

Worksheet 5: Apps you can use to help your own productivity

By Dan Sodergren

Dozens, if not hundreds, of apps claim to help people focus, manage their time, and stick to healthy habits. Believe me, as someone that works in tech and who almost built a productivity tool, the productivity app market is BIG business and is expected to expand at a compound annual growth rate of 13.8% between 2022 and 2030.

So which ones should you consider investing in? There are many but here are the ones I use.

Trello

Trello takes their Kanban board task manager from its web apps to their mobile apps. Trello makes a lot of sense for personal use, especially if you're planning something big with family, team members or friends. The visual imagery and photos are a nice addition to the primarily text-based list format. If you're looking for simple task management, this is the productivity app for you.

- **Great for: To-do lists**

OmniFocus (just for iPhone)

At first, I thought OmniFocus was some sort of distraction-free social media blocker. No, it's a to-do list. What makes this one stand out? Location-based reminders. Want to get notifications when you arrive somewhere? OmniFocus can do it. Quite frankly, that's pretty genius.

You can also organise things by person (like if you need to help them out or do something for them). That is also genius. OmniFocus reinvents lists beyond dates and brings in location.

- **Great for: To-do lists**

Skitch

The team from Evernote created this mobile app, so it's high-quality and useful. Skitch is a great option for reviewing new designs, circling a place on a map or pointing out where something needs to be moved to. If small business owners want to make life easier and mark up PDFs for their business, sorry, but they'll have to pay a little extra.

- **Great for: Sketches and notes**

RescueTime

RescueTime is one of the best apps for Android that will show you exactly how and when you're spending minutes on your phone. You can set long-term goals for yourself and then track your progress.

This will automatically increase your productivity because you'll be aware of when you're spending way too much time on social media (which is trickier for me as it's my job). Make life easier and take back your time – you can do it!

- **Great for: Goal setting and blocking distractions**

Be focused pro

This app is a little different than the typical timer or distraction-blocker app. Here's how it works:

- Add in specific tasks
- Set a timer to those tasks
- The app schedules short breaks on your [calendar](#) for you

You don't even have to keep track of it yourself. By creating work intervals, you set your own short [sprints](#) and aren't locked into a certain time length.

You can also set work interval targets each day, customising your day around meetings or appointments. It's a great option to optimise the amount of time that you do have to finish up work.

- Great for: Timing your tasks and setting up your schedule

But as [Nir Eyal \(the guru of all this stuff, with a link to his four steps here\)](#) points out, if you seem less able to do what you say you will, you need a better way to manage your time.

The solution

[Timeboxing](#) is an almost magical productivity hack: When you schedule time for each task you want to accomplish in your calendar, you can recognize any action that is not what you planned to do in a given moment for what it is: a distraction.

He suggests:

[Clockwise](#): A calendar optimization tool for teams.

[Sunsama](#): A great timeboxing tool for busy professionals.

[SavvyCal](#): A meeting scheduling tool that removes the awkward power dynamics of sharing your calendar.

Technologies you can use to help with your teams.

[Slack](#) (Android, iOS, Web)

Depending on the size of your business or team. Slack is a god send. And so much easier than email or in my mind Discord. Slack has many useful features, like unlike most emails, you can see what channel or topic your message is addressing—then decide if that's an area you need to respond to or not.

No emails can give you this type of seamless functionality. It's one of the best productivity apps for Android and Apple that you can't ignore.

One of the other great things about Slack is how easily they integrate with the other productivity tools that you use most like ClickUp, Asana and the Office Suite.

We will look at these in turn and in more detail.

- Great For: Team communication and chat

DISCORD

[Discord](#) is a Slack alternative that has become popular in the last few years. It is a great app for keeping all of your teams in check and supports multiple channels similar to how Slack does.

Personally I think it's for bigger teams / companies. But that's just me.

Discord also has voice chat channels which can make collaborating on a project much easier especially if teams are remote.

There's also a big price difference. As Discord is a quarter of the price of full blown Slack. Discord is great for project management communication.

- Great for: Team chat and communication in bigger teams / projects

GOOGLE DRIVE

Now this one isn't new. And you might already use it. But people do forget, when used properly, how much time Gdrive can save a team. As having all of your company's important uploads in cloud storage is a huge benefit. Especially when remote working. As it saves time and avoids needing to rely on others to send you the files you need or having to wait until you are back in the office to get work done.

Google Drive works perfectly if you already use Google Suite for emails and with the Google Stream application. Upload all of your files from your desktop and then access them from your mobile devices.

- Great for: Document management

CLICK UP

ClickUp brings your team together to plan, track, and collaborate on any project — all in one place. So you can organise projects at a glance, collaborate with your team and track progress and goals.

You can manage your resources on a List, Box, Gantt, Board, Calendar view or create your own workflow with any of ClickUps 10+ customizable views.

And do stuff like add comments to any task or document. Assign comments with action items, chat in real-time, share attachments, and so you never miss a beat with notifications that bring everything in one place.

- Great for: Project Document management

Your FLOCK

Your FLOCK is a team engagement platform which helps teams get to know each other better and therefore work together more effectively.

Full disclosure – I invested in this company and so I am biased. But I include it here because productivity for your team comes down to working together and knowing each other and potentially sharing the same values. Or at least understanding each other.

- Great for: Helping your team understand each other.

Which of the technologies do you already use ?

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Which ones will you look into using?

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