



# Choosing a SaaS Management Platform

5 Questions Every Modern  
Enterprise IT Leader  
Should Ask





# You've got a SaaS portfolio that's evolving and growing. Shadow IT is lurking in the hidden corners of your business. Why is it important to solve now?

Today, there's an enterprise SaaS application for virtually every business need, from CRM to collaboration. This is true across all industries: tech, healthcare, food and agriculture, transportation—you name it.

- An average of 129 applications are in use for every company, and that only takes into account apps that use [Okta's](#) single sign-on.
- [Netskope](#) reports the actual number to be 1,071 cloud services per company.

The growth of SaaS is a positive for businesses. Employees have options for getting work done no matter where they are. The trend shows us that the forward-thinking, modern CIOs want business units to be agile: a key component of today's digital-forward company. SaaS makes work better and easier.

**You need to make strategic, informed decisions about which apps your employees are using daily, and not by making your best guess. Enterprise SaaS Management brings you into a world where everyone's lives are easier: IT, finance, PMO. Visibility is part of the package, IT has data at their fingertips to prepare for renewals and identifying what helps employees be productive is easy.**





## Question 1: What are the benefits of a SaaS Management Platform?

Plenty of companies are still relying on their IT team to stay on top of a massive spreadsheet that keeps record of hundreds of SaaS applications – so many that despite there being a list, no one really knows exactly what's in the portfolio. Not to mention, you don't know whether your apps are enterprise grade, if confidential data is being leaked, when renewals are happening or how much money you're spending.

If you don't get ahead of SaaS management, your business's portfolio will balloon. Think about a day in the life of your IT manager who's trying to keep up: there's SaaS spend outside of IT, IT can't identify what's out there, there's no solution for management and suddenly there are 100+ new unapproved systems. How does that affect budgeting? Compliance? Security?

Nearly every business out there, small and large, regardless of vertical, considers digital transformation and the employee experience strategic priorities. You need to understand SaaS app adoption, engagement and ROI data to determine whether your initiatives are successful. Spreadsheets won't tell you this story, but an enterprise SaaS Management Platform will.

Getting a handle on your SaaS applications saves your team time and your company money. No more massive spreadsheets to exhaust you, no more fire drill renewals that upend your budget.



### When you're evaluating technology solutions, ask your potential vendors:

#### **Does this SaaS Management Platform eliminate my SaaS spreadsheet and the associated maintenance?**

Eliminating a spreadsheet can save your team 10+ hours per week on tedious management tasks. Look for a software solution that provides visibility into all applications, contract details and spend, license tiers, renewal dates, user engagement data and more.

#### **Does this help me get visibility into shadow IT and the applications purchased by individuals or teams?**

A true SaaS Management Platform must connect seamlessly with your diverse array of internal systems, from invoicing to the CASB, to uncover the full picture you're looking for. A sole connection to your SSO provider isn't enough.





## Question 2: What applications do our employees really want to use?

When IT teams have resigned themselves to a spreadsheet, one of the side effects is lack of insight into what employees actually want. When you know the applications your employees are using and how often, you have a better understanding of how team members work best. After all, employee choice is a key driver of employee happiness and retention.

When steering blind using your giant spreadsheet, you're making impactful strategic decisions on behalf of a thousand people – maybe 20,000, depending on the size of your company. The point is, without the ability to correlate engagement data points, you're using limited information to choose company SaaS apps that empower employees.

Now, if you've got rich, informed data that tells you adoption rates, use cases and details on feature sets and engagement, you can create meaningful internal benchmarks to determine what apps are effective and enjoyable for employees to use. It becomes easy to uncover what applications users rely on frequently, heavily used features, trends and patterns across different teams and more.

Plus, when you're analyzing multiple data points, use cases, functionality, adoption and risks, you can stack these considerations up RFP-style and decide where your budget should be going in terms of SaaS applications. An enterprise SaaS Management Platform makes this process easy and quick with legitimate accurate data, true usage, and no general high-level numbers.



### When you're evaluating technology solutions, ask your vendors:

#### **Does the SaaS Management Platform have application connectors to our top apps?**

Your solution of choice should have application connectors to your top apps, giving you the ability to identify your primary core applications such as Microsoft Office 365 or G Suite—and your primary business applications like Salesforce and ServiceNow.

#### **What employee engagement data and reporting does the SaaS Management Platform provide out of the box to help my team understand what employees are using and how?**

You need to understand who has access to what apps and precisely how those apps are being used. This information enables you to create and support a great employee experience.

#### **Does the SaaS Management Platform provide benchmarks about what other companies like mine are using?**

This is useful data that alerts you of the trending SaaS applications you should evaluate for your own stack to help your team remain competitive.





## Question 3: Do we have multiple applications that seem to serve the same purpose?

It's common to find your business is paying for multiple applications that serve the same purpose, which requires you to determine whether you need to rationalize applications or vendors.

Take collaboration as a universally applicable example. There are options spanning everything from Zoom to Slack and Microsoft Teams, plus legacy tools like Cisco Jabber, Skype and Yammer. Some are probably shelfware for your business while others are relied upon daily but might not be the best choice; a few are even being used in pilot.

Standardizing on applications, especially for use cases such as remote collaboration, can significantly reduce spend and risk simultaneously. However, it's impossible to decide what to standardize on unless you know how employees are using the apps available to them. Surveys are an option for gathering the data you need to uncover this information, but they're not an easy or accurate route. It's also worth noting you don't need to eliminate an application simply by virtue of redundancy in your portfolio. Gathering engagement data using your SaaS management tool is the key to determining whether you should make cuts.



### When you're evaluating technology solutions, ask your vendors:

**Does the software help me understand what overlapping applications exist?**

**Does it provide business insights about how different teams and locations are using SaaS applications?**

**Can it help me with business decision making, such as supplier or application rationalization?**

**Will the data allow me to operate a more informed renewal process?**



*"We had too many chat tools - messages and meetings were getting missed. Productiv insights showed us that there were good number of people who weren't letting go of Skype for Business to move to Teams. In a very fast and easy way, we got engagement reports that allowed us to focus communications on these people to get them to move over. As a result, our migration to Teams all went to plan. Productiv frees up time and provides us the analytics to move quickly and decisively."*

**Joshua Yadron**, IT Manager, Unified Communications, Equinix





## Question 4: Do we have a handle on SaaS costs and renewals?

If you're paying for SaaS apps, surely employees are using them...right? Wrong. The truth is, even if SaaS spend doesn't seem like a big problem today, if you have unchecked SaaS apps, they'll continue to snowball.

Maybe your limited visibility into the many different apps your team members are using isn't a big deal now. But if your SaaS portfolio is growing continually and shadow IT lurks behind the scenes, how will you budget for the 50-some systems that have cropped up in your environment in a year? There's no way your finance team can account for those costs. Your IT team certainly can't account for the risks.

If you're working with a smaller budget and don't have the wherewithal to buy the other tools your employees need unless you find ways to save, eliminating unnecessary SaaS apps allows you to invest in the ones team members need.

There are also secondary cost considerations. When your IT team wastes time maintaining an unpredictable spreadsheet with no useful engagement data, it's costing your business. Negotiating with vendors on renewals and investments is harder because you don't know the extent to which your business is using their solutions.

An enterprise SaaS Management Platform is an excellent way to keep track of SaaS spend. Your solution should cover apps managed by IT as well as expensed and free apps – remember, those can change in the future. Automated license reclaiming is also a helpful feature because it eliminates the need to renew licenses manually.



**97% of IT leaders see managing the cost and usage of SaaS applications as a top business priority.<sup>1</sup>**



### **When you're evaluating technology solutions, ask your vendors:**

**Does this help my team get a handle on applications expensed by individuals or teams?**

**Does the solution provide benchmarks on spend at an application and license tier level?**

**Will it help me regain control of spend by automating license reclaims?**

**Does this provide the usage data by license tier required to effectively negotiate my upcoming renewals?**

1. <https://productiv.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Pulse-SaaS-Mar-2019.pdf>





## Question 5: How do we reduce the time spent managing applications?

Think long and hard about how you'll use your SaaS Management Platform. What administrative features do you need to make IT's SaaS management objective easy? They already have so many manual tasks in their day; eliminating even one rote task such as trying to keep up with the spreadsheet would be an advantage. Automation is a key SaaS management feature: IT should be able to easily configure rules to provision, deprovision, upgrade, and downgrade licenses based on actual individual usage patterns.

Aim for a solution that addresses your security and compliance needs. It's impossible to address security without understanding the assets you have and operating a management system to keep track of it all.



### When you're evaluating technology solutions, ask your vendors:

**How easy is setup and onboarding?**

**Do you provide customer support and implementation services? Are these service components included in the pricing?**

**How do you support my security and compliance policies?**

**Is the product easy and intuitive to use for my team?**

**Will the product allow me to easily create reports to present to business stakeholders?**



*"Productiv is easy to set up, intuitive and visual, and enterprise-grade. Before, it was almost impossible to get an accurate pulse on our software landscape and adoption, but now Productiv helps us drive adoption of our top apps through feature and team-level analytics, get visibility in to all apps so we limit to only apps that employees actually use, and automate repetitive tasks like license management."*

**Mike Hamilton**, Head of IT, Databricks





# 3 key takeaways for IT leaders searching for an enterprise SaaS Management Platform

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## SaaS proliferation is real, and spreadsheets are not enough to manage it.

Today, there's a SaaS solution for virtually every business need, with an average of 1,071 cloud services per company.<sup>1</sup> The amount of SaaS applications per company is tipping into the hundreds or even thousands, and in IT it's not easy to gain any real insight into which apps are being used and how much. Spreadsheets are simply not the solution for staying ahead of renewals, and they definitely don't allow for in-depth engagement analytics.

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*“Productiv gives us a single dashboard that can be used by our global IT, Procurement and Finance teams, eliminating manual spreadsheet tracking. Productiv insights help us not only rationalize how we provision licenses, but also reveal usage trends across different job types, departments, and geographies, enabling us to improve employee collaboration. With Productiv, we've saved up to 20% of our IT team's time, allowing the team to be more strategic”*

**Ashraf Monzur**, VP Global IT, Cheetah Digital

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## Consider immediate value when it comes to choosing your solution.

The right SaaS Management Platform will deliver immediate value to your business and IT team. It should be instantly easy to know when renewals are approaching, which SaaS apps can be phased out and how to rightsize apps that aren't engaged with as much as you might think. You need more from your enterprise SaaS Management Platform than confirmation of which apps you're using; it's also about how they're being used.

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*“With Productiv, we have an unsurpassed level of control, automation, and data-driven decision making. Productiv has saved the IT team more than 10 hours per week, driven renewal savings of over 30%, and enabled a better employee experience with actionable engagement insights.”*

**Praniti Lakhwara**, CIO, Apttus

1. <https://productiv.com/wp-content/uploads/2019/03/Pulse-SaaS-Mar-2019.pdf>





## 3 key takeaways for IT leaders searching for an enterprise SaaS management solution

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**If you are on the path to becoming a modern IT leader, make sure to think strategically and account for employee engagement with SaaS apps in your decision-making process.**

There are a handful of enterprise SaaS Management Platforms on the market now, but most don't have the right feature set required for collecting true application engagement analytics. Businesses have to supplement this data with quite a bit of manual effort—56% of IT executives still rely on internal tools and manual spreadsheets to discover and manage SaaS applications.<sup>2</sup> Plus, management processes are handled on an app-by-app basis, which isn't scalable.

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*“An important focus for the modern enterprise is ensuring people are brought together to easily collaborate. Beyond just selecting the best tool for each need, engagement data is required to understand and optimize how people are working together. Productiv is the first partner to provide us with real-time application engagement insights, so we can focus on unlocking enterprise value.”*

**Paul Cheesbrough**, CTO, Fox Corporation

To learn more about how Productiv can help you manage SaaS applications and optimize employee engagement, schedule a demo at [www.productiv.com/schedule](https://www.productiv.com/schedule)



2. <https://www.netskope.com/press-releases/netskope-report-reveals-half-microsoft-office-365-usage-occurs-services-onedrive-business>