

The Modern Worker's Toolkit: 24 Productivity Tools to Work Smarter, Not Harder



Many people today have a confused understanding of the word “productivity”. We live in a world that demands more and more of our time, attention, and energy, forcing us to work long hours at an unsustainable pace. Many of us make the mistake of equating these outrageous work demands with “productivity”. If we don’t work ourselves half to death, we don’t feel productive.

Productivity is actually defined by what gets produced, not by how hard we work at something. It’s all about the output — not the input.

If producing a desired result is the ultimate goal, shouldn’t we all be good stewards of our time and work as efficiently as possible?

Of course!

Deliberately improving your productivity and efficiency doesn’t just make you a more competitive worker. It also leaves more time and energy to devote to your family, friends, and church.

So, how do you get more done in the same working hours? The trick is utilize tools that facilitate and automate as much of your work and life as possible.

In this guide, you’ll find 24 tools to help you work smarter, not harder. You don’t have to use them all — just the ones that make your life easier. Once you try a few, you’ll quickly realize the rewards of working smarter, not harder.

Communication

1. Boomerang

Have you ever wanted to write an email while it's fresh in your mind, but you weren't ready to send it? With Boomerang, you can craft an email now and schedule it to be sent another time. It's perfect to keep conversations moving and prevent inbox clutter. You can also set reminders for yourself if a recipient doesn't reply.

Cost: Free for the most useful features.

2. Slack

Slack is a lightweight, flexible communication platform for teams so you don't have to deal with clunky emails. You can organize conversations into channels or private messages, and it's an easy way to share links and files. It's perfect for people who travel or work remotely. You can also join community Slack channels around your industry or role.

Cost: Slack is free to use (to join teams) and set up a small team. Larger teams cost \$6.67/month and up.

3. HubSpot CRM

If you're in sales or just want the perks that come with keeping up with your network, check out HubSpot CRM. It gives you an up-to-date, visual view of your contacts so you can see where you are in each interaction. It's a great tool for reaching out to a lot of people, like when you're searching your network for job opportunities.

Cost: The CRM is free, but the full HubSpot suite has a ton of interesting features. There's no monthly fee, but you pay based on the number of contacts.

4. Insightly

Insightly is a customer relationship management (CRM) tool that helps you keep track of your contacts. You can store information about each contact, including a concise history of all of your interactions. It's great for sales and marketing people, or anyone who interacts with a large number of contacts.

Cost: Free up to 2,500 contacts. After that, plans start at \$29 per month per user (you can invite other people to your account).

5. Zoom

Zoom is a video conferencing tool for meetings, webinars, trainings and events. It's an excellent way to conduct meetings (even one-on-one conversations) with anyone all over the world. Zoom is full of useful features, like recording and screen sharing. To invite someone into your meeting, simply pass them your meeting URL.

Cost: The free plan comes with unlimited one-to-one meetings, but each has a 40 minute time limit. The \$14.99/month plan lets you host meetings for as long as you like.

Web Apps

6. LastPass

LastPass stores all of your passwords so you don't have to remember them all or dig through a password spreadsheet. If two people have LastPass, they can share access without trading sensitive information. You can revoke their access at any time.

Cost: The important features are free.

7. Buffer

Buffer is an extraordinarily simple way to share content on social media without navigating between all of your profiles. Simply connect your social media accounts to Buffer and share content right from any web page or social media post. You can even schedule your posts for specific times.

Cost: Most features are free, but you may want the \$10/month plan if you schedule a lot of posts.

8. Evernote

No more messy bookmarks and forgotten ideas. Evernote is like a vault for all of your important information. You can capture, organize, and share notes, articles, images, and data from anywhere on the web.

Cost: Free, but you may want to spend \$34/year to sync all of your devices.

9. IFTTT

IFTTT is a unique tool that integrates all your other tools with "recipes" to perform advanced operations. For instance, you could create a recipe to...

- Track work hours with a widget on your phone
- Save new email attachments from Gmail to Google Drive
- Automatically log every call you make in a spreadsheet
- Get an email digest of the week's most popular business articles

There are thousands of available recipes, or you can create your own.

Cost: Free

Invoicing

10. Zoho Books

Zoho Books has all the basic accounting features of most financial tools (invoicing, expense tracking, banking, reporting, etc.) plus one unique extra: Without special accounting knowledge, you can create advanced financial reports like a balance sheet, profit & loss report, and cash flow report). Its great for someone starting a business without much financial education.

Cost: \$9/month, but you only get 50 contacts. You'll quickly grow into the \$19/month plan.

11. Wave

Wave is best suited for small businesses with less than 10 people. It comes with the usual financial features. The best part about Wave is that it's mostly free. You only pay for certain services as you use them (like credit card processing or payroll). The invoicing tools are completely free.

Cost: Free to use, but you pay to process credit cards, run bank transactions, and run payroll.

Productivity

12. Trello

Trello is a simple project management tool with a visual way to organize your tasks. Create columns for project phases, then stock your columns with cards. Load information on cards for each task (due dates, checklists, comments, etc.) and move them through the columns. Trello is great for simple to-do lists for one person.

Cost: Free for single users

13. Airtable

Databases are complex, especially when you have to compare different types of information. With Airtable, you can create fluid spreadsheets to seamlessly manipulate data (like marketing campaigns, event planning, hiring processes, etc.). You can swap between different views to explore your data in whatever format you prefer. This lets you keep all of your information in one place so you don't have to deal with multiple files.

Cost: Free unless you need to store more than 5,000 records, then it's \$10/month.

14. StayFocused

Do you procrastinate? This Chrome extension restricts your use of time-wasting websites (like Facebook or reddit). It's a great way to avoid distractions and force yourself to work.

Cost: Free

15. Calendly

Calendly is one of the best tools to organize your appointments and meetings without sending a lot of back-and-forth emails. Simply set your availability and share your link. Calendly will prompt invitees to choose a time, then add the meeting to your calendar.

Cost: Free unless you want to integrate with other tools, customize your notifications, or create group events, then it's \$8/month.

16. Toggl

Toggl is a super simple time-tracking app to manage your projects, clients and team. Use it to discover the real cost of each project, bill clients properly, and keep tabs on your team. It will show you where you're wasting time and what tasks you should optimize.

Cost: Free, but there are paid plans for more features.

17. [aText \(for Mac\)](#)

Do you spend a lot of time typing the same phrases, like your name and title, email address, or common answers to questions about yourself? aText increases your typing speed by replacing common phrases with abbreviations. Instead of typing everything out, just enter your shortcut and aText will make the swap. You can even include formatted text (bold, italics, tables, etc.), scripts (like today's date), HTML, and images in your shortcuts.

Cost: \$4.99 one time purchase

18. [AutoText \(for Windows\)](#)

Just like aText, AutoText is a text expander, but for Windows computers. You can create text shortcuts for words, phrases, whole passages of text, and even code.

Cost: \$22 one time purchase. That seems like a lot for a small program, but once you start using it to replace long bits of copy (like sales messages, cover letters, or freelance job pitches), it will save a lot of time.

19. [Alfred \(for Mac\)](#)

Alfred is similar to Mac's Spotlight search tool, but far more powerful. Using simple shortcuts, you can open any folder, file or Google doc you have access to. You can even create your own shortcuts to open any web page. That means no more digging through folders or bookmarks. Over time, it learns your search habits to speed up your searches.

Cost: Free, but for \$25 (one time fee) you can upgrade to the Powerpack that comes with a suite of productivity features.

20. [Google Calendar](#)

Google Calendar is particularly powerful because it integrates with all of your Google products. Creating entries is lightning fast and you can invite other people to keep everyone in the loop (invites can include attachments). Google will email you reminders and push notifications to your phone so you don't forget. You can even share calendars with other people so you always have access to their schedule. (Google syncs everything across time zones.)

Cost: Free with a Google account.

File Storage

21. [Google Drive](#)

Drive is an easy place to store all of your files and media. You get 15 GB with a free Google account and access to Google's shared web products, like Docs, Sheets, and Slides. These products create cloud-based shared documents that are always available to you and your team. By storing your files in Drive, you can email much larger files to your team than Gmail normally allows.

Cost: Free up to 15 GB of storage space. 100GB costs \$1.99/month and 1 TB costs \$9.99/month.

22. [Dropbox](#)

Dropbox is essential for most people these days. It's a cloud-storage service for all of your important files. What makes it especially useful is its desktop integration that turns Dropbox into just another folder on your computer. You can manage files on Dropbox (including shared folders with other people) by simply dragging them in or out.

Cost: Free for 2GB of storage space. For \$8.25/month, you can get 1 TB.

Writing

23. [Hemingway](#)

If you aren't the strongest writer, you probably spend a lot of time reading and re-reading your emails before you send. Quit agonizing and use Hemingway. Simply paste your copy into the Hemingway editor (or write it there to start). The app will identify opportunities to improve your style, prose and structure. Then simply follow its advice to dramatically improve your writing.

Cost: Free

24. [Grammarly](#)

Like Hemingway, Grammarly makes sure everything you write is clear and free of mistakes. But unlike Hemingway, Grammarly is a Chrome extension that monitors everything you write, even social media posts, Slack messages, and blog comments. This tool prevents embarrassing mistakes before you post

Cost: Free

Find a Coach, Change Your Life

Crown's Career Direct Coaching Package will help you find clarity, chart your course, and ignite your passion.

[START NOW](#)