

Three Tools to Manage Your Projects

Use these keys to find a tool that works for you.

By Amy Sample Ward

Project management. How can something that sounds so easy be so difficult? Or, maybe it isn't difficult in your organization—maybe it's impossible, unwieldy, frustrating, an optimistic goal, or something no one wants to do.

Some of us are natural project managers. Some of us aren't. To help all of us stay on track, there's a huge selection of project management and collaboration tools available online. Finding a tool that works for you shouldn't be a huge project in itself, though! The keys to selecting a project management tool for your organization are pretty simple:

- **People:** Who will be involved in this project? What technical and time limits do they have that will influence the usability of a new tool?
- **Tools:** What other tools are you using for document storage and sharing, notifications, communication, and contact management? Will those tools need to integrate with your project management tool?
- **Time:** Is this a one-time project, or will you repeat it every year or every month? Does the project have an end-date, or is it an ongoing program?

Project management, when done right, supports successful work, including staff collaboration, steady progress, and a pathway for continued work. Here are three tools to help you and your team manage your projects:

Trello (<http://trello.com/>) is a free online tool that provides a visual outline of tasks. You can use it for individual projects as well as with a team. Trello uses a "board" or display page where tasks are lined up and can be moved with a click of the mouse. You can orient your board to have columns for different stages of work, use filters to sort by task status or by task owner, and more. Trello is valuable for discrete projects and can also be used to manage repeated processes, like a monthly event or an annual fundraiser.

Try it out today at trello.com

“How can something that sounds so easy be so difficult?”

asana (<http://asana.com/>) goes beyond tasks and timelines and seeks to replace all those project-related e-mails with a central communication and content hub. With asana, you can manage your own tasks, review what each team member is working on, and start discussions. This app also integrates with many other services you may already be using, like Box, Dropbox, Google Drive, Mailchimp, and Wordpress. Like Trello, asana is a free, Web-based application.

See if asana works for you at asana.com

FMYI (<http://fmyi.com/>) is an online collaboration service that combines tasks and timelines, file storage and discussions, and social engagement. You needn't limit your project management to the work on your to-do list; you can also manage contacts and engage with a social networking platform. If you have a small team (10 or fewer people) and plan to have an equally small use of the system, this app is free; otherwise, there are scaled pricing options for more people and more storage. FMYI comes with free phone and e-mail support to ensure your success with the system.

Start your free trial at fmyi.com

S

Amy Sample Ward (amy@nten.org) is CEO of NTEN: The Nonprofit Technology Network and author of Social Change Anytime Everywhere.

