The State of Project Management 2021
Welcome to Project.co’s first ever State of Project Management survey report.

In this document, you’ll find a wealth of information and data about how your peers and competitors manage projects for maximum efficiency, including…

- How do they communicate with clients?
- How do they communicate internally between teams?
- Which software tools do they use?
- How do they manage workloads, task lists and deadlines?
- And, crucially, where are the areas and opportunities for change, improvement and growth?

The stats presented in this report were gathered by surveying 437 unique respondents in December 2020. Respondents came from businesses across a range of industries, niches and countries.

Our plan is for this to become an annual report - a piece of research which seeks to track the development and changes in our industry.

We want this yearly report to help give professionals like you a deeper understanding of how teams and businesses manage their projects - identifying strengths, weaknesses and opportunities for the benefit of everybody who participates.

We hope you enjoy the report!

Citation Policy:

Please feel free to use these statistics in any commercial or non-commercial capacity. If you use the statistics we require a link to Project.co
01

Task management & to-do lists

88% of people make a list of tasks to manage the work they need to do in a day.

44% do this on paper, 35% use task management software, 11% plan out their days in a spreadsheet, while the remaining 10% use ‘other’ tools - including word processing tools, notes apps on mobile and more.

Only 11% of people have confidence that they never miss or forget tasks they have due - with a staggering 20% of people saying they miss tasks ‘regularly.’

80% of those who DON’T create a task list feel that doing so would make it easier for them to plan out their work - and 90% of them say they miss or forget tasks occasionally or regularly.

...so why don’t they do it? The results were split almost evenly between not feeling it’s necessary, finding it too much effort, lacking a system to do it, or wanting to focus on the ‘doing’ rather than ‘planning.’

95% of people feel having a list of tasks to do each day is good for their mental health.

95% of people feel that having a to-do list to work through makes them more efficient and productive.

Over a quarter of people (26%) say they find it difficult to plan out and prioritise their daily tasks and workload.
02

Cross team visibility

94% of people feel that having a good view of what their teammates are working on improves productivity and efficiency in a business...

...but less than half (42%) of people say they find it easy to understand what other members of their team are working on at any given time.
03

Communication with clients

67% of people say they mainly communicate with clients using email, dwarfing other channels including phone calls (8%), project management software (9%), online meetings (8%) and face to face meetings (5%).

But just 49% of people say email is their preferred way to deal with businesses as customers, with 25% saying they prefer to use project management software.
Internal communication between teams

Email is the dominant tool for communicating between teams - it’s used by 75% of people who collaborate with other people in a team. 68% use phone conferencing, 59% use online collaborative tools such as Google Docs and Sheets, and 38% use a project management tool like Project.co.

An astonishing 92% of people say they believe collaboration with their teammates could be improved.
05

Deadlines

As a whole, more than 1 in 10 people say they ‘rarely’ or ‘never’ hit their deadlines.

A paltry 16% of people say they ‘always’ hit their deadlines.

44% of people don’t use a project or task management software tool to keep their deadlines visible - which naturally makes it more difficult for deadlines to be managed and met.

Where people use a daily task list that lays out their work for the day, they are 31% less likely to ‘rarely’ hit deadlines and 68% less likely to ‘never’ meet them.

People who use a daily task list are 21% more likely to fall into this category.
06

Time tracking & project profitability

Remarkably, 15% of businesses which bill clients according to time spent on projects told us they don’t actually track that time at all.

Where businesses DO track time spent on projects, only 13% believe it’s tracked ‘extremely accurately’ with 35% saying it’s not tracked very accurately at all.

Just 34% of people use a dedicated time tracking tool.

60% of people who DO track time spent on projects say they don’t retrospectively use this data to identify efficiency in their projects.