Project and Portfolio Management Software

Evaluation Guide

BrightWork

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About This Guide

With so many project and portfolio management tools on the market today, how do you know which one is the right one for you?

Project management is not one-size-fits-all, which makes evaluating and selecting the right collaborative project and portfolio management solution quite challenging.

This guide provides practical and objective evaluation criteria to make your software decision easier and more effective.

The guide explores four important areas you should be looking for in your solution:

- Portfolio management
- Project management
- Work management
- Organizational project management.

In each of these four sections, there are three key capability sets that your chosen collaborative project management tool should deliver.

Accompanying this guide is the Project and Portfolio Management Weighted Scoring Sheet. This scoring sheet gives you an objective tool to compare solutions and to select the best project and portfolio management tool for your business.

The Business Case for Project and Portfolio Management Software

The Project Management Institute reports that organizations with mature project and portfolio management processes complete 35% more of their projects successfully.

When implemented correctly, PPM helps organizations to execute high-value projects at the right time, supported by the right resources and budget.

PPM software plays a vital role in delivering the strategic goals of an organization. The right software helps:

- **Senior management** to approve new projects, manage resources, and track portfolio performance.
- **Project managers** to plan, manage, and report on projects using standardized templates.
- Team members to find, do, and update their work across multiple projects, whilst collaborating easily with teammates.

PPM software also contributes to the success of the Project Management Office (PMO), a group or department responsible for defining and maintaining project management standards.

The Business Case for Project and Portfolio Management Software

The benefits of PPM software are numerous, including:

- Standardized processes and reports.
- Improved communication and collaboration, with all project information in one place.
- Increased visibility into performance, leading to faster decision-making.
- A complete view of the project pipeline, including resource allocation.
- Enhanced risk management.

As noted above, project management is not one-size-fits-all.

It's important to find a tool that supports your current project management processes, with room to evolve and mature in time.

This guide covers four important process areas to evaluate: Portfolio, Project, Work, and Organizational capabilities.

Accompanying this guide is the Project and Portfolio Management Weighted Scoring Sheet. This scoring sheet gives you an objective tool to compare solutions and to select the best project and portfolio management tool for your business.

Portfolio Management Capabilities

The first process area you should evaluate are the portfolio management capabilities. The ability to manage and report across multiple projects and portfolios is critical to project success and organizational performance.

Portfolio management capabilities ensure senior executives have real-time visibility into project status; can track resource allocation, and manage new project requests in one place.

The three key feature sets to look for under portfolio management are:

- Project Request Management
- Real-time Portfolio Dashboards
- Resource Management Tools.

Project Request Management

In many organizations, the process for deciding which projects are dropped or deferred and which ones are approved is informal, ineffective, and inconsistent.

Quite often, approved projects are not aligned with key organizational objectives, wasting resources on low value solutions.

Your solution should include a scalable project request management system for consistent and objective optimal project selection. Managing new requests, from Draft to Project Site Creation, should take just a few clicks.

The solution should also include resource allocation, which allows project managers to assign resources during project planning. This helps project reviewers to understand the impact of the proposed work on current and upcoming projects.

Real-Time Portfolio Dashboards

Senior executives often struggle to assess the performance of projects and portfolios in an organization.

Project status reports are unreliable and can vary in quality, consistency, and timeliness. When it comes to project management, surprises are not good, especially if it is bad news.

Your project management solution should provide real-time, cross-project portfolio reports that deliver the visibility needed for effective project control.

Reporting features can include metric tiles, KPI tracking, and scorecards. Users should also be able to drill-down into a report for more details, and create personalized views.

Resource Management Tools

Projects compete against each other for resources, and team members are often assigned to several projects at the same time.

Team members who have special expertise or scarce skills are usually in high demand, potentially causing bottlenecks on important projects.

Senior executives need an easy way to track work assignments to ensure that the right people are working on the right project at the right time and that no one is under- or over-utilized.

Project Management Capabilities

The second process area you should evaluate are the project management capabilities. Projects are increasingly delivered by 'accidental project managers', individuals who are not formally trained but need to manage projects from time to time.

To support different types of projects, methodologies, and levels of experience, look for simple, intuitive project management templates and automated reporting.

The three key feature for project management are:

- Project Management Templates
- Collaborative Toolset
- Automated Project Reporting.

Project Management Templates

Many projects get off to a bad start and go downhill from there. Your solution should include standardized project management templates to help project managers plan, initiate, and manage projects consistently.

When it comes to initiating a project, it is important to match templates to your local project management style and processes.

Templates should also include easy task management and project scheduling. Look for features such as Gantt charts, Kanban boards, and task lists.

Collaborative Software

One of the biggest challenges for project managers is that day-to-day project management is too time-consuming and difficult. They spend too much time doing unproductive work, like chasing team members for updates in order to re-plan a project and keep stakeholders updated.

Your solution should include a collaborative site that allows project managers to track work, and create accurate reports in one place.

Automated Project Reporting

Another challenge faced by project managers is keeping stakeholders informed in a regular and systematic way.

When stakeholders do not have complete accurate information, they are unable to provide the type of feedback required when issues do arise on the project.

Team members are often very busy, so you'll need a simple way to send task reminders when a task is assigned or is overdue.

Your solution should include built-in automated reporting to deliver project status updates to stakeholders and work reports to the team.

Work Management Capabilities

The third process area you should evaluate are the work management capabilities. Stretched across multiple projects and day-to-day work, team members can often find it hard to deliver on what is expected of them on a project.

As remote working becomes more popular, some team members may be working in different locations or time zones to the rest of the team. You may also need to manage freelancers and contract workers.

Work management and collaboration capabilities help the team to engage with their work, regardless of location

The solution should allow the team to view personalized reports, manage their work efficiently, and connect with other members of the team.

The three key feature sets you should be looking for under work management are:

- Centralized Project Sites
- Simple Task Management
- Collaborative Project Management Platform.

Work Management Capabilities

Centralized Project Sites

Team members are often unclear about the goals of the project, who else is involved in the project, and what their own role on the project is.

They typically don't have an easy way to keep track of their assigned work and when it is due.

Your solution should bring all project information together in one centralized project site, so team members know what is happening on the project and never lose sight of the big picture.

Documents and deliverables should be easily accessible in the project site.

Simple Task Management

It’s difficult for team members to know what has to be done and by when, especially when they are working on multiple projects at once.

Your solution should provide team members with a simple work management system to find, do, and update their work.

It’s also important to look for easy ways to flag issues for the attention of the project manager.

Collaborative Project Management Platform

Collaborative project should be just that: collaborative.

Your solution should deliver a platform that supports a culture of collaboration with the project team (regardless of location) by using shared sites, document management, co-authoring, version control, social, and other collaborative capabilities.

Organizational Project Management Capabilities

The fourth process area you should evaluate are its organization project management capabilities. These capabilities are particularly important to project management champions, who are tasked with continuously improving project management practices.

You need to find a solution that can meet you where you at in terms of project management maturity, is simple to deploy and adopt and can be configured to meet your local practices.

The three key feature sets you should be looking for under organizational project management include:

- Practical deployment with low IT burden
- Best-practice project management templates
- Highly flexible and configurable solution.

Practical Deployment with Low IT Burden

IT resources are often scarce, and many solutions simply become 'shelfware' with poor user adoption. It's no surprise that many IT departments say 'No' to deploying a new enterprise tool into the organization.

Your solution should have as low an IT burden as possible, with a simple interface and easy cloud or on- premise deployment for successful user adoption.

The solution should integrate with your existing toolset, combining multiple data points and communication tools into one place.

Once the solution is deployed, project managers and end-users should have the ability to complete simple configuration without the help of IT.

Best-Practice Project Management Templates

One of the biggest challenges in implementing project management software is the temptation to turn on every feature at once.

However, this simply overwhelms end-users who are not ready or don’t need these new tools.

Your solution should allow you to start with the templates and features needed to support your current project requirements.

Highly Flexible and Configurable Solution

Your PMO or project champion needs out-of-the-box functionality to get up and running quickly, with the option to configure or add advanced capabilities later on.

It should be easy to create, use, and reuse best practices throughout the organization.

Look for scalable performance, flexible configuration, pre and post-deployment assistance, training, and upgrades.

Using the Weighted Scoring Sheet

This Project and Portfolio Management Software Evaluation Guide is accompanied by a weighted scoring sheet that enables you to objectively assess a number of tools against a series of questions grouped according to the four key areas covered in this guide:

- Portfolio Management
- Project Management
- Work Management
- Organizational Project Management

The sheet will give you a score for each tool for each of the four areas and will give you a combined score across the four areas for each tool.

Each section contains 12-15 questions that asks whether a tool has a particular feature or can achieve a certain process, task or goal.

Score the tool according to how well it delivers on the question. We recommend using the below scoring scheme but you can of course go more granular if you so desire.

- Excellent:100%
- Good: 75%
- Satisfactory: 50%
- Mediocre: 25%
- Poor: 0%

By default, all questions are assigned the same relative importance of 100. To adjust the weighting, simply enter a new weight in the relevant weight cell; for simplicity's sake, we recommend you use a similar blocked weighted system such as:

- Show stopper: 100
- Very important: 75

Using the Weighted Scoring Sheet

- Important: 50
- Nice to have: 25
- Not needed: 0

The screenshot below demonstrates how the weighted scoring system works.

Note: The formula cells in the scoring sheet are locked to prevent data entry in these cells. To edit the sheet (for example to add an extra question row) you will need to unprotect the sheet. The password for this is BrightWork.

Total Score Across All Four Areas			262.5		193.75
«« (25%); poor « (0%)	weight	Product A		Product B	
		rating	weighted score	rating	weighted score
	100	75%	75	100%	100
	75	50%	37.5	75%	56.25
ct request into the project site?	50	100%	50	75%	37.5
	100	0%	0	0%	0
	100	0%	0	0%	0
thin the project?	100	0%	0	0%	0
	100	0%	0	0%	0
	100	0%	0	0%	0
	100	0%	0	0%	0
Portfolio Management Score			162.5		193.75

WHAT IS **BRIGHTWORK?**

BrightWork is a SharePoint-based project management application that includes a range of best practice templates that delivers immediate visibility and control, with the flexibility to evolve and mature as needed.

See what BrightWork can do for your organization in our video demo.

Watch short demo