

Absolute Workflow Transparency for Absolute.org's Projects



Interview with Ryan Wood, COO at [Absolute.org](#)

Ryan, tell us a little about yourself and your organization. When did you start your search for project management software?

I'm the Chief Operating Officer at Absolute.org. This is a charitable non-profit organization that sparks pivotal life change through our innovative and strategically linked school motivational and humanitarian programs. We call this "Exponential Philanthropy", making a difference globally by reaching out to youth locally and empowering them to be the solution, creating hope and change for both students and the people they help. I'm in charge of all kinds of things there, as my key duties include operational oversight, business and fundraising planning, financial management and IT solutions.

Business:

Charity.

Organization:

[Absolute.org](#) is a non-profit engaging hundreds of thousands of students through school programs and humanitarian relief work.

Challenge:

Organize collaborative management of tasks and workflow.

Solution:

Adopted Wrike as a system to track the actions and communications of the whole team.

Result:

Every team member has an instant view of the status of any project, and everyone is in the loop, so fewer tasks get lost or forgotten.

We started our search for project management software when we realized the need for a tool to collaboratively manage our tasks and workflow. We had great systems in place to collaborate on content (Confluence wiki) and sales (Salesforce CRM), but nothing to create the same organization and management of projects and tasks.

Have you tried other project management software?

I have reviewed, researched or tested many other tools, and we have tried JIRA issue tracker. It is amazing software and very powerful, too, but it was oriented to software development and a little slow to use, so it was not adopted by our largely non-technical staff. Then, during my research, I came across a blog post about "best of breed" Web 2.0 tools. This is how I arrived at Wrike.

Has Wrike transformed the way you manage your projects?

There was no formal system for organizing projects and workflow before we adopted Wrike. Projects and task would be managed ad-hoc through email or verbal communication. This, of course, provided no collaboration, tracking or insight into the organization's workflow or projects, and it resulted in numerous unfinished or lost tasks. Wrike gave us a shared system to track and manage tasks, so now our staff has a **great view of the status of any project**. Each team member can see what is happening on the projects that he or she is involved in. All the project schedules are up-to-date, as **the changes made by other team members are seen in real time**.

How did Wrike change your project collaboration?

Wrike's smart email integration allowed us to boost team communications and easily attach them to our project plans. This is vital for a big team like ours. There are about 18 people that use Wrike in our organization today, and about half of our users are usually in different locations. The importance of effective project communications for us seems very hard to overestimate. We are largely dependent on email, and

for our team, Wrike's email integration turned out to be a life-saver. Being able to **create tasks by simply forwarding a project-related email to Wrike does save a lot of time.** Discussion on a task is often done through email. But the biggest benefit is that, thanks to Wrike's Email Engine, the discussion can also be found online and is accessible from any computer in our Wrike workspace. Wrike's email notification system helps to keep everyone on the team in the loop. Therefore, **much fewer tasks are lost,** and more items are completed on time.

What do you like most of all in Wrike?

1. Email integration for task updates and commenting – the feature that we use the most.
2. **Very fast and intuitive Web interface** for creating tasks, reviewing and organizing projects.
3. Flexible folders for organizing tasks anyway you can think of.

What is the major improvement Wrike brought to your business?

I'd say it is the ability to share project-related data and have oversight of the entire team's workflow. As the most experienced user, I feel that Wrike has **helped me become 75% more organized** in managing my work and in tracking delegated tasks.

What advice would you give to those who are about to try Wrike?

Remember that no matter how slick the system is, it always means investing a little time and effort upfront to organize your work, in order to **get a huge long-term return in efficiency, productivity and stress reduction.** The system cannot do all the work for you; however, a good system will make your life a lot easier. In this regard, Wrike is the best you can get, as it makes the process quick, painless and intuitive.

Please express your impression of Wrike in 3 simple sentences.

I think Wrike has an **ideal balance for a project management system.** It is extensive enough to handle a variety of workflows and processes and actually be useful. But is also intuitive, fast and user-friendly enough to actually be used.