How to get your team started with time tracking.

Time tracking can be tricky for some teams to get used to. Being intentional about how you introduce them to your new time tracking tool can help.

HARVEST

Introduction

Introducing your team to a new time tracking tool can be tough. Many people are resistant to the idea of tracking time, either because they don't understand why it's necessary, or because they've had a bad experience in the past.

The problem is, if you don't get their buy-in and convince them to track time consistently, your team's timesheet data will be incomplete and inaccurate. That limits your insight and ability to make decisions.

While time tracking can be hard for some people to get used to, the right introduction can make all the difference. The easier you make it for your team to get started, the more likely they are to stick with it.

This guide will provide you with some general tips for introducing your team to time tracking. And if you're using Harvest, we've thrown in some helpful resources that you can share with your team to get them quickly up to speed. Ready? Let's dive in!

Lay the foundation

First impressions make a difference. It's an old cliche, but in this case it also happens to be true. How you go about introducing your team to time tracking can make a big difference in terms of whether they actually do it.

One thing to remember is that when you introduce a time tracking tool like Harvest to your team, you might also be introducing many of them to the concept of time tracking in general. They may have never had to track their hours before and won't understand why they have to start now.

Make sure you explain why time tracking is important for the business—and don't be afraid to be specific. The more people understand how their individual time tracking impacts the company's success, the more buy-in you'll get from them.

We recommend giving a brief presentation to your team explaining why time tracking is necessary and letting them know what's expected of them. It also helps to give a quick introduction to the tool you're using. Here are some topics to touch on:

- **Why you're tracking time -** Explain why your team needs to track time and how the business will benefit from it. Show them examples of reports that will be generated with their timesheet data.
- **What's expected of people -** Make sure your team knows exactly what time they need to be tracking—is it everything or just client projects? And make sure they're aware of any deadlines for having their time in.
- **The different options for tracking time -** We've found that the more options your team has for entering time, the more likely they are to do it. Make sure they know about the

different ways they can track their hours (such as the different apps and integrations available) so they can find what works for them.

- **What time tracking is *not* for -** There are many time tracking tools out that take screenshots of people's computers, monitor what sites they're visiting, and even record their location. Here at Harvest we don't believe in any of that. Reassure your team they aren't being spied on.
- **How individuals can benefit -** Many people think that time tracking only benefits the business. In fact, time tracking can give individuals a lot of insight into their own work habits. It can help them focus, work in a smarter way, and hold themselves accountable to their biggest priorities.
- **Next steps -** Make sure your team knows what's going to happen in the coming days. If you're a Harvest customer, your team should be on the lookout for an email inviting them to join your Harvest account.

To make things a little easier for Harvest customers, we put together a **presentation template** that you can customize and use to present to your team.

Learn more

Introduce Harvest (or your tool of choice)

Even if you give people a killer presentation, it's still important to follow up with your team and provide them with the info they need to start exploring their new time tracking tool. It's a lot of information to absorb all at once, so make sure they have something they can refer back to as they're getting started.

Ideally, they should have an overview of the different options for tracking time, all the different apps available to them, and any other features and reports that might be useful for tracking or analyzing their time. There's nothing worse than paying for features your team doesn't even know about, so make sure they have a good idea of what's available to them.

If you're using Harvest, we've put together a nifty **welcome guide** that has all the essential info your team needs in one place, so they can get up to speed quickly.

Check it out

Make sure people know what to track time to

Even after you get your team's buy-in and get them in the habit of tracking time, there's one more thing that needs to happen in order for you to get value out of time tracking—your team needs to track time to the correct project and task. Otherwise, the insight you'll be able to glean will be incomplete. You won't know which particular project is in danger of running over budget, or which task is eating up most of your time.

The only problem is that sometimes people don't know what project and task they should be tracking time to. This leads to one of two outcomes: either they don't track time at all (bad) or they guess what they should be tracking to (also bad).

Depending on how complicated your projects and tasks are, it can help to create a legend that points people to the correct project and task for different activities. It doesn't have to be exhaustive. As long as it outlines some common scenarios, it can help guide people to more accurate time tracking.

We've created a customizable template that can help you create a **project/task legend**, whether or not you use Harvest.

Learn more here

Set a schedule

Setting a weekly deadline for submitting timesheets can help your team stay on track. It ensures that no more than a week passes without people tracking time. It also ensures that your time tracking data remains relatively up to date.

Try coming up with an agreed upon time of the week, like Friday afternoon or Monday morning, for everyone to have their timesheets in. Just be sure to talk to your team before setting a deadline. It can be demotivating to have a deadline imposed from the top down, and your team might be able to give you more context about their week. Maybe you'd be ruining a happy hour by making the deadline Friday afternoon. Maybe Mondays are already crazy thanks to the all-hands meeting.

Even after you agree on a deadline, the week gets away from everyone sometimes. It can be helpful to give people a little reminder when the deadline is approaching. Consider setting up an automatic reminder to give your team a heads up, or encourage them to set up personal reminders.

Need help setting a schedule and creating reminders for your team? We created a **schedule assistant** to give you some help.

Check it out

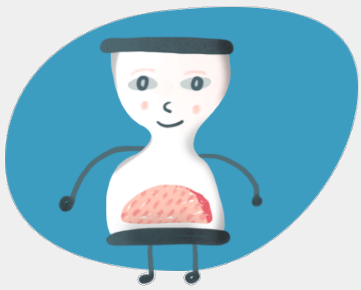
Make it fun

Last but not least, don't forget to make time tracking fun. People tend to think of it as something depressing and it's easy for them to resent being asked to enter their hours. Don't be afraid to take the edge off with a fun GIF the next time you ask your team to track time.

And don't forget to say thank you when people submit their timesheets. A little bit of acknowledgement goes a long way. You could even offer your team some kind of reward, like a happy hour or pizza party, as a thank you once everyone is tracking time consistently.

Spice up your time tracking with **custom GIFs** from Harvest. They're perfect for adding a dash of personality to Slack messages and emails.

Check them out

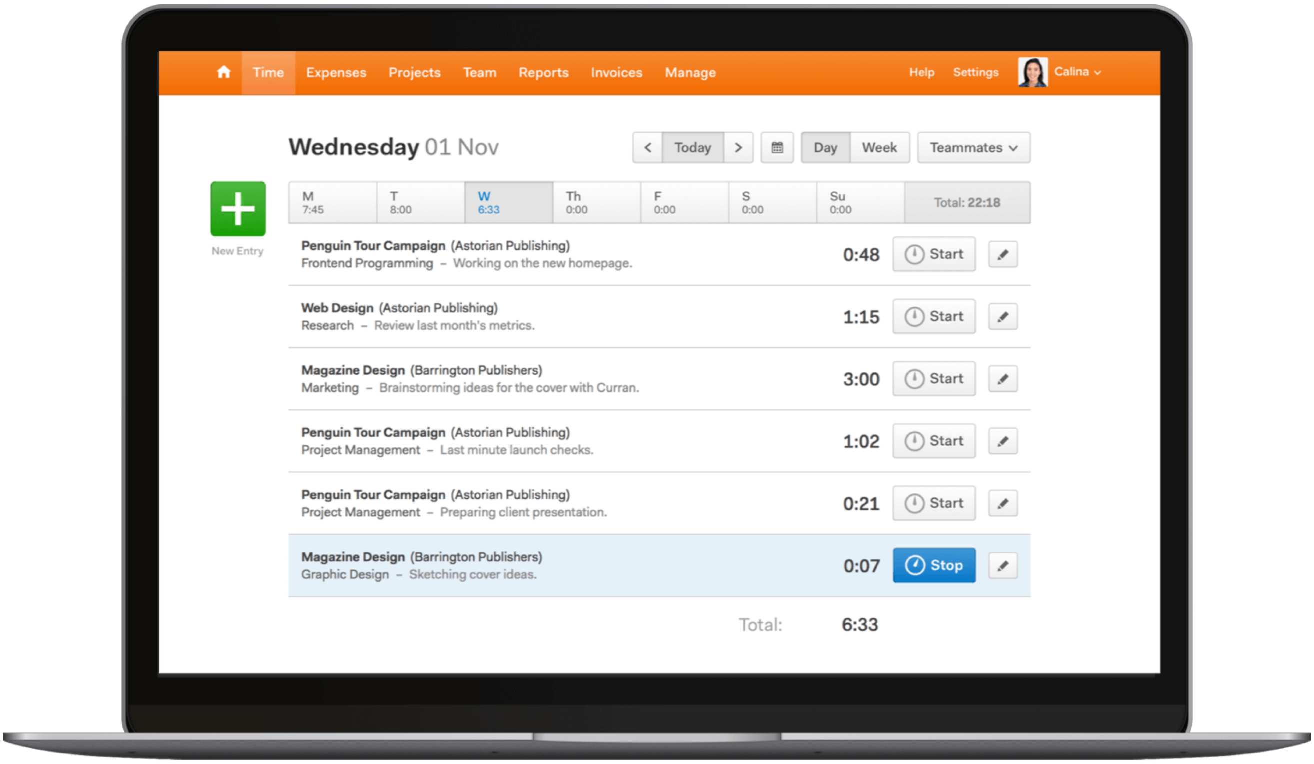


Conclusion

Don't forget, time tracking can be a big adjustment for your team. Even with the best preparations, it might still take them a few weeks to get fully in the swing of things. Don't get discouraged if they don't take to it immediately.

If you've tried and failed to get your team to track time in the past, don't underestimate the difference the right tool can make. A tool that makes it easy to track time and gives your team plenty of options for doing so can eliminate a lot of their resistance.

If you've never tried Harvest before, we encourage you to check it out. It's free to try for 30 days, so you've got nothing to lose. It just might be the key to making time tracking work for your team. Create a free trial today.



Team-approved time tracking.

Getting your team to track time shouldn't be a battle. Harvest makes it easy, so you get the insight you need without driving them crazy.

Track time

Flexible time tracking options that work for your workflow.

Get info about your business

Intuitive reports that shed light on your team and projects.

Invoice clients and get paid online

Easy online invoices that help you get paid faster.

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Learn more at getHarvest.com