

Index

Introduction	2
Finding the Fastest-Growing Apps for Work	3
The Results	4
The Fastest Growing Apps in 2016	7
1. Airtable	9
2. Acuity Scheduling	10
3. HubSpot CRM	11
4. Agile CRM	12
5. OmniFocus	13
6. Google Sheets	14
7. HubSpot	15
8. Office 365	16
9. ActiveCampaign	17
10. Slack	18
The Fastest Growing New Apps and APIs of 2016	19
1. Facebook Lead Ads	21
2. Google Forms	22
3. Calendly	23
4. Basecamp 3	24
5. ConvertKit	25
6. MeisterTask	26
7. ClickFunnels	27
8. Kajabi	28
9. Excel	29
10. Chatfuel for Facebook	30
The Fastest Growing App Categories and Trends in 2016	31
Bots	31
Chat Everywhere	32
Apps Inside Apps	32
AI and Machine Learning	32

Introduction

Few things grab the Zapier team's attention like popular new apps—and we're not alone. Whenever the next Pokémon Go or Snapchat comes out, you can't help but hear about it, even if you don't read tech news.

Among those most talked about apps, the rising stars of business software are often overlooked. For a SaaS (software as a subscription) tool, Slack's fame is an anomaly—buzz about the team messaging and collaboration app can't be missed. But if you were to ask a colleague for the lowdown on the latest top scheduling tool or task manager, they'd likely start googling.

So how do you find the best software to use at work when the search results surface hundreds of project management tools, email sending providers, marketing automation apps, and eCommerce platforms?

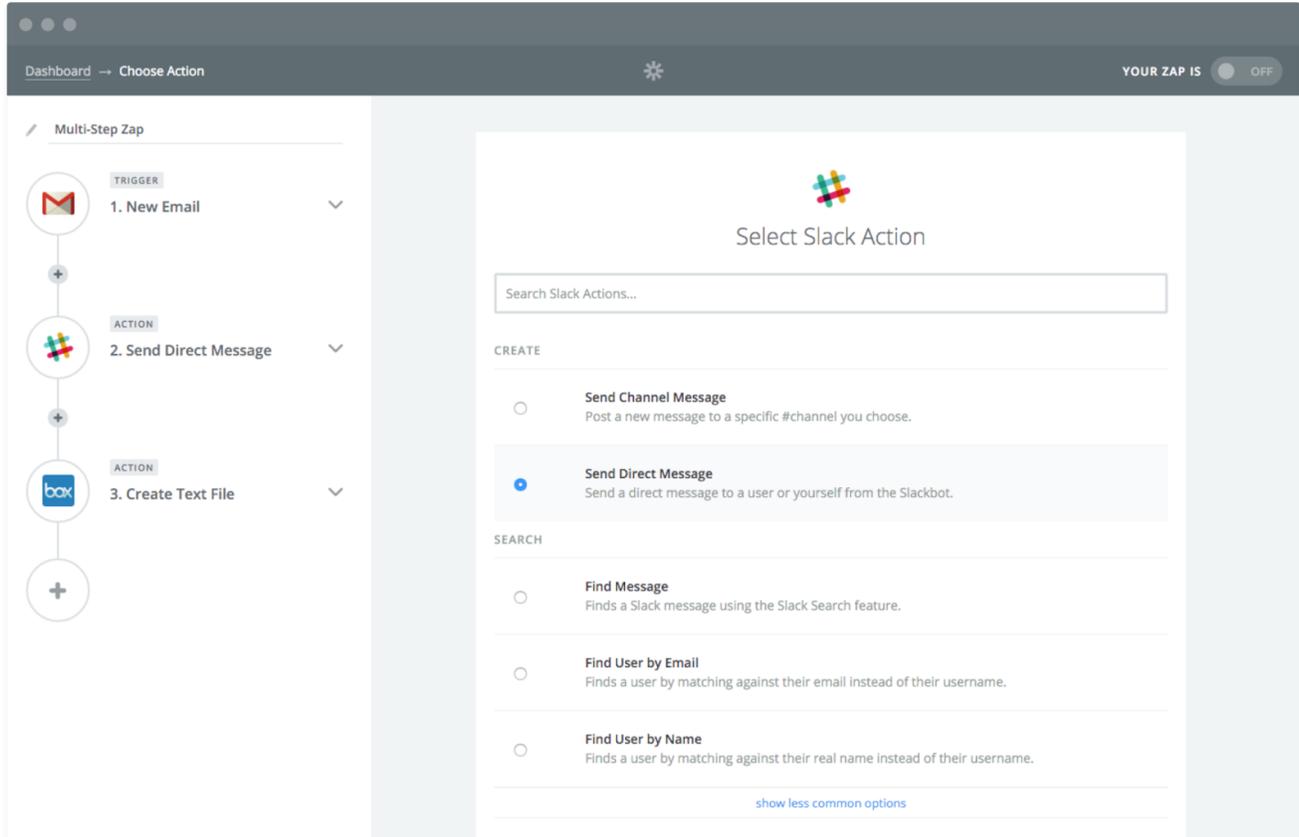
Zapier's data and latest report can help.

Finding the Fastest-Growing Apps for Work

At Zapier, our app automation tool helps teams and more than 1.5 million professionals get the most out of their favorite software, such as Trello, Evernote, and Dropbox. Over 750 business apps across 50-plus categories integrate with Zapier.

Using our online editor (*pictured*), Zapier users have created more than 6 million automated workflows—known as "Zaps"—and collectively automate over 65 million tasks per month.

These workflows are at the heart of businesses--filled with critical processes, information, and communication channels companies rely on. For five years, we've tracked how business apps are used in these functions, and now for the first time we're sharing some of that data in this new report, *Web Apps That Ruled the Workplace in 2016*.



The Results

After reviewing data on the more than 750 apps integrated with Zapier, two growth rates emerged that will be valuable to anyone considering a new app for their business software stack in 2017:

Fastest-Growing Apps

The services with the greatest growth rate or increase in users this year on the platform. We looked at the apps that have been on Zapier for more than a year and had a sizable user base with live Zapier integrations (at least 300 users) on January 1, 2016

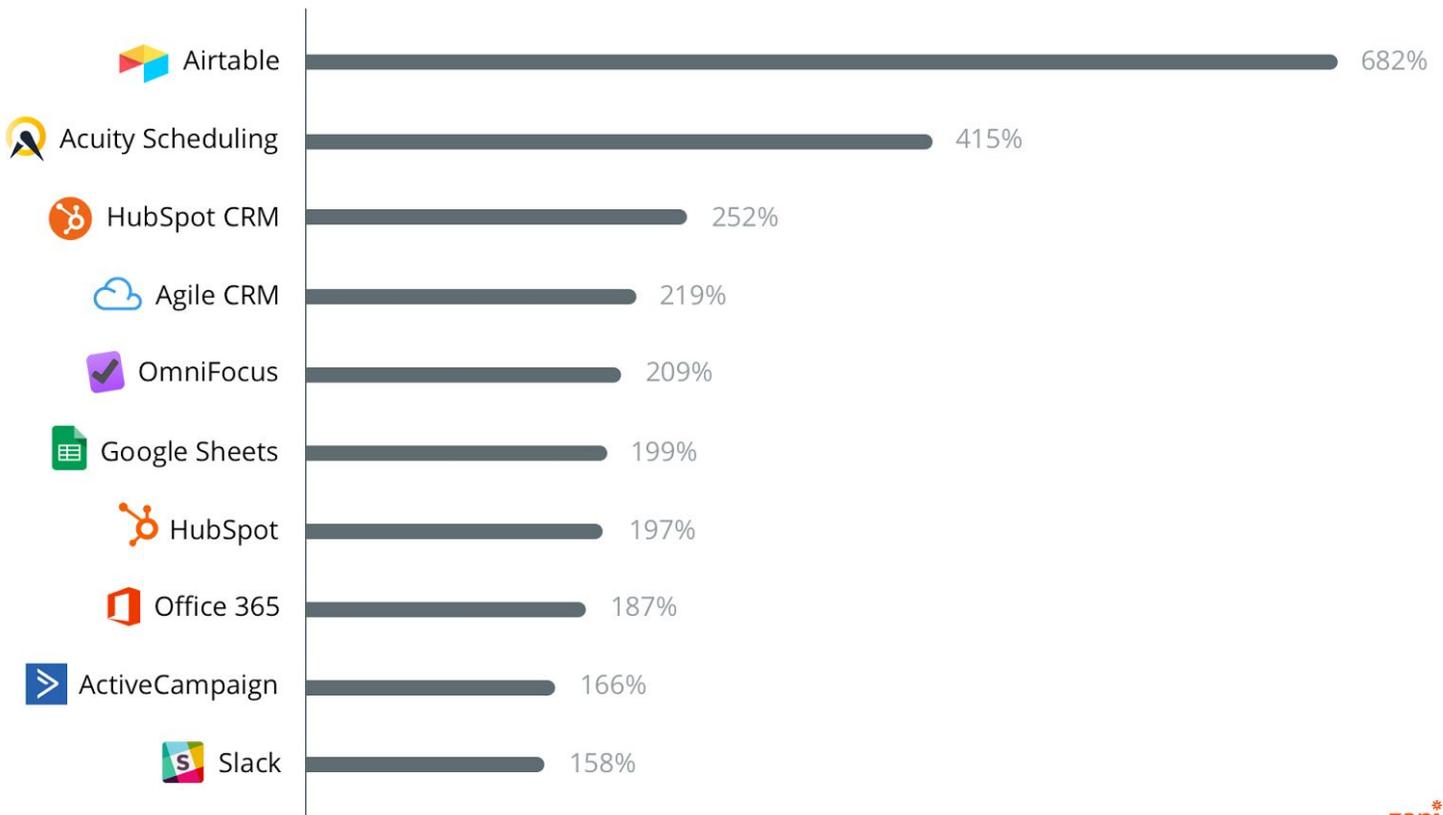
Fastest-Growing New Apps and APIs

The services with greatest growth rate based on daily user growth. We looked at apps that either first launched or released their [API](#) (the technology used to integrate apps) on Zapier in late 2015. This way, an app or API that launched mid-year could still make the list.

Data was collected from January to October 2016.

Fastest-Growing Web Apps of 2016

Of the 750 web apps connected to workflow automation tool Zapier, these 10 apps gained the most users



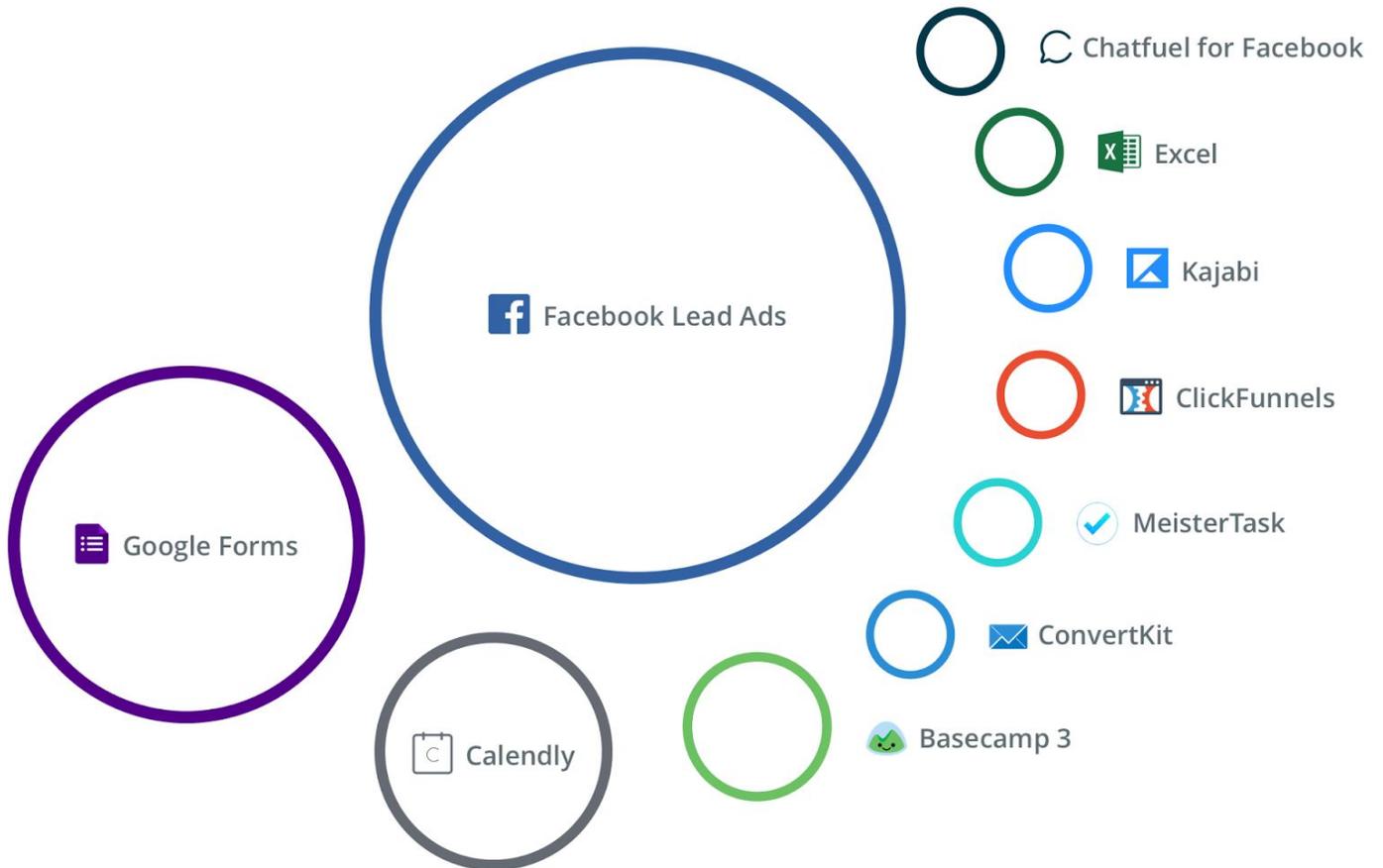
zapier

Some of the 10 fastest-growing apps may come as a surprise, if you've never heard of services like Airtable, OmniFocus, Agile CRM, or Acuity Scheduling before. You already know about Slack, of course, and their popularity made chart-topping growth numbers for 2016 a challenge. But that didn't stop it from rounding out the group with a still tremendous 158% user growth on Zapier. Google Sheets and Office 365 accomplished the same feat: each started with a large user base on Zapier, and still finished among the fastest-growing.

HubSpot landed two apps on the list: its marquee marketing automation tool and its two-year-old CRM (customer relationship management) app. Appropriately, these two services make up two-thirds of what HubSpot calls its "growth stack".

Fastest-Growing New Web Apps and APIs of 2016

Of the 175 new web apps or APIs connected to Zapier in 2016, these 10 apps attracted the most users



zapier

Facebook Lead Ads, a fresh advertising product from the social media giant, topped the list of the 10 fastest-growing new apps and APIs. The lead generation service launched in March and quickly gained traction with marketers. Google Forms, Excel, and Basecamp are familiar brand names among the 10, too, each either releasing a new version or API this year. Then there are the up-and-comers: Calendly, MeisterTask, ClickFunnels, Kajabi, Convertkit, and Chatfuel.

The Fastest Growing Apps in 2016

On average, software integrated with Zapier saw 125% user growth in 2016. Leading the pack far out in front is a simple database app called Airtable with 682% growth—almost twice that of the second fastest-growing app, Acuity Schedule. Along with No. 3 HubSpot CRM, these services are part of a trend to offer apps that modernize and simplify work.

Apps That Modernize and Simplify Work

Founded in 2012, **(1) Airtable** makes it easy to organize data in hybrid spreadsheets and databases. It's like Microsoft Access reinvented for the modern web—a mobile-friendly personal database that's easy to use for anyone who's ever used a spreadsheet. You can quickly enter data, add images and formatting to make your work look polished, filter through information, and link entries to find anything you need. Connect Airtable to your online form collecting leads, say, and it's one of the easiest ways to run reports and surface trends for your sales team—or find information from any data you're working with.

In second place and an entirely different category is **(2) Acuity Scheduling** with 415% growth. It's a tool that makes booking appointments surprisingly slick—enough that it's now a core part of many of our customers' workflows. And **(3) HubSpot CRM**, which has a generous feature set for even its free users, logged 252% growth.

Traditional Software Now in the Cloud

Some of the fastest growing apps are traditional desktop software that's moving to the cloud. If you needed a custom email account a decade ago, odds are you'd install Exchange on your server and maintain it in-house. Today, **(8) Office 365** lets you deploy email, calendar, and other core apps to your team in a few clicks. That simplicity has driven its 187% growth on Zapier. In the same way, **(6) Google Sheets** brings your spreadsheets to the cloud, and **(5) OmniFocus** integrations let you track team tasks from web apps in your personal to-do list app on your Mac—those apps saw 199% and 209% growth, respectively.

Automate Marketing and Keep Your Team's Info in One Place

Keeping all your marketing tools together can make your team more effective at closing sales. **(4) Agile CRM**, **(7) HubSpot**, and **(9) ActiveCampaign** are all focused on various parts of marketing automation—Agile CRM at helping you reach out to customers wherever they are, HubSpot with tracking all of your marketing efforts, and ActiveCampaign through powerful email workflows—and they grew at 219%, 197%, and 166% respectively. And last but not least, **(10) Slack** has continued its fast growth—only this year, it was only our tenth fastest growing app at 158% after its dramatic early growth in 2015.

Here's a deeper look at each of the fastest-growing apps on Zapier in 2016:

1. Airtable

The screenshot shows a web interface titled "Zapier's Project Management App Cheat Sheet". It features a red header with navigation options like "Apps", "Main View", "Hide fields", "Filter", "Grouped by 1 field", "Sort", and "SHARE". Below the header is a table with columns: Name, Pics, Category, Overview, Designed to, and Free for. The table is divided into two sections: "Task Lists" (5 items) and "Gantt Charts" (7 items). Each row includes an app name, a small image, a category label, a link to a Zapier article, a brief description, and user/feature counts.

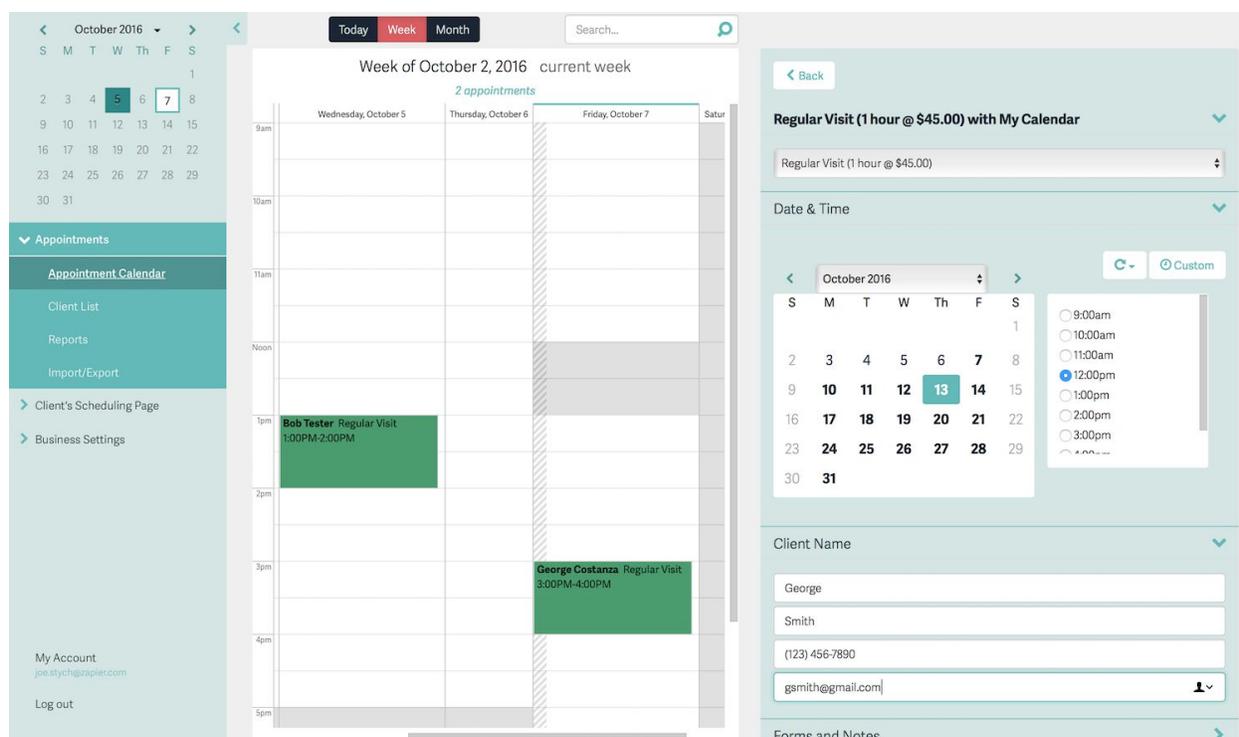
	Name	Pics	Category	Overview	Designed to	Free for
Task Lists CATEGORY COUNT 5						
2	Asana		Task Lists	https://zapier.com/lear...	Manage team to-dos with updates and progress graphs to keep everything on track.	15 users
3	Dapulse		Task Lists	https://zapier.com/lear...	Visualize each task's progress with labels that show the results of each task's workflow.	
4	Insightly		Task Lists	https://zapier.com/lear...	Focus on contacts and projects together in one app.	2 users
5	Toodledo		Task Lists	https://zapier.com/lear...	Outline everything your team needs to do in task lists with custom fields.	∞ private tasks
6	Allthings		Task Lists	https://zapier.com/lear...	Write down tasks in simple lists, add extra data with custom fields, then turn those fiel...	∞ users, 5 proje
Gantt Charts CATEGORY COUNT 7						
7	Wrike		Gantt Charts	https://zapier.com/blog...	Manage team and personal tasks together in a list, spreadsheet, or Gantt chart view.	5 users
8	Pagico		Gantt Charts	https://zapier.com/blog...	Work on personal and team tasks in a professional project management tool.	
9	Microsoft Project		Gantt Charts	https://zapier.com/blog...	Outline and plan projects with familiar Microsoft Office tools.	
10	Sandglaz		Gantt Charts	https://zapier.com/blog...	Plan scrum sprints in kanban-style lists for a simple way to prioritize tasks and plan th...	
11	Aha!		Gantt Charts	https://zapier.com/blog...	Turn ideas into broad goals, detailed schedules, and individual releases for effective ...	
12	Runrun.it		Gantt Charts	https://zapier.com/blog...	Know when your projects will actually ship with	
13	Projectplace		Gantt Charts	https://zapier.com/blog...	Manage due dates and processes together in a Gantt chart and kanban mix.	1 project, 5 user

[Airtable](#) is an easy-to-use relational database—as robust as a database builder like Microsoft Access, but as user-friendly as a spreadsheet like Google Sheets. Adding data is as simple as typing in a spreadsheet—and you can drag-and-drop in photos and media to bring your data to life. Then, with Airtable's filters and database-style linked fields, you can connect your data and find the info you need from any device. You can use it to organize any data you need—your projects, property, or even your plans for the new year—then quickly find data in those listings whenever you need it.

Airtable this year launched native [iPad](#), [Mac](#), and [Windows apps](#)—and recently added [calendar](#) and [kanban](#) views to visualize data the way you want.

Price: Free for unlimited databases with up to 1,200 records each; from \$12/month per user for 5k+ records per database

2. Acuity Scheduling

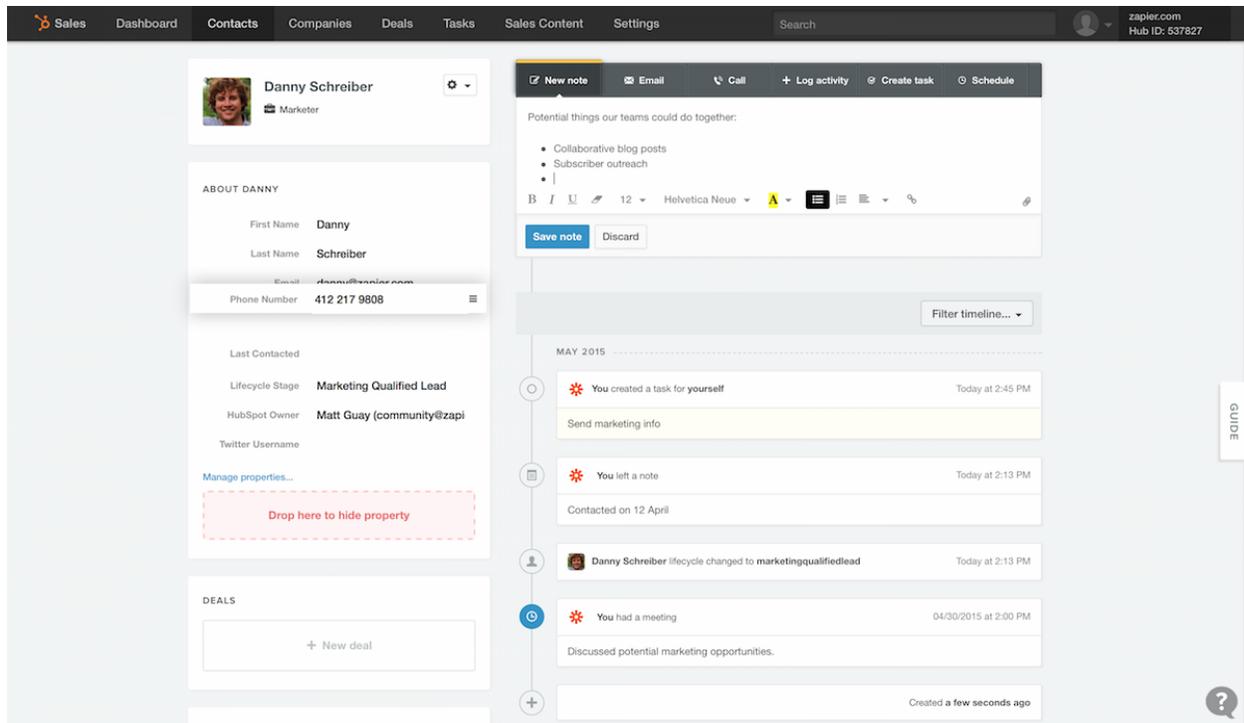


[Acuity Scheduling](#) lets your clients book appointments when you're ready for them. Instead of having to check your calendar each time someone wants to schedule a meeting, you can set the hours you're available—with your vacation and holidays blocked automatically—and let contacts choose an available time in their own timezone. Acuity Scheduling will then remind you and your contact so no one ever misses a meeting—and everyone avoids the "when are you free?" back-and-forth hassle.

With their new [WordPress plugin](#) that makes it easy to embed event bookings into your website, it's easier than ever let your clients book appointments.

Price: Free for 1 user and basic features; from \$10/month for reminder emails, customizations, payments and more

3. HubSpot CRM

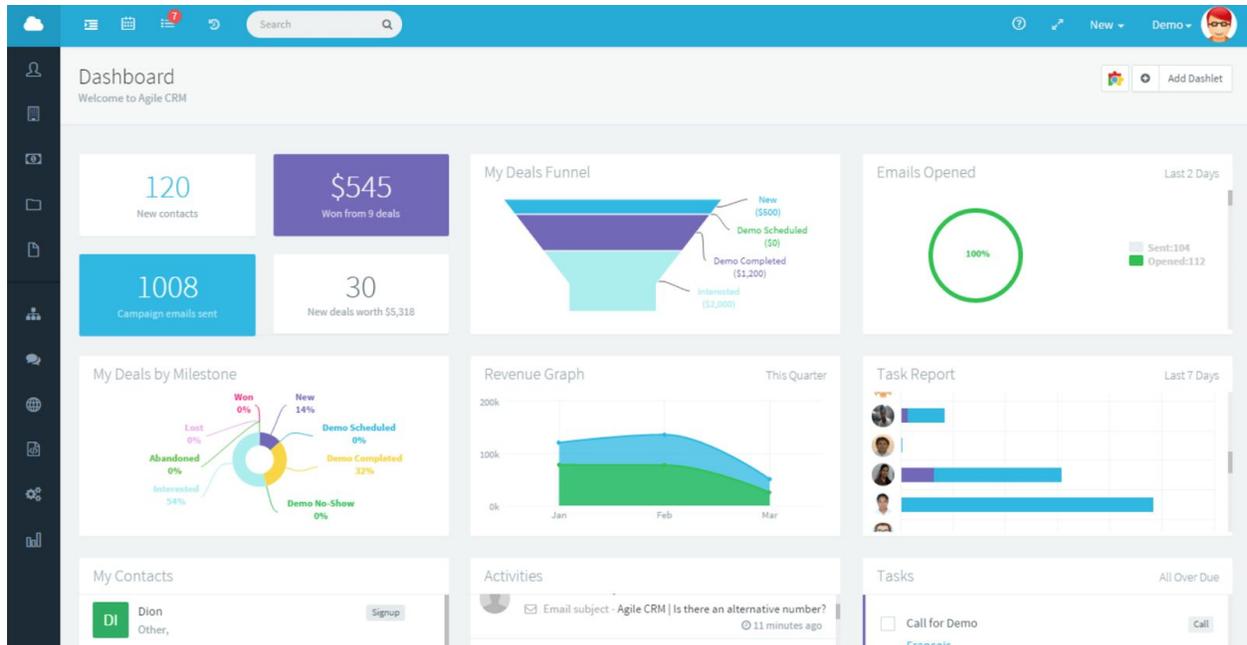


You need a better way to keep track of your contacts, leads, suppliers, customers, sponsors, investors, and everyone else that interacts with your company. That's why you need a CRM—or customer relationship manager—and [HubSpot CRM](#) can take on that task for free. From the same team behind marketing automation tool HubSpot, HubSpot CRM lets you track every interaction with each of your contacts across your entire team. You'll never have to wonder what your coworker talked about with the person you're meeting again.

After launching in late June 2015, HubSpot CRM's team followed up this year by [launching a mobile app](#), one that now combines HubSpot CRM and its core HubSpot marketing tools. Even if you use your CRM mostly from your email inbox, its new [template tools](#) let you turn any Gmail email into a template that you can reuse later for an even simpler way to stay in touch with your contacts.

Price: Free for core features and up to 1 million contacts

4. Agile CRM

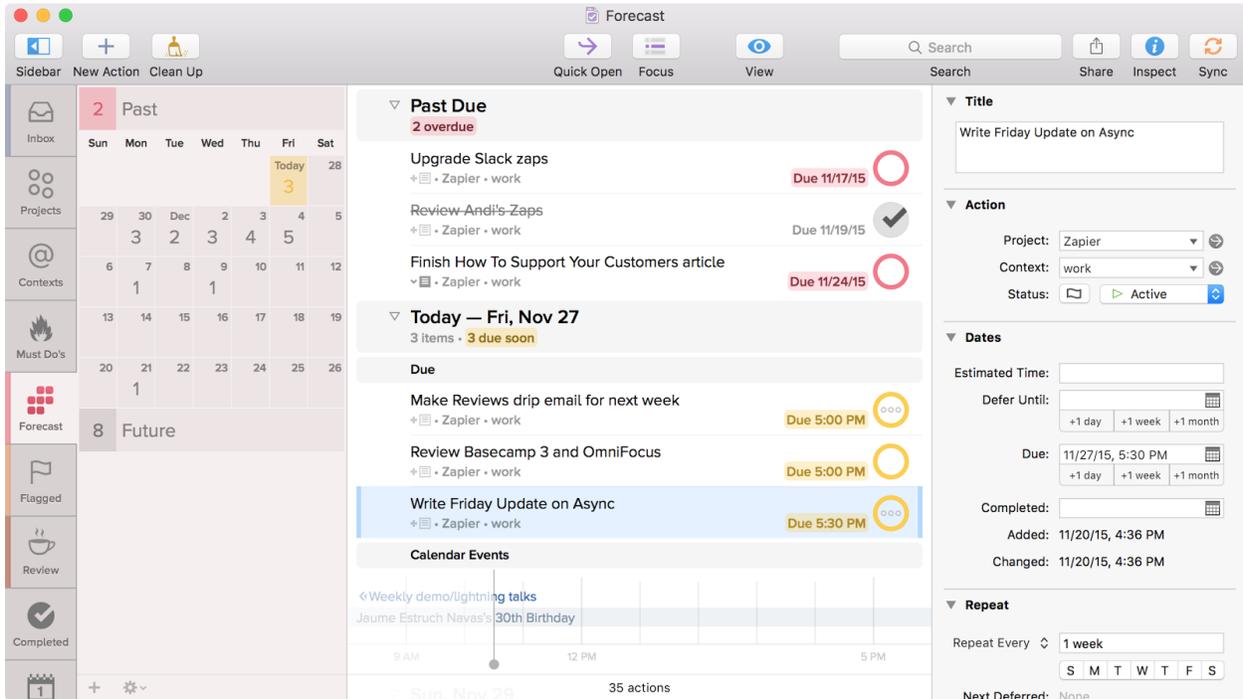


Want to turn your new leads into customers? [Agile CRM](#) includes all the tools you need to do that. It can expand your marketing reach with email, SMS, and social messages, add a personal touch with phone calls, and gamify your sales to keep your team motivated to make the next sale. With your tasks, deals, contacts, and marketing tools in one place, you'll easily know where a lead is in the sales process anymore.

The Agile CRM team has been busy this year, launching [WordPress](#) and [Joomla extensions](#), tools to [send video emails](#) and [search through your contacts by voice](#). It even improved its [free plan](#), so now you can manage contacts with 10 colleagues for free.

Price: Free for 10 users and 50,000 contacts with core CRM features; from \$8.99/month Starter plan for email campaigns, landing pages, and more

5. OmniFocus



[OmniFocus](#) is the perfect counterpart to your team project management app. It's a powerful to-do list app for your own tasks and appointments, helping you stay productive with the Getting Things Done (GTD) methodology. Most at home on your Mac, iPhone, iPad, or Apple Watch, OmniFocus' email powered integrations let you combine it with your team apps to plan everything together.

OmniFocus now works with iOS integrations with its support for [URL schemes](#)—and its Apple Watch version was listed as the [App Store's Best of 2015](#). It offers some of the best native app features, along with cloud sync that supports [end-to-end encryption](#) and integrations.

Price: From \$39.99 for Standard edition Mac or iOS app

6. Google Sheets

The screenshot shows a Google Sheet titled "Zapier's Project Management App Cheat Sheet" with a table of project management apps. The table has columns for Name, Designed to:, and Free for:. The 'Explore' sidebar on the right displays data analysis, including a bar chart titled "Count of Apps" and a pie chart titled "Count of Milestones".

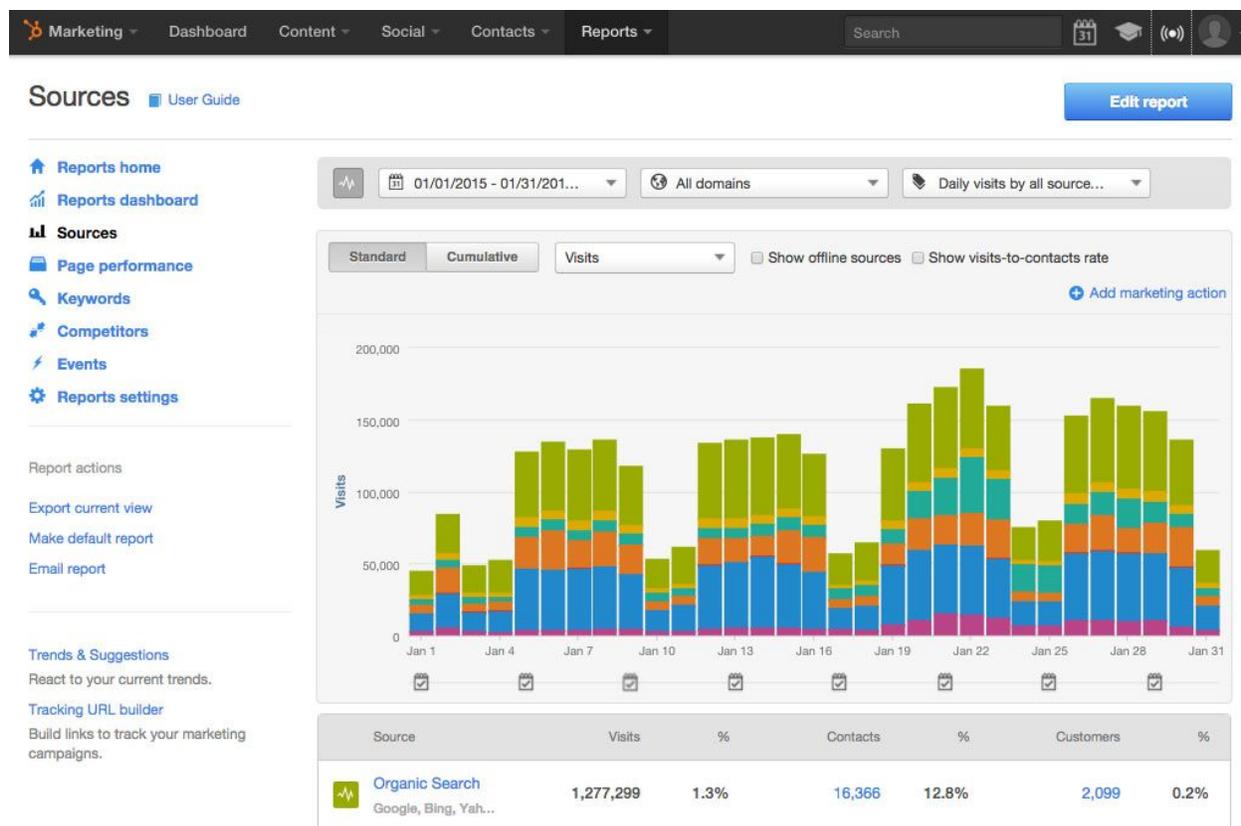
Name	Designed to:	Free for:
Task Lists		
Asana	Manage team to-dos with updates and progress graphs to keep everything on track.	15 users
Dapulse	Visualize each task's progress with labels that show the results of each task's workflow.	
Insightly	Focus on contacts and projects together in one app.	2 users
Toodledo	Outline everything your team needs to do in task lists with custom fields.	private tasks
Allthings	Write down tasks in simple lists, add extra data with custom fields, then turn those fields into kanban lists.	users, 5 projects
Gantt Charts		
Write	Manage team and personal tasks together in a list, spreadsheet, or Gantt chart view.	5 users
Pagico	Work on personal and team tasks in a professional project management tool.	
Microsoft Project	Outline and plan projects with familiar Microsoft Office tools.	
Sandglaz	Plan scrum sprints in kanban-style lists for a simple way to prioritize tasks and plan the week's work.	
Ahal	Turn ideas into broad goals, detailed schedules, and individual releases for effective projects.	
Runrun.it	Know when your projects will actually ship with automatically calculated delivery dates.	
Projectplace	Manage due dates and processes together in a Gantt chart and kanban mix.	1 project, 5 users
Kanban		
Trello	Create easy to use kanban boards with just the features you want.	projects
MeisterTask	Brainstorm projects in a mind map, then turn them into kanban projects that automate work.	projects
Blossom	Build clear kanban boards with analytics and email reports to quickly analyze your work.	
Kanban.Tool	Nest kanban columns to create detailed workflows for your projects.	2 users, 2 boards

Spreadsheets are the original killer app—and they're still one of the most versatile ways to crunch numbers and make sense of data. [Google Sheets](#) started out as a basic online alternative to Excel and one of its best features was its low price of free. Today, with a powerful library of [add-ons](#) alongside its built-in features, you might choose Google Sheets for its powerful features. It's today's online spreadsheet app to beat.

Google Sheets is even pushing spreadsheets forward, with its new [Explore tool](#) that automatically makes graphs and finds insights from your data. That, along with [Sheets' powerful add-ons](#) that work online and now on [Android](#), let you start putting AI to work for you.

Price: Free for full features and 15GB storage; additional storage from \$1.99/month for 100GB; from \$5/month per user G Suite for business use

7. HubSpot

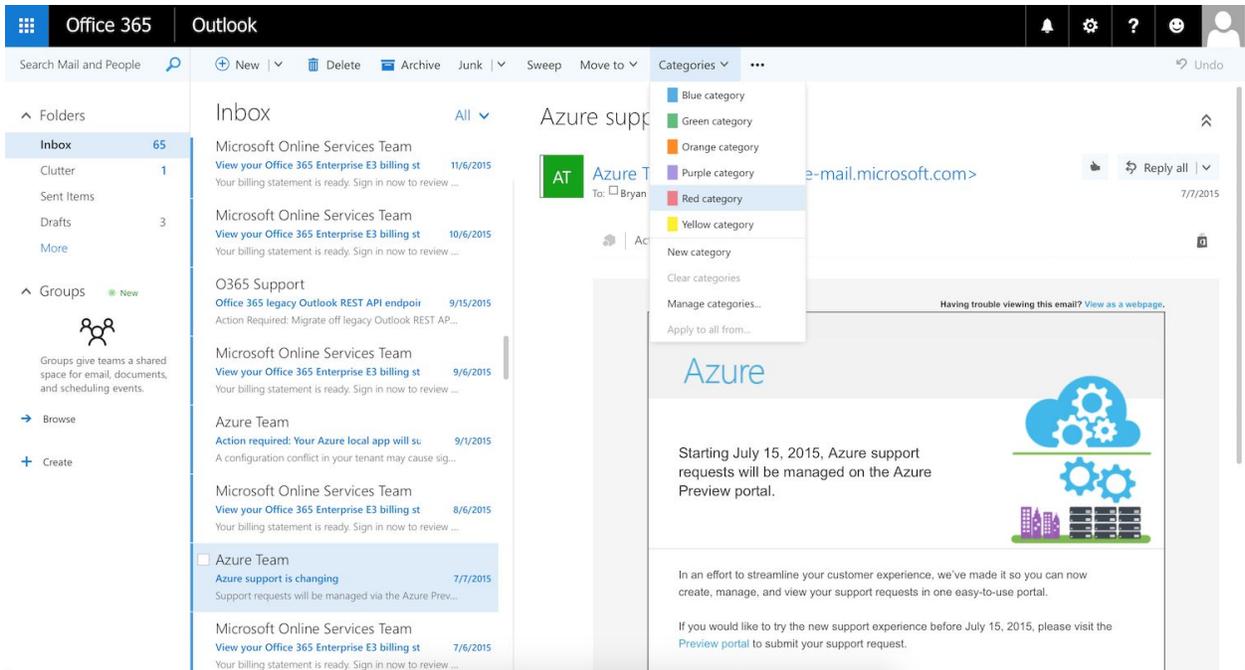


The original [HubSpot](#) marketing tools are a powerful companion to HubSpot CRM—they're enough to manage your blog, email newsletters, signup forms, and much more. With automated workflows, you can stay in touch with leads using drip emails, and customize the message based on their interactions with your site. Figure out which pages on your site are performing the best, use SEO tools to target your content marketing, and track the results on your individual leads back in HubSpot CRM.

You can now [manage projects in HubSpot](#), too, to keep your tasks organized along with your contacts and marketing efforts. And if you ever need help trying to hone your marketing skills, HubSpot's new [Growthbot in Facebook Messenger](#) can offer up automated replies that just might help.

Price: From \$200/month Basic plan for core features and up to 100 contacts

8. Office 365

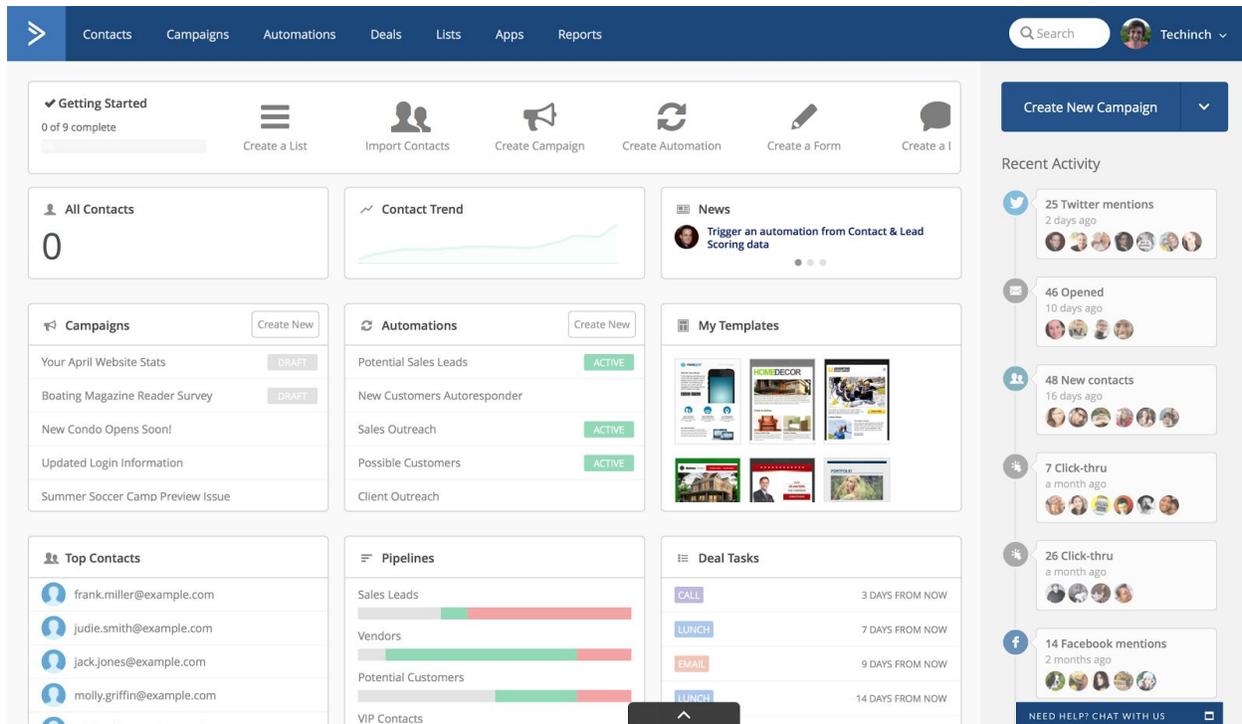


Want Exchange email without the hassle of running a server? Office 365 gives you that and more with one simple account. You can deploy Exchange-powered email to your entire team, along with hosted Sharepoint, Office Online apps, and file sharing in OneDrive for Business. Need Office apps on your Mac or PC? You can get those in your Office 365 subscription, along with Microsoft's newest apps like [Microsoft Teams](#). It's a simple way to get your team's core productivity tools with one subscription.

With strong growth throughout the year—[51% growth](#) for Office 365 revenue in this quarter alone—along with a new version of Office launching last year, Office 365 is an increasingly popular way to pull all of your team apps together. You can email in Outlook, chat in the new [Microsoft Teams](#) app, and manage all of your users from one place in the new Office 365 [admin center](#).

Price: From \$5/month per user Office 365 Business Essentials plan, which includes Exchange Online email, Office Online apps, and 1TB file storage

9. ActiveCampaign

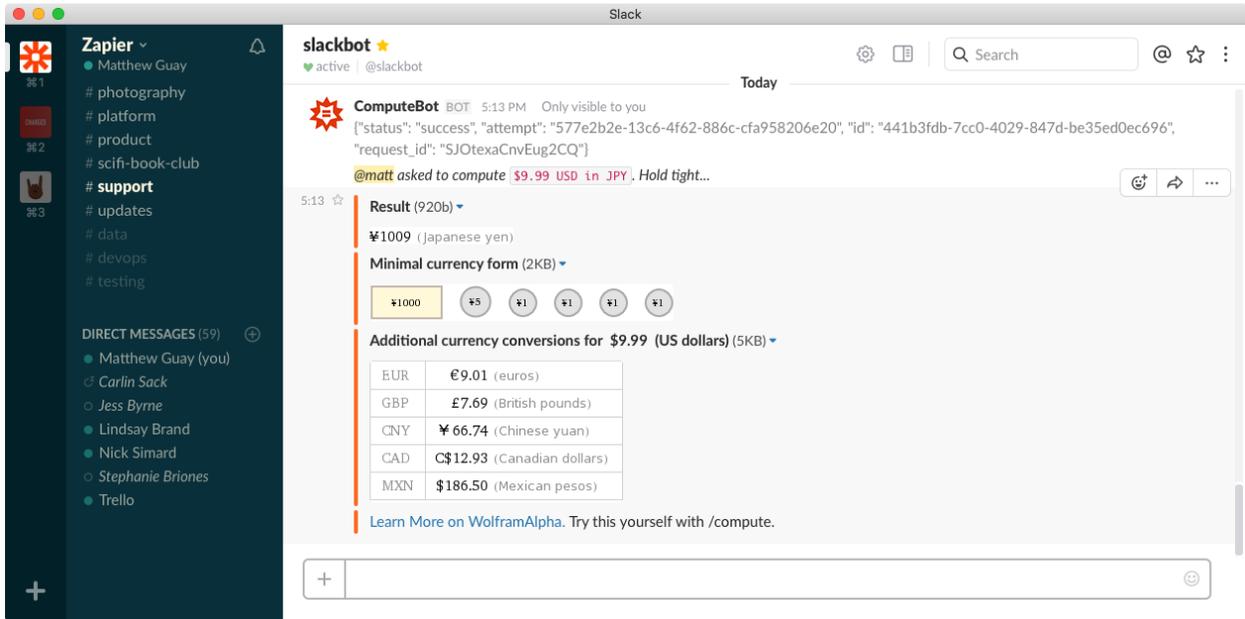


Starting your marketing out with email newsletters? [ActiveCampaign](#) is the email app that'll grow with you. It's great for sending email newsletters. It also includes marketing automation tools to send customized emails based on your contacts' interactions with emails. You can track details about each contact in ActiveCampaign's included CRM to use your emails to close deals, make sales, and do the job your emails started out.

ActiveCampaign's focus this year has been on automation, with a new [drag-and-drop automation builder](#) that gained features throughout the year to trigger on dates, RSS feeds, field changes, clicks, and more. Combine that with its new [Chrome extension](#), and ActiveCampaign can be a powerful tool that fits right into your existing workflows.

Price: From \$9/month Lite plan for sending unlimited emails to 500 contacts

10. Slack



[Slack](#) is the rare enterprise app that went viral. A team chat app that takes the best of technical tools like IRC and consumer chat apps like LINE or Messenger and combines them into a productive work tool, Slack is the one place for your team and private discussions. Chat about anything in channels, jump on a quick call, or [build Slack bots](#) to pull in data from your apps automatically. It's the way teams stay in touch today.

After launching the Slack Fund to build an ecosystem around Slack, the fund has [invested \\$1.97M in 11 companies](#) this year. That, along with new API tools including an [Events API](#) for real-time notifications and [message buttons](#) for Slack apps put Slack at the center of today's more connected—even if distributed—office.

Price: Free for 10 integrations and a 10k message archive; from \$8/month per user Standard account for unlimited

The Fastest Growing New Apps and APIs of 2016

From the latest apps to new takes on old favorites, the best apps of this year had two things in common: App integrations and APIs. APIs are the bridge between your favorite apps, the tech that keeps your data synced between apps and powers automated workflows to get more done in less time. They help developers focus on what their app does best, reaching broader audiences through partner apps and letting users manage their own data rather than being siloed into individual apps.

That's a trend you'll find in this year's fastest growing new apps and APIs, led by **(1) Facebook Lead Ads**. A new ad offering from Facebook that was launched last fall, Facebook Lead Ads gained an API this year and became one of the most popular ways to get actionable results from your ads. Viewers can now fill out a form and send you contact info right from an ad, so you can reach out with special offers and additional info.

Coming in second, **(2) Google Forms** launched as a stand-alone app this year with a brand new design, extra features, and a marketplace of add-ons to make it one of the best free ways to create forms and surveys. Our fourth and tenth apps, **(4) Basecamp 3** and **(10) Chatfuel for Facebook**, are also new apps that launched in the past year. Basecamp 3 is a new take on Basecamp with chat inside your projects, and its much-awaited API was launched this summer after Basecamp 3 itself launched last fall. Chatfuel for Facebook came out this summer after Facebook opened Messenger to developers, as a simple way to build bots without any code.

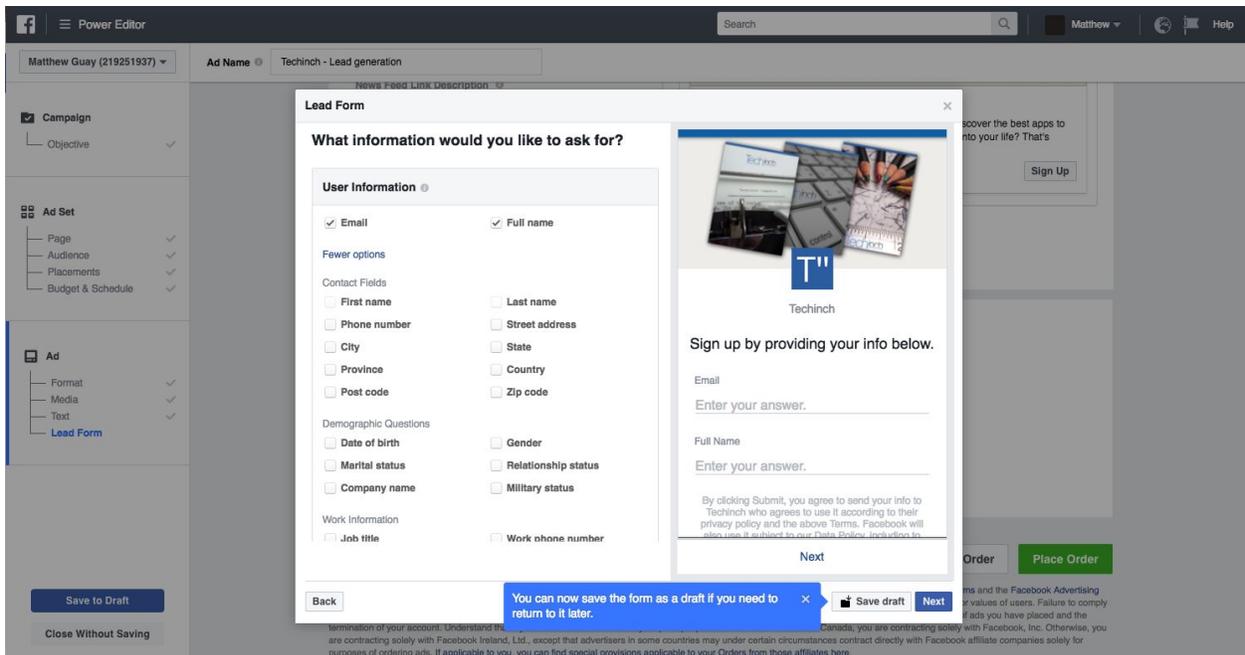
Finding an agreeable meeting time between multiple parties is a perfect job for connected apps, a place where our third fastest growing app **(3) Calendly** excels. **(5) ConvertKit**, **(7) ClickFunnels**, and **(8) Kajabi** each helps you market your products through emails, landing pages, and courses, respectively—each task that needs help from your other apps through integrations. And **(6) MeisterTask's** unique take on task management means your to-do list can kick off tasks in other apps through its new API.

Spreadsheet apps are tools you've likely used in your business since its earliest days, and with the new **(9) Excel** API, your spreadsheets have learned new tricks.

With its added integrations, your apps can save data to Excel Online automatically, synced to your computer via OneDrive so your spreadsheets are always up to date.

Here's a deeper look at each of the fastest-growing new apps and APIs on Zapier in 2016:

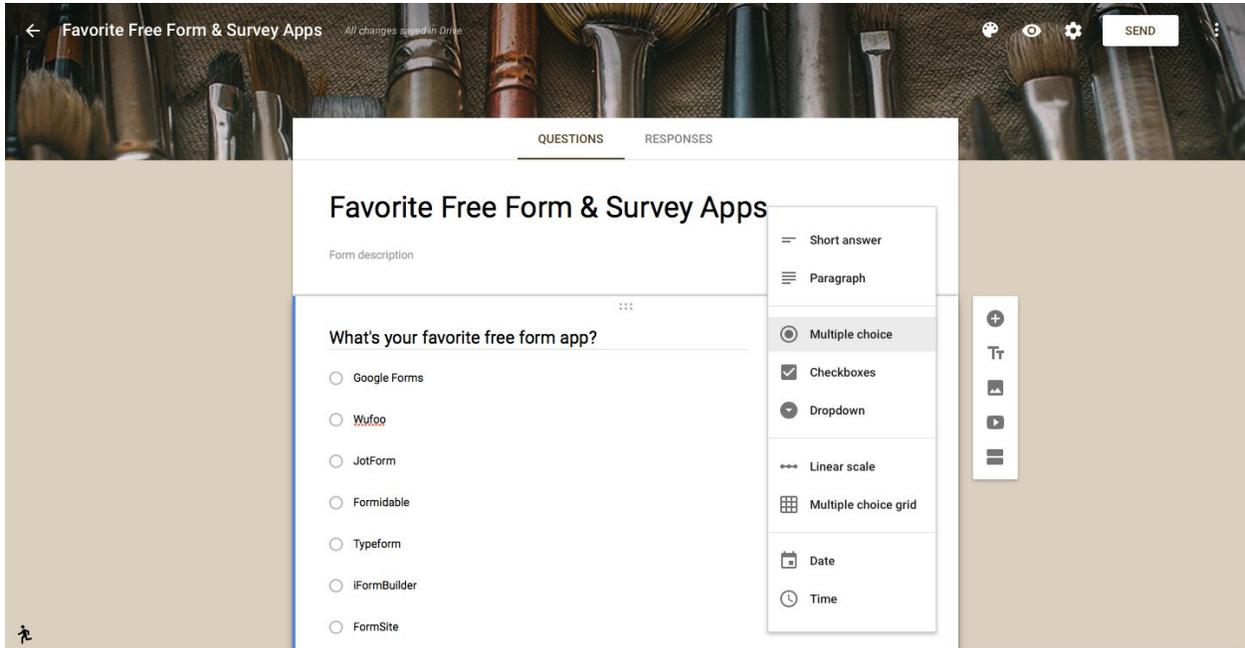
1. Facebook Lead Ads



[Facebook Lead Ads](#) are ads like you've never seen them. Instead of just showing a graphic or video and hoping people notice it, Facebook Lead Ads let interested viewers fill out a form and directly send you their contact info. That way, you can continue the conversation, sending them additional info for a much better chance of turning them into a customer.

Price: Varies on ad target market, market size, ad campaign duration, and more

2. Google Forms

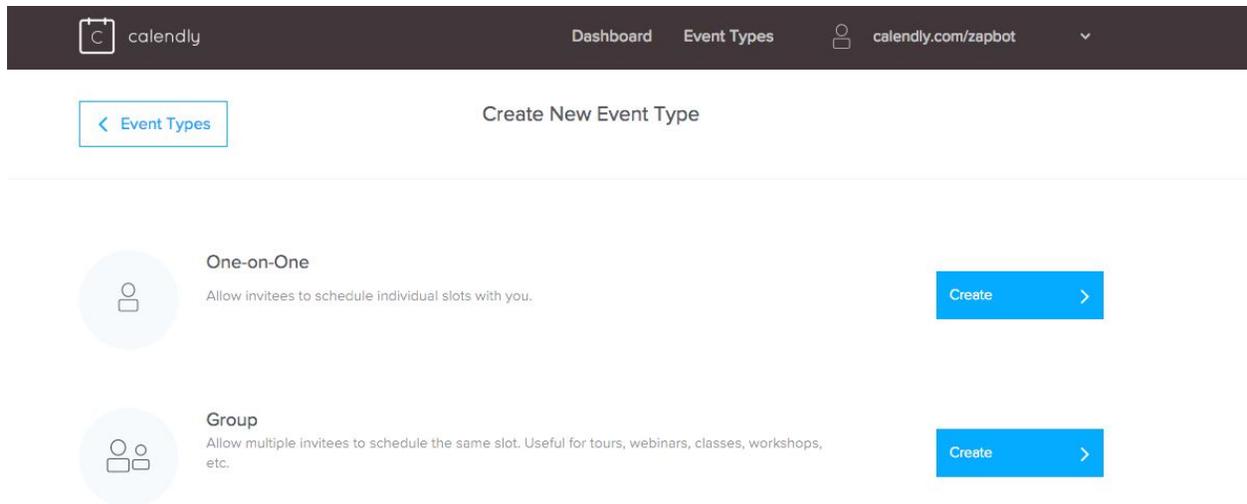


The screenshot shows the Google Forms editor interface. At the top, there's a navigation bar with a back arrow, the title 'Favorite Free Form & Survey Apps', and a 'SEND' button. Below the navigation bar, there are tabs for 'QUESTIONS' and 'RESPONSES'. The main content area shows the form title 'Favorite Free Form & Survey Apps' and a 'Form description' field. The question is 'What's your favorite free form app?'. The question type is 'Multiple choice'. The options are: Google Forms, Wufoo, JotForm, Formidable, Typeform, iFormBuilder, and FormSite. The 'Multiple choice' option is selected in the question type menu.

Google's included a forms tool with Google Sheets for years—but this year, it redesigned that tool and launched it as a standalone app: [Google Forms](#). For the low price of free, Google Forms includes the core tools you need to build forms and surveys. You can route respondents to questions based on their values, quiz them and let them know their results, and log responses to a spreadsheet. And if that's not enough, you can add extra features with Google Forms add-ons.

Price: Free; From \$5/month G Suite for business use

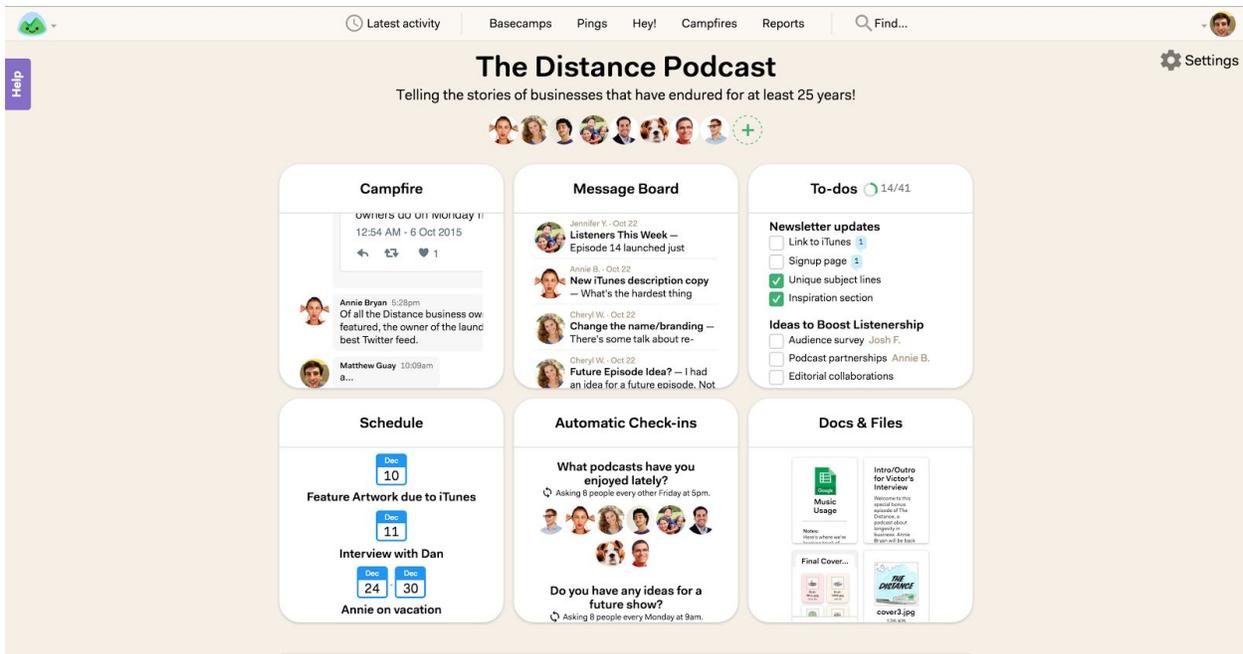
3. Calendly



The back-and-forth of scheduling meetings can waste more time than the meetings themselves. [Calendly](#) cuts that out, letting you list the times you're available so your meeting attendees can choose the time that works for them in their own timezone. It'll then add the event to both of your calendars, and remind you when it's time to jump on that call.

Price: Free for 1 event type; \$8/month per user Premium plan for unlimited event types and custom branding

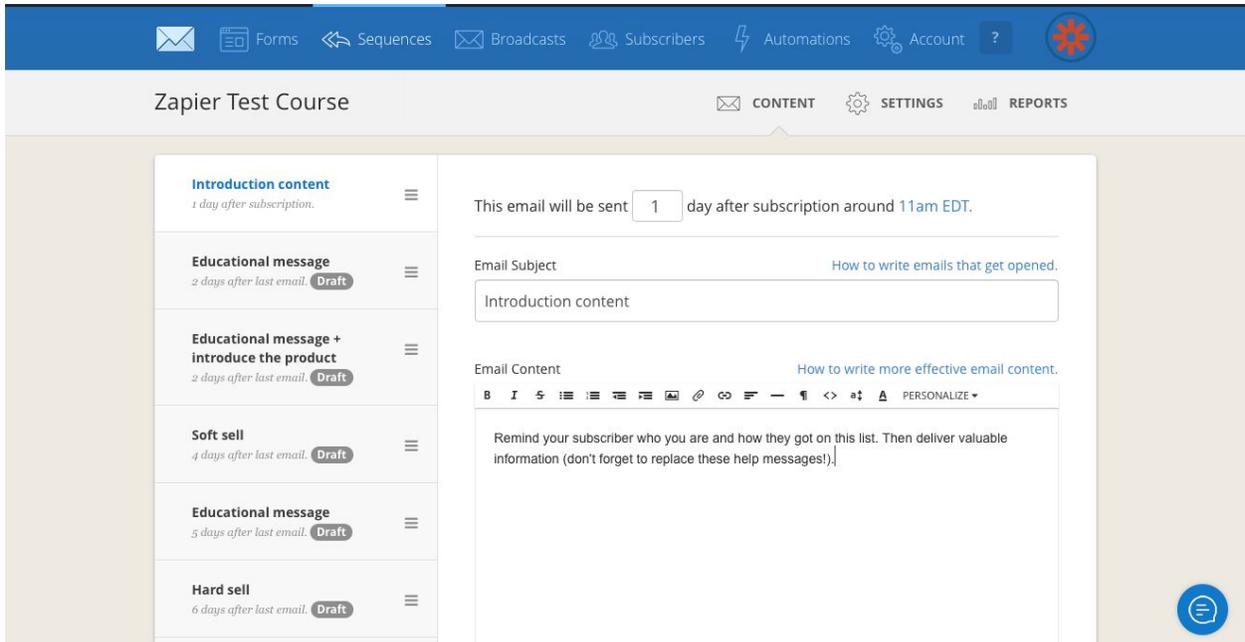
4. Basecamp 3



[Basecamp 3](#) is the Basecamp you know and love, along with the best features from its former companion apps, Campfire and Backpack. You can keep track of all your tasks, notes, conversations and more inside projects—and create as many projects as your team needs for the same price. Then, when you need to chat about your work, the new built-in Campfire chats let you keep the conversation right inside your projects to keep your team focused.

Price: Free for 1 project; from \$29/month Basecamp for Us plan for full features with in-house teams

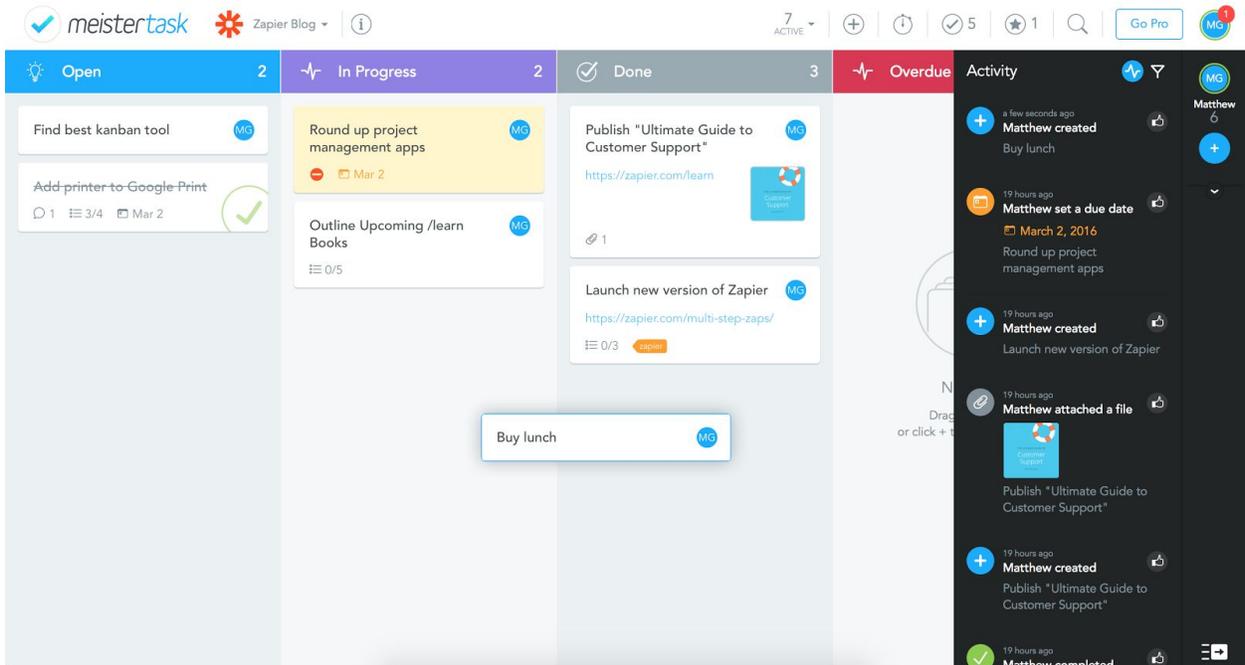
5. ConvertKit



Often it takes time to convince people to purchase your products. [ConvertKit](#) can handle that for you. Whenever you want to launch a new product, you'll make a landing page to gather emails, and ConvertKit will then send out drip emails to convince them to make the purchase—or train them how to use your product. Once your product is ready to sell, your leads will be ready to hit buy instantly.

Price: From \$29/month for 1,000 subscribers and unlimited emails

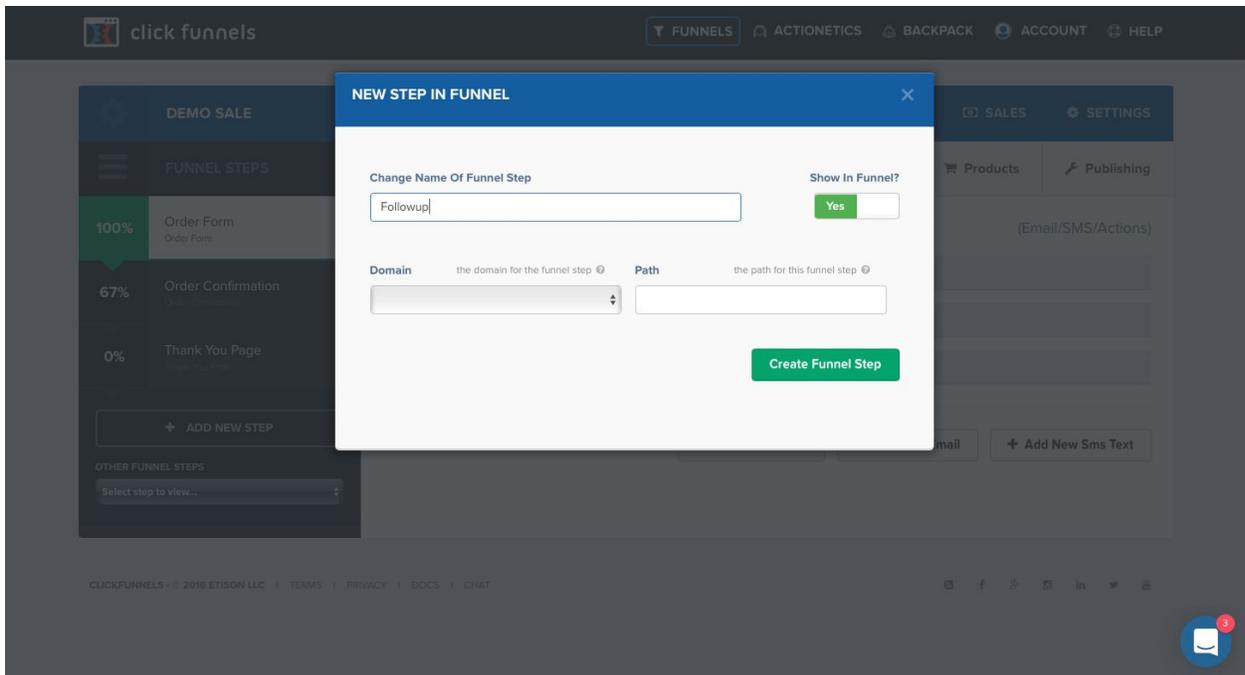
6. MeisterTask



A simple checkbox belies all the work that goes into completing a task. [MeisterTask](#) can help you manage the workflow your tasks go through before completion. You can add columns for each stage in your workflow, then drag tasks between them as they progress. That's when MeisterTask jumps into action, running automated workflows based on the stage a task is in to automatically notify team members, set due dates, and more.

Price: Free for 2 integrations; \$9/month per user Pro plan for full features and unlimited integrations

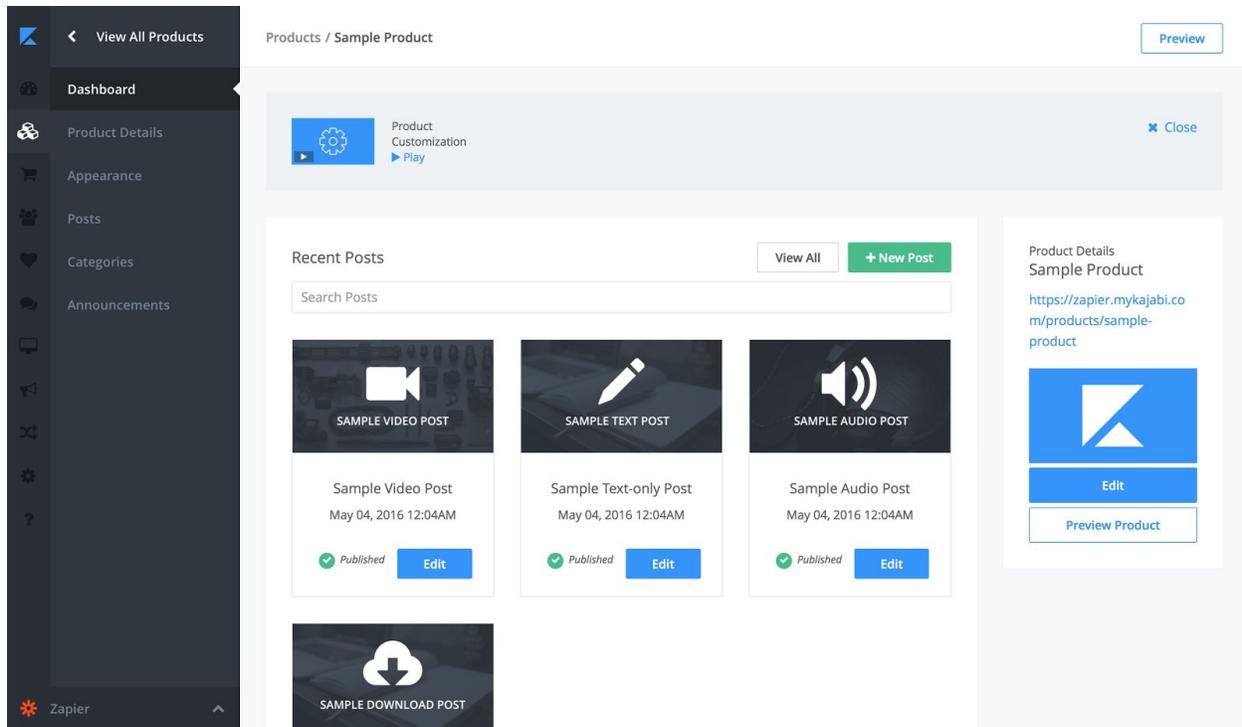
7. ClickFunnels



[ClickFunnels](#) is one app for every part of your customer acquisition process. You can build a landing page with its drag-and-drop editor, gather contacts with its forms, and use its automations to stay in touch with marketing emails. Then, you can build a full store in ClickFunnels, using the same tool to sell your products as you've used to promote it.

Price: From \$96/month ClickFunnels plan for up to 100 pages, 3 domains, and 20,000 monthly visits

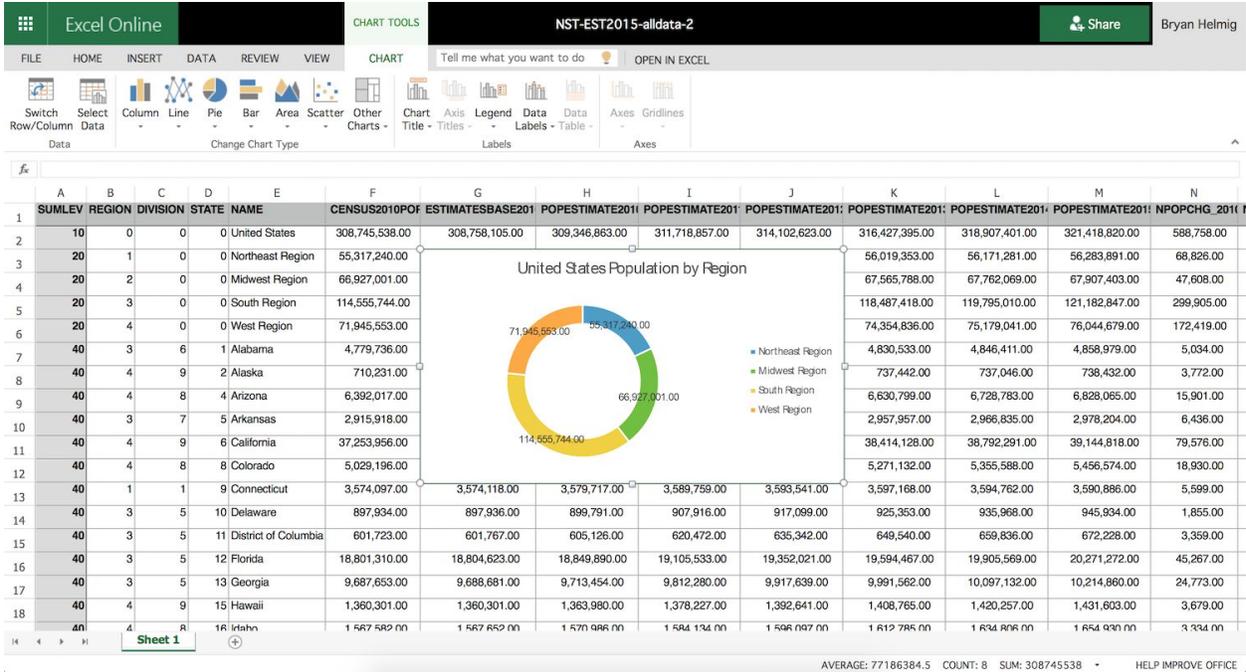
8. Kajabi



Want to share your skills in an online course? [Kajabi](#) is the tool you need. It can host your course videos, send new lessons to students via email, and help you build a beautiful website to feature your courses. It even includes payment tools so you can sell your courses, as well as communication tools to reach out to individual students, see their progress, and offer personalized feedback.

Price: From \$129/month Basic plan for selling 5 products

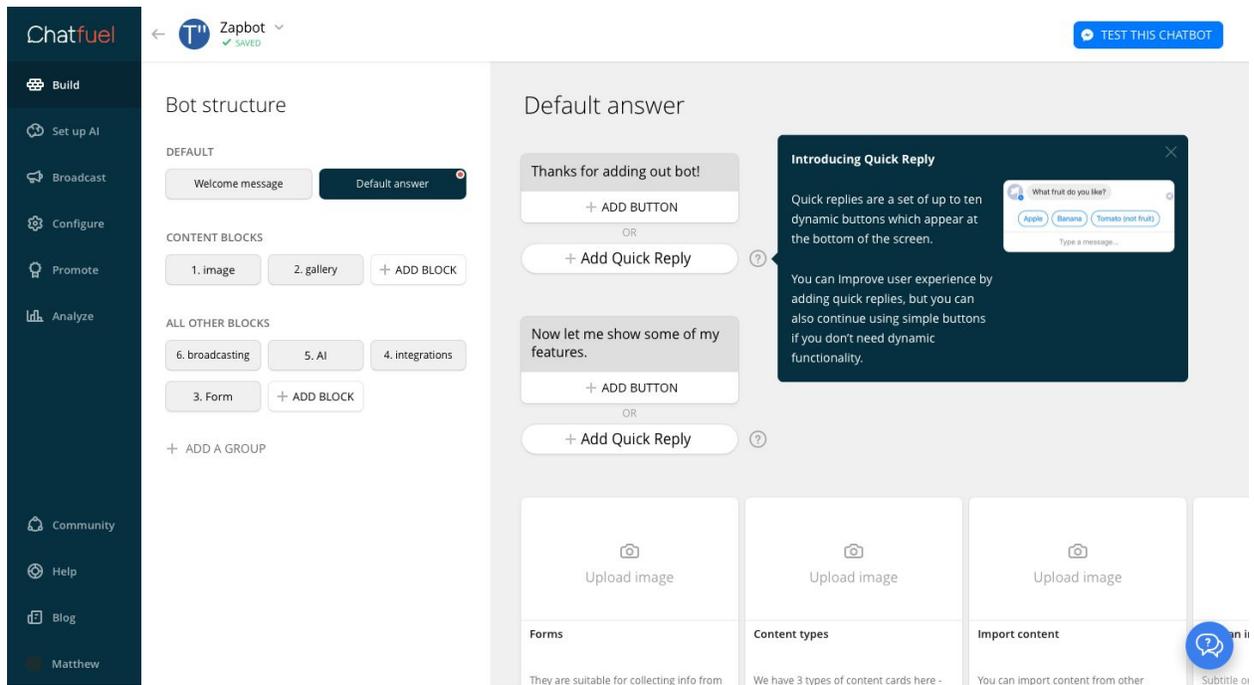
9. Excel



From its original release on the Macintosh in 1985 to its brand new web app edition, [Excel](#) continues to be one of the most popular spreadsheet tools. You can now crunch and chart numbers collaboratively with your team, pulling in data from your apps and using new add-ons to bring in the features you need. It even now includes a survey and form tool for a quick way to gather data directly into a spreadsheet.

Price: Included with Office 365 plans starting at \$5/month per user for Office 365 Business Essentials

10. Chatfuel for Facebook



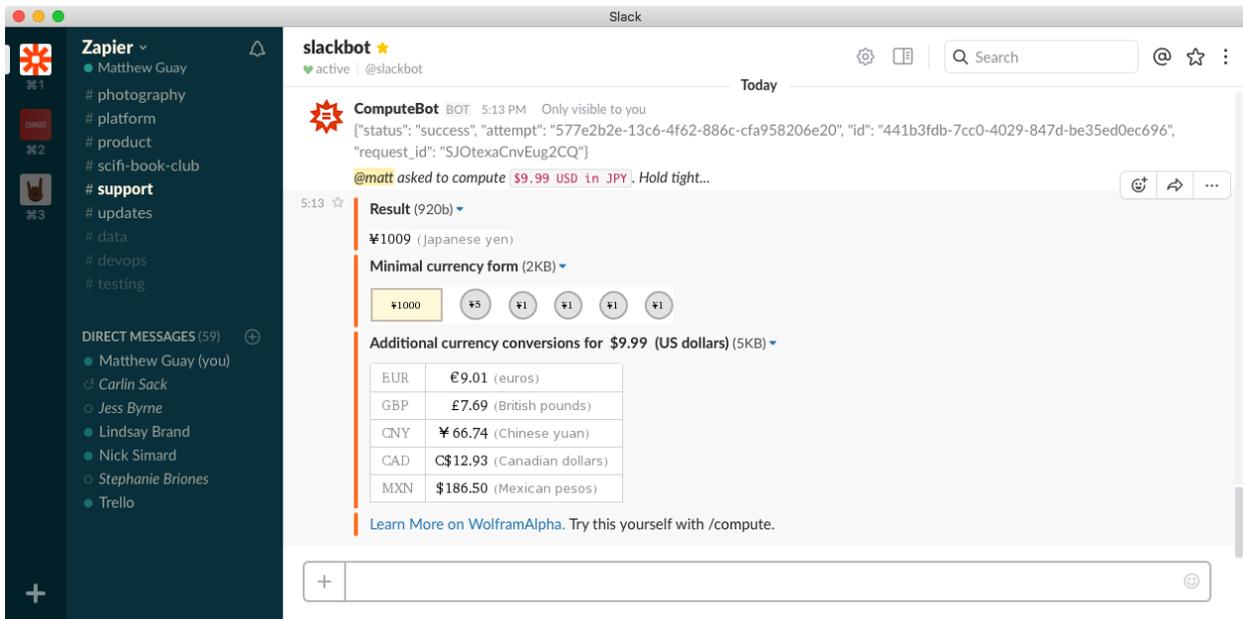
Want to build an intelligent chat bot, but don't know where to start? [Chatfuel for Facebook](#) lets you build your own in minutes, without any coding. You can teach it what questions your customers might ask—and what to say back—then send automated messages whenever you have something to announce. Need to share maps, opening hours, or specials? You can build a bot for that and more, one that'll be accessible to a billion people on Facebook Messenger.

Price: Free

The Fastest Growing App Categories and Trends in 2016

CRM apps aren't new. Neither are ads. What is new, though, are the greater marketing insights CRM apps and ads now provide. New features in CRM apps can tell you who to contact next and what each one of them has viewed on your site, and modern ads help you gather contact info from people who clicked your ad.

Those are only part of larger trends that are prevalent across professional software in 2016:



Bots

Siri taught us to talk to computers, and Alexa made that something you could do from anywhere in your house even without a phone. Bots now let you get that same power inside your software—and without talking in the middle of the office.

Much like how Siri or Alexa let you get facts from Wikipedia or set an alarm, bots let you find info from your business apps and get work done. You'll just type a

command to them inside a messaging app—perhaps a team chat app like Slack, or even Facebook's Messenger—and the bot's code will find the info or do the task you want. The difference is, for the most part, you'll need to make your own bots, something tools like Zapier's app integrations and bot builders like Chatfuel are perfect for.

Chat Everywhere

In a related trend, messaging apps are everywhere. WeChat serves as the default way to interact with businesses in China, and Facebook Messenger's bot launch this summer aims to make it the default way you talk to brands everywhere else. Productivity software often now comes with chat tools, something you'll find today in apps like Flow and Basecamp 3. And consumer tools like Skype and Facebook are being repurposed for business conversations in tools like Microsoft Teams and Workplace by Facebook.

Apps Inside Apps

Similar to bots, you'll now see more of your favorite apps inside other apps. Want to schedule meetings from your Trello cards? A Trello Powerup that integrates your board with a meeting or calendar app is your best option.

Instead of turning into a hub for everything, some professional apps are increasingly focused on being the absolute best at one task and leaving everything else to other apps that are the best at those tasks. WebMerge is great for filling in template documents—and it relies on data brought in from other apps. Mailparser and its new sibling app Docuparser are great at pulling data out of emails and documents—data that you can send to other apps with integrations. Even in consumer apps, you see a similar trend, with 3rd party apps inside of iMessage and sharing extensions on mobile devices.

AI and Machine Learning

Recognizing objects in photos isn't something any programmer can code in an afternoon. Neither is analyzing vast volumes of text for trends or predicting the

next big thing. But thanks to tools like BigML and Algorithmia, you can find a code snippet from someone else who's already solved that problem and use it in your own app. Or, you could use a professional AI tool, as Google released its Cloud Vision API this year, joining IBM Watson, which is already an API that is powering a [3D printed, self-driving bus](#). None of this is brand new, really—it's just come to a point where it's semi-easy to use it all productively.