LiquidPlanner®

HOW TO SOLVE THE TOP 9

PROJECT MANAGEMENT
CHALLENGES

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The Top 9 Project Management Challenges

Managing projects is hard work.

You have to know how to create schedules, track plans, satisfy stakeholders and customers, motivate team members, make deadlines, use an array of apps and tools—the list goes on.

The best project managers have a wide bandwidth of knowledge because they have to. This job is a veritable juggling act of skills: technical and people; left brain and right brain; diplomat and facilitator.

As a project management software company, we hear about the challenges that project managers commonly face, because it's our mission to offer the best solutions in the business. So we gathered some common themes and created a list of the top nine challenges that project managers like you deal with every day.

In this eBook, we give you practical tips and actions to take to solve each one of these challenges. We also show you how our project management software, LiquidPlanner helps solve these common PM challenges.

Ready? Let's make those PM challenges a thing of the past—and turn them into opportunities!

1. Managing Expectations

Your stakeholders will typically have a vision of what they expect the project to deliver. Unfortunately, this vision can vary greatly depending on the stakeholder in question. For example:

Technology lead: "It's all about short, sharp schedules."

Sales: "It's all about customer satisfaction."

Finance: "It's all about maximizing the profit."

Customer: "I want something top-end and shiny— the moon on a stick really, and with sprinkles!"

As a project manager, your job is to get disparate visions aligned with reality, and keep them that way as the project progresses and variables change. While this is one of the toughest challenges you'll face; it's also one that's critical to the project's success.

EXPECTATIONS

Here's what happens if you can't manage team expectations:

- Your team delivers products that customers don't want or need, thus losing their trust and any future business.
- Your managers and peers lose confidence in your ability to do your job effectively.
- Your team grows dispirited. After working long hours to deliver what was asked for, they have nothing more to show for than a failed or poor-quality project.
- You lose money, people and sleep.

How do you engage stakeholders and manage their expectations?

If you engage your stakeholders early in the project— ideally during the planning stage—everyone gets a common understanding of the scope, the timing, the budget and the resource demands from the get-go. This means no major surprises later in the lifecycle, and no ongoing divergence between stakeholder vision and reality. That's why we have menus in restaurants. We don't just expect the waiter to serve us exactly what we want without discussing it first.

So, as a technology leader overseeing projects, you need to make sure that the project plan is seen and agreed upon by all of your stakeholders at the very beginning. Then, you need to keep everyone apprised of project status as the project progresses and changes occur—which they invariably will.

The best start to managing expectations is by using a collaborative project management tool that automatically updates every time something changes. This means everyone from team members to stakeholders can access, update and gain insight into the project as it unfolds every step of the way.

When you manage expectations with care great things happen:

- You build trust.
- You develop healthy and rewarding relationships.
- You get satisfied customers.
- Your value within your organization grows and everyone wants to work on projects with you (or assign them to you).
- You make money.
- People want to work with and for you.
- You sleep well at night.

Here's where we can help. LiquidPlanner is a collaborative online project management tool that lets everyone access their plans from wherever they are. You can make updates or inquiries, and see the schedules updated in real time, all the time.

Here are three key ways LiquidPlanner helps you manage the expectations.

1. A single, shared workspace with clear priorities

LiquidPlanner gives teams a single shared workspace that houses plans, schedules and detailed data across a portfolio of projects and tasks. Team members know what their priorities are each day because our priority-based scheduling engine lets you drag-and-drop project folders and task items into order of importance. Project leaders have easy visibility into how the project is progressing—from the big picture into the minute details. There are no other plans or documents stashed away in emails or desktop folders. There is just the plan. Get that plan in place and everyone will have visibility of what's in, what's out and who's doing what and when. This means all your stakeholders can see what's going to be delivered and when, with absolute clarity.

2. The schedule is realistic and automatically updated in real time

LiquidPlanner's schedules are based on best/worst case scenarios to account for uncertainty, and these schedules are automatically updated to reflect current progress at all times. The means you can see any incoming risk as soon as it rears its head so you can respond intelligently, rather than react dramatically. Whether stakeholders are checking out the schedule or not, you have all the data you need to give a comprehensive and accurate status update on how the project is really progressing. Then you can have the necessary conversations along the way. No surprises, no false expectations.

3. Stakeholders can access the data they need

Your stakeholders will ask for different types of data from your projects. LiquidPlanner provides analytics and reports on a variety of project information—
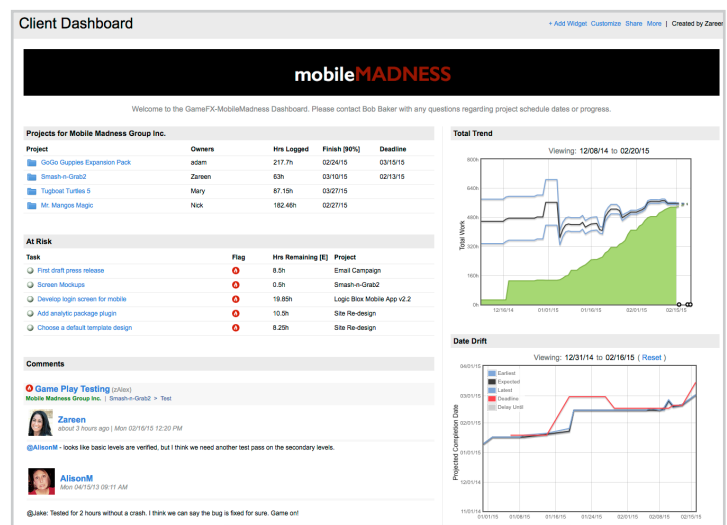
giving insight into allocated resources, budget updates, project dates, task reports and more. Our Dashboards provide another way to filter and surface project data for the team or stakeholders.

Managing expectations can be one of the biggest stresses of leading a successful IT project. But when you have your whole team using LiquidPlanner, you've just established the best way to bring your stakeholders together through the life of a project. Our platform keeps everyone informed of current status and what's to come. One plan, a shared vision that matches it, fewer sleepless nights, an engaged team, happy stakeholders—all great things!

2. Motivating Teams to Use the PM Tool

Change is tough, and we're creatures of habit. For these reasons, introducing a new process or software into an organization can be challenging, and at times, unsuccessful. Especially if it the process goes something like this:

Executive lead to project manager: "Find a more collaborative project management tool for the team to use."

Project manager to executive: "OK, I tried out a few; this one should do."

Project manager to project team: "Surprise! We have a new PM tool, have at it."

Project team: "Whaa—?"

When new tools are sprung on teams without their involvement, or without explanation of their value and benefits, they're not likely to get well-adopted. These consequences are grim, especially when valuable time and money has gone into considering, trying and then purchasing a project management platform that then doesn't get used. Failed adoption can actually set the business back rather than moving it forward; it can also lead to loss of confidence in those driving the implementation and, in the worst cases, loss of jobs. No business wants that.

Here are the top reasons why teams don't use their new project management tools:

- The tool is the wrong fit for the business, and doesn't deliver the anticipated benefits.
- There is no rollout plan.
- Team members are not part of the trial and selection process, so there's no initial buy in.
- Team members aren't involved in planning the tool's rollout.
- Team members don't receive adequate training on the new tool.
- The vendor doesn't provide good support and training tools.
- Who's got time to learn a whole new way of doing things?

How do you get your team to embrace and use your PM software?

First, the evaluation process: Make sure you choose the right tool for your organization's vision, processes and business needs. You can try different products, and assess whether the tool is the right one for your team. We recommend getting team members involved in the evaluation and approval process.

TOOLS

Make an effort to communicate the benefits of using the tool, and take the time to help people understand all the ways the planning software can make their job better and can even improve their career. This helps make the selection process matter to them, and not just the organization. Make sure the software company you've chosen provides enough support, training and learning materials and is a good partner in your adoption success.

Then, implementation: Get team members involved in the roll out process and (this is a big one) find a champion, someone who really loves and gets the product, you need someone who can advocate and be a go-to person for questions and issues from other team members.

The benefits of team adoption include:

- You get important data and project insight that enhances project decision-making and business strategy.
- You can rely on your project's schedule, anticipate change and deliver projects on time.
- You prove yourself as a leader who can identify the need for change and can deliver it.
- Increased collaboration improves working relationships across the organization.
- This could be the first step in shifting your corporate culture toward embracing change in the future.

It's our opinion that your vendor should play an active role in helping you introduce your project management software to your organization. Your success is their success after all. If they're not supporting you with training and learning materials, you're talking to the wrong vendor.

Here's how LiquidPlanner helps onboard your team

At LiquidPlanner we partner with organizations and teams from the second they start using our project management tool. And, we stick around—providing support, trainings, consultations and a whole host

of resources. We help our customers get their implementation right and get the most out of our product thereafter. Here are four ways we support customers so that everyone on the team uses the tool.

- **Demos.** We offer thorough product demos that help you determine how, and if, LiquidPlanner meets your business needs.
- **We have an ace team dedicated to your success.** Our Customer Success and Professional Services teams provide excellent consultations, as well as all of the support you need before, during and after rollout. We also have product and project management experts who understand your needs and the challenges you face—not just with learning the product, but with your adoption process as well. They can help!
- **Seasoned trainers.** Educating your team in the right way at the right time is essential to get your team not only using the product, but use it in a way that maximizes the benefits and improves the quality of their job.
- **Self-serve content.** LiquidPlanner has a treasure chest of resources available 24/7: from Getting Started and onboarding materials to a wealth of videos and help articles.

We conducted an in-depth analysis of our current successful customers, and found that teams that have a critical mass working in LiquidPlanner stay engaged with the product, use key features more, and generally get more value from the product.

Successful onboarding and adoption is all about preparing your team before introducing a new product. Then, you have to manage that introduction in a way that grabs your team members' interest and holds it thereafter. And at LiquidPlanner we're dedicated to doing all we can to help you do both successfully. We love our product, and we want your organization to love it too.

3. Getting Team Members to Track Time

"Time is money." – Benjamin Franklin
"I just can't wait to fill in my timesheet!"
– Nobody, ever.

Time is one of your most precious commodities. And for projects that are driven by schedules and budgets, project managers and team leaders need to know how and where everyone is spending their work hours. In order to get the right information, team members need to log time to all of their work. Easier said than done, right?

It's hard to get people to use time tracking tools because:

- Timesheet systems are clunky and not user-friendly.
- Team members don't see the value in logging their hours, and if they do enter their hours, they do it inconsistently—at best.
- Timesheet data isn't integrated with the project schedule, so work hours have to be manually wrangled from one system to another—a hassle that also increases the chance for errors.
- By the time schedules are updated to reflect timesheet data it's too late to address any problems.

How do you get people to track time?

First off, you need an efficient (non-clunky) time tracking process that's integrated into your project management software. Then, you want to give your project team a way to quickly record work done and work remaining on a task—and to do so in context. For example, imagine starting a timer right from your task item and knowing your time is being logged into the project schedule pronto. Tracking time has to be convenient enough to become a habit.

Team members also have to see the inherent value that time tracking adds to their jobs, rather than seeing it as a tool just for their manager's benefit. Show your team how logging time has a greater purpose for the individuals using it; show them how to analyze their time tracking data in a way that makes them better at their jobs and supports their initiatives.

Tracking time has huge benefits for team members in a number of ways, including:

- Time tracking data is an irrefutable way to show the need for more help and resources.
- It keeps people from being overbooked, overworked and getting burnt out.
- Time tracking data can be used to

TRACKING

plan yearly job goals, including budget requests.

- If a manager questions how a team member is spending his time, there's data to show for it.
- It's a track record of the amount of effort it takes to complete individual tasks all the way up to the entire project. This data can be used to make estimates on future work.

Effective time tracking tools provide essential benefits for everyone on the team: executives, managers, customers and team members. But you have to find the right kind of software and then convey the benefits and how to reap them.

LiquidPlanner is project management software that integrates time tracking into the scheduling software. The interface makes it easy to track time as you work on tasks throughout the week. It's also easy to extract data and information that's useful for everyone from project leads and stakeholders to team members.

Here's how LiquidPlanner motivates people to track time.

A friendly interface that's easy to use

For people to use a time tracking tool, it has to be functional, intuitive and easy to use. And let's face it—a good-looking interface always helps. When
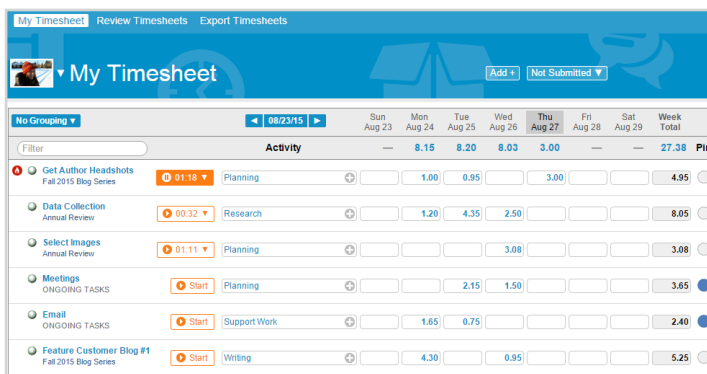

you log in to your timesheet on LiquidPlanner, you'll see a list of every task you're assigned to. From here you can start timers, enter hours, update estimates, submit timesheets, access tasks and more. You can also start timers directly from your task items and log time as you move through work items.

An integrated solution tied to a bigger picture

LiquidPlanner provides a time tracking tool that is directly linked to the scheduling engine. So, when team members enter hours worked and hours remaining for a task, it's immediately reflected in the project schedule. No data wrangling between tools, no waiting for hours entered to be reflected in the schedule at some ambiguous future date—it's updated there and then, in real time.

Also, team members can see the impact of their work on the project immediately—something that never happens when entering numbers into spreadsheets that are completely divorced from the schedules. By tracking time in LiquidPlanner, team members see the importance of their contribution, and how it affects other tasks; individuals can pull important information from their data that helps them stay on deadline, and they can surface time tracking widgets in Dashboards and see hours completed and hours remaining on work. Most importantly, everyone will understand why time tracking matters—to the project, the team and to their jobs.

If time is money—and your most precious resource—you need to know where and how you're spending it. And you need your team to be part of the process.
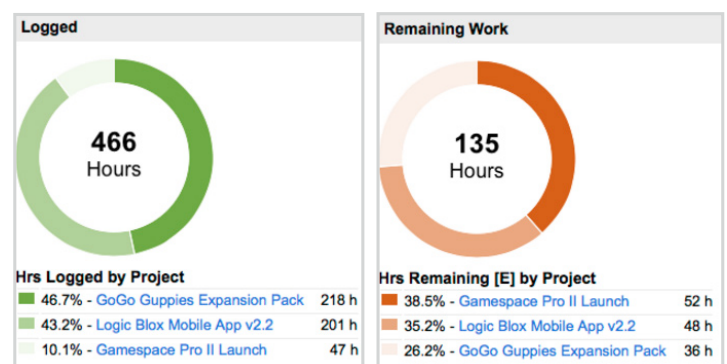
So use a system that makes it easy and habit-forming for everyone to use, and delivers essential information in real time.

And a tip for the road: If your team keeps asking you, "Where do we track our time to again?", you're using the wrong tool.

4. Collaborating With Internal and External Customers

"If everyone is moving forward together, then success takes care of itself." - Henry Ford

Effective collaboration has gone from a nice-to-have to being critical to business success—even to improving the world! Would we have an International Space Station if the 16 nations that built it together had decided to stay in their own back yards and do their own thing instead? Doubtful.

Even when we recognize the value of people working together effectively, and even when we set up project teams and partners that are motivated to do deliver great projects together, collaboration efforts often misfire. Sometimes, they don't happen at all.

Here are the top reasons why collaboration efforts fail:

- Organizations are siloed, and project teams are matrixed.
- The team relies on email and spreadsheets to manage projects.
- Information is scattered over different data repositories and apps, rather than in one unified location.
- Teams and customers depend on the project manager to access schedule status and project data.
- Organizations don't use collaborative project management platforms.

How do you best support successful collaborations?

While you can focus on improving communication and commit to breaking down silos, if you don't have the right tools to support your efforts, you won't succeed. If you want to facilitate collaborative projects and environments, we recommend that organizations invest in cloud-based, collaborative project management tools.

These software platforms unite teams, customers (internal and external), and virtual workers by giving teams a central location to access all project items, see updates and status, and comment in context with their tasks. You also have a singular space that shows what everyone's working on, surfaces dependencies, end dates, priorities and essential data. And while email will never go away, these tools enable you to use it as a communication accessory, not as a project management methodology.
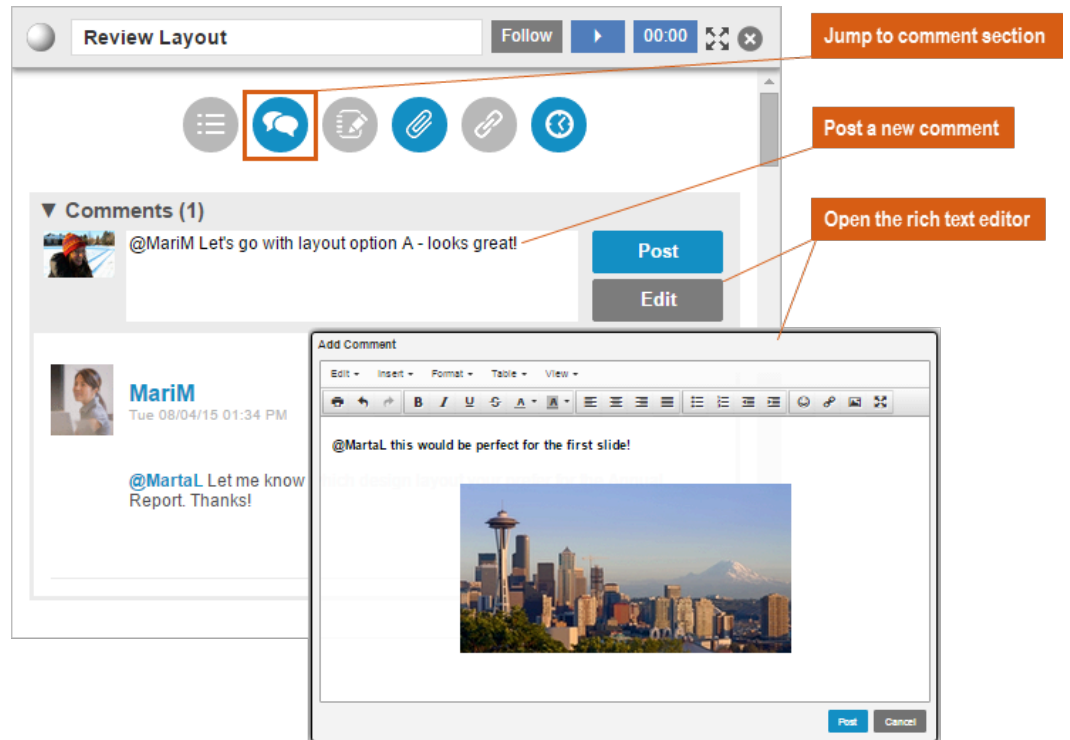

COLLABORATION

Here's how project management software platforms benefit your business:

- Avoids communication breakdowns
- Builds trust with your clients and peers
- Speeds up completion, and improve quality
- Makes it easier to work remotely with colleagues
- Improves brainstorming and problem solving
- Unites people around a common goal and bigger purpose
- Improves team morale, spirit and enthusiasm

It's not just setting up the right culture and sense of a shared purpose that enhances collaboration—you need a shared space to put all those good intentions.

beautiful truism, LiquidPlanner has a contextual commenting feature that puts conversations in line with the task or project folder they apply to. This way, teams and individuals can track conversations streams, reduce meetings and avoid email silos.

Here's how LiquidPlanner creates effective collaboration

Cloud-based and a central location

LiquidPlanner provides a single shared workplace in the cloud that everyone on the team can access. Whether you're a project team member at HQ or working virtually; an external supplier, or a customer working from the other side of the globe, project assignments and schedules are clear to everyone. Features like Dashboards provide a more graphical way to share information and project status with team members and customers.

In-context conversations

Communication fuels collaboration, and collaboration fuels communication. To build off this

Seamless file sharing

One of the biggest project frustrations is not knowing where things are. You can search your email, desktop folders and sticky notes until you're red in the face. To solve this problem, LiquidPlanner has a seamless document sharing feature. You can upload and share docs from your desktop or cloud storage systems like Google Drive, Box or Dropbox; do collaborative editing, get approvals and sign-offs and move work items through the pipeline more efficiently.

Collaboration matters. But what you want is an effective collaboration process. So next time you want to send an email with a project status, or you're running around asking for the latest schedule, stop for a second and think of the International Space Station. Then consider the right project management software—and go collaborate smarter.

5. No Visibility Into Project Status

Wouldn't it be great if you had your finger on the pulse of your project portfolio? Then, you could give project updates on an impromptu basis without breaking into a sweat, like this:

Department VP: "I just got off the phone with the customer. Where do we stand on that database merge project?"

Project lead: "Um, let me check a few things and I'll get back to you . . . ." [Followed by panic.]

In an ideal world, you would know where all aspects of your project stands at all times: which tasks need attention, how your budget and resources are being allocated, if there are any incoming risks and whether the current deadline is still realistic. You don't want to be the one who gets blindsided by a simple status question without an intelligent answer on hand.

What's worse is when you have to spend hours or days collecting a bunch of different updates and data from team members, then put them into a project

summary for your boss—who wanted the answer yesterday.

Here are some common problems that result when you don't have visibility into projects:

- You don't know what's going on with the work you're responsible for overseeing.
- Your manager, stakeholders and team lose confidence in your leadership.
- You waste precious time corralling project updates from various team members.
- There's no way to know if your team is over- or under-assigned and how resources are being managed.
- You aren't able to see incoming risks, and adjust the plan well ahead of time.
- It's hard to make smart, savvy decisions without project data at your fingertips.

If this is the way you're used to working, there's probably a constant tremor of stress running through your workdays (and your team's), whether you realize it or not. On a well-run project, everyone needs to have clear visibility into project status—from the executive team to project managers and team members.

This happens when you have a central location that provides instant and total visibility into all project activity. Then, you have access to key details needed to do your job well, like: who's assigned what; how much time a project item has until completion; how resources are being allocated—and how all this data affects your schedule.

Here are some key benefits of having visibility into your projects:

- You have the confidence of knowing, at all times, where your project stands.

VISIBILITY
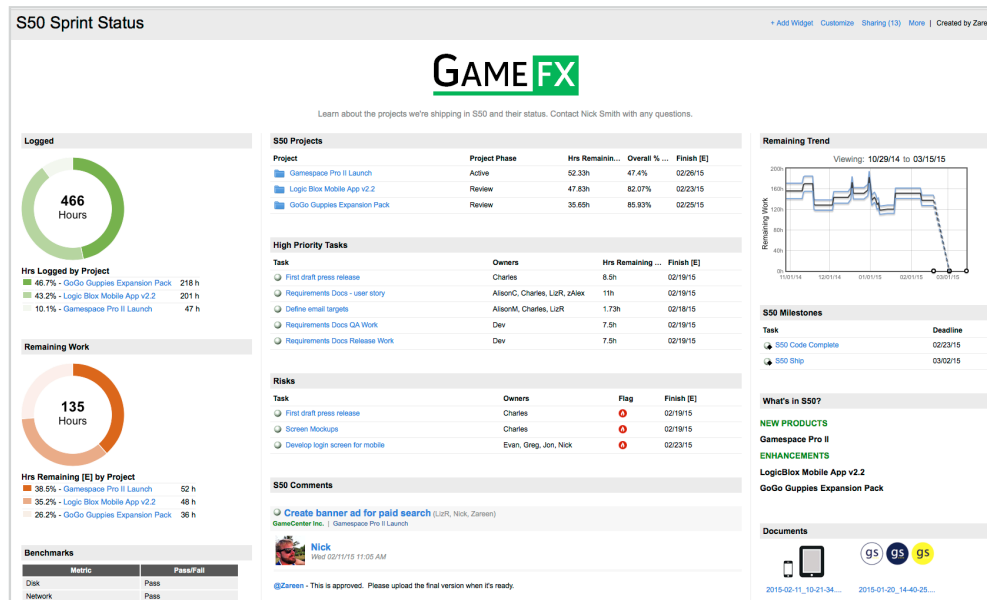
- Your boss, stakeholders and teams trust and respect your project leadership.
- You can use your time and project insight to craft strategy and make meaningful business decisions.
- You can manage and forecast resources accurately, and make sure your team is assigned to the right work.
- You can be a step ahead of incoming risks and plan accordingly.
- You have a better chance of delivering the project on time!

Here's how LiquidPlanner gives you the project visibility you need

LiquidPlanner is transparent project management software that provides a central space for comprehensive project insight. Here are some of the ways we provide visibility into project work:

Visibility across portfolios of work

The LiquidPlanner workspace gives you access to hundreds of projects and tasks in a single view. You can choose to see everything from a high-level, long-range planning view to focusing in on current task activity. You can also customize how you see various project data using Dashboards, Card View,

Baseline views and various reports.

Automatically updated schedule

Whenever there's a change to a project item, the schedule automatically updates itself, in real time. And since everyone is responsible for keeping their project activities updated, you can rely on the fact that the project view and all its details give an accurate picture of where the project stands.

Resource insight

We're one of the only resource-driven scheduling engines in the business. In the words of LiquidPlanner customer Jason Grovert, CTO at Ryland Homes, "LiquidPlanner provides visibility at all levels… helping us estimate schedules with confidence and manage and forecast resource availability."

You don't want to be caught off guard, or blindsided by unexpected surprises when you're leading a project. With the right kind of visibility into all details of your project, you not only build trust with your stakeholders and team members, but you help forge a successful path by delivering excellent projects, and on time. Why not use the PM solution of your dreams?

6. Too Many Different Software Solutions

"Men have become the tools of their tools." - Henry David Thoreau

There's an endless array of software systems and tools available today to address business needs: task management tools, scheduling tools, communication apps, time tracking software, calendars, Agile systems—the list goes on. Irrespective of your company or team focus, there's a product that will help you optimize and better organize your work.

Having such a broad range of tools to track projects and provide essential data offers up rich opportunities for organizations. But when is there too much to choose from? Many companies have to work with such a bewildering array of systems that productivity is often paralyzed (or severely slowed down) rather than maximized.

## Common problems of having too many project software platforms include:

- It's time consuming switching between systems.
- You have too many tools to maintain, and pay for.
- Teams working in different project management tools can't collaborate effectively.
- It's hard to access project data across an organization when information is spread over various platforms.
- Organizations with a mishmash of integrations can't wrangle a consistent flow of information.
- Companies pay for software that nobody's using.
- There are too many software products to learn (or choose from) so people pull out their spreadsheets and go rogue.

To confront (and unravel) what feels like a hodgepodge of platforms, we recommend integrating key project management needs into one system. You don't need a suite of different products to create a top-notch, one-stop project management platform.

A central location for multiple project-related functions supports a shared mission among teams and across organizations. It also helps everyone get their work done in a more efficient and productive manner.

Here are the top benefits of streamlining your project management software:

- Improved communication and collaboration because more people will be managing their

SYSTEMS
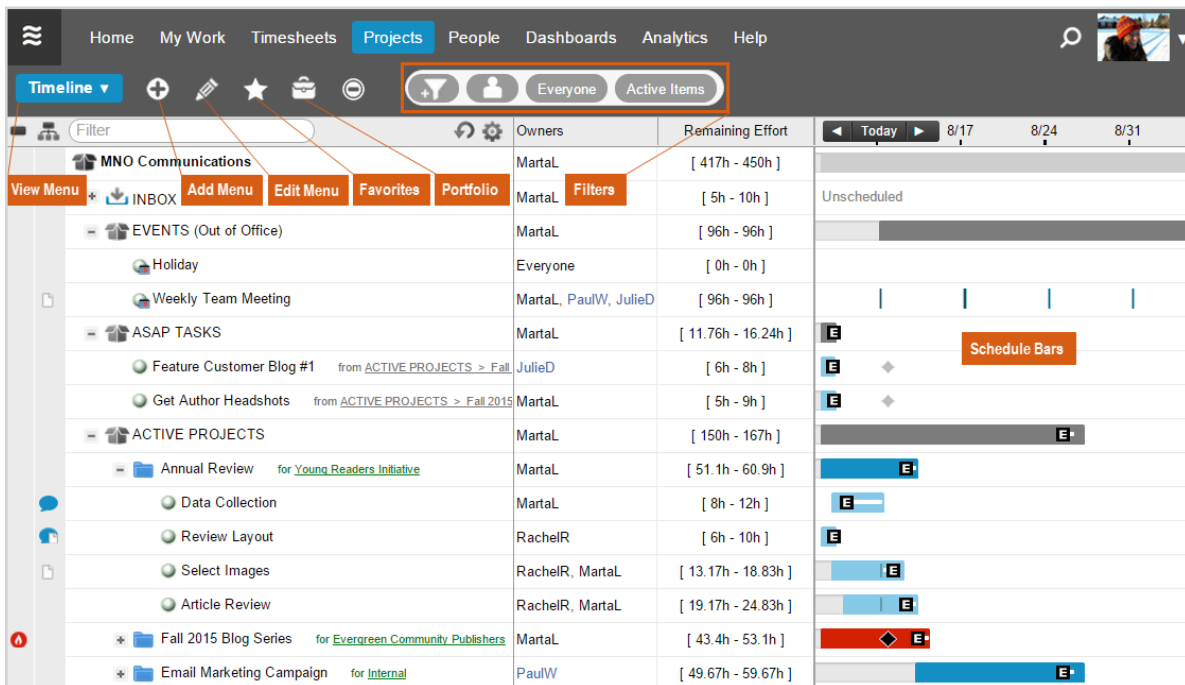
work in the same space.

- More reliable and holistic data and insights.
- Higher adoption because key PM features are in one place.
- A more realistic and complete view of the project.
- A more efficient use of resources.
- Increased time tracking—if you include this feature in your PM tool.

Even though modern-day business teams use a variety of software products to conduct business, you don't have to cobble together a myriad of tools to make a complete PM platform (Frankenstein's monster be gone!).

How LiquidPlanner helps organizations streamline systems

Unifying features in one project management solution

At LiquidPlanner, we set out to make it easy for teams to manage their projects from A-to-Z. We did this by creating a complete project management solution, something that integrates features for everything from basic task management all the way up to

complex scheduling and estimation. We provide organizations a consistent toolset that everyone can use, which keeps communication and processes highly efficient.

If you're looking to streamline your project processes and tools, here are the features that LiquidPlanner provides:

- Project planning
- Predictive scheduling
- Time tracking and timesheets
- Workflow management
- Resource management
- Commenting and social collaboration
- File sharing
- Project data, analytics and reports
- Visual analytics through Dashboards
- Open API to other business system

Your organization might have all these features covered already—but in different apps. What a mess, right? Imagine consolidating these into one platform. A better work experience for everyone, more reliable data, a more productive team and higher quality deliverables. It's a complex world we work in, but things don't have to be that complicated.

7. Teams Using Different Methodologies

Project teams love their methodologies. And for good reason. If you launch a project without structure, you're setting yourself and the team up for failure. Teams typically choose a planning methodology that best fits the nature of their work; they then use that methodology to structure their work. For example, manufacturing typically goes with a Waterfall method; dev teams like Agile. The result might go something like this:

Software dev manager: "I need a burndown chart; this Gantt chart tells me nothing."

Biz dev manager: "Burndown chart—where am I going to get that?"

Often times, teams within the same organization use different methodologies and PM platforms—a Dev team works in an Agile-specific tool and an IT team in something else, sometimes even spreadsheets. Or, with the increasing popularity of Agile processes, there might be a "We-are-Agile" mandate imposed on the company, which can wreak havoc on some teams' processes.

Here are the top problems of juggling different PM methodologies within an organization:

- Managing dependencies across projects can be a nightmare.
- It's difficult to get a comprehensive view into the priorities of cross-functional teams.
- It's also difficult to get a complete view of the workload or availability of various teams' members.
- Scheduling tools don't always mix and match sprint-based and phase-based tasks.
- It takes a lot of reworking to add updates and changes to the project plan.
- Agile teams often want a different view of their projects than their non-Agile teams.
- Reporting tools fall short of what's needed.

What often happens is that project teams continue to work in separate methodologies than others and just deal with it—hassles and all. But what if there was a project management solution that accommodated various methodologies, and gave your organizations one space where teams could plan and schedule projects however they like?

Here are some of the benefits of integrating methodologies into one PM solution:

- Teams collaborate more effectively.
- Managers get more exact and comprehensive project insight.
- You can run reports that show the entire

METHODOLOGY

project, rather than a report per team.

- You can manage and allocate resources more accurately.
- The process of managing a portfolio of projects—and anticipating risks—gets much, much easier.
- The process makes project work so much better, that software adoption goes through the roof.

Here are some of the ways LiquidPlanner integrates methodologies into one PM tool:

With LiquidPlanner, various project management methodologies can co-exist in a single, shared planning tool. Here's how our features unite methodologies into one unified workspace.
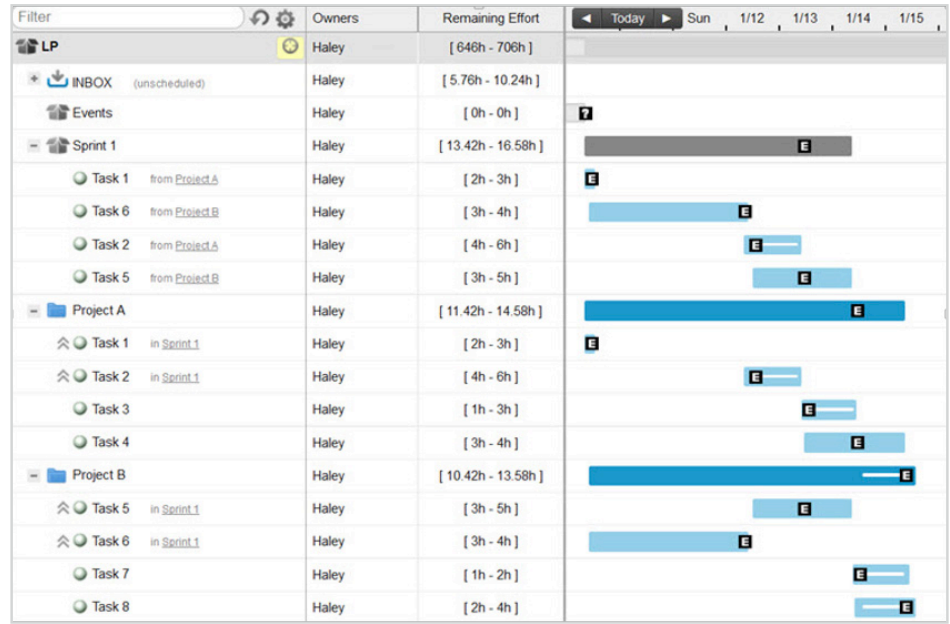
Your schedules are always reliable and updated, no matter how you plan

LiquidPlanner takes the priorities you set then applies automatic resource leveling to generate realistic

Filter		Owners	Remaining Effort	◄ Today ►	Sun	1/12	1/13	1/14	1/15
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Events		Haley	[0h - 0h]						
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Task 2 from Project A		Haley	[4h - 6h]						
Task 5 from Project B		Haley	[3h - 5h]						
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Task 2 in Sprint 1		Haley	[4h - 6h]						
Task 3		Haley	[1h - 3h]						
Task 4		Haley	[3h - 4h]						
Project B		Haley	[10.42h - 13.58h]						
Task 5 in Sprint 1		Haley	[3h - 5h]						
Task 6 in Sprint 1		Haley	[3h - 4h]						
Task 7		Haley	[1h - 2h]						
Task 8		Haley	[2h - 4h]						

Project structures match the way you work

There are no pre-defined project structures in a LiquidPlanner workspace. We don't differentiate between methodologies; projects are just work items, and you can structure your project the way you want to. For example, teams can arrange project work in a number of ways. If one team is Waterfall they can build out a work breakdown structure in a traditional project, sub-project/phase and task format. If another team, or project, is Agile, you can use our Packages to take backlog work and group it into sprints instead. You can also organize work by time (weeks and months); set up packages to organize projects by Active and Pending, and a lot more.

Priorities are always clear

Whether team members have two projects or 20, priorities are always reflected in how high up in the project plan structure they're placed. So no matter what processes your various teams are following— priorities will always be crystal clear, and easy to update.

schedules—no matter what methodology you use. And it does this for all projects and tasks in your workspace. So if you're sharing resources between Agile and non-Agile projects, you get a unified view of what work is being done when and by whom—with no need to burn hours sweating dependencies.

You can select different project views

LiquidPlanner provides a host of views and reports which you can apply to any project. This way you can provide and access project information in various formats from Gantt charts, PDFs and burndown charts to baseline views and Card View (our version of Kanban).

Your team's method matters. But there's no reason for methodologies to keep teams from collaborating seamlessly on project work, and to keep managers from being able to access a unified view into a portfolio of projects. Just pick a platform that works for everyone!

8. Apps and Tools Don't Integrate

With the growth of SaaS and Shadow IT, the number of apps in a business is exploding. Teams are constantly seeking the best apps and services to enable collaboration and information sharing. At the same time, businesses need platforms to better manage the work that's being undertaken in the organization through these applications and services.

An integrated project management system is critical for this purpose.

If your project management software doesn't integrate with other business systems, your team will struggle with organizational inefficiencies, incomplete data, and poor collaboration.

Here's what happens when PM tools don't integrate with existing apps:

- Communication breaks down. If software apps can't communicate, the team will struggle to do so too.
- Data exchange is cumbersome and team members spend extra time working between applications.
- Costs and risk of errors increase if data is manually manipulated between applications.
- Data exported in the form of snapshots gets stale in a matter of hours leading to potentially harmful decisions.
- Your ability to manage projects is limited if you can't access apps from mobile and portable devices.
- Unnecessary duplication.

Spending your day wrangling information from apps that don't play well together is frustrating and time-wasting. It's especially painful for teams who can't get the data they need in the format they need. But use a tool that integrates with your other key business applications, and your processes become streamlined and more effective—with comprehensive data insight that takes project strategy to the next level.

Here are the benefits of being able to integrate apps with your PM software:

- Develop a shared context and understanding of business needs and resources.
- Automate tasks and deliver information between online services.
- Share cross-department requests and updates.
- Stay on top of a variety of task types within one environment.
- Collaborate more fluidly with other team members, clients, customers and vendors.
- Communicate and collaborate better.
- Deliver comprehensive and reliable data to stakeholders.
- Help your organization embrace change.

INTEGRATION

Here's how LiquidPlanner helps you integrate services into a PM tool

LiquidPlanner is project management software that offers the following integrations:

File sharing and storage

LiquidPlanner offers integration with the three most popular cloud storage services: Google Drive™, Dropbox, and Box.

Salesforce integration

The LiquidPlanner App for Salesforce is available at no cost to LiquidPlanner customers. This integration lets sales and project teams share information seamlessly, and provides real-time visibility into the entire project process, starting with the sales cycle.

Email integration

LiquidPlanner lets you use email to create new tasks and make comments on existing plan items in your workspace. You also have a choice of email notifications you can receive, giving you updates and prompts on work that needs your attention.

Mobile

We have iOS and Android mobile apps for anyone with a LiquidPlanner account. These apps let you access project views, collaborate with team members, track time, create or edit tasks, and more.

Developer API and Webhooks

LiquidPlanner has an open API, and also offers a Webhooks configuration. We have a public Developer Forum where you can ask questions – developer to developer, share resources, and download API documentation as well as sample code.

Just as teamwork is essential to project success, so is having a project management tool that lets you integrate with all the business integrations that drive your business forward. No organization should have to spend valuable time weeding out information form a variety of systems. Find a way to bring them all together, and you'll achieve your project successes more efficiently and faster.

9. Missed Deadlines

"Expect the best, plan for the worst, and prepare to be surprised." ~ Denis Waitley

Missed deadlines cost money and break trust—an obvious statement that belies the fact that projects run late seemingly all the time.

What drives missed deadlines? Sometimes an executive or a customer mandates an aggressive finish date leaving your project team no choice but to comply. Other times an end date is set with some rough calculations, but there's no accurate way to track and manage resources and task completion along the way. Or, people are over-assigned.

The bottom line? If you want to build a reputation for getting projects done when you say you will, then finding a way to meet deadlines is imperative to your success. Even if going a smidge past deadline is a normal way of doing business in your organization, delivering projects late over time adds up, and not in

a good way! You pay a price when you can't keep your end of the bargain with customers and stakeholders.

The high cost of missing deadlines includes:

- Losing the confidence of your team, boss and stakeholders
- Losing existing clients and customers
- Losing opportunities for business growth
- Incurring overtime, especially toward the end of the project.
- Overworking employees—who might choose to leave your organization
- High stress, low morale and poor engagement from burnt out workers

Projects meet their deadlines because they're not only well-planned down to every detail and resource, but they're realistic. This means the schedule makes room for uncertainty and unexpected surprises. Team members are assigned to work based on their availability; the right software is used to provide accurate and updated insight into the plan, and it's easy to identify which tasks are on schedule and which ones are running late.

This way, even if there's a renegotiation of deadlines during the course of the project, you're able to identify issues way before they occur; teams can plan, strategize, re-allocate resources and get the customer involved long before things blow up.

Here are some key benefits of meeting your project delivery dates:

- You save money for your organization and your customers.
- You gain the trust and confidence of your team, boss and stakeholders.
- You create a culture where people actually believe in their deadlines.

DEADLINES

BEST CASE
3 HOURS

EXPECTED FINISH

WORST CASE
6 HOURS

E

h 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8

PROBABILITY OF COMPLETION   LOW   HIGH

- You build customers and grow the business.
- People want to work for and with you.
- Work quality increases because people aren't working fast and furiously.
- You create a work environment that everyone wants to be part of.

Here's how LiquidPlanner helps your team meet project completion dates

We created LiquidPlanner as an antidote to unreliable scheduling tools and missed deadlines. Our software was created around the belief that teams work best when they can make best/worst case estimates that account for the uncertainty inherent in all projects, and when they can rely on a scheduling engine that automatically updates whenever plan items change. Here are some of our unique features that help teams make their deadlines:

Ranged estimates

LiquidPlanner manages uncertainty by using ranged estimations based on best case/worst case scenarios. Building schedules around two-point estimates based on effort gives teams realistic dates because the risk is built in. This means that project managers and team leaders can speak with confidence about project status and delivery dates because they're rooted in reality.

Predictive finish dates

LiquidPlanner's scheduling engine calculates all plan details—estimates, assigned resources—and delivers an expected delivery date all the way up to the project level. And every time a change is made, the scheduler automatically recalculates the plan and gives you the latest statistical likelihood of achieving your given finish dates.

Resource-driven scheduling engine

Our scheduling engine reflects how resources are allocated—from project costing to capacity planning that incorporates everyone's availability. This type of real picture helps you distribute resources effectively, see where you might be falling short (or going over) and keep the project on budget and on time. Meeting your deadlines is not an impossible task. With the right scheduling software and a realistic approach that accounts for uncertainty and all of your available resources, you'll master the art of delivering projects on time. Your customers, team and organization will love you for it.

≋ **Liquid**Planner®

LiquidPlanner is project management software for technology teams that need reliable solutions to complex problems. We help teams thrive in the face of common challenges by turning plans into real-time schedules that everyone can trust.

To learn more and get a demo, visit

LiquidPlanner.com