What is Project Management Software?

Your ultimate guide for picking the right project management software.

What is Project Management

Project management includes the tools and techniques required to deliver your projects successfully.

Projects are comprised of stakeholders, their vision/goal, the resources required to achieve that goal, and management processes and tools to make sure you get there. Project management is key to this success. Project management includes the technology, methodology, and resources that enable project completion. Over time, technology and methodology have gotten incredibly sophisticated.

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What is Project Management?

Project management software helps managers control their costs and hit deadlines. It helps people deliver the projects they commit to. It even helps them track whether or not they've been paid on time and in the right amount. Project management software has many high-level bucket features. These can include:

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

Task Management

Task Assignment & Scheduling

Project Plan Template

Schedule Management

Gantt Charts

TEAM COLLABORATION

User Dashboard

File Sharing

Calendar Share

Mobile App

Access Permissions

RESOURCE MANAGEMENT

Hard & Soft Resource Allocation

Resource Scheduling

Resource Shaping

BUSINESS INTELLIGENCE

Real-Time Analytics

Expert-Built Reports

Custom Reporting

Trend Analysis & Forecasting

PROJECT ACCOUNTING

Time & Expense Tracking

Budgeted Projects & Tasks

Invoicing & Online Payments

Rate Cards

Common project management software you might use or have heard of include Gantt charts. A methodology example would be SCRUM management style. Today's tools go beyond charts and SCRUM, though. We have endless project management software tools from which to pick.

Who Uses Project Management Software?

Are you a developer? Try out the HTML to PDF API

Plenty of people use project-management software, including everyone from airplane builders to employees performing non-billable work. Some industries rely more heavily on project management software than others. Consultants, service providers, and marketing agencies commonly use project management software. Nearly anyone serving a client needs some way to estimate, track, deliver, and get paid for their services. They need tools that let them sustain high-quality work, fuel creativity, and keep clients engaged and satisfied.

Each project is a single opportunity for revenue. But it is also a chance to build lasting relationships and repeat business. Software that keeps track of the granular details can help. But consider the pros and cons of picking your project management software.

What are the Advantages of Project Management Software?

Project managers need specific tools to manage and deliver their projects on time. Traditional project management software helps these managers perform functions including managing project scope, cost, and resources. Modern collaboration software offers even more tools. These tools help reduce wasted time, such as time spent looking for files or data and time spent manually updating schedules and timetables. They need tools to share files, communicate in real time, and ensure all team players are working on one page. Some tools reduce redundancy — they consolidate systems, so that information exists in only one place. And they also avoid file redundancies, which can contribute to what some call a "versioning nightmare." In addition to mitigating the number of differing files around, project management software also ensures teams use one method to track time, tasks, expenses, other budgeting items such as invoices, and more. Having one systems allows teams to work creatively within a given framework.

Moreover, with the onset of cloud-based project management software, organizations no longer have to work in a single physical location. They can easily work as a team while dispersed

across geographies, while retaining the same access, updates, and collaboration levels. Software as a service (SaaS) project management solutions facilitate teamwork — and thus project delivery, client satisfaction, and repeat business.

Finally, software automates your processes and provides a central hub to manage resources, tasks, schedules, projects, and communication. All this information living in one system gives you a huge opportunity to run progress reports — whether daily, weekly, monthly, or quarterly. Today's advanced systems can offer real-time progress reports, so you can easily visualize and share information related to project health. This not only gives you insight into where you can adjust your resources to make smarter project-delivery decisions; it also enables you to give detailed, transparent responses to stakeholder questions.

What are the Disadvantages of Project Management Software?

Project management software has its cons too. Picking one system requires an investment, which means you need to carefully consider and determine which system will work for your unique workflows. The system you pick should be just as customizable as you need. You should consider the cost of time and possibly money to train your employees. Employee adoption of the technology you pick is critical to gain the highest return on your investment in a project management software, as well as avoid having employees not use the system out of lack of understanding its user interface and total functionality. You want your project management software to speed up processes, not create extra burdens on your team's time.

How to Compare Project Management Software

CIO.com's 7 Best Project Management Apps

of 2015

Capterra's Top Project Management Tools

Carefully consider your leading prospective systems. A typical consideration trajectory for new software might go like this:

1. Do your research. Use the above tools and similar search engine research to find your most promising project management software.

2. Schedule a demo with a prospective software provider; usually this option appears on their website.

3. Assess the full cost of software systems you want to consider. Don't forget to factor in the

hidden costs of integration, inviting clients to use your system, and training time.

4. Get your team's buy-in. These are the folks who have to use the software, so let them evaluate the product you are considering, so they can alert you to advantages and disadvantages they would know best, related to actually using the software.

5. Build relationships with the provider's staff, so you can preview the customer experience you will have once you adopt their technology. It might be important to get buy-in from your staff who will be using the software, too. If this is feasible on your time schedule, gain their input so you can consider which product they believe will work well for them, and therefore increase adoption across your organization.

Start the Conversation

If you are ready to start evaluating project management software, you can schedule a call with one of Mavenlink's representatives to discuss your organization's needs. You can also compare Mavenlink plans and pricing to see what project management software features are available. If you have any questions, we're available to answer them 24/7 by clicking the Live Chat button on the right. We look forward to working with you!

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