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Microsoft Project Review 2025: Features, Pros & Cons

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& 1 other 

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Starting price \$10 per user per month	Roadmapping Yes
Gantt chart Yes	

Our Verdict

Microsoft Project is one of the oldest project management tools on the market. It’s an effective solution for project managers and teams that are experienced with Waterfall and Agile methodologies. It isn’t the most user-friendly program, so it isn’t the best project management software for every business.

It’s also worth noting that while Microsoft is still providing support for the browser- and desktop-based application, there’s also the cloud-based Project for the web, which is much easier to learn and use. We researched and tested both versions for this Microsoft Project review, with a focus on the original Microsoft Project.

Pros

- Desktop and browser-based versions
- Advanced Gantt charts
- Budgeting feature
- Resource management on mid- and high-tier plans

Cons

- Complicated and complex, especially for new users
- Expensive for large teams
- Outdated interface

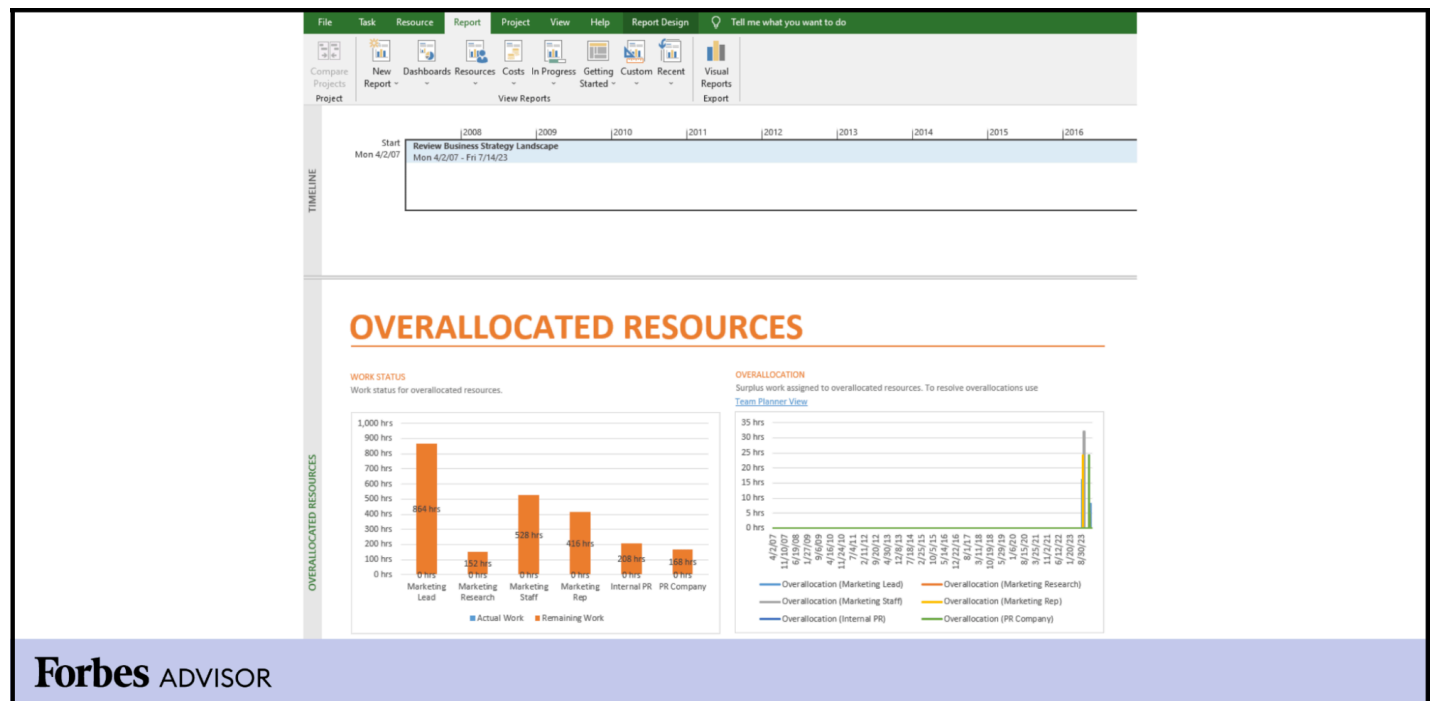
Table of Contents

What Is Microsoft Project?

Microsoft Project is a project management program that's a part of the Microsoft 365 ecosystem of apps. You can use the browser-based or desktop version of Microsoft Project, or switch over to the Project for the web version, which is based in the cloud. You have the option to view projects in a timeline, Gantt chart or task list, which makes this a helpful tool for project teams using Waterfall or Agile methodologies.

What Sets Microsoft Project Apart

Perhaps what sets Microsoft Project apart from its competitors is that it's slightly more advanced than some of the more popular productivity tools, especially with its resource management, roadmapping and reporting capabilities. It can help with project scheduling with task dependencies and project timelines for future project predictions.



The report tab shows a timeline of a project above specific reports you choose to view

Use Microsoft Project's built-in automated scheduling to plan out tasks and due dates to save time with project planning. As you and teammates add actual start times, the timeline adjusts dependencies and dates automatically and accordingly. Other features that make Microsoft Project unique:

Easily generate advanced reports

Use Project for the web in addition to or instead of Microsoft Project

You'll notice key differences between Microsoft Project and Project for the web, such as ease of use, feature complexity and view options. Microsoft Project can handle more complex scheduling, planning and managing of projects, while Project for the web is much simpler for anyone to use. Also, Project for the web offers a Board view, which makes it easier to set up a Kanban-style project.

Pros

Microsoft Project has powerful functionality for project managers who need to plan and schedule detailed projects. It can help with automated task scheduling, reports for insight and custom fields for all types of projects.

Cons

Collaboration is much harder with Microsoft Project because of how it's built. If you're using other Microsoft apps, you can share via SharePoint and use Microsoft Teams for conversation. Plus, there's no board view in the traditional version of Project, which may be limiting for teams that prefer Kanban-style views. There's also no free plan for Microsoft Project.

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Microsoft Project Core Features

At its core, Microsoft Project is project planning software with its advanced resource management, automated task management and pre-built reports. It includes all the basic features you need for project management, such as:

Role Assignment Features

In Microsoft Project for the web, you can easily create a group for each project and add members to the group. Then set permissions for how users can interact with the project, whether they can only view or edit tasks and project details. In the older

SharePoint to add people to the project.

Timelines

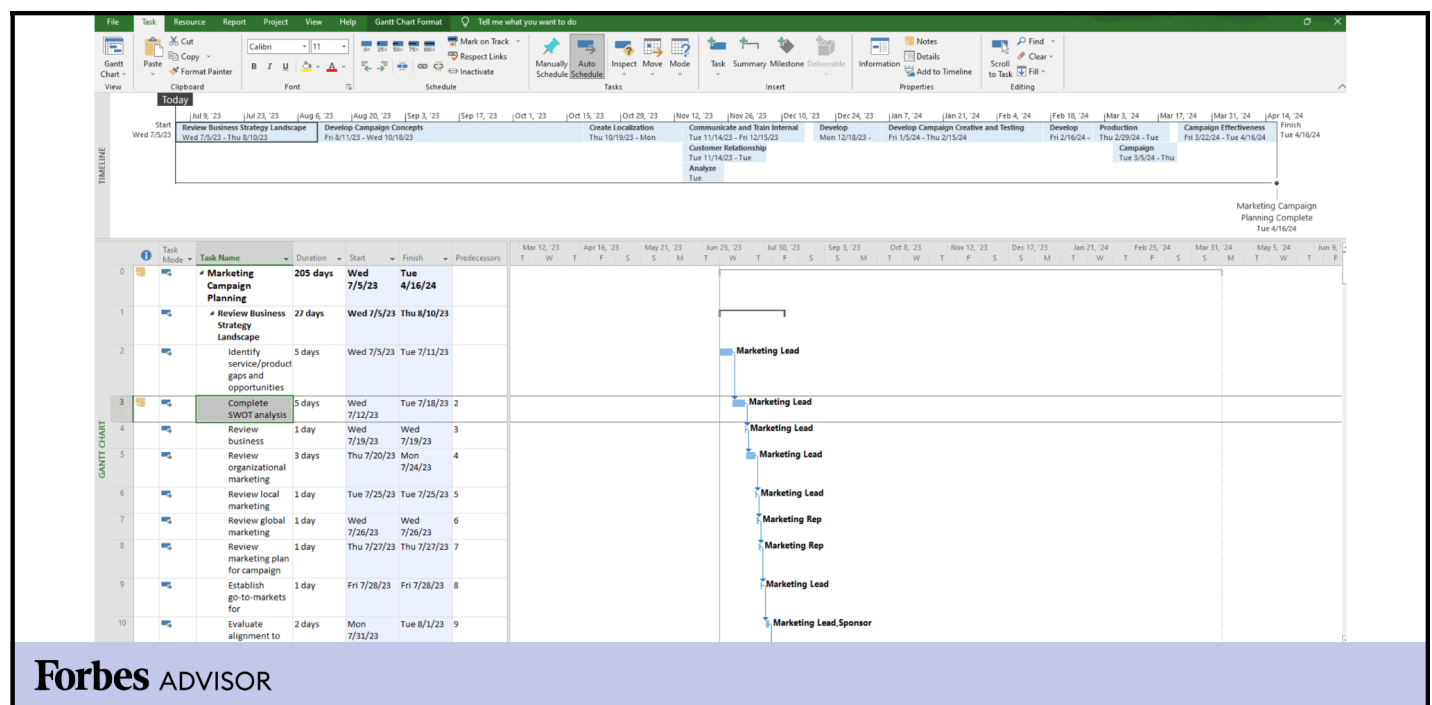
All versions of Microsoft Project offer a timeline view, so you can see how a project is faring from a bird's-eye perspective. You can see task dependencies along with a task list on the side in Project for the web, so you can home in on a specific part of the project for a clearer view. Slide any task bar on the timeline to a different date and all other tasks related to it will adjust dates.

In Microsoft Project Professional, the timeline view is a static look at your project. It's a good way to simply see what's coming down the pipeline and helps you plan accordingly if you're off track.

Gantt Charts

In the on-premises version of Microsoft Project, the Gantt chart is where you'll find the most functional view. You can adjust tasks and all related tasks adjust dynamically as you extend or reduce a task's time. In this version, you can add a multitude of parameters to track on your Gantt chart, from baselines to costs to percentages complete.

Although Microsoft Project for the web doesn't have a Gantt chart specifically, the timeline view works similarly to Gantt. You can't track even close to the same number of parameters in a project as the desktop versions, but it's also easier to use than the more complex versions of Microsoft Project.



The Gantt chart view in Microsoft Project (desktop version)

Software Integrations

Most of Microsoft Project's integrations are with other Microsoft products. Microsoft 365, Teams and SharePoint are standards that can help extend the functionality of your project management software. Overall, there are fewer integrations compared to other mainstream project management software.

Dependencies

Every version of Microsoft Project allows you to set task dependencies, which helps immensely with project planning. In Microsoft Project for the web, you can choose a task from a drop-down menu to create the connection between it and another

In the on-premises versions, linking tasks is a little more complicated and requires more steps. From the Gantt chart, you need to choose the tasks you want to link by clicking and holding Ctrl, then navigate to the task menu and choose the link icon.

Budgeting

Desktop versions of Microsoft Project allow you to create custom cost fields so you can track budgets. Combine this with resource management and you'll have a solid way to track finances and allocate the resources needed and allowed for a project.

Microsoft Project Pricing and Plans

Pricing plans for Microsoft Project are a bit confusing because of the plan names and what's included. There are five total plans: Project Plan 1, Project Plan 3 and Project Plan 5 are all cloud-based and/or desktop solutions; Project Standard 2021 and Project Professional 2021 are on-premises programs. Pricing starts at \$10 per user per month.

	Project Plan 1	Project Plan 3	Project Plan 5	Project Standard 2021	>
Starting Price	\$10 per user per month	\$30 per user per month	\$55 per user per month	\$679.99 per license	
Cloud-Based	✓	✓	✓	X	
On-Premises	X	✓	✓	✓	
Views	Grid, Board, Gantt	Grid, Board, Gantt	Grid, Board, Gantt	Grid, Gantt	
Collaboration	Via Microsoft Teams	Via Microsoft Teams	Via Microsoft Teams	N/A	
Roadmapping	X	✓	✓	✓	
Resource Management	X	✓	✓	X	
Project Portfolios	X	X	✓	✓	

Project Plan 1

This is the entry-level version of Microsoft Project for the web, which gives users access only to the browser-based client. It costs \$10 per user per month and it's easy to add projects and tasks from any device. You get three views, including Gantt, grid and board views, so you can work the way you want.

Project Plan 3

With this plan, you pay \$30 per user per month and you get access to the cloud version of Microsoft Project for the web and the desktop client known as Project Online. Additional features include roadmapping, desktop downloads for up to five PCs and resource management.

Project Plan 5

enterprise-level resource planning. This version also gives you desktop client access and the browser-based app.

Project Standard 2021

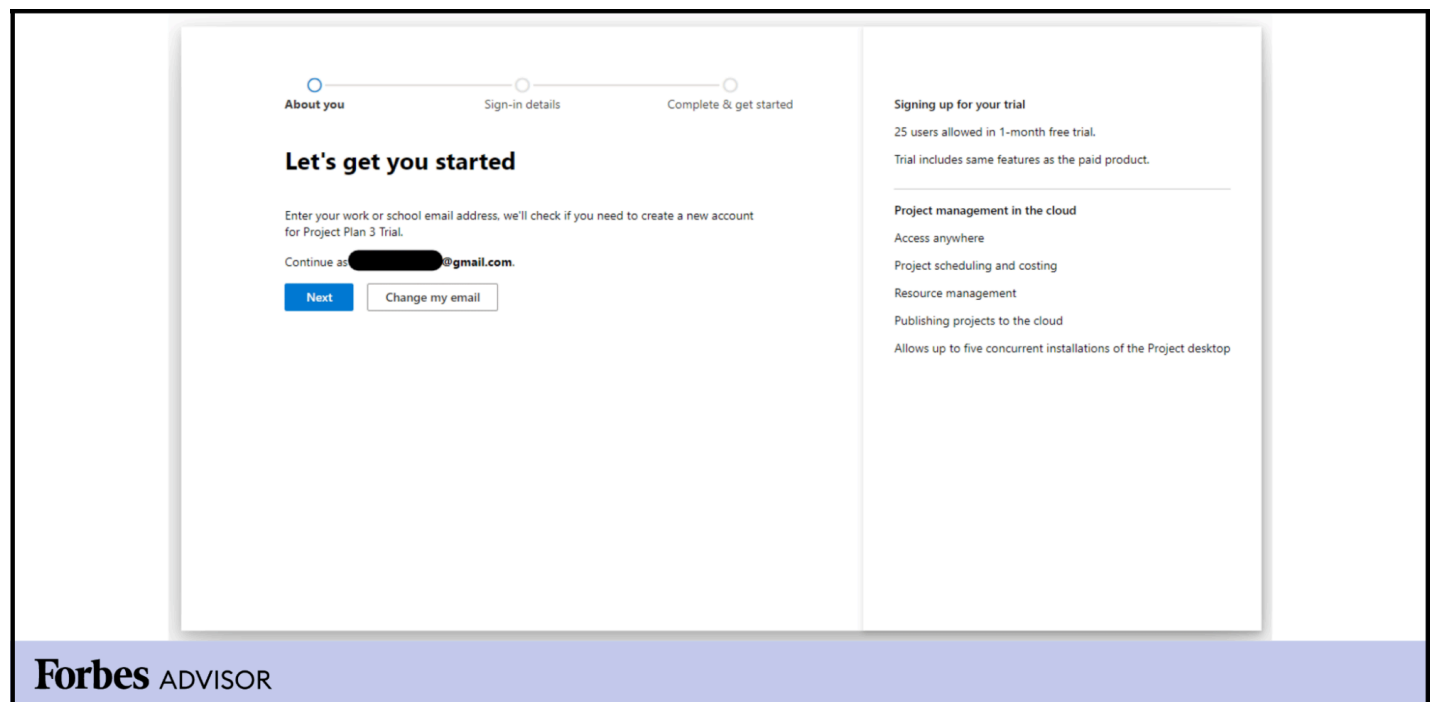
If you manage projects and budgets single-handedly, a perpetual license for the Project Standard 2021 desktop client may be all you need. It costs \$679.99 for one license and includes tools you need to plan and manage tasks, budgets and projects. Reporting tools are also included.

Project Professional 2021

To get the same functionality of Microsoft Project Standard 2021 with the added benefit of being able to sync with Microsoft Project Online, you may want to consider Project Professional 2021. It's also an on-premises solution with added resource management and time tracking tools via timesheets. It costs \$1,129.99 per license.

Microsoft Project Setup and Customization

Setting up Microsoft Project can be a long and frustrating process, whether you're choosing the desktop or browser version. You have to sign up for Microsoft 365 if you don't already have it and then choose the app you'd prefer to use. There is no free plan, but you can sign up for a 30-day free trial. However, the trial is for new users only. After a few false starts as an existing Microsoft user, you should be able to squeeze a five-day trial out of them.



The trial screen shows what you get in a one-month trial

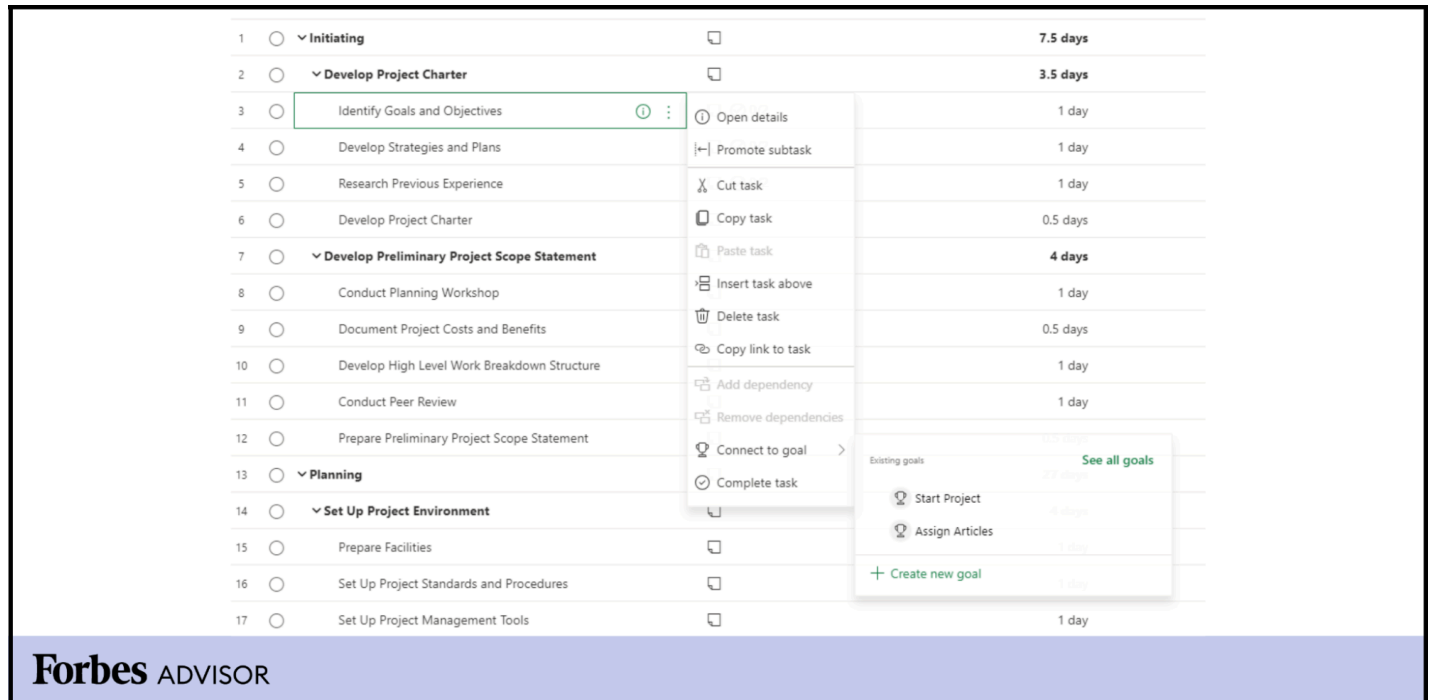
Getting started with the desktop version of Microsoft Project is easy enough if you start with one of the many premade templates. After the project loads, you can customize the fields as needed, set up start times and then choose whether you want to manually choose dates for the timeline or let Microsoft determine due dates for tasks automatically.

It's a little surprising how long it takes to set up a project on Project for the web. It's one of the slowest setups we've seen from any project management system. In fact, there's a note that the software will send an email when your project is set up and ready for you to work on. Once it has populated, it's simple to create and assign tasks.

Ease Of Use

planning, budgeting and resource tracking, but it takes more steps to complete actions in the programs.

Microsoft Project for the web is much more user-friendly. The interface is clean and intuitive. Simply create a project, add tasks and double-click to access everything you need within each task to set up dependencies, add attachments or connect to goals.



The menu on a task showing how to connect a task to a goal

Security

If you use the desktop version of Microsoft Project, security is mostly in your hands. When you need to share a project, you'll do so via SharePoint and then your project is protected by SharePoint security features. There's also the Trust Center, in which you can block users from signing in, adjust macro settings and add trusted users.

Within Microsoft Project for the web, you can set permissions for each user. Additionally, you are required to set up multifactor authentication (MFA) using the Microsoft Authenticator to access your apps. If you'd rather not download the app, you have the option to use your smartphone to secure your login.

Customer Service and Support

Microsoft offers a robust self-help section for all of its project management tools. You can search a variety of articles for desktop or online versions of Microsoft Project. If the knowledge base isn't enough, you can look for information on the Project blog, search for an answer in the integrated help section within the cloud-based software or contact Microsoft 365 support staff via live chat.

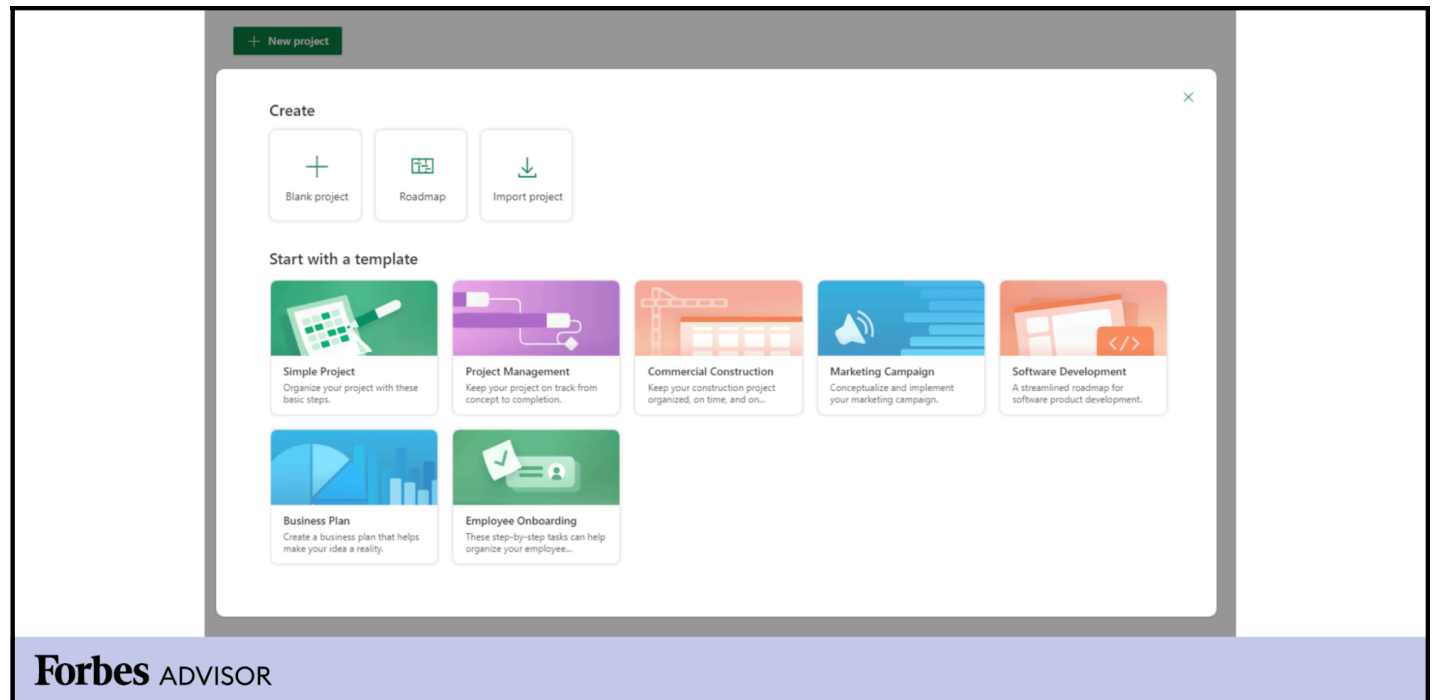
The wait for a live chat representative wasn't terribly long. However, getting answers from the rep took a while and many of the responses were clearly copied and pasted from a script. Overall, getting a couple of questions answered took roughly 20 minutes.

Additional Features

sense for your team.

Customizable Templates

Starting a new project with a template in desktop versions of Microsoft Project is easy and you can customize them fully. There are more than 20 premade templates available. In Microsoft Project for the web, you have eight templates to start with and each is customizable.



The various project templates available in Project for the web

Milestone Tracking

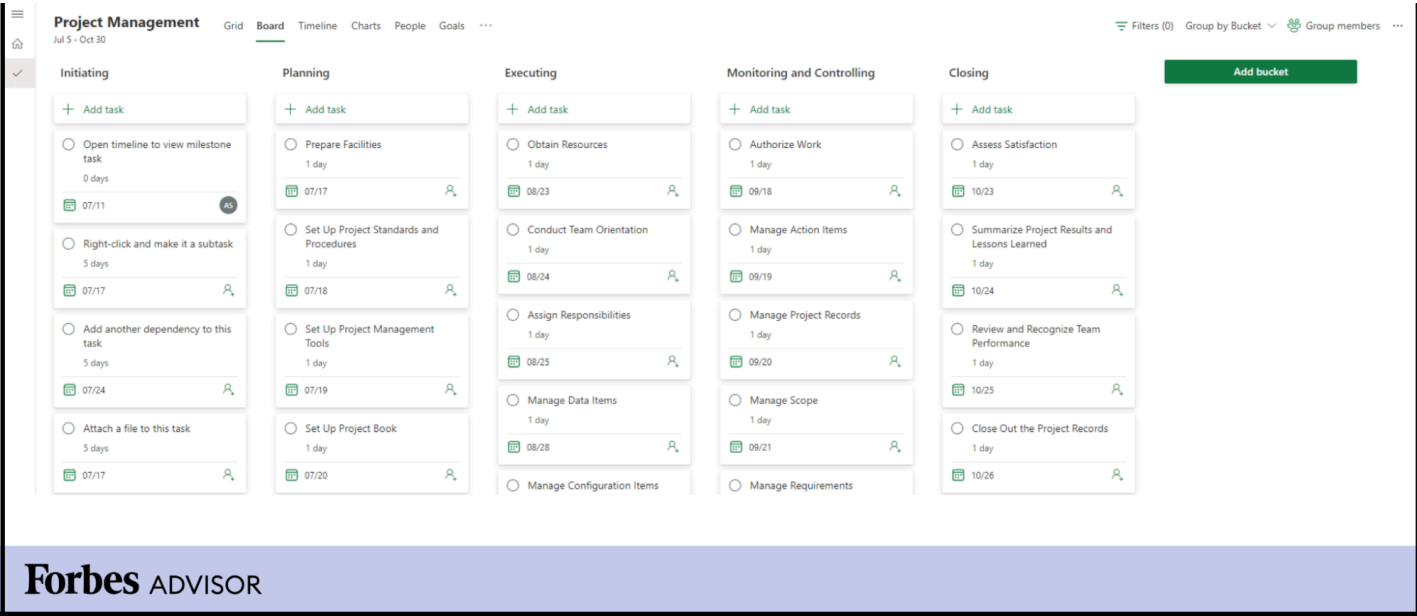
Microsoft Project allows you to create milestones at any stage of a project. In the desktop app, simply add a new task and open the task information box. Under the advanced section, you can set it up as a milestone by checking a box (and then choose duration, date and add more information about it).

There isn't a specific way to create a milestone in Microsoft Project for the web, but you can create goals. These goals won't appear on your timeline, but you can link tasks to goals, which allows you to track progress of portions of your project.

Kanban Board

You can access a Kanban-style board in Microsoft Project for the web, but it isn't available as a view in the desktop versions of the program. The card style is similar to other project management software with a few differences. Columns are called buckets and the cards are simply called tasks. You can manage custom fields, priorities, status, dependencies and attachments from each card.

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Shows the Kanban-style view in Project for the web

Billing and Invoicing

There are no native billing or invoicing features in Microsoft Project. You can track time in billable and non-billable hours, create a report and then export it to use in another program to create invoices.

Guest Access

The easiest way to share information about a project within Microsoft Project desktop versions is to run a report that’s relevant to the client. In Microsoft Project for the web, you can offer read-only access to projects if you add them to a specific group that’s part of the project. Guests access the project via a specific URL. You can set specific permissions for guests that have a Microsoft Project license to allow them to edit tasks, attach files or create a project.

Microsoft Project Alternatives and How They Compare

	Microsoft Project	ClickUp	Smartsheet	Trello
Rating	★★★★☆	★★★★★	★★★★☆	★★★★★
Starting Price	\$10 per user per month	\$5 per user per month*	\$7 per user per month*	\$5 per user per month*
Free Trial	30 days**	None***	30 days***	14 days***
Role Assignment Features	✓	✓	✓	✓
Timelines	✓	✓	✓	✓
Gantt Charts	✓	✓	✓	X

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Software Integrations	Microsoft 365 apps	\$93	\$85	196
Dependencies	✓	✓	✓	✓
Budgeting	Desktop versions only	✓	Add-on	Add-on

*Billed annually **

For new users only; five-day trial for existing Microsoft users

***Offers free forever plan

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Microsoft Project offers flexible project management options, whether you’re focused on project portfolio management, project planning or you need a simple project management tool. However, it may be too pricey, too limiting or too complex for your needs, in which case you may need a [Microsoft Project alternative](#).

Microsoft Project vs. ClickUp

For the most part, anything you can do in Microsoft Project is possible in ClickUp. The biggest difference between the two, aside from ClickUp being half the cost of Microsoft Project, is that ClickUp is far more collaborative.

Microsoft Project vs. Smartsheet

Smartsheet is a more user-friendly project management tool compared to Microsoft Project. It has an intuitive spreadsheet-style interface, includes collaboration tools and it offers third-party integrations. Both are powerful project management software, but Microsoft Project is likely to require more time and effort to get started.

Microsoft Project vs. Trello

Microsoft Project’s desktop versions excel at resource management and roadmapping, making it a great pick for product and feature development, but inexperienced users may face an uphill climb getting it set up. Trello is easy to use straight away and includes most views you likely need. If you need an interactive Gantt chart, Microsoft Project is a better choice, as Trello requires you to use an integration.

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Starting price	From \$8 monthly per user	Starting price	\$7 per month	Starting price	\$10 per user per month
Integrations	Zoom, LinkedIn, Adobe, Salesforce and more	Integrations	Slack, Microsoft Outlook, HubSpot, Salesforce, Timely, Google Drive and more	Integrations	Salesforce, Adobe, Miro, Netsuite, QuickBooks, SAP

Who Is Microsoft Project Best For?

Microsoft Project's desktop software options are excellent project planning tools and it's a good choice for medium to large businesses that require a powerful, customizable program. The automatic scheduling helps you get a jump start on project creation, the Gantt chart is dynamic and the program is capable of handling multiple complex projects from start to finish.

Our Expert Opinion

The overall impression we get after using Microsoft Project is that it's powerful and flexible, but may be too complex and frustrating for some users. The plans and software options are a bit confusing; there are two desktop versions and one cloud-based version that offer different user experience, features and ease of use.

If you're already wrapped up in the Microsoft ecosystem of software, adding Microsoft Project to your tech stack may be a good choice, especially if you have experience with project management software. However, if you or your team are looking for a more user-friendly experience, lower pricing and more flexible integrations, consider some of the other [best project management software](#) we've tested and ranked.

Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs)

- + **Is Microsoft Project being phased out?**
- + **What is Microsoft Project now called?**
- + **Is Microsoft Project free to use?**
- + **What are the disadvantages of Microsoft Project?**

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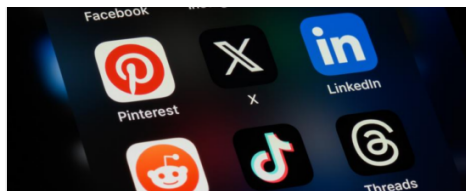
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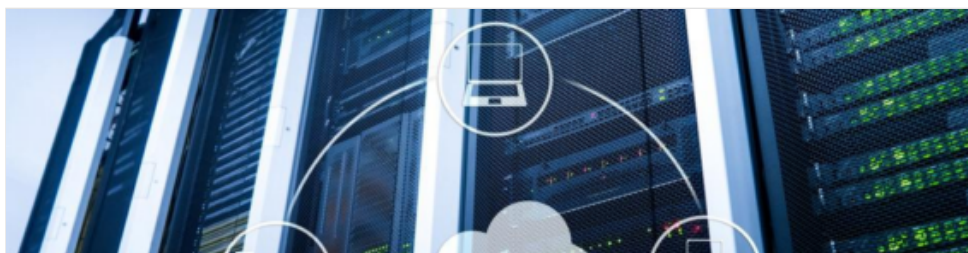
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