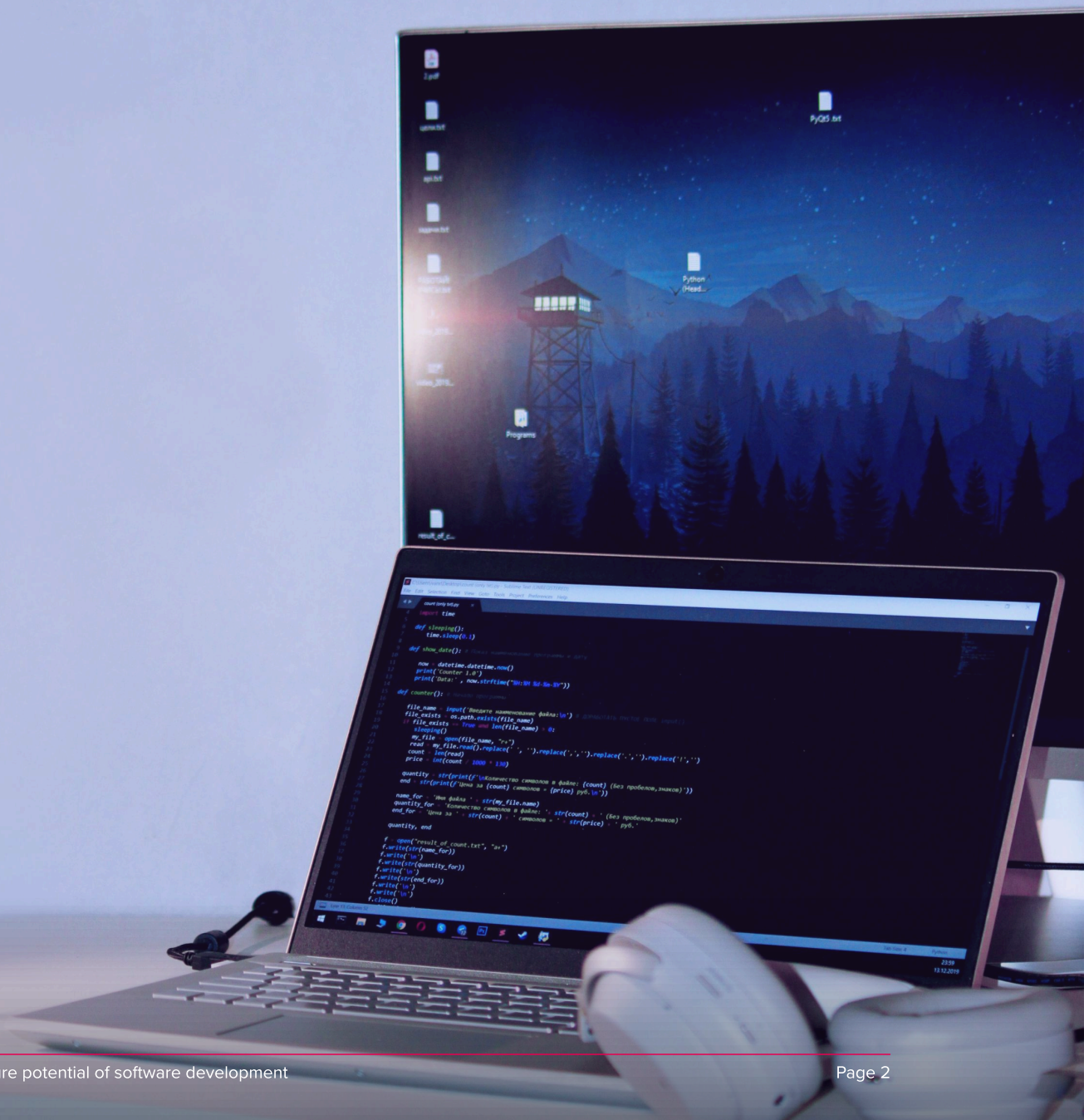**Discover key findings from our annual future software survey**

Software development continues to shape every aspect of business and modern life. As technology changes rapidly, so too do expectations about the impact it should have on the world. With so much ethical debate around AI, software and the risks of cyber security never far away understanding this shifting landscape is key to ensuring software remains a force for positive change.

"In the future, every company will become a software company."
Bill Gates, Co-founder of Microsoft

At Propel Tech, we specialise in bespoke software development, with a deep belief in its potential to transform businesses and society. In 2023, we launched a nationwide survey to understand the role people wanted software to play in the next decade. The response was overwhelming, with over 800 participants offering their insights from across the globe, revealing a diverse set of aspirations for bespoke software. The results showed a clear demand for technology to address pressing issues in business, the workplace, and the world.
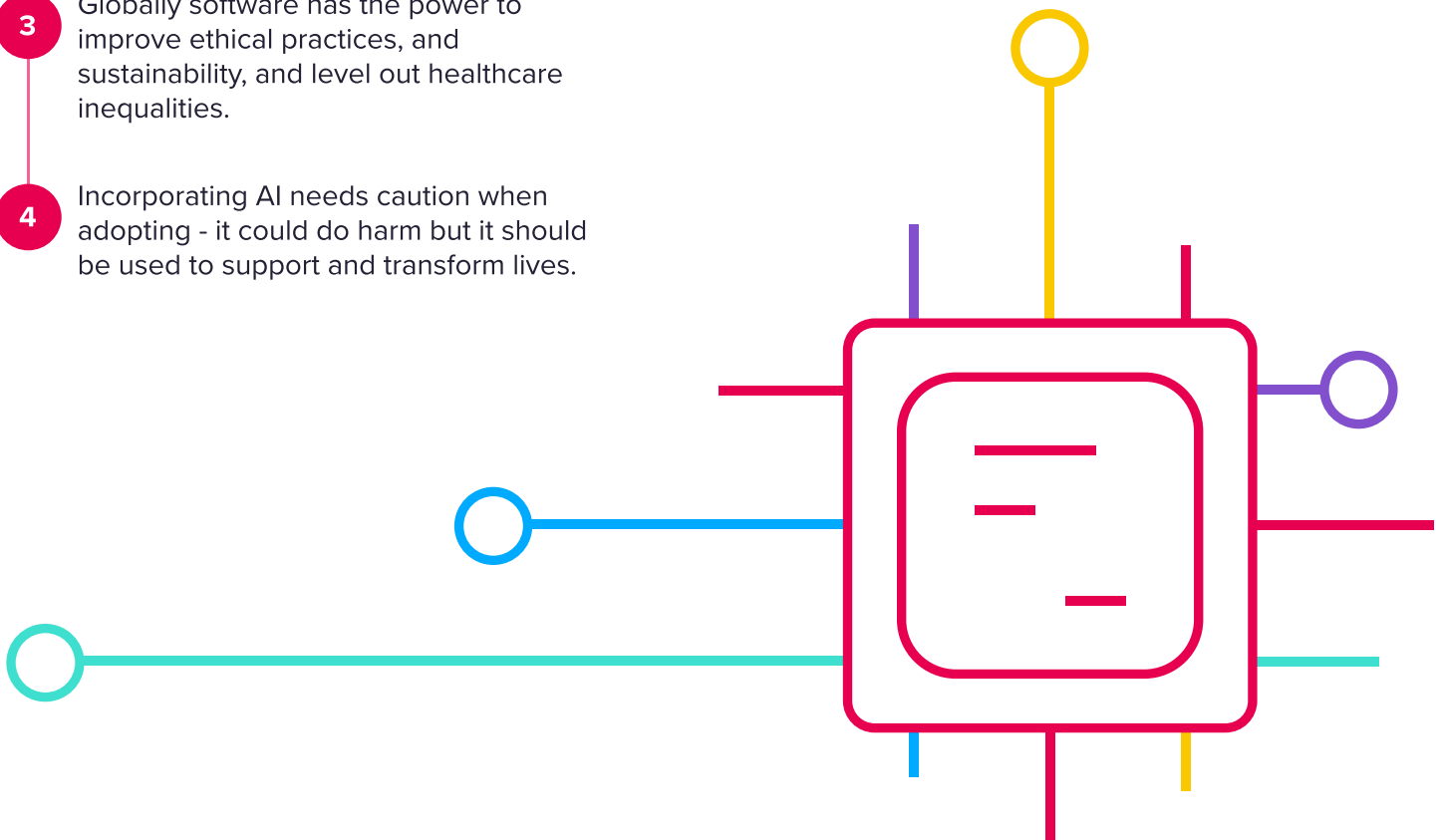
In this guide:

A recap on last years key themes:

From the 23/24 survey, four central software and AI themes emerged:

1 Bespoke software can improve individuals working relationships, supporting better well-being, collaboration, and problem-solving.

2 Software should create efficiency, and revenue growth, and improve decision-making in business.

3 Globally software has the power to improve ethical practices, and sustainability, and level out healthcare inequalities.

4 Incorporating AI needs caution when adopting - it could do harm but it should be used to support and transform lives.

"While technology is important, it's what we do with it that truly matters."

Muhammad Yunus

Now, in 2025, we have conducted our second survey to see how opinions have shifted
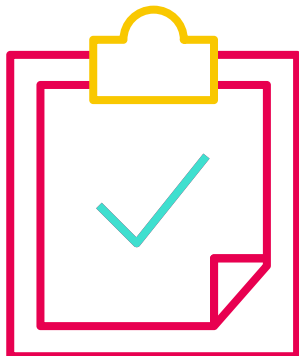
The key question we posed remained simple yet profound:

"If software could improve and change your business... or even the world... over the next 10 years... what would you like it to do?"

To add depth and greater understanding, we broke this question into three areas;

1) World issues

2) Business issues

3) Individual employees' issues

Each area suggests 10 key aspects that bespoke software could play a role in and these considered aspects such as; improving global ethical practices, sustainability, healthcare inequalities, global wealth, efficiency, corporate decision-making, employee wellbeing, problem-solving.

Propel Tech founder and director David Ritchie comments

"The results from our second survey confirmed that the future of software lies in its ability to not only enhance business performance but to solve human problems, and make a meaningful impact on society and the planet.

By staying true to our mission to "make tech possible," we aim to always put people at the centre of our software development approach, and it's heartening to see that our view that software can solve not just business but global problems is also widely held across different sectors, what's interesting about this year's survey is the shift towards support decision making and supporting wellbeing and health equalities."

How have priorities changed?

With fresh insights from our 2025 survey, we can compare previous findings with this year's results to see where attitudes have evolved and new challenges have emerged.

The Propel Tech bespoke software wishlist: then vs. now

Top 12 areas businesses want software to improve (2025 vs. 2024)

Ranking	2024 Priorities	2025 Priorities	Change
1	Increase operational efficiency and cost savings	Enable better decision-making through analytics	Shift
2	Enhance employee productivity and collaboration	Improve treatment of global health issues	Shift
3	Improve employee well-being and work-life balance	Improve employee well-being and work-life balance	No change
4	Boost revenue and market competitiveness	Enhance data security and privacy	Shift
5	Advance social responsibility and ethical practices	Provide better training and developmen	Shift
6	Improve economic opportunity	Advance social responsibility and ethical practices	Shift
7	Improve treatment of global health issues	Increase free thinking and problem-solving	Shift
8	Enhance education and inclusivity	Boost revenue and market competitiveness	Shift
9	Enhance data security and privacy	Improve economic opportunity	Shift
10	Streamline repetitive tasks	Enhance education and inclusivity	Shift
11	Provide better training and development	Increase operational efficiency and cost savings	Shift
12	Enable better decision-making through analytics	Streamline repetitive tasks	Shift

The shift in priorities reveals a significant shift in focus for bespoke software from 2024 to 2025, with a growing emphasis on its role to support and improve **global health**, **social responsibility**, and **ethical practices**. While operational efficiency and **cost savings** remain important, the focus is shifting towards utilising **analytics** to **improve decision-making processes**. As organisations prioritise **data-driven insights**, **bespoke software can help create solutions that support better decision-making**, **particularly for** respondents in sectors like healthcare, where **improving treatment** and response to global health issues is crucial.

At the same time, **employee well-being** and **work-life balance** became an even greater priority for software, and there's a notable shift toward software being tasked to enhance **education** and **inclusivity**. Bespoke software development should increasingly focus on creating platforms that support diverse learning needs and enable adaptive training systems.

Moreover, respondents were clear in their belief that bespoke software can help **foster ethical practices by integrating inclusivity and social responsibility** into training modules, ensuring these values are embedded in everyday business practices.

The shifts in respondents' views also highlight the need for technology that drives **innovation** and addresses **global health challenges**. As companies focus on enhancing **data security** and **privacy**, bespoke software solutions can play a role in safeguarding sensitive information. Additionally, the trend toward automation and streamlining repetitive tasks now includes empowering creativity and problem-solving capabilities, making software an essential tool in driving global health progress and fostering ethical innovation within organisations.

"Technology, like art, is a soaring exercise of the human imagination."

Daniel Bell

Let's get into the data...

How should bespoke software improve the employee experience?

Top 4 priorities for employee software solutions (2025 vs. 2024)

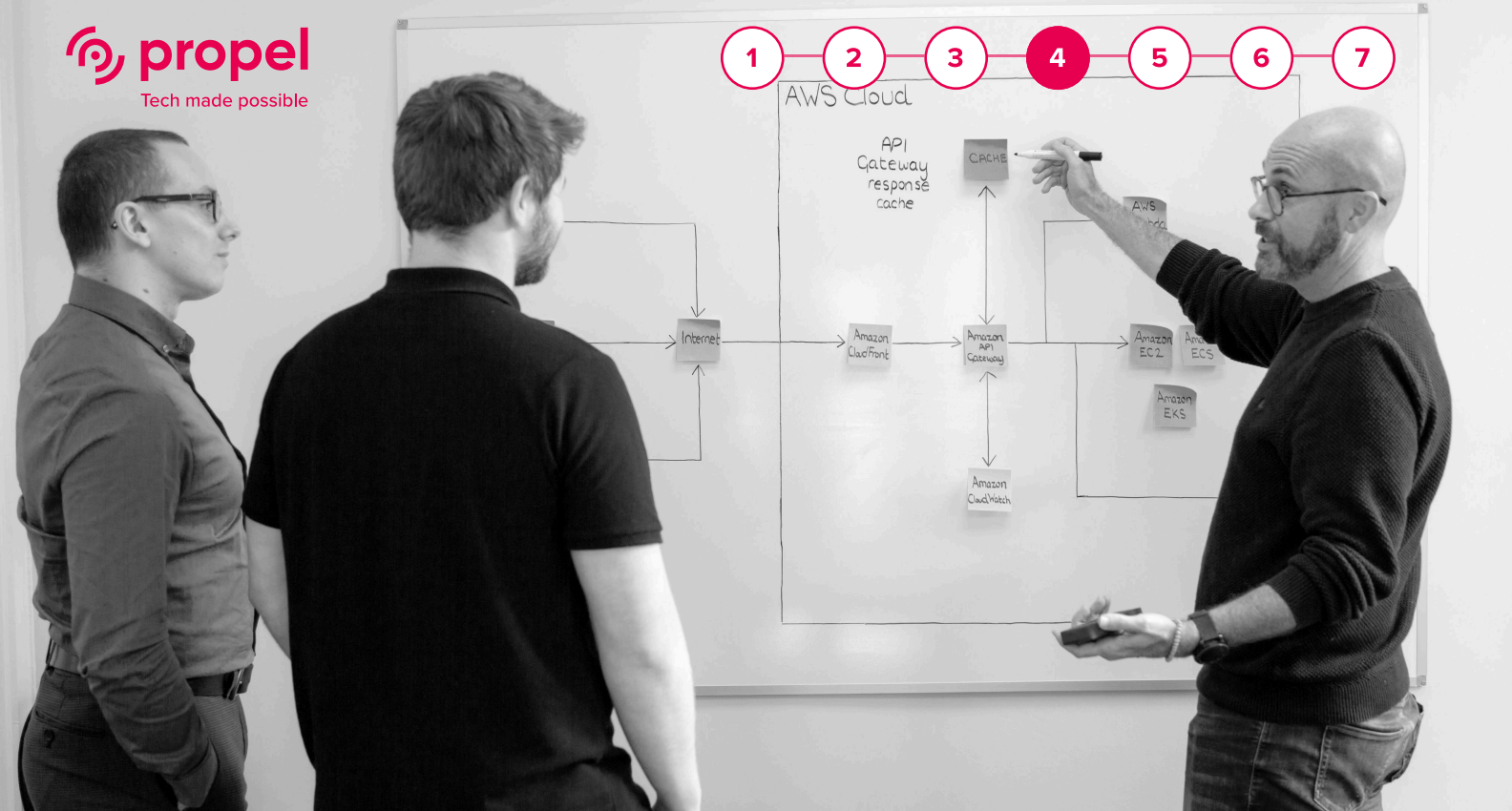| Priority	2024	2025	Change
1	Enhance employee productivity and collaboration	Improve employee well-being and work-life balance	Shift +
2	Improve employee well-being and work-life balance	Provide better training and development	Shift +
3	Streamline repetitive tasks	Increase free thinking and problem-solving	Shift -
4	Provide better training and development	Streamline repetitive tasks	Shift -

Key takeaways:

Wellbeing and work life balance have overtaken productivity and collaboration, which has dropped out of the top 4. As we increasingly prioritise wellbeing and work-life balance, the focus has shifted away from software being used to enhance constant productivity and collaboration, allowing individuals more flexibility and autonomy to manage their personal and professional lives without the pressure of being constantly connected or productive.

Mirroring this sentiment, respondents also prioritised software's role in enhancing training and supporting the streamlining of repetitive tasks, so software enabling and supporting employees, not monitoring or tracking performance.

"Science is beginning to catch up with global health problems."

Bill Gates

Examples of bespoke software improving employee experiences:

Slack:

This collaboration software has been tailored for workplaces to enhance communication and productivity.
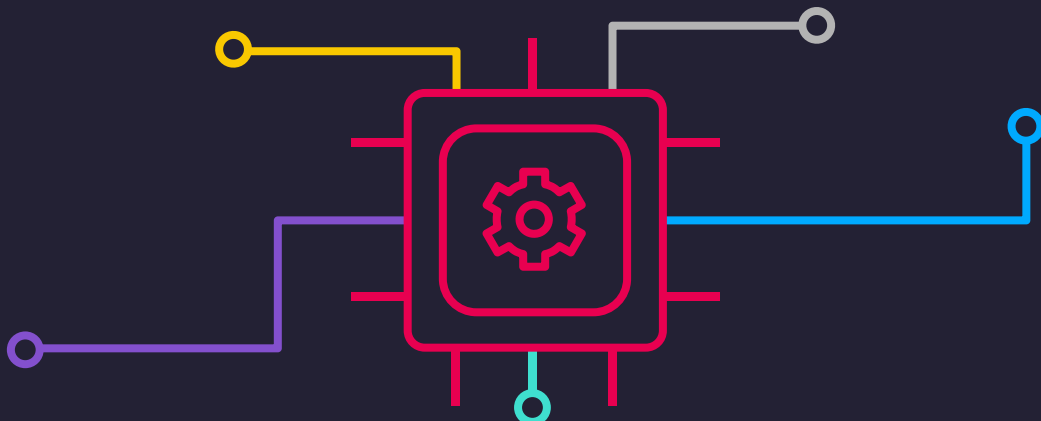
Headspace for work:

A bespoke corporate wellness platform designed to improve employee well-being and mental health.

Trello:

Customised workflow automation helping teams to manage projects better and increase efficiency.

How should bespoke software improve business in the future?

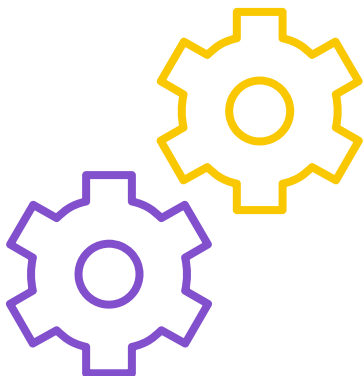**Top 4 business priorities for software (2025 vs. 2024)**

Priority	2024	2025	Change
1	Boost revenue and market competitiveness	Enable better decision-making through analytics	Shift +
2	Enable better decision-making through analytics	Enhance data security and privacy	Shift +
3	Enhance data security and privacy	Boost revenue and market competitiveness	Shift -
4	Improve creativity and NPD	Increase operational efficiency and cost savings	New Entrant

Key takeaways:

Boosting revenue seems less of a priority for technology in 2025, and the focus has shifted to technology's ability to enhance better decision making via analytics.

Increasing operational efficiency has become a focus for bespoke software and looks set to be a continued theme in 2025.

Interesting software's ability to deliver creatively or add to NDP has dropped from the top 4 wishlist priorities in 2025. Software enhances creativity and NPD by making processes more efficient, reducing costs, improving collaboration, and enabling innovation. Whether it's for designing a new product or generating creative content, software is an essential driver of modern creative and development processes.

> **"Software is eating the world."**
>
> Marc Andreessen, Co-founder of Netscape

Examples of bespoke software transforming business:

SAP AI-powered Analytics:

Helping businesses make data-driven decisions.

Amazon's Personalised Recommendation Engine:

Boosting e-commerce revenues by tailoring customer experiences.
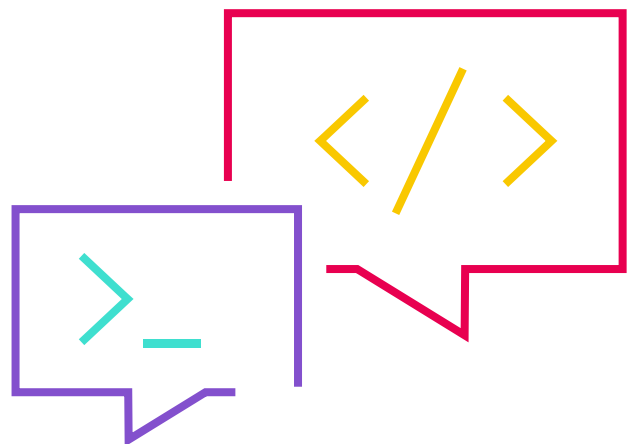
Tesla's Auto-Pilot Software:

Custom-built software with integrated AI for self-driving and operational efficiency.

Supply Chain Optimisation:

ERP (Enterprise Resource Planning) software streamlines manufacturing, reducing waste and speeding up production.

Digital Twin Technology:

BMW creates virtual replicas of manufacturing plants to simulate production before implementation.

How should bespoke software improve the world?

Top 4 global priorities for software (2025 vs. 2024)

Priority	2024	2025	Change
1	Advance social responsibility and ethical practices	Improve treatment of global health issues	Shift
2	Enhance education and inclusivity	Advance social responsibility and ethical practices	Shift
3	Improve economic opportunity	Improve economic opportunity	No change
4	Improve treatment of global health issues	Enhance education and inclusivity	Shift

Key takeaways:

Global health issues have shifted to the number 1 concern spot from 4th position, highlighting and increasing concern for world health. Digital health can help make health systems more efficient and sustainable, enabling them to deliver good quality, affordable and equitable care.

While ethical practices, sustainability, and social responsibility have moved down into second place. While we face a climate crisis and scope three emissions are being targeted across the supply chain, bespoke software can significantly impact sustainability, as poorly designed or inefficient software can lead to increased energy consumption through its reliance on powerful hardware, data centres, and network infrastructure, ultimately contributing to a larger carbon footprint; conversely, well-designed software can promote sustainability by optimising processes, reducing energy usage, and enabling solutions for environmental challenges.

"The software that powers our world must be built responsibly and ethically."

Satya Nadella, CEO of Microsoft

Examples of bespoke software solving global challenges:
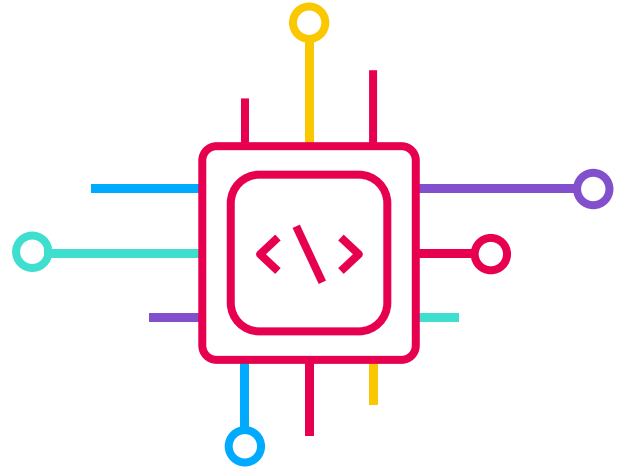
IBM Watson for Healthcare:

AI-driven solutions addressing healthcare inequalities worldwide.

Too Good to Go:

A custom platform reducing food waste and promoting sustainability.

Google's Project Sunroof:

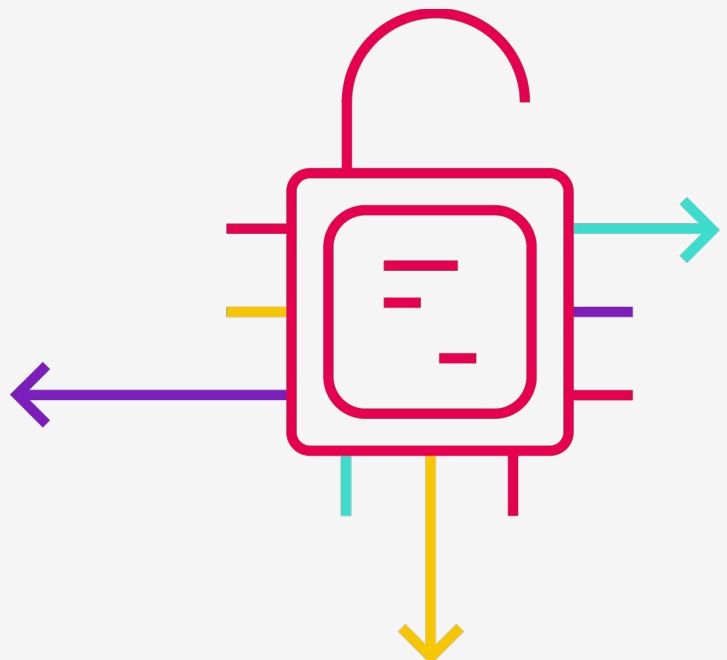Helping households transition to solar energy efficiently.

The power of bespoke software in problem-solving

Bespoke software solves problems by being custom-designed and developed to precisely fit the unique needs of a specific organisation or user, addressing their particular pain points and workflows.

Unlike off-the-shelf software, which might not fully align with all required functionalities, bespoke solutions improve efficiency, productivity, and problem-solving capabilities.

Key benefits of bespoke software:

1 **Tailored functionality:**

Includes only the necessary features, eliminating unnecessary complexity.

2 **Integration with existing systems:**

Seamlessly works with current workflows and minimises data redundancy.

3 **Scalability:**

Can evolve alongside a business, adding new features as needed.

4 **Customisation for specific users:**

Enhances user experience and productivity.

5 **Enhanced security:**

Designed with robust security measures tailored to specific needs.

Propelling software forward:

The Propel Tech Wishlist Survey for 2025 provides an insightful comparison of changing attitudes towards bespoke software development while some priorities remain unchanged.

The future potential of software development is evolving rapidly, with bespoke software increasingly seen as a powerful tool to address both business and global challenges.

As organisations shift priorities in 2025, there's a growing focus on the ability of bespoke software to:

- Enable better decision-making through analytics,
- Improve global health outcomes,
- Foster social responsibility
- Improve health and wellbeing.

Bespoke software solutions are becoming more advanced and AI is being integrated as standard in many circumstances.

At the same time, bespoke software development plays a crucial role in employee well-being and work-life balance, enabling systems that allow for greater flexibility, autonomy, and inclusivity in the workplace.

At Propel Tech, we are deeply committed to utilising our expertise in bespoke software development to drive positive change. Our human-centric approach ensures that we create solutions that prioritise the well-being of individuals and the environment.

> "Bespoke software should solve human problems, and essentially, it should support organisations in navigating change and planning for the future."
>
> Andrew Brown - Propel Tech

Through our ReTech initiative, we are actively advancing the role of technology in improving equality, making a meaningful impact in education and healthcare. Additionally, our dedication to sustainability is reflected in our green initiatives, aiming to reduce the environmental footprint of our software solutions. We also actively support employee well-being by offering access to the Headspace app, ensuring that our team has the tools they need for mental health and stress management.

Find out more about our future changing bespoke software services - talk to us today.

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