

**ACCION**

# Software, Systems & Tools

*January 2016*

Investing in individuals.  
Improving our world.



# Overview

---

- In December 2015, Venture Lab surveyed **19 early-stage fintech companies** to understand what **systems and tools they use for their operations**, including Cloud Hosting, CRM, and Project Management
  - This survey includes responses from companies around the world, including companies operating in the US, Latin America, East Africa, India, and SE Asia
- Respondents **assessed the systems they use** for different functions in order to understand which systems are working well, whether systems are providing good value for money, and what systems' particular strengths are
- The following materials provide **detail on satisfaction with systems** for each function

## Definitions and Terminology

- Customer satisfaction is based on the Net Promoter score (0-10)
  - “*Would you recommend this to a friend?*”
  - Promoters rate a system very highly – must be either a 9 or 10
  - Neutral customers rate a system 7 or 8
  - Detractors rate a system 6 or less
- Customers rated systems by their value for money on a score of 1-5
  - Excellent value for money: 5.0
  - Good value: 4.0
  - Average value: 3.0
  - Fair value: 2.0
  - Poor value: 1.0

# Systems

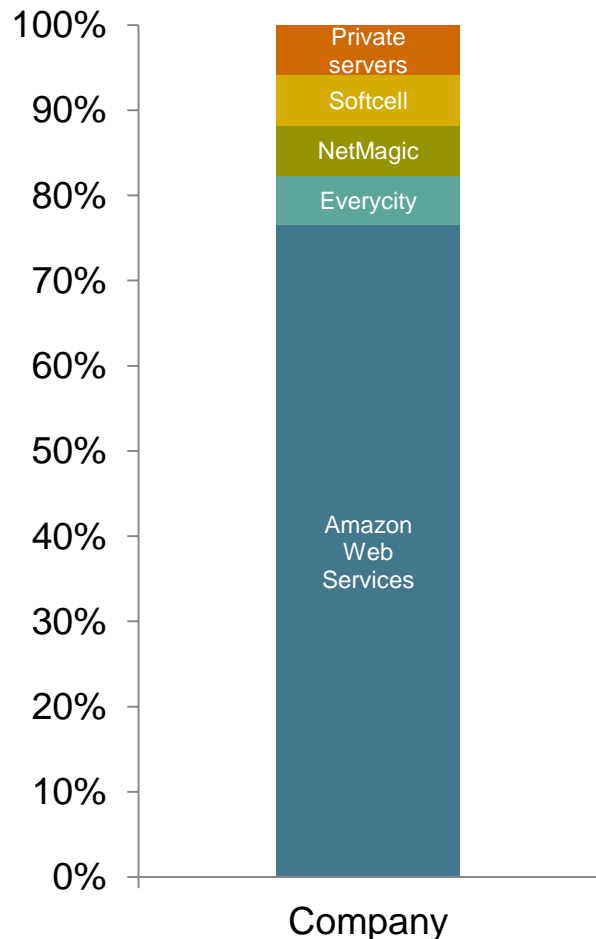
---

1. Cloud and hosting services (e.g., Amazon Web Services)
2. Customer relationship management (e.g., Salesforce)
3. Customer service (e.g., Zendesk)
4. Domain and website management
5. Human resources (including performance management)
6. Online analytics (e.g., Google Analytics)
7. Outbound marketing tools (e.g., Mailchimp for email, SMS tool, Autodialer for calls)
8. Project management (e.g., Basecamp)
9. Recruiting
10. Team communication (e.g., Slack)
11. *Other systems mentioned*

# Cloud & Hosting Services

## Most common company used is AWS

Program mentions



## AWS customers are positive about service; none have negative experiences

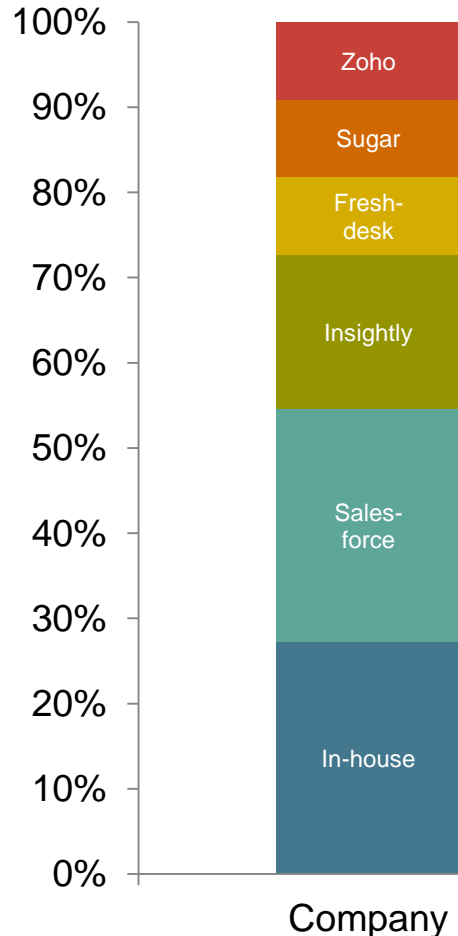
Company (# of users)	Satisfaction	Value for Money	Pros	Cons
<b>AWS (12)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>83% of users are promoters</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4.1 / 5.0</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Reliable</li> <li>Affordable</li> <li>Scalable</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>No negatives mentioned</i></li> </ul>
<b>Everycity (1)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Neutral user</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4.0 / 5.0</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-</li> </ul>
<b>NetMagic (1)*</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>User is a promoter</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4.0 / 5.0</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Locally hosted</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Quality of support</i></li> <li><i>Downtime</i></li> </ul>
<b>Softcell (1)*</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>User is a promoter</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5.0 / 5.0</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>VPS</i></li> <li><i>Good tech support</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-</li> </ul>
<b>Private / proprietary servers (1)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>User is a promoter</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4.0 / 5.0</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Time to market</i></li> <li><i>Flexibility</i></li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>Bandwidth</i></li> </ul>

\*NetMagic and Softcell are local providers in India  
Source: Systems survey (n=16)

# Customer Relationship Management

**~30% of companies build CRM programs in-house**

Program mentions



**There is a wide variety of CRM solutions**

Company (# of users)	Satisfaction	Value for Money	Pros	Cons
<b>Salesforce (3)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Two promoters</li> <li>One detractor</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3.3 / 5.0</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Flexible</li> <li>Scalable</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expensive</li> <li>Cumbersome</li> </ul>
<b>Insightly (1)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Neutral user</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4.0 / 5.0</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gmail integration</li> <li>Complete view of cust. for every email</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>UI/UX is average</li> </ul>
<b>Freshdesk (1)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>User is a promoter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5.0 / 5.0</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Cheaper than SF</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Customization is hard</li> </ul>
<b>Sugar (1)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Neutral user</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5.0 / 5.0</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Control and following up of commercial opps.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Sales process stages config. is static</li> </ul>

Several companies built CRM systems in-house, typically in order to be **flexible and customizable**; however, over time often **becomes unwieldy**

Note: Zoho not fully evaluated in survey so does not appear in RHS table  
Source: Systems survey (n=11)

# CRM: Zoho and Insightly have the right mix of affordability and functionality

Note: **bolded** price option indicates the program that was chosen using this comparison

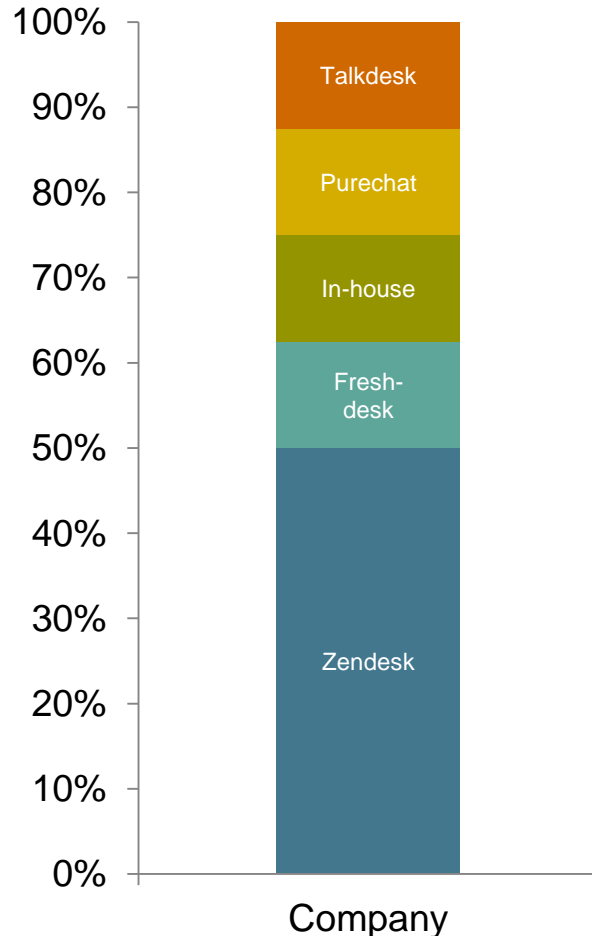
## EXAMPLE ANALYSIS OF CRM SYSTEMS

Vendor	Pricing Options	Price?	Google Adwords Integration?	Mobile App?
Salesforce	\$25 / \$65 / <b>\$125</b> (per user / month)	SUPER HIGH	Yes	Yes
Base	\$25 / <b>\$75</b> / \$125 (per user / month)	HIGH	Yes	Yes
SugarCRM	\$40 / <b>\$65</b> / \$150 (per user / month)	HIGH	Yes	Yes
AgileCRM	\$0 / <b>\$9</b> / \$30 / \$48 (per user / month)	LOW	Yes	No
Insightly	\$0 / \$12 / <b>\$29</b> / \$49 / \$99 (per user / month)	MED	Yes	Yes
Bitrix24	\$0 / <b>\$39</b> / \$99 / \$199 (per month)	MED	No	Yes
MS Dynamics	\$50 / <b>\$52</b> / \$72 (per user / month)	HIGH	Yes	Yes
Zoho	\$12 / <b>\$20</b> / \$35 / \$50 (per user / month)	MED	Yes	Yes

# Customer Service

**44% of companies use Zendesk**

Program mentions



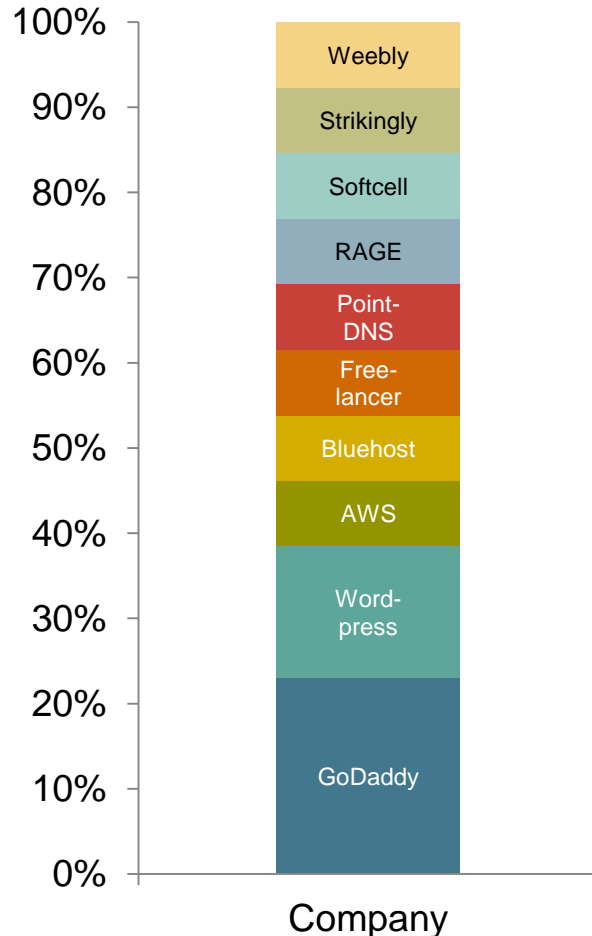
**Zendesk users find the product easy to use and functional, but expensive**

Company (# of users)	Satisfaction	Value for Money	Pros	Cons
<b>Zendesk (4)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Two promoters</li> <li>Two detractors</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4.3 / 5.0</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ease of use</li> <li>Good reporting</li> <li>Integrations w/programs</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Expensive</li> </ul>
<b>Freshdesk (1)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Neutral user</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4.0 / 5.0</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Customization</li> <li>Easy integration</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Too detailed</li> </ul>
<b>Purechat (1)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>User is a promoter</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>5.0 / 5.0</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Free</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-</li> </ul>
<b>Talkdesk (1)</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Neutral user</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>4.0 / 5.0</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-</li> </ul>

# Domain & Website Management

## 50% of companies use GoDaddy or Wordpress

Program mentions



- **GoDaddy:** Recognized because it is the industry standard and the cheapest solution
- **Wordpress:**
  - **Advantages:**
    - Easy and quick to make changes, and there are many pre-programmed modules
    - Content customization, and don't need an engineer to make small changes
    - Ease of content management; flexibility to choose our own theme and template
  - **Disadvantages:** Sometimes lots of hacks are needed to make small design changes
- **Other programs**
  - **PointDNS:** Reliable; Quick propagation across net
  - **RAGE\*:** Local solution (India); Timely delivery; Cost effective
  - **Softcell\*:** Reasonably priced; Excellent TAT
  - **Strikingly:** Easy 1 page design
  - **Weebly:** No Javascript; Ability to work w/ Internet.org/Free Basics

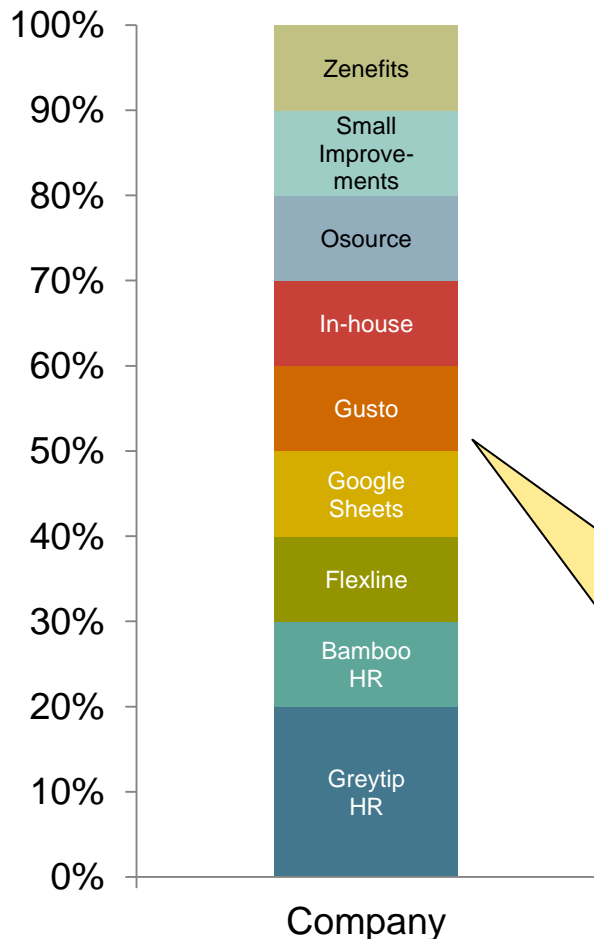
Note: For companies using more than one program, programs counted separately; \*RAGE and Softcell are local Indian providers  
Source: Systems survey (n=10)



# Human Resources

## There is a wide variety of HR programs used

Program mentions



Company (# of users)	Satisfaction	Value for Money	Pros	Cons
<b>Greytip HR (2)*</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Both neutral users</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3.0 / 5.0</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Collects data well</li> <li>Ease of use</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Missing a lot of features, i.e. customized salary breakdowns</li> <li>Employees cannot do much but download salary slips and check birthdays</li> </ul>
<b>Flexline (1)*</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Neutral user</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1.0 / 5.0</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dynamic usability in controlling / configuring payroll</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Short scope, just payroll; not for HR mgmt.</li> </ul>
<b>Osource (1)*</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Neutral user</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3.0 / 5.0</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Good service</li> <li>Attractive price</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>System is not flexible for handling changes</li> </ul>

### How Zenefits & Gusto are both used by one company:

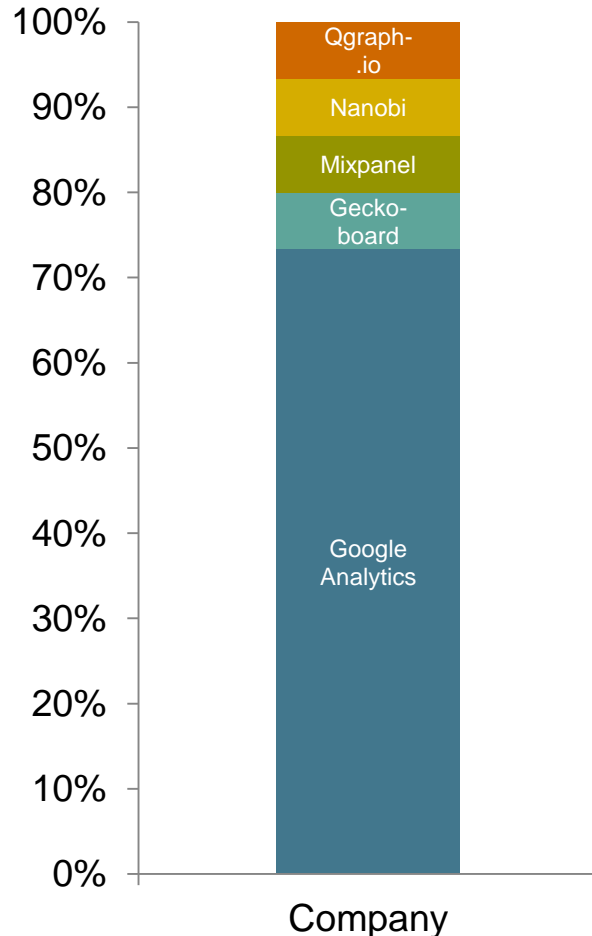
- Pros:** These are **two separate services**, but they are integrated for our HR management. Makes payroll and employee benefits incredibly fast and easy. They **manage all tax compliance issues** for us, notify us when it is time to take action on anything, and running payroll takes about 5 minutes.
- Cons:** Both are startups and they are continuing to add new features all the time. Their customer service agents are always available and very responsive, but they are not experts in their field so we usually have to have a phone call to get through issues. But overall, I don't know what I would do without these services, they save so much time! Also, the employee reimbursement function in Gusto does not allow for a memo, and we often issue employees reimbursement for travel through the system so it is a bit annoying as the items are not segregated and labeled when pulled into QuickBooks."

Note: For companies using more than one program, programs counted separately; \*Greytip HR and Osource are India providers; \*Flexline is a Chilean provider  
 Source: Systems survey (n=8)

# Online Analytics

>90% of companies use Google Analytics

Program mentions



- **Google Analytics:**

- 80% of users are Promoters
- Users cite numerous advantages, including:
  - Industry standard
  - Easy to pull reports and data
  - Easy to integrate
  - Depth of information available
- Only criticism from users is that it is not always user-friendly

- **Other programs:**

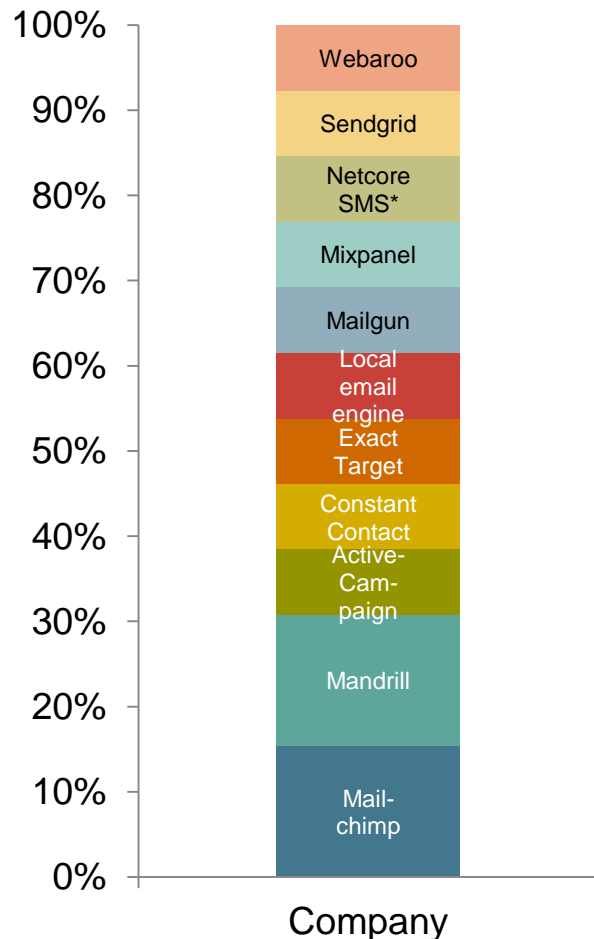
- **Mixpanel:** Can grab data from many sources and it is very easy to do analytics on people/events, send notifications, etc.; but, it is expensive
- **Geckoboard:** Easy way to display data in impressive and useful dashboards
- **Qgraph.io:** Helps understand uninstall behavior / data

Note: For companies using more than one program, programs counted separately  
Source: Systems survey (n=12)

# Outbound Marketing Tools

## There are numerous marketing tools used

Program mentions



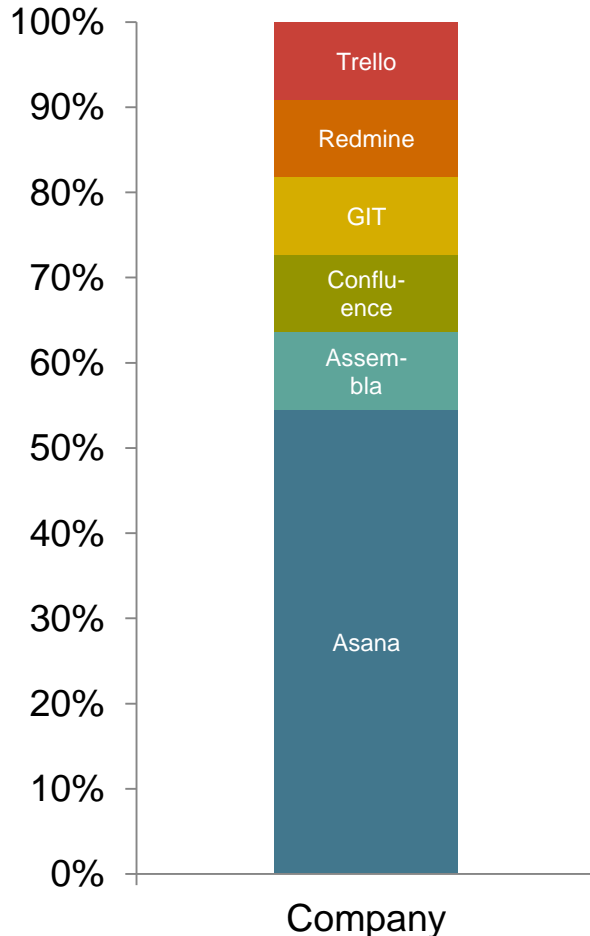
- **Mailchimp:**
  - User is a promoter, good value for money
  - *Considered industry standard, it is recognized for its “ability to track who read mailers and easy to configure templates and mailing lists”*
- **Mandrill:**
  - User is a promoter, good value for money
  - *Pros are cost and reliability. Con is that it never gets its geotagging for logins correct.*
- **Active Campaign:**
  - Neutral customer satisfaction
  - *“Easy to set up and use, and good value. But, slow website.”*
- **Constant Contact:**
  - User is a promoter, good value for money
  - *“Easy and cheap to set up. It is a good and quick way to develop email campaigns.”*
- **Other positive reviews:**
  - **Sendgrid:** high customer satisfaction, great value for money
  - **Mailgun:** user is a promoter, good value for money
- **Other negative reviews:**
  - **Exact Target:** very low value for money
  - **Webaroo:** average value for money
  - **Postmark:** *“experience was terrible”*

Note: For companies using more than one program, programs counted separately; \*Netcore SMS is a local Indian provider  
Source: Systems survey (n=11)

# Project Management

## The most commonly used program is Asana

Program mentions



- **Asana** is the preferred project management tool:
  - 67% of Asana users are Promoters
  - Users point to several key advantages:
    - *“Affordable, easy to use, increases transparency, makes tracking tasks easier, and improves productivity.”*
    - *“Multiple Projects, Users and Teams are possible. The level of detailing you can do is tremendous. Key board shortcuts are excellent.”*
    - *Benefits are “New improved mobile client (Asana every where!); Project segmentation; Cost”*
  - Disadvantages include slow load times, a long learning curve, and difficulty managing at a high-level:
    - *“There are still many features they need to add to make the service more efficient and useful for managers. It is difficult to view the company from a high level and set priorities, there is no gantt chart feature, and few visualizations.”*
- One free program is **Redmine**, which is an easy plug and play project management tool
  - However, it can be *“quite difficult to configure and model different stages and parameters related to project management processes”*

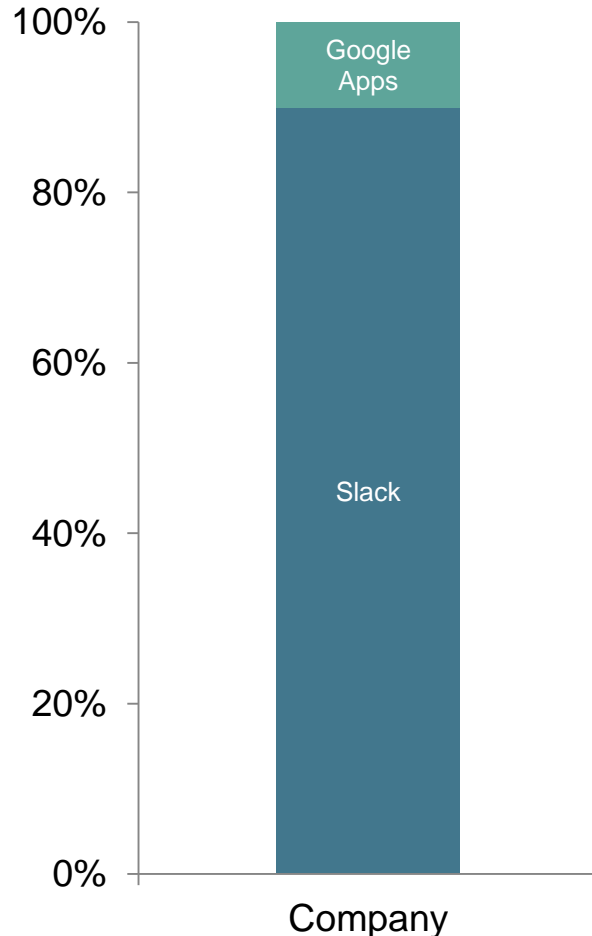
Note: For companies using more than one program, programs counted separately

Source: Systems survey (n=10)

# Team Communication

## 90% of companies use Slack

Program mentions



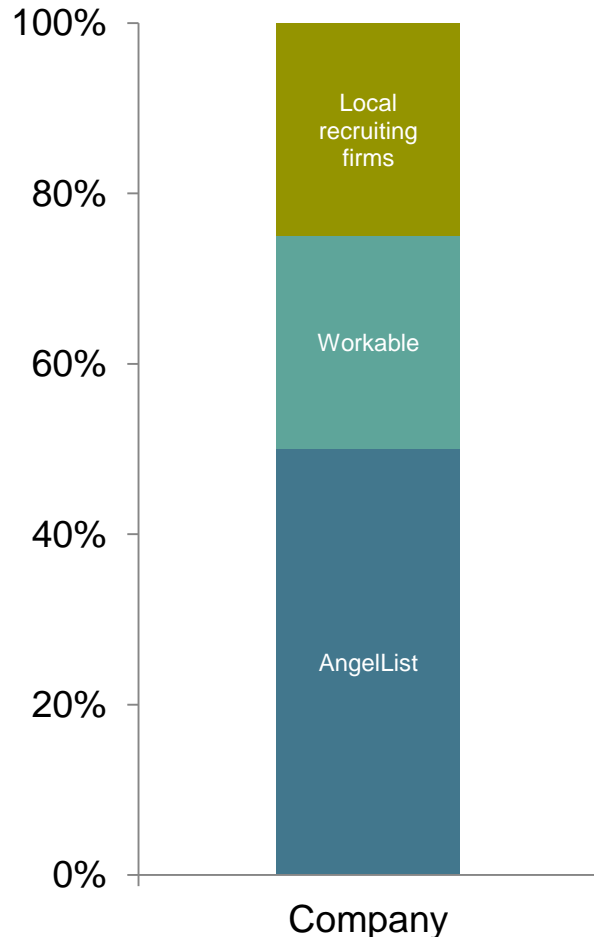
## Users are extremely satisfied with Slack

- ~89% would recommend Slack to other organizations
- Companies like Slack as a free app; not all would rate it as good value for money:
  - 56% rate it as Excellent; 22% as Good; 11% as Average; 11% as Fair
- **Advantages of Slack:**
  - Easy to use, simple, convenient
  - Affordable
  - Ability to have private conversations
  - Excellent integration with numerous services
- **Challenges using Slack:**
  - Expensive beyond free offerings; may lose older messages without premium service
  - Alerts can be distracting
- **Why use it:**
  - Eliminates email clutter
  - Reduces time spent in meetings
  - Faster communication helps our team be dynamic
  - Helpful for office notifications and chit chat
- **Competitors:** Flowdock, Whatsapp

# Recruiting

## Few companies use recruiting programs

Program mentions



- AngelList has been used by two companies
  - “**Must-have** – just put up a good profile, people will come”
  - *Global site, used by companies in Mexico and India*
- Other companies have not found passive job hunting fruitful
  - “Need to pull people in as opposed to hunting CVs”
- Companies have also used LinkedIn / LinkedIn premium for pull recruiting
- Other sites that have been used:
  - Hired (best of three sites, particularly for tech roles)
  - Interview Jet
  - Vetterly



**Biggest gap in recommended systems is Recruiting tools; there are few clear-cut solutions to solve hiring needs**

# Other services

Purpose	Company	Comments
<b>Banking</b>	Nucleus Software	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Loan Management Systems from Nucleus Software (e.g., Nucleus Finnone for Loan Management)</li> </ul>
<b>ERP</b>	SAP Business One	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>World class ERP</li> </ul>
<b>Finance</b>	Quickbooks	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Industry standard, easy, affordable, integrates with many other systems, allows instant insight into US and global finance</li> </ul>
<b>HR</b>	Zenpayroll	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Payroll</li> </ul>
<b>Legal</b>	Adobe Esign	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Signing legal agreements and terms of service, allows you to embed a document in an email or on a website with a link/widget</li> <li>DocuSign is the largest and probably most successful of these services, but it was about 10x more expensive to access the widget feature, which we find really useful</li> </ul>
<b>Marketing</b>	Appsflyer	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Attribution, install tracking</li> </ul>
	Bitly	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Link shortening, tracking</li> </ul>
	Facebook	
	Google Adwords	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Marketing</li> </ul>
<b>Online analytics</b>	New Relic	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Application monitoring</li> <li>Helps augment our monitoring of AWS infrastructure and applications</li> <li>API based monitoring that is very easy to integrate with</li> <li>Higher tiers are pricey</li> </ul>
	Webmaster tools	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>From Google – provides additional insights</li> </ul>
	Wistia	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Video hosting with video analytics (Youtube doesn't give you play analytics)</li> </ul>
<b>Outbound communication</b>	Exotel*	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Power of a call center setup on our mobile phones from their cloud telephony solution</li> </ul>
	Sendgrid	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Transactional email delivery via SMTP</li> </ul>
	Twilio	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>SMS transactional messaging</li> </ul>
<b>Product testing</b>	Optimizely	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A/B testing</li> </ul>
	UserTesting	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>User testing</li> </ul>
<b>Team collaboration &amp; document backup</b>	Box Sync	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Backup, availability and cloud management of org.</li> </ul>
	Github	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Best and easy code repository</li> </ul>
	Google Apps	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For docs, tracking; use gmail/calendar/drive/forms - integrates with everything well and is very easy to use, accessible anywhere, on any device</li> </ul>

\*Exotel is a local Indian provider

# Creative Commons License

---

- This work is licensed under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike 4.0 International License. To view a copy of this license, visit <http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/> or send a letter to Creative Commons, PO Box 1866, Mountain View, CA 94042, USA.