How to build a productivity-first organisation

5 easy ways to drive productivity in a new era of work
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Featuring insights from leaders at:
Make employee productivity your #1 KPI
Make employee productivity your #1 KPI

Amid rapid change and uncertain economic conditions, companies are being asked to produce more without increasing headcount.

While advancements and changes to long-standing ways of working can be overwhelming, they present exciting opportunities for future growth and scale.

State of Work 2023 insights

Accelerating work with automation will unlock your team’s potential like never before.

More than a quarter of workers are using AI, and this group is 90% more likely to report higher levels of productivity than those who haven’t adopted AI.

To supercharge productivity, check how you’re measuring it.

Your workers may be spending valuable time and effort looking productive, maintaining a front from old-fashioned productivity pressures. Sixty-three percent of non-executive workers make an effort to keep their status online, even if they’re not working at that moment.

Happiness breeds great work

Eighty-two percent of desk workers say that feeling happy and engaged at work is a key driver of productivity.

Source: The State of Work,” Slack Research, 2023
Case study: Pet Circle

Pet Circle, an online shopping hub for pet supplies across New Zealand, Australia and Southeast Asia, has seen incredible productivity benefits thanks to Slack.

Harnessing automation, Pet Circle has streamlined its incident process. Now, engineers and customer experience specialists can address potential issues before customers are even aware there’s a problem.

An alert is automatically sent to a channel, with five or 10 people able to pick it up and deal with it in minutes. Ultimately, this means we’ve reduced our response waiting times from at least two hours to two minutes.

Tony Abi Khalil,
Vice President of Engineering, Pet Circle
Remove barriers to productivity

Endless meetings, repetitive tasks, context switching — there are a number of unnecessary distractions standing in the way of true productivity.

Hours per week saved by automating manual processes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Country</th>
<th>Hours per Week Saved</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Global</td>
<td>3.6 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Australia</td>
<td>3.3 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>India</td>
<td>4.9 hours</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Singapore</td>
<td>3.6 hours</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: The State of Work, "Slack Research, 2023"
How employee productivity will improve your bottom line
Productive employees equal organisational security

Intelligent and automated productivity tools will serve not only your employees but ultimately your organisation’s bottom line. Here’s how:

**Save the clock:** Efficiency is the heart song of streamlined productivity. Clean up your processes with automation and regain time and energy for your teams.

**Aligned and informed:** Our 2023 research found that productive workers feel happier and more engaged. They are also more likely to understand how their roles fit into the company’s mission overall, and benefit from transparent communication.

**Do not disengage!** Disengaged workers cost the world 11% of global GDP, or USD$7.8 trillion in productivity. Ignoring the risk of a disengaged workforce will stunt organisational growth.

**Here to stay:** When work design is based on human flow and needs, employee fatigue decreases by 44% and employees are 45% more intent on staying.

**Lean into AI:** Workers who are most productive are 242% more likely to be using AI compared with their less productive counterparts.

*Source: The State of Work,“ Slack Research, 2023, Gallup, Gartner*
How employee productivity will improve your bottom line

8 productivity blockers

1. Unnecessary or drawn-out meetings
2. Complicated email threads
3. Disconnected teams
4. Context-switching and loss of focus time
5. Lack of project or role clarity
6. Remote collaboration complexities
7. Menial tasks that could be automated
8. Misalignment between management and workers on how to measure productivity
Tip 1: Lean into automation
Supercharge capacity with automation

With overwhelming change comes exciting possibilities, something that today’s employees are demanding from their employers. Three-quarters of knowledge workers believe that automating some of their routine tasks would greatly improve their productivity.

Case study: BukuWarung

BukuWarung, an Indonesian FinTech helping more than 8 million micro, small and medium enterprises, has seen the benefits of Slack’s automation capacity at scale.

“
The efficiency we see on Slack compared with all other tools on the market is unparalleled.

In the last nine months alone we’ve saved 250+ hours in employee time thanks to Slack Workflows, saving an average of 15 minutes per issue. Even better, our IT team isn’t saddled in unnecessary meetings — they’ve been able to eliminate more than 350+ meetings in the last nine months, as we’re able to solve issues and do check-ins on Slack.

Alka Gupta,
Director of Data, Marketing, Business Operations and People, BukuWarung
Automation reaches explosive impact when combined with the possibilities of AI. In our 2023 research, 27% of respondents are already using AI. Tellingly, those respondents are 90% more likely to report higher levels of productivity at work.

Meanwhile, Knowledge workers who use automation and AI at work estimate saving an average of 3.6 hours a week — or, around one working month in a year!

Less time spent on routine tasks and switching between apps means more capacity for innovative, strategic and engaging work.

Teams that embrace and run alongside automation possibilities will see an incredible boost to their intellectual productivity.

**Work smarter, not harder with Slack GPT**

Recently announced, Slack GPT integrates the power of generative AI to supercharge the productivity capabilities of your workforce. Helping your people communicate clearer, work smarter and stay up-to-date faster.

Imagine if every time you hop into a channel, you’ll be able to get up to speed on unread Slack messages in one click – whether you’re jumping in midway through a project or catching up from being out of the office. In the future, with generative AI built seamlessly into the user experience, conversation summaries will be there when you need them, the moment you start scrolling through a channel.
Case study: SPH Media

Scaling in the fast-paced media landscape with SPH Media

SPH Media has seen a noticeable boost in its communication, collaboration and productivity since choosing Slack.

“Slack has helped us to scale our operations. We’ve been able to move faster and work much more productively, in terms of reacting to events and information as it comes in.”

George Irwin,
Director of Engineering, SPH Media

For example, the SPH Media technology team harnesses Slack Workflows to streamline its complex approvals process.

“When you’re dealing with a workflow that involves emails and ticketing interfaces, there are gaps between creating tickets, notifying the approver, the approver seeing the notification and going back into that environment to approve that request,” says Irwin. “But in Slack, I can approve right there.”
Tip 2: Banish unnecessary meetings
Tip 2: Banish unnecessary meetings

Transform meeting culture

When companies reduce meetings, teams see improvements across the board.

- 42% increase in team collaboration
- 32% increase in psychological safety to speak up and express opinions
- 28% increase in team performance

Source: HBR
Meetings can be a productive combination of thoughts, ideas and strategy. They can also be a painful waste of time.

According to our 2023 research, knowledge workers reported that 43% of meetings could be eliminated with no real adverse consequences. This percentage increases even more for leaders and executives. To avoid meetings, leaders and employees can champion asynchronous and casual communication options, such as Slack Huddles, to keep work moving forward.

HR tech startup Springworks used Slack to transition to a remote-first setup, slashing unnecessary meetings along the way.

We were doing five stand-ups a week, but we’ve been able to eliminate three. The other days we share updates on Slack.

Kartik Mandaville, Founder and CEO, Springworks

While distributed teams are craving stronger communication, the value sits in quality rather than quantity. Leveraging more intelligent, asynchronous and flexible communication methods will equal a more adaptable and empowered workforce.
So, we know why it’s necessary to scale back the number of meetings your company has. Now for the how.

Here are five easy ways to eliminate those pesky time-sucking meetings:

- **Quick informal debrief or chat?** Hold a Slack Huddle—lightweight audio and screen-sharing that facilitates quick, informal discussions without having to schedule a meeting.

- **Asynchronous updates without juggling global calendars?** Post a Slack Clip—short audio, video and screen recordings to provide updates, showcase work, walk through a product demo, or give step-by-step instructions.

- **Ask: Does this really need to be a meeting?** Replace unnecessary meetings by anchoring updates in your Slack Channel. Share ideas, make decisions and move work forward with a common purpose and place.

- **Can this be automated?** Enter Slack Workflows. These nifty automations take care of routine and repetitive tasks, so you can get answers, approvals and more without calling a single meeting.

- **Need a central source of truth?** Keep everyone on the same page with Slack Canvas—collaborate around structured information and share that across your organisation.
Choosing smart. When deciding on platforms and tools to add to your existing tech stack, consider their integrative capabilities. Amazon Alexa was already using Chime as its video-conference platform, so Slack’s seamless integration equaled a smooth adoption curve for their distributed teams.

Cut back the calendar bulk. By establishing simple channel updates, Amazon Alexa eliminated Monday morning stand-ups, reclaiming 30–45 minutes every week.

Formality is fading. The adaptive and agile world we now work in responds well to more reactive collaboration. Amazon Alexa’s teams have welcomed the informal and accessible options, such as Slack Huddles and Slack Clips, so employees can communicate asynchronously.

No agenda, no meeting. If someone plans to use 30 minutes of your time, they need to be able to justify how it will drive work forward.

“Slack has helped us remove the need for everything to be a meeting. We’re now able to jump on and have a quick conversation and we’re done.”

Jen Beirne, Head of Marketing, Amazon Alexa
Tip 3: Streamline your processes
Pause for a moment and consider all of the tiny steps, triggers, emails, moments and checks that go into each process within your organisation.

It’s hard to comprehend, right?

The modern workforce needs to funnel its digital complexities into simpler, automated channels.

Tip 3: Streamline your processes

More than ever, streamlining processes is the foundation for productivity and longevity. Reducing multiple layers of manual processes equals more time to innovate and experiment.

Canva’s Internal Infrastructure team, who create bespoke workplace technology solutions, rely on Slack to drive work forward. The Sentry integration keeps track of error incidents, helping the team to discover incidents within minutes of them happening.

To unlock developer productivity, customised Slack bots are a nifty way to run code and automate tasks. Canva’s internal applications and systems operations team uses bots to:
• Automate Jira ticket requests via keyword detection
• Simplify communication with its China office via translation bots
• Triage tech support requests with chatbots

Case study: Canva

“Getting error notifications delivered into our team Slack channel feels much more like a livestream of updates and less spammy than emails.”

Lawrence Law,
IT Platform Lead, Canva
Are we working in the flow yet?

In our 2023 research, **22% of knowledge workers said** that **too much chaos** at work is negatively impacting their ability to be productive.

Meanwhile, **68% of employees spend at least 30 minutes every day switching between apps**, according to **Future Forum** research. This context switching threatens to only grow with organisational tech stacks becoming more complex.

According to a study from the **University of California**, it can take an average of **23 minutes** for workers to **refocus** after being distracted.

This endless toggling between screens and refreshing for updates is a formidable foe for productivity.

According to a **longitudinal study from McKinsey**, when employees are equipped to ‘work in the flow’, they are five times more productive.
REA Group, leaders in digital property platforms, uses Slack to streamline complex processes.

The company has around **100 apps** integrated into its Slack workspace. For example, if there is a building evacuation, REA Group’s wardens can use custom emojis and the PagerDuty integration to respond and share real-time updates with the team. It also uses more than **120 workflows**.

"Workflows are incredibly easy to create, so when someone sees an opportunity to simplify processes, they can create one themselves.

**Toby Borella**, Tech Product Lead, REA Group

A long list of apps and workflows could appear as an overwhelming to-do list. But with intelligent and automated integration, like with Slack, the hard work happens on its own.
Tip 4: Make onboarding more efficient
Particularly within the current landscape of attracting and retaining the best talent, a positive onboarding experience is only becoming more critical.

Add to that the importance of strong employee alignment, and you have a case for effective onboarding.

Eight in ten desk workers say that feeling happy and engaged at work is a key driver of productivity.

It can take upwards of six months for new employees to reach their ‘full impact’

Companies embracing the benefits of technology on culture see their workers score 2.2x higher on a sense of belonging.


**New productivity hack: Slack Canvas**

**Canvas** is a newly launched and simplified surface within Slack to host relevant files, links, information and stakeholders all within one curated space.
The percentage of employees who believe their onboarding experience was adequate.

Source: Gallup

Case study: REA Group

Workflow Builder has improved REA Group’s recruitment and onboarding process. When a new-starter joins a specific channel, a workflow is triggered to deliver the necessary information they need to settle in. This could include job-specific documents, helpful contacts and resources and overviews of team customs.

Slack is part of the onboarding experience before new employees even walk through the doors of REA Group.

“We use Slack to preboard new-starters, introduce them to the rest of the team, and connect them with the information they need to hit the ground running.”

Alana Shepherd,
Executive Manager of People Agility, REA Group
Slack is easy to use and has an easy learning curve. Better yet, it was the best tool to onboard a diverse team. We were confident Slack could eliminate unnecessary admin so our team could focus on driving work forward and doing their best work.

Nav Pawera
Head of Design, Jiva

Here are some useful onboarding tips from Jiva:

**Celebrate day one:** Connect new employees quickly with their teammates, colleagues in different teams and stakeholders.

**Learning the ropes:** Take the time to show your company’s unique way of working—and allow space for questions and feedback.

**Be you:** Prompt new-starters to personalise their profiles and suggest social and common interest channels they might be interested in joining.

**A-OK automate:** Use Slack workflows to kick off each stage with all the necessary detail.
Tip 5:
Make time for innovation
Make time for blue sky thinking

67%
of workers say having predictable blocks of time when everyone is disconnected would improve their productivity.

Make space to space out

Having time for strategic thinking is critical for innovation. Employees have recognised this need, with 67% saying having predictable blocks of ‘disconnected time’ would improve their productivity.

Take Amazon Alexa whose employees are saving around two hours per week with fewer meetings and less context switching.

“We’re so often in meetings for the sake of meetings and don’t have the space to consider how we can add value,” says Jen Beirne, Head of Marketing at Amazon Alexa.

Beirne encourages employees to take a block of time on a Friday when they don’t host meetings and aren’t expected to be responsive to emails. They are given that space to think, strategise and focus on their development.

Meaning creative and strategic thinkers can not only ward off the risks of burnout but also have more capacity to do their most valuable work.
Innovation is made up of a complex and ever-changing list of ingredients, but is increasingly essential in the future of work.

Removing layers of manual processing frees up space for more creativity, agility and innovative thinking from your people.

REA Group uses Slack to host internal hackathons where employees work in multidisciplinary teams and collaborate on an idea of their choice.

Now, participants can join from anywhere, with seamless collaboration and real-time communication all in one place.

“Slack meant we could open up hack days to interstate and international offices. And some of the learnings from this have informed how we plan future virtual events,” says Kimi George, Lead Business Analyst at REA Group.

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**Innovation from anywhere**

**Asynchronous brainstorming.** Get ready to level up your global collaboration with Slack Canvas—where teams can curate, organise and share mission-critical resources.

**Nothing is lost.** With intelligent search functionality and the ability to summarise with AI, every team member, wherever they are, has access to what they need to do their best work.

**Stay in the flow.** Slack Workflows mean less time taking data and updates from one place to another, and more time harnessing creative thinking.
Best practices for building productivity platform
A productivity platform like Slack will harness the power of connected teams and intelligent automation. Here’s how:

**Winning workflows.** Reclaim time and focus like BukuWurang, who saved more than 250 hours of employee time by streamlining IT tickets using Slack Workflows.

**Banish unproductive meetings.** Audit your meeting culture, and encourage asynchronous and informal communication options such as Slack Huddles. Just ask Springworks—the company was able to quickly remove three out of five weekly stand-up meetings by moving the process to Slack.

**Stack smarter.** Be considerate when adding to your tech stack and choose clever integrations for long-term adoption and focus benefits. Amazon Alexa’s creative success is supported by clean integrations such as Chime and Slack, making collaborative communication smoother.

**Get AI on your side.** Discover the possibilities for AI to simplify the ways of working and make space for your people to do more of their best work.
Ready to boost your company’s productivity?

GET IN TOUCH

About Slack

Slack is on a mission to make people’s working lives simpler, more pleasant and more productive. It is the productivity platform for customer companies that improves performance by empowering everyone with no-code automation, making search and knowledge sharing seamless, and keeping teams connected and engaged as they move work forward together. As part of Salesforce, Slack is deeply integrated into the Salesforce Customer 360, supercharging productivity across sales, service and marketing teams. To learn more and get started with Slack for free, visit [slack.com](http://slack.com) or connect with us @SlackHQ.

PS: You’re doing a great job 🌟

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