

The Ultimate Guide for Remote Team Time Tracking



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CHAPTER 1

WHAT IS REMOTE TEAM TIME TRACKING?



What is Remote Team Time Tracking

It's a process that involves tracking the number of work hours your remote team spends in a day regardless of where they are working from.

It enables managers to see who has completed their work hours and what activity they did during that time, allowing them to get a clear picture of their remote team's performance. Let's explain:

With [16%](#) of the global workforce working remotely and more following a hybrid routine, managers no longer have the leverage to just get up from their seat and take a stroll across the hall to see which employees are working and which ones are causally chatting by the coffee maker.

Also, since individuals at most remote-friendly places work on flexible timings, it has become more difficult for managers to track the working hours of each employee, which eventually boils down to either of the following situations:

Under-invoicing: the time and cost for which you are charging your clients is higher than what you've quoted in your invoice, and your business will end up bearing this additional cost

Over-invoicing: you're charging a higher price against the cost you've incurred, in which case, your client may switch to a competitor for future projects.

The discrepancy in hours worked, costs incurred and billed amounts, has become a significant challenge for managers today. They need a way to track remote employee performances to streamline work from top to bottom.

As a solution, managers have turned to [time trackers to monitor remote teams](#), track progress and ensure accountability, all of which foster a healthy and effective remote working environment.



Generally, time trackers are responsible for two core functions:

- **Streamlining the entire remote working process**

It has taken you months to build a successful workflow to manage your team from a physical workplace, and now shifting to a remote work model is disrupting it.

The dynamics of work-from-home routines are totally different as a lot of things can distract or render your team members unavailable for a couple of hours during the work shift. This is why flexibility is critical in remote work so people can work comfortably to deliver high-quality outputs on time.

Deploying a time tracker helps you make the transition a whole lot smoother by allowing your team to record work hours spent on specific tasks. They can choose to work on a project in three different cycles and time trackers will compile the data, showing you the total time an employee has worked on it, so that's one less thing for you to worry about.

- **Ensuring Timely Deliveries**

One of the biggest conundrums of remote work is tracking progress being made on projects. You have to gather each employee's progress against different tasks and compile them in relevant projects to determine the progress.



Time trackers make this entire cycle hassle-free and efficient by allowing employees to log progress in their respective projects.

At the end of the day, you have a detailed report, which allows you to readjust resources deadline-sensitive projects to ensure you don't miss any critical deliveries. However, that is if you're using the right kind of time tracker.



Types of Time Tracking Software for Remote Teams

Roughly speaking, we can break down the time tracking software into four different categories:

Timesheet Software

These are used to keep track of employee workdays. While it can take workers hours to fill out and submit manual timesheets, their digital alternatives provide an easier, more accurate way to record hours worked across different projects.

Although they take less time to fill out, the problem with them is that they're still manual in the sense that your team members have to insert time they spent on tasks. You have to then check the legitimacy of the sheet by revisiting what tasks you assigned to your team and when.

The good thing is that these software are fully customizable, so you can add new fields for specific groups of employees, facilitating more in-depth reporting.

Time Recording Software

These applications provide users with many automated features to log and track their workday hours. Standard functionalities include easy time entry, submission/approval workflows, and adjustable benchmarks for employees.



Time recording software are excellent to track the time that your team spends on different tasks and if you're on track to complete projects in time.

Since the work logs are automated, employees can spare a mere few minutes at the end of each day to submit their daily timesheets. The only notable limitation these tools have is that you have to start the time once you sit down to work and stop it once you're done.

Time Clock Software

As the name implies, these tools automatically track metrics related to employee workdays. From hours worked, to idle hours, absentee days, and shifts worked. The statistics provide an in-depth view of each employee's working behavior.

However, the trend of using time clock software is going out the window with remote teams, since most of its time tracking methods involve clocking in through a physical device (think fingerprints before entering your office).

Automatic Time Tracking Software

These tools act as complete productivity monitoring platforms that encompass automated functionalities similar to time clock software with additional project management and accounting/billing integrations.

You can leverage real-time time-tracking capabilities to drive project planning, budgeting, and pricing. Meanwhile, payroll-related functions help drive accurate employee remuneration and invoicing. Automatic time tracking software have gained a lot of traction in recent years as they provide you an excellent platform for remote team time tracking and project management.

CHAPTER 2

CHALLENGES & BENEFITS OF AUTOMATIC TIME TRACKING



Challenges and Benefits of Automatic Time Tracking

Dealing with remote teams can be difficult at times. Let's take a look at some of the challenges you might face while working with such teams.

Challenges of Dealing with Remote Teams

The idea of working from the comfort of home is quite appealing to employees, but managers have always been a bit skeptical and paranoid to some extent. Some managers believe that employees slack while working from home, and they're not entirely wrong.

In a physical workplace, your team doesn't have to do the household chores, make coffee, or look after their little ones. WFH routines unwillingly require them to do that, which can cause distractions and hinder work, leaving you with:



Declining productivity levels as individuals find it difficult to focus on tasks while at home



Communication gaps since there are no in-person meetings and interactions anymore



Mounting deadlines as employees often begin slacking and thus, miss deadlines

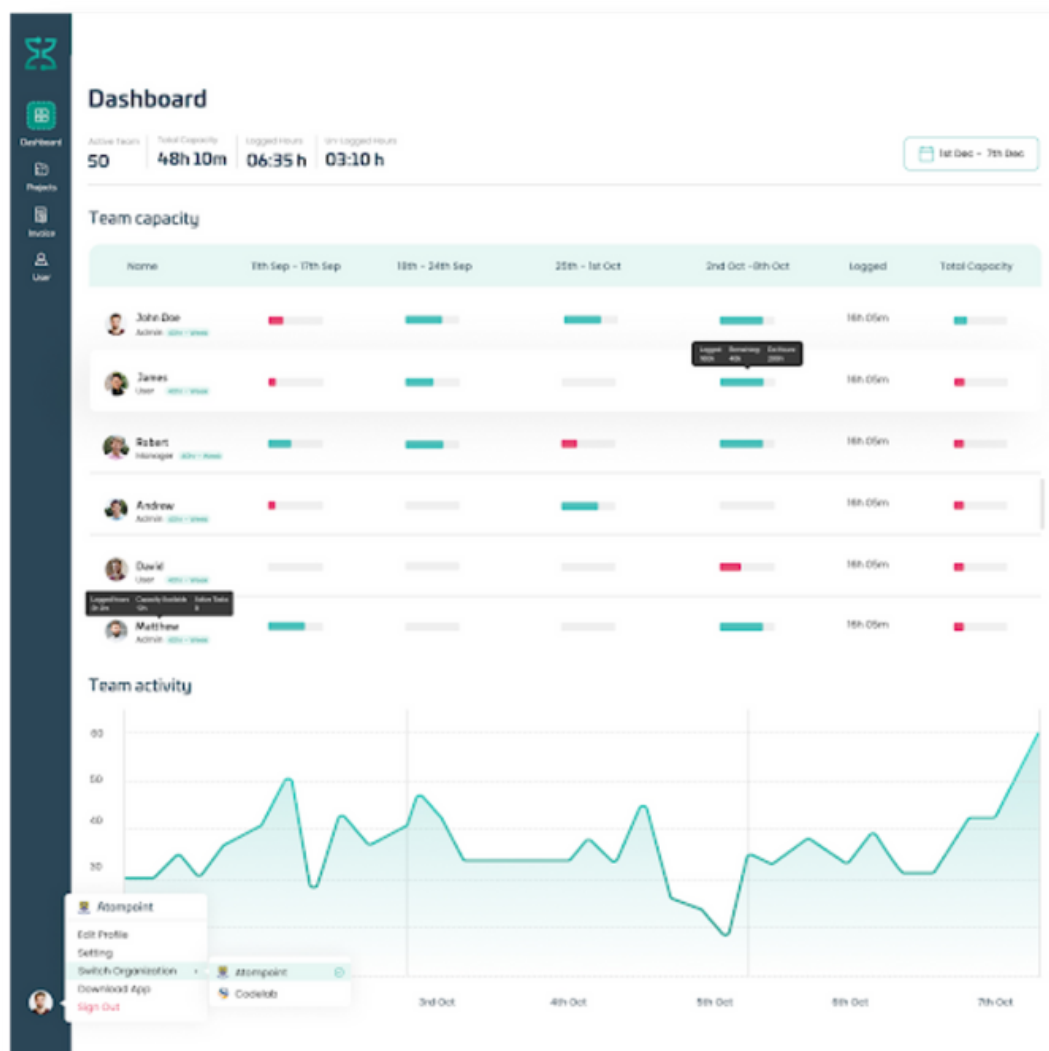
Dealing with remote teams has always been a challenge for managers, but time trackers have greatly helped them in streamlining work and ensuring effective outputs.



Both employees and their managers benefit from time tracking in their own way.

5 Ways Employees Benefit from Time Tracking Tools

Improve Productivity



It's important to note that time tracking and employee satisfaction are not at odds. Consider this:



The average employee is productive for only about [31% of their workday](#). But, of course, that's not by design. In fact, a large part of the problem is down to a lack of proper time management.

Does this scenario sound familiar? You come into work with a prioritized list of tasks that you want to get accomplished.

But as soon as you get into your seat, you're met with a completely unrelated issue that you have to fix. Before you know it, you're 5 hours into your workday and still haven't made a dent in your to-do list.

So, how does time tracking help? Well, first of all, understanding how you work and where you spend the bulk of your effort is the first step toward improving your productivity.

Then, analyze reports from a time tracking app over a week or month, and you will start to see some common patterns emerge, and they might point towards issues you might not expect.

For example, if the software shows you're spending a solid hour on your work messaging app every day, and you know this time is spent providing feedback to the same employee, you've immediately identified a roadblock to your productivity.

Now, you can think about shifting the individual to another team or changing their designated duties to reduce the burden of mentorship off your shoulders.

Implement a System of Feedback

You can also think of time tracking reports as a system of real-time feedback on your performance.



Whether your manager is chiming in with their thoughts on your metrics or not, you can take a look at your task completion rates and overall project completion times and measure them against hours worked to identify where you're underperforming and even uncover where your greatest strengths lie.

This type of self-awareness can only benefit your effectiveness over time.

Set Standards and Work Towards Them

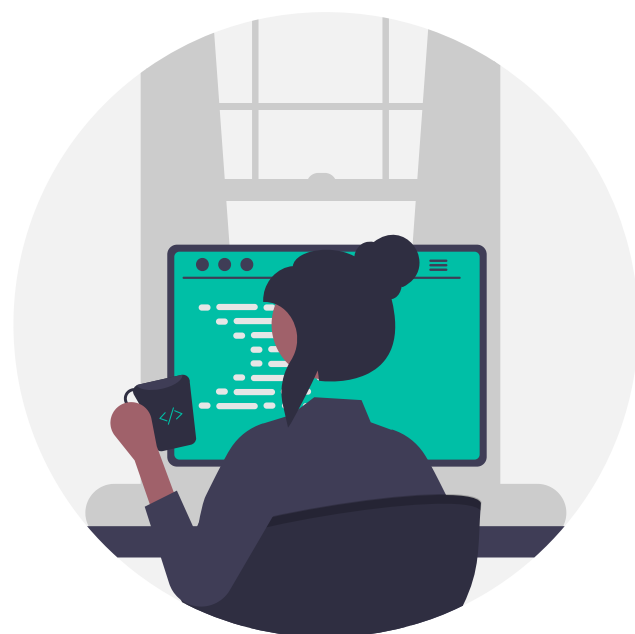
Continuous improvement requires clear and achievable goals. With [time tracking software](#), you have all the metrics at hand to achieve those benchmarks.

If you're a salesperson that wants to spend more time prospecting, taking a look at the reporting will show you how long you're currently spending on the task. Let's say your time tracking software reveals you spend 20% of the time on this activity on a good workday. Now you have a goal to achieve and better.

Increase Work Transparency

Although your team loves working from home, they often feel that they're not being able to report the full extent of how tiring their workday was and how much progress they made by the day-end.

This happens because there are a lot of activities like rolling out email, talking to a vendor on Skype, or attending meetings on Zoom that never make it to the progress report.





All of this might have taken a good couple of hours from the workday, which will not reflect in their progress report. Remote team time trackers don't leave these out; they capture the entire daily activity in the background and allow your team to share every second of the time they spent on work-related tasks.

Such a level of transparency enables you to identify areas where your team is spending the most or the least amount of time. This can help you plan project timelines accordingly, [offer accurate appraisals based on employee performance](#), and ensure that every bit of your team's effort toward work is accounted for.

Better Time Management

Remote employees find it difficult to track and manage working time due to the countless chores they have to take care of at home. This often leads to late submissions, delays in project timelines, and sometimes even the quality and effectiveness of work.

Remote team time trackers allow your team to see their daily and weekly progress, the time they spent on each task, and the time they spent slacking over their favorite YouTube videos.

Employees can use this information to take relevant measures for reducing time wastage and improving work efficiencies. For example, employees who realize they're spending a lot of time in meetings can cut that time down to focus more on their primary job.

5 Ways Managers and Business Owners Benefit from Time Tracking

When we're examining the benefits of employee tracking software for managers, business owners, and C-suite executives, the advantages are clear.

Make Payroll More Efficient

To start with, automation takes away all the guesswork from payroll calculations. For example, instead of documenting when employees timed in and timed out, you can simply trust the software to provide an accurate picture of billable hours for each worker.

Improve Project Management

This information can be further drilled down into the work performed per project. So, you can start to look into the numbers and see how much time is spent on different phases of a project, including revisions, client communications, and production itself.

These insights can help you understand how to improve project delivery, which individuals are performing, and underperforming based on their roles, and ultimately how successful a team is in their given duties.

Then, moving forward, you can adjust things like pricing and [working policies](#) based on the outcomes of your assessments.





Optimize for Employee Performance

Performance management is another crucial area where time tracking software can reap big dividends. As a manager, it can be easy to give feedback to your employees based on intuition and experience but adding accurate data to the picture adds real weight to these communications.

Think about it. If you have analytics showing how your employee works and what they contribute to overall project timelines, then you can tailor your advice and possible incentives to match the data.

That means you're far more likely to find alignment with your employees.

Track Task Progress and Deadlines

Remote managers often struggle with tracking individual and team progress since there is a lot of discrepancy in reporting. You have to pull up timesheet reports submitted by each employee, tally them with the project timelines and determine if you're on track to completion.

This becomes more tedious when employees don't share progress reports on time.

Modern managers avoid this concern by using remote team time trackers with built-in project management functionalities that provide an accurate view of individual and team progress through an intuitive visual dashboard.

The tool captures employees' time, maps it to the activities and apps they have used to complete tasks, and enables logging everything to respective projects. Once done, the data from these logs becomes visible on the manager's dashboard for review.



This entire process saves you several hours that you would otherwise spend extracting data from manual timesheets and progress reports.

Fosters Accountability

Here's a secret behind successful businesses: they foster a sense of accountability within teams. When employees know you trust them with their tasks, it triggers a sense of accountability, encouraging them to perform better. That little bit of confidence can mean the difference between a fruitful and failing performance.

Accountability extends beyond work to other areas like submitting accurate time and task sheets, ensuring the top-tier quality of work, better teamwork and collaboration, etc., for a seamless workflow altogether.

Remote team time trackers foster this sense of accountability within your team by allowing it to share progress and timesheets instead of having you monitor their working hours through [employee surveillance methods](#).



When workers know that you trust them by using time tracking tools that promote accountability, chances are that they will put more effort into improving their overall efficiency and effectiveness, which can come back with greater ROIs for your business in the long run.

CHAPTER 3

HOW TIME TRACKING HELPS IN MANAGING YOUR REMOTE TEAM?



How Time Tracking Helps in Managing Your Remote Team?

Managing remote teams was always a daunting task for managers due to disrupted communication, employees working in different time zones, and accountability issues. But time trackers have come to your rescue and resolved most, if not all, of the challenges you face with teams working from home.

They create work transparency

The progress and overall performance of employees should be clearly visible to them and their managers as it creates a sense of accountability. You know precisely the work your employees are doing, the status of each project, and if everyone is meeting their goals.

Having insights into each employee's work habits and performance allows managers to plan tasks intelligently, ensuring that a balanced workload is assigned.

With all the puzzle pieces falling into place perfectly, you can maintain and even achieve higher productivity and customer satisfaction rates.

For this purpose, a time tracking solution will come in handy, as it keeps track of work-related activities and shows exactly how your team utilized the time to achieve their tasks.

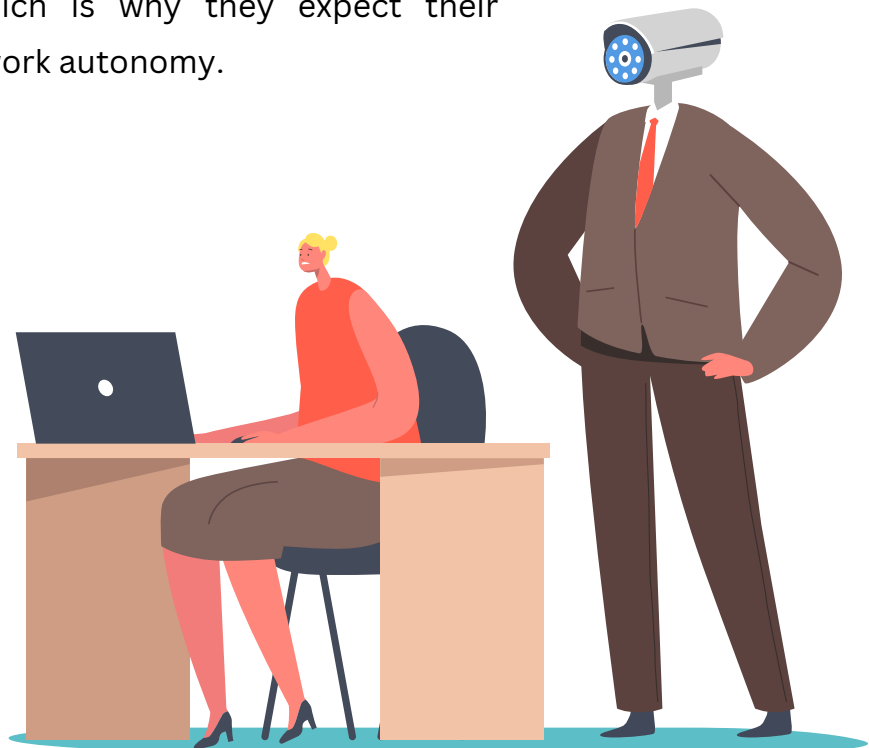


They relieve you from micromanaging employees

Here's a fact: nobody likes to be micromanaged. Micromanagement may have worked in the past where our parents and grandparents weren't aware of the best practices at work, but things are no longer the same.

Employees today know exactly how micromanagement hurts performance, which is why they expect their managers to give them work autonomy.

Managers, on the other hand, are also aware of the fact that trusting their teams with work and giving them due autonomy drastically increases the quality of outputs



Remote team time trackers have made this easier for managers as these tools automatically record employees' progress, which means you don't have to constantly remind them to log timesheets or submit work progress reports. Employees can do that from the time tracking app with a few clicks at each day's end.



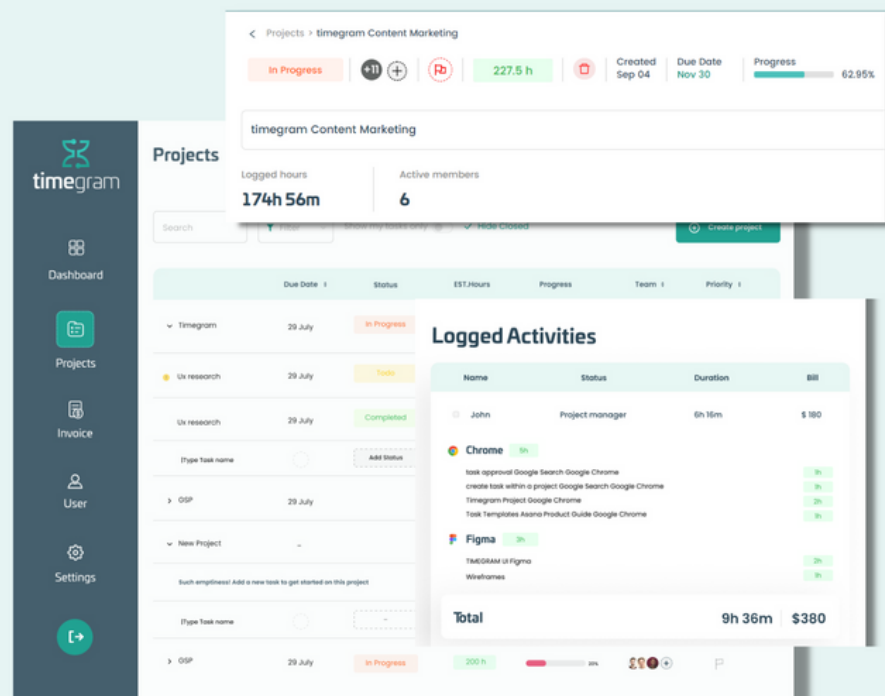
They allow you to plan more effectively

As a manager, you want to know how each of your employees is performing, so you can reward top-performers and work on slackers to improve their productivity.

Time tracking allows you to do that by tracking daily and weekly performance reports, and measuring outputs against capacities.

You can do this by using the integrated project management modules that come in-built in most timetracking tool

They allow you to assign tasks to different members of your team and then track each employee's time spent on those tasks to identify strong and weak points.



For instance, if you see that Jake is struggling with a certain type of tasks, you can revisit planning for future projects and assign Jake the tasks he completes more efficiently. This will allow you to increase the overall efficiency of your team by utilizing resources to their full potential.



You save your team from potential burnouts

Work overload is one of the biggest causes of employee burnout, which can lead to significant declines in productivity. Such an unproductive workforce is also costlier for your team, disrupting your financial projections for the business.



Time trackers allow you to ensure this doesn't happen by keeping employee capacities in check. Once you hire an employee, you assign a weekly working capacity in hours to that worker.

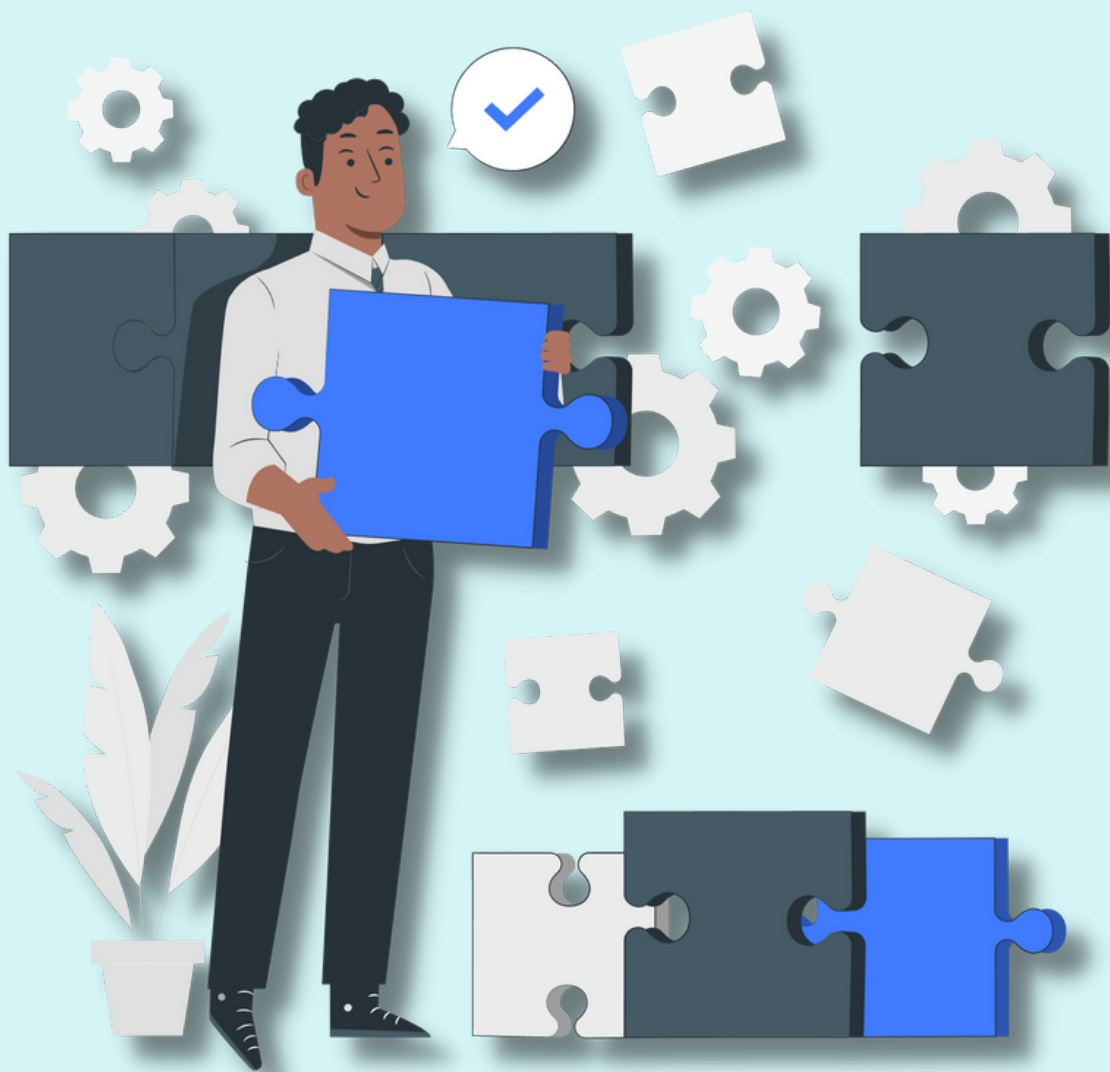
Let's assume that the new person in your team is Alex, and you assign him a 40-hour per week capacity.

Now, if Alex begins to deliver more than 40 hours each week, you know that he's overworking, which may jeopardize his work-life balance, eventually leading to burnout.

You can monitor Alex's working hours through your time tracker and assign projects that he could deliver within his assigned weekly capacity. This will keep Alex from experiencing burnout systems and, thus, remain productive all year round.

CHAPTER 4

WHAT TO LOOK FOR IN A REMOTE TIME TRACKING SOLUTION?



What to Look for in a Remote Time Tracking Solution?

So, we touched on what features you can expect from this software. But the truth is that the market is [constantly expanding](#), and there are many options available, from free time tracking tools to much pricier enterprise solutions.

However, if we want to categorize these products broadly, then we can do so based on a couple of critical criteria:

- What do they measure?
- What kind of reporting is provided?

So, let's tackle the first point, to begin with. One of the biggest concerns regarding time tracking software is employee privacy. After all, nobody likes to be spied on. You have a range of choices in terms of invasiveness.

What Do They Measure?

Looking at some of the more established names in the industry. They advertise real-time monitoring features, including GPS tracking, remote screenshot capabilities, and mouse and keyboard tracking.

Meanwhile, some apps position themselves more in the project management space. These solutions provide relatively more limited time tracking features.

Apart from simple time-in and time-out functions for users, the software allows employees to manually log hours for tasks or a project.

Finally, you have tools that split the difference between these two approaches.



These time tracking tools automatically record and group tasks, allowing users to focus on work instead of manually logging activities and time worked.

At the end of a given work period, employees just have to filter out the activities into their relevant work and simply submit them as a log.

In this way, the product puts the control in the hands of users while still providing managers the visibility they need on employee productivity.

What Kind of Reporting Do They Provide?

Most tools on the market today provide a centralized management system for managers to view metrics for each employee, but the way information is presented can vary quite significantly.

Going back to our market assessment, many employee time tracking software enable users to submit their timesheets directly to managers, who can then approve these and send them back with additional feedback

Managers can also view overall project completion timelines in self-generated Gantt charts.

However, one of the significant drawbacks of these tools is that they don't offer integrated invoice tracking, so hours billed and worked need to be manually calculated.

At the same time, more mobile-driven competitors provide additional functionalities, such as attendance tracking to monitor employee absentee rates, holidays taken, sick days, and other related metrics.

They also allow you to track hours billed against each project to calculate overall profitability.

CHAPTER 5

FAQS ABOUT REMOTE TEAM TIME TRACKING



FAQs About Remote Team Time Tracking

#1. How does time tracking software help manage time?

Remote team time trackers have proven to be excellent for employee time management. They track your employees' time spent on different tasks, and once they're done for the day, they can simply review the timesheet to see precisely where they were most or least productive.

All of this data can help employees improve their working habits and manage time better, enabling them to demonstrate higher productivity. You, as a manager, can use it to assign future projects based on your team's strengths and weaknesses.

#2. Which problems did time tracking software help you solve?

Time trackers help both employees and managers in different ways. For instance, [employees can benefit from time trackers](#) by:



Improving work productivity by identifying parts of the day where they were most productive and unproductive and then working on those areas accordingly



Implementing a system of personal feedback by reviewing the time spent on tasks



Set personal standards by reviewing metrics and then working to achieve them



Increase work transparency by knowing precisely where and how much time was spent



Better time management by using time tracking insights to remove potential slacking time

For managers, time trackers help by:



Making payroll more efficient due to accurate time tracking insights



Improving project management by reviewing individual and team progress



Optimizing for employee performances by focusing on work delivered against estimated capacities



Tracking task progress and deadlines through an intuitive dashboard to ensure timely work delivery



Fostering accountability by trusting employees with work and the time they spend on tasks

#3. What's the most efficient way of tracking employee hours?

There are several ways to track employee hours at work, but when it comes to remote teams, automatic time trackers are the single-most reliable option at hand for several reasons. For starters, employees don't have to manually log hours since these tools capture activity for them, allowing your team to share accurate logs with you.



#4. What are the essential features of a time tracking solution?

Modern [time tracking tools come with a bunch of features](#) that allow you to take a step further than just time tracking. Some key features of a good time tracker include:



Project management to monitor task progress and working capacities



A billing module to identify billable hours and generate accurate invoices



Setting business-specific KPIs to highlight individual and team performances



Intuitive dashboards to review consolidated information and take relevant actions

Different time tracking tools add unique functionalities to their tool to make them a better alternative for you and your team.

#5. Why do companies need time tracking software?

We live in an era where remote work is the new normal, and that comes with some challenges.



How do you know if your employees are working at home or watching TV and playing PS5?



How do you track the number of hours they've worked on a project to identify billable hours?



How do you track individual progress within a project?



Answering these and several other performance-related questions is essential in a remote work model, and a viable solution available today is time tracking software.

These tools are equipped with all the basic functionalities you, as a manager, need to run a remote team.

#6. Does time tracking in an organization really improve productivity?

Time tracking may not have a direct impact on [productivity](#), but it certainly provides you and your team with insights that can lead to a more productive workflow.

For instance, your team can review its activity to identify lost hours and see where and how they're allocating their 8-hour shift.

This data can then be used to improve work consistency, reduce idle time, and increase the efficiency and effectiveness of work altogether, all of which translates into improved productivity.

#7. How does an automated time tracking tool work?

Automatic time trackers are one of the several different types of time tracking tools available on the market.

These are complete productivity monitoring platforms that automatically track your team's time spent on tasks, allowing them to focus on their primary work instead of manually submitting time logs.



They can then review their entire day's activity, group tasks into relevant projects and share the log with you.

By doing this, automated time trackers remove the guesswork from the equation and allow you to receive accurate data about where and how your team spent its time.

#8. How to track an employee's schedule easily?

Tracking a remote employee's daily schedule can be a challenge. Time trackers offer a dedicated project management module, where you can assign projects and the working capacity of your team.

Once the project or tasks commence, your employees will share the automatically tracked work logs with you, which allow you to see the overall individual and team progress on the assigned tasks.

You can also project completion times based on the daily working capacity of your team, which will allow you to schedule tasks and manage deadlines easily.

#9. How do I get my employees to track work hours properly?

Time trackers are an excellent way to track the working hours of your team, but convincing them to log hours in the first place can be a daunting task.

You can [do it by using automatic time trackers](#) that run silently in the background, recording employee activity, so your team doesn't have to manually log hours or remember which tasks they worked on during the day.



#10. How can employers track remote employees' time?

Tracking remote employees' time was a major concern for most managers when teams started working from home, but time trackers quickly came to the rescue. These tools automatically record activity that employees can review and share with you within a few clicks.

Since tracking through these tools is automated, you can rest assured that the time logs are accurate to the core.

Conclusion

Managers have been using different time-tracking methods to mark attendance for decades, but the concept has greatly evolved in the modern-day, where you're dealing with remote teams and are focused more on productivity than time-ins and time-outs.

Automated time tracking tools have come out as a winner as they allow you to efficiently manage virtual teams and follow practices that utilize your workforce to its full potential. It also comes with a unique set of challenges and benefits discussed in detail in this eBook.

This is a complete A-Z guide to modern time-tracking methods and how your remote team can make the most of them. For a hands-on experience, try timegram – a privacy-first time-tracker that packs features to help you with efficient resource utilization and project management.

Get your Free Trial Now!

About timegram



timegram is a smart time tracking and project planning tool that automatically tracks time and activities, making the whole process ridiculously simple for employees.

We understand that employees hate monitoring and surveillance. But employers need performance visibility too. To reach a common ground where everyone is happy and focused on productivity, we took a privacy-first time tracking approach.

That means, **timegram** doesn't capture webcam shots, monitor screens, track keystrokes, or use any other surveillance tactics that invade employees' privacy.

Our time tracker is features a project management module that allows you to measure time against projects and tasks. You can assign tasks to users, track individual and team capacities, calculate billable hours, acquire insights based on business-specific KPIs, generate invoices, and do much more.

To learn more about how **timegram** can help you with remote team time tracking, visit us at: <https://www.timegram.io>.

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