



Software Meets Soft Skills:

5 Top-Rated PM Tools With Features That Support Emotional Intelligence



Asana



Jira



Notion



Smartsheet



Trello

Emotional intelligence is a hidden driver of project success

In our recent study*, project managers identified the emotional intelligence (EI) traits that most positively impact their work and the ones they struggle with most. Problem-solving, decision-making, and team management are the most sought-after traits, but they are also the hardest to consistently apply under pressure.

Software can help bridge the gap.

Project management (PM) tools can support EI behaviors through specific features, such as:

- **Problem-solving** → Root cause analysis tools
- **Decision-making** → Scenario planning, forecasting, and real-time dashboards
- **Team management** → Workload visibility and transparency

This guide helps you choose a project management tool that supports emotional intelligence as much as productivity.

What you'll learn from this guide

We've analyzed five top-rated project management tools—listed alphabetically—through an emotional intelligence-first lens. Each tool helps teams improve transparency, set clear expectations, and build fairer dynamics without losing productivity.

Here's what you get:

- **Emotional intelligence traits explained:** Learn how eight key EI traits, such as decision-making, balance, and communication, translate into practical software features.
- **Tool-by-tool insights:** See how each platform applies EI in everyday workflows through visibility, transparency, and reflection features.
- **Actionable recommendations:** Get five practical ways to strengthen EI in your team using the tools you already have.
- **Questions to ask vendors:** Use a ready-to-ask checklist to evaluate whether a PM tool aligns with your team's EI goals.

By the end of this guide, you'll know which project management software best fits your team's business and cultural needs and how to apply emotional intelligence to every project you lead.

8 emotional intelligence traits that drive better project management outcomes

El trait	Supporting PM feature	How it helps
Problem-solving	Root cause analysis	Pinpoints underlying issues to drive lasting solutions.
Decision-making	Forecasting	Uses data trends to guide smarter, faster decisions.
Team management	Workload visibility	Balances workloads and prevents burnout.
Risk management	Risk registers	Flags potential issues early for proactive action.
Change management	Change request workflow	Tracks approvals and impacts to keep teams aligned.
Conflict resolution	Decision logs	Records key choices to avoid confusion or blame.
Relationship management	Stakeholder mapping	Clarifies roles and priorities to strengthen trust.
Communication of needs and expectations	Project briefs and shared documents	Keeps everyone informed and aligned on goals.



Project management tools that strengthen emotional intelligence

Find out which tools support key EI traits and the features that make it possible.



Asana helps you organize tasks, set goals, and track progress across projects. You can build workflows with boards, lists, and timelines, assign responsibilities, and map dependencies to keep everyone aligned. It helps you plan projects, manage workloads, and connect daily tasks to broader business goals. You can also integrate it with tools you already use for communication or analytics.

What features does Asana have that map to EI traits?

Asana helps you bring emotional intelligence into your daily work through reflection, clarity, and fairness. Use progress updates to spot challenges and learn from them. Plan smarter with features that show task links and outcomes. Track workloads to maintain balance, and use approvals to keep decisions fair. Shared project briefs and documents help everyone stay informed and aligned.

Who is this best fit for? Mid- and large-sized teams managing cross-functional projects, especially marketing, operations, and product teams that need visibility, accountability, and balanced workloads.

Pricing:

Starting price: \$10.99 per user, per month (billed annually)

Free plan available



"We found Asana's flexibility and modern design impressive, with features like timeline view and robust integrations enhancing productivity."

— Aaron E., Management Consulting

How Asana features support emotional intelligence

El trait	How Asana supports it
Problem-solving	Helps you identify blockers and analyze what caused them using reflection templates and status updates.
Decision-making	Supports thoughtful decisions through Timelines and Goals that show dependencies and outcomes, with space to record rationale.
Team management	Gives visibility into team workloads so you can balance tasks, avoid burnout, and manage capacity fairly.
Risk management	Lets you log and score risks in real time using templates and custom fields, helping you act before issues escalate.
Change management	Supports change requests with approval workflows and clear impact notes, keeping everyone informed and aligned.
Conflict resolution	Preserves approval histories and task comments so decisions stay transparent and easy to revisit.
Relationship management	Helps you track stakeholder updates and engagement through custom fields, improving trust and communication.
Communication of needs and expectations	Promotes clear communication with shared briefs, documents, and task details that define goals and ownership.



Jira helps you plan, track, and manage work across projects of any size. You can create tasks, map dependencies, and visualize progress through Scrum or Kanban boards. Advanced Roadmaps let you model different scenarios and adjust timelines before committing to changes. You can also connect Jira with Confluence for documentation and decision tracking, or use marketplace apps to extend workflows.

What features does Jira have that map to EI traits?

Jira helps you apply emotional intelligence by encouraging learning, balance, and clear communication. Review completed work to understand what caused delays or issues. Plan better decisions with tools that let you test timelines before making changes. Track workloads and risks to stay proactive. Approval steps keep changes transparent, while shared notes and pages ensure everyone understands the plan.

Who is this best fit for? Agile, IT, and engineering teams that handle complex workflows, dependencies, and continuous releases with a need for structured tracking and transparency.

Pricing:

Starting price: \$7.53 per user, per month for 300 users (billed monthly)
Free plan available



"You can tweak it to fit your team perfectly, and it plays nice with other Atlassian tools like Confluence. Plus, the reports and dashboards give you a clear picture of how things are going."

— Shabana A., Digital Marketing Manager

How Jira features support emotional intelligence

El trait	How Jira supports it
Problem-solving	Helps you record and review issues to understand what caused them, using templates or linked Confluence pages for reflection.
Decision-making	Supports better decisions with Advanced Roadmaps that test scenarios and store your reasoning in comments or logs.
Team management	Shows real-time workloads through Scrum and Kanban boards so you can manage capacity fairly and avoid burnout.
Risk management	Lets you create and track risks as custom issues, helping you monitor threats and plan mitigation steps early.
Change management	Manages changes with approval workflows and risk checks in Service Management, keeping actions transparent.
Conflict resolution	Maintains comment histories and decision logs so everyone can see how issues were resolved.
Relationship management	Helps you track stakeholders and communication through linked issues and custom fields.
Communication of needs and expectations	Keeps teams aligned with shared briefs, documents, and tagged comments for clarity.



Notion lets you organize projects, take notes, and manage tasks in one flexible workspace. You can create pages, databases, and templates for anything—from team wikis to project timelines. Its drag-and-drop interface makes it easy to structure information, link related work, and collaborate with your team in real time.

What features does Notion have that map to EI traits?

Notion helps you build emotional intelligence through reflection and clear communication. You can look back at projects to see what went well and what needs improvement. Track key decisions, workloads, and risks using simple templates. Keep changes visible with shared pages and approval trackers. Use project briefs and stakeholder maps to make goals and roles clear for everyone.

Who is this best fit for? Agile, IT, and engineering teams that handle complex workflows, dependencies, and continuous releases with a need for structured tracking and transparency.

Pricing:

Starting price: \$10 per user, per month (billed annually)

Free plan available



“Working with Notion has been great, I love the custom features, I love that we can use it to manage so many things, goal tracking, project management, HR handbooks, shared calendars, there's so many benefits.”

— Jisselle B., Managing Director

How Notion features support emotional intelligence

EI trait	How Notion supports it
Problem-solving	Helps you reflect on challenges using decision journals and guided templates for learning and improvement.
Decision-making	Supports structured decisions with timelines, dependencies, and pages where you can record your reasoning.
Team management	Lets you track workloads through boards and databases so you can see capacity and assign work fairly.
Risk management	Helps you log and score risks using templates and custom fields for tracking and mitigation.
Change management	Manages change requests through approval pages and workflows that keep updates clear and transparent.
Conflict resolution	Preserves comment histories and decision records so your team can revisit discussions when needed.
Relationship management	Helps you map and track stakeholders through templates and custom databases to improve engagement.
Communication of needs and expectations	Promotes clarity with shared briefs, wikis, and documents where everyone can collaborate in real time.



Smartsheet helps you manage projects, track progress, and automate workflows in one place. You can build sheets, dashboards, and forms to organize data, assign work, and monitor timelines. Features like Gantt charts, workload heatmaps, and automated approvals help you plan and execute projects efficiently while keeping everyone informed.

What features does Smartsheet have that map to EI traits?

Smartsheet helps you practice emotional intelligence through awareness, balance, and clear communication. Use templates and dashboards to review what worked and what didn't after each project. Plan smarter with charts that show how changes affect your timeline. Check workload heatmaps to see who might be overloaded and adjust before burnout happens. Automated approvals keep decisions fair, while shared sheets make sure everyone stays informed and aligned.

Who is this best fit for? Mid- to enterprise-level organizations running large, data-heavy projects, especially in construction, finance, and operations, where reporting and approval workflows are critical.

Pricing:

Starting price: \$9 per user, per month (billed annually)

30 days free trial available



"We like that we have a central place for tasks/projects, can easily assign them across our team, and can go back and see how those tasks/projects went."

— Tyler M., Manager

How Smartsheet features support emotional intelligence

El trait	How Smartsheet supports it
Problem-solving	Helps you review issues and lessons learned using templates, forms, and dashboards for reflection.
Decision-making	Supports better decisions with Gantt charts, portfolio dashboards, and templates for recording choices.
Team management	Shows workloads through heatmaps and dashboards so you can manage balance and prevent burnout.
Risk management	Lets you track and score risks using templates and custom fields for mitigation planning.
Change management	Manages change through automated approvals and forms that capture impact and decisions.
Conflict resolution	Keeps row history and comments to document how issues were discussed and resolved.
Relationship management	Helps you track stakeholders and engagement through registers, rollups, and dashboards.
Communication of needs and expectations	Keeps everyone aligned with shared briefs, sheets, and dashboards for clear communication.



Trello helps you organize projects using visual boards, lists, and cards. You can assign tasks, set deadlines, and track progress at a glance. Features like timelines, dashboards, and automations help you plan work, follow updates, and keep projects on schedule.

What features does Trello have that map to EI traits?

Trello helps you practice emotional intelligence through visibility and open communication. Use cards and checklists to review what went well and where things got stuck. Plan decisions with timelines and document them in card comments. Track workloads and risks to stay proactive and balanced. Automations and approvals keep everyone on the same page, while shared boards make goals and responsibilities clear for your team.

Who is this best fit for? Small and growing teams that need a simple, visual way to organize tasks, track progress, and improve team communication without heavy setup.

Pricing:

Starting price: \$5 per user, per month (billed annually)

Free plan available



"With its versatility and user-friendliness, the platform has become an indispensable tool that continues to help me stay organized, collaborate with others, and accomplish my objectives more efficiently."

— Angel D., Media Producer

How Trello features support emotional intelligence

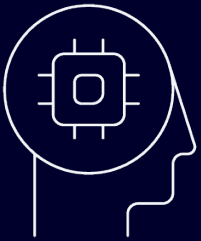
El trait	How Trello supports it
Problem solving	Helps you reflect on challenges using cards, checklists, and comments to capture lessons learned.
Decision making	Supports decision-making with timeline views and card comments where you can record context and outcomes.
Team management	Shows workloads by member through dashboards and boards, helping you balance tasks fairly.
Risk management	Lets you track risks using labels, checklists, and add-ons for scoring or sentiment tracking.
Change management	Manages change with automations, checklists, and comments that record approvals and impact.
Conflict resolution	Keeps comment histories and activity logs that make decision trails transparent.
Relationship management	Helps you assign members, add labels, and track engagement using Power-Ups or checklists.
Communication of needs and expectations	Supports clarity with shared cards, attachments, and checklists that outline goals and deliverables.

Top-rated PM tools:

Asana vs. Jira vs. Notion vs. Smartsheet vs. Trello

	Overall rating	No. of reviews	Starting price	Value-for-money rating	Ease of use rating
 Asana	4.5/5	13,440	\$10.99 /user/month	4.4/5	4.4/5
 Jira	4.4/5	15,168	\$7.53 /user/month	4.3/5	4.1/5
 Notion	4.7/5	2,621	\$10 /user/month	4.5/5	4.3/5
 Smartsheet	4.5/5	3,442	\$9 /user/month	4.4/5	4.3/5
 Trello	4.5/5	23,388	\$5 /user/month	4.5/5	4.5/5

Note: Ratings, reviews, pricing, and features analyzed as of October 2025.



Putting emotional intelligence into action

Five ways to use your project management tools to build more thoughtful, balanced teams.

Key Takeaways

Emotional intelligence in project management isn't a one-time skill—it's a daily habit shaped by how your team communicates, plans, and reflects. The right tools can strengthen those habits. Here are five ways to put emotional intelligence into action.

1. Choose tools that make emotions visible

Pick platforms that reveal how your team is really doing, not just what they're delivering. Features like workload dashboards, blockers, and progress updates help you identify stress points and redistribute tasks before burnout hits. Visibility creates empathy—and empathy builds trust.

2. Build reflection into your workflow

Encourage teams to pause and learn, not just execute. Use post-project templates or weekly updates to discuss what went well and what didn't. Reflection helps teams turn challenges into insights, making future decisions more grounded and collaborative.

3. Automate for fairness, not control

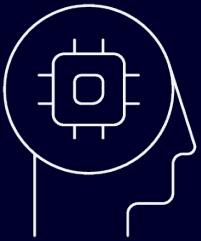
Use automation to create balance, not micromanagement. Set rules for workload distribution, approval timelines, and task assignments that promote consistency and fairness. The goal is to make accountability clear while keeping trust intact.

4. Keep communication simple and open

Replace scattered chats and vague updates with shared briefs, comments, and project documents. Clear communication sets expectations, reduces friction, and keeps everyone working toward the same goal. Transparency is the foundation of emotionally intelligent teamwork.

5. Revisit your setup regularly

As your team grows, its emotional and operational needs change. Reevaluate your workflows, dashboards, and templates every few months. Continuous fine-tuning ensures your tools keep supporting—not stifling—the way your team connects and performs.



Questions to ask vendors

Ask the right questions to find tools
that truly support your EI goals.

Questions to ask vendors

Evaluate how each tool helps build emotional intelligence across your team. Use these questions to find platforms that encourage reflection, balance, and transparency in daily work.

How does your tool promote team reflection and learning?

Look for built-in features that help teams pause and assess—such as feedback loops, post-project templates, or prompts for identifying blockers. Tools that encourage regular reflection help teams grow from experience instead of repeating the same mistakes.

What visibility does the tool provide into workload and team well-being?

Ask how the platform surfaces capacity, balance, or burnout risks. Dashboards showing real-time workloads, task ownership, or project bottlenecks give managers the information they need to redistribute work fairly and maintain healthy performance.

How does your platform support transparency in decision-making and communication?

Find out whether the tool tracks who made which decision and why, and how that information is shared. Features like decision logs, approval trails, and shared project briefs promote openness—reducing confusion and helping teams work with trust and accountability.

Methodology

To be considered for this list, products had to:

Earn top scores in a proprietary methodology combining user ratings with popularity. We mapped the EI traits identified in our survey* to PM software features that support those behaviors. The products were chosen based on the presence of these features, and relevance to our evaluation criteria.

Have at least 20 unique product reviews published on Software Advice within the past two years, with an average rating of 4.0 or higher.

Meet our market definition for project management software: "Project Management software automates task assignment, resource allocation, scheduling and milestone tracking for all phases of a project. Project Management tools and systems may take one of several approaches: collaborative, when multiple people work on a project; top-down, when one person works on a project at a time; or integrated, when multiple aspects of the organization are involved."

For details about each product's features, we referenced to publicly available sources, primarily vendor websites, as of October 2025. In some cases, vendors supply us with information, which our research team then validates via public sources.

Product ratings are based on an analysis of our verified user reviews as of October 2025. Our independent and objective research is based on market demand signals along with analysis of our proprietary data, including product information.

Review excerpts are passages extracted from longer reviews written by verified reviewers. We obtain these excerpts by applying an algorithm that considers factors including, but not limited to, length, sentiment, topic coverage, and thematic relevance. Excerpts represent user opinions and do not represent the views of, nor constitute, an endorsement by Software Advice or its affiliates. Excerpts are trimmed for brevity.

*2024 Impactful Project Management Tools Survey was conducted online in May 2024 among 2,500 respondents in the U.S. (n=300), Canada (n=200), Brazil (n=200), Mexico (n=200), the U.K. (n=200), France (n=200), Italy (n=200), Germany (n=200), Spain (n=200), Australia (n=200), India (n=200), and Japan (n=200). The goal of the study was to understand the leadership and emotional intelligence skills needed for PMs to successfully lead teams and projects leveraging/incorporating AI. Respondents were screened to be project management professionals at organizations of all sizes. Their organization must currently use project management software.



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