

Asana Project Tracker: Templates, Dashboards, and Reporting

See how Asana works for project tracking, including templates, milestones, dashboards, timelines, automation, and plan limits.

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TL;DR Asana shifts from task tracking to project tracking the moment a body of work needs a timeline, owners, milestones, and a stakeholder report. The platform handles all four reasonably well: Timeline (Gantt) on Starter and above, Portfolios on Advanced, status updates on every paid tier, and dashboards that roll up by status, owner, or custom field. Where Asana stalls is portfolio-grade governance: cross-portfolio dependencies, formal stage gates, and Earned Value Management belong in a dedicated PPM suite. This page covers how Asana tracks projects, what templates speed up setup, where dependencies and dashboards earn their keep, and where alternatives win. Pricing and tier information verified against Asana's published pages on May 20, 2026.

How Asana Tracks Projects

A project in Asana is a container for tasks with shared views, fields, members, and a status. Status updates, milestones, and owners turn a task list into a project. Portfolios then aggregate projects for executive views.

Three layers matter: project, portfolio, and goal. Most teams start with one project per body of work; portfolios appear when there are more than five active projects to track in parallel; goals connect work to outcomes.

- **Project status** — On track, At risk, Off track, On hold, Complete — set weekly by the owner
- **Project milestones** — special tasks that show as diamonds on Timeline and roll up to dashboards
- **Project members and permissions** — comment-only, edit, project admin; granular per project
- **Views** — list, board, calendar, timeline, dashboard; each view is a different lens on the same data
- **Portfolios** — Advanced plan only; one row per project with status, progress, owner, and custom fields

The shift from task to project tracking shows up the first time a stakeholder asks "is this on track?" and the answer needs to combine schedule, scope, and resource signals.

A project is a container with status and milestones. Portfolios aggregate them; goals connect them to outcomes.

Project Tracker Templates and Setup

Asana ships dozens of project templates: campaign brief, product launch, employee onboarding, event planning, IT request, bug triage. Templates ship with pre-built sections, custom fields, and rules — often 60 to 80 percent of the setup work.

Use a template as a starting point, then strip half of it. Templates ship with more fields than most teams need; the editing pass is where field hygiene happens.

- **Best-fit templates:** Marketing Campaign, Product Launch, Editorial Calendar, Client Onboarding, Bug Tracker
- **Custom templates:** save any project as a template, including rules and custom fields; available on Starter and above
- **Intake and request workflows:** pair a project with a Form so external requests land as tasks with required fields populated
- **Sections vs columns:** list view uses sections, board view uses columns — they are the same data structure
- **Owner before invite:** assign a project owner before inviting the team; ownerless projects drift fastest

Field hygiene during setup matters more than feature toggles. Five custom fields all team members will use beats fifteen that no one updates.

Start from a template, strip it back, assign an owner before inviting the team. Five used fields beat fifteen ignored ones.

Timelines, Dependencies, and Deadlines

Timeline (Asana's Gantt view) is available on Starter and above. It supports dependencies, drag-to-reschedule, and critical-path-style visibility. Compared to MS Project or Smartsheet, it is lighter; compared to Trello, it is a clear upgrade.

The dependency model is task-to-task: Task B is blocked by Task A. When Task A's due date moves, Task B can shift automatically (with a setting) or stay put while the badge flags a conflict. Either choice has merit; teams should decide upfront.

- **Date ranges** — start and due dates on Starter and above; without start dates, Timeline collapses to a stripe
- **Dependency tracking** — finish-to-start only; no start-to-start or finish-to-finish edges
- **Slippage signals** — overdue badge, status downgrade prompt, dependency conflict warning
- **Calendar view** — useful for content calendars and personal planning; less useful for project schedules
- **Gantt-style export** — PDF and image export work; structured CSV export keeps dependencies but not visual layout

Asana's scheduling depth is "good enough" for projects up to 12 weeks with under 200 tasks. Beyond that, Smartsheet, MS Project, or a dedicated PPM tool offer more.

Timeline handles 12-week projects with under 200 tasks comfortably. Past that, look at Smartsheet or MS Project.

Dashboards and Stakeholder Reporting

Project dashboards in Asana mix six to ten chart cards with status update text. The combination is enough for executives, clients, and team leads — not enough for analysts who want pivot tables.

The status update is underrated. It is the part of Asana most likely to be read by people who never log in: a one-paragraph narrative plus a link to the live dashboard.

- **Weekly status** — On track / At risk / Off track plus 3-5 lines of narrative; pushed to project members and followers
- **Risk and blocker cards** — count of overdue tasks, count of blocked tasks, count of tasks without owners
- **Goal rollup** — link projects to a parent goal so progress appears on the Goals dashboard
- **Executive view** — Portfolio dashboard with one row per project, status colour, and progress bar
- **Client report** — share a read-only project link or export the status update as PDF

Set status update cadence at project creation. Bi-weekly is the median; weekly is common in agencies; monthly works for slow-moving programmes.

A weekly status update plus six dashboard cards covers most stakeholder reporting. Anything more belongs in a BI tool.

Automation and Integration Options

Project-level automations cover status reminders, milestone celebrations, and cross-team handoffs. Integrations turn Asana into the project hub of a wider stack — usually Slack/Teams for chat, Drive/Box for files, and Salesforce or HubSpot for revenue.

The most useful project-level automations are not the impressive ones. Reminders, escalations, and handoff notifications quietly remove half the manual chasing in a project manager's week.

- **Status reminders** — every Friday, ping the project owner to file the weekly status update
- **Milestone handoffs** — when a milestone completes, notify the next-phase owner and add a kickoff task
- **Cross-team automation** — when section moves to "Ready for Design", create a task in the Design team's queue
- **Calendar integrations** — push milestones to a shared team calendar so non-Asana stakeholders see dates
- **Doc and file integrations** — Drive, Box, Dropbox; embed the brief or spec directly in

the project description

- **Workflow handoffs** — use rules plus multi-homing to push a task from project A to project B with full history intact

Document automations as you create them. A rule named "Move to QA when status = Ready" is interpretable two years later; a rule named "Rule 17" is not.

Use rules for reminders and handoffs. Name them descriptively; you will thank yourself in 18 months.

When Asana Is Not Enough

Asana hits a ceiling for portfolio-grade governance, formal stage gates, resource-constrained scheduling, and dependency graphs across hundreds of projects. Engineering and PMO-heavy orgs often need a different primary tool.

Recognise the failure mode early. Workarounds in Asana — manual portfolio fields, external spreadsheets, third-party reporting connectors — work for a while, then quietly consume project managers' weeks.

- **PPM gaps:** no Earned Value Management, no formal stage gates, no resource-constrained scheduling — look at Planview, Smartsheet, or MS Project for the Web
- **Engineering depth:** no story points as a first-class field, no native burndown — use Jira, Linear, or GitHub Projects
- **Complex portfolios:** Portfolios cap at a reasonable size, but cross-portfolio dependencies don't exist — dedicated PPM wins
- **BI reporting:** Asana export to Tableau, Looker, Power BI via API or Fivetran when dashboards aren't enough
- **Compliance-heavy industries:** HIPAA only on Enterprise+; FedRAMP not currently supported — check before scoping

For most mid-size operations and marketing organisations, Asana is the correct ceiling. The cases above are real, but they are not the modal team.

Hit the ceiling? Look at Smartsheet/Planview for PPM, Jira/Linear for engineering, and BI tools for analyst-grade reporting.

FAQ

Is Asana good for project management?

Yes, for operations, marketing, agency, and cross-functional teams up to a few hundred people. It is weaker for formal PPM with stage gates, Earned Value Management, or resource-constrained scheduling. Engineering-led organisations also tend to outgrow it for sprint-based delivery.

Does Asana have a Gantt chart?

Yes, called Timeline, available on the Starter plan and above. It supports finish-to-start dependencies, drag-to-reschedule, and milestone diamonds. It is lighter than Microsoft Project

or Smartsheet on resource levelling and critical path features.

What is a project portfolio in Asana?

A Portfolio is a top-level view that lists multiple projects with status, owner, progress, and custom fields. Portfolios are available on the Advanced plan and above and are how leaders see status across an entire program without opening each project.

How do I report project status to stakeholders?

Use the weekly status update on the project: pick On track / At risk / Off track, add a short narrative, and Asana notifies project followers automatically. Combine with a dashboard for charts and a Portfolio for cross-project rollups.

Can I import a Microsoft Project file into Asana?

Not natively. The realistic path is CSV import or a third-party migration service. Tasks, due dates, and assignees usually transfer; dependencies, baselines, and resource assignments rarely survive cleanly.

How many projects can I have on the free plan?

Unlimited, up to the 10-user seat limit and the soft performance ceiling. The Personal plan is rarely the bottleneck for project count; it is the missing features — Timeline, dashboards, Workload, Portfolios — that push teams to upgrade.

Full article: <https://asanatracker.com/asana-project-tracker>

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