

The Roadblocks to the Dynamic Enterprise

2023 Quickbase Research Report

 quickbase



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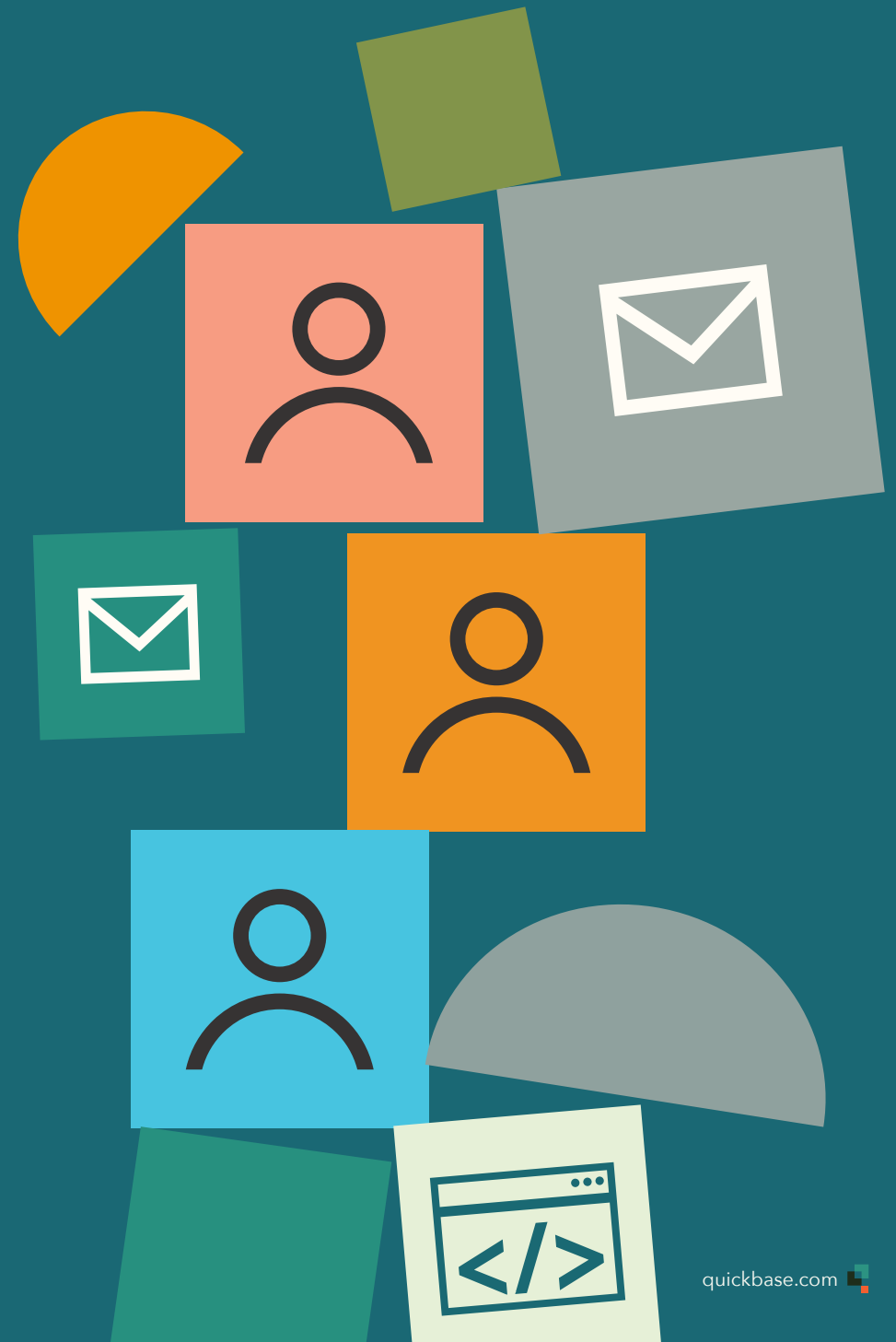


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Introduction

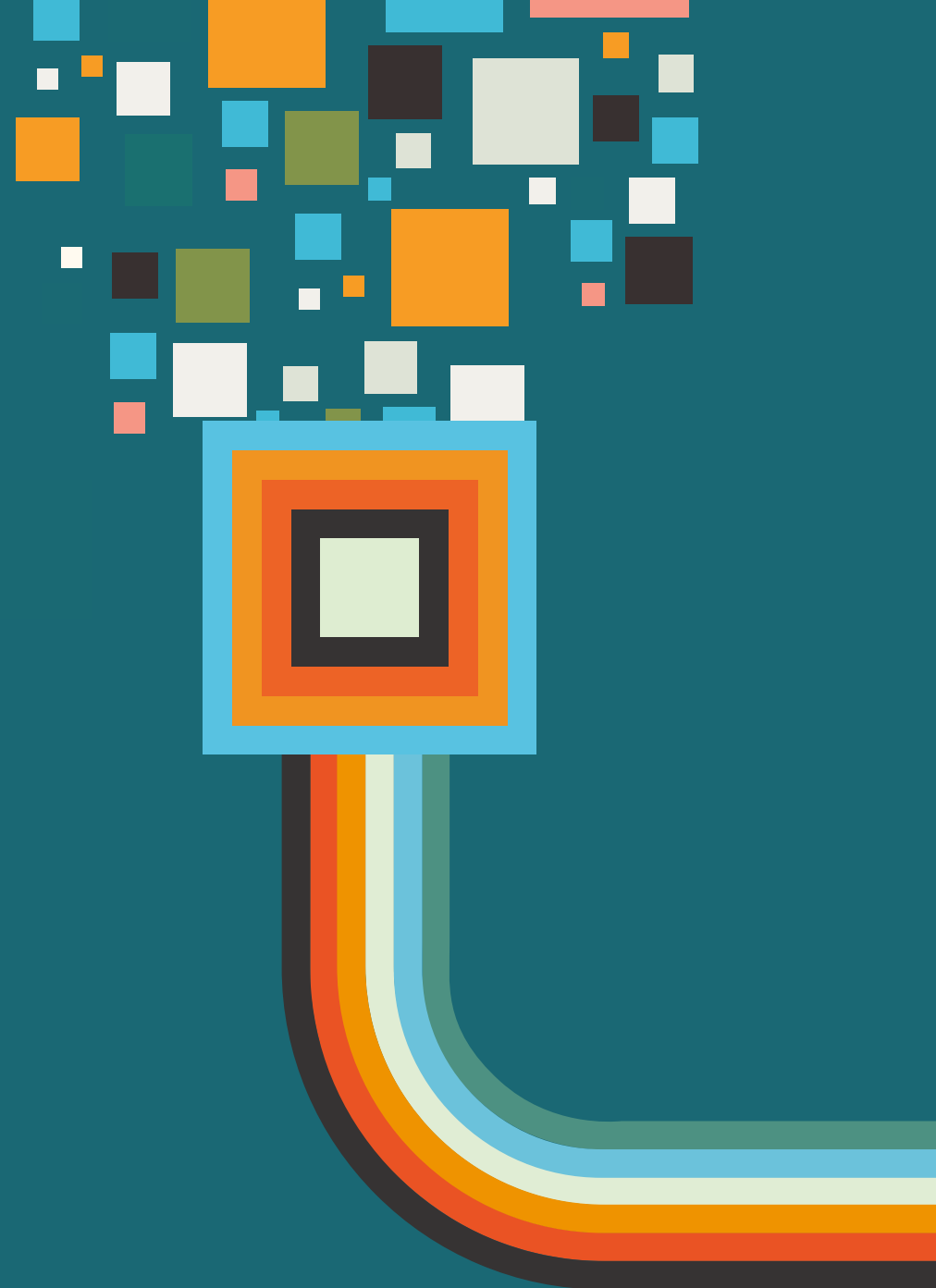
We are seeing a massive shift in the way we work, from structured work to dynamic work. Not only have we seen new work habits because of COVID and remote work, but globalization and our increased interconnectedness has driven more collaboration in our work. And digital transformation hasn't been up to the challenge of dynamic work.

Structured work of the past is moving to the wayside: the small, team-based tasks that can be done linearly. Instead, modern enterprises have to master dynamic work: work that is flexible, involves many stakeholders, is highly complex, and changes constantly. It doesn't fit neatly into one function - it is the work that runs across your entire business. So a project delay isn't just one project - it is the whole portfolio of complex work at stake - and getting it right is critical to success.



Imagine you want to find the status of a project, updated supply chain information or, market information for different store locations. On an individual level, without a way to manage dynamic work well, these kinds of tasks become immensely frustrating. In an ideal world, you'd go to the one place where all of your information is centrally up to date, find the piece of information you need, and quickly move on. But we all know what really happens - we get different answers from different systems, people aren't on the same page, and reconciling information takes up valuable hours from our day. And when systems don't work, teams end up stitching information together manually to make up for the gaps - and creating workarounds in offline or other disconnected systems, in a type of work known as 'gray work'.

This way of working may have been good enough in the past, but not with how work gets done in today's world. With the cross-functional, multi-stakeholder work that actually drives revenue, struggling to manage information or assets can grind progress to a halt.



The State of Work

This work is even more striking when you realize where people are spending their time. Quickbase's recent research surveyed over 1000 technology decision makers*, and found that more than half of respondents spend over 10 hours per week chasing information they need from different people and systems. 50% spend another 10 hours per week on administrative or non-value-add tasks like data entry or other manual work. That leaves less time for the meaningful work that drives revenue and results for key projects. To put this into context, our data found that this critical work is not the bulk of people's time - 58% of respondents spend less than 20 hours per week on that revenue-driving work.



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*Quickbase surveyed 1,032 people in March-April 2023 who have software purchasing authority or influence across the United States. These decision makers spanned across industries, and had job functions including project management, business operations, IT or engineering, digital transformation, or executive/general management responsibilities.



53%

said they spend **10 hours per week tracking down information** from different people & systems

As we found in our research, people are frustrated. They are sick of wasting time, wasting resources, and seeing their projects fall behind. It's not just time - it's money at stake. **IDC found** that the time workers spend searching for information costs a 1,000 person organization \$2.5 million per year. Think about this on a global scale - that's billions of dollars wasted. And even as we are in an age of continued innovation and automation, we are less productive than we have been in a long time. We've seen the largest decline of productivity since 1974, according to the **Bureau of Labor Statistics.**

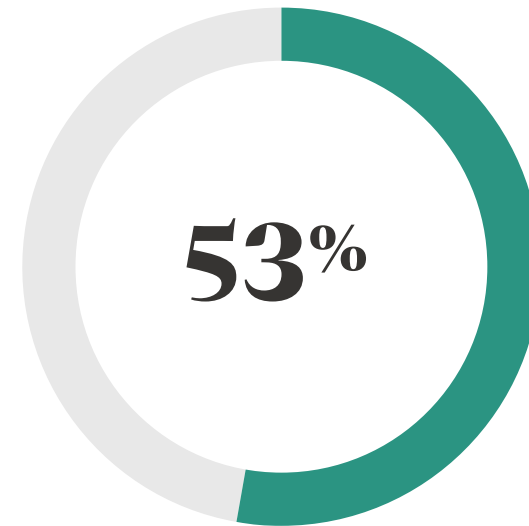
So let's look at where people are stuck wasting time, what is letting us down and leading to frustration, and what's at stake - and what success might look like.

\$2.5 million per year in lost revenue searching for information

Wasted Time

When people are seeking information, it is not as simple as knowing where to go and moving on with the right data. Our research **found that people are using on average 10 different systems to manage their projects**, which makes finding information a serious challenge - and a serious time commitment. More than half (53%) of respondents said that they spend over 10 hours per week chasing information that they need from different people and systems. For 22% of people, chasing information takes up more than 20 hours of their workweek - that's half of an average 40 hour work week!

It's not simply seeking out information - it's the manual, administrative tasks like data entry and transfer, or syncing data across different systems and tools that takes up time. **Half of respondents spend more than 10 hours per week on these manual, aggravating, and repetitive tasks.** When systems don't work together, and information is stuck in Excel sheets and other decentralized locations, these tasks become all the more tedious and time-consuming.



said they spend **over 10 hours per week** chasing information or people

As one survey respondent shared, “Our systems don’t really sync up, so we have to manually go back and check all the data and make sure it is the same in one as it is in the other.”

So what does that leave for critical work? The work that actually drives revenue and moves key projects along? The research found that 58% of people spend less than 20 hours per week on meaningful work that drives results for key projects.

This isn’t simply wasted time. Along with IDC’s research, IBM’s recent study found that companies waste **\$5.7 million per year per 10,000 employees due to time spent by employees searching for information.**

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Survey Respondent

Wasted Efforts, Frustrated People

In a moment where employees have more technological knowhow, they are more frustrated with their work than ever. ComPsych's **2022 StressPulse** report found that 62% of employees claim high levels of stress, with workload as the most commonly cited cause of workplace stress.

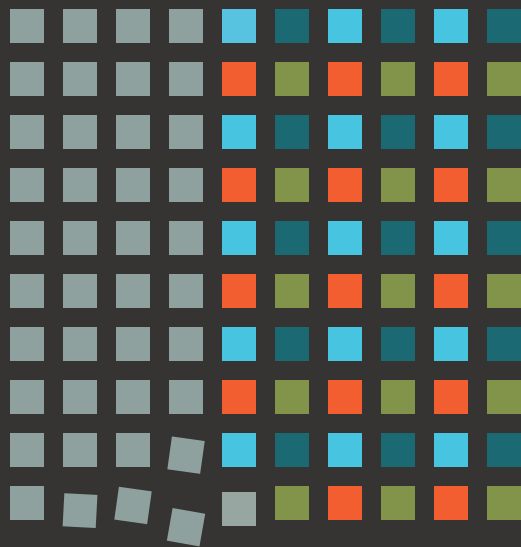
Decision makers are finding that tools are letting them and their teams down. Our data found that just over half of respondents are at least moderately (29%), very (15%), or extremely (7%) overwhelmed by the amount of software solutions they need to get work done. Couple that with the number of tools people need to get work

done - that 10 different tools with different information, processes, and ways of working that people need to understand to do the work that drives revenue. To become a Dynamic Enterprise, this is completely untenable.

It may not be a shock, then, that 45% of respondents say that their software tools are not a net positive for productivity, being viewed as either neutral (38%) or negative (7%). And these tools are gumming up the works - 65% of people feel prohibited from easily sharing project information because of using multiple project management solutions.

51% are overwhelmed by the amount of software solutions needed to get work done





41%
are stuck with
gray work

Gray Work

Beyond this, even as people are dedicated to finding new skills and new ways to make a difference for their organizations, needs change too quickly for their skillsets to fit. Over half of respondents are being asked to do tasks or use tools that are outside of their primary skillsets either somewhat frequently (43%) or very frequently (7%). When people are unable to put their skillsets to use, they are stuck working in systems they don't know or coming up with new processes on their own.

This can result in "gray work." Gray work is the work that teams do to create ad-hoc solutions to get by and keep pace. These tasks exacerbate the lack of connection between systems. 41% of respondents take on this gray work, creating workarounds or customizing their software tools to fit their needs when they run into roadblocks that their software can't solve in the moment.

Survey respondents commented on a lack of connection or consistency in tools across departments, making this gray work more common. **"Not every team is ramped on the project management software," said one respondent, "so we end up using Google Sheets or a manual tracker to centralize access."**

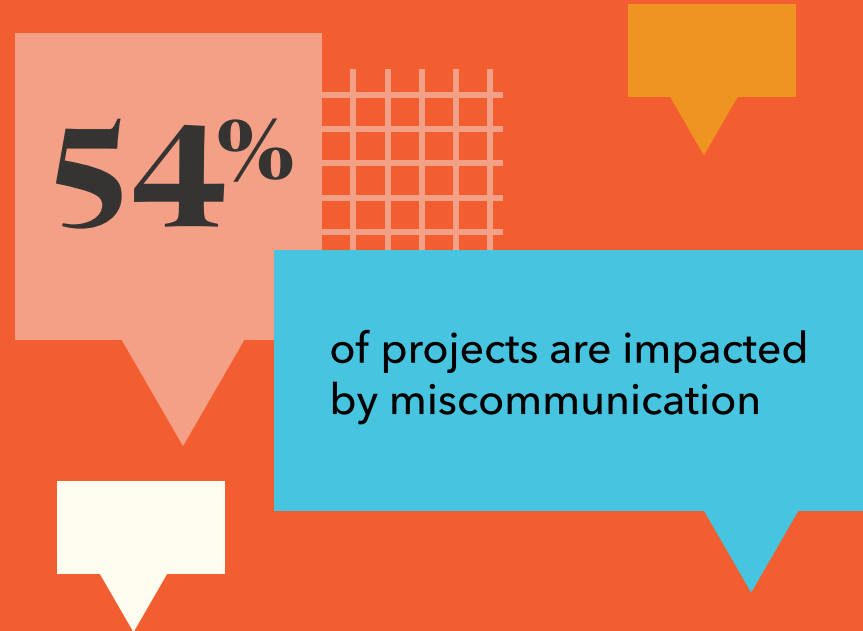
When people have to work outside their skillset, with a wide swath of tools that don't make the job easier, digital transformation isn't working as intended - it's making work harder, and making people more frustrated.

What's At Stake

What is most troubling is that these frustrations and time-sucks are focused on the major projects that most impact our modern way of working. Keep in mind the dynamic work that is so critical to how we get work done today. Most commonly, it is especially relevant to industries prone to complexity, sophistication, and large asset collections, such as big retail, manufacturing, construction, energy, and healthcare.



of projects are impacted by delays



Because of this, managing complex work effectively is critical - and currently, organizations are falling short. Our research found that 64% of projects are impacted by delays. In addition, 54% of projects are impacted by miscommunication. That means extra costs, extra man-hours, and ultimately not delivering what your customers expect when they expect it. Work is over-budget, delayed, and messy - not a recipe for success.

0.5% of projects requiring \$1 billion are delivered on time and under budget

Danish researcher Bent Flyvbjerg lays out the extreme state of things when considering megaprojects. His research into megaprojects highlighted in the [Wall Street Journal](#) found that only 0.5% of projects requiring at least \$1 billion in investment are delivered on-budget, on-time, and with the projected benefits. Consider the impact this has on a global scale – projects are stuck and not accomplished.

“Project managers are overly optimistic about budgets, schedules, and even project benefits,” [Flyvbjerg told the Quickbase blog](#). “They go in clueless about the real odds and end up underperforming on all three counts.”

With people unable to clearly understand the information they need to make clear decisions, they are putting their most critical work at risk in service of manual work, disconnected systems, and gray work.

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Bent Flyvbjerg, Danish Researcher

The Potential For Change

Seeing the struggles and frustration lays out the single greatest opportunity for organizations who can solve for this morass and who embrace dynamic work as the new world we're operating in. Instead of wasted time seeking out resources and information, organizations can instead dedicate time to their most critical work. Instead of employees having to take on skills outside their job description and learning double-digit systems just to work, they can bring their people and information together to bring people closer to impactful projects.


Comcast is currently upgrading and deploying their next-generation WiFi network, designed to improve reliability and service for their customers. Upgrading this equipment will alleviate capacity and bandwidth issues millions of customers for over a billion devices. This upgrade process requires Comcast to work with stakeholders ranging from cities and towns in counties across the USA that issue permits, to power providers, and additional stakeholders both within and outside the company.

Getting this project right requires everybody to be on the same page with consistent information and priorities.



COMCAST





“We all [need] an apples-to-apples comparison, getting and giving the same information to each other,” said Blake McFall, an analyst in engineering operations for Comcast Cable. “With a project the scale of Project Genesis, we have a variety of people...facilitating node cuts, scheduling node cuts, interacting with our business partners and making sure they understand what to prioritize.”

Integrating data across multiple tools, Comcast uses Quickbase to have one clear set of data to stay on the same page with this complex work and remove the strain that comes from working in different tools at once.

“When you have that level of complexity and stakeholders that you have to keep along for the ride, you really have to have everything in one spot,” said Rich Taylor, Vice President of Comcast Cable.

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Rich Taylor, Vice President of Comcast Cable



Deal pipeline has grown from \$400 million to \$1 billion

STAG Industrial, a real estate investment trust headquartered in Boston, went through this struggle to find accurate deal status information in one place. With software systems that weren't user friendly and didn't meet all the needs of different teams, people opted for manual work, or gray work of using their own systems.

"Work was being done in email and spreadsheets that were not communicating," said Jeff Mangano, Head of Data and Technology.

They also had to dedicate specific resources to this manual work, as one person's full-time job was updating the status of pending deals. "They were responsible for collecting updated statuses for deals across the country, and manually adding the information into yet another spreadsheet. We couldn't keep operating that way," Mangano says.

STAG took control of this sprawl and complexity by moving the deal pipeline process from multiple spreadsheets and systems into one centralized platform designed to streamline workflows and automate processes. Users had access to real-time insights with a centralized view from across systems. They could customize processes to best fit the needs of different teams while keeping information consistent. Now, the deal pipeline has grown from \$400 million to \$1 billion.

Conclusion

Companies have a unique opportunity to unlock new productivity that so many are unable to find. The growing challenges of modern work - gaining back the time lost to manual work and seeking information, and stuck in separate tools for one process or project. As the new world of work is upon us, unlocking its potential comes with solving these challenges of wasted time and employee frustration.

While organizations adapt to dynamic work being the norm, teams things out on their own can no longer be acceptable.

The status quo, stuck in spreadsheets, emails, and manual or gray work, is too costly. Bringing all of your processes and people together onto a single platform purpose-built for the dynamic enterprise will empower you to see, connect, and control your most complex work. Ultimately, this is what leads to happier people and more efficient spending. This is the advantage that organizations that solve for dynamic work can achieve - instead of figuring out how to best work around your systems and processes, unite your systems and processes to work.





quickbase

Founded in 1999, Quickbase has since become the leading application platform for dynamic work. Used for complex project and portfolio management, the platform empowers more than 6,000 customers to see, connect, and control their processes and data all in one centralized location. Named an Inc's Best Businesses of 2022, see for yourself why Quickbase is at the forefront of business-led innovation at [Quickbase.com](https://www.quickbase.com). Quickbase - All together now.