Making Slack Work for Your Team
Welcome to Slack

We're on a mission to make your working life simpler, more pleasant and more productive. Slack is an easy-to-use messaging app for teams that brings all your communication into one place and integrates with your existing tools. More productivity, more transparency... no more email. That's Slack.

Start with a pilot team

Choose a specific week. Organize a small group of the people you work with closely. Instead of using email (or IM, or Skype, or whatever-it-is-you-usually-use), commit to using Slack as your primary communication tool for that week. Using Slack for one week with your team is the best way to understand how to roll it out to the larger organization.

Resist setting up tons of channels in advance. You'll soon figure out the right channels for your team, and can create them as needed. When lots of messages get posted about a specific subject (whether that's a project like '#product-redesign,' a topic like '#marketing' or group like '#engineering'), create a new channel and invite people to continue their conversation in the new channel. Letting the channels emerge is typically more successful than trying to figure it all out before you get started. If you create too many channels when you first
start using Slack, you might end up with tumbleweeds in empty channels. For some recommendations on channel naming conventions, please see the Establish Channel Conventions section in this guide.

**Default communication to channels** unless there’s a reason to keep them confidential. When you do need to have a confidential conversation, create a private group or use direct messaging. Public conversations are how you build a database of organizational knowledge with zero effort. Having conversations in channels is also a key way to draw your team into Slack. No one wants to miss out on critical conversations, and the buzz of productivity provides ambient awareness of everything happening in your team.

**Integrate with as many external systems as you can** to pull all your data together and get the full benefit of universal search. Integrations vastly increase the value of your organizational knowledge by bringing that external data into the context of your team’s conversation. A list of our current integrations is available on our website here and you can read more about integrations later in this guide.

*Once your pilot team is running smoothly, it’s time to think ahead for how to set up the rest of your organization for success.*

**Structuring your Slack Team: One or Many?**

Slack is designed to flexibly fit all types of teams — from small co-located teams to large teams distributed around the world— so we recommend setting up Slack teams that match the structure of your organization.

Typically, many large organizations are comprised of many smaller teams focused on their own goals. We find that Slack teams can consist of up to 3,000 people while still realizing all the benefits of Slack in an environment better suited to free-flowing communication. For larger organizations, it may be useful to set up more Slack teams as it can be overwhelming to have so many channels to choose from and so many unrelated conversations all happening together.

If you’re not sure what to do, we recommend starting with one Slack team. This will allow your entire team to communicate transparently and help you build an archive of organizational knowledge.

Other questions? Our accounts team is happy to provide further guidance and figure out the right solution for the structure of your particular organization. Based on what is in the best interest for you and your organization, we will work with you to set up and roll out Slack to your company.

**Set Up Team Preferences**

Configuring the correct preferences for your team can help give everyone in it the best experience. We’ll go over some of these key preferences below, which can be configured by team admins and owners. For more information on team settings, you can visit this section in our Help Center.
Team Signup

We recommend enabling members of your organization to sign in via Single Sign-On (SSO). We support Google Apps, Okta, OneLogin, and other SSO providers including custom SAML implementations. If you don’t have an SSO solution in place, you can allow team members to sign up by whitelisting one or more company email domains. Team admins and owners can also invite new team members to Slack from the Invitations page; pending and accepted invitations for your team can be viewed there as well. From the team menu in Slack, you can invite new members using "Invite People" from your team menu. SSO is available for all teams on the Standard Plan or above.
For more information on user authentication, including a detailed guide on how to set it up, please refer to this section of our Help Center.

**Default channels + channel purposes**

A set of default channels that team members will automatically join is a great way to help them get started. What conversations should everyone be participating in? In Team Settings, you can specify which channels all new team members will automatically join, as a kind of bundle. And when you invite people, you can add to those channels on a per-person basis, so that they join channels specific to their role or who they'll be working with.

When you create a new channel, you can set a purpose for that channel. A channel purpose makes it clear to your coworkers where to have particular conversations. Make sure to fill in the channel purpose field for every new channel by selecting Advanced Options from the channel menu. This will help people choose whether to join channels and help keep the conversations on topic.

**Encourage channel creation + integrations**

While it may be tempting to restrict the creation of channels or integrations to admins, we advocate letting all team members help mold Slack into being whatever will help them be most productive. As a team admin, you'll benefit from sharing this work and before you know it, Slack will meet the needs of everyone on your team. You can remove those options later on when the team has grown. You can see a complete list of integrations here and if you need some help getting started, check out these resources in our Help Center.
Require @ for mentions
Any 50+ person team will want to require using @username to mention others. Otherwise team members will be notified even without the @—and those who choose common words or names for their usernames may receive unintended mentions.

Restrict who can post in #general
We recommend that teams with 100+ users restrict posting in the #general channel to Admins only. The #general channel is the only one every team member is in, so it’s perfect for posting announcements and other information critical to all team members. Since all team members are required to be in #general (members can’t leave that channel), it can become distracting on large teams. If you want to rename #general to something that better fits your organization, such as #announcements or #all-hands, follow the steps outlined in our Help Center.

Add more owners + admins
It’s lonely being the only admin on a team. Appoint additional owners and admins early on to make sure you’re not a bottleneck in any administrative activities. It’s best practice for each Slack team to have at least a couple owners and admins, since those roles have access to team-wide preferences and permissions such as invites.

There are five different roles a person can have on a Slack team, each with their own level of permissions for available actions and access to data:

- **Owner** — Team owners control the highest-level security and administrative settings: payments, team authentication methods, security policies, and so on. The primary owner (usually the person who created the account) can add other owners or delete the team.
- **Admin** — Administrators are able to manage members, moderate channels, invite users, and handle other tasks. We recommend that every team have several administrators.
- **Member** — Team members have access to standard features like joining any public channel and uploading files. This is the default for new people added to your team.
- **Restricted Account** — These accounts can access only a limited set of channels and private groups defined by the inviting admin. Restricted accounts are not able to view the entire team directory or search messages and files shared outside their permitted areas, but they are able to directly message users who are in the same channels or groups. Restricted accounts are typically used by teams to loop contractors or interns into the appropriate channels and groups without giving them access to everything else.
● **Single-Channel Guest** — Guests are a type of restricted account that are only invited to join a single channel or group. Single-channel guests can directly message other members of that channel or group. Many teams use single-channel guests to work with outside vendors to complete a specific initiative.

If you want more detail on how to assign permission and what their permissions allow them to do, check out this [article on our Help Desk](#).

## Establish Channel Conventions

While we don’t recommend trying to set up every channel in advance, when onboarding a large group it can be useful to create a few channels that reflect the structure of your organization.

### Here are a few examples that have worked well for other teams

**Team channels**

Nearly every company on Slack creates channels for each distinct department within their organization. Often, it’s useful to have both a broad channel (e.g. #engineering) and narrow ones (e.g. #eng-security, #eng-support, etc.).
Topical channels
Topical channels are typically social channels - the virtual watercooler. Whether they’re for serious topics like #politics or fun topics like #football, these non-work channels allow people to socialize across teams. Social channels are part of the fabric of Slack, and help people feel comfortable.

Project channels
Projects or company initiatives often need their own channels, especially for projects that cross departments. When you’re not sure which team is working on something, where do you ask your question? Project channels bring together interdisciplinary teams and prevent too much confusion from having project conversations in team channels.

Location-based channels
Many of the companies that use Slack are working across different locations. Consider making channels for each company office (e.g. #sf, #nyc, #syd) to help people share local lunches, happy hours, and news.

Integration-based channels
While most channels tend to be dominated by real live actual people, sometimes the focus needs to be on data. We recommend giving high-volume integrations their own channels. Common examples of integration-based channels include Twitter streams, support tickets, and bug databases. Team members can still chime in and discuss the incoming bot messages right in line with the integrations.

Temporary channels
Sometimes conversations in Slack are only temporary. Don’t want to overwhelm existing channels? Create one just for your event, even if it will just be used for a few hours! Whether it’s planning a party or addressing an urgent matter there’s no need to resist temporary channels. You can archive channels without losing the messages or files that were shared.

Working Within Slack

Files and Links
It’s easy to share a file within Slack - you can drag and drop from your computer, upload a file, or paste links from services like Google Drive or Dropbox. Similarly, we make it easy to share web content like articles, tweets, images, and videos within Slack. Just paste the link and Slack will automatically expand the link to display an inline preview.

Search
We index every file (whether you upload it directly or through an integration) so that you can search for it directly within Slack, without having to remember when or where you uploaded it. You can search using special modifiers such as ‘in:’ a specific channel or ‘from:’ a particular person. You can also filter results by recency, relevancy, and file type to quickly get to what you need. We even have file browsing if you need to go wading through the many files you’ve shared with your team. Our search function also deep indexes all the files you add to Slack, so that it searches within shared documents and not just for titles or creators of the file.
Get to know Slackbot

Slackbot is Slack’s built-in robot. It has the following primary uses:

Profile completion and integration setup
You’ll likely encounter Slackbot shortly after you start using Slack — with just a few simple questions, Slackbot will help you fill out your account profile. Slackbot will also help you whenever you take an action that requires authentication with an external service, like pasting a Google Drive link.

A personal, private, searchable notepad
Slackbot can be used as a notepad and file repository. Messages you send and files you upload to slackbot are indexed and searchable but will be visible only to you.

Automatic responses
You can configure Slackbot to respond to your team members at my.slack.com/customize/slackbot. While there are plenty of work-related uses for this, most teams just use the feature for fun:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>When someone says</th>
<th>Slackbot responds</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>hey slackbot</td>
<td>![Image] Hello! ‘Sup? Hot diggity. I’m here ... just catching up on email. Hay is for horses.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Enter a trigger word or phrase, and then, what you’d like Slackbot to respond with. If you want to make it random, enter more than one response on new lines (as shown above). You can even use emoji or image links — images will expand inline when Slackbot responds. Note that Slackbot responses only occur in channels and private groups — not in direct messages. (That would be rude!)
Programming Slackbot
Your team can set up Slackbot to say things programmatically by creating a new Slackbot integration at my.slack.com/services/new/slackbot. This will give your team a unique URL for posting messages as Slackbot via HTTP POST.

Shortcuts
Slack offers you keyboard shortcuts to help you speed right through. You can see a complete list here or by typing “⌘ /” or “Ctrl/” in a message box.

You can also use a variety of commands called “slash commands” directly from the message box. Just type “/” to see a full list of those commands, including any custom ones you create. You can see a complete list of default slash commands here. You can also create your own custom slash commands at my.slack.com/services/new/slash-commands.

Migrate Your Data
Slack supports importing data from a variety of other communication tools, including HipChat, Flowdock, Campfire, and other Slack teams. This is a great way to add value to Slack search from day one. We'll map imported users to new ones based on their email address, so it's best to do the data import after your team has already signed up. For help on importing data, please see this link here.

Slack Stats
Your journey has just begun. After you’ve started using Slack, there are plenty of opportunities to improve how you function as a team and be even more productive (while having fun, of course!). To help you with that, we’ve built a dashboard that gives you a visual summary of how your team is using Slack. Use these indicators to develop new ways to create transparency, connectedness, and collaboration in your team. Slack Stats are available for all teams on the Standard Plan or above.
Other Helpful Resources

- [Slack Help Center](#)
- [Several People are Typing](#) - Our Slack Blog
- [Several People are Reading](#) - A collection of posts about Slack, written by teams using Slack
- Read more about our Fair Billing policy [here](#)