

BQE WHITEPAPER SERIES

6 SIMPLE STEPS FOR SELECTING THE PERFECT TIME TRACKING SOFTWARE

INTRODUCTION

Time tracking software records the time that employees spend on tasks and projects. Consistently tracking time across your company allows you to understand how many hours to allocate for a specific activity or project, spot inefficiencies, and better utilize your employees. All of these benefits help you and your clients to plan projects more precisely and see improved results.

The practice of time tracking allows you to measure progress, identify delays, and make adjustments for ideal outcomes. Companies that adopt time tracking software notice more accurate time cards, an improved payroll process, and a boost in employee productivity. Many programs use the data captured to automate invoicing and payroll workflows.

There are plenty of time tracking software options out there, including desktop and mobile apps, tailored to your needs based on industry, company size, workload, and project type. This article will help you evaluate and choose the best time tracking solution for your firm. *Let's start by considering your firm's needs and identifying the time tracking features that will help you work more productively.*

STEP ONE

DEFINE YOUR NEEDS

To begin your time tracking software search, identify what your firm hopes to gain from this investment. Consider your current process — what's working well and what problems are you trying to solve? Setting goals that you'd like your time tracking software to help you achieve can help you narrow down the right solution.

One of the best ways to identify what you're trying to accomplish is to get feedback from others in your company. If your employees feel frustrated, unmotivated, or overworked, time tracking software can help them be more engaged, encourage accountability, and remind them to take breaks. Identify a couple of crucial problems you hope the software solves, such as finishing projects on schedule and setting more accurate billing rates.

Be transparent with your staff about why you're adopting the software, how it will be used, and your plan to train them to use it. Once you receive feedback from the team and set goals for what you want to gain from time tracking software, you can start researching your options. We recommend reading reviews from reputable sites like Capterra and PCMag and user reviews from other firms like yours to get a sense of real-life use cases.

Create a long list of options based on your ideal time tracking process, goals, company needs, and the reviews you read. Next, we'll narrow down your list by taking a more detailed look at time tracking software features, pricing, and more.

To better understand your software preferences, answer the prompts below:

- How comfortable is your team with using technology? How much time and effort will it take to onboard them to the platform?
- How does your staff usually work? Do they spend most of their hours at a desktop or will they need a mobile app with GPS tracking?
- Consider payroll-related regulations, such as the Fair Labor Standards Act, which penalizes businesses that don't comply with overtime pay standards. Look for a tool that alerts you when employees exceed designated levels.
- Make a list of the other functionality your firm considers indispensable. Will your time tracking solution need to include it or integrate with it?

Our suggestion is to draft these questions and answers somewhere easily accessible by you and your team.

NOTE: The questions suggested are starting points; we encourage additional, personalized prompts based on your needs.

STEP TWO

NARROW IT DOWN

Now that you have your long list of time-tracking programs, start eliminating options based on what won't work for your firm. If you currently use or previously tried time tracking technology, list what you like about it and what needs improvement. This will ensure you don't end up with software that still doesn't help your business work more productively.

In addition to assessing your current needs, it's crucial to plan as much as possible for your firm's future. Do you plan to hire several more employees? Will you significantly scale your workload? The software you choose should support your company's growth without needing to hire additional administrative staff.

To further future-proof your time tracking process, you can ask a software vendor about their product roadmap. How often do they release new features? Do they plan to add capabilities beyond time tracking? Look for solutions built on APIs (application programming interfaces), which offer more integrations, power, and flexibility.

Be on the lookout for obvious reasons to eliminate some of the programs on your list. For example, certain products may not fit within your technology architecture. Some may be too new, too expensive, or missing a feature that's essential to your workflow. User reviews will also help you spot red flags and eliminate options. Once you've evaluated your longlist using these lenses, your shortlist will emerge.

STEP THREE

COMPARE AND CONTRAST

Once you have your time tracking software shortlist, compare each platform's cost, features, user experience, logistics, and security.

Watch tutorials of the software in action to get an idea of the user experience. Then, schedule a call with each vendor and communicate your needs and goals. If necessary, send a request for proposal (RFP) for comprehensive feedback. Discuss the materials you receive with your team, emphasizing which functions and characteristics matter most to you.

Assess the features of each program against your requirements and weigh the factors to determine which one most closely meets your needs. Assign a number to each solution based on how well it meets each requirement, multiplied by the weighting factor. Naturally, the one with the highest score across all requirements should be the platform that best meets your needs, but you should also have a second choice.

Here's a time tracking features checklist that you may find helpful. You won't necessarily need all of these functionalities, but it's useful to be thorough in defining what you want.

- Online time tracking
- Billable and non-billable hours

- Automatic time capture
- Employee database
- Overtime calculation
- Task management
- Resource scheduling
- Timesheets
- Accounting/invoicing capabilities or integration
- Budget/expense tracking
- Compliance requirements
- Native apps for iOS and Android
- Cloud-hosted
- Application program interface (API)
- Analytics and reports
- Notifications
- Security
- Level of customization and scalability

Don't forget to outline what features your company is currently using and which features will benefit your company in a future state.

STEP FOUR

SEE IT IN ACTION

Now that you know exactly what you need from time tracking software and have narrowed it down to a couple of options, it's time to get a personalized demo. While you've already had a call with the vendor and watched video tutorials or reviews, it's important to get a sense of exactly how the software will be applied to your firm's processes. Invite the priority stakeholders to the demo to see firsthand if the technology will meet their needs, then debrief afterward.

Many SaaS companies offer a free trial of their platform, which you should take advantage of. However, it's still a good idea to first complete the demo and have the software rep explain everything to you and address your specific questions and concerns. This will ensure your free trial gives you the clearest picture of if the software fulfills your needs.

Whether testing the software yourself or attending a walk-through, pay attention to the solution's ease of use. If you and your team feel confused or notice any issues, address them during the demo, but take note that the software likely isn't right for you.

STEP FIVE

CONSIDER THE LOGISTICS

Even the most seemingly straightforward programs can give you a headache if they don't fit into your office's ecosystem. Whether it's customizations, integrations, or IT, you need to ensure that the software will work for you.

Once you've tested each program, you should be able to conclude whether or not there's an out-of-the-box product that will fulfill your needs. Talk to each vendor to see how customizable their software is and how much it would cost to include all the features you require.

Additionally, a lack of consistency or integrations can cause software to fall short of your needs. Whether you choose a standalone time tracking solution or a comprehensive one that includes expense tracking and automatic billing workflows, make sure it has the integrations you need. If it doesn't, ask if the integrations are on the vendor's product roadmap or you can somehow supplement it.

You must also consider the software's IT requirements. Can you implement this solution today? Is it complicated to install and train employees to use? Ask how the vendor will manage updates and upgrades. Ideally, updates should be cloud-based for ease of installation so they don't disrupt operations.

For some companies, it's a good idea to loop in additional stakeholders to make a best decision for cross-functional teams.

STEP SIX

KNOW WHO YOU'RE DEALING WITH

In terms of implementation and support, you need a reputable, communicative software vendor. Ask if the vendor will provide personalized training, either remotely or on-site. Consider the documentation you'll receive, the setup support, and the long-term technical support. Is customer support available 24/7 or only between certain hours? Does the vendor have live support technicians available by phone or only via an online forum or FAQ page?

Ask yourself: Is it easy to work with the vendor? Do they focus on your needs, or are they just interested in selling software? Reread user reviews, but this time, zero in on any mentions of customer support to determine if the experience is usually helpful or disappointing.

Look into the history of this company. How long have they been in business? Read the testimonials on their website and assess if they already serve clients similar to your company. Look into the vendor's business plans, goals, and financial stability. Are they growing or downsizing?

We also recommend review websites like G2, Capterra, and Software Advice, for unbiased qualitative feedback.

CONCLUSION

Time tracking software offers so many benefits to your firm, including greater profitability, accurate invoicing, precise project scheduling, and improved employee accountability. Like implementing any solution for your business, pay close attention to your needs and do your research before choosing a software provider. By following these steps, you'll find a time tracking solution that adds productivity to your firm, satisfying you, your clients, and your employees.

[As you evaluate time tracking software options, keep these questions in mind:](#)

- How will this program streamline your workflows and help you reach your goals?
- How easy will it be for your average employee to use it successfully?
- How much does the software cost? Are there fees related to set up, training, recurring, maintenance, and support? Obtain a detailed written summary from the vendor before making your purchase.
- What training options are available? Is there personalized training from the vendor, either online or in-person?

With more than 25 years of experience, [BQE Software](#) is trusted by 400,000+ users worldwide. Its flagship product, BQE CORE, is a robust time tracking technology that incorporates expense tracking, project management, invoicing, and accounting features. Features include pre-filled timesheets, easy-to-use timers, automated reminders, customizable invoice templates, automatic billing, and more. CORE streamlines time tracking, enabling firms to save time and improve project delivery with minimal effort and maximum accuracy. [Book a demo](#) to see how BQE can help your team.

