

# Asana Task Management Tracker for Teams

Evaluate Asana for task management, including views, custom fields, templates, automation, collaboration, reports, and limits.

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**TL;DR** For teams choosing whether Asana can replace a standalone task app, the answer depends on team size and workflow complexity. Asana wins on shared context, hand-offs, and reporting across people; loses to lightweight tools like Todoist, Things, or Notion on speed of capture and personal planning. The platform structures tasks into projects with sections, custom fields, dependencies, templates, and rules — enough to model most non-engineering team workflows. This page covers the structure Asana imposes, the custom fields and templates that make repetitive work fast, collaboration inside tasks, automation, reporting, and the alternatives that beat Asana on specific axes. Feature availability verified against Asana's published pages on May 20, 2026.

## Task Management Structure in Asana

**Asana organises work into tasks, subtasks, sections within a project, and projects within a team. Sections group related tasks; subtasks nest one level below; custom fields standardise the data attached to each task.**

The structure looks rigid on day one and proves flexible after a month. Two patterns dominate: list-shaped projects (sections like Backlog, In Progress, Done) and board-shaped projects (same labels, columns instead of rows).

- **Tasks** — the atom; one owner, one due date, custom fields, comments
- **Subtasks** — single level of nesting; can be promoted to full tasks if scope grows
- **Sections** — group related tasks; render as headers in list view or columns in board view
- **Custom fields** — the most powerful structural feature; turn tasks into structured records
- **Views** — list, board, calendar, timeline, dashboard; choose based on how the team thinks

The choice between list and board view is more about cognitive fit than feature parity. Operations and writing teams gravitate to list; ops with stage-based handoffs prefer board.

*Tasks, subtasks, sections, projects, teams. Pick list or board view based on how the team thinks, not on feature counts.*

## Custom Fields, Templates, and Intake

**Custom fields turn tasks into records: priority, type, customer, stage, effort. Templates apply pre-built field sets to new projects. Forms collect external requests with required fields populated upfront.**

Get the field architecture right early. Adding a custom field later is easy; removing one in active use across hundreds of tasks is painful.

- **High-value fields:** Priority (single-select), Type (single-select), Effort (number), Stage (single-select), Customer (text or dropdown)
- **Field types:** single-select, multi-select, number, date, text, formula (Advanced), people
- **Templates:** ship with fields, sections, and rules; cloning a project template applies all three
- **Form intake:** pair a Form with a project so client/internal requests land as tasks with required fields filled
- **Form branching:** ask different follow-up questions based on previous answers; Advanced plan only

Five to seven fields per project is a soft ceiling. Past that, custom field hygiene falls and dashboards get cluttered.

*Five to seven custom fields per project. Templates and Forms scale the architecture across teams.*

## Collaboration Inside Tasks

**Each task carries a comment thread, file attachments, mentions, approval workflow, and a notification model. The combination makes tasks the unit of discussion as well as the unit of work.**

The notification model is the most tunable part of Asana. Default settings overwhelm new users; the team that turns off email notifications and keeps inbox/Slack alerts retains users much better.

- **Comments and mentions** — @-mention a person, team, or task; threaded discussion at the task level
- **Files and proofing** — attachments inherit Drive/Box permissions; image annotation supported on images
- **Approval task type** — a task that returns Approved/Rejected/Changes Requested rather than Done
- **Notification model** — Inbox (in-app), email, Slack, Teams; configurable per user
- **Notification hygiene** — turn off email by default, keep Inbox; the single highest-impact tweak

Approvals are underused. For sign-offs (creative reviews, contract approvals, expense decisions), the Approval task type beats a generic "needs review" status.

*Comments, mentions, approvals, notifications. Default email notifications off; the user-retention effect is huge.*

## Automation for Repetitive Task Work

**Rules cover the routine: status changes, assignments, due-date reminders, section moves, recurring tasks. Asana's automation usage limits scale with plan tier and are the most under-discussed part of pricing.**

The first automation a team builds is almost always wrong. Plan to revisit after week two with concrete usage data.

- **Common rules:** when section = Ready for review, assign to QA; when status = Done, archive
- **Recurring tasks:** daily, weekly, monthly, custom; useful for routine checks and reports
- **Reminders:** 24 hours before due date, comment with checklist; reduces missed deadlines
- **Plan limits:** Personal has no rules; Starter caps at 250 runs/month/project; Advanced lifts to 25,000 actions/month/project
- **Audit cadence:** quarterly; stale rules are the leading cause of "Asana feels noisy" complaints

Document automations as you create them — even a one-line note in the rule name pays dividends 18 months later.

*Start with reminders and section moves. Check plan limits, audit rules quarterly, name them descriptively.*

## Reporting and Productivity Signals

**Dashboards show open work, overdue tasks, owner load, and custom-field rollups. The cards that mean something for productivity are different from the ones managers tend to chase first.**

Useful productivity signals are about flow, not volume. The cards listed below tell the truth; "tasks completed per person" mostly lies.

- **Useful:** tasks aging in a stage, blocked tasks count, overdue count, status change velocity
- **Useful:** workload trend per person, time tracked vs estimated variance (Advanced)
- **Noisy:** raw task completion count (gameable via subtasks)
- **Noisy:** comment count (more comments often means more confusion, not engagement)
- **Inputs to reporting:** time tracking, workload, custom field rollups, status updates

If a metric can be gamed in a 30-second meeting, it shouldn't drive performance conversations.

Track aging, blockers, variance, and status velocity. Skip raw task completion — it gamifies into noise.

## Asana Task Management Alternatives

**Three alternatives consistently win against Asana for specific task-management profiles: Todoist for solo speed, Notion for combined docs and tasks, and Linear for engineering. ClickUp competes on price and breadth.**

Match the alternative to the dominant use case. Asana is the safe default for mixed teams; the alternatives win on a single axis.

Alternative	Wins on	Best for	Pricing band
Todoist	Personal capture speed	Solo and 2-4 person teams	Low
Notion	Docs + tasks in one tool	Knowledge-heavy teams	Low / Mid
Linear	Engineering speed and Git-native	Software teams under 200	Mid
ClickUp	Feature breadth at lower per-seat price	Cost-sensitive ops teams	Low / Mid
monday.com	Spreadsheet feel and automations	Operations teams	Mid
Trello	Simplicity, single board	Tiny teams or single processes	Free / Low

- If migration cost is high and the current tool works for 80 percent of cases, don't switch
- If switching, pilot the alternative on one real project for two weeks before committing the org
- Pricing checks: list price per seat × team size × 12, then compare against migration time and adoption friction

The most overlooked factor in switching is migration friction. The second-most overlooked is muscle-memory loss; expect a four-to-six-week productivity dip.

*Todoist for solo, Notion for docs+tasks, Linear for engineering, ClickUp for budget. Asana for mixed mid-size teams.*

## FAQ

### How many custom fields can I add per project in Asana?

Asana doesn't enforce a low hard cap, but five to seven custom fields per project is a comfortable working ceiling. Beyond that, list view becomes hard to scan, mobile editing slows, and field hygiene drops as team members stop maintaining the extras.

### Can I convert subtasks into full tasks?

Yes. Promote a subtask to a top-level task with a single menu option; the comment thread, attachments, and custom field values transfer. Subtasks are useful for nested detail but become hard to track when they hold work that needs to appear in dashboards.

### **Does Asana support recurring tasks?**

Yes, with daily, weekly, monthly, periodically, and custom recurrence patterns. The next instance is created when the current one is marked complete. Recurring tasks work with rules, so a routine handoff or report can be fully automated within plan limits.

### **What is an approval task in Asana?**

A task type that asks the assignee to choose Approved, Rejected, or Changes Requested instead of marking it Done. Useful for creative reviews, contract sign-offs, and expense approvals where the outcome matters more than completion alone.

### **How does Asana compare to Notion for task management?**

Notion is stronger when tasks live alongside documents and wikis; Asana is stronger when dashboards, workload, dependencies, and timeline matter. Teams that primarily live in docs tend to pick Notion; teams that primarily live in projects tend to pick Asana.

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