

How to Select the Best Project Management Software for Your Needs



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A guide with researched information

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How to Select the Best PM Software For Your Needs

A Guide with Researched Information.

Project management today is vastly different from the past

The environment in which we run projects is very different than 20 years and more ago. Innovation and digitization turned the world upside down. The internet, speed of innovation, laptops and mobile communication enabled people to run projects at any time of the day from anywhere in the world. Without fast resource management and the tools for allocating and managing resources project managers and their teams will be in jeopardy.



The problems

Teams that handle from one to multiple projects can't rely on human memory or crude paper and pencil systems to conduct project resource management.

If you push, it to the extreme your resource management spreadsheet might tell you how under-resourced or under-utilized your teams are, or even include forecasting, but does it include budget tracking, time tracking, project reporting, send staff notifications? Can a spreadsheet help to collaborate or have a built in process for requesting resources and allocating resources to projects?

And importantly, does it have a change process for when resources are moved around by the resource manager or your rebel project manager colleague?

There's hope. A growing number of resource management software and resource scheduling software tools have evolved in recent years to fix the limitation problem of resource management in Excel and actually created something better than the free resource management tools. They've created resource management software that works!

Purpose of this report

The purpose of this report is to assist you to select the best project resource management software for your conditions and needs. A third party who is not familiar with your circumstances can't do the selection on your behalf. I will describe a logical process that you can follow and also provide some critical information and sources.

The requirements

- Projects are different from ongoing management work.
- Projects are unique and are a once off endeavour with a specific start and end. We plan and execute a project according to specific life cycle phases. Project resources have to be deployed and managed according to the life cycle of the project.
- Resource planning is a discipline within project management that involves gathering the proper mix and quantity of resources required to complete a project.
- If we want to deliver projects on time and within budget, information needs to be documented, deadlines plotted, and documents shared.
- Team members need to be in continuous communication with one another.

- While a project manager might still be the person overseeing the whole project and helping to redirect resources as needed, she is not the only person using the project management application. The manager & the team will use it.
- Typically, other team members can see who is responsible for what, whether that person is on track to complete it on time, and if there are any unanswered questions about the job. That level of insight is important because it alerts people who are further down the planned chain of events of possible delays before they occur. (visibility) see progress.
- Projects have assets ranging from the project definition documentation, models and visual mock ups. People on the project team all need access to these assets, and the project management application becomes the central place where they live.
- Many project management solutions include storage space so that your team can upload files right into the workspace, where everyone on the team can see them and discuss them.
- If you are serious about managing projects, the solution is to get project management software. Project management applications are specifically designed for projects.

Project management resource software features

Here is a synopsis of the most important features offered.

1. Project planning and scheduling

Assigning tasks and responsibilities, setting priorities and deadlines.

2. Team collaboration

A project team may consist of a large number of people, each working on specific tasks and having expert knowledge in a different field.

Members frequently access each other's work in order to complete and complement their own. It is important to have organized and quick communication through multiple channels.

- **File sharing**

The best project management software includes features for file sharing, shared calendars and contact lists. Every team member can insert information into the system and others will have quick access whenever and wherever they need it.

- **Team dashboards**

Explore a software solution that enables creating team dashboards that everyone can access. You can add graphs, charts, visual metrics and key performance indicators (KPIs) to your dashboard

- **Sharing customer data**

For some project teams it is important to store and manage client data. The best project management tools aid you in doing that and let you create a customer card that you can share with other team members

3. Documentation

- **All data accessible in one place**

Have all your project information accessible in one place. Including planned and completed tasks, past and upcoming calendar events, customer data, project resources, expenses and bills sent to clients.

4. Reporting

- To successfully manage your projects, you need to be aware of the shortcomings and problems with your project that require solutions.
- The best project management software includes reporting tools that collect your previously inserted project data and enable creating customizable reports
- For example, you can get reports on your project budget, expenses, completed tasks and team members' performance. As you have already gathered a large data set to your PM tool, you can create new reports anytime and choose the parameters and information categories you'd like to include on the graph or chart.
- Reports enable to you get a quick overview of how the project is doing and you'll also notice team performance.
- Project KPI dashboard - The quickest way to keep track of your project performance is to create a project dashboard that updates the information automatically in real time. Include important metrics like planned and actual project value, schedule variance and the percentage of completed tasks.

5. Resource management

- Good project management includes a feature for resource management, outlining all the scheduled and planned resources and calculating the cost of their use. This helps to avoid over-assignments and possible conflicts for lacking resources.
- You'll instantly notice when a resource is over-used and can decide whether to limit its use or set new guidelines for its exploitation.

- As a project manager, you can manage and assign resources to specific tasks and ensure that everyone has the resources and tools to complete their tasks.

6. Managing the project budget

The larger the project, the more expenses you need to document and manage. For efficient expense management, an Excel spreadsheet is not an option

- **Budget reports** - You need a project management tool that tracks your expenses and provides quick and clear reporting on the budget performance. Good project budgeting software gives you weekly and monthly reports on your project expenses, expenditures and totals. You also notice when your project goes over budget.
- **Project budget dashboard** - Create a financial reporting dashboard and add multiple KPIs to reflect on your project progress. Add graphs and charts to your dashboard to get real time updates about your project. To share the dashboard or budget reports with team members, set up access rights, ensuring that the right people receive the data.

Project management software for small businesses

One tip-off as to whether a project management solution is better suited for small companies or large enterprises is how they charge. Project management platforms that can support enterprises typically have a per-user-per-month fee structure, while those that cater more for small businesses often charge a flat monthly rate for a set number of licenses or for unlimited licenses. And it's not that a very small business can't or shouldn't use the same software that the big players use, but sometimes it's overkill, and who wants to pay for features they don't need?

Making your selection

Small business and enterprises have very different needs, however, and it's important to find the project management tool that best fits your business.

It takes time for project team members to learn the software, and for your organization to figure out how best to use it for your projects.

Another differentiating factor is whether the project management platform has many permissions levels. Some applications have different permissions levels for executives, portfolio managers, project managers, and team members. Having such hierarchical roles can ensure that each person in the organization has the right level of access. In a very small business, where each employee wears a lot of different hats, permission levels might not be required.

You must list your requirements for the kind of application that will satisfy your resource management needs. Once you have listed your criteria look at the different alternatives available in the next section. See which application will best suit your needs and whether the payment structure is acceptable.

The software listed here is not an exhaustive list. We could list another 8 applications that will do the job well. This will give you a starting point in the selection process.

Some of the project management software systems have free versions with limited functionality. The main limitation is the number of projects you can manage, usually one or two and the amount of storage space allocated.

Selection for Small Businesses

Name	Wrike	Zoho	Gantt	Resource Guru
Features	Timeline, critical path & Gantt Project planning Resource workload management Cross team collaboration Custom status workflows Real time status updates Visual dashboards & reporting File management Live activity stream Mobile Apps Project & team reporting Status & workflows User groups Dashboards Good security	Project planning Gantt charts Project coordinator Timesheet Reporting tools Collaboration software Document management Google Apps Issue tracker Mobile Apps Project chat Project forums Dropbox integration Project pages	Resource management Task management Financial planning Timeline management Users & resources Reporting – task project & resource driven Utilization tracking	Web based Resource scheduling Capacity management Demand forecasting Employee scheduling Resource allocation Skills tracking Utilization management
Pricing	\$24.8 per user	\$50 flat	Starts at \$25 per resource	Start \$3 a month per person
Storage included	50GB	15GB	Starts at 25 resources	Unlimited projects
Available free version	Yes limited task list small teams	Yes	Yes	No
Free acc storage	2GB	10MB	10 resources	n.a.
Number projects in free account	Unlimited	1	10 resources	n.a.
Read a review	Wrike Review	Zoho Review	Gantt Review	Resource Guru Review
Go to software website	Wrike website	Zoho website	Gantt website	Resource Guru Website

Name	Podio	Mavenlink	ProWorkflow	Liquid Planner
Features	Project management Manage teams Content sharing Web forms Mail integration Progress reporting File sharing Task management Status tracking Collaboration tools Activity management File management Document management	Advanced project man. Resource planning Collaboration Financial tools Manage team activities Stores, shares & organises files Task management Track time & budgets Keeps track of assets & resources	Overview of workload & priorities Collaboration Project time & comm. Contact management Task management Reporting Messaging Resource management File sharing	Task management Planning workload Schedule planning Cross project visibility Contextual collaboration Time & budget tracking Advanced analytics
Pricing	Quotation starting \$9 per month	Teams \$19 per month	\$ 20 per month per user	\$39 per user
Storage included	No limit	1TB	25GB file storage	100GB
Free acc storage	No limit			
Available free version	Podio Lite	No free version	No free version	No free version
Number projects in free account	-	n.a	n.a	n.a
Read a review	Podio Review	Mavenlink Review	ProWorkflow Review	Liquid Planner Review
Go to software website	Podio website	Mavenlink website	Proworkflow website	Liquid planner website

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PS For a very good introductory course to project management [click here now](#)

This is a good quality well proven course available online.