



HOW TO NOT GET RIPPED OFF BY WEB DEVELOPERS

PEOPLE

PROCESSES

TECHNOLOGY

THE PROBLEM

HOW TO NOT GET RIPPED OFF BY WEB DEVELOPERS

Far too many web application development projects fail. Why? A variety of reasons, including unrealistic expectations, changing markets, unclear objectives, missing processes, and shady development firms. After two decades in the trenches of software development, we've seen projects that were wildly successful and others that were miserable failures. And those lessons are what we are here to share. We invite you to explore our tips on how to not get ripped off by web application developers...



TIP #1

DO YOUR HOMEWORK

Studies show that less than one third of all software projects succeed. The more you understand how web application development works, the more likely you'll have a good outcome with your project. Trusting a "black box" is risky at best, so if you can learn the basics, you'll mitigate risk of getting ripped off. Key topics to understand include:

- Project Requirements
- Project Scope
- Project Management
- Technology Stack
- Future Plans

If you understand how software development works, you'll be able to make smart decisions and avoid the traps that lead to failure of so many projects.



TIP #2

BEWARE OF BAIT & SWITCH PRICING

One of the key factors in failed software development work is cost overruns. No developer has an accurate crystal ball, but some are actually devious enough to offer a sweetheart deal, knowing that you'll sign up but face additional fees as the project gets going. Put simply, many application developers promise a low fee to win the work, misleading the client into ultimately throwing good money after bad...

Odds are that if it sounds too good to be true, it probably is. Get more than one estimate (3-4 if possible) so you can understand the approaches used for budgeting your project. A reputable developer will "show their work" on how they arrived at the estimate. One other thought is that you get what you pay for. Yes, some outsourcing shops overcharge and some are fair - but a low estimate may indicate what you're really getting.



TIP #3

- **GOOD**
- **FAST**
- **CHEAP**

{Pick any 2}

The "iron triangle" of software development has been unwavering over the years. Set realistic goals for your project in terms of scope, timeline and budget. As a corollary to #2, if you're getting good, fast, and cheap in a vendor's estimate, it's probably bait & switch or a recipe for failure.



TIP #4

PROCESS

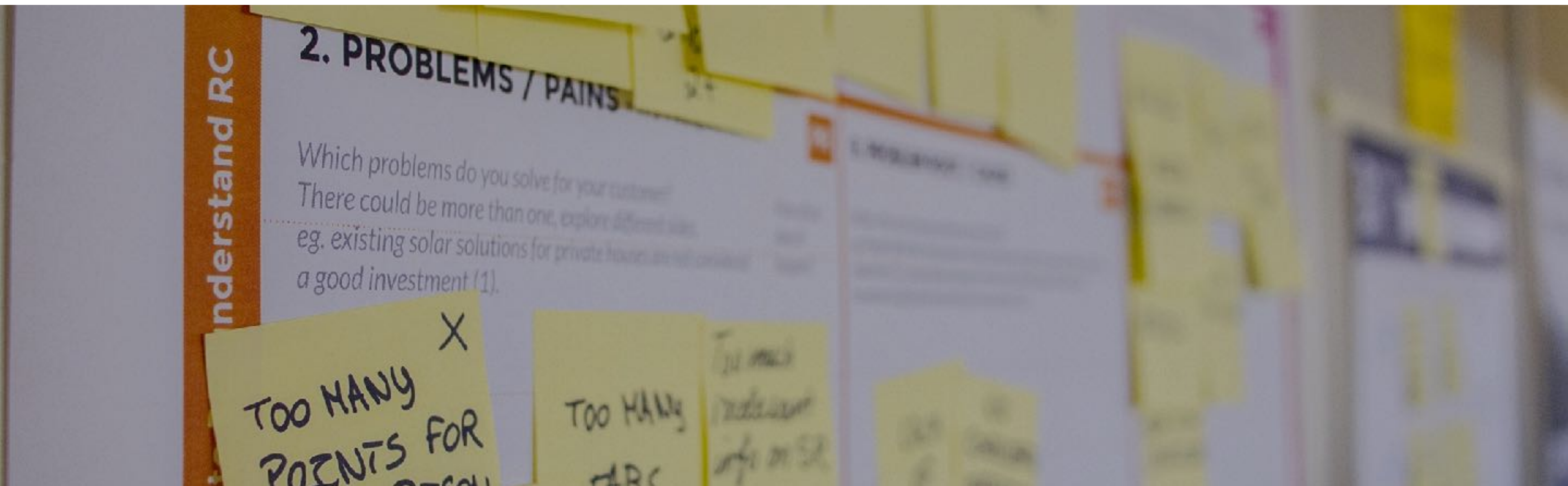


PRODUCT

When evaluating vendors, ask about their processes.

- How do they staff their team?
- What methodologies do they use for project management (e.g., agile, waterfall or a hybrid)?
- How will they communicate project updates with you?
- How do they manage change requests?
- How do they test?

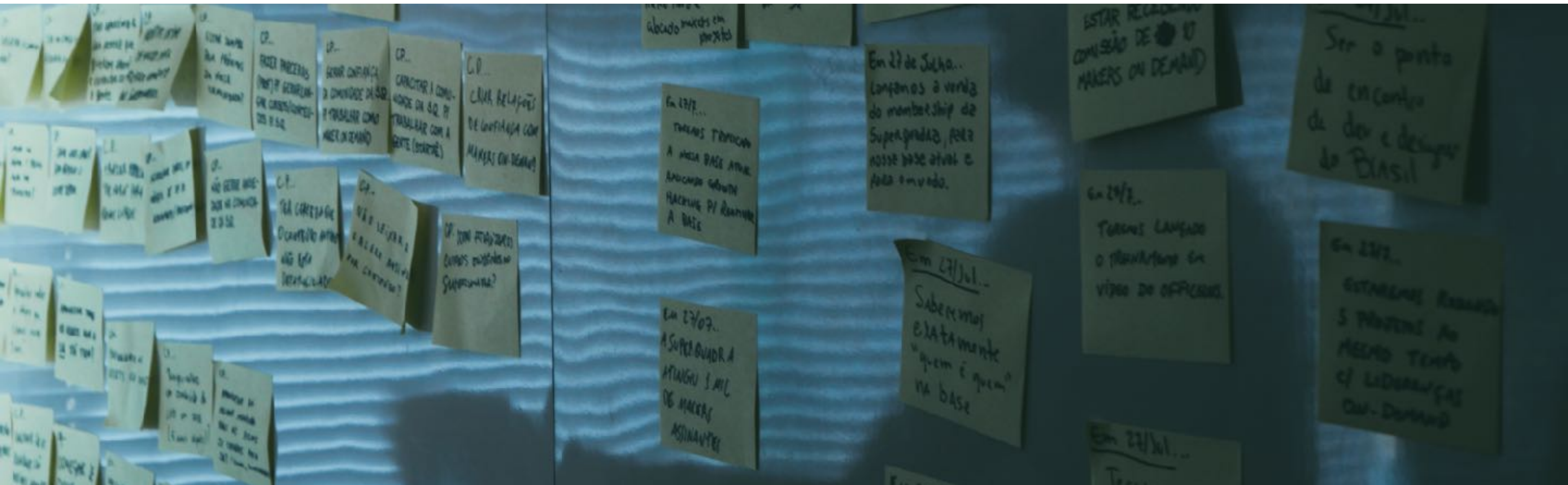
The more of these answers that sound well thought out, the more likely the vendor can deliver a quality product. This scenario is one where you DO want to know how the sausage is made!



TIP #5

PLAN YOUR PRODUCT STRATEGY

Building on the lessons learned in #1, YOU are responsible for explaining your product strategy to vendors. What do you need now? What will you need in the next quarter or next year? Don't dive into application development without a roadmap - or you will waste significant time and money. Document everything with words and images (or have your vendor do so). You'll undoubtedly innovate over time too.



TIP #6

INVEST IN USER EXPERIENCE

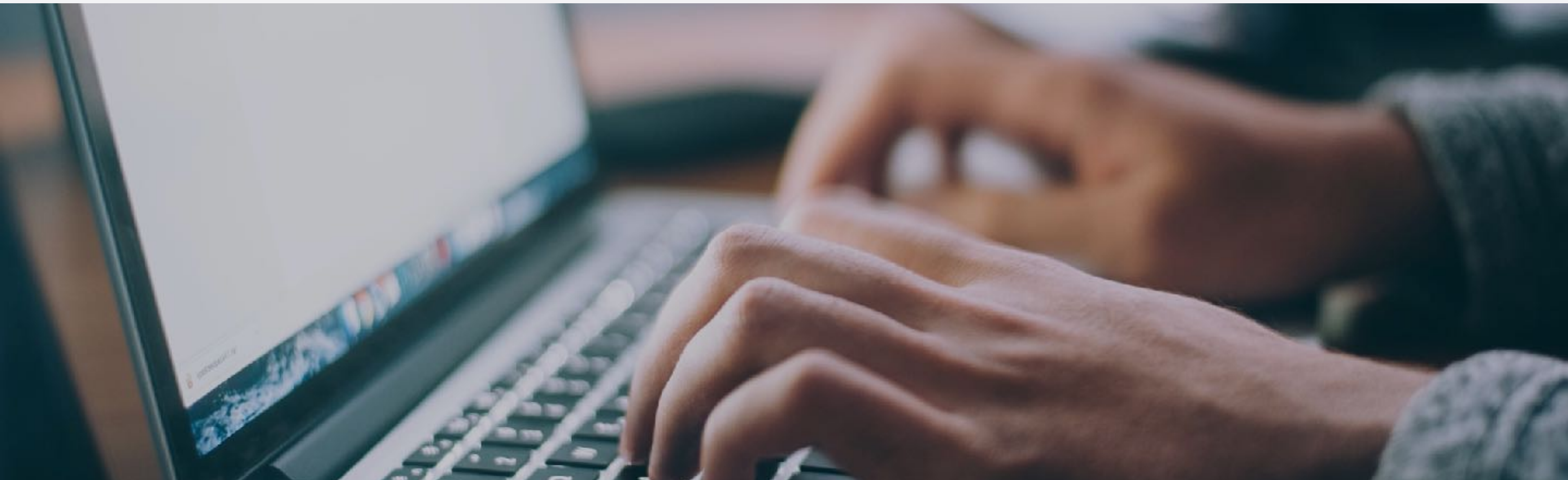
Most applications fail because of the user interface or user experience. Ask for samples of previous project work to see if the vendor makes attractive, functional systems.



TIP #7

TEST TEST TEST

Touched on briefly in #4 is the concept of testing. Drill down to understand if the vendor has a robust testing method. In the end, you'll get higher quality, easier to use applications. Yes, bugs will happen, but you want to minimize them by having a repeatable, adaptive test plan. And make sure there are appropriate resources (time & money) allocated for testing and iterating.



TIP #8

EMBRACE CHANGE

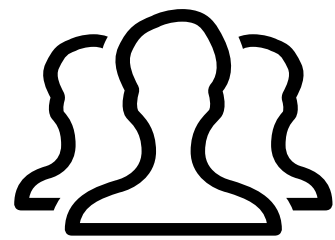
First, software is never done. Second, software is never 100% right. Requirements are dynamic based on business needs, markets, users, and technology. Your plans should include resources to review deliveries, verify requirements are met, and define changes over time. Every project faces change. In addition, software development itself is not predictable.



BEST PRACTICES

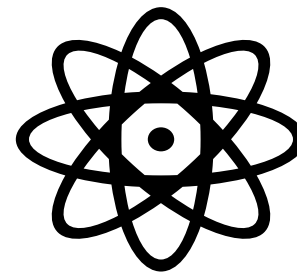
EFFECTIVE APPLICATION DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

An effective software development strategy should focus on three key areas...



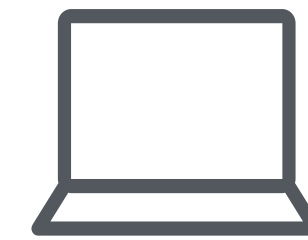
PEOPLE

Whether you have dedicated in-house IT staff or use outside support, you need to support current and future needs. Identify stakeholders and include them in decision-making.



PROCESSES

Designing and maintaining efficient and effective processes is essential to your software development. Applications and user demand must match delivery expectations and company goals.



TECHNOLOGY

You'll need to determine what existing technology is worth keeping, what needs to be left behind, and what needs to be built.

APPLICATION DEVELOPMENT

APPLICATION DEVELOPMENT

We specialize in building complex custom applications or in migrating legacy applications to the web.

We offer full lifecycle development services leveraging leading technologies. We deliver fast, scalable, manageable state-of-the-art applications.

We've delivered over 800 successful, custom-tailored engagements..



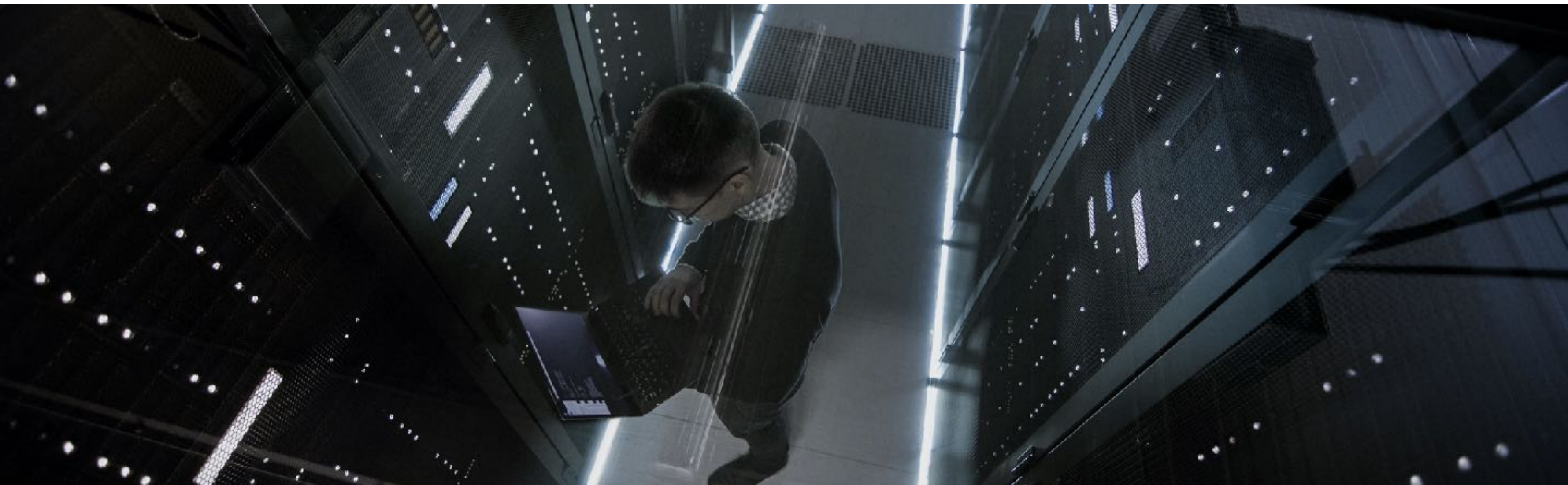


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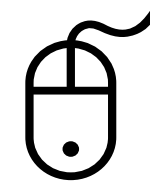
We provide fully-managed cloud hosting with boutique-style support, world-class cloud management tools, consulting services and application development. Since 2001, Webapper has provided a true one-stop shop consulting experience for customers with web-based applications. We’ve worked on many of the largest, high traffic complex systems in this space.





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