ZenHub
2019 Survey Report

Introduction

Every company is becoming a software company. As Marc Andreessen wrote in a Wall Street Journal back in 2011, software is eating the world[1]. Software projects are now mission critical, and the ability to manage, track and improve the outcomes of these projects is paramount.

ZenHub is the leading project management solution for software teams using GitHub and our users are on the front lines of this digital transformation. Our mission is to help every organization become a highly effective software company. To accomplish that, we believe every team should work the way that best suits their needs without adding additional overhead or friction.

This means different things to different players on a software development team. Developers want to manage their projects alongside the code that defines the work they are doing so to stay productive. Project managers need insights to guide the team towards continual improvement in the software development lifecycle. Product owners and other business stakeholders need timely information on key software projects to track against business objectives.

This report is based on a survey we conducted to see just how well ZenHub delivers on these key requirements. It covers productivity, project planning, project management, and more.

Key Findings

Software development teams using ZenHub for Agile project management saw improvements across project planning, productivity, and project management. These improvements included:

Reducing The Number of Tools: 89% of teams were able to eliminate one or more tools from their workflow. 12% of teams had reduced their tools by three or more.

Getting More From GitHub: Teams saw significant increases in the utilization of their investment in GitHub as illustrated by heightened usage across several features including Milestones (+72%), Labels (+19%), Issues (+5%), and GitHub Actions (+20%).

Being More Productive: Adopting ZenHub led to increases in productivity with 52% of teams saying they spent less time in meetings, 75.8% claiming a reduction in context switching, and 62% said they spent less time updating project status and more time coding.

Shipping Software Faster: With ZenHub, 78% felt they understood priorities better, 51% were able to more accurate estimate project completion dates, and 65.5% saw projects better scoped and shipped on time.

1. Andreessen, Marc. (2011, August 20). Why Is Software Eating The World. www.wsj.com/articles/SB100014240
5311190348090457651225091562946O

Survey Methods

We sent a survey by email to 20,091 highly active ZenHub Users. We received a total of 516 responses which gave us a statistical significance of the results with a 95% probability that the sample reflected the total population.

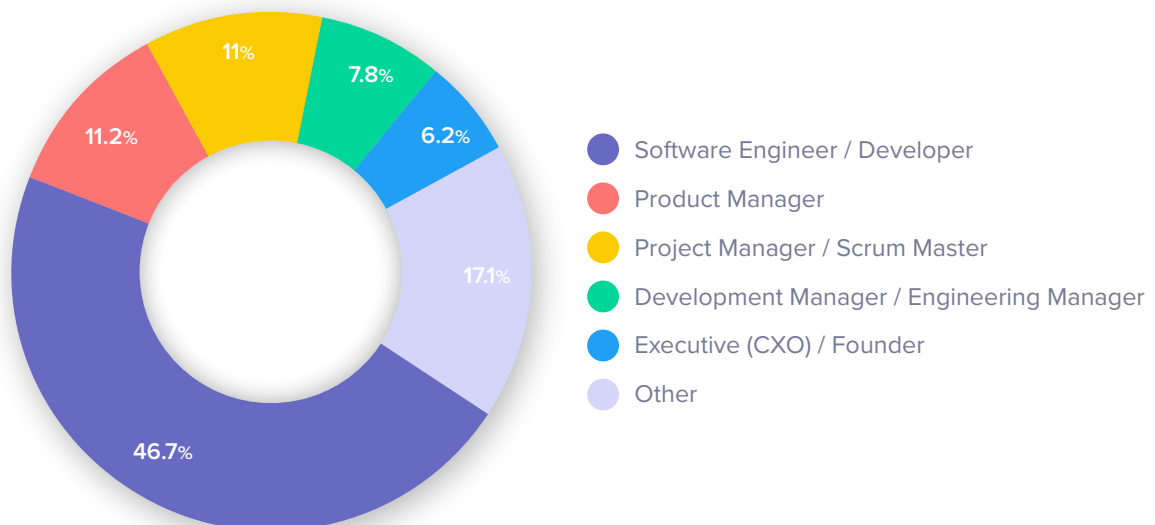The survey consisted of three types of questions:

1. Survey respondents were asked to grade on a scale of one to five whether they strongly disagree to strongly agree with a provided statement.

2. Multiple choice questions were asked to quantify the changes in outcomes and behavior when using ZenHub. For example, the time a task takes both before and after adopting ZenHub for project management.

3. We also asked free form questions designed to gather product feedback and variable data unique to individuals such as job title.

Roles

Software Development is a Team Sport

Software teams are made up of more than just developers. Project managers, product managers, and other stakeholders all play a role in successful software projects. Responses to this survey came from across the software development team with the majority of responses being from Software Engineers, Project Managers, Scrum Masters, and members of the Product team.

Question: What is your role?

- Software Engineer / Developer
- Product Manager
- Project Manager / Scrum Master
- Development Manager / Engineering Manager
- Executive (CXO) / Founder
- Other

# Productivity

Getting More Focus

Context switching kills productivity, especially for development work which by nature requires long periods of intense focus. While GitHub is where most developers want to spend their day, they are often forced to leave GitHub to update a third party project management tool. ZenHub leverages a browser extension to add project management directly to GitHub. The end result is software teams don't need to leave GitHub nearly as often after adopting ZenHub.

ZenHub was also found to greatly improve software teams dynamics, primarily across three areas:

- A reduction in the number of meetings related to project status updates

- Improved team focus and prioritization due to increased transparency of the work being done across the team

- Greater confidence that project progress is up-to-date and accurate

A contributing factor for these improvements is that ZenHub is built on GitHub's Issue data and is updated in real time as work in completed.
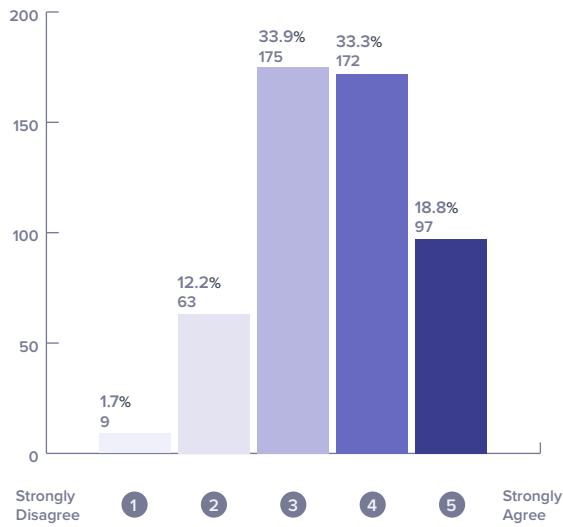
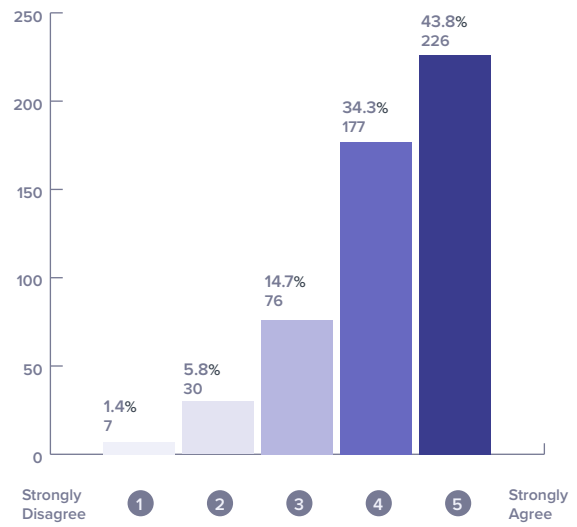Question: ZenHub has helped you be more productive by:
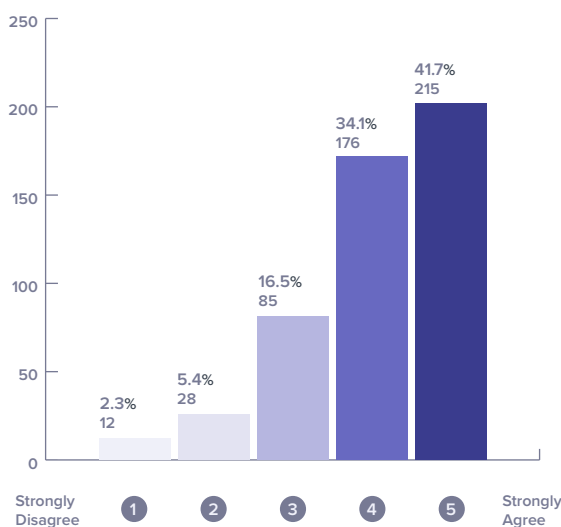
Reducing the need to context switch between GitHub and another project management app (like Jira, Trello, etc.).
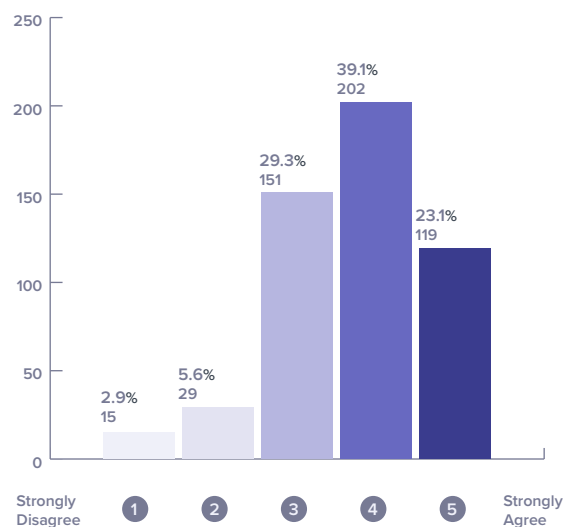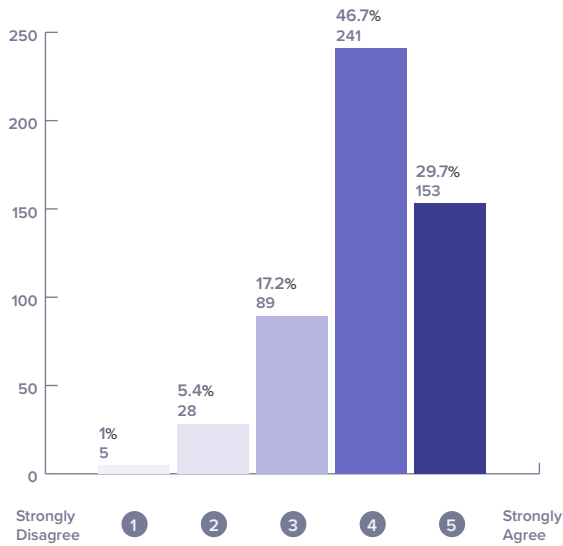

Letting me spend more time coding and less time updating my project progress.

Reducing the number of meetings needed for project progress updates.

Making it clear which issues are a priority so the team can focus on the right tasks in the correct order.

Giving your team confidence that project progress is always up-to-date and accurate.

Project Planning

Gain Clarity

Accurately estimating tasks, spotting workflow bottlenecks, and identifying at-risk projects are essential to shipping software projects in scope and on time. Using a platform like ZenHub that is powered by live GitHub Issue data gives teams the added tools they need to continually improve their workflow.

The results shown here show that ZenHub teams found it easier to remove bottlenecks in their workflows, accurately estimate project completion dates, understand their team's velocity and capacity, and identify at-risk projects. This improved their ability to ship projects both in scope and on time.
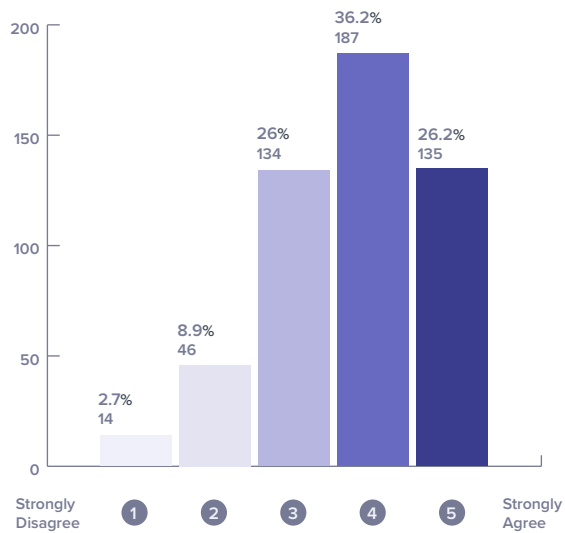
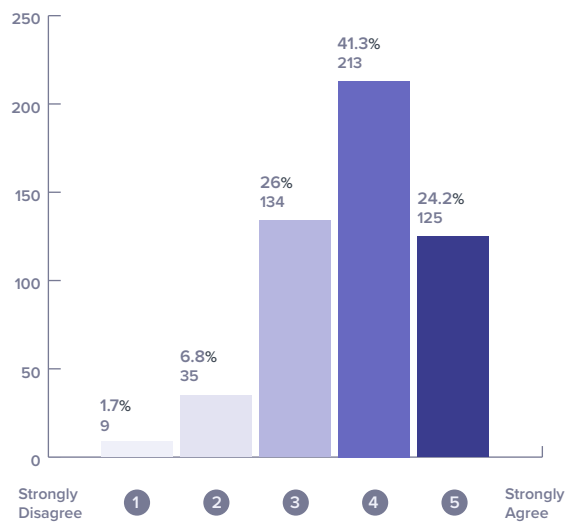Question: ZenHub has improved your project planning by:
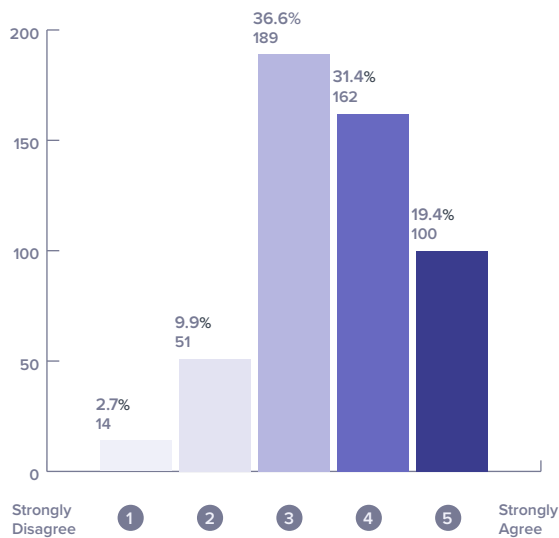
Helping you find, remove, and improve bottle-necks in your workflow.
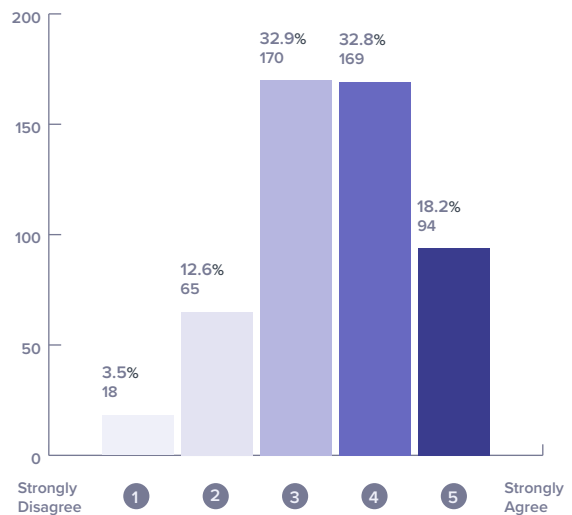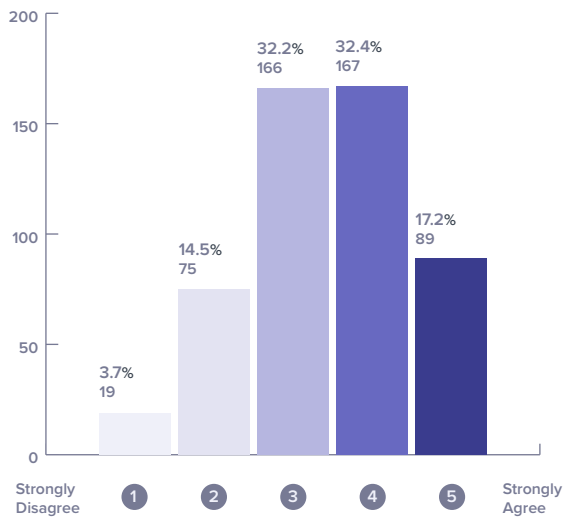

Allowing you to more accurately estimate project completion dates.

Helping better understand your team's velocity and capacity.

Helping to keep projects in scope and shipped on-time.

Predict project outcomes and identify at-risk projects.

GitHub Usage and Feature Adoption

Get More From GitHub

ZenHub teams get more from their investments in GitHub. In fact, 66.3% of survey respondents said that ZenHub had increased their GitHub usage by more than 50%. 8.4% said ZenHub had increased their GitHub usage by 200% or more.

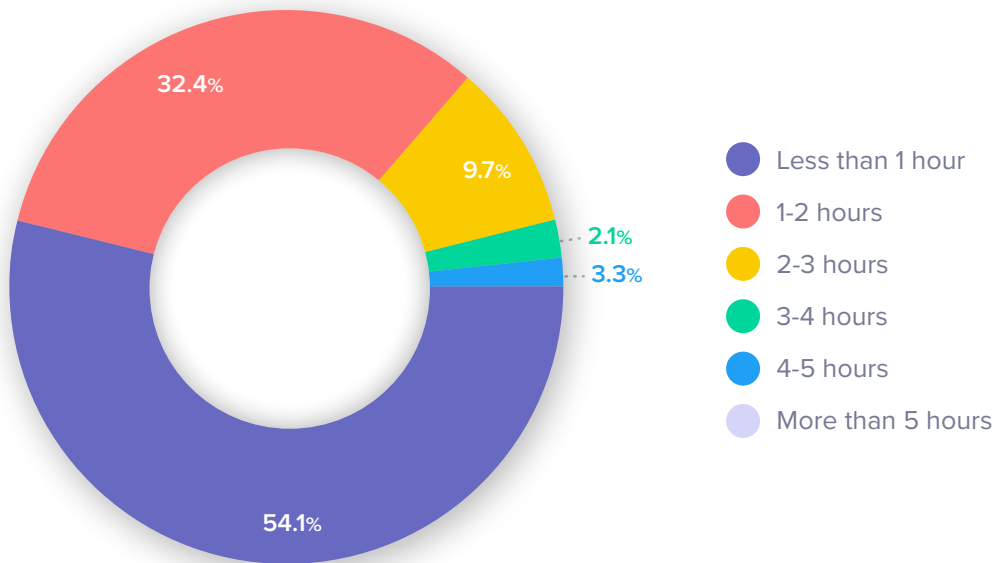Question: Which GitHub features did you use regularly BEFORE/AFTER ZenHub?
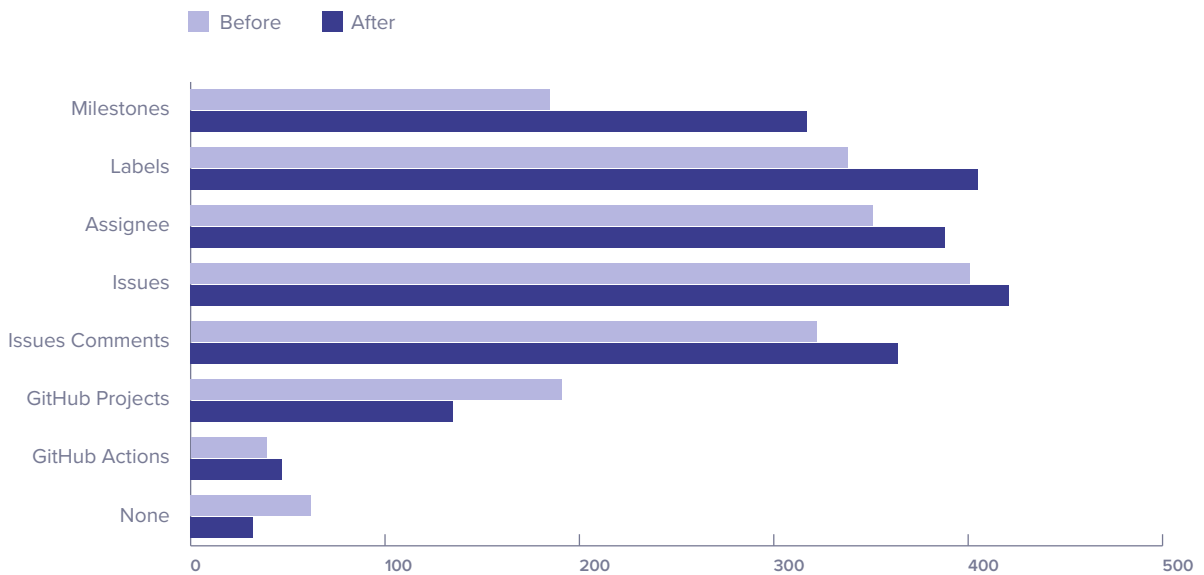
Project Management

Less Time Managing, Faster Time to Customer Value

Using ZenHub for project management cut project management time down significantly. Those stating that they spend less than an hour per day on project management jumped from 31.6% before ZenHub to 54.1% after ZenHub.

How much time do you now spend per day on project management tasks working inside GitHub with ZenHub? This includes planning, issue organization and prioritization, etc.

- 54.1% — Less than 1 hour
- 32.4% — 1-2 hours
- 9.7% — 2-3 hours
- 2.1% — 3-4 hours
- 3.3% — 4-5 hours
- More than 5 hours

In your opinion, how many tools has ZenHub replaced for your team? This could include to-do / task tools, productivity apps, Kanban/Scrum tools, or other project management tools (like Trello, Jira, etc).

- 11% — 0
- 76.6% — 1-2
- 11.6% — 3-4
- 5-6
- .6% — More than 7
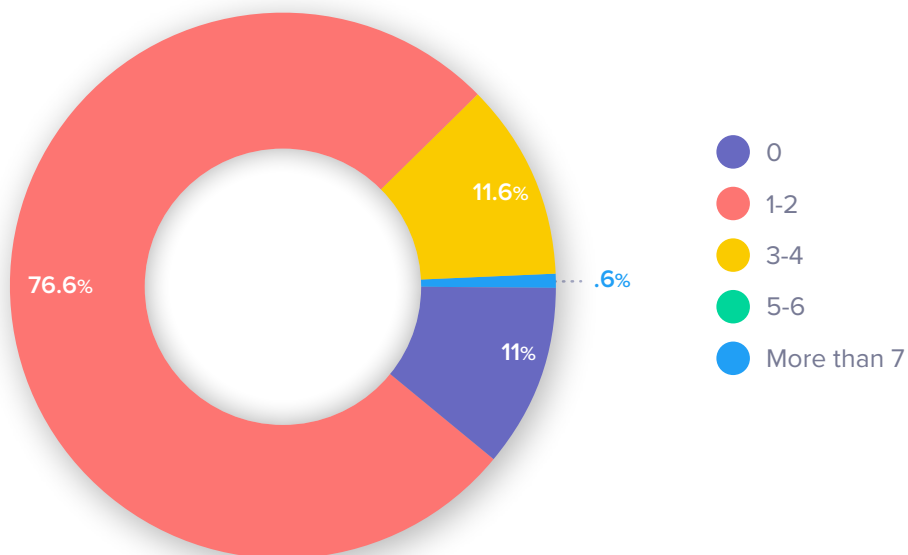
More Accurate Project Status with Fewer Tools

Highly accurate project status is the key to being a high performing software team. However, maintaining that accuracy sometimes comes at the cost of productivity as the team context switches away from their work to update a third-party tool.

Turns out, in the case of project management, using fewer tools is the ideal solution. 76.7% of respondents reported they were able to remove 1-2 tools from their development workflow by using ZenHub. This led to their project status being far more accurate at any given time as it required less effort to maintain that accuracy.

How likely is it that your project progress was accurately recorded at any given time BEFORE and AFTER ZenHub?
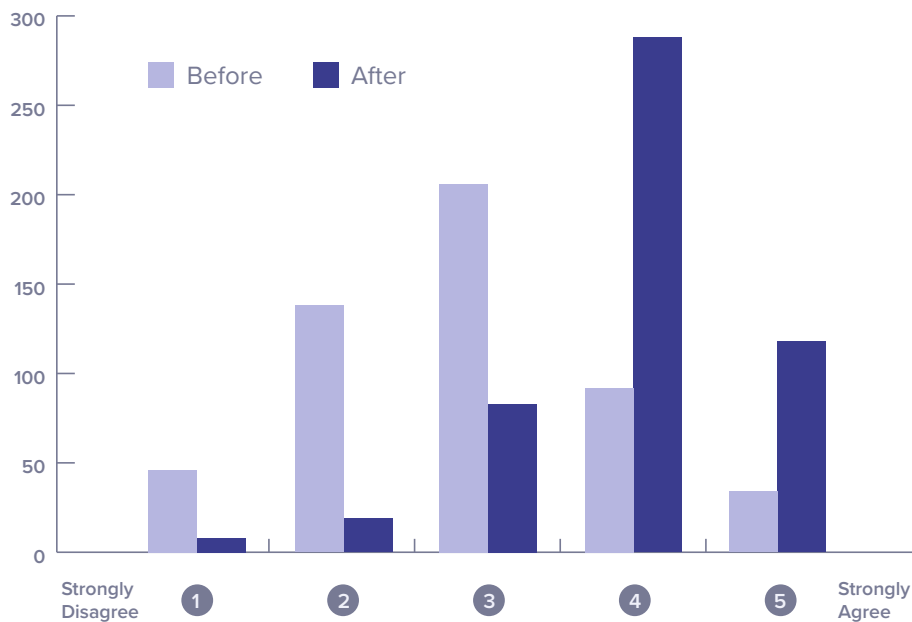
What ZenHub Teams Have To Say

Question: In what ways has ZenHub affected how your team works together?

Better communication.

'Epic' feature makes our project management vision much more clear.

Much easier to get an overview of priorities on a team basis.

It has helped us manage growing from a team of 3 to a company of over 50, split into 4 teams.

It has streamlined and centralized the process.

ZenHub

More transparency.

Product can see clearly what the team is working on and the team is able to prioritize tasks.

Estimation of required effort has improved.

All very easy to use, sits really nicely on top of GitHub.

We split work into much smaller stories that get completed rapidly, are easier to design for & QA.

The ZenHub Advantage

Software development is a complex endeavour with multiple moving pieces that need to align for a team to be effective. In order to set your team up for success its important to consider some key factors that affect productivity, planning, and project management.

Reduce Context Switching Whenever Possible – This survey data clearly shows that reducing project management overhead and thus decreasing the need to context switch away from important work improves productivity. By streamlining your developers' project management work you are increasing their productivity. For example, survey respondents were able to eliminate between one and two tools from their workflow after starting to use ZenHub inside of GitHub.

Make Sure Project Status is Highly Accuracy – Your project management is only as good as the accuracy of the underlying data tracking the team's progress. When you ask the team to leave GitHub to update their progress you are not only forcing them to context switch, you are also creating friction that will slow down the frequency of those updates. When your project status is based instead on GitHub Issues and its real time data, you can be sure that the true status of a project is being reflected. Survey respondents reported that their project status was much more likely to be up-to-date and accurate when tracking projects from within GitHub.

Get Better Workflow Visibility – The software development lifecycle is a complicated process filled with places for inefficiencies to hide. By applying analytics on top of GitHub Issue data you get the real picture of how work is progressing through your workflow. Only then can start to diagnose some of the hidden bottlenecks slowing your team down. A majority of respondents felt ZenHub has let them find, remove, and improve workflow bottlenecks.

Find out what ZenHub can do for your team. Sign up for a free 14-day trial today at www.zenhub.com.