

The 6 categories (one tool each, never two)

Category	The job	Free pick + its wall	Paid pick
1. Task manager	Your personal to-do list, captured fast	Todoist - 5 active projects, 5 collaborators, 3 filters	Todoist Pro \$5/mo (annual)
2. Project mgmt	Shared team work: who does what by when	ClickUp - unlimited tasks/members, but 60 MB storage + 100 automations/mo	ClickUp Unlimited \$7/user/mo
3. Docs & knowledge	Decisions, SOPs, company memory	Notion (solo: unlimited blocks; 2nd member caps them) or Google Docs	Notion Plus \$10/user/mo
4. Calendar & planning	Where your hours actually go	Google Calendar + appointment schedules; Reclaim Lite schedules 1 week out only	Reclaim Starter \$10/user/mo
5. Communication	Questions, pings, quick calls	Slack - 90-day history visible, >1 year deleted, 10 apps, 1:1 huddles	Slack Pro \$7.25/user/mo
6. Files	Every document your business owns	Google Drive - 15 GB shared with Gmail/Photos	Google Workspace \$7/user/mo

The sprawl tax: workers toggle between apps ~1,200 times a day (HBR, 2022)

That is ~4 hours a week lost reorienting. Two tools doing the same job is sprawl, not redundancy. When a free plan hits its wall, upgrade that tool - never add a second one to route around the limit.

Choose by workflow

Solo founder / freelancer

Todoist + Google Calendar + Drive + Docs. Skip the project tool and chat; a team-of-one board is overhead.

Client services (3+ clients)

Add ClickUp (1 space per client) + Notion for client-facing docs. Slack only if clients insist.

Product / startup team (3-10)

ClickUp + Notion + Slack + Drive. Rule: decisions go in Notion the day they happen - Slack forgets after 90 days.

Ops-heavy small business

Shared Google Calendar + Drive + simple task lists. A heavyweight project tool is usually the wrong shape.

Red flags before adding any tool

1. No CSV/PDF export on the free plan = lock-in.
2. Per-seat price x your headcount in 18 months, not today.
3. Overlaps an existing tool's job? One of them has to go.
4. Where does the record live in 6 months? Not in chat history.