

Should you build a custom AI assistant?

A 5-minute decision checklist and a rough cost guide. The build cost is mostly integrations and guardrails, not the AI itself.

1

Do you actually need custom?

tick what's true

☐ You get a steady stream of repetitive questions or requests.
 ☐ Your team spends hours on work a machine could draft.
 ☐ You need answers available 24/7.
 ☐ You have your own knowledge base, docs or playbooks.
 ☐ You want actions taken, not just answers.

Two or more ticks? A custom build is worth pricing out.

2

Which one are you?

2026 ballpark, roughly

Focused assistant (MVP)

One job, grounded in your docs, read-only, simple interface. A first version.

≈ \$6,000–\$15,000

Advanced / agentic

Takes actions across systems, multi-step workflows, guardrails. A full build.

≈ \$18,000–\$25,000+

3

What moves the number

Integrations	Connecting to your systems is where the real hours go — not the model.
Grounding data	Getting your docs clean and searchable is most of a read-only assistant.
Guardrails	Evaluation, limits and safety add ~15–30% — and make it trustworthy.
Actions vs answers	An assistant that only answers is cheap; one that acts is a different project.
Runtime	Usually a few hundred dollars a month — cheap next to the build.

4

How we de-risk your project

☐ **You own code & IP**
From day one — no lock-in.
 ☐ **Fixed-scope phase one**
A defined MVP with a fixed price and date.

☐ **Demo every sprint**
You see progress, not promises.
 ☐ **Start small, expand**
Later phases are funded by the results of the first.

Get a free, no-obligation estimate

A clear scope, timeline and price range within 1 business day. No pitch, no pressure.

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