

What's the ROI of a Work Management Platform?

A global study



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Foreword

Clarity for your workplace and your investment

From the CEO to new hires, everyone wants to be part of an effective organization.

Research suggests that the adoption of collaborative technologies has accelerated by 5 years already in 2020.¹ Yet the growing speed of digital transformation adds both new complexity and opportunity in keeping teams organized and connected.

In unprecedented times, how can organizations use technology to achieve continuity and clarity, whether on day-to-day tasks, teamwork, or the company mission?

We believe that a new category of tools, Work Management Platforms, can address this gap. Work Management Platforms—which empower teams to orchestrate their workflows—help everyone to do their best work and enable businesses to flourish today and tomorrow.

With economies and individual organizations under pressure, though, we need more than belief alone.

This is why, in partnership with Sapio Research, Asana analyzed the behaviour and attitudes of more than 3,000 knowledge workers across Australia, France, Germany, Japan, the UK and the US who are using Work Management Platforms. We wanted to understand how their workplaces have changed, and the critical role these technologies are playing in keeping teams connected and enabling organizations to coordinate their work to achieve their goals.

Fundamentally, we wanted to understand the impact and return on investment of Work Management Platforms.

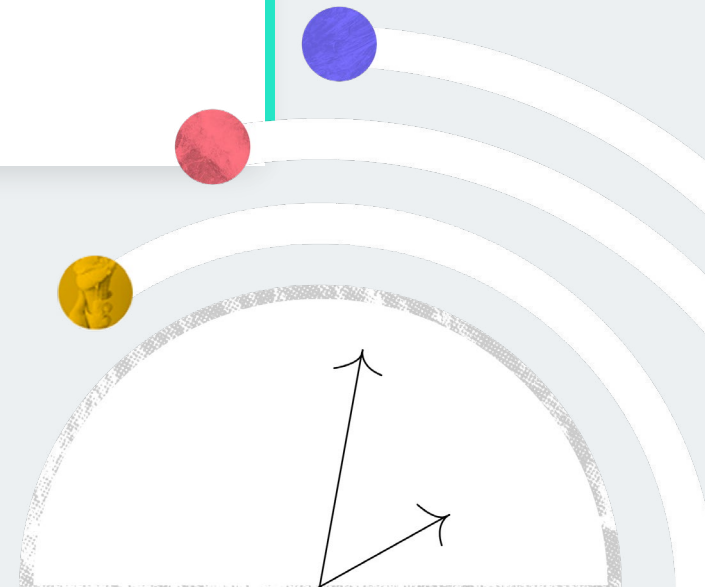
To do so, we took a holistic view of both the role Work Management Platforms play within organizations and—crucially—the return on investment they provide.

This report explores what Work Management Platforms do, and why organizations need them, their impact on effective work and talent retention, and ultimately answers the question of whether or not they provide a meaningful return on investment.

¹ <https://blog.asana.com/2020/06/idc-culture-of-collaboration/>

Preview of the key findings

- 89% say that a Work Management Platform is worth the financial investment, a statement that 93% of Asana users agree with.
- 87% see a direct correlation between using a Work Management Platform and improved productivity.
- 86% say Work Management Platforms improve clarity on goals and the impact that their work has, boosting individual, team, and organizational engagement.
- 64% of users say they wouldn't be able to do their job without one, with 77% of Asana users sharing this sentiment. Once in use, Work Management Platforms become an essential tool.



1.

What is a Work Management Platform?

Work Management Platforms provide a systematic approach to orchestrating an organization's workflows—be it a project, an ongoing process, or routine tasks—to give teams the clarity they need in order to hit their goals faster.

These tools are about coordinating people and work across all levels of an organization to ensure that everyone has the information they need to accomplish the work that matters most.

People sometimes conflate work management with project management, but they're different. Work management is a broad system, encapsulating projects, planning and processes. Essentially, project management and associated methodologies like Agile or Waterfall, sit within work management but they are just one branch of the overall system.



2.

Why do organizations need Work Management Platforms?



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In the fast-paced world of business, which is increasingly distributed between the office, home, and co-working spaces, organizations feel the impact of every aspect of an ineffective workflow.

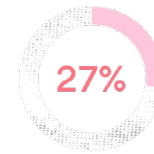
But the biggest barriers to efficiency do have a common thread; they are all fuelled by a lack of clarity.

This can manifest in time lost in unnecessary meetings and admin (27%), poor communication overall (26%) or a lack of clear processes (25%).

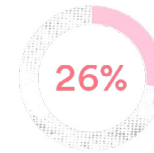
Number one barrier to efficiency by country

- **Australia:** Time wasted on meetings or admin (32%)
- **France:** A lack of alignment and time wasted on meetings or admin (27%)
- **Germany:** Poor communication (26%)
- **Japan:** Poor communication (28%)
- **UK:** Too many apps/tools to get work done (25%)
- **US:** Overworked employees (30%)

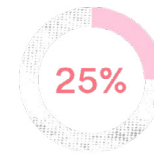
Top 5 biggest global barriers to efficiency



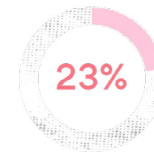
Time wasted on meetings/admin



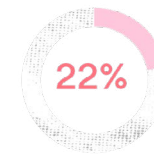
Poor communication



Lack of clear processes



Too many apps/tools to get work done

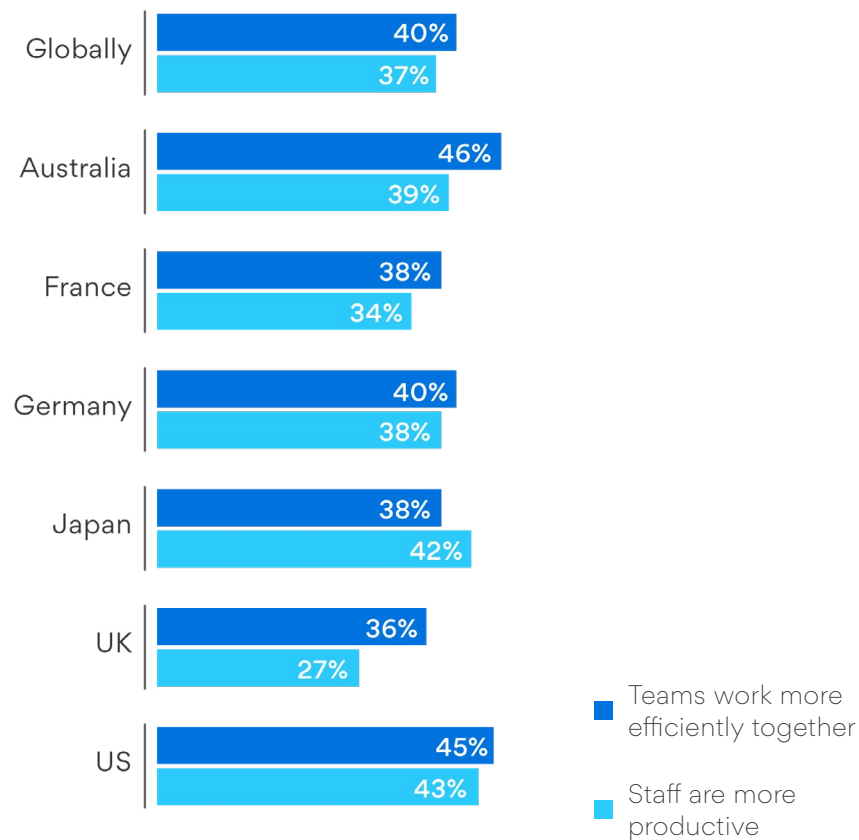


Overworked employees

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Organizations that adopt a Work Management Platform find it transformational. Globally teams see their teams working more efficiently together. Meanwhile, monotonous low-impact work—like staying on top of a never-ending inbox—plummets, with 71% saying less time is spent going back and forth on email.

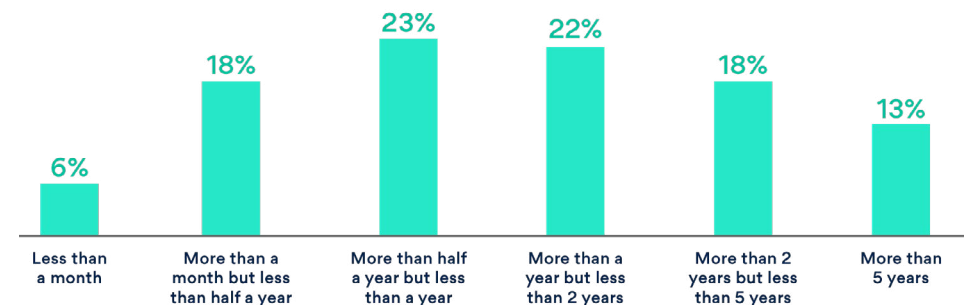
Top benefit from using a Work Management Platform breakdown



How the benefits of a Work Management Platform keep growing over time

After the first 30 days of using a Work Management Platform, users are likely to see an increase in their own, their team's, and their organization's productivity. These benefits keep growing. On average 29% say that a Work Management Platform helps save costs in the long-run, but this rises to 37% for those who have used one for 5 years or more.

How long have Work Management Platforms been in use for



3.

How does a Work
Management Platform
impact productivity?



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The knowledge workers we spoke to echo the clear role of Work Management Platforms in creating more effective and efficient workplaces.

On average, each individual, team and organization has seen a 50% increase in productivity—meaning an increase in work completed—thanks to using a Work Management Platform.

But what impacts productivity? How does using a Work Management Platform alter the fabric of a worker's day? And why does this make this technology a critical pillar in the essential work tech stack?

Top 6 factors workers say make for an effective workplace

36%

Better distribution of work across teams

34%

Clarity on current and future tasks

32%

Being more aligned with colleagues

31%

Clarity on deadlines

31%

Fewer meetings

29%

Automated features to reduce repetitive work

There are several fundamental ways organizations are leveling up by using a Work Management Platform. These range from improving how individual, team, and organizational tasks, roles and responsibilities are distributed to offering clarity on what needs to happen when, and boosting time on focused, deep work.

Renewed focus and clarity, supplemented by effective processes, means teams are able to streamline their schedules and dive deeper into the work that matters most. Overall, by empowering individuals, teams and organizations to get more work done, Work Management Platforms can create a significant competitive advantage to a business.

By reducing the time lost on status updates and unnecessary meetings, 26% more time each week is focused on skilled work that individuals are trained to do. This means a Marketing Manager, for example, can spend more time strategizing and developing impactful marketing campaigns. That's 26% more time on the work that makes a critical difference in today's fast-paced business landscape.

The average working day

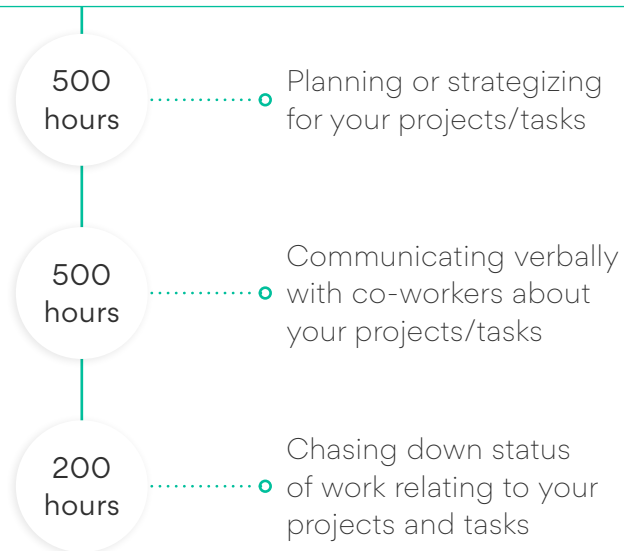
Asana's Anatomy of Work Index revealed the unbalanced day of the average knowledge worker:

- 60% of time is spent on work about work (busy work including searching for information, hunting down documents, sitting in meetings).
- Just 27% of time is dedicated to skilled craft and deep work.
- The remaining 13% is spent planning.

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In total 1,200 more hours every week are spent on the deep work employees were hired for when a Work Management Platform is in use. In Germany, this rises to 1,850 hours, the largest gain of any country surveyed.

How much time back does a 1,000+ employee organization get from using a Work Management Platform each week?

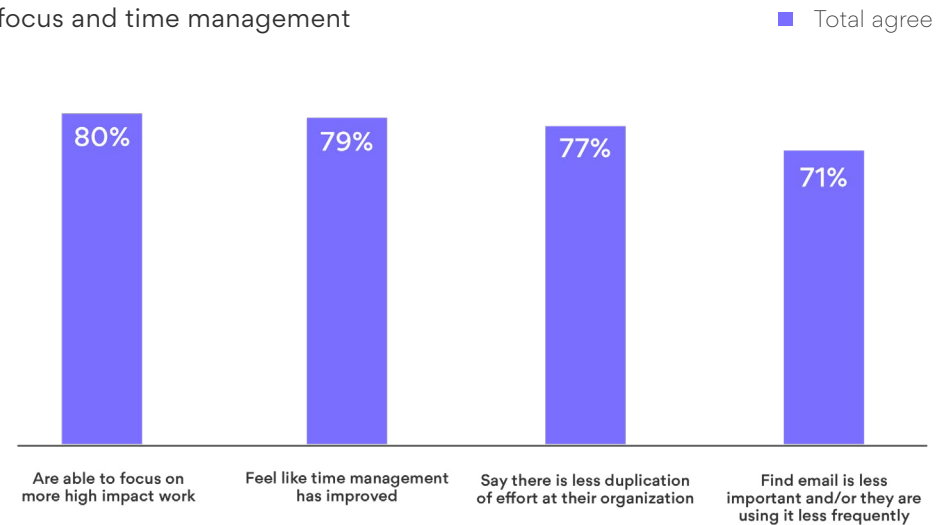


Not only are businesses benefiting from more time spent executing impactful work on an individual level, but 81% also see an improvement in team collaboration.

The collaborative benefits of a Work Management Platform are essential in a world of increasingly distributed and remote work. Often, when teams are spread out across various locations, silos can occur and leave businesses spending more time on admin and processes e.g. chasing status updates, rather than deep, meaningful work.

Alongside this, beyond the office walls, new challenges are coming to light, as new work paradigms accelerate.

How using a Work Management Platform improves focus and time management



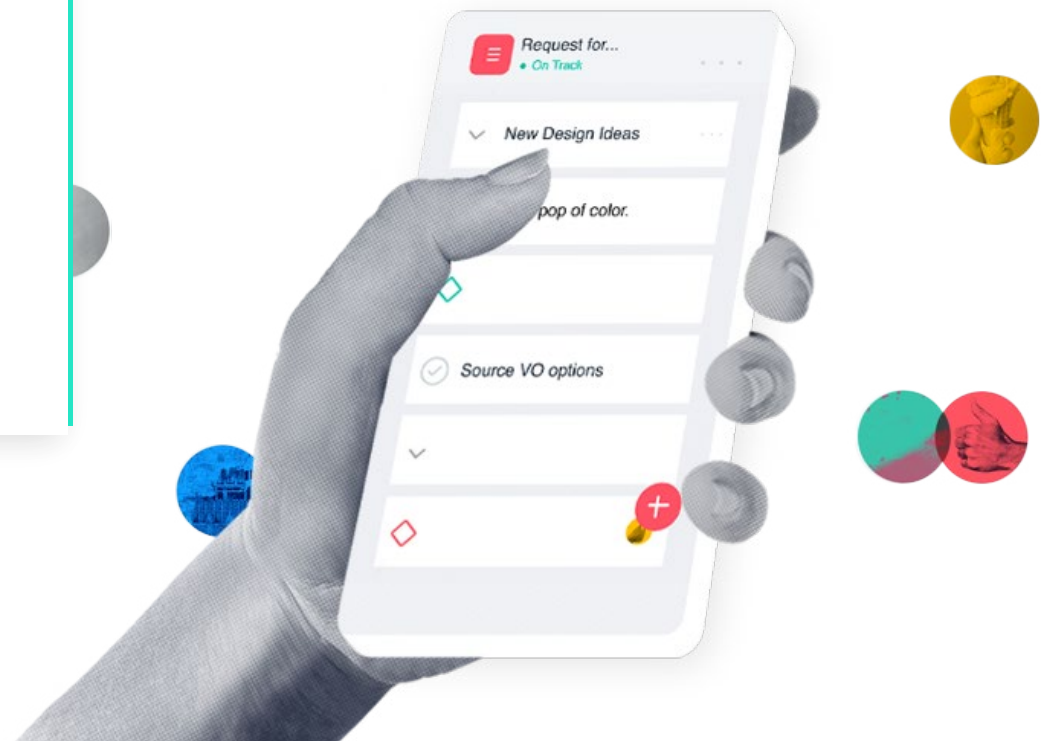
Top challenges faced by remote and distributed workers

Our recent Anatomy of Work: Remote Teams report, conducted in April 2020, as businesses and workers responded to the COVID-19 pandemic, revealed the top challenges when working remotely as:

1. Staying motivated
2. Managing stress related to global crises
3. An inability to switch off and disconnect

When workers have clarity their motivation doubles.² 39% of respondents state that a Work Management Platform helps centralize information, which creates this clarity, both in and out of the office. Additionally, 32% state it reduces the number of calls and meetings taking place, meaning workers can focus when needed but switch off at the end of the day.

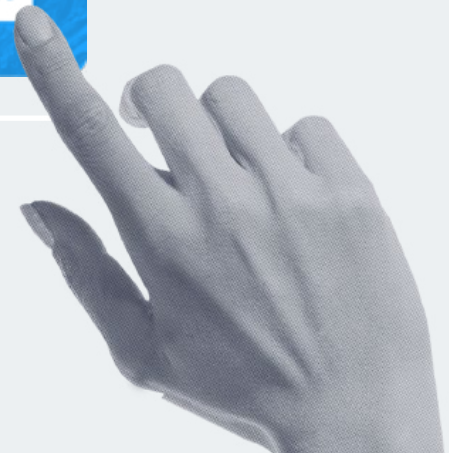
The research shows that Work Management Platforms drive collaboration, clarity, and organizational focus. This is key to maximizing the value of resources in the face of new pressures, leveling up effective working, both in the short and long term, and tackling challenges across distributed workforces.



² Anatomy of Work Index, 2019

4.

The impact of Work Management Platforms on staff retention, talent acquisition and happiness



Great workplaces are made up of great people.

When considering new technology, it's important to look not only at hours saved and productivity boosted, but how new tools can help positively shape an organization's culture—a key route to reducing overall attrition and its associated costs. What foundations do Work Management Platforms build for teams and the employees that use them, and how do they help secure and engage future teammates?

Workers experience a variety of benefits from using Work Management Platforms. 82% manage their time better, and the same number also have greater clarity on project progress. 65% also state it reduces burnout.

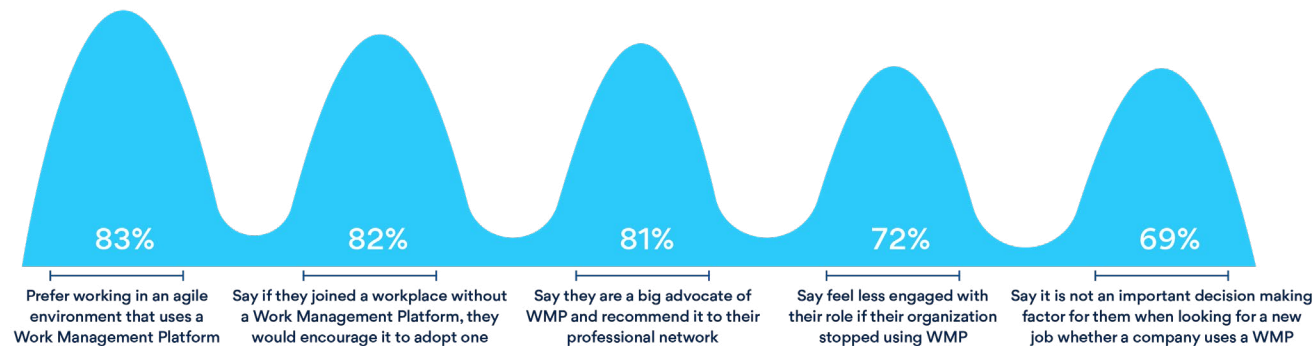
Overall, almost all (92%) users of Work Management Platforms are happy with their current job.

Unsurprisingly, workers that use Work Management Platforms are reluctant to give them up.

How employees feel about workplaces using Work Management Platforms

- 83% of knowledge workers preferred working in an agile environment that used a Work Management Platform.
- 82% said if they joined a workplace without a Work Management Platform, they would encourage it to adopt one.
- Asana users were more likely than other Work Management Platform users to say if their organization stopped using a Work Management Platform, they would feel less engaged.

Work Management Platforms and their effects on the workplace



How individuals reinvest time gained from a Work Management Platforms

Work Management Platforms are an investment in the future—not only because of their ability to level up a business, but also because they ensure continuity in uncertain times.

Globally, improving productivity is the number one way time is reinvested. However, 34% also use the time they gain to finish work on time, and 34% invest it into developing skill sets.

In short, Work Management Platforms do much more than simply streamline tasks. By investing in Work Management Platforms, organizations gain a happier, more focused workforce that's engaged with work and developing professionally.

Work Management Platforms for all?

- 66% stated they didn't know how they ever managed to do their job without a Work Management Platform.
- 77% said every company should have a Work Management Platform in place.

Where does time gained from using a Work Management Platform go?

To get more work done/be more productive

37%

To finish work on time

34%

To grow professionally/improve my skillset

34%

To learn something new

30%

Ability to be proactive and grow in my career

28%

Skilled work

26%

To get involved in companywide initiatives

25%

Company/forward planning

24%

To take more breaks

20%

5.

The financial benefits of Work Management Platforms



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Work Management Platforms are an investment in the future—not only in their ability to level up a business, but also in ensuring continuity in uncertain times.

Understandably though, for many organizations and business leaders they must see the financial benefits before any investment takes place. So, how does a Work Management Platform impact the bottom line? Do workers believe the budget put toward a Work Management Platform is money well spent?

According to 89% of users—and 93% of Asana users—the answer is yes.

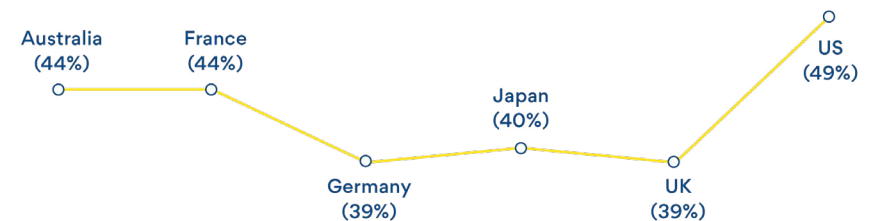
Top 8 risks of missing mission-critical deadlines



Several factors lead them to make this judgement.

- Aligning teams to save wasted time:** 58% state Work Management Platforms improve the ability for a team to reach its targets and objectives.
- Hitting mission critical deadlines:** Knowledge workers estimate that their team would miss 42% of mission-critical deadlines each month without a Work Management Platform. The consequences of missing these deadlines are vast for organizations. They put at risk not only targets and morale but business revenue and even profitability.
- Better use of time:** 79% of users say they have been able to complete more work since using a Work Management Platform. The ability for teams to work more efficiently means organizations can boost bottom lines by increasing the quantity of projects they take on as whole.
- Satisfied teams and an attractive workplace:** 92% of Work Management Platform users are happy with their current job and 69% consider an organization's use of a Work Management Platform an important factor when considering a new role. By supporting the retention of current teams and making the organization more appealing to potential hires, this technology can cut attrition costs.

Mission-critical team deadlines missed each month per country without a Work Management Platform



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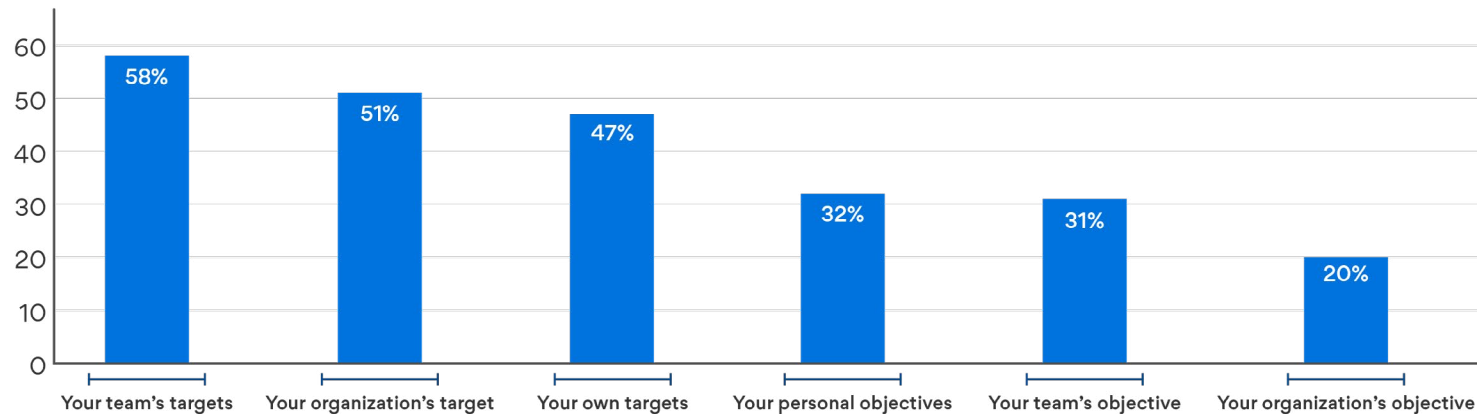
The findings show that Work Management Platforms are an essential investment for businesses that wish to bolster their resilience to rapid change, refocus their organization on skilled work and reduce unnecessary meetings, repetitive administrative tasks, and unclear processes.

Adopting a Work Management Platform provides a catalyst for creating more clarity and accountability across a business.

Clarity means having everyone on the same page about what the organization's goals are, who is responsible for the different actions that will ladder up to your goals, and knowing when that work is being done.

Clarity reduces stress and confusion and helps us communicate what matters, and, more importantly, helps us know what matters. While this is always important to an organization, it's especially important when work needs to pivot quickly due to shifting priorities and rapid change.

How many targets and objectives does a Work Management Platform help you reach



Conclusion

In our current environment, it's easy for individuals, teams, and even entire organizations to become overwhelmed.

A growing list of apps and notifications, a poorly planned project, or a rapid and unexpected move to remote work can sap the vitality from work and create confusion where there should be clarity.

Workplace magic happens when teams can focus on deep, skilled, and thoughtful work. Too often though, teams at every level of an organization don't have the time and clarity to fuel that focus. The right technology can make a real difference.

However, our research found that tech alone does not create change. It's the leaders and the workers that do. When they embrace Work Management Platforms, they can reveal the true benefit they offer.

That benefit is a powerful ability to enable continuity in the face of unprecedented change, and access to new organizational opportunities. Together they show a Work Management Platform is a vital investment in an increasingly digital and distributed world of work.

Work Management Platforms provide tangible business outcomes



Increased efficiency

82% are more efficient since using a WMP.



Greater impact

79% believe they have been able to complete more projects since using a WMP.



Greater transparency

71% of respondents are using email less since they started using a WMP.



Increased productivity

On average each individual organization has seen a 50% increase in productivity.

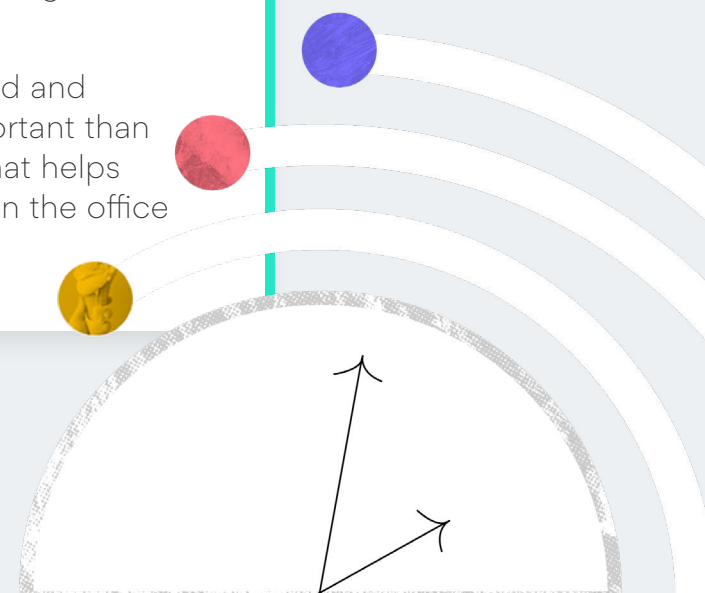


More skilled work

Workers spend 26% more time on skilled work with a WMP, compared to those without.

Leverage the power of a Work Management Platform with Asana

1. **Clarity:** To be effective, organizations need to provide clarity and visibility of deadlines, responsibilities, and goals. Asana enables individuals and teams to understand how their work contributes to company-wide priorities, ensuring they feel empowered, engaged, and connected to the work that matters most.
2. **Coordination:** Managing work across disparate technology often fails to deliver the real-time alignment and coordination companies need today. Asana provides transparency, breaks down silos and simplifies processes so that teams can focus on doing better work, faster. And, with [templates](#) ready to go, teams can plan and manage the projects successfully from day one.
3. **Collaboration:** Centralizing discussions and information enables teams to ask questions, share knowledge and problem-solve effectively. Teams using Asana can rapidly link up and tackle new challenges, progress projects, and ultimately accomplish more.
4. **Continuity:** In uncertain times it's essential to stay connected and organized. This makes reducing work about work more important than ever. Asana provides a single, go-to source of information that helps organizations stay structured and organized, whether that's in the office or across a distributed remote team.



Case study

How Autodesk's Customer Events team became 50% more effective with Asana

Autodesk creates software for people who make things—from skyscrapers to high-performance cars to smartphones. Being at the heart of this global community of creators, Autodesk hosts over 30 highly-attended events every year.

Autodesk's 30-person Global Customer Events team is behind the logistics of each event, keeping everything operating smoothly, from production timelines to the development of conference apps. However, the team lacked a central project management tool and was tired of inefficient planning and confusion about deadlines. So the team turned to Asana.

Today, Autodesk's Global Customer Events team uses Asana for general project management and planning key timelines to keep everyone aligned and working from the same information. By iterating on past Asana templates planning is accelerated, consistency is maintained as teams change, and critical steps are never missed.

The team has also been able to reduce email and streamline manual work. Now inbound requests are submitted via an Asana Form (such as to live-stream a talk) and tasks are automatically assigned to the correct team member to evaluate and move forward. As a result of cutting manual processes and eliminating email entirely from this workflow, the team actions inbound requests five times faster.

In total, by managing work in Asana, the team has reduced email use by 75%. They also estimate that the centralization of plans, deadlines, and information in one place has made them 50% more effective.



About Asana

Asana is a work management platform that helps teams orchestrate their work, from daily tasks to strategic initiatives. With Asana, teams take the chaos out of planning, organizing, and executing work so they can get more done, faster.

[Learn more.](#)

