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**Empowering a More  
Productive Workforce  
with Accurate Time  
Tracking**

employees are more **confident**  
**and productive** when their  
time is being used effectively

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# Empowering a more productive workforce with accurate time tracking



By enabling employees to report their time more accurately across accounts, project managers will be able to assign the right employee to the right project, making both employees and customers happy when projects remain within budget and deadline.

Simply put, better time tracking data means more productive, happier employees-and that means more successful customer engagements for the business. Fortunately, there is a way to collect accurate data and enable better project planning.

**Time tracking software that prompts employees a few times a day, via Slack or Zoom, to log their hours for various projects will help train employees to track their time better.**

At the same time, it will also provide the precise data directors and managers need to plan resources and schedule multiple projects with various employees.

Successful professional services engagements use time and resources effectively and cost- efficiently. Without being able to accurately track employee time across projects, professional services directors and project managers cannot determine the ultimate reasons why a project went over budget or missed deadlines. Capturing accurate time tracking data can mean the difference between successful project completion and happy customers and failed projects and discouraged employees.

## Why Projects Go Over Budget

All project managers have been there. They are nearing the end of a project and find that the budget has already been blown. How can that be possible? **There are several reasons.**



### **Resource planning is flawed because of inaccurate or incomplete data.**

While time tracking is a common expectation in professional services firms, too often the time that employees enter is inaccurate or incomplete. That's unfortunate. Project managers and other corporate leaders, of course, rely on this data for pricing, budgeting and measuring productivity. They base important decisions on this data. But, the end result of flawed data can lead to disaster.



### **Time entered after the fact is guesswork and generally understated.**

It's common for employees to scramble at the end of the week to enter their data, trying to recall how they spent their time over the past several days. Those recollections are, of course, almost always flawed. And that can be costly. In an article in Harvard Business Review, Gretchen Gavett reports on the results of a study that indicates that poor time reporting has a significant impact on the U.S. economy-estimated that about 50 million hours, or \$6.4 billion a day in productivity is not captured or reported.

Dinvy research has revealed that employees tend to underreport their time by as much as 30%. Think of the impact this gap can have on project budgets.

**When projects go over budget it's not just the company that suffers; managers and employees feel the impacts as well.**



### **Catch-up efforts at the end of projects yields unexpected surprises.**

In some cases, employees don't even enter their time at the end of the week. Instead, as a project deadline draws near they scramble to recreate all of the time they've spent on the project over the past several weeks or months. Suddenly a project that appeared to be on track and within budget parameters, is significantly over budget. It's too late to create a change order or revised scope of work. The client isn't going to accept these overages. And in most cases, the firm will end up eating those costs.



### **Poor data from previous projects results in inaccurate estimates for future projects.**

What do project managers do when they pull together a bid for a client or new project? They look back at previous projects to get a baseline for how much time might be required. When those baselines are flawed because data was incomplete or inaccurate, future projections will be flawed as well. It's a self-fulfilling cycle of misinformation and missed opportunities.

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## Impact on Managers

Managers, at the core, are responsible for managing people and other resources to achieve results. They want to accomplish as much as they can with as few resources as possible. That's how they make their mark. It's not an easy task.

When making decisions and projections based on flawed or incomplete data, managers' plans are destined to fail. However, when they have accurate data they can plan

resources appropriately, predict challenges and plan for success in the future.

**Without data they can rely on, managers aren't able to budget effectively or accurately.**

In addition, they are not able to use resources efficiently and are at risk for missing deadlines. All of this can lead to disgruntled employees. And, ultimately, they're faced with lost revenue and overages that eat into the organization's bottom line.



When managers have good data, though, they can address common issues proactively and confidently:

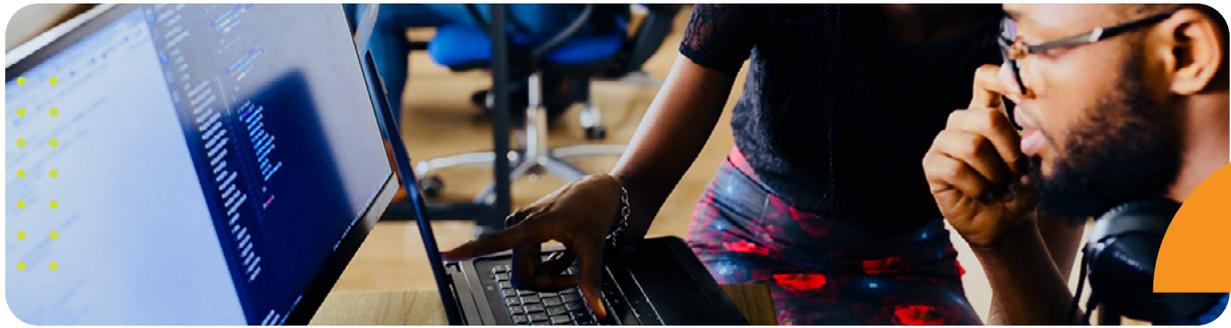
"We're just not going to be able to transfer Client X to you; your time allocation shows you just don't have the required capacity to handle the account."

"I know you've been feeling overwhelmed lately. Let's take a look at your time allocations to see if there's any opportunity to shuffle things around."

"We can definitely get you some more help next quarter. I can see that you're maxed out."

Effective time tracking lays the foundation for critical conversations that impact employee satisfaction and engagement. Often, they're not able to justify their sense of overload and frustration with anything but subjective feelings.

When they -and others- can see how their time is being spent and have the ability to compare their time allocations to others to help benchmark productivity, **they can put facts behind their feelings.**



## Impact on Employees

Employees want to be productive. It's highly unlikely employees start the day thinking: "I really want to be unproductive today." No, most employees start each day with the best of intentions for producing quality work in a timely manner. Yet they often fail to do so.

Often this is the result of unrealistic expectations-too much work to accomplish during the available time.

When employees are tasked with the right amount of work, they feel more competent and confident.

Too often, employees can find themselves stuck between an Those facts can lead to productive discussions with managers about how their work might be shifted to lighten their load. The result: greater satisfaction and better engagement.

But to get there, organizations need access to a time tracking system, and process, that employees will use. That goes against the grain of most approaches. Getting it right can help to empower a more productive workplace.

## Building in Opportunity for Better Productivity

When accurate time data is collected in an ongoing manner at multiple points during the day through automated prompts, organizations have opportunity for better productivity. A time tracking system that starts from the premise of ensuring that accurate data is captured at the outset, paves the way for more successful project management, more productive staff, and more satisfied customers and clients.



### Starting from a factual foundation.

It is absolutely key that organizations lay a factual foundation for the evaluation of workflow and project success. Everything starts from a foundation of accurate, timely data entry.



### Sharing/benchmarking how time is spent.

With accurate data, managers are able to benchmark how time is spent by comparing activity across multiple employees. As best practices are identified, they can be shared, helping to increase productivity among all members of the team.

Employees also benefit by being able to determine where they may excel, and where they may have opportunity for improvement.



### Identifying under -and over- used resources.

In any organization there will be staff who are underutilized and staff who are over- utilized. Underutilized staff will suffer from boredom. Overutilized staff will suffer from burnout. Both can be addressed through the ability to identify where staff resources are being stretched too thin and where there may be opportunities to shift assignments and workload.



### Maximizing optimal use of available staff time and ability to take on more.

When organizations can readily identify how their staff resources are being used, they're able to spot opportunities to take on more customers, clients, and project work. That's key in budgeting and forecasting. This can have a significant impact on staff morale because managers are able to properly assign work based on what staff are truly capable of doing.

One of the biggest complaints that employees tend to have is that they're getting way too much work assigned to them. Part of the reason for that is that they're under booking their time.

Accurate time tracking allows managers to do what they're charged with doing-manage. The right time tracking tools

allow them to manage more effectively because they're basing decisions on sound, solid, reliable data.

For professional services firms, time is money. Project managers must make sure they are maximizing their time and employee resources with a reliable means of capturing real-time, reality-based time data.



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