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# NEXT STEP

# INEXPENSIVE TRICKS TO REDESIGN YOUR OFFICE SPACE

When it comes to our personal lives, we all know that our surroundings affect our mood. A sloppy, cluttered room can bring us down, while a walk in the woods can be refreshing. We are constantly moving from one location to another to escape and uplift our moods. The same applies to our office. A dreary office space isn't doing any good for your team's happiness or productivity. Before you start adding up the numbers for an office revamp, take a look at these tips to pimp your workspace without burning a hole in your pocket.

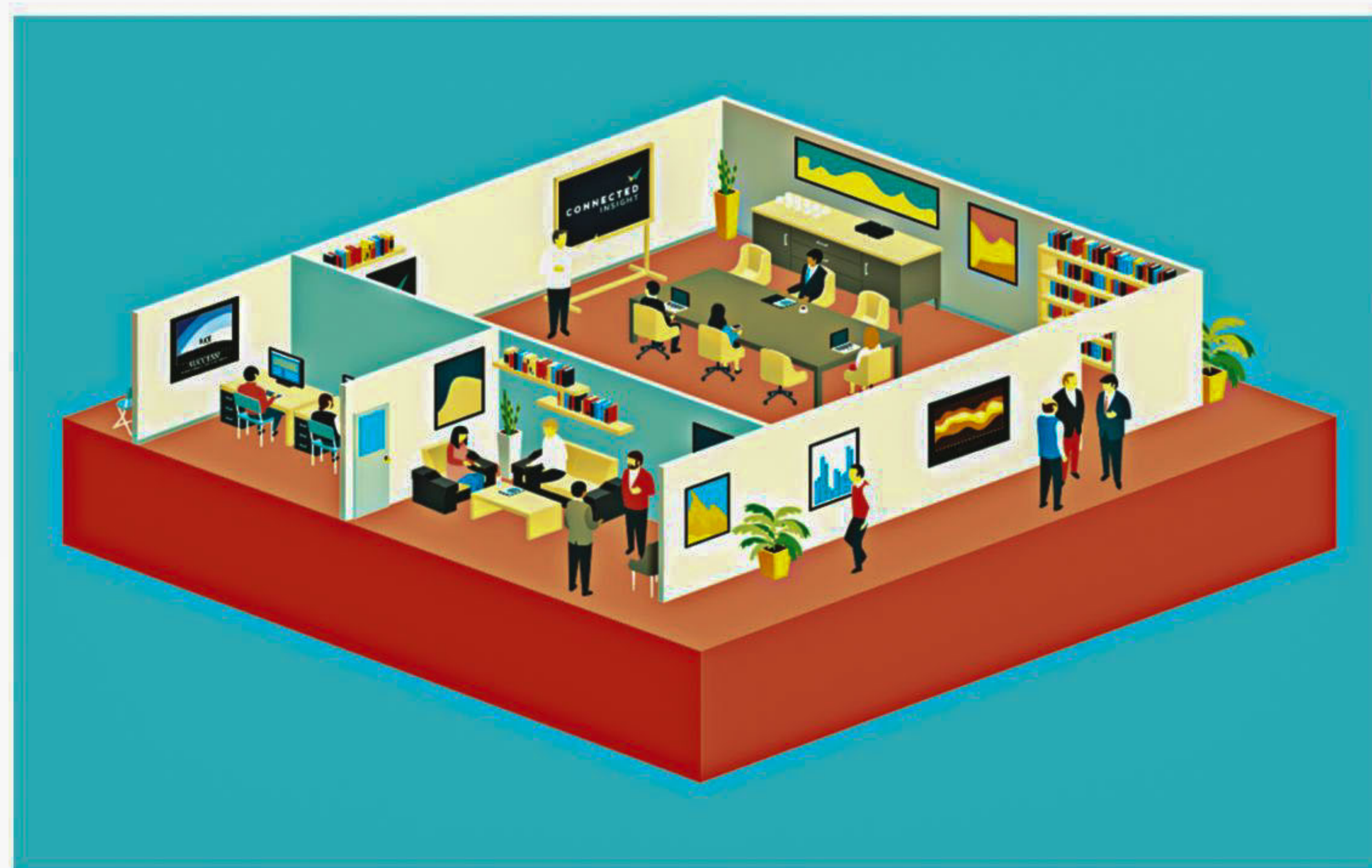
## Get artistic

This is a fairly common sight in up-and-coming companies and fresh new startups. The best workspaces aren't just squeaky clean and practical – they encompass something of the culture and spirit of the company. Splurge on a couple of quirky, inexpensive embellishments here and there – anything from a feature wall with the company logo on it to local and handmade art or antiques. Think about Cilantro, the Mediterranean-themed restaurant in Dhanmondi, with its crazy green, glass bottle walls and bottled fairy lights.

Ditch the soul-devouring motivational posters for custom-made prints. Crop, zoom and add custom effects to a digital photo, enlarge and frame. Or add a favourite poem or quotation to jazz things up for that extra personal touch. One or two big pieces will truly make a difference to your office.

## Green is the colour

Studies show that it only takes a brief glimpse of nature to increase creativity. There are so many ways to incorporate the great outdoors in the office. Get some nifty potted plants



that will survive and look great. And if that sounds too messy, opt for a terrarium or freshwater aquarium plants instead.

Another cool trick is to include natural materials like unpainted wood into the office furniture. It wouldn't kill to arrange your desk

to look outside either.

## Splash out on air freshener

Know what really makes a warm, inviting space that impresses your visitors? A great air freshener. Swap the tacky, soapy citrus smells

for apple-flavoured or cinnamon-infused scents. It's only normal to obsess over how things look, but don't neglect this other important sense. Changing up how our office smells can make it a fancier, nicer place at virtually no cost.

## Do away with the reception area

Ask yourself – do you really need that reception area? If you're nagged by worries that visitors might feel lost, find a new way to guide them through the space. Colourful branded floor bubbles can lead to different rooms, making it easier to explain to clients where to go. You're bound to brighten the place up.

## De-clutter

When it comes down to it, cleaning up costs nothing and radically improves the look of your workspace. Amidst piles of paperwork and knotted-up wires, a once neat and tidy office can turn into a disaster in no time. Have a 'no eating' policy at desks and arrange for easily accessible bins to avoid the inevitable pile up of trash. Encourage recycling and personal upkeep of workstations amongst employees.

Last but not least, do something about that tangle of electrical wires. Unravel the cables, cords, wires and plugs, and invest in some clips to attach cords along the backside of desks and out of sight.

As the New Year approaches, show your office the respect it and your team deserves. And remember, you don't need to spend a fortune – get creative and straighten up this second home of yours.

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## GET PSYCHED

### THE ULTIMATE PRE-PRESENTATION PLAYLIST



things. This song, for those who haven't heard it, does just that. Lemmy's growling voice and the loud, obnoxious guitar riff is enough to get your blood pumping. Hopefully you will finish the speech before your heart collapses.

**How You Like Me Now by The Heavy (Raffertie Remix)**

'The cooler, meaner version to the original' – this is like walking out like a boss while things explode in the background and a lone wheel rolls out of the flames and collapses on the ground. Except you will be walking in feeling like a hero or those men in suits from, umm, Suits.

**Turn Down for What by DJ Snake, Lil Jon**

Honestly, this song makes no sense to me. The video shows random people possibly having seizures while destroying furniture. But the beats are catchy enough to make you feel like moving to it, and possibly in the process (while the weird snake-charmer music part comes up), be ready to tackle that big presentation.

**Kashmir by Led Zeppelin**

This is for those with the music-taste of 60's teenagers, who wish they were alive during Woodstock. Compared to other songs in this list, it's relatively mellow. But Jimmy Page's guitar riffs are hypnotising and calm you into a state of alertness if that makes any sense.

**Bad to the Bone by George Thorogood and the Destroyers**

*And when I walk the streets  
Kings and Queens step aside*

...

*I'm here to tell ya honey*

*That I'm bad to the bone*

*Need I say more?*

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For the first time ever, Pantone chose two colours to represent the upcoming year. It was a deliberate move to give a nod toward gender equality. What they convey: Rose Quartz is all about compassion and composure while Serenity brings respite in stormy times.

## THE MOST IMPORTANT COLOURS IN BUSINESS

### Pantone announces 2016's Colours of the Year

Every year, Pantone, a company that develops colour systems for a variety of industries, pores over aesthetic trends – from new movies and technology to hot travel spots – and crowns a new shade the Colour of the Year.

## Making a DIFFERENCE

Bangladesh is rapidly moving towards middle income status by 2021. Our businesses definitely offer immense opportunities for the growing economy and this diversity needs a stage for the stories untold. See Bangladesh make its mark on the global map as Making a Difference brings you our proudest success stories from across the country.

## BEST TO-DO LIST APPS FOR MANAGERS

Let's face it, after the advent of internet and social media the world has become a distracting place. And to stay organised and focused, there isn't any better tool than the good ol' to-do list.

Though some tend to resort to pen and paper, modern day tech-savvies find productivity apps much more appealing. These apps are good for almost everything – from maintaining project deadlines to picking up groceries and paying utility bills. But with a myriad of mobile productivity apps out there, finding the right one seems distracting too. We bring you a list of the best handpicked to-do apps. Just set aside some time to go through these to find which one suits you best:

### Google Keep

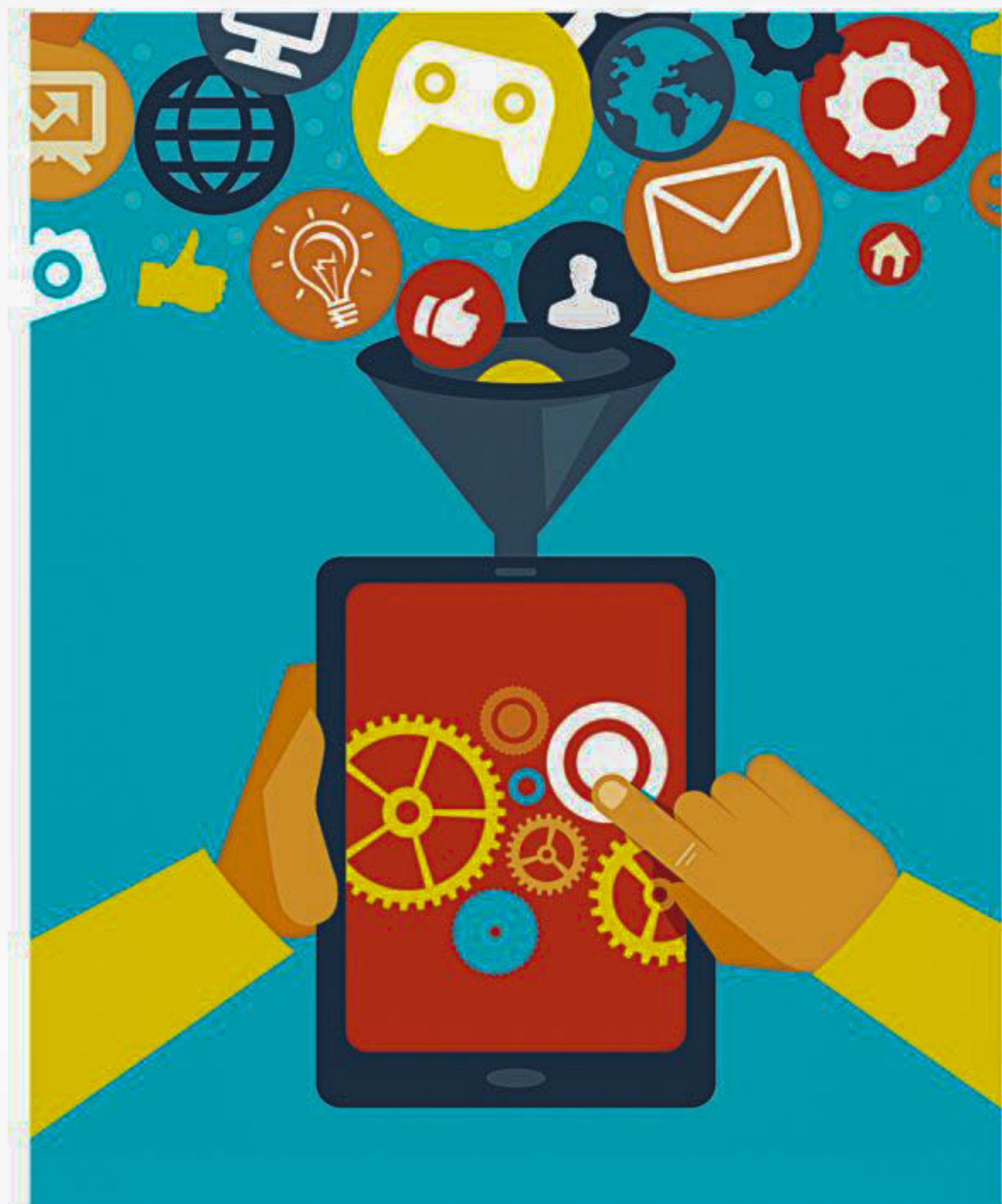
With more than 100 million downloads, Google Keep is first on our list. This app has a nicely designed interface. The card-like design is big and bright, easy to tweak and can be stacked according to importance.

Plus you can easily sync Keep with your Google account. Sadly you can't add it to your work account or any other POP or IMAP account.

The search feature is something we loved, so finding an old task or deadline is easy. And collaboration with people is super simple.

### Any.do

This one is a newcomer. Yet just in a short span of time it has become widely popular. Available on both Apple and Android, this app runs on mobile devices and platforms. Handling recurring tasks with timed and location-based reminders are easy. Sadly, not all the features are free.



### Wunderlist

This cross platform app works perfectly on desktop and mobile devices. It also has a web app that enables remote login. The simplistic design and easy-to-use interface with recurring to-dos, on-the-date reminders and a note-adding option are some of the features we adored. You can even star-mark your important tasks. P.S. it has a Chrome extension.

### Evernote

Last on our list is Evernote. We love the UI on Apple devices, but the Android felt a bit laggy. It has incorporated some cool features

that many might find useful, i.e. Work Chat, Context, and Presentation mode. This extremely popular app seamlessly syncs with every note, image and voice recording of yours via the cloud. So you can access everything from your devices.

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