

# Week 8 Essay Question

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CSE-682 SOFTWARE ENGINEERING

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## Question

A small company has developed a specialized product that it configures specially for each customer. New customers usually have specific requirements to be incorporated into their system, and they pay for these to be developed. The company has an opportunity to bid for a new contract, which would more than double its customer base. The new customer also wishes to have some involvement in the configuration of the system. Explain why, in these circumstances, it might be a good idea for the company owning the software to make it open source.

It would be a great idea for the company selling the software to make it open-source. Instead of custom designing each application for every customer, sell the source code along with a non-disclosure agreement for a smaller fee. The customer base would rapidly increase as the customers would be able to tailor their applications to their needs. The software company would not be bogged down with the work of designing every application, so the throughput would be much higher by selling an open-source license.

Software development and support is a time consuming and expensive process that closely involves the customer. Selling custom software makes sense for larger software companies that can maintain and support their customer base. However, smaller software companies may benefit from selling open-source software, as they would not be able to support a large customer base. The only pitfall of selling open-source software is if it were leaked to the public. To prevent this from happening, each customer would sign an NDA included in their open-source license.