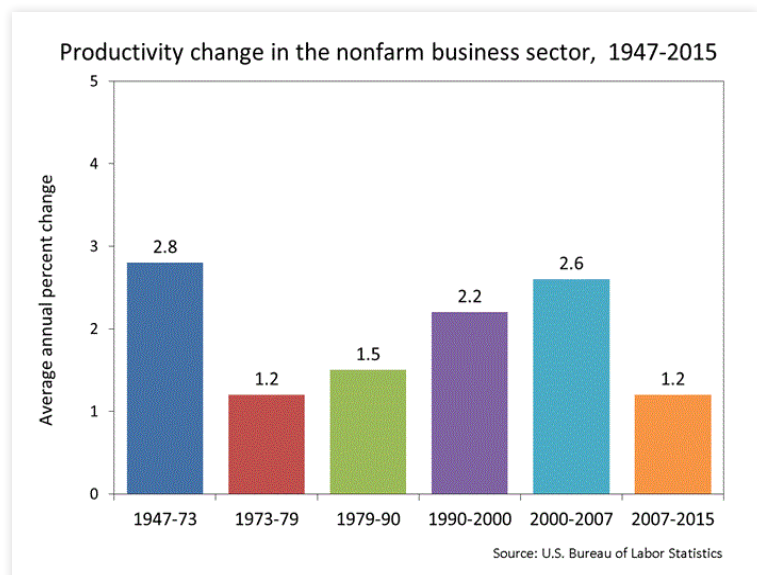# TOOL SPRAWL: A TOXIN TO PRODUCTIVITY

Technology is designed to make work faster, easier, and more effective. From the industrial revolution to the internet, technology over the centuries has transformed work in almost unimaginable ways. And with every new advancement business productivity has always improved, at least, until now. Despite our golden age of technological advancements and almost instantaneous innovations, workplace productivity has begun to steadily decline for the first time in almost 50 years (Heinemann). So why the sudden change? With more resources available than ever, decreasing workplace productivity is not only troubling but doesn't seem to make sense. At least until you take a look at tool sprawl.

Tool sprawl occurs when companies expand their products, vendors, apps, and overall tools to the point of hindering rather than helping progress. It almost always happens gradually and creeps up in every industry. At first, you take on a new tool to solve a specific problem. Then your department designed an in-house program to address a unique need. After a few months, your new hire asks for a service she's more familiar with. And then you learn your biggest competitor just implements the newest tech and you don't want to be left behind.

Productivity change in the nonfarm business sector, 1947-2015

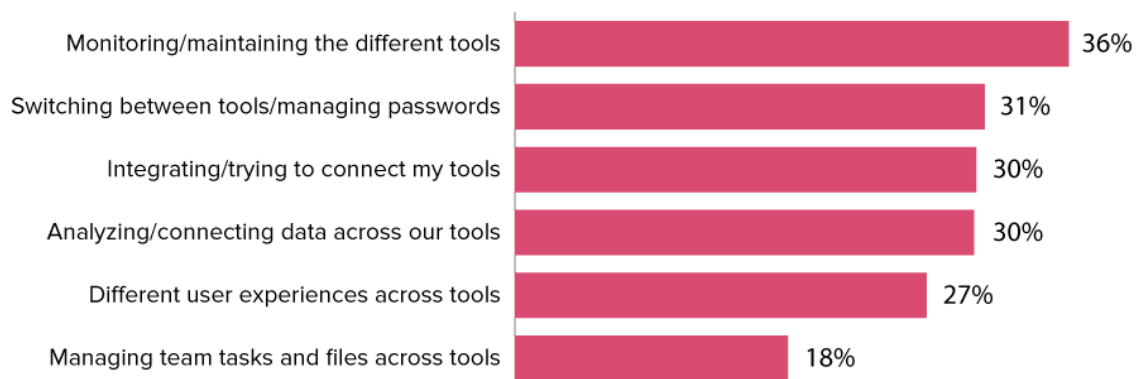| Period	Average annual percent change
1947-73	2.8
1973-79	1.2
1979-90	1.5
1990-2000	2.2
2000-2007	2.6
2007-2015	1.2

Source: U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics

Before you know it, what started out as a few simple solutions has turned into a multitude of resources beyond management.

Tool sprawl isn't limited to just enterprise organizations either. According to a recent Automic survey, while large companies tend to use 20 tools or more, it's common for small businesses to have up to 10 different tools in place (Null). And the average employee, regardless of business size, uses more than 6 different tools on a daily basis (Bernazzani). In another study, the majority of sales respondents shared they use 5 different tools for CRM alone. Automic also found that if left unchecked, tool sprawl just continues to expand. 69% of surveyed respondents said their toolchain is still steadily growing (Null). Tool sprawl is more than just an inconvenience, but is detrimental to company productivity at every level, disrupting progress, hindering collaboration, and creating an overall negative experience.

DAMAGING INDIVIDUAL EFFORTS

Tool sprawl literally slows down every aspect of the employee experience. With work and resources spread out across multiple platforms, it takes a ridiculous amount of time just to find, open, and navigate everything you need. Instead of channeling energy into a centralized workspace, employees spend their days constantly switching between apps, reorienting workflow, and reorganizing information. In fact, in a recent worldwide study, employees reported that 'how long it takes to operate multiple tools' and 'how long it takes to switch between tools to complete tasks' were two of their biggest work pain points (Bernazzani). Similar research also indicated that while individual work tools might make specific tasks faster, the saved time is actually completely negated by how long it takes to continuously switch between so many programs (An). And that's assuming employees actually remember where everything is.

What are the most frustrating aspects of using many different tools?

Aspect	Percentage
Monitoring/maintaining the different tools	36%
Switching between tools/managing passwords	31%
Integrating/trying to connect my tools	30%
Analyzing/connecting data across our tools	30%
Different user experiences across tools	27%
Managing team tasks and files across tools	18%

Base: 1,649 marketers and salespeople in the US, UK, and Ireland
Source: HubSpot Global Tools Survey, Q4 2016

With information everywhere, it can be almost impossible to track down past conversations, relocate shared files, or reference recent reports. Employees naturally become frustrated as they struggle to find information or duplicate work due to a lack of visibility between different applications. According to a Hubspot report, 82% of employees lose up to an hour every day just managing all of their tools, forcing them to cut back on important revenue generating practices like content creation and lead follow through (Bernazzani). And if that didn't add insult to injury, running multiple programs on a computer or a digital device causes equipment strain and increases lag time, slowing work down even more.

PREVENTING TEAM PRODUCTIVITY

Tools sprawl does more than just mess with the individual work experience, it affects the collaborative environment as well. When information is scattered across different tools it's much more difficult for teams to gain insights from each other and work well together. Employees are accidentally left out of the loop, causing them to miss out on important resources and critical information. Without clear direction deadlines get missed, people become irritated, work relationships suffer, and projects lose potential. Perhaps unsurprisingly, employees often cite 'lack of communication' as the most common reason for conflict between employees, departments, and teams (Baer).

80% of employees attribute 'lack of collaboration or ineffective business communication tools' as the primary cause of workplace failures

Without a simple way to share resources, express thoughts, and collaborate on ideas, work can never be improved and enhanced by multiple perspectives, enabling it to reach its full potential. Tool sprawl also invites damaging data sprawl into an organization. Data sprawl occurs when information needed by multiple employees is located across dozens of different tools. Without a centralized workspace, employees either have to redo work, go without, or try to navigate the unfamiliar tools used by another employee. And data sprawl often prevents employees from knowing about beneficial resources until it's too late. Tool sprawl and the data sprawl it initiates are one of the major reasons 80% of employees attribute 'lack of collaboration or ineffective business communication tools' as the primary cause of workplace failures (Pandit).

DETERRING CORPORATE ACHIEVEMENT

And even when teams do develop a successful system for collaborating and sharing resources, tool sprawl still finds a way to negatively impact the corporate environment. At the individual team level, devising customized sharing methods might be an all right answer, until that work has to be presented, transferred, or moved to another department. Suddenly, trying to integrate the tools, tactics, and communication methods of dozens of different teams can create a real problem. While silos might get tasks accomplished at the team level, it results
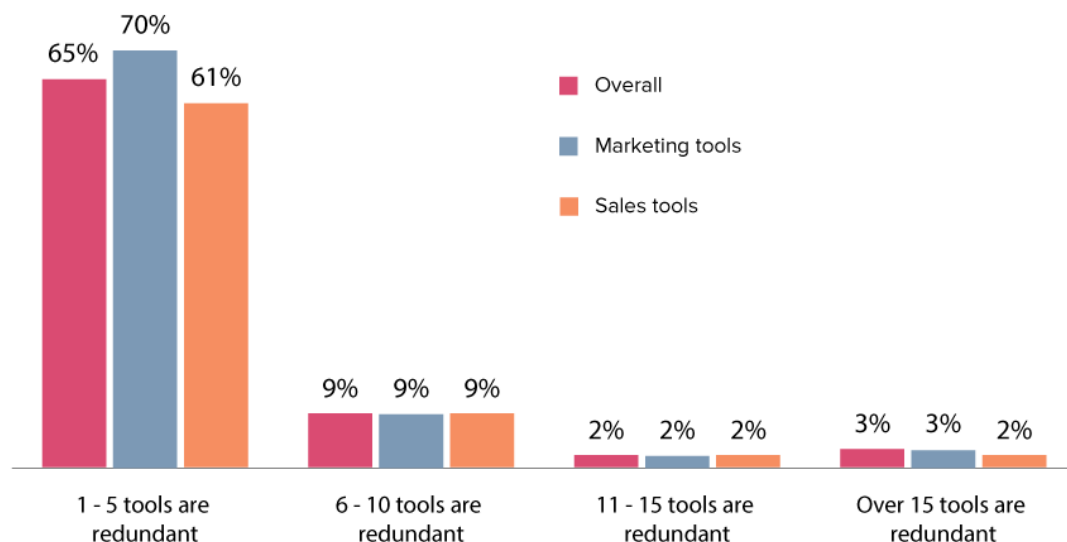
in a mess of technology tools that can't talk to each other, update at different times, or force other employees to manually connect the dots. In fact, 72% of salespeople alone recently reported spending up to an hour a day just connecting records from different tools together (An). Instead of a seamless handoff, transitions between teams become tedious reconstruction tasks.

This problem is even more exacerbated for employees who simultaneously operate between teams. For managers who receive content from multiple types of teams, different styles mean spending time trying to organize disjointed data. Even if the individual team tools do have interpretive abilities, managers must take the time to sift through multiple analysis and make important decisions without complete context. In a recent survey, 25% of managers and 29% of small business leaders listed a lack of end-to-end network visibility as their greatest challenge in maintaining successful operations (McGillicuddy). Working this way not only takes up time but means leaders are more likely to miss workplace correlations and important insights.

Tool sprawl is one of the 10 most common challenges faced by CIOs

For the IT department, the situation is even more discouraging. According to a Gartner report, tool sprawl is one of the 10 most common challenges faced by CIOs (Redmonocle). An organization's IT department is responsible for managing and resolving technical issues as they arise, but with dozens of overlapping tools spread throughout the business, maintaining company tools suddenly means becoming an expert in over a dozen different platforms, let alone monitoring and resolving issues for each one. As a result, IT work becomes overtaxed and much more difficult, putting unnecessary strain on IT employees and often resulting in company employees failing to receive the support they need.

In your opinion, how many of your tools have at least some redundant capabilities (they do the same things)?

Bar chart comparing Overall, Marketing tools, and Sales tools:

	1 - 5 tools are redundant	6 - 10 tools are redundant	11 - 15 tools are redundant	Over 15 tools are redundant
Overall	65%	9%	2%	3%
Marketing tools	70%	9%	2%	3%
Sales tools	61%	9%	2%	2%

Base: 2,008 marketers and salespeople in the US, UK, and Ireland
Source: HubSpot Global Tools Survey, Q4 2016

HINDERING CONSUMER EXPERIENCES

Perhaps worst of all, tool sprawl affects the final consumer experience. Tool sprawl is expensive in almost every way imaginable. From obvious costs like licensing fees and training to the less measurable, but still significant, wasted time and decreased employee engagement. To make matters worse, many tools add to the expense with overlapping features and abilities. Employees worldwide recently reported that an estimated 66% of their tools had overlapping features and 65% of employees believe up to 5 of their existing work tools are completely redundant (Bernazzani). And unfortunately, when it comes to extra business expenses, consumers literally have to pay the price, negatively impacting existing customers and discouraging future sales.

The plethora of tools involved in managing client information increases security concerns as well. With more tools accessing customer information, the risk of potential hacks, breaches, data leaks, and other susceptibilities naturally increases. Staying company compliant on every platform is challenging and only gets harder with more moving pieces. Without serious diligence client content could become mismanaged or misplaced in any number of areas, creating if not irreversible damage at the very least serious problems with productivity.

TAKE BACK TOOL SPRAWL WITH MANGOAPPS

Meet the antithesis of tool sprawl, more commonly known as Mango Apps. Unlike disorderly tool sprawl, MangoApps is an integrated employee platform, providing companies with a truly consolidated workspace. Our individual, team, and company centered features help organizations break down silos and find success at every stage. With personalized calendars and to-do lists, designated team meeting spaces, interactive company intranets, simple file sharing, and hundred of other abilities, working effectively has never been easier.

Working in MangoApps is more enjoyable too. With MangoApps, collaboration occurs organically, helping employees stay productive while still orchestrating a fun and uplifting environment. And working in a centralized area lets everyone see content in context, eliminating multitasking, encouraging informed decisions, and saving employees both time and mental energy.

MangoApps also seamlessly integrates with all kinds of existing systems, dual syncing data and incorporating our advanced security features. Companies can still use any of their existing tools but now achieve the benefits of a single workspace. Or they can seamlessly transition into MangoApps without losing functionality or having to duplicate data. We even protect employees from unwanted emails and annoying spam. MangoApps was built to overcome tool sprawl and empower company productivity. To learn more about MangoApps and how we strengthen organizations of every size, contact us or schedule a personalized demo today.

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ABOUT MANGOAPPS

Founded in 2009, MangoApps is the leader in cloud-based employee intranet, engagement, collaboration, and HR software. MangoApps is privately held and is based out of Seattle, WA with an office in Pune, India. Businesses of every size use MangoApps products to modernize, consolidate and streamline many of the siloed applications employees use into a single platform. MangoApps' focus on providing a complete employee experience enables employees to work in one environment, dramatically improving adoption, engagement, and team productivity. Visit us at www.mangoapps.com to learn more.

TAKE THE FIRST STEP
SCHEDULE A DEMO!

ARE YOU READY TO LEARN WHY MANGOAPPS
IS THE PERFECT HUB FOR YOUR DIGITAL WORKPLACE?

Schedule a personalized demo and see what MangoApps has to offer.
Or see for yourself today with a *free trial!*

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