

Five ways to get the right project management tool for your business

 By [Daniel Marcus](#)

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Project management systems are tools that any business, regardless of size, can make use of, in almost any industry.



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No matter the type of activity your business is engaged in, the software or system you choose should monitor the state of your projects using reports and task lists. It should automatically track time spent on projects, then store and link all email and files to relevant projects.

Though we all like to think we run tight ships, regardless of how organised your project team might be, identifying project management software for your business is imperative. We can spend all the time in the world, drawing up the most elaborate of plans, but human nature is fairly simple: Out of sight, out of mind. That, more than anything, is the number one reason plans fail. A good project management system will keep everything front of mind by presenting it to you in a clear visual format, whilst constantly updating you on the status of your businesses projects.

The right tool for your company can aid in the smooth-running of projects, specifically when they occur in parallel, where confusion and missed deadlines are most likely to occur.

But with so many options out there in terms of systems which promise to do just this, how does one go about picking the right system? In answer of that, here are five tips and steps to consider to help you in the selection of the project management software or tool to best suit your business needs:

Why do you need a PM tool?

It's important to first identify exactly why you need a platform. Part of this process is listing what your company's potential 'pain points' are and who the key stakeholders are that will drive the project management tool. Once you can answer these questions, it is easier to look through the various offerings.

Wading through the clutter

There are a number of systems out there that can be found online. Project management platforms are usually easy to implement, but long-term support is the key.

Make sure you assess a prospective platform's support portal before committing to sign up and pay.

Taking advantage of the cloud

Many project management tools are web-based cloud platforms. Understandably, many are wary of moving all of their data

into the cloud.

Quite often, concerns business people have when it comes to The Cloud include: your data being accessed by your service provider, your service provider getting hacked and your data being stolen, your service provider going under, or losing your data.

These concerns are valid, and a clear sign that you are a careful businessperson. However, they can be mitigated.

A reliable cloud service provider ensures that it stays up to date with today's ever-evolving industry standards and regulations. At the least, look for a cloud provider which uses 512-bit SSL encryption which is the same kind of encryption used in online banking. If, when you ask a provider about this, they can't answer, look elsewhere. The cloud provider you're looking for should be running periodical backups (at the least on a daily basis). This means that should something go wrong, they will be able to recover your information.

A top-level cloud service providers' servers run in state-of-the-art data centres with power-redundancy, hardware mirroring, and multiple internet connections.

And finally, the best cloud providers never access your data without your clear, explicit permission.

So yes, if you can find the service provider who can answer all your security concerns about the cloud, the benefits far outweigh the risks.

Getting started

Swift deployment of a project management tool or software is dependent on your company's structure and size. However, the best tools should be simple enough to implement without the use of external specialists.

You should only need specialists once the system is in place and you want to tailor or refine it, or its process, to better suit your businesses needs.

Reap the rewards

As a company manager or owner you now have access to information including who's working on what, what tasks are complete and outstanding, and how much time has been spent on a project and what your budget status is. Work closely with your provider to ensure you're getting the right data out of your tool. By that, I mean that the best project management providers or tools are not static fixed products, but rather implements that can be tailored to best serve the needs of your particular business. If the service or services you're considering, can't, don't - or to be more honest, won't - offer that, then it's not the services for your business.

ABOUT DANIEL MARCUS

Daniel Marcus, is a serial entrepreneur and co-founder of Magnetic, a cloud-based small business management tool that streamlines the day-to-day administrative functions needed to maintain steady growth in a small business. Additionally, Daniel also manages and co-owns Living Your Brand, one of South Africa's leading events and conference agencies, which counts Bentley SA, FNB Wealth, Nedbank Capital, Sanlam Investment Management, Vodacom and Standard Bank among its client list. Dan@magnetichq.com

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