

Category	ID	Product Name [and logo]	Brief Description	Experience with Usage
Agile / Scrum, End to End Product Management Suite	1		All inclusive tool to manage product delivery including: 1) Managing the Product Backlog; 2) Code Repository; 3) Test Case Coverage / Test Plans; 4) Wiki for Project Knowledge Sharing; 5) Dynamic dashboards based on all project relevant data from Burndown charts to Code deployments;	I've used this product extensively since September 2018, and the product has been evolving ever since. Azure DevOps has evolved into a mostly mature solution, and has a marketplace for 3rd party plugins. If your looking to adopt Agile/Scrum to manage your product, you can't go wrong with Azure DevOps.
Project Management	2		Do you want to collaborate with project team members on tasks, but the team is in a diverse ecosystem (e.g. Macs, PCs, shared drives, etc.). Smartsheet makes it easy by using a browser to present the plan. Invite people to collaborate on your project by sharing sheet(s) with them. SmartSheet has most of the bells and whistles of competing products, such as predecessor links, and attachments to rows/tasks. Since it's a SaaS product, collaboration is the foundation of this product, information in one centralized location accessible across any browser, device, and operating system.	I first used SmartSheet when I was working as a Project Manager for a Digital company specializing in Healthcare / Pharmaceuticals. The shop was a mixture of creatives which used Macs, and the implementation team with Macs and PCs. We used this web based tool, Smartsheet, as our primary project planning tool. I was skeptical at first, but it seemed to work very well. No issues with collaboration, or the basics of project management (e.g. handling dependencies / predecessor). In addition, there are all sorts of ways to collaborate/share your plan internally and externally (through export). I'd highly recommend it. Slight drawback, you need to pay \$\$ for version control of changes from iteration to iteration differences in the plan.
Collaboration	3		SharePoint is a web-based collaborative platform that integrates with Microsoft Office. Launched in 2001, SharePoint is primarily sold as a document management and storage system, but the product is highly configurable and its usage varies substantially among organizations.	I've used SharePoint for many, many years now on a variety of projects, such as digitizing business workflows, project / product jump (launch) pages, corp video streaming, etc. I've seen teams use SharePoint as an application utilizing multiple tiers of the tech stack (UI; DB). Its the "Ginsu knives" or Swiss Army knife of collaboration platforms.
Automation/Work flow	4		Microsoft created a powerful platform that enables anyone, though an intuitive interface, to create custom workflows. There are a plethora of data connectors available from 3rd party software solutions, triggers to execute, and actions to perform.	I've been using Microsoft Power Automate [Flow] for all kinds of actions. For example, upon the trigger, the creation of a new Azure DevOps work item based on certain criteria, an email can be sent. Hundreds of opportunities to automate your SDLC workflow.

<p>Project Management</p>	<p>Microsoft Project</p> <p>5</p> 	<p>Microsoft Project is a project management software product, developed and sold by Microsoft. It is designed to assist a project manager in developing a schedule, assigning resources to tasks, tracking progress, managing the budget, and analyzing workloads.</p>	<p>I've been using MS Project since the late 1990s, and it's a mature product including all/most of what you think you will need for managing a project. Many of the initial projects I managed I performed though using MS Excel. Some companies I worked for at the time did not want to spend the \$\$ to purchase the license. Also, using MS Excel to manage tasks and milestones kind of "fit the form" of row and columns. However, one of the major drawbacks, is there is no easy way to create Predecessor relationships between rows/tasks. Predecessors allow the PM to automatically shift the schedule if a dependency is shifted. This feature is priceless, especially for complex projects.</p>
<p>Documentation</p>	<p>Notepad++</p> <p>6</p> 	<p>Notepad++ is a text and source code editor for use with Microsoft Windows. It supports tabbed editing, which allows working with multiple open files in a single window. The project's name comes from the C increment operator. Notepad++ is distributed as free software. At first the project was hosted on SourceForge.net, from where it has been downloaded over 28 million times</p>	<p>Notepad ++ is my goto note taking app, especially if Microsoft OneNote is not available. Notepad++ has a wealth of functionality for an editor where you would pay for the functionality. I highly recommend using it, and leveraging the tabs for a perpetual knowledgebase.</p>
<p>Documentation</p>	<p>Microsoft OneNote</p> <p>7</p> 	<p>Microsoft OneNote is a note-taking program for free-form information gathering and multi-user collaboration. It gathers users' notes, drawings, screen clippings, and audio commentaries. Notes can be shared with other OneNote users over the Internet or a network. OneNote is available as part of the Microsoft Office suite,[6] it is also available as a free, standalone app via the official website, the app stores of Windows 10, macOS, iOS and Android.[7] Microsoft also provides a web-based version of OneNote as part of OneDrive and Office for the web.</p>	<p>OneNote is THE note taking app. Starting from the organization of your information, down to the integration and capture of information be it text, images, etc. arguably, it can't be beat. The organization of the hierarchy of information is a huge lure. At the highest level of information organization, you have Notebooks, and within each Notebook the user has Folders. Users can add Pages to each of the named Folders in the notebook. Pages are were users collect their information regarding the Folder in which they reside. Users can also share and export content into a PDF.</p>

Documentation	8	Portable Document Format (PDF) 	The Portable Document Format (commonly referred to as PDF) is a file format used to present documents in a manner independent of application software, hardware, and operating systems.	There are many applications that allow you to export to PDF from their native format. This enables the project manager to have a wide distribution of various files without the need of the native app, such as Word, PowerPoint, Visio, etc. PDF documents also provide another level of security for the PDF file, such as "Read Only" and "Password Protection"
Communication	9	Microsoft PowerPoint 	Microsoft PowerPoint is a presentation program. PowerPoint was originally designed to provide visuals for group presentations within business organizations, but has come to be very widely used in many other communication situations, both in business and beyond.	Clear communication is essential for any project initiative, and on all levels of your organization from the IT implementation team to Senior Business Stakeholders. Projects often involve one or more external vendors in joint initiatives, and clear communication is a powerful solution to accomplish any daunting communication. The more diverse the stakeholders, the more iterations of a communications plan. For example, not just business and IT, but projects could span the whole world, and need multiple translations, not in language, but in as simple as USD v. CHF, and the format for expressing monetary values. Collectively people learn and align to articulate a common message. PowerPoint could be one of the most important tools in the project manager's toolkit.
Documentation	10	Microsoft Word 	Microsoft Word is a word processor.	Need I say more?
Financials / Project Reporting	11	Microsoft Excel 	Microsoft Excel is a spreadsheet developed by Microsoft for Windows. It features calculation, graphing tools, pivot tables, and a macro programming language. Microsoft Excel has the basic features of all spreadsheets, using a grid of cells arranged in numbered rows and letter-named columns to organize data manipulations like arithmetic operations. It has a battery of supplied functions to answer statistical, engineering, and financial needs. In addition, it can display data as line graphs, histograms and charts, and with a very limited three-dimensional graphical display.	Over the years I've used MS Excel for a variety of applications. I've used MS Excel as a Project Plan, listing out milestones, tasks, start, end dates, sequences of tasks, and reporting on those milestones. For project budgeting, I've tracked forecast versus actuals from a month to month, and year to year basis. Teams I've worked with used MS Excel for checklists, like a production checklist. I've worked on QA teams that created their test cases from within MS Excel, and then captured the execution of those test cases in MS Excel. Definitely a keeper in the toolbox.

<p>Collaboration</p> <p>12</p>	<p>Microsoft Teams</p> 	<p>Microsoft Teams is a proprietary business communication platform developed by Microsoft. Teams offers workspace chat and videoconferencing, file storage, and application integration. Teams is replacing other Microsoft-operated business messaging and collaboration platforms, including Skype for Business.</p>	<p>I've been using MS Teams for around a year now, and it amazes me how much functionality they bake into this platform "out of the box". I primarily use this tool for chat, and [video] conferencing. However, there is so much more in Teams and integration that it's a great platform to recommend. Try out the Transcribe feature on conference calls, and bye, bye note taking, allowing you to focus on the content of the discussion.</p>
<p>Collaboration</p> <p>13</p>	<p>WebEx</p> 	<p>Web conferencing and videoconferencing</p>	<p>Any issues with MS Teams, WebEx is now my "goto" backup.</p>
<p>Documentation</p> <p>14</p>	<p>Microsoft Windows Snipping Tool</p> 	<p>Snipping Tool is a Microsoft Windows screenshot utility included in Windows Vista and later. It can take still screenshots of an open window, rectangular areas, a free-form area, or the entire screen. Snips can then be annotated using a mouse or a tablet, stored as an image file (PNG, GIF, or JPEG file) or an MHTML file, or e-mailed. Snipping Tool allows for basic image editing of the snapshot, with different colored pens, an eraser, and a highlighter.</p>	<p>Before this FREE tool existed in prior versions of Windows, we had the Windows "Print Screen" shortcut function, or you needed to buy a screen capture tool. The Snipping Tool is an essential part of your toolbox with lots of opportunities for usage such as reporting Bugs with capturing of images of the error, or capturing a subset of project timelines to be embedded in PowerPoint presentations. Did I mention it was FREE.</p>
<p>Collaboration</p> <p>15</p>	<p>https://www.planningpoker.com/</p> 	<p>Planning Poker® is the secure, fun way for agile teams to guide sprint planning and build accurate consensus estimates. Planning Poker® is a digital card game designed to help agile and scrum development teams effectively set their sprint goals through collaborative planning and consensus-based estimations. Planning Poker® is proven to be one of the most effective sprint planning tools for agile teams.</p>	<p>If the implementation team is mature enough in their process to make time and implement consensus building, effort estimations in the form of story points, the team will be able to predict project completion estimates leveraging a Burndown chart. The team's average velocity can also be calculated if user stories are associated with story points through the use of Planning Poker, consensus building exercise. Planning Poker also takes a lot of the negative physiological effort out of the process. For example, with planning poker, the whole implementation team flips their estimate cards over at once, which removes the "follow along" what the senior dev lead dictates.</p>

Collaboration	16	<p>Microsoft Azure DevOps - Effort Estimation Module, Planning Poker type tool</p> 	<p>Play Estimation Poker in Azure DevOps. Select work from an iteration/sprint, query, or your backlog, estimate the effort of those items with your team, and immediately update the work items.</p>	<p>Similar in function to the PlanningPoker.com tool with the convenience of the Estimation tool integrated with Azure DevOps, which means once a consensus is reached in the Estimation tool, the Story Point value is automatically saved into the work item (i.e. user story).</p>
Collaboration	17	<p>Microsoft Outlook</p> 	<p>Calendars, Emails, and Tasks</p>	<p>Another MUST HAVE for the PM toolbox.</p>
Documentation	18	<p>Snagit</p> 	<p>Snagit is a screenshot program that captures video display (still images and videos) and audio output. Snagit replaces the native print screen function with additional features. Newer versions allow batch capture of embedded items such as links, pictures, and multimedia. The user can set parameters and keyboard shortcuts to capture particular types of data, which are stored in a folder called "Catalog" by default. The software can also follow links in web pages, capturing the specified data from the linked pages.</p>	<p>Before Snipping Tool existed, the goto tool was Snagit. It costs a nominal fee, but was well worth it given the capabilities beyond the "Print Screen" function of the Win OS. As a QA / Tester, it was essential in capturing information related to an observed Bug/Defect. Not only could you snapshot of an error message, but you can record a video walking through the procedure which produced the error.</p>
Agile / Scrum, End to End Product Management Suite	19	<p>Atlassian Jira</p> 	<p>Jira is a proprietary issue tracking product developed by Atlassian that allows bug tracking and agile project management.</p>	<p>I've used this product extensively, and is comparable to the relatively new solution from Microsoft Azure DevOps.</p>
Collaboration	20	<p>Atlassian Confluence</p> 	<p>Confluence is a web-based corporate wiki (collaboration software) developed by Australian software company Atlassian</p>	<p>It's a Wiki with integration opportunities between Jira and Confluence</p>

<p>Collaboration</p> <p>21</p>	<p>Microsoft OneDrive</p> 	<p>Microsoft OneDrive (formerly SkyDrive) is a file hosting service and synchronization service operated by Microsoft as part of its web version of Office. First launched in August 2007, OneDrive allows users to store files and personal data like Windows settings or BitLocker recovery keys in the cloud, share files, and sync files across Android, Windows Phone, and iOS mobile devices, Windows and macOS computers, and the Xbox 360, Xbox One, and Xbox Series X and S consoles. Users can upload Microsoft Office documents to OneDrive.</p>	<p>Essential tool for collaboration and knowledge sharing. If using other Microsoft Office products such as MS Outlook, there are additional bits of integration, such as the option to insert a file, or send a link to your OneDrive document.</p>
<p>Collaboration</p> <p>22</p>	<p>Google Drive</p> 	<p>Google Drive is a file storage and synchronization service developed by Google. Launched on April 24, 2012, Google Drive allows users to store files in the cloud (on Google's servers), synchronize files across devices, and share files. In addition to a web interface, Google Drive offers apps with offline capabilities for Windows and macOS computers, and Android and iOS smartphones and tablets. Google Drive encompasses Google Docs, Google Sheets, and Google Slides, which are a part of the Google Docs Editors office suite that permits collaborative editing of documents, spreadsheets, presentations, drawings, forms, and more. Files created and edited through the Google Docs suite are saved in Google Drive.</p>	<p>I've minimally utilized Google Drive. This may be due, in part, to the FREE tier of 15 GB, which is shared with my other Google apps, such as Gmail.</p>