

eBook

# Everyone is a project manager: A study and guide to successful project collaboration



# A deeper dive into project collaboration

Times are changing, and so are the ways people work and collaborate. With technology and globalization as driving forces, pressure is put on organizations to do more with less. We are armed with technology but complex work streams, tight deadlines, and geographical boundaries remain challenges for businesses all over the world.

Long gone are the days of exclusively working with your office neighbor; modern teams must work together virtually and collaboratively to achieve business goals.

In order to learn more about the challenges of collaboration, teamwork, and project management in today's global 24/7 economy, Appleseed Partners conducted a survey with 200 people based in North America who manage or participate in projects.

The study was commissioned on behalf of Planview, a global leader in solutions for strategic planning, portfolio and resource management, project collaboration, and enterprise architecture. This eBook covers the top findings and prescriptive takeaways for project success.



# Modern teams are virtual



**38%** percent of people on teams work cross-functionally



**70%** work with members both inside and outside of their organization



**28%** work with geographically dispersed colleagues

We all have the desire to work together to deliver and achieve great things. That hasn't changed. What has changed is the technology at hand. But despite the rapid development in everything from instantly accessible cloud software to mobile devices, organizations continue to rely on outdated and disparate tools for project and team collaboration.

To get the full picture of team and project dynamics, participants in the study were selected if they engaged in project management and collaboration with

people inside and/or outside of their company. The participants represented operations, marketing, IT, executive management, finance, professional services, product development, procurement, sales, and human resources with three-quarters representing companies with 500 to 2,000 total employees.

The research revealed that 38% percent of people on teams work cross-functionally, 70% work with members both inside and outside of their organization, and 28% work with geographically dispersed colleagues.

# Everyone is a project manager

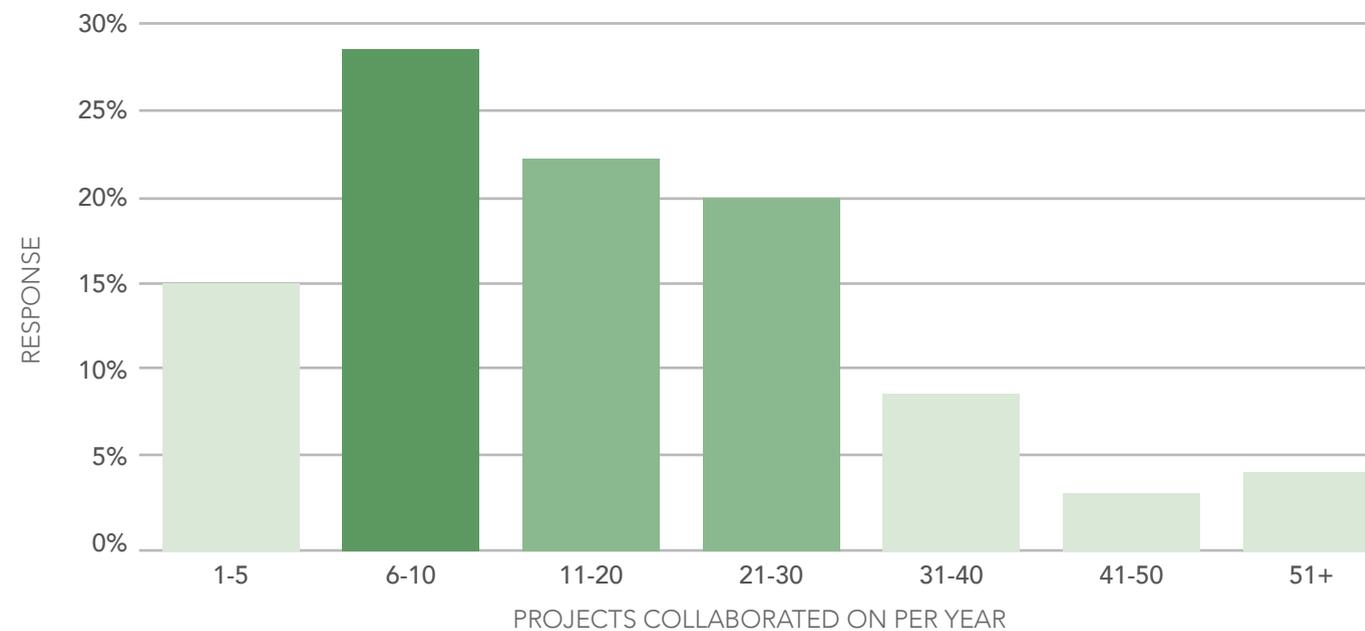
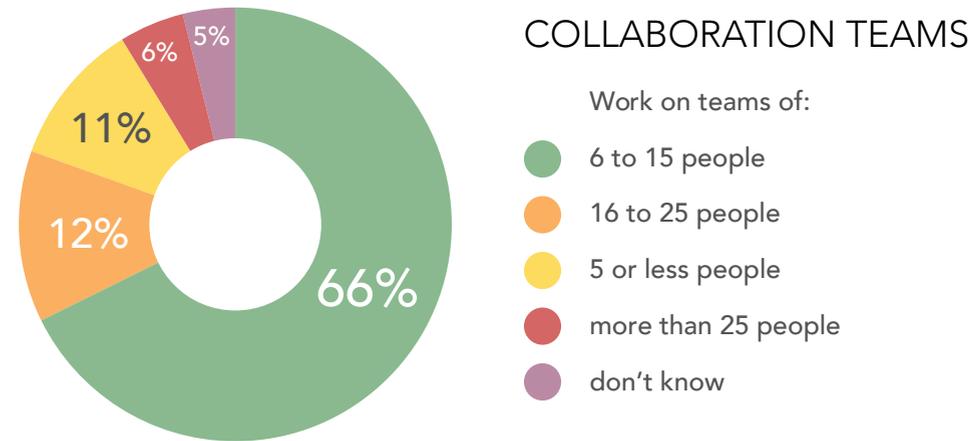
Survey says, 2 out of 3 participants are not project management certified — but manage projects as part of their role.

For many people, projects have become the default form of working - with or without a formal title. The research shows that two out of three participants who collaborate on team projects are not project management certified and for more than a third of them, “project management” is not their primary title or role. Yet, most workers have become ‘accidental’ project managers who constantly need to communicate and collaborate with a team to move a project forward.

Are you an accidental project manager?



# Complexity for 'accidental' project managers



An apparent risk for the accidental project manager is the ability to manage multiple projects and large-scale assignments. Two-thirds of teams work on 6-30 projects per year, some large and some small. Team sizes, in turn, vary widely, with two-thirds working on teams of 6-15 people and another 20% working on larger teams of more than 16 people.

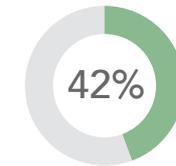
With this type of complexity, the quality of collaboration is paramount to keeping projects on track. Many teams, however, face collaboration hurdles that are creating frustration and stunting productivity instead.

# Top 5 collaboration hurdles

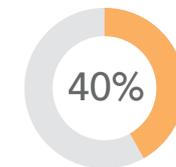
Despite today's modern technology at our fingertips to support a dynamic work environment, many of us still struggle with efficiency. We desire smarter ways of working but rely on traditional tools and methods.

These are the top challenges that project managers are facing.

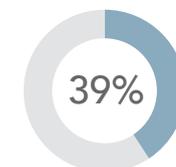
**1. Too many emails:** Team members are overwhelmed by email. With the constant stream of daily emails, staying focused on top priorities is a challenge.



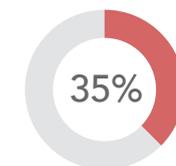
**2. Information is not easily accessible:** Who has done what and when? Where can I find the latest version? Project managers experience that timelines, project status, documents and data are difficult to share.



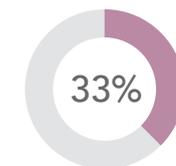
**3. Lack of workload visibility:** How can we efficiently keep track of what is going on and who's working on what? Team members are overcommitted or underutilized resulting in stress, overtime and project delays.



**4. Confusing cross-functional team collaboration:** People find it difficult and chaotic to collaborate across departments, functions and offices. Traditional and different ways of working clash, making it unproductive.



**5. The bring your own software dilemma:** The vast availability of productivity tools increases the freedom for the individual team member, but can cause communication chaos decreasing team efficiency.



# Project collaboration hurdles hurt

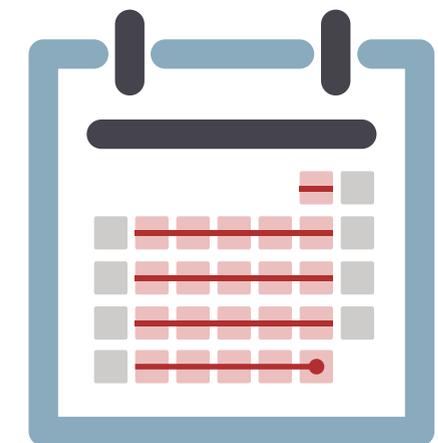
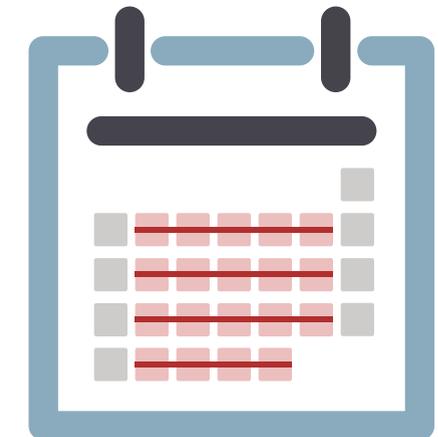
These top project collaboration hurdles are resulting in a wasted time that equates to **9 weeks per year**.

## The Impact on the Team

- Wasted time (**55%**)
- Frustrated team members (**45%**)
- Duplication of effort (**37%**)

## The Impact on the Business

- Projects delivered late (**34%**)
- Quality suffered (**33%**)
- Projects went over budget (**24%**)

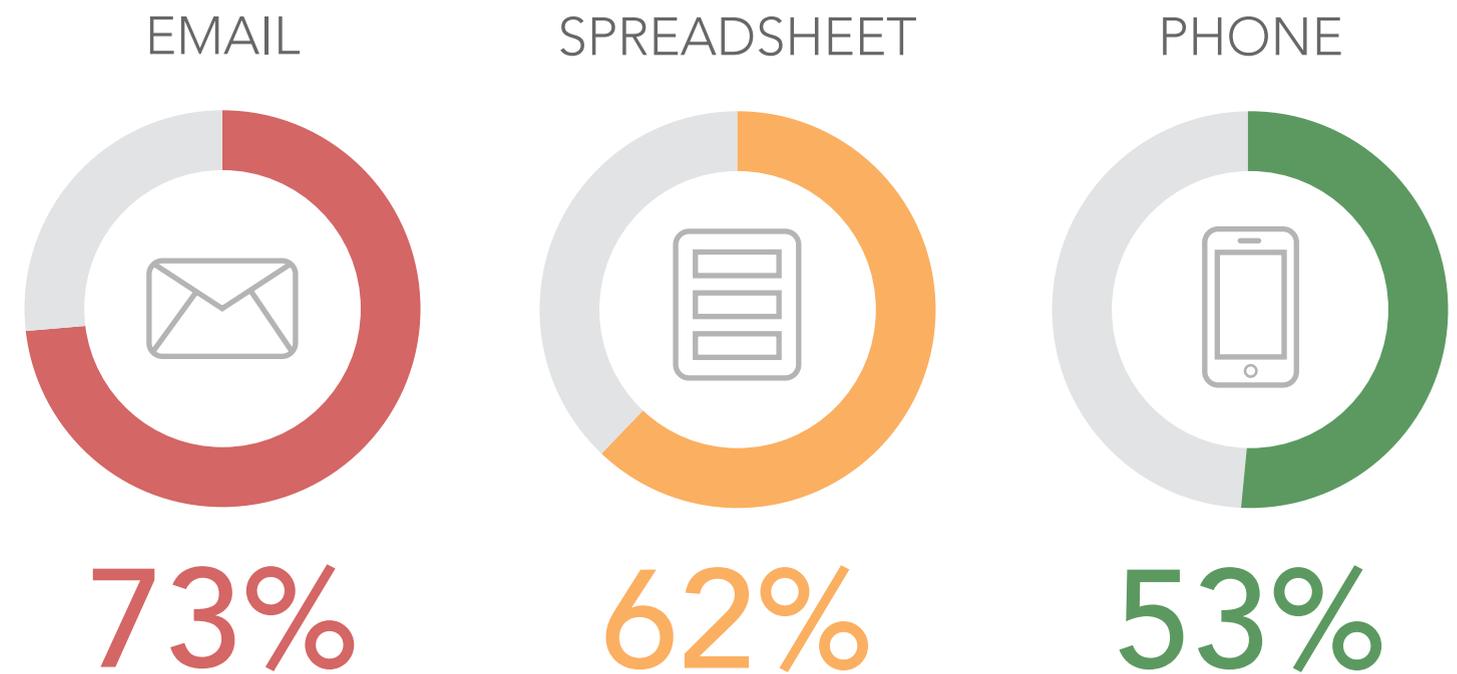


# Why technology is failing project teams

Ironically, the top hurdle of overly relying on email to collaborate is also overwhelmingly the top tool in use by modern teams. While email has a role in connecting teams, it can cause headaches and concerns about missing important information. The next two most widely used tools for collaboration are spreadsheets and the phone.

As a result of development of cloud technology and software tools, these methods are remarkably outdated in our mobile, dynamic, and social-media connected society. They fail when it comes to setting goals, creating a plan, tracking progress, sharing documents, and monitoring progress.

## THE TOP 3 TOOLS USED FOR PROJECT COLLABORATION TODAY



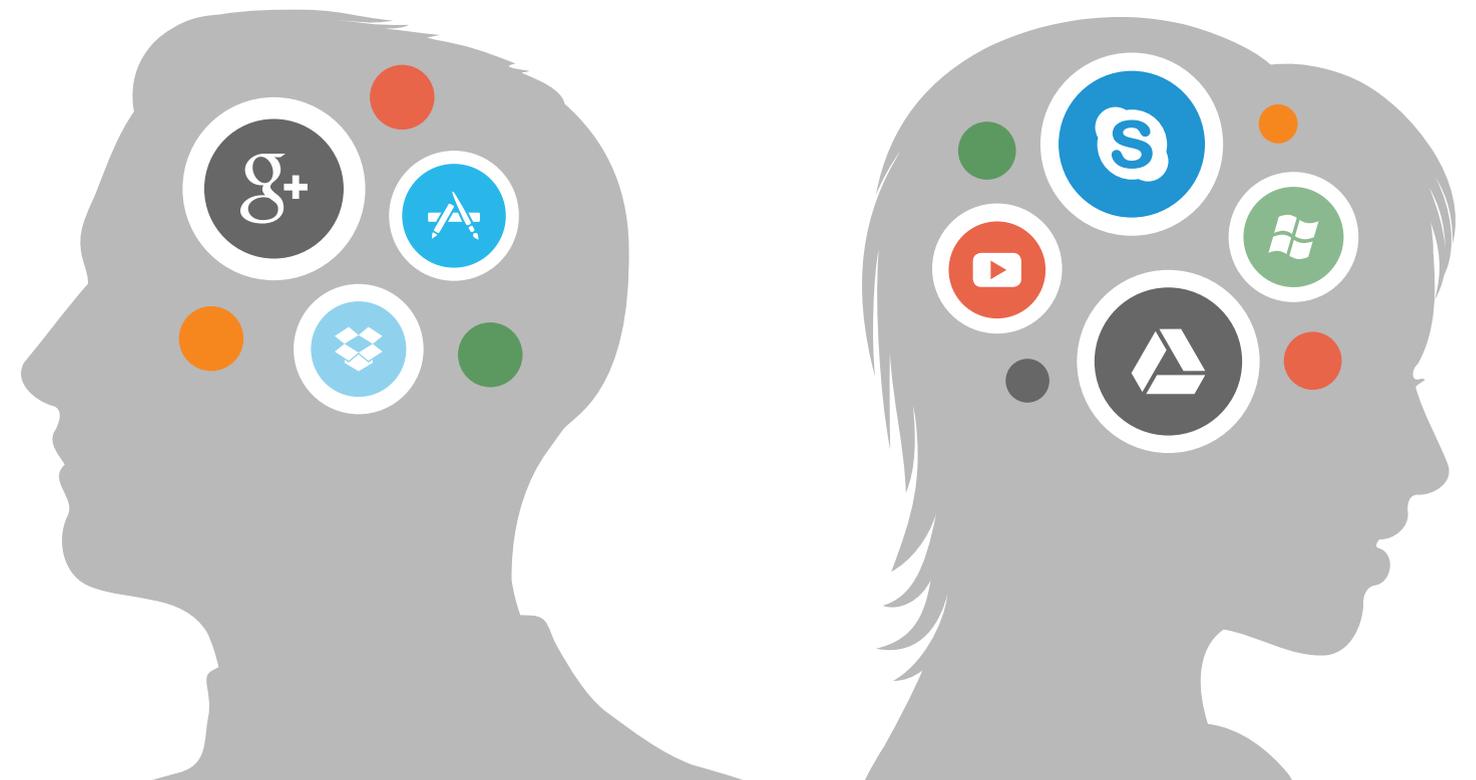
# Too many tools creates complexity

About 40% of respondents have tried other online collaboration tools including cloud-based storage options, online cloud tools, and shared spaces, but most provide only some capabilities needed to collaborate effectively.

In addition, the survey revealed that the average team member uses 4.5 different tools to manage projects and – to make matters worse – 33% stated that no one uses the same tools. While it is tempting to adopt new tools, the use of different, disconnected tools may actually exacerbate the problem. Thus, people turn back to email.

An average of **4.5 tools** are used today to collaborate on projects.

**33% say** "Everyone uses different tools."



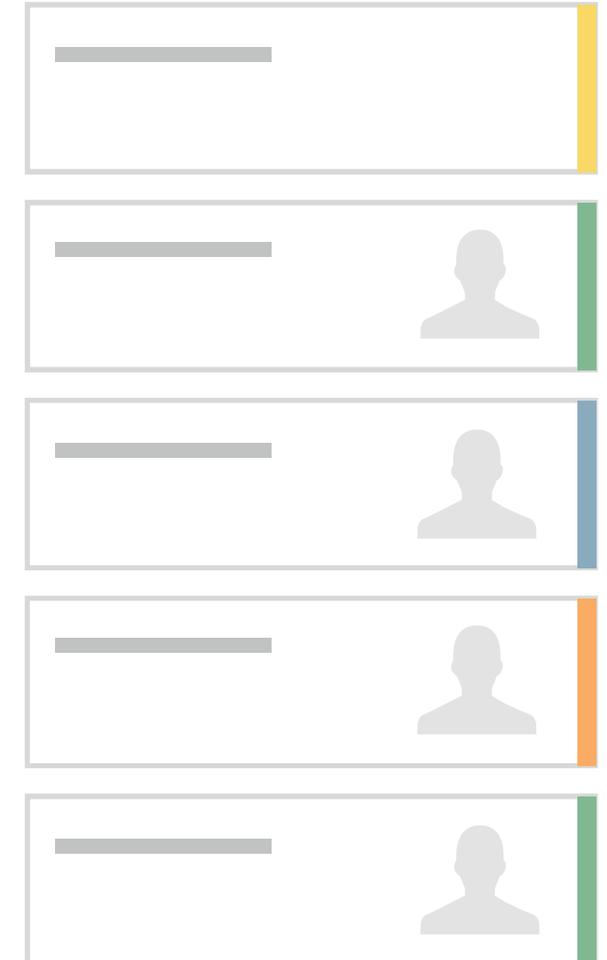
# Modern teams want one online workspace

Forty-three percent of collaborators express an overarching need to have an all-in-one online solution that includes the following four requirements:

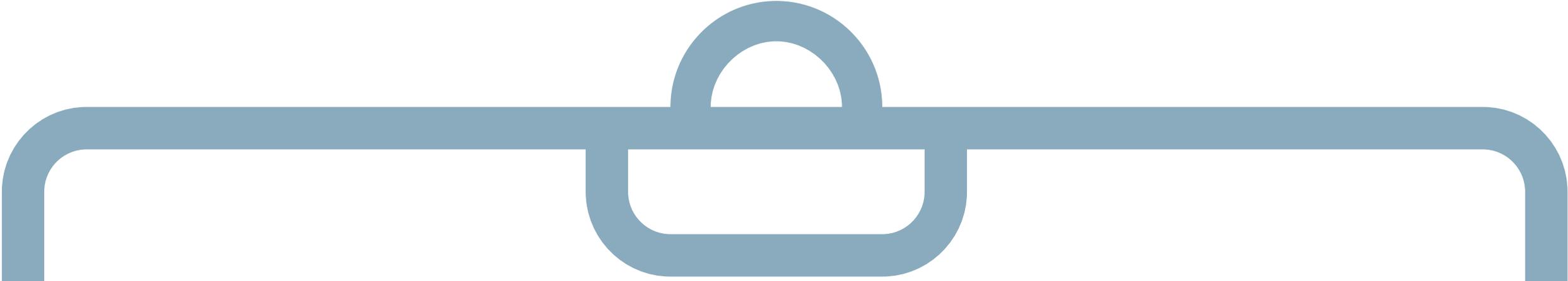
1. Document sharing with version control and iteration
2. Project planning, scheduling, charting and milestone tracking (ex. Gantt charts and Kanban boards)
3. Workload visualization by project team or individual
3. A dashboard to track multiple projects

Clearly, these must-haves are ill served by email, spreadsheets, and the phone and are difficult to put together with partial tools. By having these capabilities available in one, virtual, secure workspace, teams can elevate their communication and productivity.

These capabilities represent the needs of modern, innovative teams that work across boundaries demanding transparency into the team's progress, bottlenecks, opportunities, and outcomes.



# 6-step checklist for project success



For teams interested in moving past the collaboration status quo, follow these top tips:

1. **Create an online workspace** where project managers and teams can collaborate together more effectively to share ideas.
2. **Be mindful of the 4 technology requirements** when adopting a project collaboration solution.
3. **Use collaboration tools** that allow senior management, project managers and team members to keep track of actions and project milestones more easily.
4. **Identify overcommitted team members** to reduce stress and increase morale and quality of work.
5. **Embrace more effective communication methods** to stop email addiction and keep people connected.
6. **Safeguard sensitive data** to project organization's reputation and bottom-line.

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