To: Skunkwerks Kinetic Industries Management Team

From: Spencer Lee

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Subject: *Proposal for Increasing the Efficiency of Issue Tracking and Inter-Office Communication at Skunkwerks Kinetic Industries*

**Introduction**

The technology used for administrative tasks such as communication and issue tracking on a software project has an effect on what issues are properly logged and assigned to the right person. This directly affects the overall quality of the final product.

Two of the primary tools used at SKI are Trello and Skype. Trello ([www.trello.com](http://www.trello.com/)) is an online tool that allows users to create to-do lists within personalized boards. It is a useful tool for tracking tasks such as an individual person’s to-do list. Skype is a well known communication program which allows users to chat through voice, video or text. SKI mainly uses Skype for text communication through its group chat feature which allows multiple users to be added to a shared chat room. Currently Skunkwerks Kinetic Industries (SKI) is using two tools which are not ideal for the project the company is currently working on. These tools have their uses but there are more powerful alternatives currently available that would increase the quality of task management and communication in the company, leading to a higher quality product.

**Statement of Problem**

Although Trello and Skype have their uses they are not ideal for the purposes they are being used for at SKI. Trello is useful for tracking an individual’s to-do list or the overall milestones of a project but falls short when used to track the intricacies of every task and bug in an entire software project that multiple people are working on. Skype provides the basic utility of online text chat but lacks the ability to integrate other tools and services. Users often use the same account for both personal and business communications. Because of these issues several bugs or problems have been properly reported but have gone unnoticed because employees were unable to keep track of the multiple Trello boards where a bug might be reported or because an important Skype notification was missed. As a result these issues were not dealt with until much later in the development cycle than they should have been and ended up taking up much more time than they would have if they had been more visible when initially reported.

**Proposed Solution**

A possible solution to the problem of inefficient communication and issue tracking is for the company to shift to using tools better suited to its current needs. The online chat program Slack allows for separation of person and work communication and allows for the integration of several other tools already used by SKI, such as Subversion, to provide a central hub for team members to check for work related messages. Trac is an open source bug tracking tool that SKI has used during past projects that provides a much more robust set of features for tracking bugs and tasks in a project. replacing Skype and Trello is something that should be investigated in order to make communication and issue tracking more straightforward and efficient for the company and these two alternatives should be considered along with any others that are available.

**Scope**

To assess the feasibility of transitioning to these new tools I will investigate the following 6 points of inquiry:

1. What features do the current tools lack?
2. What features do these alternative tools provide that the current tools do not?
3. How much time must be spent to transition to these new tools?
4. What is the financial cost of changing tools?
5. How do team members feel about changing?
6. Are there any other competitors to the currently proposed tools?

**Methods**

Primary sources will include interviews with the management and team members of SKI to get their opinions on the current and proposed tools as well as an analysis of the usability of the current tools and their alternatives. I will also consult the documentation for both Slack and Trac to identify a full feature list for both tools. Secondary sources will include product ratings and reviews from leading authorities in business technology.regarding the uses, benefits and drawbacks of the tools being proposed.

**My Qualifications**

I have been working at SKI for one year and have experience using both Trello and Skype on the current project. I have experimented with both Slack and Trac as potential alternatives and am familiar with the benefits and drawbacks of both sets of tools. My academic background in psychology and computer science has given me the skills required to analyze the usability of a tool for a given purpose including survey and interview question writing and data analysis.

**Conclusion**

Skunkwerks Kinetic Industries has much to gain from using these alternative tools. By addressing the 6 areas of inquiry listed above, I can determine the feasibility of moving from Trello and Skype to Trac and Slack. With your approval I will begin research immediately.