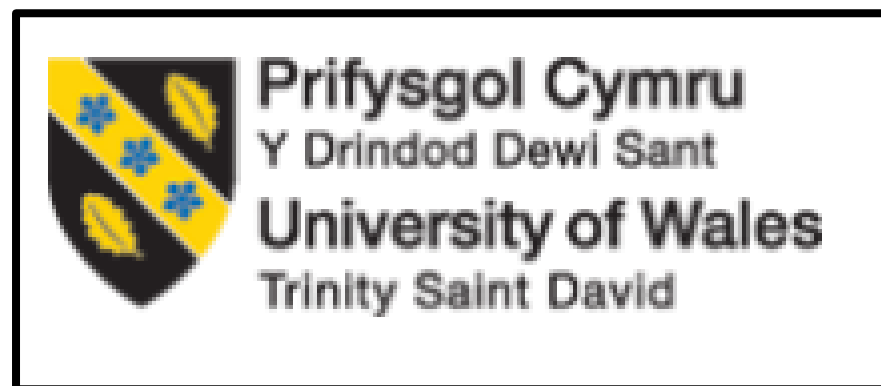




Software Solutions for Business – ACCA4026 Portfolio

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1. Introduction

This portfolio is to show my practical and theoretical knowledge of modern software solutions that are adopted in the modern business context, as specified in the GA36a Level 4 Assessment Specification. The assessment examines how proficient the learner is in using various digital tools to facilitate the day-to-day organisational activities (MLO1) and to design using the right software packages, present and communicate information (MLO2). In a workplace that is becoming more and more digital, the ability to use software applications will be necessary to increase productivity, efficiency in the workflow, and decision-making based on data [7].

The portfolio is divided into four tasks. Task 1 critically analyses present-day e-commerce website-building environments. Task 2 gets into the discussion about the application of mind mapping as a visual thinking tool in the process of organising the categories of business software. Task 3 is an extensive analysis of the fundamental office programs Word, PowerPoint, Excel, and Access; this analysis is supported by effective testing and evidence. Task 4 examines communication and collaboration tools that are current in many organisations today and provides some demonstrations of how they are important.

Certain features have been tested practically, and this has been supported by some screenshots and explanations, all the references are in the IEEE citation style [31]. There has been no violation of academic integrity, and only the generated AI has been utilised as a tool of proofreading, which is in compliance with the university regulations.

2. Task 1 – e-Commerce Website Builders / Software Solutions

2.1 Overview of Contemporary e-Commerce Platforms

Current e-commerce platforms allow companies to design, operate and grow online shopping outlets with little technical skills. Shopify and Wix eCommerce are considered to be two dominant Software as a Service (SaaS) platforms [29]. Shopify has been internationally recognised due to its strong scalability, all-in-one payment gateway, and abundant applications, making it applicable to small and enterprise-level online companies. In its turn, Wix eCommerce has an easy-to-use drag-and-drop platform that is oriented towards the micro-business and the creative individuals who will value the freedom of visual

design. Both solutions will neither require in-house hosting nor infrastructure maintenance, and will have pre-prepared templates, secure payment procedures and automatic updates.

2.2 Theoretical Concepts

Being SaaS platforms, both Shopify and Wix are based on subscription, where the vendor provides security, maintenance, and updates. This is unlike Infrastructure as a Service (IaaS), where the operating system and application environment are controlled by users. These two platforms are also Content management systems (CMS) that facilitate companies to control digital information like product descriptions, blogs and multimedia files [26]. Solutions like smart navigation, mobile-friendly, and visual hierarchy as a part of UX are incorporated into the platforms to increase the customer experience and conversion rates.

2.3 Critical Comparison Table

Feature	Shopify	Wix eCommerce	Business Benefit
Ease of Use	Moderate (structured interface)	Very easy (drag-and-drop)	Faster store creation for beginners
Scalability	High - supports large inventories&multi-channel sales	Moderate - best for small stores	Supports future business growth
Payment Options	100+ gateways	Fewer gateways	Increases global customer reach
App Integrations	Extensive App Store	Limited extensions	Enhances business automation

Customisation	Theme-based with coding options	High visual flexibility	Allows brand differentiation
Performance&Security	Optimised hosting, PCI compliance	Secure but less optimised	Reduces downtime and risk

2.4 Academic Engagement

The SaaS platforms impose minimal overhead on operations because they do not require maintenance and local installation [2]. George (2024) highlights that cloud-based CMS solutions improve agility in the business due to the immediate content update and the ability to communicate with customers in real-time [9]. According to recent studies, broadcast intuitive User Interface / User Experience design has a direct effect on customer satisfaction and buying intention [7].

2.5 Mini-Conclusion

On the whole, both Shopify and Wix are effective in improving the productivity of businesses because they allow simplifying the management of the store and minimising technical barriers. Inclusion of built-in UI/UX provides an enhanced customer experience with responsive design as well as simplified purchasing cycles. With the ongoing transformation of the contemporary working environment by the digital revolution, these kinds of SaaS e-commerce are likely to be necessary to facilitate multi-channel retailing strategies as well as promote the possibility of data-driven, scalable business processes.

3. Task 2 – Mind Mapping for Business Software Applications

3.1 Theory of Mind Mapping

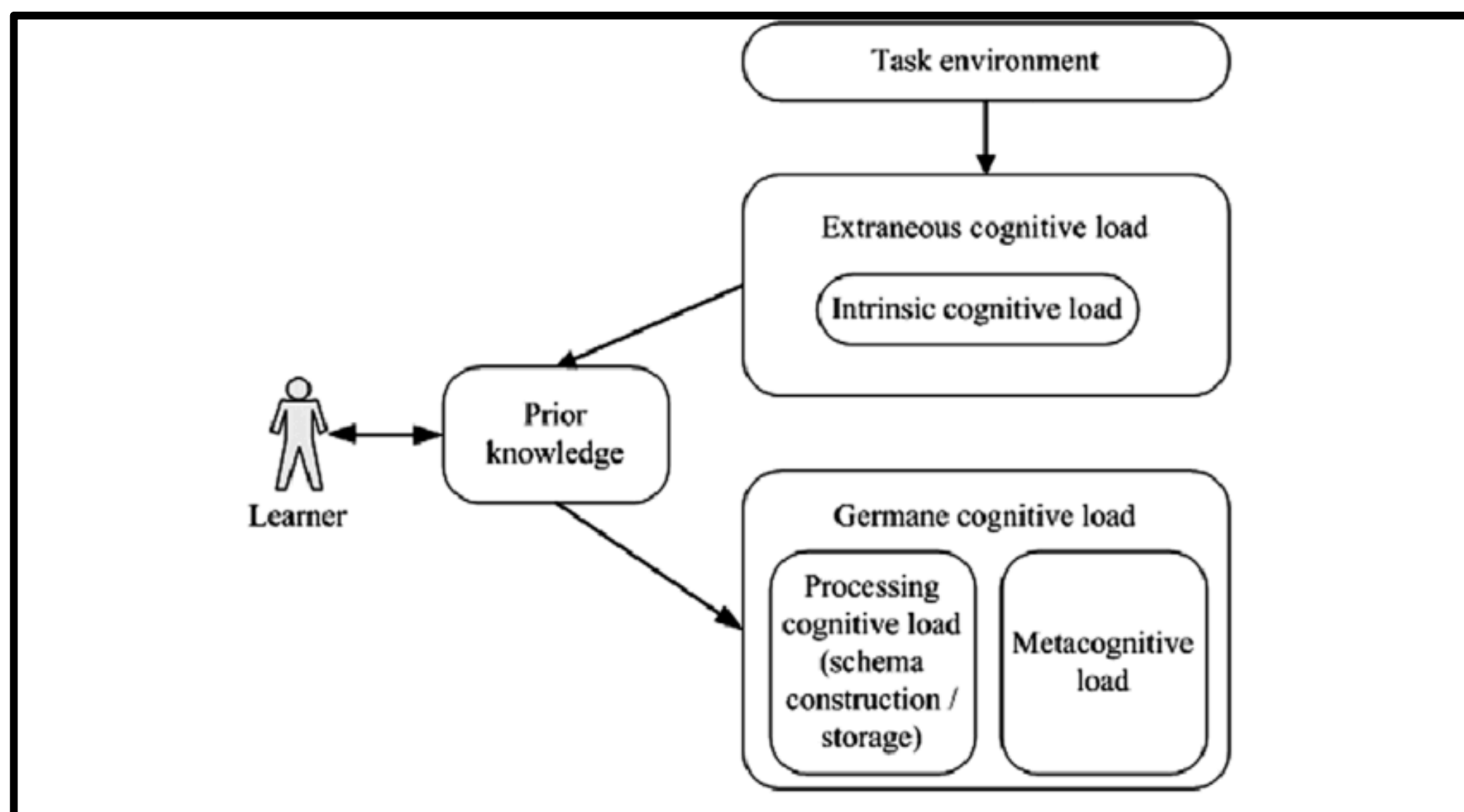


Figure 1: Cognitive load theory [7]

(Source: Chen *et al.*, 2011)

In visual thinking, mind mapping is another technique that was developed by Tony Buzan, who believed that radial diagrams stimulated both sides of the brain, enhancing creativity and memory. Unlike the linear note-taking process, mind maps are reflective of the brain's natural association process and allow users to store ideas in a hierarchy and through visual associations. Cognitive load theory posits that visual representations lessen the extraneous processing to facilitate individuals to concentrate on the key information [9]. Mind mapping also promotes a visual learning procedure which allows users to perceive relationships among colours, branches and keywords swiftly. Mind maps as a tool of brainstorming facilitate an organisation of the ideas logically, as well as facilitating productivity and problem-solving within the business context.

3.2 Benefits in Business Operations

Mind mapping has found its worth in organisational settings, mostly in planning, communication and coordinating teams. It improves the organisation of the plan of work by displaying the tasks and dependencies in a clear manner. Mind maps assist project management teams to gain knowledge about priorities and subsequently allocate resources effectively in project management. Literature (e.g., Davies, 2011; Wickramasinghe and Perera, 2020) indicates that mind maps facilitate the understanding and strategic decision-making process for a person in this context because they can synthesise complex

information [29]. In communication, the diagrams decrease the ambiguity as they provide the stakeholders with a single visual comprehension.

3.3 Mind Map Diagram

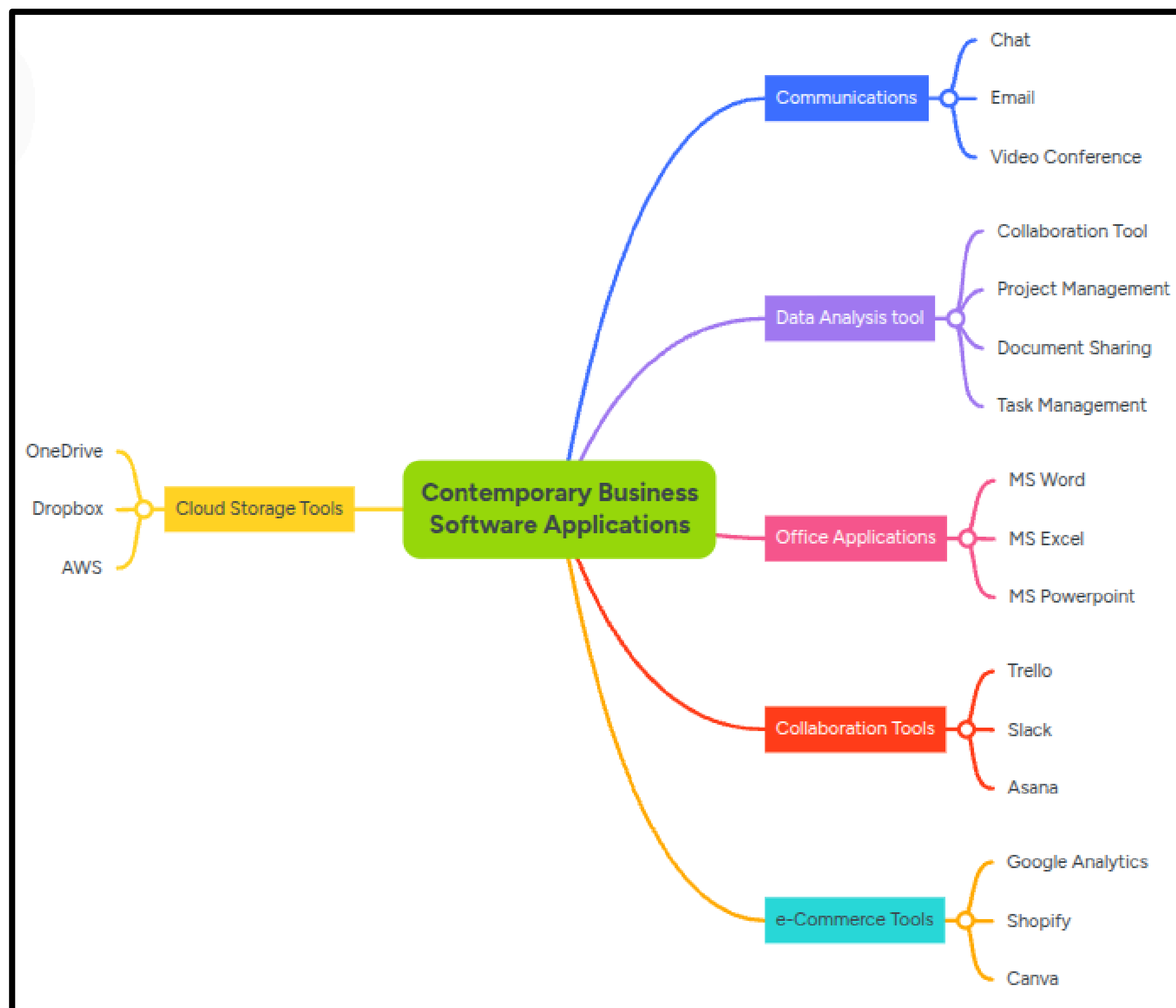


Figure 2. Mind Map of Contemporary Business Software Applications [19]

(Source: Self-created by using Mindmeister)

Branches are–

- **Communications:** Chat, Email, Video Conference
- **Data Analysis Tools:** Collaboration Tool, Project Management, Document Sharing, Task Management
- **Office Applications:** MS Word, MS PowerPoint, MS Excel
- **Collaboration Tools:** Trello, Slack, Asana
- **e-Commerce Tools:** Google Analytics, Shopify, Canva
- **Cloud Storage Tools:** AWS, OneDrive, Dropbox

3.4 Evaluation

Visual mapping is better than the linear method of taking notes because it encourages quick comprehension due to spatial organisation and colour coding. Linear notes may get torn, though mind maps depict relationships in their entirety. Mind mapping also improves the decision-making process as tough communication breaks down the choices and shows the dependency, enabling comparisons of scenarios easily [29]. Mind maps are used in the real working environment to facilitate brainstorming of ideas, project planning, software selection, and workflow analysis. They allow managers and employees to work and communicate with each other properly, as well as minimise misunderstandings.

The mind-mapping exercise is in effect a seamless illustration of how visual thinking contributes to the business organisation process involving simplification of intricate software ecosystems to clear impressionable categories that are interlinked. Based on the theory presented by Buzan and cognitive load principles, the task demonstrates that mind maps ease the mental load and enhance the level of understanding, planning, and decision-making [13]. The existence of such branches as office tools, communication platforms and data analysis software emphasises their functional relations and practical applicability in the functioning of the workplace. This activity enhances strategic awareness because it presents software solutions as a comprehensive unit, promotes the effective planning of workflow, collaborative insight, and well-informed decision-making. Altogether, the mind-map offers a brief, visual basis of the business technology analysis in the modern world.

5. Task 3 – Office Applications for Creating, Storing, Presenting, and Analysing Information

5.1 MS Word – Features, Benefits, Limitations

MS Word is a very common application that has wide acceptability among users. The popularity of MS Word has been increasing because of its convenient usage and its free-to-use nature as well. The concept of the MS word can be clearly understood with the help of the Document Process Theory. Pilehvar and Camacho-Collados (2021) state that the Document Processing Theory consists of the concept of understanding what a document is, understanding its role in the knowledge or communication [21]. The MS Word is widely used on a personal and a professional basis because of the fact that MS word clearly understands the purpose of each document and how that document can be integrated towards the

knowledge and communication purpose, as well. MS Word is also widely popular across the globe because of its Mail Merge Concepts. The Mail Concept states that database integration is required with a document in order to make a document robust and effective [15]. MS Word consists of those mail merging concepts [18]. With the help of MS Word, a user can create personalised bulk documents like letters, labels and envelopes by combining the templates and the data sets retrieved from the Excel Sheet and Database.

Features of MS Word:

The features of MS Word are vast and varied. The popularity of the MS across the globe has been possible because of its highly valuable features, which will be discussed in this section with elaboration:

Core Text and Page Formatting

The primary feature of MS Word includes page formatting. Microsoft Word allows users to curate their documents on the basis of the text, paragraphs, styles, page layout and headers &Footers [20].

Content and Structure

Another very significant feature of MS Word is its ability to curate the content and structure of the documents, as per the need. The users can curate the content and structure of the documents as per the needs of the users, whether professional or personal. From generating a table of contents to tables to customising templates, users can curate the content as per their convenience and the purpose of the documents [20]. Users can customise pre-designed templates for their letters, resumes and reports within MS Word.

Review and Collaboration

In MS Word, users not only focus on curating their documents but also are able to review the document once it is done. The review and collaboration feature of MS Word works and ensures that the document will become robust and effective for any professional and personal use. The review and collaboration feature has the features of the spelling, grammar, thesaurus, word count display and track changes monitor [20]. With the influence of such features, the chance of errors within the documents becomes less, and the documents can become much more valuable and robust.

Benefits

The use of MS Word is extremely popular among users because of its expanded benefits. These benefits can be highlighted in this context.

The primary advantage of MS Word is that it's user-friendly in nature. Microsoft Word is extremely easy to use for even beginners. The user-friendly interface makes the application accessible to all users at all levels.

The second benefit of MS Word is that it has access to several templates. MS Word has several templates within the application that include templates for resumes, reports and other documentation [12]

Limitations

One of the major limitations of MS Word is its compatibility across different versions. MS Word has different versions. Each Word version has different features and characteristics, which make the compatibility issues much more prevalent in the use of MS Word [17]. Another very important limitation of MS Word is that it lacks security and privacy. There is no solid privacy protection for MS word documents from viruses and malware.

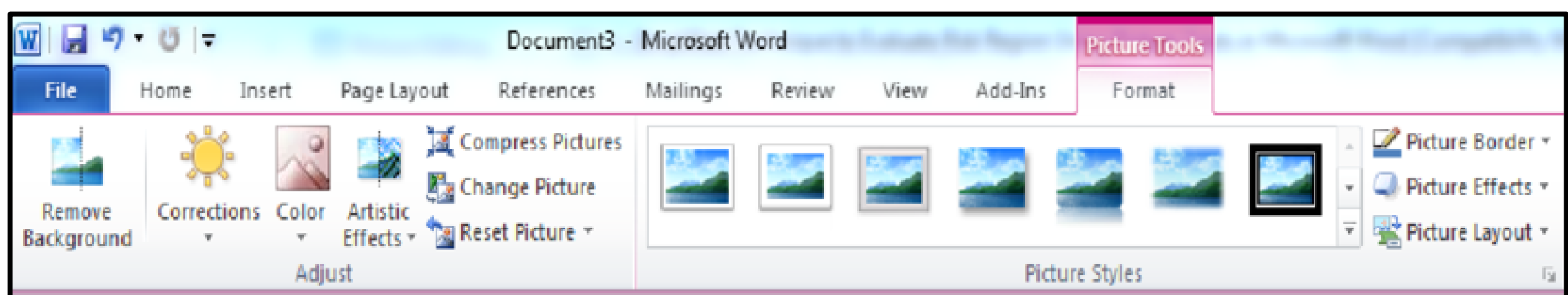


Figure 4: Screenshot of styles, references, layout tools of MS word

(Source: Researchgate, 2025)

Category	Key Features
Document Creation Editing	Create/Edit, Copy/Paste, Undo/Redo, Spelling/Grammar Check
Layout and Structure	Page Set up, Headers/Footers, page numbers, TOC, etc.
Tables and Graphics	Insert Tables, Images, Shapes, SmartArt, Charts
Collaboration and Review	Track Changes, Comments, Compare Documents
Advanced Tools	Mail Merge, Reference and Indexing

Table 1: Summarizing feature of MS Word

(Source: Self-created)

5.2 MS PowerPoint – Features, Benefits, Limitations

In the first section, the application of MS Word has been highlighted with elaborate measures along with its benefits, features and limitations. In this section, the discussion will be highlighted on the basis of the MS PowerPoint. MS PowerPoint is also another extremely popular application that is often used by users to create effective presentations. The PowerPoint helps users to curate effective designable presentations for both professional and personal use [19]. Through the PowerPoint applications, both the visual and theoretical aspects of the learning can be carried out in detail. In this context, the Dual Channel Learning theory can be highlighted. The dual channel learning theory highlights that humans have mixed cognitive channels for both auditory and visual learning [31]. The learning processes of human beings become much more efficient and quicker if the theoretical knowledge is processed along with pictorial details. PowerPoint presentations help in inculcating videos and pictures in the learning process, making the entire report styling much more convenient and easier for use, as well. The use of the PowerPoint presentation helps increase the clarity of the messaging. The inclusion of the pictures and the visuals helps in ensuring that the alignment of the text and the picture goes hand in hand. In this section, the visual communication theory can be highlighted. Visual communication theory states that the communication and the interaction of the message become much clearer and clarified with the use of visuals in the text [2]. This is exactly being achieved through an MS PowerPoint presentation. Following the slide design principles, a PowerPoint presentation helps to curate slides for a visually pleasing effect on the entire learning process.

The features of the MS PowerPoint can be highlighted in this context for detailed understanding:

Design and Content

The primary feature of the PowerPoint presentation includes design and content. The PowerPoint presentation provides several templates and themes. In a PowerPoint presentation, the user can get access to different types of curated templates that are professionally designed along with colours, fonts and layouts [18]. The inclusion of the charts and graphs is also one of the primary features of MS Word.

Interactive Engagement

PowerPoint is known for its interactive engagement, as it allows the inclusion of animations through motion effects for individual objects on slides. The PowerPoint presentation also helps in creating transitions, making the slides extremely interactive with the readers and the users. The features of the hyperlinks are also present in the PowerPoint presentation, which helps in making the presentation much more interactive and knowledgeable.

Advanced Features

Another very significant feature of PowerPoint presentations includes mobile and web access, which makes it super convenient for users. The PowerPoint presentation also has features for recording the slides, which can be used for future reference, as well. The PowerPoint presentation also has access to SVG editing.

Benefits of MS PowerPoint

One of the prime benefits of MS PowerPoint is versatility. The PowerPoint has a culmination of different features and can be used for versatile purposes that include the creation of CVs, flyers, social media graphics and videos [18]. The interface of the PowerPoint presentation is also extremely easy to use, which makes it convenient and user-friendly, as well. The templates accessible in the PowerPoint are extremely easy to use and convenient [19].

Another primary benefit of the MS PowerPoint presentation includes enhanced communication. Generation of ideas and thoughts can be carried out easily with the help of a PowerPoint presentation. The engagement with the viewers increases with the help of the PowerPoint presentation.

Limitations

One of the major limitations of MS PowerPoint is that there is a chance of overload of data and information. Since it has both auditory and visual effects, the chance of distraction is higher in the MS PowerPoint. The chance or the presence of technical issues is also extremely relevant in the MS PowerPoint, which makes a huge limitation in its usage of MS Power Point.

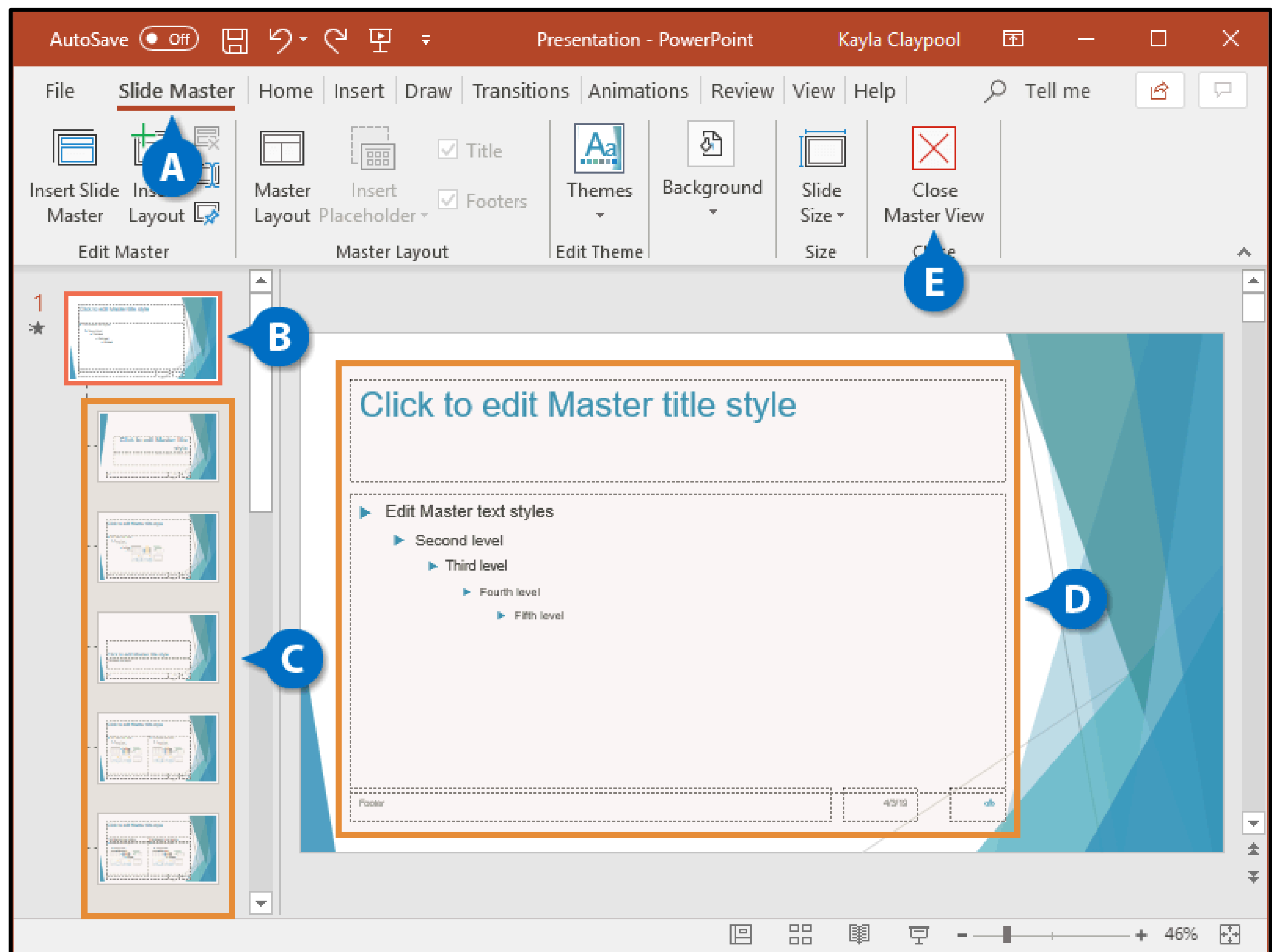


Figure 5: Screenshot of slide master [29]

(Source: High, 2025)

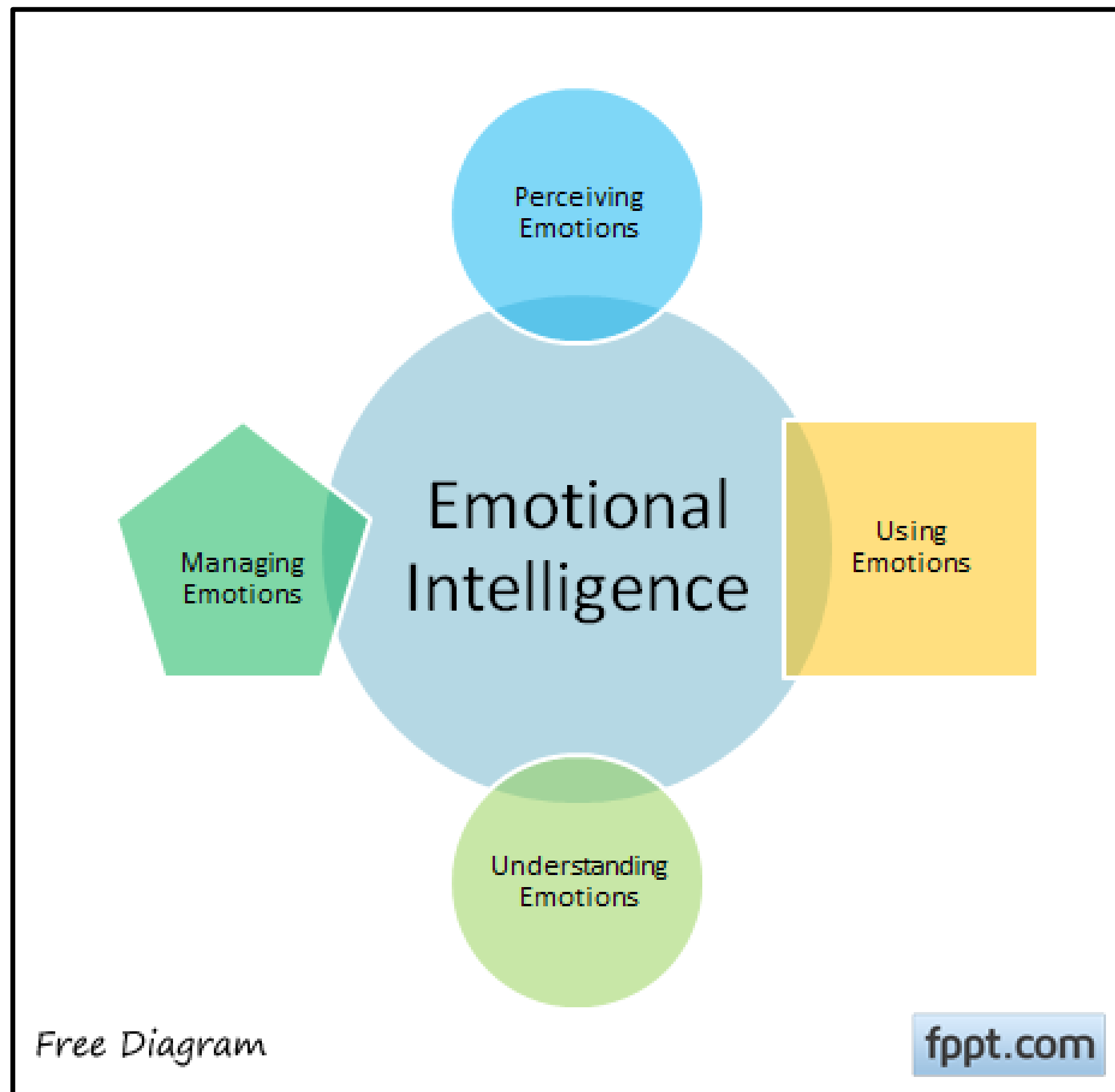


Figure 6: Example of smart art [25]

(Source: ResearchGate, 2025)

5.3 MS Excel – Features, Benefits, Limitations

MS Excel is an extremely popular processing application that is used for facilitating, creating and formatting professional documents. MS Excel is a highly used application across the globe. Almost everyone from office or college or educational purposes, everybody uses MS word. MS Excel is used for any kind of calculation and valuation. Microsoft Excel is generally used for both professional and personal purposes (Microsoft, 2025). From data handling to calculations, everything can be carried out with the help of MS Excel. Pivot tables and financial modelling are easily carried out with the help of Excel sheets. Excel is responsible for providing customisable sheets that aid in a solid documentation process. The use of the mail merging feature also helps in saving repetitive tasks, as well.

Features of MS Excel

Data Analysis and Visualisation

The features of MS Excel include the pivot tables that help in summarising and analysing large data sets from different perspectives. In order to analyse the data, the inclusion of charts and graphs is also applicable in MS Excel sheets [1].

Productivity and Collaboration

The ribbon interface can be curated within MS Excel. MS Excel also provides co-authoring facilities where the Excel can be shared between two or more users for easy access and quick task fixing.

Advanced and Modern Features

Microsoft Excel provides advanced features of VLOOKUP and LET Functions that are newer and robust forms of data retrieval and logic in a structured manner.

Benefits

The user can create any kind of preferred records on the MS Excel based on their customised convenience. The users can put their preferred styling fonts in their sheet through this feature [1]

The pre-provided calculation sheets help in saving the time of the users by already putting in the numbers and getting results instantly.

Limitations

One of the most important limitations of MS Excel is that the grids are not infinite. There are $\backslash(1,048,576\backslash)$ rows and $\backslash(16,384\backslash)$ columns per sheet, a $\backslash(32,767\backslash)$ character limit per cell, which often creates restrictions in complete retrieval of data and logic [17] Moreover, the different versions of different MS Office create confusion for the users, as well.

Category	Functions
Lookup/Reference	VLOOKUP, XLOOKUP, INDEX/MATCH, HLOOKUP
Statistics / Math	SUM, AVERAGE, SUMIFS, COUNTIFS, AVERAGEIFS, MIN/MAX
Logic / Decision	IF, IFS, AND, OR, NOT
Advanced Tools	PivotTables, Data Tables, FILTER, UNIQUE, SORT

Table 2: Analytical functions of MS Excel

5.4 MS Access – Features, Benefits, Limitations

MS Access is a user-friendly Windows-based relational database system, also popularly known as a DBMS. The use of MS Access is typically employed in small to medium-sized projects. MS Access is known for its easy data management, queries, forms and reporting. MS Access helps in linking tables through common fields [29]. The MMS Access helps to build relationships and entities between complex data management systems for smooth and effective usage. From making forms, queries and reports, everything can be provided with the help of MS Access.

Features

The primary feature of MS Access is its relational database. The relational database helps to link tables with the common fields of data sets. MS Access also has a feature of developing and creating forms, queries and macros quickly. MS Access is also used for smooth data integration, as well.

Benefits

MS Access is a low-cost enterprise system. MS Access is easy for beginners to use. It also takes very quickly to sort and install. Microsoft Access is also good for small and medium-sized business departments.

Limitations

The scalability of MS Access is low, with poor performance with large data volume sets. The file size limit of MS Access is 2GB. MS Excel is not ideal for huge data sets and multi-user collaboration.

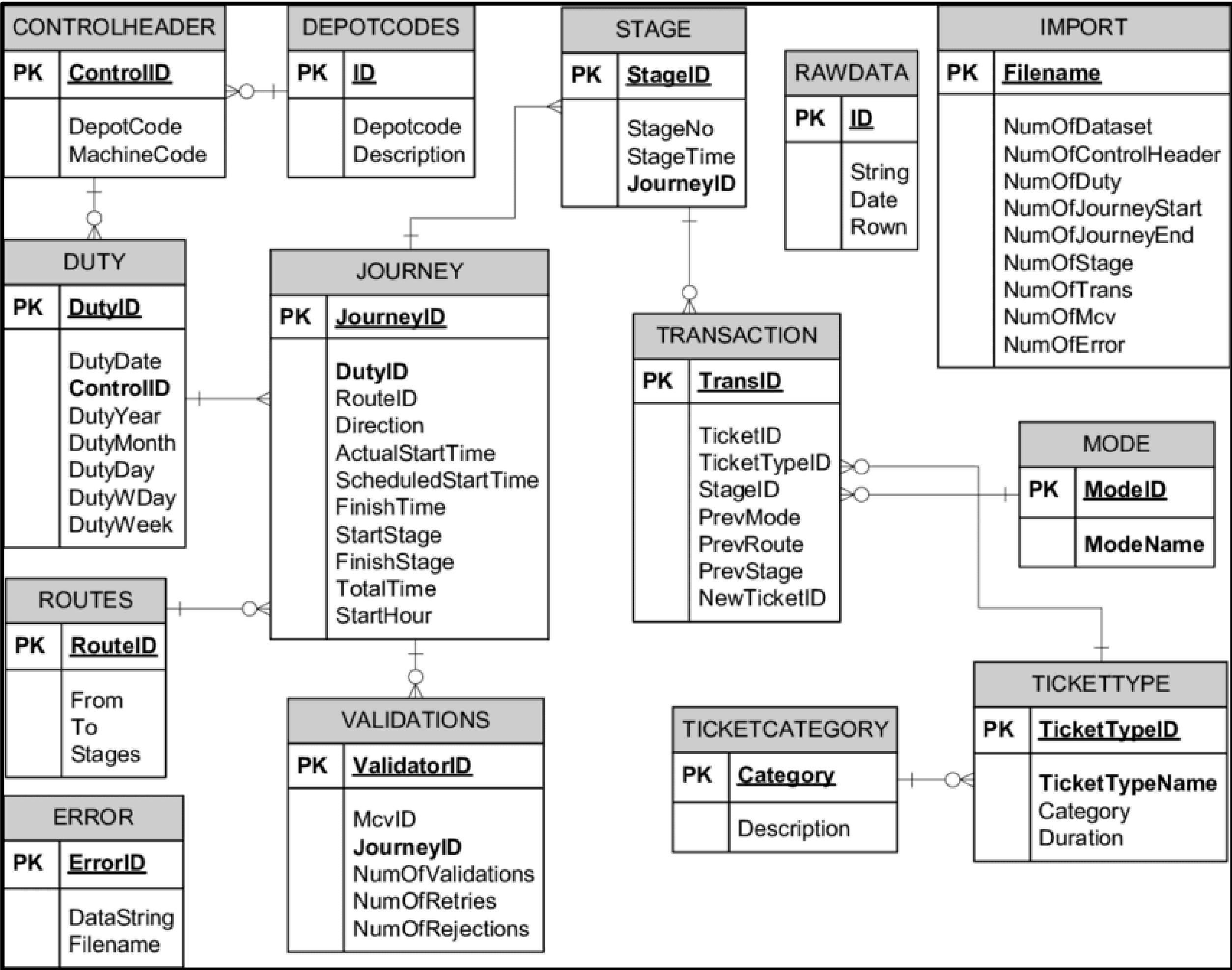


Figure 7: ERD diagram [25]

(Source: ResearchGate, 2025)

The screenshot shows the Microsoft Access interface with the 'tblProjects' table selected. The table contains 11 records of employee data. The status bar at the bottom indicates 'Record: 1 of 10' and 'No Filter'.

Employee ID	FirstName	LastName	JobTitle	Address1	Address2	City	State	Zip
2	Rex	Clay	Accounting Assistant	2556 Mohave S	Optional	Schaumburg	IL	60194
3	Janell	Frank	Accounting Manager	6433 Morgan Ln	Optional	Schaumburg	IL	60193
4	Claudine	Goff	Administrative Assistant	21 Berkley Ln	Optional	Schaumburg	IL	60195
5	Annemarie	Marks	Accounting Assistant	91 Forest Ln	Optional	Schaumburg	IL	60193
6	Cecil	Snyder	Accounting Assistant	64 Osage Ln	Optional	Schaumburg	IL	60194
7	Elvis	Manning	Office Coordinator	4753 Green Riv	Optional	Schaumburg	IL	60193
8	Delores	Townsend	Administrative Assistant	1215 Cloverdal	Optional	Schaumburg	IL	60194
9	Ruthie	Higgins	Marketing Coordinator	9876 Kingsley I	Optional	Schaumburg	IL	60193
10	Mark	Pollard	Marketing Coordinator	4685 Stanley Ct	Optional	Schaumburg	IL	60194
11	Todd	Watson	Marketing Coordinator	846 Bode Rd	Apt 129	Schaumburg	IL	60194
(New)								

Figure 8: Screenshot of sample table/query [23]

(Source: ResearchGate, 2025)

5.5 Practical Testing Evidence (Mandatory)

5.5.1 Step-by-Step Demonstration

IF

Step1: Data Set Interpretations

	A	B
1	Employee	Sales (Pound)
2	Annie	7300
3	Ben	4800
4	Carl	9100
5	Diana	6600
6		7300
7		
8		
9		
10		

Step 2: Input of Data Set

B6					
	A	B	C	D	E
1	Employee Name	Sales			
2	Annie	7300			
3	Ben	4800			
4	Carl	9100			
5	Diana	6600			
6		7300			
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					

Step 3: Final Results

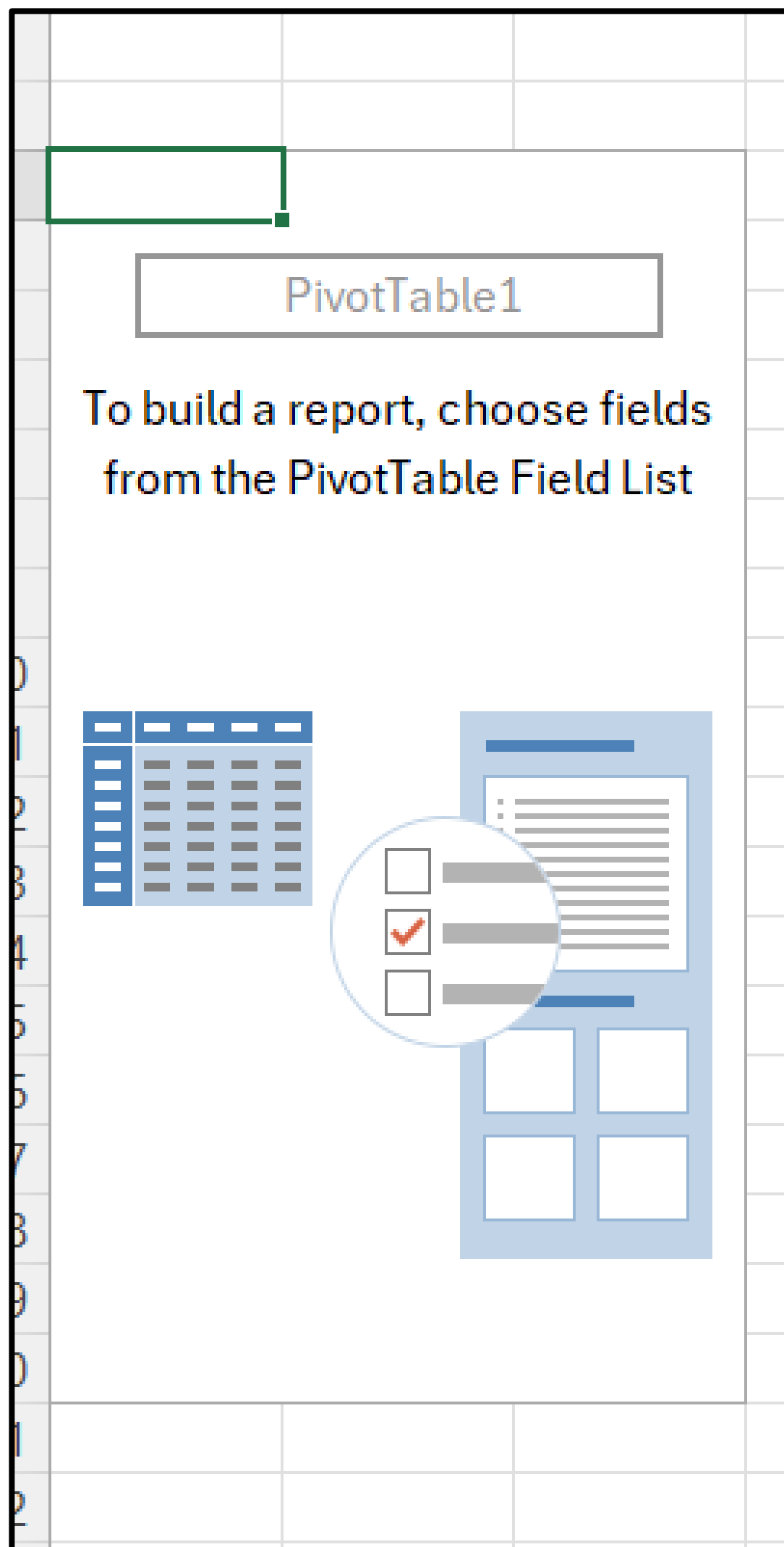
B6					
=IF(B2>=6000,B2)					
	A	B	C	D	
1	Employee	Sales (Pound)	IF Results		
2	Annie	7300	Achieved Target		
3	Ben	4800	Below Target		
4	Carl	9100	Achieved Target		
5	Diana	6600	Achieved Target		
6		7300			
7					
8					
9					
10					
11					
12					
13					

Step 4: Interpretation

Using the IF Feature, the highest achieved target and the lowest achieved target has been solved using the MS Excel sheet. The highest achieved being “9100” while the low being “4800”. After putting the formula of the highest achieved target and lowest achieved target, the interpretations of the results have been highlighted.

PIVOT Table

•Step 1: Dataset creation



Step 4: Interpretation

Inclusion of 20 data sets in the grid to generate the pivot table. The pivot table was inserted from the top left section of the screen in MS excel sheet. Once the pivot table was inserted, the details about the columns and rows were put to bring out the results. Upon inserting the details, the pivot table was finally generated turning the data set into an excel table.

5.5.3 Critical Commentary

The use of different MS Excel features are extremely helpful in several business operations. Different business calculations can be carried out with the help of different features in the MS Excel. For citation, the features of Pivot Table and IF were used. Through the use of these both features, it has been seen that the use of these tools are helpful in generating

the accurate data interpretations of large data sets, as well. The chance of error reduction also gets reduced due to the use of the tools in MS Excel.

5. Task 4 – Communication&Collaboration Applications

5.1 Analysis of Communication Tool: Microsoft Teams

Microsoft Teams are a unified communication platform that combines chat, voice calls, video conferencing, file sharing, and channel-based working. In the theoretical view, the Shannon-Weaver communication model emphasises message transmission between the sender and the receiver, and it is clear [14]. Teams facilitate it by providing multimodal communication, text, audio, and visual data and documents shared, which lessens the noise of communication and increases its clarity.

Teams enhances workflow efficiency because it can be combined with the Microsoft 365 suite of packages, which includes Word, Excel, SharePoint, and OneDrive [24]. This integration ensures that the users can access files in channels and meetings directly, thereby increasing productivity and reducing context switching. Remote working is also boosted on the platform, as it provides the ability to engage in virtual meetings and project discussions, as well as asynchronous messaging.

Some of these challenges, however, are information overload with too many notifications, the possibility of a security breach through the sharing of links, and reliance on a stable internet connection.

The table of comparison of features is presented below:

Feature	Microsoft Teams	Business Benefit
Chat Messaging	Individual&group chat	Quick communication
Video Conferencing	HD meetings, screen share	Supports remote work
Channels	Organised team spaces	Streamlines workflow
File Sharing	Integrated with	Centralised

	OneDrive/SharePoint	documents
Apps	Planner, Forms, third-party apps	Enhanced productivity

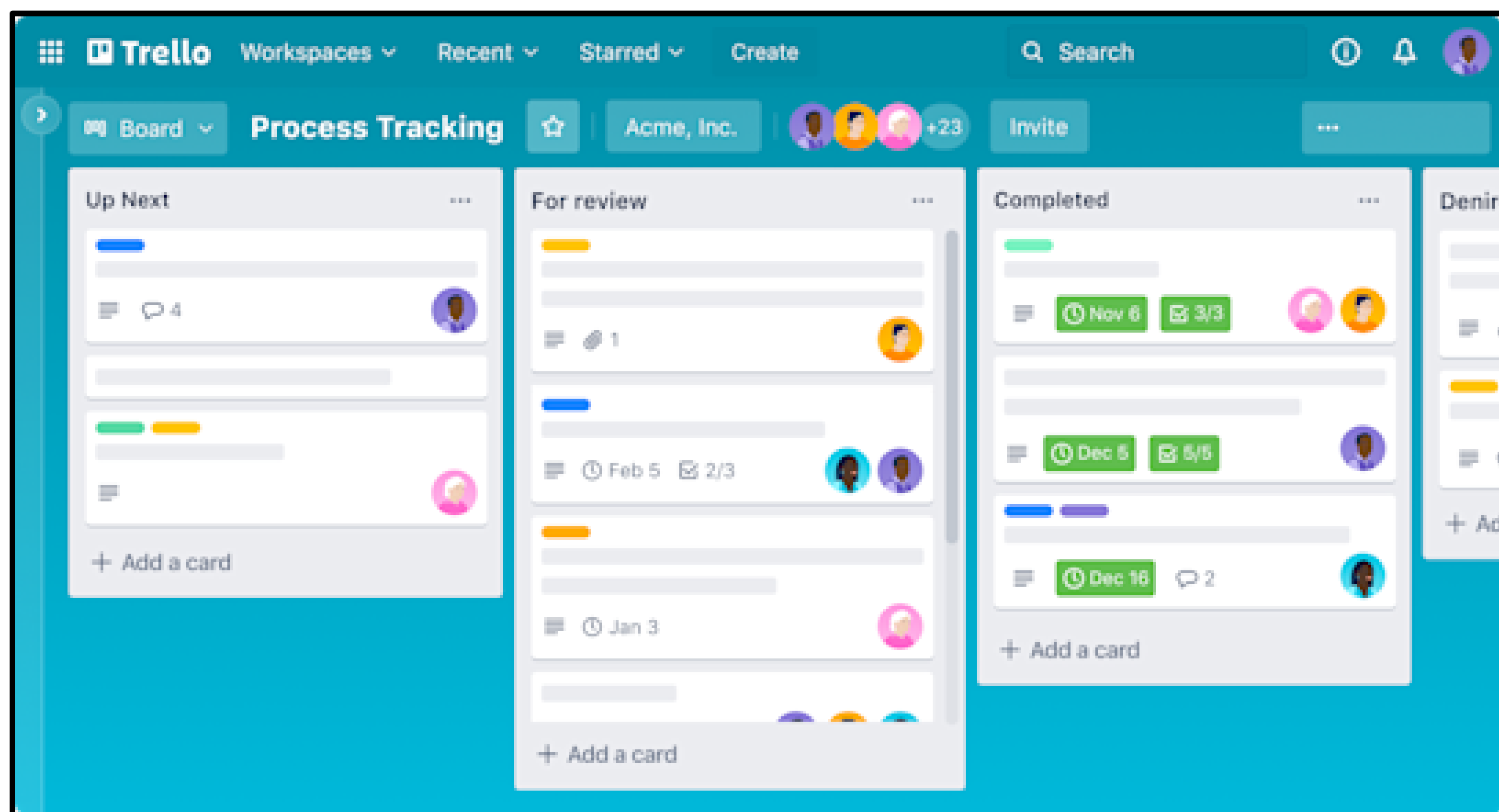


Figure: Screenshot of Trello for Process Tracking

5.2 Analysis of Collaboration Tool: Trello

Trello is a project management system founded on the Kanban methodology that is a cloud-based tool. It facilitates the following things: version control, live collaboration and community project boards. Trello enhances seamless working of a team by the help of cards, lists, and boards, which enable the users to assign work, put down deadlines, attach files, and automate processes with the help of Butler automation [19]. Trello is across-the-board on cloud computing, implying that a user only demands a browser or an application on a mobile device, whereas storage, updates and security are handled by the platform. The graphic presentation enhances clarity in the project and eliminates the chances of deadline overshoot.

5.3 Practical Demonstration

Microsoft Teams Test:

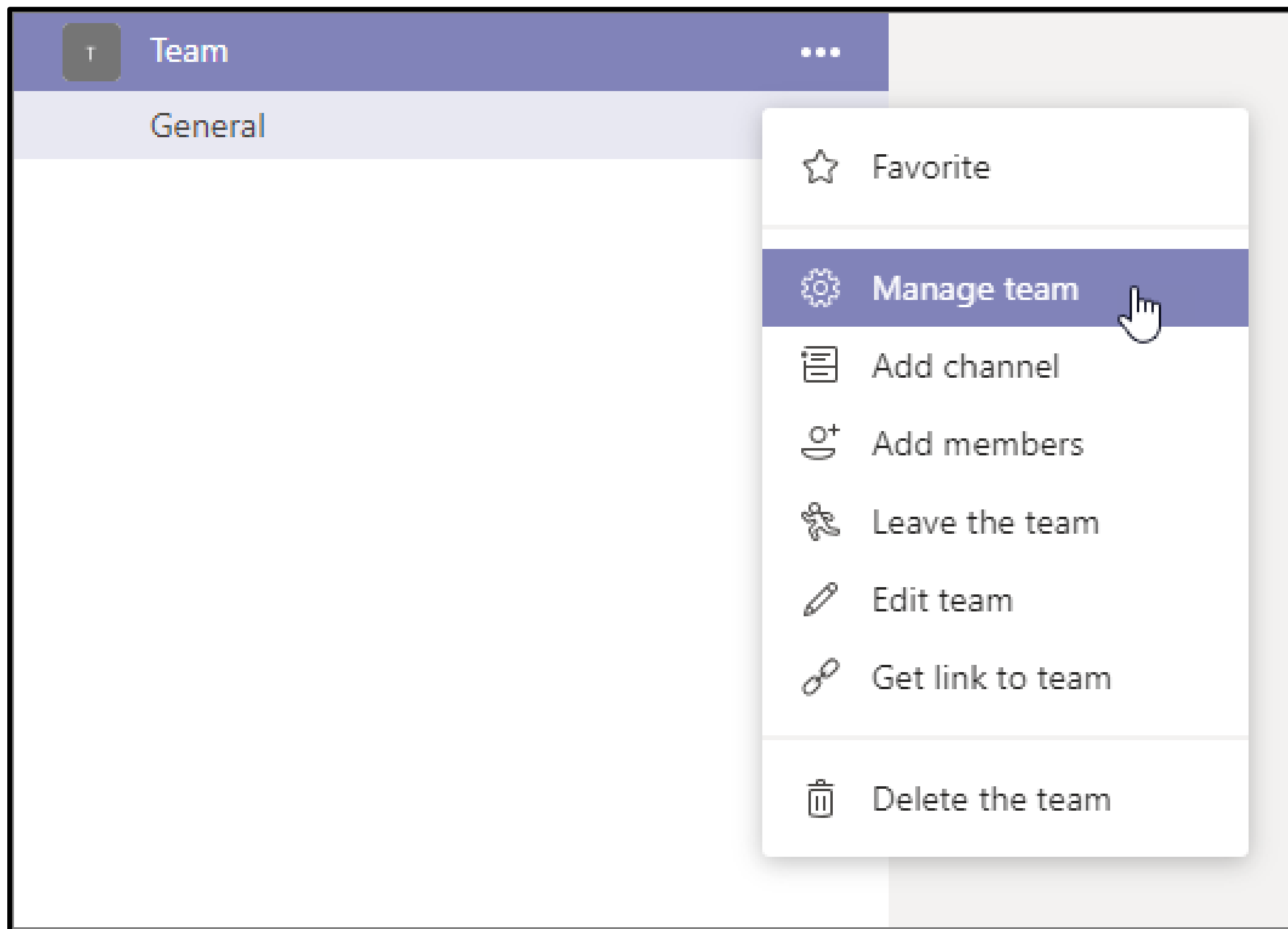


Figure: Building Microsoft Teams Tabs

- Sent a chat message to one of the team.
- Added a PDF file to a channel.
- Registered a meeting on the Calendar tab.

Trello Test:

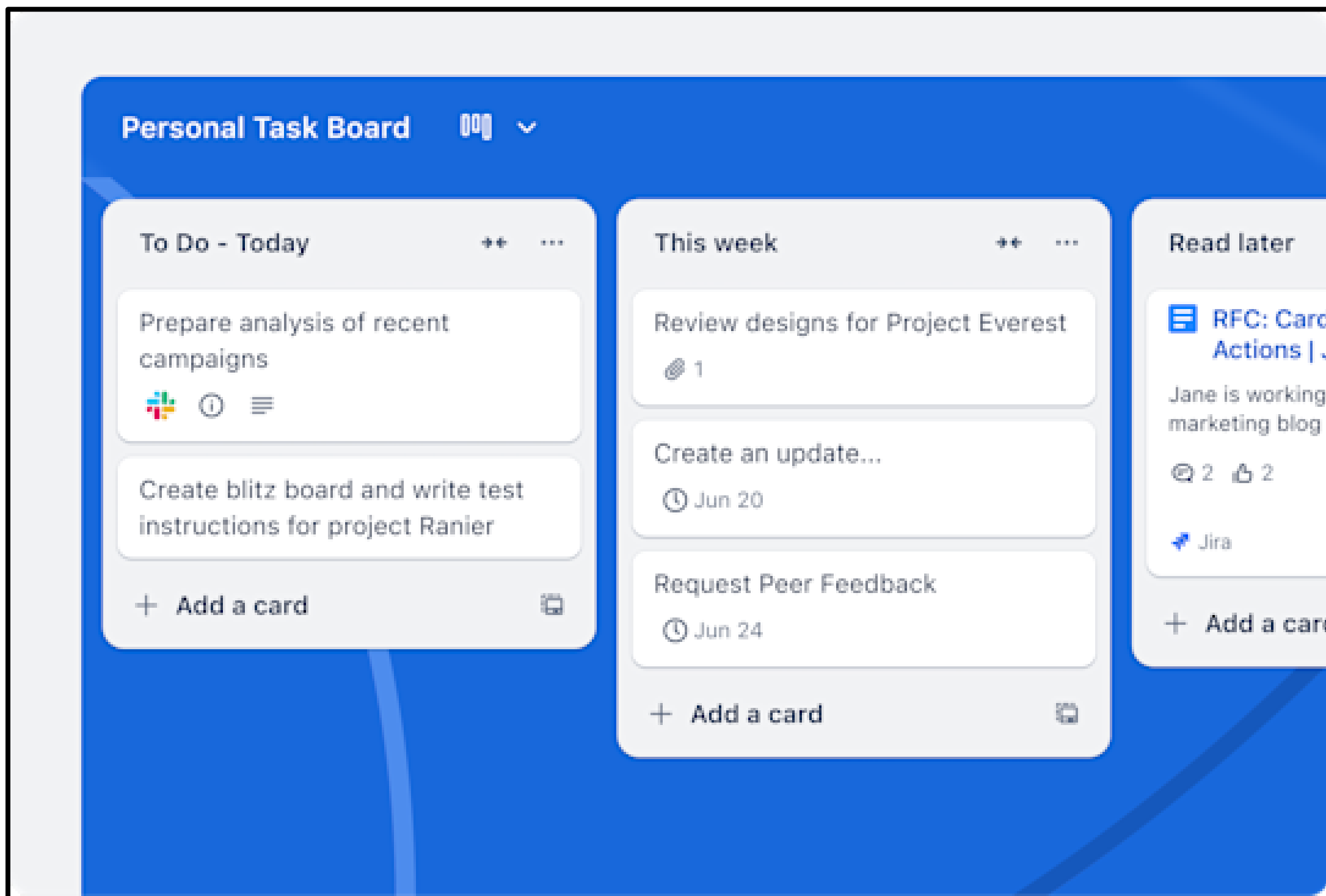


Figure: Features, Uses&More of Trello

- Created a project board
- Received a card with the title Report Draft.
- Gave a date of completion and transferred the card out of the To Do section to In Progress.

Reflection:

The practical tests reveal that practical communication and collaboration tools simplify the operations, enhance the efficiency of the team, legitimize its operations, and assist with remote working and decision-making.

6. Conclusion

This portfolio has shown why modern software solutions are vital to the processes of running the business, which in turn fits MLO1 because a vast number of niche tools are utilised, including e-commerce solutions, productivity software, communication hardware, and teamwork solutions. It also dealt with MLO2 by presenting and conveying information in a clear way with organised analysis, diagrams, comparison tables and by illustrating as well.

The comparison of Shopify and Wix has helped to identify the benefits of SaaS e-commerce solutions in improving e-commerce digital processes and customer experiences. The mind-mapping exercise revealed that visual thinking is important in the arrangement of software ecosystems. Task 3 and Task 4 provided a practical usage of office, communication, and collaboration tools via the hands-on testing to secure the knowledge of the process by providing illustrative examples.

The applied exercises also helped us to understand how software is used to enhance efficiency, accuracy and data-based decision-making in the workplace. In general, the portfolio focuses on the increasing demand for digital literacy with organisations adopting current advanced tools to facilitate remote jobs, automation, cloud computing, and simplified communications. Digital change is further altering the workplace such that expertise in software solutions has become crucial to employability and success in organisations.

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