6

REASONS TO
DITCH YOUR
SPREADSHEETS...

AND MAKE THE MOVE TO A DIY APPLICATION

TRACKVIA

Spreadsheets are often billed as simple, easy-to-use solutions for tracking data and managing projects. Unfortunately, spreadsheets have some limitations that can frustrate even the most savvy users and disrupt projects.

On the other hand, an increasingly popular spreadsheet alternative is do-it-yourself (DIY) applications, whereby users can create programs themselves to solve one or more unique business problems. Here are six ways spreadsheets stack up against DIY applications:

1 SPEED AND EASE

Spreadsheets ✔	DIY Applications
With a spreadsheet, nearly anyone can begin tracking data in a matter of minutes.	Do-it-yourself applications can require a bit more time and effort to set up than a simple spreadsheet.
The learning curve required to use a simple spreadsheet is relatively low.	As DIY tools become more sophisticated and widespread, the time and skills needed to build custom business applications will continue to decline. In fact, some tools already give users the ability to build an application from a spreadsheet in minutes.

2 SECURITY

Spreadsheets	DIY Applications ✔
A lack of controls within spreadsheets can make them vulnerable to manipulation. Documents created with these programs can be easily corrupted and are susceptible to fraud.	Unlike basic spreadsheets, do-it-yourself business applications provide robust, multi-layered, enterprise-grade security.
Malicious parties can easily change values, dependencies and formulas without being found, making businesses susceptible to financial losses that have the potential to ruin them.	DIY applications have built-in features that include HIPAA and PCI compliance. Businesses can rest assured that sensitive data such as patient records, credit card info, or social security numbers doesn't end up in the wrong hands.
	Powerful user permissions allow you to set access rights to individuals or groups. Allow someone to view, access or edit everything, some things, or just the things they need to do their job.

3 DATA INTEGRITY

Spreadsheets	DIY Applications ✔

Spreadsheets

With multiple users working on the same spreadsheet, it can be very easy to create duplicate versions containing erroneous data and distribute them throughout an organization.

Spreadsheets make it difficult to check for problems. Interrelated data may be spread throughout the document, creating a situation in which it is impossible to verify its accuracy.

Human errors that seem minor can do real damage to a firm's reputation. Overlooked mistakes can lower investor confidence and result in lost opportunities.

Many users who handle spreadsheets are unfamiliar with the best methods for storing and backing up documents. This could make data recovery impossible in the event that a disaster strikes, resulting in financial losses.

Data may be scattered about in multiple documents, on several machines or even in geographically disparate areas. This can make the process of tracking down errors extremely difficult and time consuming.

Spreadsheets can become highly personalized, which can render them unusable to other employees.

DIY Applications

One of the greatest advantages of do-it-yourself applications is data integrity. By securing data in a cloud-based application, businesses can benefit from a multi-layered approach that includes data center architecture, data storage and redundancy, disaster recovery plans and data export options.

By requiring users to work with data in a singular online instance, businesses can virtually eliminate duplicate versions of the same data.

Some do-it-yourself application platforms include an audit trail feature, allowing administrators to see exactly who has made changes, and when. Having an audit trail is especially helpful when checking for errors.

4 REPORTING

Spreadsheets

Spreadsheet-based environments can make data extraction and consolidation a time-consuming process. Summarizing information so that it can be used to help make decisions is complicated by the need to double-check data for errors in order to maintain integrity, a process that can create delays and give executives little time to work with data.

DIY Applications ✓

By managing important business data in a single online application, you eliminate the need to spend hours, or days, every month consolidating information scattered throughout the organization.

The real power of do-it-yourself applications isn't what you put into them, but rather what you get out. With a DIY app, you can easily create custom views or reports to analyze and review your data. You can also create dashboards, which display multiple views or reports in one place.

5 WORKFLOW

Spreadsheets

With spreadsheets, companies are required to design and format work before they can even get started. Once the spreadsheet is set up, it has to be emailed to everyone working on the project. After that, new copies are emailed out every time a change is made, confusing the issue of which version is the latest.

Eventually, all of the information that has been sent back and forth has to be compiled into a readable form.

Sharing spreadsheets through a network isn't helpful, either, because multiple users may be downloading and uploading data at any time. This again confuses the issue of which copy is the most recent and can disrupt a project's workflow.

DIY Applications ✓

One of the most tremendous benefits of using an application created by you is that it works the way *you* do.

Many do-it-yourself application platforms make it easy for the non-technical business person to integrate custom data collection forms into their workflow.

Furthermore, some DIY application platforms offer a corresponding mobile app, whereby your custom-built application can work seamlessly with an iPad. Imagine being able to collect data on the go, including photos, audio notes, bar codes, QR codes and signatures. How would your workflow improve if your team had the ability to geotag a record to prove presence?

6 COST

Spreadsheets	DIY Applications ✔
The upfront cost of spreadsheet software tends to be minimal. Some options, like Google Docs, are available for free. Other application licenses for programs such as Microsoft Excel can cost as little as $80 USD.	As technology matures, the number of tools available to business users continues to expand. Gone are the days when companies were required to spend thousands upon thousands of dollars to hire expensive programmers to develop a custom application.
While the initial price tag for spreadsheet software is low, there can be high hidden costs associated with these solutions, including problems with security and data integrity, lack of user permissions, complicated reporting and inefficient workflow.	Now, do-it-yourself application platforms and their sophisticated, yet user-friendly, tools allow workers to design solutions to better do their day-to-day work, and at a relatively low cost.
	With features not available in basic spreadsheets, can your business really afford not to use a secure online application?

MAKE THE MOVE

Understanding how employees use spreadsheets and the problems that can arise can help your business make the decision to switch to an online do-it-yourself application.

Do-it-yourself applications provide a greater degree of control and oversight over your data than spreadsheet software. By transitioning to an online solution for tracking and managing data, companies can eliminate the question of how to reign in their spreadsheets and improve results.

::: TRACKVIA

TrackVia is a do-it-yourself application platform for business users. TrackVia gives you the power to build custom applications for your business with no programming required.

TrackVia instantly turns flat, cumbersome spreadsheets into a deep, powerful and mobile-optimized spreadsheet alternative that helps you better track, manage and do your work.

As easy as drag and drop, you can quickly build applications for CRM, marketing automation, support ticketing, project management and more, tailored exactly to your needs and at a fraction of the cost of out-of-the-box software.

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