

Dropbox alternative

Summary and benefits

Minute reference 24/0030 (g)¹ provided the following approval:

“The Dropbox facility at an annual cost of £95.88 per annum was unanimously approved.”

This has never been actioned as the amount of storage² required has remained just below the free personal Dropbox limit, but that limit is about to be breached. A paid Dropbox was about to be deployed. However,.....

Since the April decision was made, Parish Councillors .gov.uk emails have been moved to a new service system by our webhost Parish Online. That system has many other features and I recommend we do not deploy the Dropbox option. Instead, I recommend we adopt the Parish Online³ storage solution.

We can use the system free until our next renewal (April 2025), we would then benefit from Parish Online funding until April 2026 (meaning the Parish Online version was only c£20 more expensive than the Dropbox solution) and from April 2027 the cost would be c£120 more expensive than the Dropbox version.

A Parish Online brochure is attached providing more details, but benefits include:

- All Councillors would have a file area on the system meaning that their documents would no longer need to be stored on their personal computer hard drives. This will improve the Council operational resilience and business continuity.
- We could collaborate better on draft documents. This could make us more efficient.
- Transfer of files would be smoother when Clerks change⁴
- Freedom of Information [‘Fol’] responses would be more efficient.

¹ April 2024

² Currently c1.6gb

³ In 2023, Parish Online became a not for profit company, their website stating, “Parish Online becomes a not-for-profit. Recognising the importance of providing high quality services with a high social value, the Geosphere team create a sister company, Local Authority Technology Community Interest Company (CIC). This CIC is the new home for Parish Online services, though still heavily supported by Geosphere Ltd.. The Parish Online team own and operate both companies.”

⁴ The Dropbox facility would be in my personal name rather than the Council name, which could cause handover issues one day.

- Other features are included such as; document editing, workflow approval, chat and video apps⁵

Benefits of moving our storage to Parish Online and costs

Parish Online confirm:

“With WorkDrive in our Workplace package, each user can have private folders and you can also have shared folders (which is what I was showing in the session).

To have the full Workplace package for all users would be an extra £216 ex vat (that's a discounted rate from the normal list price). Plus, we can apply for CDDO funding to get £100 ex vat off in the first year so it's effectively £116 ex vat. Plus... I can apply it to your account but only start charging you for it when your renewal comes around next April.

Although this is a more expensive option, it's a more long-term solution than a single Dropbox account. It's not completely apples with apples, as Workplace has online document editing, workflow approval, chat and video apps, 30GB storage for each mailbox and 100GB or shared storage, so it a much more integrated package (a bit like a Microsoft 365 subscription).

We don't put much uplift on this service so I don't have to do the hard-sell, but we've adopted it because we believe it's right for small and medium sized councils compared to informal accounts like dropbox and more expensive systems like MS365.”

⁵ Which could save Zoom type costs if we were to stream our meetings, or were allowed to hold virtual meetings

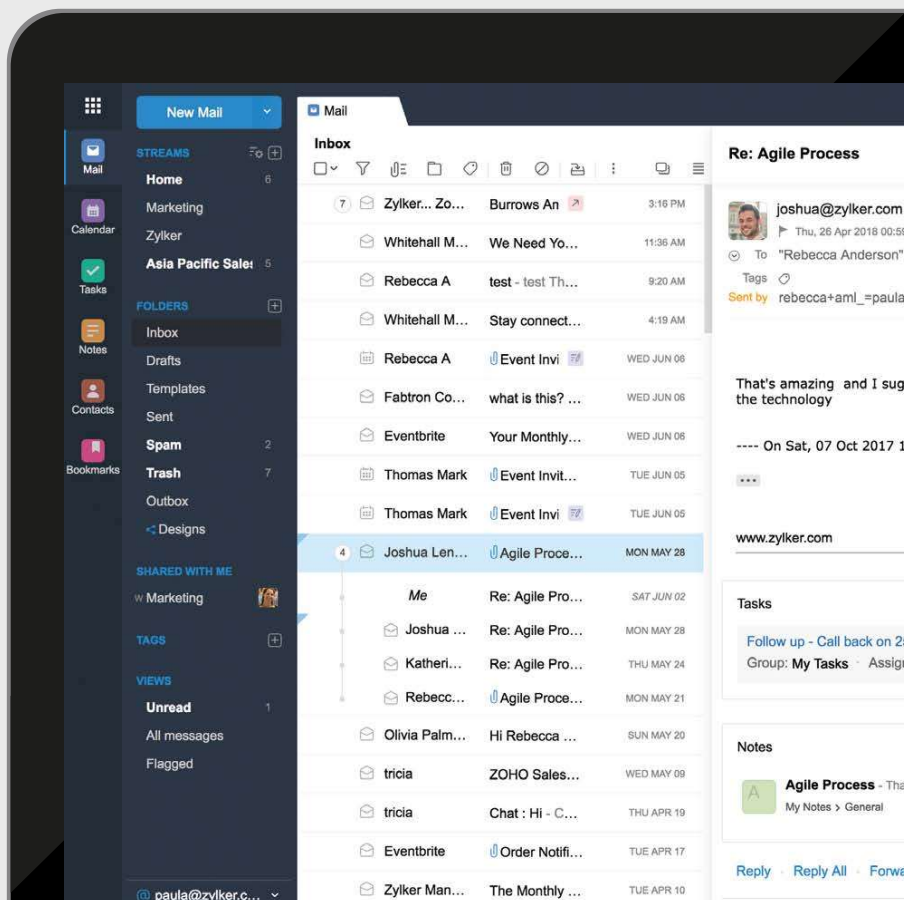


Zoho
Workplace

Business Email and Collaboration tools



Mail



Secure, feature rich email for your business

Clean and clutter-free inbox

- Advanced Search and Sort options
- Filters to organize emails
- Archival and eDiscovery

Sharing and team collaboration

- Social media style collaboration with Streams
- Draft email sharing for peer review
- Folder sharing and delegation

Integrated inbox with Calendar, Tasks and Notes

- Resource booking with calendar
- Managing to-do lists with Tasks and Notes
- eWidgets for accessing various applications from mailbox

Powerful control panel and email administration

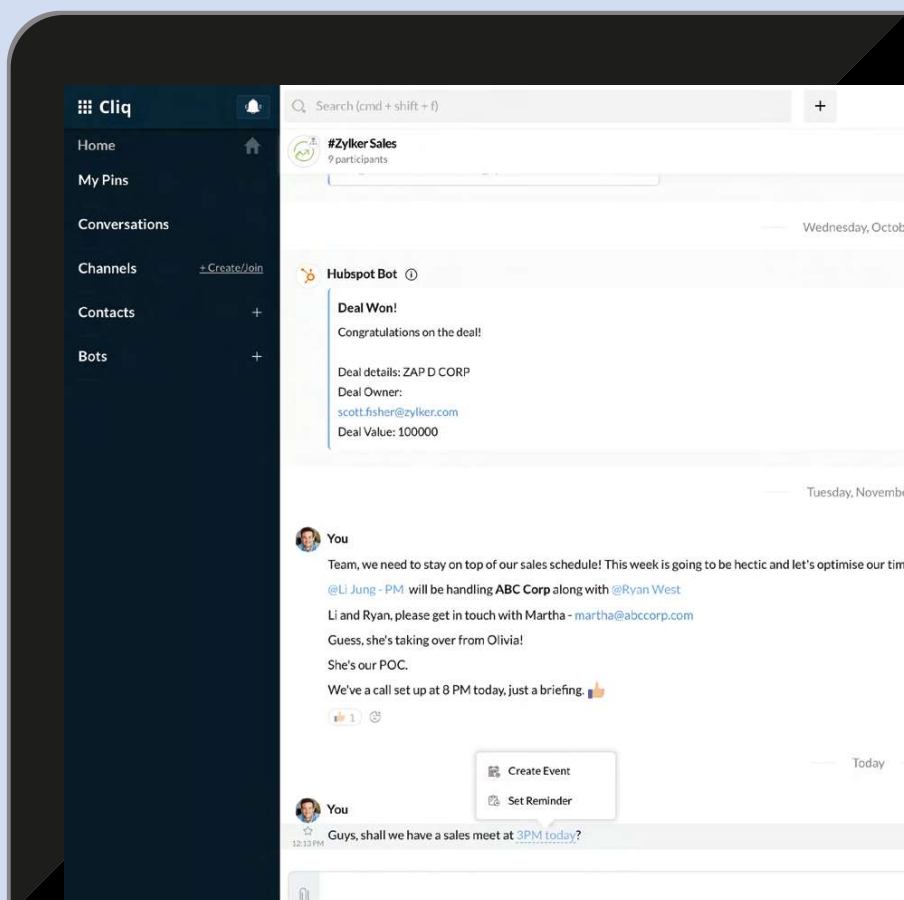
- Two factor authentication
- S-Mime for high level security
- Creating and managing group email accounts

Sending out perfect emails

- Automated vacation replies
- Recall sent emails
- Undo email sending



Cliq



Instant messaging app for your team interactions

Accessible across Workplace suite

- One-to-one messaging and group chat
- Audio and video call options
- Screen sharing and broadcasting

Managing chats efficiently

- Marking messages as important, to-do, etc.
- In-chat reminders
- Separate @mentions view

Managing online meetings

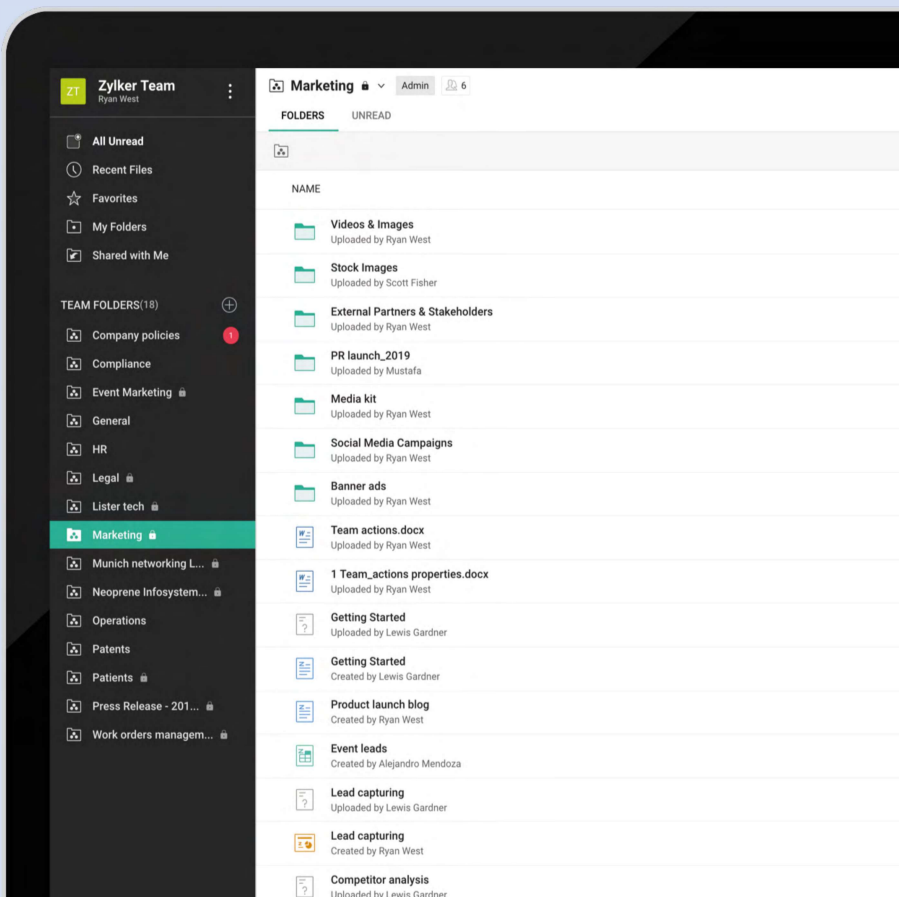
- Initiating meetings from the chat box
- Sync with calendar
- Notifications to participants and MOM reminders with ZIA

Chatbots

- Automating daily tasks using chatbots and schedulers
- Smooth integration with other Zoho and non-Zoho apps

Access across devices

- Robust mobile and desktop app
- Accessible from any browser




File storage and content collaboration platform for teams.

Shared workspaces - Team Folders

- Unified space to store, share, and work together
- Granular level access controls
- In-built office suite

Work outside your team

- Share files externally
- Set password and expiry dates
- Create multiple links and monitor access stats

Stay in sync

- Work offline, sync when online
- Sync only the files you want to work on
- Mobile apps that keep you connected at all times

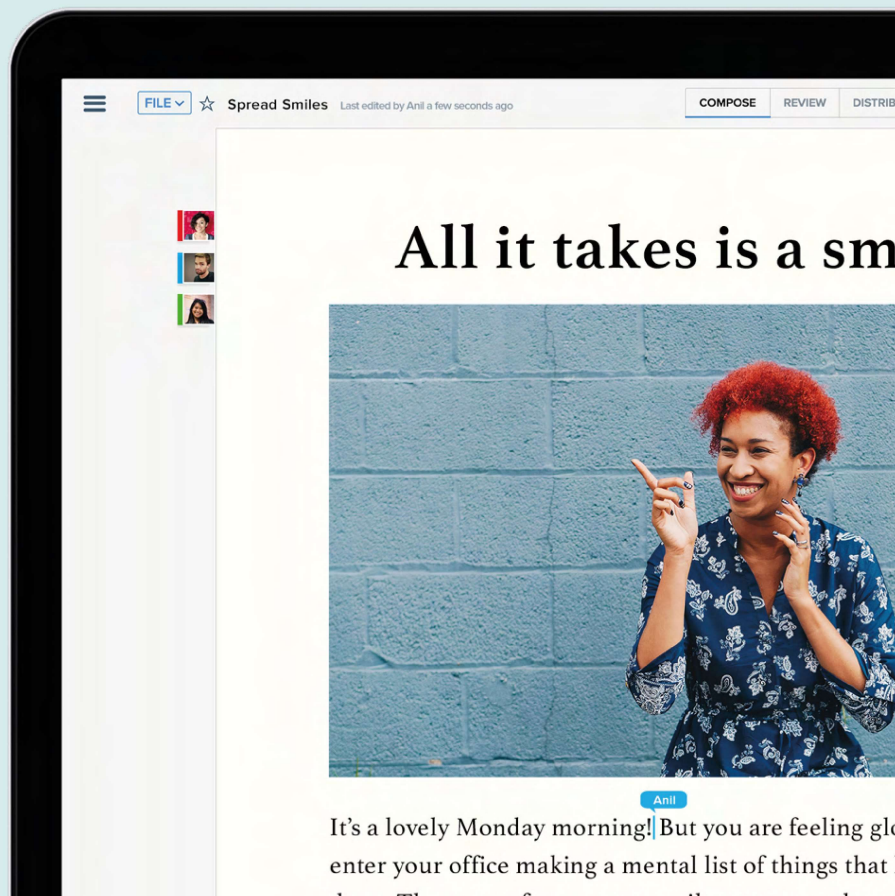
Analytics & data administration

- Comprehensive usage stats
- Activity reports and audit trail
- Transfer file ownership

Guaranteed security

- SOC type II and ISO 27001 compliant
- Encryption in transit and rest
- 24/7 secured data centres

Online word processing tool with real-time collaboration



The word processor for today's teams

From powerful tools to the beautiful, minimalist design that doesn't overwhelm you, Writer is crafted for modern teams and their workflows.

Improve your writing with Zia

Zia, Writer's AI-powered writing assistant is trained to understand and polish your writing. She's smart enough to make grammar, style and readability suggestions based on the context of your sentences.

Bring everybody to the same page

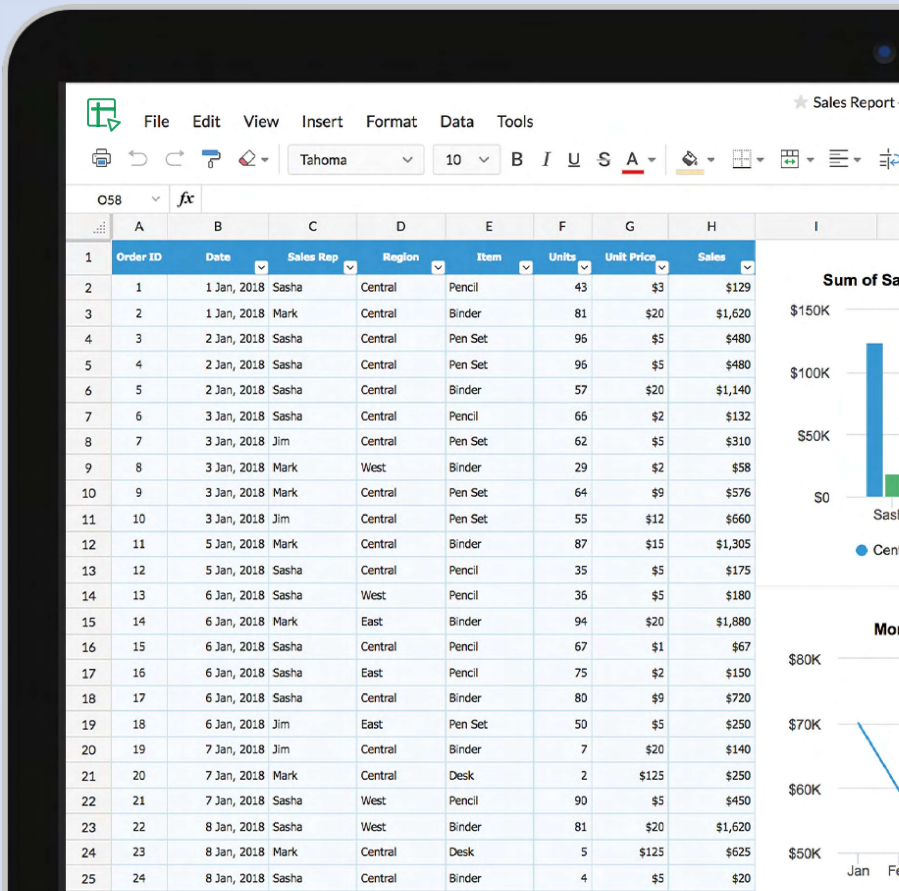
Share your work with others and collaborate with them in real time. Track their changes and initiate contextual discussions using comments.

Automate your paperwork

Put an end to mundane work. Writer can bring-in your sales or form data from Zoho CRM and Zoho Forms and generate personalized copies of template documents in bulk.

Get contracts signed

Manage NDAs or contracts from start to finish. With built-in Zoho Sign integration, Writer handles everything from document creation to automated signature collection in one platform.



Online spreadsheet for collaborative teams

Smart data cleaning tool

- Remove duplicate records
- Rectify inconsistencies in data
- Find and fill random missing values

Analyze and visualize data with Zia

- Automated chart and pivot table recommendations
- Instant answers for data-related questions
- Voice command on mobile app

Work together in real-time

- Cell and range level contextual comments
- User, date, and range specific changelog
- Automatic version backups with reverting options
- Range and user specific lock settings

Convert print outs into digital data

- Choose, crop, and convert images into spreadsheet data
- Preview and correct before inserting.
- Insert with date formats intact

Integration with other applications

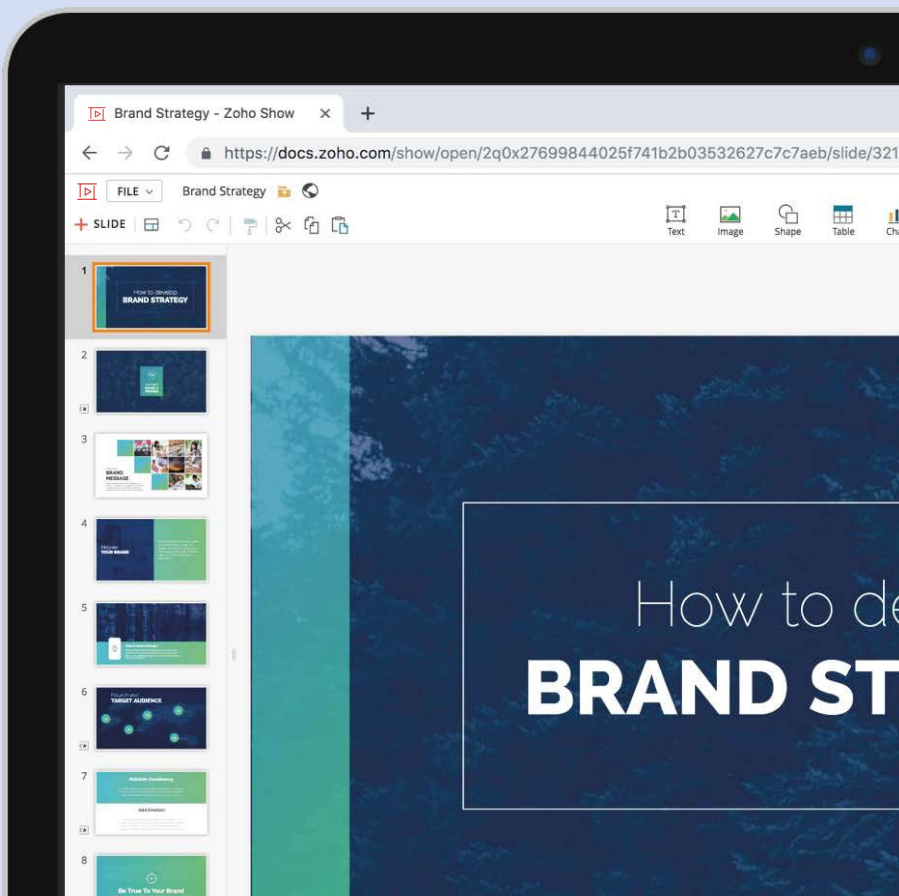
- Automated workflows via Zapier and Zoho Flow
- Bring in contextual data using custom functions
- Collect data using Forms



Show



An online presentation tool that lets you create, collaborate, and deliver ideas.



Build ideas with ease

- Clean and minimalist design
- Effortless adaptation with easy learning curve
- Choose from array of templates

Capture audience interest

- Organize your data with charts, tables, and smart elements
- Steer your presentations with visuals rather than words
- Create your own path animations in no time

Blend your team together

- Realtime editing
- Contextual commenting
- Lock slides for unauthorized edits

Reach millions around the globe

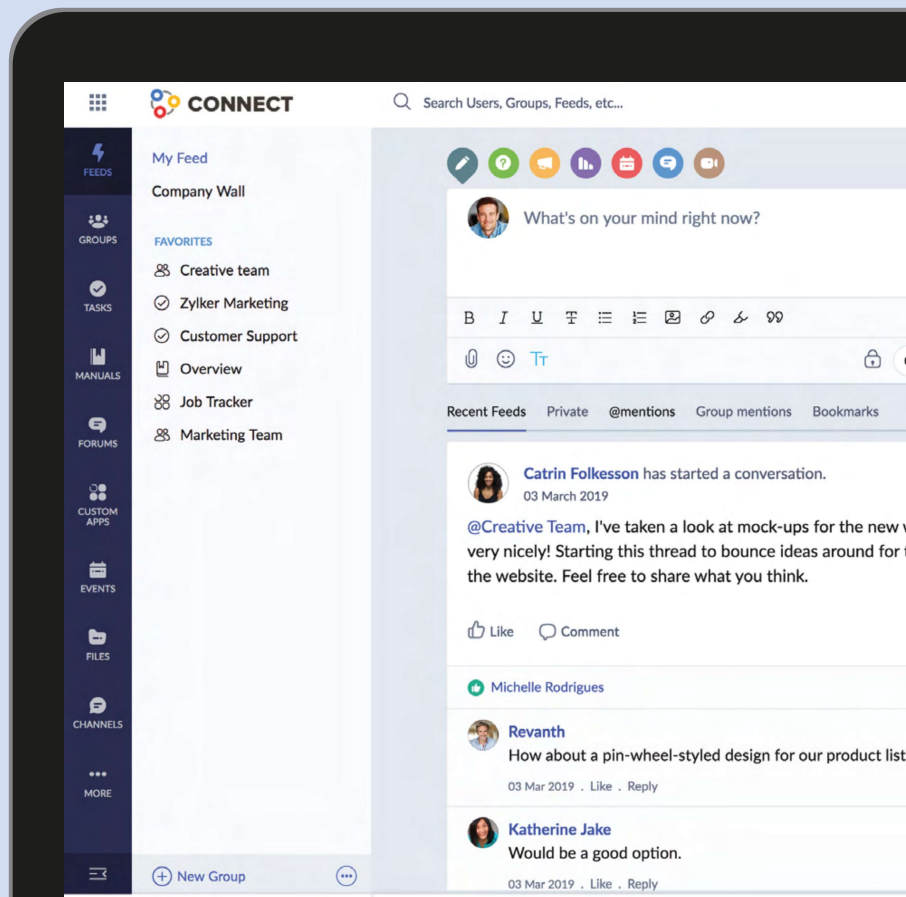
- Publish slides and embed them onto your blogs and websites
- Manage published versions
- Broadcast to remote audiences across the globe

Multi platform support

- Access slides on the go - Android and iOS
- Stage your slides through TV - Apple and Android TV
- Smart watch integrations



Social Intranet that lets your organization communicate and work together efficiently.



Communication, without barriers.

- Social media style feeds to start conversations and stay updated.
- More context with polls, questions, and announcements.
- Fully searchable archive of conversations.

Improved team collaboration spaces.

- Groups with built-in apps to enhance productivity.
- Granular permissions to manage members.
- Integrations, to bring all applications together.

Task management, simplified.

- Kanban boards to organise tasks.
- Task status to track progress, checklists, reminders, templates, and more.
- Board statistics and task reports that give the whole picture.

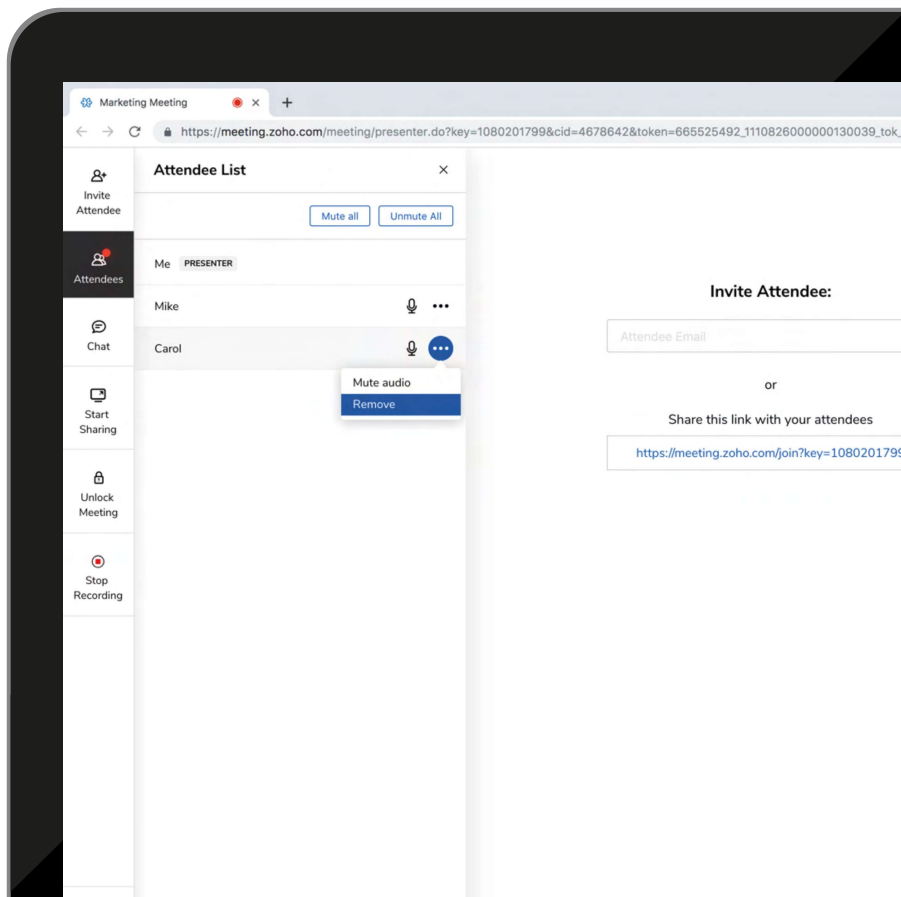
Knowledge base to create a library of resources.

- Manuals with chapters and articles to organise information.
- Publish to the entire network, or keep it private.
- Share articles and duplicate manuals.

Custom forms and workflows to automate.

- Low code, drag-and-drop form builder.
- Workflows to automate any internal process.
- Gallery of built-in apps to select from.

Web conferencing solution to host online meetings



Web conferencing solution to host online meetings

- Meet instantly, or plan ahead
- Embed meeting links on your website
- Add meetings to calendar, get RSVPs, and reminder emails

Audio, video, HD screen sharing and recording

- Join using computer audio or dial-in numbers and webcam sharing
- Share presentations and give demos via screen and application sharing
- Play and share HD meeting recordings online and also download them

Moderator controls

- Lock meetings to keep them secure
- Mute participants or remove them
- Share your keyboard and mouse controls

Organizational settings

- Co-branding using organization name and logo
- Enable or disable camera settings for your organization
- Add and manage users

Apps and extensions

- Google Chrome and Firefox Extension
- iOS and Android apps
- Desktop application