



REASONS TO DITCH YOUR SPREADSHEETS...

AND MAKE THE MOVE TO WORKFLOW MANAGEMENT APPLICATIONS

 TRACKVIA

Spreadsheets are often billed as simple, easy-to-use solutions, so many organizations leverage them as a tool for tracking and managing their data and processes. Unfortunately, spreadsheets have some limitations that can frustrate even the most savvy users and disrupt efficient operations.

On the other hand, an increasingly popular spreadsheet alternative is workflow management applications that can be customized to support and streamline businesses' unique processes and operations. Here are six ways spreadsheets stack up against these applications:

1 SPEED AND EASE

Spreadsheets

With a spreadsheet, nearly anyone can begin tracking data in a matter of minutes.

The learning curve required to use a simple spreadsheet is relatively low.

Workflow Apps

Workflow management applications can require a bit more time and effort to set up than a simple spreadsheet.

As these tools become more sophisticated and widespread, the time and skills needed to implement workflow management applications will continue to decline. In fact, some tools can turn data normally tracked in spreadsheets into applications in just days.

2 SECURITY

Spreadsheets

A lack of controls within spreadsheets can make them vulnerable to manipulation. Documents created with these programs can be easily corrupted and are susceptible to fraud.

Malicious parties can easily change values, dependencies and formulas without being found, making organizations susceptible to financial losses and to other serious liabilities.

Workflow Apps

Unlike basic spreadsheets, workflow management applications provide robust, multi-layered, enterprise-grade security.

Additionally, these applications have built-in features that ensure compliance. Organizations can rest assured that sensitive data, such as proprietary materials or operational information, doesn't end up in the wrong hands.

Powerful user permissions allow you to set access rights to individuals or groups. Allow someone to view, access or edit everything, some things, or just the things they need to do their job or perform their tasks.

3 DATA INTEGRITY

Spreadsheets

With multiple users working on the same spreadsheet, it can be very easy to create duplicate versions containing erroneous data and distribute them throughout an organization.

Spreadsheets make it difficult to check for problems. Interrelated data may be spread throughout the document, creating a situation in which it is impossible to verify its accuracy.

Human errors that seem minor can do real damage to your business operations. Overlooked mistakes can result in reports and information that lead to poor business strategies and decisions.

Many users who handle spreadsheets are unfamiliar with the best methods for storing and backing up documents. This could make data recovery impossible in the event that a disaster strikes, resulting in financial losses.

Data may be scattered about in multiple documents, on several machines or even in geographically disparate areas. This can make the process of tracking down errors extremely difficult and time consuming.

Spreadsheets can become so highly personalized, which can render them unusable to other employees.

Workflow Apps



One of the greatest advantages of workflow management applications is data integrity. By securing data in a cloud-based application, your organization can benefit from a multi-layered approach that includes data center architecture, data storage and redundancy, disaster recovery plans and data export options.

By requiring users to work with data in a singular online instance, you can virtually eliminate duplicate versions of the same data.

Some workflow management applications include an audit trail feature, allowing administrators to see exactly who has made changes, and when. Having an audit trail is especially helpful when checking for errors and discrepancies that may have occurred during business-critical processes.

4 REPORTING

Spreadsheets

Spreadsheet-based environments can make data extraction and consolidation a time-consuming process. Summarizing information so that it can be used to help make decisions is complicated by the need to double-check data for errors in order to maintain integrity. This process can create delays and give operations professionals little time to work with data.

Workflow Apps

By managing important data in a single online application, you eliminate the need to spend hours, or days, every month consolidating and centralizing information scattered throughout the organization.

The real power of workflow management applications is gaining real-time visibility into your operations. You can easily create custom views or reports to analyze and review your live data. You can also create dashboards, which display multiple views or reports in one place.

5 WORKFLOW

Spreadsheets

With spreadsheets, your team is required to design and format work before they can even get started. Once the spreadsheet is set up, it has to be emailed to everyone working on the project or involved in a specific process. After that, new copies are emailed out every time a change is made, confusing the issue of which version is the latest.

Eventually, all of the information that has been sent back and forth has to be compiled into a readable form.

Sharing spreadsheets through a network isn't helpful, either, because multiple users may be downloading and uploading data at any time. This again confuses the issue of which copy is the most recent and can disrupt processes and workflows.

Workflow Apps

One of the most tremendous benefits of using a workflow management application built especially for you is that it works the way *you* do.

Many workflow solutions make it easy for professionals to leverage custom forms to collect data that supports their operations. Intelligent workflow engines can trigger alerts, tasks, and even new workflows as steps in the process are completed or certain conditions are met.

Furthermore, some cloud-based workflow management applications offer a corresponding native mobile app, whereby your custom-built application can work seamlessly on a tablet or smartphone. Imagine how being able to collect and access data, including photos, audio notes, bar codes, and signatures, outside of the office could improve internal coordination.

6 COST

Spreadsheets

The upfront cost of spreadsheet software tends to be minimal. Some options, like Google Docs, are available for free. Other application licenses for programs such as Microsoft Excel can cost as little as \$80 USD.

While the initial price tag for spreadsheet software is low, there can be high hidden costs associated with these solutions, including problems with security and data integrity, lack of user permissions, complicated reporting and inefficient workflow capabilities.

Workflow Apps



As technology matures, the number of tools available to today's organizations continues to expand. Gone are the days when you were required to spend thousands upon thousands of dollars to hire expensive IT programmers to develop a custom application.

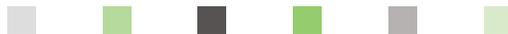
Today's workflow management applications allow businesses to deploy sophisticated, yet easy-to-use solutions that help their employees perform day-to-day work better. Increased organizational performance directly impacts the bottom line.

With features not available in basic spreadsheets, can your organization really afford not to use a workflow application?

MAKE THE MOVE

Understanding how employees use spreadsheets and the problems that can arise as a result can help your organization make the decision to switch to a custom workflow management application.

Workflow management solutions provide a greater degree of control and oversight over your data than spreadsheet software. By transitioning to an online solution for tracking and managing your business-critical data, you can eliminate the question of how to reign in your spreadsheets and improve your overall organization's ability to perform and succeed.





TrackVia is mobile workflow software that helps businesses rapidly deploy their own applications to easily streamline data collection and manage operational processes—without the need for programming.

TrackVia's unrivaled mobile capabilities make it easy for employees to enter data, scan bar codes, geotag locations, check reports and collaborate on any iOS or Android device. Additionally, the system's detailed dashboards and real-time reporting, accessible from any device, give you enhanced visibility into your operations, and equip your employees to leverage data to drive more informed business decisions across the enterprise.

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