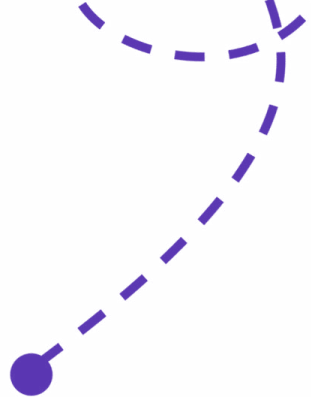


How to avoid the 5 most common pitfalls with multi-site project management





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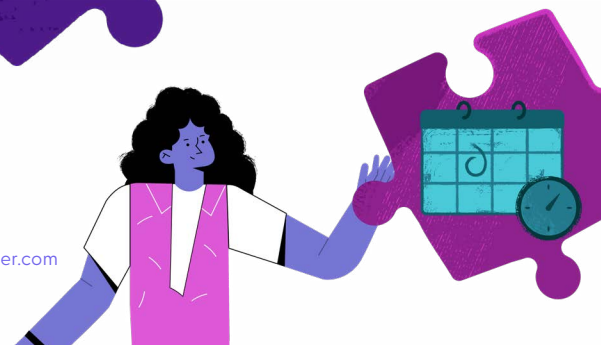
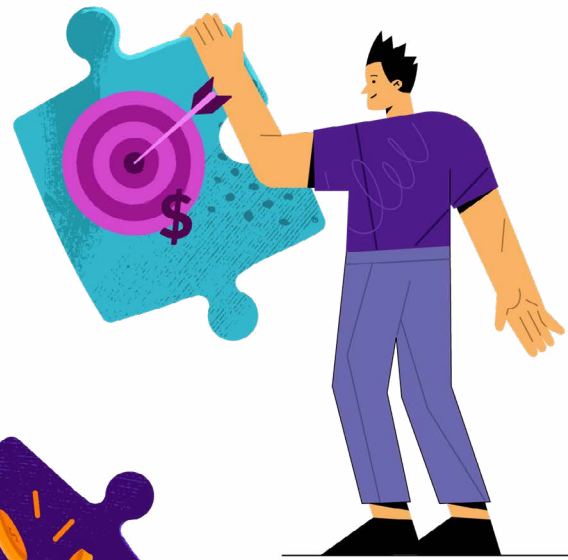
Project management is more than just task management

It's about communicating progress to the right people, helping—not handcuffing—they, and creating a plan that is flexible enough to allow for change.

The best project managers don't just understand this, they live it. It's embedded in their daily work processes. Every decision project teams make in a sprint propels their company's overall vision and goals forward. And if you think that sounds like a tall order, managing global and regional project operations of single or multiple site locations is even harder.

Deadlines are tight.

Responsibilities are wide, hurdles abound, and there's an immense amount of pressure to deliver on specification, on cost, and on time.



Why are intelligent software tools critical to modern-day project managers?

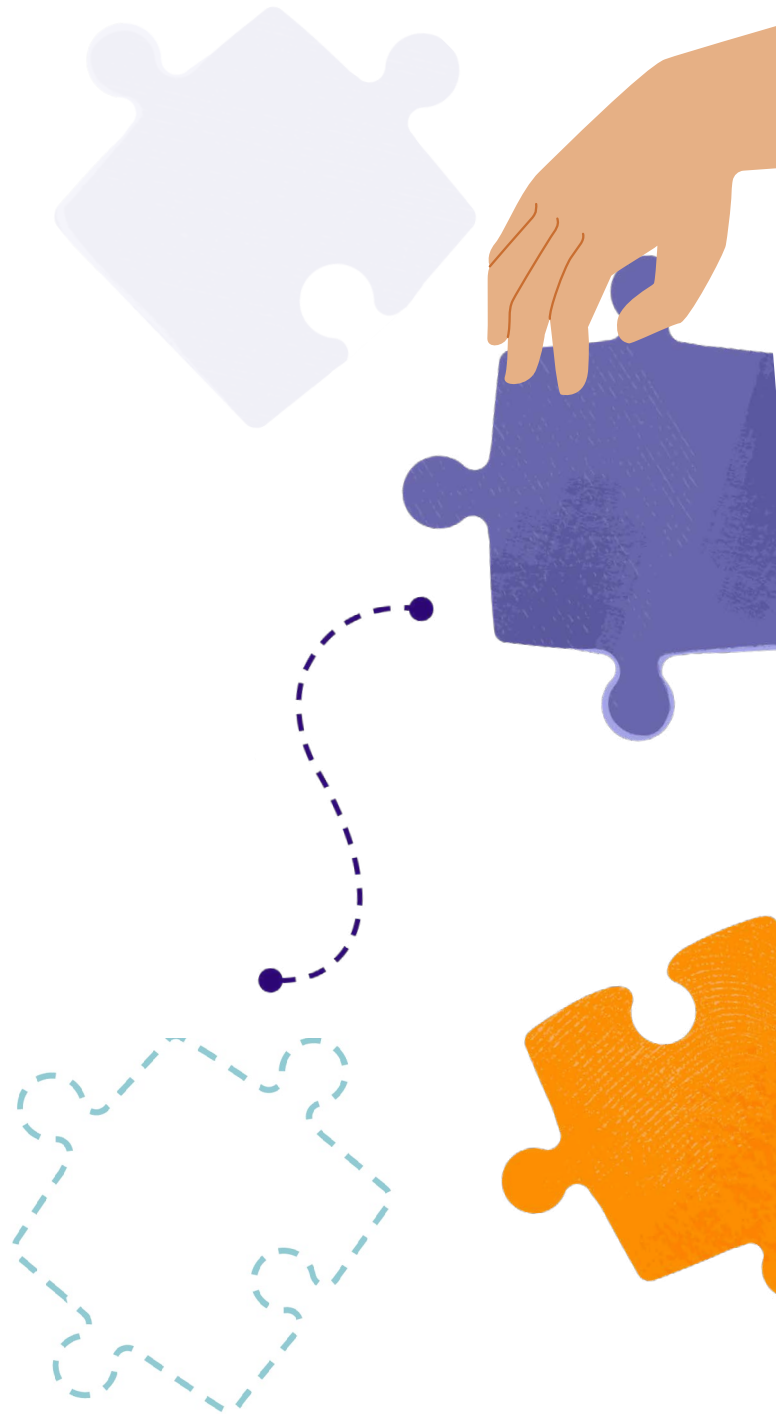
Project teams today need a bird's-eye view of progress, unexpected delays and the impact these events are costing their bottom line.

In fact,

- **47% of agile projects are late, have budget overruns, or result in unhappy customers (Scrum, 2021).**
- **46% of the projects in companies with low project management technology maturity go over budget (PMI, 2020).**
- **Moreover, 11% of agile projects fail outright and end up delivering nothing (Scrum, 2021).**

[Source](#)

And that's only considering a single-site project—it doesn't account for the complexity that multi-site project management brings with it. Most project management tools on the market today don't either.



What are multi-site projects and what makes them different?

Multi-site project management entails managing several (sometimes) identical projects simultaneously across different physical locations. They include establishing multiple franchise locations, hotel chains, restaurants, gyms, etc., across states, countries, and continents. While each location can appear to be its own independent launch, these types of project portfolios bring unique challenges; project managers need to keep pace, adapt at scale, and provide centralized oversight across each operational activity.

Let's say you're a site operations manager or hotel management company, and you need to open several new locations simultaneously—

As you work to get each location established as quickly as possible, a few questions will undoubtedly come up:



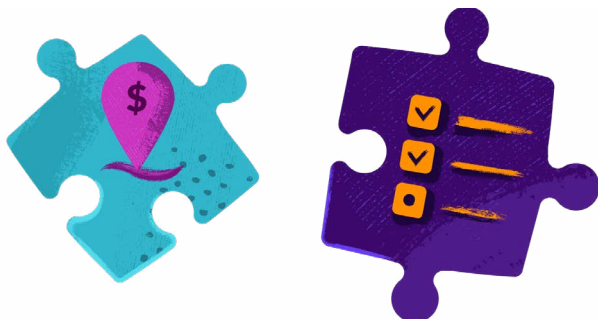
Which locations are on pace, and which are running behind?



Is everyone working off the same checklist or are there any older versions in circulation?



Which task-holders are holding up other individuals?



Or what if there's a required vendor change for one of your amenities?



How can you be sure all your locations will receive and execute the new requirements on time and that you'll launch with the proper vendor in place?



How can you get the current status of each of your projects?



How can you prioritize project plans without having to make multiple calls, shoot off a bunch of emails or flip through dozens of chaotic worksheets?

Managing complexity, efficiency, and productivity is a monumental task for any project management office (PMO). Most don't realize that 54% of project management practitioners do not have access to real-time key performance indicators (KPIs) (Wellington, 2020), and on average, 67% more of projects end up as outright failures in organizations that undervalue project management as an essential element for driving change (PMI, 2020). That's why digital transformation and intelligent, agile project management software tools are more important than ever to help operations project managers improve the performance of any project scope at scale.

Built for project management professionals across a variety of industries, this guide dives into the five most common pitfalls of multi-site operations management and identifies how sophisticated project management software can help you fix these challenges while delivering project execution with precision.

Pitfall 1: Manual data entry guarantees less control, more risk

A manual approach to project management (e.g., running a project from an Excel or Google spreadsheet) can create an endless source of errors for management and operations because visibility is marred, and you're only as up to date as the last entry.

35.5% of project managers use MS Excel to build resource plans. Meanwhile, **17.5%** do not use any software tools, while **17.47%** use an enterprise project management solution. Only **5.42%** said they use a resource management solution (Wellington, 2020).

But you've become more agile in your approach, right? Instead of relying on your project director or on-site operational manager to complete their manual updates, you're requiring multiple teams in multiple departments across multiple locations to keep their spreadsheets up to date, and it's up to you to consolidate all of the data, create user-friendly reporting for key stakeholders, and ensure they stay as up to date as possible.



Inefficiencies + Roadblocks

Typical PM Apps don't keep pace

TEMPLATE			
☐ TASK A			
☐ TASK B			
☐ TASK C			
☐ TASK D			
☐ TASK E			
☐ TASK F			
	LOCATION A	LOCATION B	LOCATION C
	☐ TASK A	☐ TASK A	☐ TASK A
	☐ TASK B	☐ TASK B	☐ TASK B
	☐ TASK C	☐ TASK C	☐ TASK C
	☐ TASK D	☐ TASK D	☐ TASK D
	☐ TASK E	☐ TASK E	☐ TASK E
	☐ TASK F	☐ TASK F	☐ TASK F

- ⊗ Must manually clone projects for every location.
- ⊗ Difficult to add/edit deployed tasks in one place.
- ⊗ No central location to view all projects.
- ⊗ No place to add project updates across all locations.
- ⊗ No ability to review task performance.

It's a tough pill to swallow, but ultimately, relying on manual entry to advance seamless operational workflows and achieve key business objectives is another project in and of itself. It distracts from what matters, like timely launches, a high-quality visitor experience, and overall team morale and productivity. It also makes it harder to uncover critical insights you'd be able to gather if you considered a cloud-based automation platform that supported flexible workflows, resource allocations, and real-time insights.

An intelligent digital project management tool can help remove some of this redundant work and manual management, demolishing communication silos by ensuring everyone is working from the most recent task list and progress is reflected via real-time dashboards. This allows stakeholders to work simultaneously on the same documents and even allows control for interdependencies between tasks (e.g., legal reviewing contracts for sales and marketing before sending to customers). Also, you can easily add notifications (via email, text, etc.) at various points of the project if certain tasks are running behind or have been completed to help replace more manual project oversight.

You should be able to:

- ✓ Access visual project overviews via real-time dashboards.
- ✓ Create custom insights for tactical and strategic leaders to assess local site performance.
- ✓ Understand where your project is not meeting the initial scopes of work.
- ✓ Calculate loss time, talent requirements, and resource allocations.
- ✓ Limit the ability to delete or change task instructions at the individual site level.

Did you know you can assign tasks, across all sites, on the fly?

A digital approach ultimately gives you more centralized control and oversight of your simultaneous projects while making it easier for your stakeholders to be in lockstep and understand what's expected of them at each stage of the process. That's why more than **3 in 4 successful project teams** use project management software. And while project management software adoption is changing, with organizations using spreadsheets to manage their agile projects dropping from 74% to 67% between 2017 and 2018 (*VersionOne*), more than half of project management teams are exposing their project's performance to grave risks that enable failure and over-budget completion. That explains why, on average, 11.4% of investment is wasted as a result of poor project performance (PMI, 2020).



Pitfall 2: Environmental factors are critical to project performance

Whether you're opening two boutique hotels in New York City or four locales in London and two in Sydney, many times, the tasks themselves are virtually the same. But local regulations can heavily influence the implementation, cultural norms, and environmental and human factors. Multi-site operations are nuanced by location, but many tasks stay the same.

For example, certain countries may require additional permits or licenses or have different governmental requirements that need to be attended to. Similarly, one or more of your locations may be experiencing a labor shortage, lack of building materials, or elevated material costs that can hinder or slow site operations, building approvals, service launches, and above all, put your project off track.

To make matters worse, this complexity may need to be managed across multiple time zones, which only increases your chances of failure, as [half of all project failures](#) can be traced back to poor communication. To keep communication between stakeholders flowing smoothly no matter where they are across the globe, a good digital project management tool will:

- ✓ Facilitate templates that accommodate geographic or physical differences between sites.
- ✓ Include a built-in communication (chat) functionality.
- ✓ Allow real-time alerts across platforms (e.g., email, text, in-app).
- ✓ Enable hierarchical views of data by locale, project, role, and responsibility.
- ✓ Allow budget tracking and integration with native calendars, along with the ability to export data.
- ✓ Offer agile project road mapping with filtered views and smartphone compatibility.
- ✓ Permit simultaneous shifting of all task dates at a given site to align with an updated construction completion date.
- ✓ Limit the ability to delete or change task instructions at the individual site level.



With a sophisticated project management automation platform, you can do more than just basic duplication your existing projects—you should be able to easily make adjustments to suit the operational planning and critical factors each location requires. It is estimated that only [15% of project managers](#) focus on a single project at a time. Most of them manage around five projects, while some of them manage up to 10. With so much to handle at a given moment, 46% of the projects in companies with low project management technology maturity go over budget (PMI, 2020).

Pitfall 3: Lagging project metrics can impact your bottom line

Operationally at least.

Project management is supposed to save cost and increase team productivity and workflow efficiencies, but poor project management implementation can end up doing the opposite.

Gallup found that **1 in 6** IT projects had an average cost overrun of 200% and a schedule overrun of almost 70%. Furthermore, PMI's Pulse of the Profession Global Project Management Survey found that **9.9% of every dollar is wasted** due to poor project performance—that's \$99 million down the drain for every \$1 billion invested.

It's easy to see how these costs and inefficiencies can quickly compound when running multiple projects across multiple sites in parallel.

While these costs and delays may not become immediately obvious, they'll surely reveal themselves in longer launch times, mismanaged team productivity, and increased talent and material costs, which will quickly throw your project into the red.

Digital project management tools allow you to run workload assessments to ensure that:

- ✓ Your team is appropriately loaded.
- ✓ You have a structured overview of tasks (past, present, and future) and their relationship to one another.
- ✓ Your team is running at peak efficiency.

Also, as these digital tools are cloud-based, they're always accessible when your stakeholders need them, and any necessary updates will be instantly represented in your software.

This means you'll save the time and effort of sending out individual updates and waiting for confirmation that they've been received and implemented, and your project leads won't have to transfer completed tasks and information onto the latest spreadsheet. With **80%** of employees saying they spend at least half of their work week on "rework," this savings isn't insignificant).



Pitfall 4: Lack of automation can lead to diminishing team productivity

While organizations that adopt project management principles generally waste **28 times** less money than organizations that don't, that doesn't mean all tasks project managers perform are valuable.

Searching for information, transferring data between spreadsheets, and doing redundant work (like duplicating existing projects) are only a few small examples of tasks that don't add to the overall project but take time nonetheless. Stack up enough of these administrative tasks and your project managers can end up spending their entire days running in circles on tasks that don't contribute to the project being completed.

At a minimum, a sophisticated, intelligent multi-site project management tool will:

- ✓ Feature built-in real-time aggregate data across project sites.
- ✓ Offer scheduled and/or reoccurring reporting.
- ✓ Give the ability to provide individuals with reference materials, links, and contacts needed to help them complete the task in one place.
- ✓ Include user management tools designed for multi-site access rights.
- ✓ Allow you to create duplicate project instances and customize them.

In addition to dealing with other tasks and demands, the biggest causes of time and administrative inefficiencies in multi-site projects are understanding which sites are on pace (and what's holding up the sites that aren't) and having to aggregate data from each site for reporting.

Finding a tool that incorporates and automates the functions outlined above turns these questions into simple queries (instead of hours of searches and calculations).

Finally, the goal of a project management tool is to keep your team on task and organized—not to add to your workload. So when selecting a project management tool, make sure it's easy for your team to use and can provide real-time insights that can influence agile decision-making for your multi-site operation and help you reach the finish line faster.



Pitfall 5: Customization is vital to your project delivery process

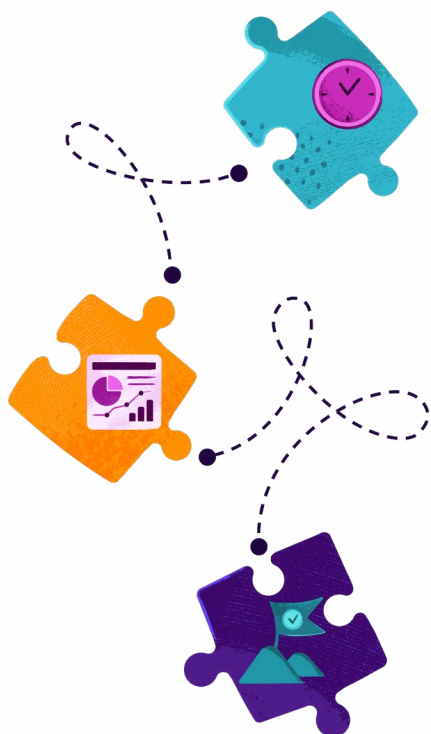
Ever had a one-size-fits-all shirt that fits well?

Us either.

Similarly, every project management software claims it will perfectly fit all of your needs out of the box, but we all know there will be at least one thing that needs to change before you can hit the ground running (if not a few dozen).

At this stage, it's more important to assess *how easy it is to customize* the tool you're selecting versus finding the tool that will work perfectly the first time.

Not only does this set you up for future success when something changes, but it makes your tool more adaptable when the next unique project comes along.



So, what items should you be looking for control over with customization?

Obviously, the basics are important (creating and customizing individual tasks and timelines, etc.), but also be sure your project management tool allows for customization of other features, including:

- ✓ Deploying and editing multiple tasks in bulk across project clones and across time zones in minutes.
- ✓ Exporting actionable insights and performance metrics into weekly status reports.
- ✓ Automatically alerting the relevant task collaborators on key milestones or delays anywhere, anytime.
- ✓ Filtering what goes in and out of key reports, so stakeholders only get what they need when they need it.

Keep in mind that your project collaborators won't be the only ones relying on your software to complete their leg of the race. If you select the right tool, management can also see their statuses and do their necessary reporting from the same tool.

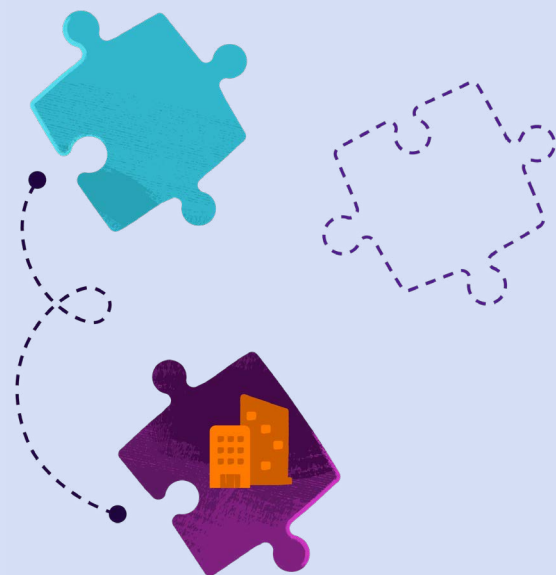
Therefore, the ability to customize your projects with a layered approach that lets each user select their level of detail isn't just convenient—it's vitally important to make the tool useful to all stakeholders involved.

Not all project management tools are created equally

Especially when it comes to pursuing seamless workflows and multi-site operational excellence.

Multi-site projects have unique challenges, like higher user requirements, creation and management of multiples of the same project, and more complex status and financial reporting, so it's important that you pick the tool that will put you on the path to success.

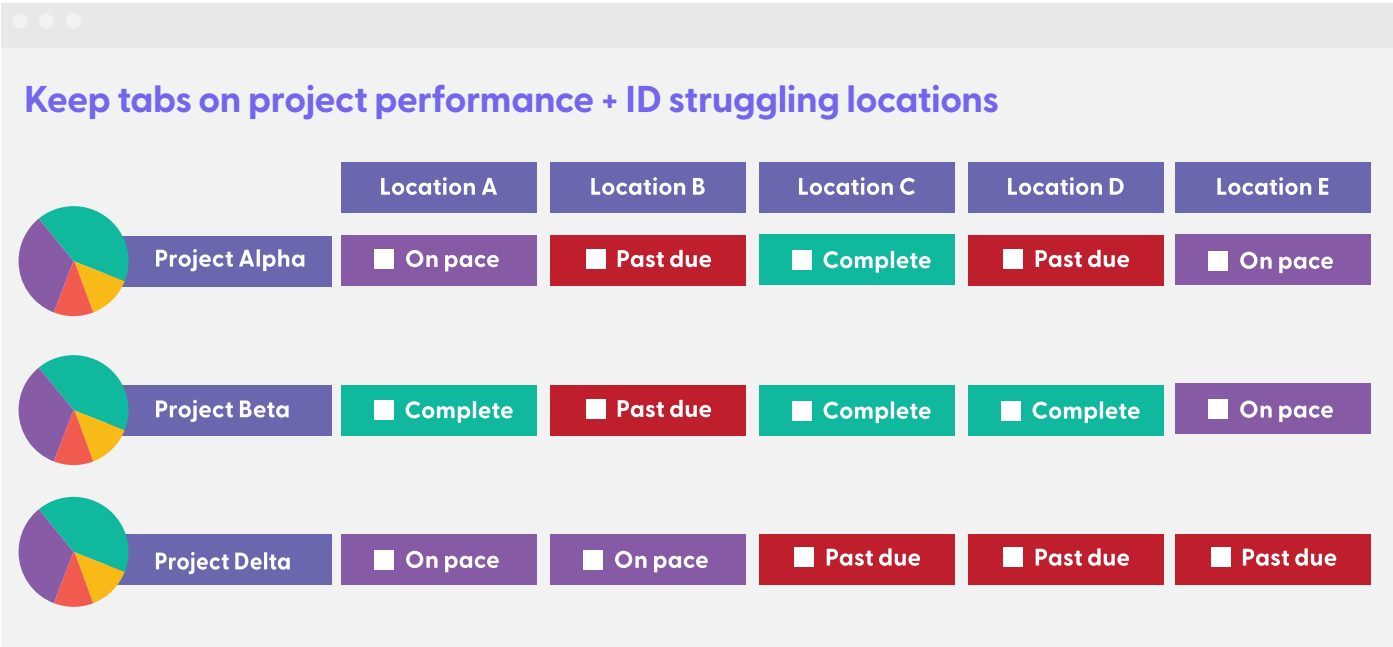
Created to serve the hospitality industry, where multiple hotel projects are simultaneously being constructed around the world, Pacer was designed with these unique challenges in mind.



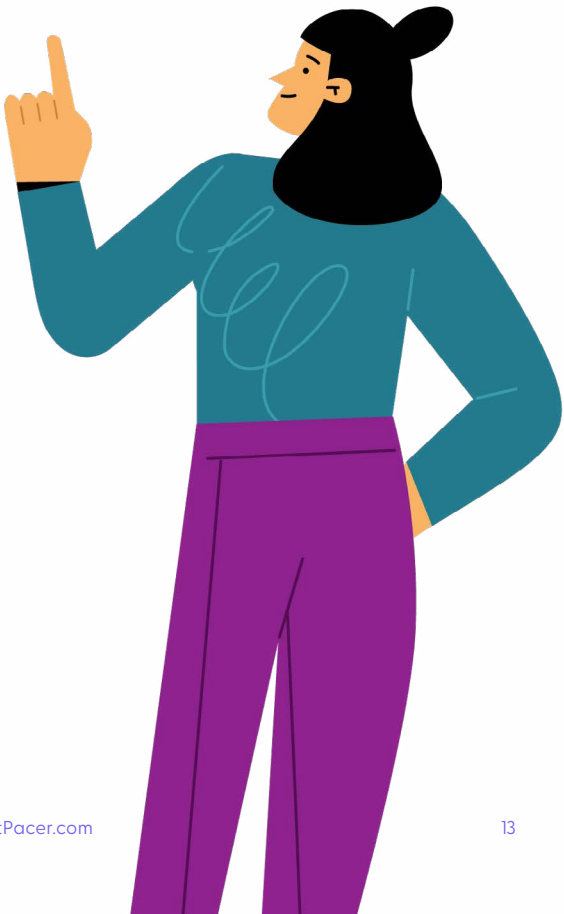
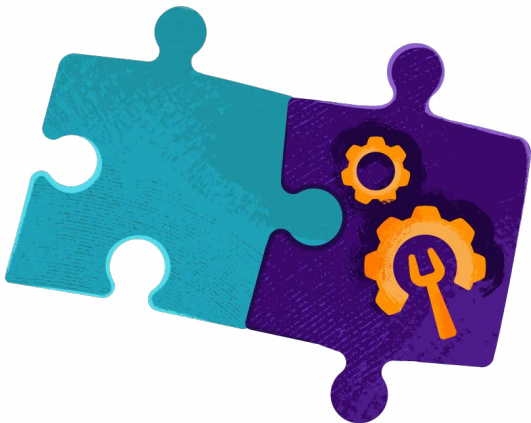
Features	 pacer	Smartsheet	MS Project	Common PM Apps	Excel Office 365 (Online)	TaskRay
Unlimited users	✓	✗	✗	—	—	✗
Manage multiples of the same projects	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Emailed reports on a recurring basis	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	—
Drill-down from all dashboard graphs	✓	✗	✗	✗	✗	✗
Easy for administrators	✓	✗	✗	✓	—	✗

— Varies

With Pacer, you can easily orchestrate complex multi-site projects, create multiple clones of your project (e.g., new hotels, fitness centers, franchises, etc.), and monitor all of you progress at any level of detail from simple, interactive, and customizable dashboards.



Pacer can handle (and help you visualize) progress on multiple projects and workflows simultaneously; enable easy task addition, modification, or removal into one or all tasks at once; and allow your team to filter their view based on their department, location, level of seniority, or any other preference to ensure everyone stays on the right path.



Advancing your project using performance data and user feedback

Project Alpha			
	Performance	Learning	Advancing
■ Task awesome	100% on time	2 comments + 1 BP	Update task instructions to all inflight locations
■ Task B	80% on time	1 comment + 1 BP	Convert best practices into task instruction
■ Task G	100% on time		
■ Task C	20% on time	2 comments + 1 BP	Understand why often late; alter task/timing
■ Task D	100% on time		
■ Task E	80% on time		
■ Task F	100% on time		

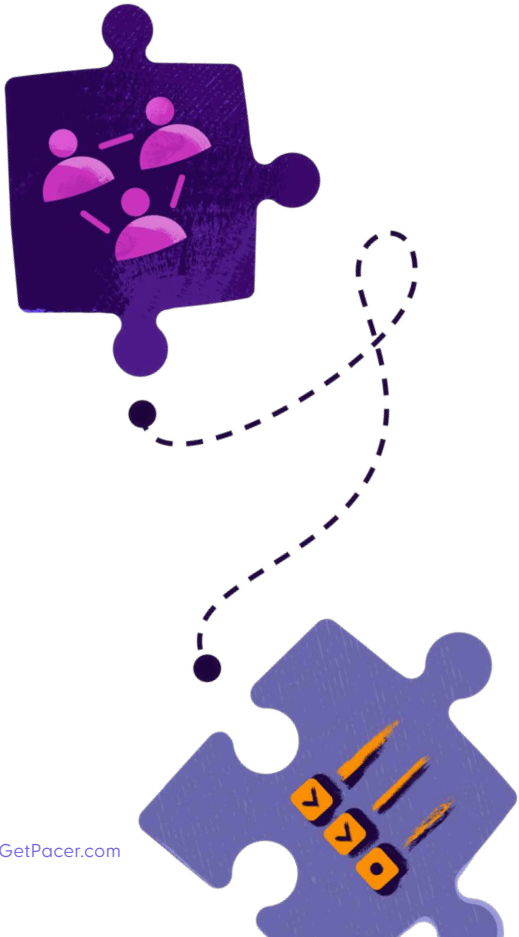
Finally, Pacer helps keep dispersed teams connected with collaborative communication features like task comments, the ability to set up dependencies between tasks and stakeholders, and a notification tool that can help users stay on top of their tasks via their preferred communication method.

Any tool can manage a timeline, but only Pacer can give your entire multi-site project the features and oversight you need for success.

If you’re running a multi-site project, only Pacer can help you stay ahead of the competition...

Get a free 30-day trial of Pacer [here](#), and hit the ground running.

- ✓ Gain actionable insights that provide key stakeholders with real-time updates.
- ✓ Create and manage larger programs with several similar task lists.
- ✓ Erase redundancy and budget overruns.
- ✓ Keep your project clones connected with native collaboration tools.
- ✓ Customize your project milestones, dashboards, and insights with ease.





Pacer (formerly 4MyRollout) makes large scale project planning easier & more efficient, enabling project leaders to communicate with team leads across multiple locations to plan, communicate, & track progress seamlessly, in real time. The task management application has helped thousands of teams streamline and automate pre-opening checklists and successfully rollout initiatives to multiple locations.