



# How to Centralize Projects in One Solution

EXECUTIVE BRIEF





# Introduction

When your team spends a large portion of the day gathering information but still can't provide reporting that aligns with your business goals, it's time to reevaluate the tools they use. If your team works in multiple tools throughout the day, they probably struggle with getting the information needed to efficiently assign resources and meet deadlines while staying on budget. What's worse is they waste a lot of time trying to get that information, so both the data and the processes are in disarray. Your team is doing the best they can, but they still face poor visibility, siloed communication, inefficient use of resources, and inaccurate reporting.

The good news is you can improve visibility, communication, reporting, and resource utilization without burdening your team with time-consuming, low-value tasks. Adopting a comprehensive work management solution that serves as a repository for all project information creates a single source of truth that benefits everyone. Centralizing projects enables production teams to collaborate and record information in real time while remaining productive, and you'll have the consistent, reliable data you need to make informed business decisions in real time. Even if that sounds unrealistic for your team, there are ways to overcome your obstacles. We'll explore four common challenges most teams face in consolidating projects and offer solutions.



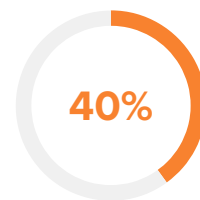
## CHALLENGE #1

# You lack visibility into which projects are in progress.

Each time you assign a new project, you do so blindly, without insight into resource capacity and available skillsets. You likely don't even know the status of your team's other projects—despite the fact that team members spend a lot of time trying to collect and manually track work statuses, resource availability, and other tedious processes on complicated spreadsheets. They sometimes lose project information because they use meetings, email threads, sticky notes, or hallway conversations to communicate about work, and there's no good way to capture and track the information from those exchanges. Because of this, you end up wasting precious time trying to piece together information about projects. Unfortunately, without standard processes and a way to view all aspects of your work, you can never be sure everything is up to date—no matter how much time is spent asking and digging for information.



More than 1/3 of workers say that a lack of standard processes gets in the way of productivity.<sup>1</sup>



40% of employees think status update meetings are a waste of time.<sup>2</sup>



## SOLUTION

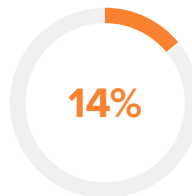
# Track all work in a central location.

Keep all work—even ad hoc tasks—in a single, centralized tool; that includes requests, communications, and information. The system should support all the methodologies your team uses, whether it's Agile, Waterfall, or a mix. By supporting all methodologies and types of work, a centralized solution standardizes communications and request management processes. Make sure your solution also includes all the features your team needs—this

includes templates, dashboards, specific integrations, online forms, or any other must-haves. If your team doesn't have access to the features they need, they may resort to using disparate tools, leading to more disconnected processes. A centralized software solution can provide the features, consistency, granularity, and standardization necessary to improve visibility at every phase of work for stakeholders, team members, and managers.



Organizations with successful work performance measures (on time, on budget, goals met) are almost 3X more likely to use standardized practices that result in better outcomes than organizations with poor work performance.<sup>3</sup>



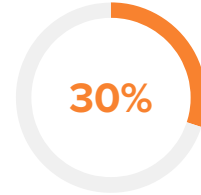
Workers spend 14% of their day duplicating information, forwarding emails, or taking phone calls.<sup>4</sup>



## CHALLENGE #2

# Communications are spread far and wide.

Team members work hard to make critical decisions and move projects along, but because much of the information and communication is siloed in email accounts, sticky notes, or hallway conversations, you aren't able to leverage that information or even find it when you need it. Even when the messages are accessible to all team members, they are often dispersed in meeting minutes, shared folders, or other places. What scattered information you do find about a project may not make sense without more context. Team members end up tracking each other down for explanations and updates—and that takes up their time and patience. Miscommunication and missed communication not only cause delays but can also lead to mistakes that result in rework, delayed schedules, and blown budgets.



**30% of project managers identified poor communication as a top reason for project failure.<sup>5</sup>**



**25%–40% of all spending on projects is wasted on rework.<sup>6</sup>**



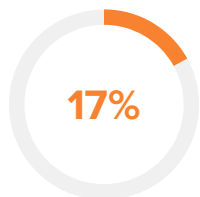


## SOLUTION

# Keep communication in the context of the work.

Make sure all work-related communication stays organized and attached to the overall project. You won't lose messages or information that way, and it will all make sense in context. Communication is key to keeping projects running smoothly and on time—but if it takes too long to find, it can still cause delays. The benefit of centralized, organized communication is streamlined, yet comprehensive, collaboration. Everyone who works on a project has access to all messages, and everyone can

understand each other's comments. Find a solution with social media-like comment streams. The comment stream is so simple and intuitive that team members adopt it easily and can find what they need quickly. This format encourages communication because it's clear who said what, when, and in regard to what aspect of the work. It's impossible to lose communication in this format, and an advanced tool can even add additional layers of visibility since information is visible on a per-task, per-project, per-user, or per-role basis.



Effective communication is associated with a 17% increase in finishing projects within budget.<sup>7</sup>

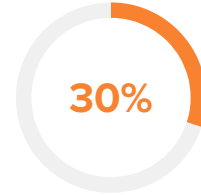


Implementing a social approach to communication can reduce the time employees spend searching for content by 35% and improve overall productivity by 20% to 25%.<sup>8</sup>

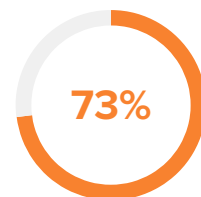
### CHALLENGE #3

# Your resource allocation process is inefficient.

You don't want to haphazardly assign work, but it's difficult to see which resources are free and which are overloaded. Even if you know what someone is working on, you can't see if their tasks are nearing completion or if they still have days or weeks left before finishing. With new work coming in and some falling behind, work assignments become a guessing game. Reassigning resources based on changing priorities is like changing the course of a speeding train by moving the tracks. Without complete visibility into resource availability, you cannot effectively scope, forecast, and measure projects so that you can keep costs down. Without clear assignments and timelines, your team members won't know which projects take priority. They may also feel overworked and overwhelmed without consistent workloads and expectations.



30% of workers say poor work prioritization methods are a major barrier to getting work done.<sup>9</sup>



73% of people work more hours than paid.<sup>10</sup>

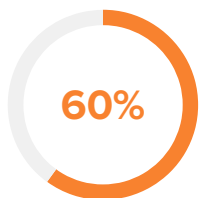


## SOLUTION

# Utilize your resources strategically.

Use a centralized tool that tracks who's assigned to what, as well as the status of tasks and projects—both planned and unplanned. This type of solution not only reduces busy work but also allows visibility into who will be available for incoming projects. You can see workloads and priorities, and make necessary adjustments in real time. Once you have the basics in place, you can focus on fine-tuning resource management with time tracking tools.

Accurate time tracking offers a domino effect of benefits—it improves resource allocation, which leads to meeting deadlines and better time estimates for future projects. In the end, stakeholders are satisfied because projects are successfully completed on time and on budget, and your team is happier because they know they will have consistent and reasonable workloads.



Nearly 60% of workers are either completely overwhelmed or barely meeting their deadlines.<sup>11</sup>



The average IT organization spends 45% to 55% of its time on unplanned and urgent activities.<sup>12</sup>

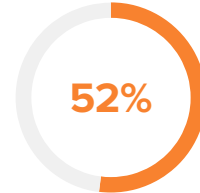




## CHALLENGE #4

# You base reports on bad data.

Collecting and analyzing project metrics is increasingly complex because of the number of high-tech tools in the workplace. Without access to reliable tools for gathering consistent, updated information, the data is inaccurate before it's even compiled. Using spreadsheets to store and analyze data wastes a lot of time because you have to manually enter and transfer the data, but you also risk making errors in your reports. It's too easy to paste a wrong number or accidentally change a formula within a cell, which is why 88% of spreadsheets contain errors.<sup>13</sup> Minor mistakes can have big consequences when that inaccurate data is used to make poor decisions, resulting in project delays and increased costs. As the enterprise makes metrics a priority, your team lacks the tools to gather project information accurately, measure the data, and analyze or report on the path to improvement. Ultimately, you don't have a way to measure the value of your team's work and to compare their results with business goals.



**52% of surveyed organizations said their top two challenges in managing data and extracting business intelligence from analysis were departmentally siloed information and limited cross-functional interaction.<sup>14</sup>**



**Bad data costs the U.S. \$3.1 trillion a year.<sup>15</sup>**



**SOLUTION**

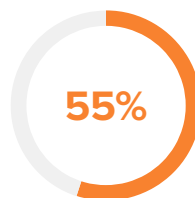
# Get an all-in-one solution for accurate reporting.

Drawing real-time data from within your work solution is the only way to get real-time information that is accurate enough to facilitate decision-making. An all-in-one solution will allow you to manage tasks, projects, and portfolios alongside integrated request and resource management and will provide the comprehensive, contextualized, and consistent data you can rely on—with no extra work needed to

compile the information. By going to the source of work, you can track and analyze data to see where failures, hiccups, and successes occur from the planning phase all the way to execution and delivery and then determine where to make changes. You will have the insights necessary to increase efficiency and on-time delivery, as well as to align work with your business goals.



92% of businesses are investing in real-time analytics technology.<sup>16</sup>



55% of project managers believe that effective communication with stakeholders is the most important factor in project success.<sup>17</sup>



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# Become a Master of work.

You don't have time or energy to waste hunting down delayed projects in disparate tools. Get all of your projects in one place for better visibility into all work. Workfront helps you:

- Improve project delivery rates
- Boost communication and collaboration
- Improve resource planning
- Cut costs through system consolidation
- Provide more accurate reports

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