



## How much does cost a good collaboration tool set for a virtual team of 5 members?

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In our research we noted that many virtual teams use only a limited number of virtual collaboration tools. Many teams restrict themselves to Skype calls or telephone calls. With these two tools they try to solve every issue on the virtual teams. This reminds me on Maslow's law of the hammer: if the only tool you have is a hammer, then every problem looks like a nail.

We looked at VTMM – Virtual Team Maturity Model and identified tools supporting the different processes. It is based on the approach to increase the positivity within the team so that the productivity will increase automatically as well. To implement virtual team processes successfully, the virtual team needs the right mix of virtual collaboration tools and the costs for these tools can be very affordable.

For a team of five members, then monthly expenses range **€ 107,21<sup>1</sup>** (\$ 138,87) between **€ 147,27** (\$ 255,53). The main difference in the price is the task management system. There are simple, cost-efficient solutions and high-end solutions. IT really depends on the requirements of each virtual team, which option to buy.

The monthly virtual collaboration software fee looks like a very heavy investment for a NGO and a Social Enterprise or very little for a multi-national company. However, consider the following calculation. You have a virtual team with members in the USA, Brazil, Dubai, India and Europe. If you want to fly the team members to one location of a meeting, then you need to calculate roughly 2 working days for each team member is lost in travelling. If the team members earn on average € 30,-/hour, then the lost productivity costs are € 1.920,- plus flight and travel costs of roughly € 4.000,-. If you reduce the number of meetings from 4 to 2 each year, because the team works effectively together in the virtual environment, then you have net savings (saved costs for 2 meetings minus the annual costs for the collaboration software) of € 9.472,74,-, if you have chosen the most expensive software suite proposed in this paper. The savings on travel expenses in this year can be used to pay the software licenses for over 5 ½ years.

**Conclusion:** Investing in good virtual team collaboration tools gives you a very high ROI (return-on-investment). So, if you are in charge of a critical project and you need to collaborate with other team members in different continents and without wanting to waste any time and money for unnecessary travels, then our proposed toolkit is a good investment.

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<sup>1</sup> Prices are verified in March 2013. Any subsequent changes are excluded.



<b>Tools</b>	<b>VTMM Process</b>	<b>Description</b>	<b>one user</b>	<b>5 users</b>
Google App. Account <a href="http://www.google.com/enterprise/apps/business/">http://www.google.com/enterprise/apps/business/</a>	Information Management, Social Network	<p>This account includes Google application, Hangout for video and audio communication, Email, Collaborating on the project documents, etc., with 5 GB space on Google Drive and 10 GB space for email.</p> <p>You can create sites for your projects and teams. By Calendar you can manage your time and your team. It supports time zone.</p>	\$ 5,- / month, for 1 user OR \$ 50,- / year, for 1 user	\$ 25,- / month, for 5 users OR \$ 250,- / year, for 5 users
Conceptboard <a href="http://conceptboard.com/">http://conceptboard.com/</a>	Meeting Management, Get-to-know-each other, Decision Making, Feedback	Communication between team to have virtual meeting. It is possible to hold various meetings like brainstorming, requirement workshop, decision making, etc. It supports: real-time collaboration; Google Drive and Google Hangout; video and audio communication.	\$ 25,- / month, for 3 users AND \$ 7,- for each additional user	\$ 39,- / month, for 5 users
Creately <a href="http://creately.com/">http://creately.com/</a>	Information Management	<p>One of strong tools for drawing 23 different diagrams. It supports desktop and web.</p> <p>It support Google Drive, but you need to have Google account. It supports real-time collaboration and many other features.</p>	\$ 5,- / month, for 1 user OR \$ 49,- / year, for 1 user (for Google Drive)	\$ 25,- / month, for 5 users to use online OR \$ 249,- / year for 5 users (for Google Drive)
SmartSheet <a href="https://www.smartsheet.com">https://www.smartsheet.com</a>	Task Management	A complete task management tool. It provides capabilities to define GANTT chart, task, connects to Google Drive, Google calendar. It is possible to send task for team members. Generating reports, work on mobile and more...	\$ 15,95 / month, for 1 user with unlimited collaborators OR \$ 159,50 / year, for 1 user	\$ 49,95 / month, for 3 users and unlimited collaborators. PLUS \$ 9,95 for each additional user



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OnTime <a href="http://www.ontimement.com">http://www.ontimement.com</a>	Task Management	One of strong tools for managing project by SCRUM. Provides a lot of functionality for executing a software project. It has a capability to integrate with IDEs. It supports mobile and tablet devices.	\$ 7,- / month, for 1 user OR \$ 70,- / year, for 1 user	\$ 35,- / month, for 1 user OR \$ 100,- / year, for up to 10 users <i>(Special Small-Team Price)</i>
TargetProcess <a href="http://www.targetprocess.com/">http://www.targetprocess.com/</a>	Task Management	One of strong tools for managing project by both SCRUM and Kanban. Provides a lot of functionality for executing a software project. It has a capability to integrate with IDEs.	\$ 9,- / month, for 1 user ( <i>for light version</i> ) OR \$ 25,- / month, for 1 user ( <i>for pro version</i> )	\$ 45,- / month, for 5 users ( <i>for light version</i> ) OR \$ 125,- / month, for 5 users ( <i>for pro version</i> )

If you want to learn more about VTMM – Virtual Team Maturity Model, then please download the model from our website [www.gepros.com](http://www.gepros.com) or do a free self-assessment with your team on [vtmm.gepros.com](http://vtmm.gepros.com).

We offer regular complementary webinars on virtual team maturity or virtual team collaboration. Look for topics and dates on our website. We also qualify virtual team leaders and team members to become Certified Virtual Team Assessors (CVTA) so that experts in your organization can lead the virtual team improvement process. The education will take place through eSeminars.

This paper has been written in a virtual collaboration effort between Sasan Nikookar, based in Australia and Ralf Friedrich, based in Germany. It proves that excellent virtual teamwork can happen across the globe without any minute spent on travel time.

We hope that this information is useful to increase your virtual team performance. If you need more information please contact us: Ralf Friedrich (Tel.: +49 170 2973030, Mail: [ralf.friedrich@gepros.com](mailto:ralf.friedrich@gepros.com)) or Sandra Müller, (Tel.: +49 151 46641253, Mail: [sandra.mueller@gepros.com](mailto:sandra.mueller@gepros.com)).