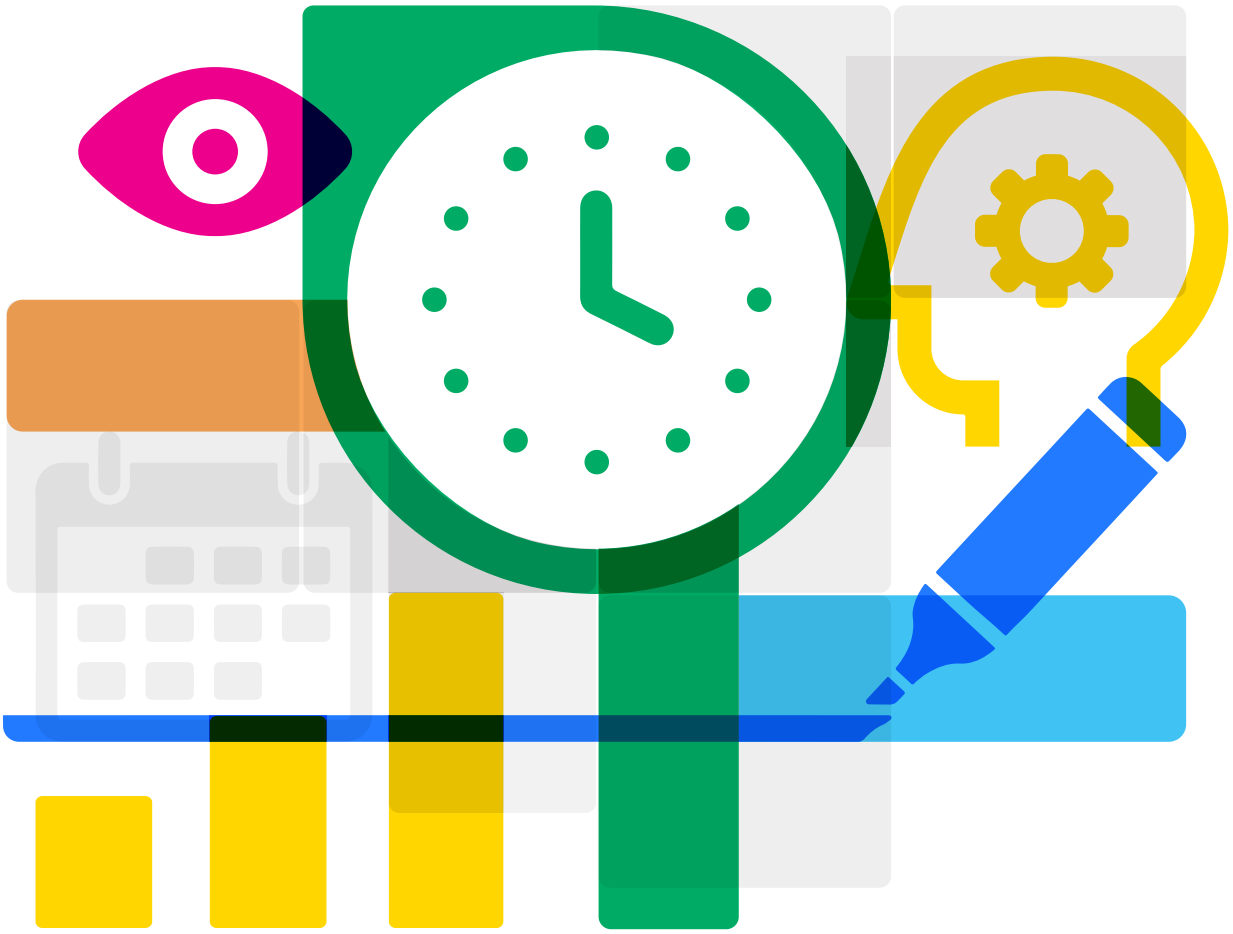
Tempo



‘This is the future’

How one services consultancy uses Tempo apps to fuel its growth

The right software can be a game-changer. Here's how NXI uses Jira Cloud, plus Tempo apps Timesheets and Structure, to work smarter.

Like most companies, IT integrator NXI wants to tackle bigger accounts and grow its business. But rather than fueling that growth with lots of additional funding, NXI's focus is to scale up with the smart use of tech tools.

"Instead of having to get venture capital money to grow our capabilities, we solve our problems with software," said Vadim Rusakov, founder and CEO of the Hamburg-based company.

Why chase funding, when the right toolset can get you what you need? As a service company, NXI needs to optimize around a few key activities:

- Tracking billable hours
- Budgets and project costs
- Streamlining project management to maximize efficiencies

When you do those things well, you don't need nearly as much cash to keep growing.

"It takes time to find the right software and get it set up – but once we do, it helps us reach our fullest potential. Nobody on the team is wasting time and everybody operates effectively with just these tools, so we don't have to increase staff or other expenses. That is something that many companies don't recognize, but I believe it's the future."

Here's how NXI uses Jira, Structure by Tempo and Timesheets by Tempo – plus a key integration between them – to accomplish its goals.



Jira for remote work and task-driven communications

The company consults for a wide variety of customers, and Jira offers a way for NXI suppliers and customers to work in the same project – or in some cases, customers work in their own project and suppliers get a clone of the project and tickets, so they're always in the loop and can assist easily.

But Jira alone can't solve some of NXI's essential requirements. The company needed a better way to manage resource allocation and analyze the amount of effort that went into each project. For that, they needed Jira extensions.

Timesheets by Tempo for making data-driven decisions

NXI needs to make sure employees and contractors are spending their time on high-value activities so the company can maximize efficiency.

Timesheets by Tempo lets employees easily record the hours they spend on each task or project, so Rusakov gets reliable data about time-tracking in Jira.

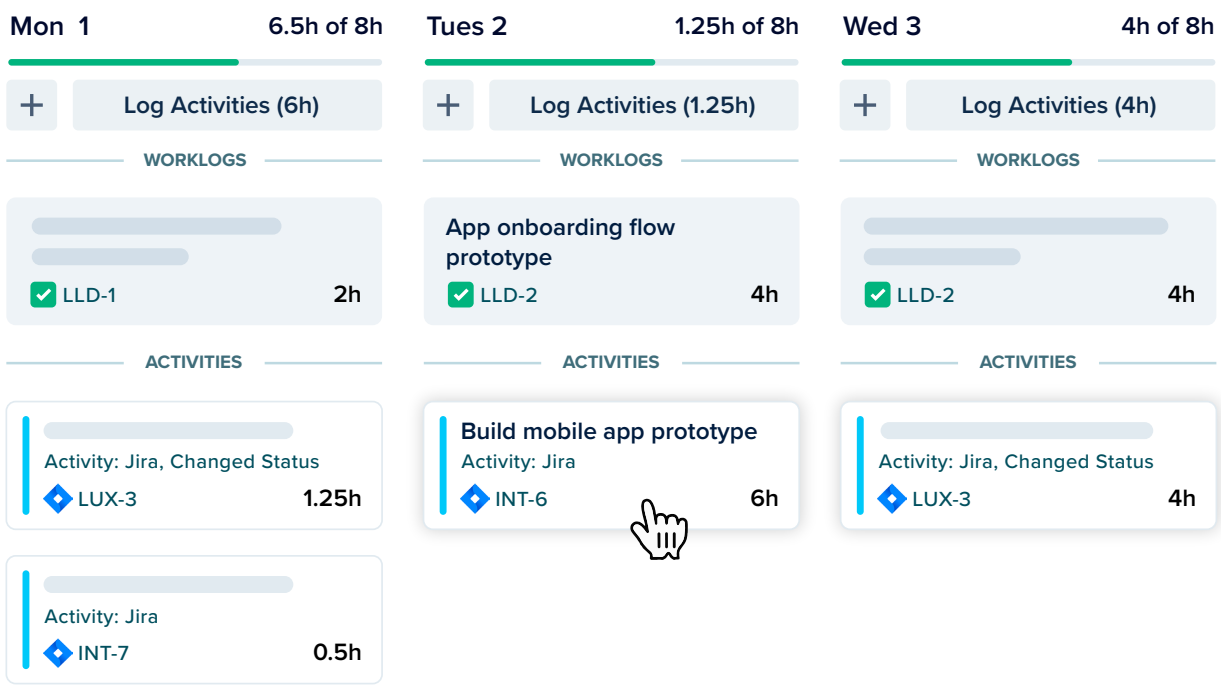
Timesheets can answer the all-important question "how much time is this task or project taking?" From there, Rusakov can answer some key questions:

- Are we charging this customer the right amount?
- Are we being cost-effective in how we spend our resources?
- Which of our suppliers is the highest-performing?

Ease of use is also an important element. NXI is implementing human resources software for a client's customers, for example – for this one contract, NXI now will work with dozens of individual companies that are the end-users of the software.

This HR project has 60 sub-projects currently, and that number is likely to grow to several hundred.

NXI is doing this work on behalf of its main client, which requires a consolidated, integrated invoice for all these different efforts, which leads to multiple projects integrated into the key customer's account.



Where is your time going? Timesheets makes it easy to log time across multiple projects so you can quickly find vital project data for better decision-making.

Timesheets makes that much easier. Work on each project is allocated to its proper account so it will be invoiced correctly.

That means all the hours worked on the account are included, creating reliable data about the consolidated efforts from all the employees who were involved.

User / Project / Issue	Key	Billable Hours	Total Hours
CE Catherine Evans	H3E-1	36h	40h
Helium-3 Energy	H3E-5	25h	30h
Analyze energy operations	H3E-26	13h	15h
[redacted]	H3E-30	3h	4h
[redacted]	H3E-19	2h	4h

Easily see billable hours for each team member by project.

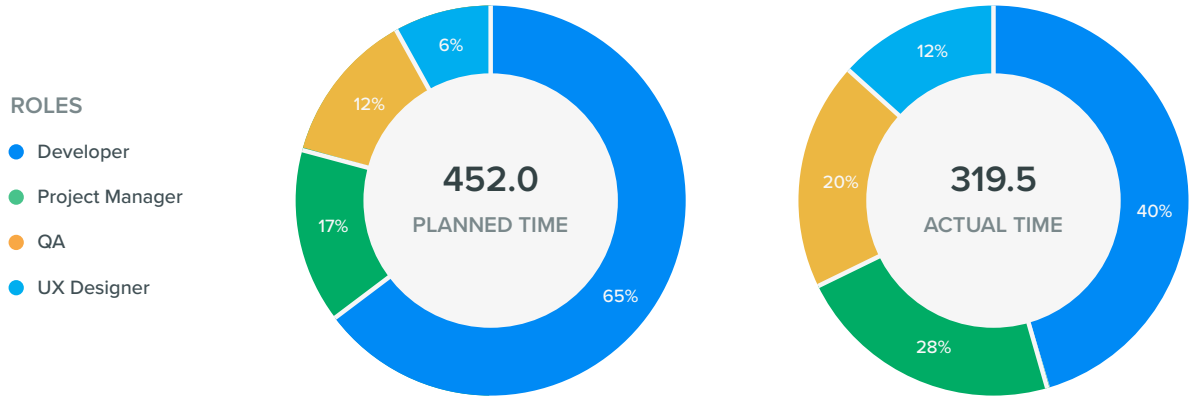
Planner by Tempo for allocating resources

Meanwhile, NXI uses Planner by Tempo to allocate resources across projects. This helps ensure that teams are working on the right priorities and meeting delivery targets. Then, during retrospectives it helps answer important questions. Did the team perform the project as expected? How closely did the team's estimates match reality?

Planner uses Timesheets data to let you see projects and available resources in one view, so you can centralize planning and – perhaps most importantly – gather data on how a past project went, so you can refine estimates going forward.

"How does the whole team perform? Are they above the expected time, or below?" Rusakov said.

The team members can also view their own calendars, see what unbooked time they have, and get assigned to projects in need of resources.



How accurate were your project estimates? Planner by Tempo breaks it down by team role.

Structure by Tempo for visualizing and managing large portfolios without missing a step

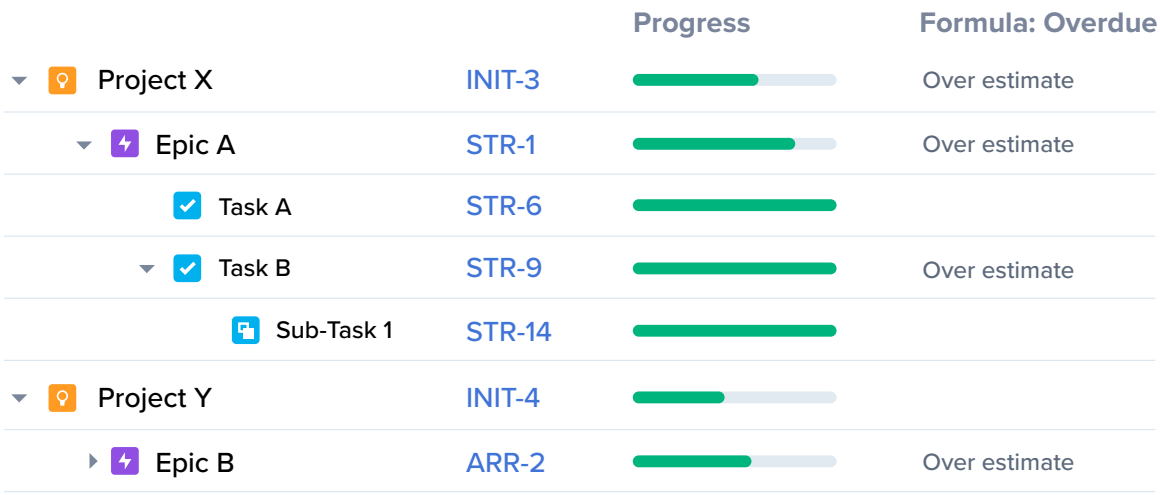
Meanwhile, Structure is employees' day-to-day solution for managing all those different HR software customers.

As a multi-project portfolio management solution, Structure makes projects visible and easy to administer for project managers and team leads.

One of Structure's biggest strengths is its flexible hierarchies – for example, NXI dispenses completely with the commonly used stories-under-epics Jira hierarchy, because they have no use for stories. The company prefers this Jira hierarchy:

- Project
  - Epic
    - Task
      - Sub-task

Structure's flexibility makes it easy for NXI to work as they like. Structure also lets project managers and leads see only what's important to them, visualizing a portfolio of project hierarchies within a single view.



Structure by Tempo's custom issue hierarchies and views enable teams to work the way they want to.

"From there, we can jump through the different layers of a project – into a task, into an epic. In Jira I can't open five tasks at the same time and look at all the epics."

"I could compare all the epics in one board within Jira, but that's not what I need. Structure is the only tool that makes this comparability possible."

Take the example of the HR implementation contract. Say one NXI employee is responsible for 10 projects, representing software implementations for 10 different companies. There are lots of tasks that are repeatable between all of the clients. But there's a lot of variability, too – maybe Project #1 has more communications requirements, for example, and Project #2 needs a recruitment module, while Project #3 wants a specialized employee ranking module, etc.

The worker has a template project that they can replicate 10 times so they get all the repeatable tasks in place immediately. After that, they can easily make client-specific adjustments.

Structure provides an overview of all these projects so the NXI employee can run them in parallel, taking care of the repeated tasks while efficiently noting and acting upon the specialized requirements for each one.

Without Structure, the employee would have to jump into each project individually and try to make comparisons across them. As Rusakov notes, "Having 10 tabs open in your browser and comparing them all is extremely annoying."

In Structure, it's all one space – and you can jump into each level and work with customers, keeping better track of details. A few times a day, Rusakov can open it to see progress and get updates on what needs to be done.

"Without Structure, this HR project would not be possible. Without Structure, we would be driven to conversations about whether we should continue using Jira at all."

Structure + Timesheets integration for reporting with billable time

It's incredibly important for NXI to understand how many hours a project has taken – that means understanding not only where employee hours are going and to which projects, but more importantly, how many hours are billable.

A new integration between Timesheets and Structure, called the Work Logged column, provided instant access to the total amount of logged and billable time on any project, across all projects.

Users can easily add this column to their custom hierarchies in Structure, where it can roll up all project hours across an epic or initiative. In NXI's case, Rusakov can see the full time scale of billable hours across all users. Before, Rusakov used to have to use filters across time periods within the project – now, he can see it all at once in Structure: the full sum of billable hours for each and every project, each and every task, subtask, etc., without having to filter the structure repeatedly.

"Finally, we can not only track planned hours by effort, but also by budget available."

Summary		Original Est.	Logged Hrs	Billed Hrs
Project W	INIT-3	10w 6d	9w 6d	8w 3d
Project X	INIT-4	36w 1d	30w	34w 4d
Project Y	INIT-5	12w 4d	9w	12w 1d
Project Z	INIT-6	32w 5d	29w	31w 4d

The Work Logged integration brings Timesheets data to Structure, allowing for more flexible, customizable project reporting.

Unifying work within Jira

After starting with email-based communications, NXI now barely uses email at all. While they still have Outlook, a Jira add-on shifts email content to its respective Jira issue so they can see it in context – a setup that further centers Jira as the hub of all their work.

Jira also acts as the relationship management solution – NXI only works with suppliers who are comfortable working within Jira. Freelancers track time and do their invoicing with Timesheets, and NXI team members work within Structure as they interface with Jira.

It took some time for Rusakov to create the organizational setup, and he's willing to adapt to new tools and features to keep his company punching above its weight.

"Having a workspace where you can be extremely efficient no matter where you are, where you can communicate transparently, being connected to your repositories and wikispace so everything is interconnected, and everything can be found very easily – all of that is giving us a chance to grow fast organically, without racking up huge expenses on expanding our employee headcount or seeking out venture capital money."

"Having this software is really making companies like ours possible."



About Tempo

Build what is most important, at the right time

We help teams build better, together. Our solutions help users orchestrate creation and delivery of work, so teams can focus and optimize around their highest priorities.

We build some of the most popular tools for portfolio management, including top-selling apps on the Atlassian Marketplace. With Roadmunk and ALM Works now part of Tempo, we deliver integrated solutions for roadmapping & idea management, project portfolio management, and resource & cost management.