

Voiceover Artist 0:00

Are you ready to manage your work and personal world better to live a fulfilling productive life, then you've come to the right place productivity cast, the weekly show about all things productivity. Here, your host Ray Sidney-Smith and Augusto Pinaud with Francis Wade and Art Gelwicks.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 0:17

And Welcome back, everybody to productivity cast, the weekly show about all things personal productivity, I'm Ray Sidney Smith.

Augusto Pinaud 0:24

I am Augusto Pinaud.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 0:25

And welcome to our listeners to this episode, we've got a little bit of a surprise for you all. We don't do this very often. But on occasion here on ProductivityCast we invite a guest to talk about a topic or a thing that we think is really useful. And we're actually really delighted to have Michael Sliwinski here from Nozbe. And and so welcome Michael to the show.

Michael Sliwinski 0:47

Hi, thanks for having me.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 0:49

Yeah, absolutely. Okay, so do you want to tell us a little bit about you, you have a long standing relationship with Michael, and you want to tell us a little bit about Michael and then Michael can fill in the gaps.

Augusto Pinaud 0:59

That sounds like Good plan. Yeah, I have the good fortune to call Michael a friend. I met Michael many years ago on a publication called Productive Magazine. And he's been talking about being No Office and Office Free seems at least the last 20 years, maybe more. Michael is the founder and CEO of Nozbe. And now, Nozbe has been growing and evolving and has a new product coming out called Nozbe Teams. And Nozbe Teams is one of the things that we want to focus this conversation on about this new thing. And I'm sure we will talk about #iPadOnly the book that we Michael and I wrote together and we still strongly believe in and still continue using iPads. And I'm sure also we will talk about No Office as it is really relevant to the dates that we are living right now. So we start welcome, Michael.

Michael Sliwinski 2:02

Hi. Yes. Thank you. I'm good. I'm good. I. So anyway, before I start, like I love the podcast, I'm a big fan. And I'm a regular listener, actually, a few weeks ago, I was listening to one of the one of your shows, and then I was like, Hmm, I don't want to listen to listen to

Augusto recorded, I will I want to talk to him. So that was really an impetus to send him a message and say, Hey, I haven't talked for a while. And then this is how we reconnected after a few months. So that was great. So anyway, I'm a big fan of the of the show. And I'm a productivity freak. So productivity geek, productivity freak, productivity aficionado, like, however you want to call it. And that's why I think I belong to the show in this sense. And, yeah, I've been building Nozbe and it's a personal productivity tool that helps people be awesome, by you know, getting their stuff together. And yeah, we've been All remote company 25 people right now I think I always lose count. But anyway, we don't have an office. We don't go to any office, we've always been remote. And that's why also right now we are trying to help people to, you know, to advise them how to how to deal with this current situation of the Coronavirus and how to stay at home and work effectively.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 3:20

Michael I wanted to start us off with giving people an understanding of maybe the differentiation what specifically differentiates Nozbe from say other time and task and project management software that are out there. And then if you can give us a little bit of compare and contrast between Nozbe Personal and Nozbe Teams?

Yeah, so um, the first thing was that must be was built for me. I needed to solve my own problems, question my own itch and build something that I would that will help me get stuff done better. And second thing is a very powerful yet simple tool that I tried. I tried to simplify getting things done. I wasn't Taking inspiration from getting things done, but not direct implementation like you, for example, you compare it to OmniFocus, which has like lots of lots of great features. And it's very complex, you have to study OmniFocus, to be able to use it, for example, but not only is it simplified, because I tried to simplify origins where like I wanted to get next actions, projects and contexts. And that's it like nothing else. And this is what I did in the very beginning, when I was building Nozbe, right now mostly is grown after 13 years, to a very cool productivity tool with more than half a million users all over the world. Nozbe is also syncs across all the devices. So you can have it even on there wasn't even an Apple Watch app so you can have your next actions on the go with just your watch. So in this sense, we we have we tried to be actually multi-platform really easy to use. And what happened was like when we were building Nozbe as a personal productivity tool, again, to make Getting Things Done simple to make productivity as simple as, as possible to really be able to quickly put stuff into your projects into your tasks. And, and also comment on the tasks. So this way you have a larger context of what what you really want to do. When you when you think about Nozbe other tools like this, you know, they're all a different version, you know, different interpretation of productivity. And in my case, I wanted it to be as simple to use as possible, and also as portable as possible so that I could use it, you

know, on my iPad, you know, I was done, I wrote the #iPadOnly book. And we just recently published it for free on the internet. So if you go to #iPaddonly.com, you can just read it for free for me, the multiplatform the simplicity, and also collaboration. So again, something that you don't get when you for example, you have things or OmniFocus is collaboration with other people. So it must be it's very simple to share a project with anyone. So even if somebody who doesn't have Nozbe account can share a project with you. This way. You don't have to let go of your system you can share a project with somebody. And when they create a task, they create tasks in your project that you share with them. So we don't have to just you know, copy and paste things. This will be like a briefly a summary of Nozbe. So a very, very powerful simply simple tool, but you know, multi platform and you know, multi person if he wants to. Now we have two tools we have we just launched Nozbe Teams. And lots of people are asking, why would you build a completely new tool under the same brand name? Why not a newer version of Nozbe. But Nozbe Teams is is an opposite approach. It's approached from you create a team. So it's it's for a team to get stuff done together, instead of you getting stuff together with some people. So so let's like the simplest, the simplest version to explain the difference between these two products is that there needs to be the original Nozbe and we call Nozbe Personal is a tool to help you get stuff done. Also with some other people on all of your devices, but not be teams is to help teams get stuff done. So it's just basically just for teams. And there are like many things that we'll we'll talk today about the differences that come from that, but it's a, like a kind of completely different design decision, like from the get go. And, and because and we had to build a separate tool for that, because we just couldn't morph, you know, current tool, not. And, you know, in order not to upset users like otherwise it will, it will do something completely strange people wouldn't understand it, it will be an upgrade that people wouldn't want to have. So that's why we decided to build a completely different tool just for teams, which is separate, and it has its separate codebase it's separate database, there is no sync between these two. These are two different tools. And, and the aim was to bring productivity getting things done to groups in an easier way.

And so what I what I find to be fascinating about Nozbe Personal, the things that draw me to Nozbe are the fact that it is based on the GTD principles, you know, you build it from the ground up there. When you talk about multiple platforming. Yeah, you can you could talk about the the sexy language of Apple products, but there's a Linux app. And for those, those super geeks out there, myself included, you know, you can put Nozbe on Linux and and run with it. I mean, that's the level of geekery we're talking about here that I think a lot of our listeners really appreciate and your ability to be able to understand the nature of productivity, not just because you care about GTD, but because you care about productivity as a whole there there isn't this existential argument about being productive from the GTD particulars

its its overall productivity and baking that into teams. I'm really curious about this conversation today because of that piece. And and I'm gonna I'm gonna let the Augusto kick us off here because he's the he's the Nozbe Team's guru here. So I'm curious from here on out hearing from and for our listeners and for my own benefit, I suppose How Nozbe Teams was built? Understanding that I think David Allen didn't quite give us a lot of framework for how teams should really implement GTD. And I'm curious about that process that you all went through to to identify how GTD should be implemented for group collaboration and actionability.

Michael Sliwinski 9:22

It's true, like David Allen is insisting on, you know, GTD being very personal, and that's true, and that but but over the years, like I've been running Nozbe for the last 13 years. So I've you know, as I said, I've grown as a productivity geek and productivity student, and, and I've learned how and especially having an old remote team, which is like a, an extreme version of everything, you know, we can do, I've learned that yes, you can apply GTD for teams, you can apply it in a team environment. And we call it a task based collaboration. This is what we call it, there is there is we have, we have coined the term for that. And this principle of task based collaboration is something that we've learned with the first version of Nozbe. And then it was the main principle of Nozbe Teams

Augusto Pinaud 10:13

when we wrote it, #iPadOnly that was one of the first things that happened. We create a project on Nozbe. And that was a project that moved that book from, let's have this idea to let's publish this book, okay. And as a user, as a person who hadn't had use Nozbe up to that point, it was a really interesting experience to see how easy it was to interact with the different components of this, you know, when between sending message to Hey, here is the revision of the chapter one through now we are going to add person x so that we have a third set of eyes to review and that was a really powerful collaboration tool for me. As a person who lives in a really closed system who lacks collaboration, I could see the power of that. When the idea of Nozbe Teams came out, I was lucky enough to have a conversation with Michael and access even the early versions of this. And what it was really interesting between 2013 on a now is how certain things has changed for me. At that time, I was working for a company, I had my own thing, but he was me, myself and nobody else. So it didn't matter. Now, my business is evolved to the point that I have certain people that I deal with and it is really nice to see how the approach of Nozbe Teams came up, as Michael was describing nazari was designed for me and my productivity while the nazari team is assigned for the productivity of the team and that really change the way we do and see certain things. You know, not any Know the tools, including Nozbe really was up to that point, really powerful into allow the team to move forward to communicate, to have a repository where the things are, but at the

same time where you could also keep your personal productivity component, that's what for me was really, really interesting. Not only that you are looking at this from a completely different approach as where the team is going to move on what is a successful outcome to use the GTD terminology of that team, but also how every team to a certain extent it's an equal into making this project and the success happening. That is something that I have not seen on any other productivity tool up to this point. And that's one of the things that, for me made it really, really, really interesting. So I wanted to share that before we let Michael Go in where he's going to be able to trickle a lot more things that are coming, but that is experience of a person who has seen live on a closed system and seen the interaction with both things. Maybe without all the knowledge of living inside of Nozbe for so long.

Michael Sliwinski 13:18

The basic question that I get right now and we get and you can imagine that right now we have lots of confused people because because of confused user because like there is Nozbe Teams for me or it Nozbe Personal for me like what is for me like or what to do. And what's really the difference like you know, Nozbe Team is more like a personal tool, this one to team to like, what's really changed, right. And the basic concept when you have a team productivity tool is that you structure things differently. Like for example, in Nozbe Personal. When you sign up for an account. You can create a project and when you create a project this product is the only thing is you are the only person who can see the project unless you invite somebody To this project, so even if you have a, have a business account and Nozbe personal and you have several people on your team, whenever you create a new project, this is just for you unless you decide to invite somebody there. In Nozbe Teams is completely the other way around. You create the project. And by default, everybody on the team can see the project. You can also limit the you know, who can see the project, you can limit that. But the default option is the project is open for like for the whole team. And this is what we've learned over the years of using Nozbe and talking to our business customers should not be dead. Like by default, most of the projects like why not this is a custom company knowledge base like why not have them open for everyone to see like nobody will only follow up after these projects and then then comes you know another thing we invited we have created the concept of following a project. When you follow the project you get notifications from these projects from this project activity information from This project, if you don't follow it, you don't, you can always access it. But you don't, you know, like follow the project. So you don't really follow what's going on in this project. So, and you can also, then the funny part is that you can also follow a task, like if there is a project. And then there is a task, for example, they'll get it to you automatically, you're following this task, because you know, you were involved in this task. So, and the basic principle, suddenly you create projects for the team, not projects for yourself and some other

people that you will have to invite. And this The cool thing about this is that it eliminates this administrative overhead of just creating projects and always remembering, okay, I have to invite this guy and this guy and this guy and this guy, I don't know, like, there's decision fatigue. We tried, which as we know in productivity decision, it's real. It's something that really stresses us out and makes us unproductive later in the day. Like we have we wanted to get rid of it. We wanted to make sure that you create the project. You tasks, you don't think too much about it, you just create stuff, which is substantial, which is important. And then you decide who you want to delegate this task to who you should notify about this, like, you know, it's it's the second thing you know, it's not the most important thing. So, so so this is the whole concept is completely different and putting this kind of logic in current must be was completely impossible. That's why we decided to create a new product where which which focuses on this on creating team projects and and then tasks and then comments to these tasks.

Augusto Pinaud 16:33

Coming back to keeping the projects part of the team and unavailable for everybody. So in a certain way, we are on geeking out what personal kanban has done for many software developers, but we are bringing data to to everybody you know, for people who are not familiar with was that basically we have in the in the geek world developer world jus calm and everybody have these meetings where we are trying to show everybody what are all the projects where he's updates, how they're moving forward, in, in the change, but when you go to none development, that's a practice that rarely exists. You know, the projects exist that things exist, but they are all over. So without maybe not being relevant or being relevant how that apply. I mean, at the end of the day, Nozbe there is a big component of Nozbe that software development, okay, software development isn't the day today to store productivity but isn't the day today. So how much of that applies to to the creation or to the idea of Nozbe Teams, how much of that was on the on the essence?

Michael Sliwinski 17:56

But, so actually, it must be teams as a result of me Personally interviewing lots of business customers of Nozbe. And again, for this show, I've prepared a few, like really geeky stuff that like normally I wouldn't share in a like an interview not about productivity, but we are among productivity geeks here. So so for example, what I did was, I created a time slot every Tuesday and every Thursday in an app called calendly. That that was a unique link that people could just click on this calendly and, and, and just have a talk with me. So I just, you know, pre decided that in these time slots is available for customers. So what happened was that every time our customer support was thinking, you know, this customer is interesting, this customers industry is interesting. I think Michael could talk to these guys. So they would just email them you know, Michael would like to talk to you

or would you like to talk to Michael and usually they were happy to talk to the CEO of Nozbe because they were using those themselves. And and I was really curious about their industry about how they work. How they get stuff done and why they use Nozbe for their, you know, company. So this way, every week, I had two three conversations with, with, you know, with like amazing people like CEOs and you know, managers of really cool companies. And, and Nozbe it's not a tool for big companies not being like, you know, small and medium sized companies so really but but you know, but these companies are amazing they're doing great things and and for me what was astounding was that lots of them were from completely different industries. They were not in software. They were like lawyers, they were like real estate agents, insurance agents, like complicated, you know, lots of different industries. For example, lawyers lawyers use not be because they realize that their infrastructure, IT infrastructure is just really crap. And they needed a way to store documents in a safe way in the cloud. And they knew that we encrypt documents when they are uploaded to not be so they were sure that they were, you know, very confidential, top secret Deal send and documents are safe. So they were using Nozbe because they have they needed a, you know, a way to handle customer cases. with with with security in mind. So with all these conversations, this is how Nozbe teams can come to me because I was asking them how they are getting stuff done, why they decided not to send emails anymore to each other, about use internal to like not being to get stuff done. And because Nozbe Teams in the end of the day, it's our biggest competitors are like companies like Asana, Basecamp, or whatever. But the biggest competitor is email. The biggest competitor competitor is non usage, like not using a tool like this for internal communication. Because again, no space for task based communication, internal communication in the team. And so that's why when we were building Nozbe Teams, we were thinking about that about normal people, normal users, not productivity geeks, not it enthusiasts, because you know, it enthusiasts they they can build themselves like stuff they do and they like doing that so, so with them, it's really tricky because they want to have like this, you know, small features that nobody else would use. But with Nozbe Teams, what we're trying to do is try to build a mainstream task based communication tool. And that will switch small and medium sized companies from using email from using chat from using all these different tools. And especially post it notes. And and when which they cannot use right now when they're working from home. And to not be teams where they can have everything in projects very nicely organized, and it must be teams we have project sections, so we can have sections of projects so you can see the progress. And then in the tasks have the comments and attachments this way, nothing is lost. Everything is in the same place. There is one source of truth to everything and you can with one glance you can see when you open the project you can see with avatars like who's who's whose job is which task, like who's responsible for this was responsible for that. You don't have to ask you don't have to send emails with carbon copy and,

you know, blind carbon copy. So with all that, so what I'm trying to say is that I did something that doesn't scale, I was talking to customers. But because I was doing it over a few years, I managed to really have lots of conversations and really understand lots of industries. And for me, the cool thing was that, and this is what you would like, is that I found in these customers, there were lots of productivity geeks as well, who knew that who could appreciate having a productivity tool, like having a productivity system, like because this is what we're talking about here in this show on this show, that's what you do all the time, to have your own productivity system. And what they appreciated was the fact that they they understood that they needed a productive system not only for themselves, but for the team because they were getting stuff done, but everybody else was chaos. So they were trying to bring people on board so they were like our champions inside this company. You know, and for me talking to them was trying to understand how can we build a tool that will help them incorporate productivity and convince other people to just give it a try? And, and not to just, you know, say I don't want another tool for like, because this guy likes it.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 23:18

What were some of the things that maybe shocked you in the conversations you had with these folks? I mean, yes, you you identified that there were some productivity enthusiasts out there some productivity geeks, what were some of the things that you thought kind of shocked you in the conversations that you thought you didn't know before you started talking to these customers?

Michael Sliwinski 23:36

You love it, man. So they're like, there's so many cool things. So for example, like there was a CEO of a small company that he was like to really like Nozbe enthusiasts he loved Nozbe and he won't really ever want to use Nozbe. So what he did is he gave them treats, like if they would, you know, create a new project or something they would give them he would give them like cinema tickets and all that stuff like that. So he was he would bribe them. Basically, so that they could use knows be more and more and more. And this is how he built this, you know, muscle memory for everyone that habits of using Nozbe because he was kind of driving a little with his his team members. So so for example, so like that. And another thing like, and it was another idea why we should design the system a little bit differently was there were people who were who had like, thousands of projects, because for example, there was an insurance and there was an insurance insurance agent. And she has she's a very successful one, unfortunately which and but I'm saying unfortunately because because of that she had lots of customers and she decided each customer is a different project, which makes perfect sense why not? Because in each project that she would put a task, you know, with, for example, the most important thing like with date and recurrence, so for example before like, you know, a date before the expense by the insurance of this, somebody

expires, she gets notified people know what to do you know that she set up the whole thing. And because she was so successful, she created like 2000 projects and suddenly like our Nozbe app will break because of that. So we had to really like issue a quick update to the app to make sure that we can fix this so that she can handle like 2000 or 3000 projects, because our app wasn't just designed for so many projects. But it made perfect sense like this one, as you know, when you deal with insurance agents, when you deal with real real estate agents, many, many times they screw up because they don't show up on time. They don't call back on time. They don't, you know, call you to remind you that you have a policy to you know, to upgrade or to you know, renew or whatever. But she was successful because she had nausea and she had all the systems you know, all these tasks that will just remind her of, and then she was happy, even upselling you know, in the comment of a task she would have like a checklist of what she can upsell to this customer later. So she will, you know, she would create a date for this task, the task would likely say show up in a few months with suggestions what you know what to upsell to this customer because she knew that, you know, she shouldn't upsell things to them right away when they became the customers but she just wait a little bit and you know, get get confidence, you know, gain confidence, and then do it. So, it was for me amazing that Nozbe became like, this insurance agent tool.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 26:30
Basically, she built a CRM inside of Nozbe.

Michael Sliwinski 26:34
Exactly, exactly. Another thing I can tell you is this was this was completely mind blowing. So I was talking about lawyers. So we have quite a few law firms using those be and the funny thing was, there was a there was a 60 people law firm there is in Poland, and they Managing Partner so they'd be as busy, busy as lawyer there is, you know, in a big law firm like this. He was enough to be only on the iPhone. He wouldn't even download the Mac App. He wasn't logging on web Never, he just used the iPhone because he was on the way all the time. So he and then again, they had the structure that every customer was different, or every case was a different project. So every case was different project. Again, because of the flexibility of mostly they could do that. But the best part was that because he was using only iPhone, and he, there were 60 people on the team. And again, lots of projects. Again, we we had to optimize the sync engine for the iPhone, because he was just sinking too much data into his iPhone, and the app would freeze or something. So we had to just make sure that we can, you know, improve the app, because again, we were not prepared for this kind of use case that somebody would do something like that. And and again, with Nozbe Teams, we have already thought you know, bigger how to do it so that in the future, if somebody is not as the case like this, they're saying that I would think and it wouldn't break and all that stuff. So we just put it already, you know, at the

architecture part, but here we had to just you know, kind of fix things as we as we went but for us was like, you know, again, how can somebody like such an important person melanic partner of a big law firm, just use the iPhone. And again, we realize that sometimes suddenly we are competing against them. Typical law firm-me, you know, platforms who have other modules like like, you know, invoicing and all that stuff, time tracking or whatever. They didn't need that they didn't this law firm, this complex law firm didn't need these, all these, you know, lawyerly features, what they needed was this guy to be able to manage his whole company with an iPhone.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 28:32

And I'm actually starting to see that more and more is that when some of these executives who, with with no disrespect or are more mature or getting upper upper end age, they they choose to learn the smartphone. And then that's the only tool they'll use because they've learned it so well. It's it's a it's a lesser featured interface, right? Because you have fewer were fewer things you can do in that space. So it's actually easier for them to learn. And so then they just they abide by using that solely. And they don't you I actually have a client right now who that's his only interface with Evernote is the mobile device. And I'm always like, Oh, so let's just go ahead and do this feature in Evernote. And I'm like, Oh, yeah, that's not on the iPhone. So let's just let's just simplify, simplify, simplify, because I think that it just makes a lot of sense.

Michael Sliwinski 29:27

So that was, again, our discovery and and so two things that we stand by firmly that we already did and Nozbe but in those big teams had to take it to a whole new level, which made everything very complex for us, was the sync. So we said after you know, already having it in Nobe Teams, we said, you know, we're going the same route, we want to have data local, so local data, unlike, for example, other tools where if you want to just you know, open a project, it pulls data from the internet We realize that even though everybody has is on a super Wi Fi, or super fast, LTE, whatever, the truth of the matter is that very often you need access to data very quickly. And if you want to wait, if you're forced to wait for something to pull from the internet, sometimes you know, when you're on a spotty connection, you're just in this place where the connection is not good. So we decided it has to be local. So the sync engine has to sync the information keeps sinking the information and you plug the iPhone, you know, it works, you are on the airplane, it just works. Like for example, an airplane, sometimes you have internet connection on the airplane, but when you do, it's very, very slow. So it can sync the information. But if you would like to know to just pull up the whole project, it will just it will be impossible. So there was one thing. And second thing, also what we found out in Nozbe, and now Nozbe Teams even more so we want the same feature set. So the same powerfulness of the iPhone and the desktop app, which also means that something Sometimes this app will

not have certain features that maybe other competitors have. Because it's glorious and you know, very sparkly and whatever, we decided to simplify just to make sure that we can do the same thing you can do on the iPhone, you can do on the iPad you can do on the web. Of course, sometimes the interface is a bit better. Of course, we do certain things differently on the web or on the on the iPad, because we have a bigger screen real estate, but the feature set so the power fullness is the same this way as you write in your example, this guy doesn't have this problem that you know, all this feature, you cannot do it on the on the iPhone, no, you can still do it on the iPhone. So it's, it's for us that that's why for example, right now, when we implement anything new, to not be teams, we have to figure it out how it works on the mobile and then how it works on the on the web. We like we don't want to have anything that would just impede people like like this guy like this managing partner, I just use the iPhone, like if it's your only interface, like you know, stick with that. It's fine.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 32:00

I think that's a really great principle of thinking mobile first. I mean, I talk about this all the time to small businesses about marketing and thinking about their mobile marketing first as they go into this, but thinking mobile first in terms of the app interface, I think is such an important aspect of how you're developing Nozbe teams. And I really, I really like that.

Michael Sliwinski 32:19

Yeah, when you think about it, like, you know, people that as I said, increasingly, their interface will be mobile will be iOS will be Android. And you don't want to, to have them as an experience like you and you want them to get stuff done. You want them to get to be able to get back to you to send you this comments to reply to your task to be able to move it to a project, you know, to be able to really, you know, get stuff done on the go. So this is like really important and the good thing again, this is the good thing about me being an iPad geek, is that you know, iPad only, like my main interface is my iPad. I have an iMac in my home office, but this is but my Mac is my secondary canvas. Like I do stuff. I prefer to get stuff done on my iPad Pro. So this way that On one hand, it kind of, you know, people are looking at me like I'm crazy. But on the other hand, This, to me is great, because then I can really make sure that when we design Nozbe Teams, I am not the handicapped person, because I can do the same thing everybody else can do on their desktop.

Augusto Pinaud 33:17

I work with small businesses exactly that their mobile device is their main machine is the machine where they spend 80% of the time that on a lot of the frustration I hear in some of those conversations is yes, if when I get to the computer, I can then do fill in the blank. And I think it is something that we are seeing more and more where their iPhone, or their Android is their main device and really the only

device that they want to use especially after they get to to a certain level, you know, so that approach that I experienced in Nozbe and I experienced in Nozbe Teams it is it is really, really an advantage of the platform.

Michael Sliwinski 34:05

Yeah. And so another cool things that I wanted to share with you guys another cool behind the scenes things like so what we what happened like last year when we finally like we started, you know having the beta version of Nozbe teams, it was still very, very early product. But we saw that our, our team is not really using much of it. So, one day one of our main developers, he just what he did is he just took exported all of our projects to Nozbe teams, all our team projects, and delete them Nozbe like that. He just basically forced everyone to go to Nozbe teams. And it was great. Like we needed that. We were of course, like most of the teams was not really happy with the sudden change of platform but this spike the usage of Nozbe Teams, so we started getting used to the platform and just seeing everything that wasn't working right. And one of the things we discovered Even though we were using the same project in Nairobi, but then it must be teams, what happened, we realized that we discussed more. So we sent more comments. And we are like, the interface for comments was also better in Nozbe teams than then in the Nozbe it's pretty important. But also, there are more discussions like when the parties are open, when tasks are when tasks are available to everyone. People are, you know, very often just writing more, they're just writing more comments. They're giving more feedback, which is good. Because again, we believe in this a synchronous feedback. So it's not like it's not like Slack, like chat, where you are expected to reply right away. No, it's like, you know, somebody going in or doing a record review or going through projects that they normally wouldn't go through. And they see a task, which is interesting for them. And they say, Oh, I have some opinions here. So they just write it comment. And what we decided early on, was like, Whoa, so if this is the case, in our case already, like it we used to use Nozbe like this. We are right now using Nozbe teams and our comments. creased, we had to do in the first comments, because it Nozbe personal. And comments go from, from the latest to the oldest. So so the top comment is the latest comment, and we thought it was the right thing to do. But when we saw how many comments we are producing in Nozbe Teams, we realized it's not the I mean, for personal use, it's fine. But for a team use when you have so many comments, it's easier to scroll down and just read and read or read. So it must be teams. We actually borrowed the idea from WhatsApp that from WhatsApp groups, like when you open a task, what happens is you You're the common thread opens and you are being transported to your last seen comment in this thread. And then you just can continue where you left off. So basically the same way when you open a whatsapp group and you have the chats the same way because we realized that this is kind of Nozbe Team's it's more of a task manager crossing between Task Manager and what's up because it's it's a communication tool, I think

communication tool. And so that's why we did we had to invert the comments and do all this again, with some of the decisions in Nozbe teams, we brought on ourselves so many problems, some of the engineering problems and engineering challenges because of that, because we had to really learn how to how to implement this. But for the customer, it just seemed less like they open they are like, in the same place where they were last last time here and they have seen the new comments, they can scroll to read the comments, they can reply to the comment, everything is fine, everything looks good. But for us, it was a COMPLETE REVERSE OF OUR like, you know of the way we used to do it in Nozbe so we have to learn it again. Because the team environment you just communicate more.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 37:53

And it's really interesting because the the reality is is that I'm going to make some I'm gonna make an argument here that most people are not going to like but they have their Email Setup wrong because people read emails backwards, and they also read and reply backwards when you reply to a message the message should be below the original message. Just like WhatsApp, you know, it's like it has always boggled my mind how unproductive people read unproductively, people read email because of the structure of putting everything above the prior message. So you're always reading the opposite way that the brain actually naturally thinks of chronology. So like think think, think, think of, of a conversation, you think of it in a linear fashion from one time to the next, not the backwards, you know, not in the inverse way. And so I love that being able to just like take a conversation from where you last read it and going from there. Just makes sense.

Michael Sliwinski 38:48

Yeah, and just, you know, small things like that we had to, we had to like figure out for example, like, you know, every task every task Nozbe Teams like and in any task manager has parameters, like, you know, date or occurrence. Sorry, delegation, like, who's responsible for that and all that stuff. But for example, we have to figure out that, of course, they do have the parameters. But if you're opening it comment and you want to ask and you want to catch up, these parameters should be very small, because you don't care about them right now, you don't want to change them right now. Unless I mean, until you've read all the comments, because only then you can decide what to do with a task, should you take it or should you just delegate it to somebody else or whatever. So again, this kind of situation, you know, having here that has parameters smaller than them bigger, like all these, you know, this is this was our design decisions that we're still tweaking. But, but we're trying to, we're trying to make with Nozbe Teams. Because as I said, many people who will use Nozbe Teams now have never used a tool like this have never used a test manager have never used a productivity system at all. So we are trying to and you know, we'll see how this goes. But we're trying to make it as easy to use as possible as natural to use as possible. That's why the structure is

simple. There is a team In team, we have projects that we have tasks, and we have comments. And we have some test parameters, but you know, just how to make it as intuitive and, and as good to use on the mobile. So all these things like, I can tell you all about this, you know, nitty gritty design decisions that we have to go through, but we will not have time for this show. But I wanted to give you some just ideas, how it all went through,

Augusto Pinaud 40:22

I think it's really important to to bring back and to to reinforce the fact that basically, you are just you're going to have the projects and the task and all that but you are going to keep all the tools hold the ways that you are communicating today, we before you implement this into your company, you know, the email, the text or the slack, whatever way of communication was a big big difference. Now, everything will be accessible in the right context, because any of our listeners or the non listeners, okay who are experiencing this problem Sometimes he's okay. I remember Michael sent me an email about this. And that's where everything fall apart, or, yes, it was a mail or it was a text when this came. And that is a problem that I see a lot. Especially in a small businesses, there are two or three people. And because there are two or three people and they're pretty simpatico with each other, they don't have these really good communication protocol. And when you look at from the Nozbe team perspective, it is really really powerful and cool to now you don't need to go to the email or to the text, keep the communication inside of the tool doesn't matter the device you're using to access and you will be able to have all those specific elements just from the productivity perspective. As a coach, that will save so many hours to small businesses not looking for that piece of information for that comment. Oh, he said the color was Purple or green, just that little thin will save hours to people.

Michael Sliwinski 42:06

Yeah so um for example, another difference between Nozbe Teams and Nozbe from again productivity standpoint. I told you right in the beginning that Nozbe when it was born it was born for me it was born for personal use and my idea was to simplify. So, for example, if a task was due, it just directly was went to your next actions, because it was due right now, it was due for you, no problem it just so shows in your next actions we were later renamed into private priority, but it would show up there you know, because it was for you. But once we started implementing that and like delegating tasks to people became their priority, it was getting to be kind of a mess. So in Nozbe Teams. For example, what we did is we have this whole incoming section like like an inbox. So incoming section is like, if a task is due, it goes to your incoming if somebody's delegated as to it goes to your incoming, if if somebody mentions you in a comment of a task, it goes to your incoming and then in You're incoming, you decide what to do you read it, okay, whatever, or you date you date somebody, or you

comment on it, or you make it your priority. And but but the only way for the task to be your priority is your conscious decision you have it has to be your decision, your your click on the on the Start became your to become your priority. So, again, when we saw how many people like work collaborating, we realized that it's not a good design decision that if somebody delegates that to you, they can influence your priority to your next actions, you know, your next actions is your choice. Like, like, we like we compared it to like to a desk, like if I'm sitting at the desk, and somebody wants something from me, they should put it in my inbox, because then I'll do it in my inbox instead of just, you know, shoving it in my face, like Michael, fix this. And so again, these are the decisions we have to do when we were doing Nozbe Teams. So as you can see, they're small, but kind of substantial decisions difference that we had to go through and we didn't want to split Must be product Nozbe Personal for, you know, half a million users that are already using it. But do something better, something better, something different for teams, who are just completely new to this, who are completely new to having this kind of system, any kind of productivity system.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 44:16

So today Nozbe Teams is as it is, right? It's a fairly new product, it's out of beta people can access it, where we're where do you feel like Nozbe Teams is going to go in the next six months if you could share with us a little bit of roadmap in terms of of what do you think is the next best thing that's going to come to Nozbe Teams that I think will level up the app that you think will level up the app in a way that will make it better?

Michael Sliwinski 44:44

Yeah, so you know, when you know, when you when you know how software development works, you have to sacrifice lots of cool features you would love to have in the initial version, because you just cannot make it all happen. It's just impossible. So that's why at the launch, you just have to go anywhere. We have to decide, you know, cut our, you know, darlings and and remove lots of cool features that we have prepared for people to use. So, in the coming, you know, half a year a year like we will be improving and iterating on the product a lot. One of the first things we are implementing, which we haven't done on the on the launch, but it's coming, I can think in a week or two already is the integration with email. So you can email tasks to us, but we didn't do it on launch, because we wanted to do it a bit differently than we did it and not be so but it's coming later integration with slack. So you will be So our idea is that we could copy the team from Slack, build it and not be like just completely copy it to not be and then have an integration that you can add any thread and any you know, slack chat thread, you can convert it into a task this way, like when you start you know, chatting with somebody and you get to some details. So like none of this shouldn't be here in slack because we'll forget about it. So just like making a task bomb and then it goes to

your task two project this way, it won't be forgotten, because Nozbe should be the source of truth in your company, you don't want to be browsing, you know, through infinite chat messages to get things done. So, this definitely, also, we have this idea of, of resources. So the project right now has tasks, we have tasks, sections of tasks. And you can already comment with with text and also attachments, but you want to make sure that you also in the project, there are also things that which are which are not tasks, which are just resources, like, you know, templates, and documents, like all these things. And right now, which is the hacky way to do it is just to create a task with all these resources and just put them there, but we want to make sure that they are just a first class citizen that you know, at project can have these resources which are not to be done, they are there to be there. So this is another big thing, and also working on working on files, like we want to introduce this way that you can have versions of files and not be this way. Thank you. Upload the same file, but with like a newer version, and you can comment on the newer version on the changes. So this way, we want to reduce or completely remove this necessity of sending attachments through any other means like even if you so it Nozbe Teams in the future you will be able to collaborate with anyone outside of the team as a guest, for example to a project or to a task. And this way, you will have to send them an email with attachment, you send them a link to the task, they'll be able to access it and to and even to upload their version or whatever. This way you can invite them to collaborate with you in your system. So the things stay in your system, but you don't send them just emails with staff and then copy and paste them in your in your Nozbe. So, so we want to make sure that that again that not be teams becomes your company intranet, again flexible for any industry. So not just for you know, software development or again, lawyers, anyone manufacturing so that and to be able to just work with other people, but still thinks come back to your Nozbe Teams this way you have everything there where you should have it. And as Augusto said, you'll have to search for things search, like, Where was it? Where did it go? Like, what was the last version of the attachment? Or where was the, you know, resource, it should all be there. So I think, you know, this kind of, and then of course, other integrations and all that other stuff is coming, also. So,

Raymond Sidney-Smith 48:23

yeah, I love the idea. I love the idea of having a single source of truth, as you said earlier to, like having a brand assets, resources area, you know, like all the logos and just one spot, you know, and that's gonna be something you use over and over again, it's supposed to, you know, asking the client 16 times, where's that logo? Or where's the newest version of that logo or what you know, man, it's just such a back and forth on all that stuff. And then it's like, oh, well, I can't email the logo because it's too large and you know, all those kinds of silly things that do come up. Before we close out just kind of the the target audience for Nozbe Teams again, and the pricing

structure As you have it right now, because it's free up to five team members, with five projects in three sections per project and that kind of thing. So I want to just discuss that a little bit. Before we close out.

Michael Sliwinski 49:10

Again, the idea for Nozbe Teams right now and especially in this situation is to really create new habits. And I want to just highlight that, again, that create new habits that things go into our productivity system. And, and, and the challenge is to make sure that everyone on the team understands that that you know, if you don't put stuff there, it's going to be gone. It's not going to be available to everyone. And, and and my experience with Nozbe Personal already and with teams using Nozbe personal in the past. And the teams I was talking to was the fact that once a company gets it, they really get it so it takes a little bit more time. So it takes a little bit of patience for these people introducing this kind of tool in their companies. But once they get it the change is great, like, they experienced the same kind of change that we do when we discover GTD and we start, you know, getting our stuff organized the same kind of thing, but on a team level, which is just amazing. And suddenly, you know, they know where things are, they know who said what they know, they know things, you know, and, and like, there was one company you asked me, you asked me about some examples. So there was one company that the guy said that he thinks to not be he got like 50% more revenue. And I was like, like how like Nozbe is not not a revenue generating, you know, tool, like what are you saying? And he said, because my team is forgetting stuff. They are like they're because they're putting tasks, they're putting attachments to these tasks and all that stuff. They don't forget about things they don't forget about, you know, because of course many customers when they see that somebody is slacking off or not delivering on time they just walk away. So like the revenue goes away, and with a tool like those be apparently it generates more revenue. So it pays for itself because of this fact that that that people don't forget things and then they deliver things on on them on time, and as we know, 80% of everything is just to show up. So, so that's the thing.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 51:09

Absolutely. So So talk to us a little bit about the who, who is Nozbe Teams for. And and I'm gonna, I'm gonna go over your current kind of levels here. So you could start with Nozbe Teams for free currently. And you can have up to five team members in that knows B teams account with five projects and five project sections. And so that's pretty generous. And it gives people an opportunity to really onboard and get kind of set up and try Nozbe Teams out. And and then it levels up from there in increments for sizes of teams. So you're not paying for an individual user, but the number of users within that team for that monthly fee. So who's who's Nozbe Teams for?

Michael Sliwinski 51:53

We say Nozbe Teams is for small, small teams that want to do great things. Basically So for small teams to do great things, it's so anything that is small that like for us, the target audience for Nozbe Teams is between 5 and 20 people. So this is like our main core user base 20-30, but 5 to 20-30. So we're not going after like, you know, big corporations, big companies, we're going after small and medium sized businesses, because they need to get organized because they like they cannot afford to lose time on searching for things and getting organized. And that's why the structure was like this. So I'm going to explain two things. First of all, why the freemium model so we were debating this like trial freemium, trial freemium, what to do, but we decided as you said, to be able to generous and help people understand it, build the habits like and also by talking to business customers, I realized that when they try with just a few people, a few projects, they get the hang of it. When they get the hang of it, then they are likely to upgrade and then getting the hang of it takes more than 30 days. They need some times a few months to really get the hang of it. That's why having a freemium model where it's completely free for up to five people up to five projects, gives them time to just get used to the tool to get used to this kind of structure, and then they can onboard more people. And then the tears why we did tears instead of just per user, because we want to also make sure that people when they upgrade, I mean, the cool thing is that with every tier, the price per user is lower. So the savings are there. And that because we are for small teams, like the tiers, like doesn't 5, 7, 10, 15, 20 and 30. So, these are the tiers And the important thing about it was that if somebody buys a 15 like for example, there are 11 people but they buy 15 you know, person tier, then when they have new person, they will not debate whether they should buy and you know, just be, you know, user for them and the whole structure. No, they just Send them an app an account. And that's it like, and this person, this new person who's on the team will instantly get access to everything that's on the team that they should have access to, which is just amazing. You know, like, it can be overwhelming. That's true. But on the other hand, it's great. They can, you know, go through projects, they can go through tasks, see what's going on, see who's working and what, so very quickly, they can get get up to speed. So with tears, we just wanted to nudge people that that they shouldn't, you know, think too much about it. And another thing, so, for the month of April, the end and beginning of May the even the premium version is free, because we decided to you know, launch early, not implement the payment systems and just let people just use it, and then we will implement it in May. But another thing that we made sure that small businesses don't have problems using Nozbe and upgrading to higher tiers is that upgrading doesn't require you to pay anything. So I think this is one of the I'll see this is an experimental thing, but I think it's going to be great. The idea is this, if you buy a plan for five people, like for a month, and then you see that you have the six person on board, you just upgrade to seven people with one click. And what happens is that

we just recalculate, like how many days are on your plan, and just make your you know, renewal just earlier. So instead of like in a month, let's say you would renew in 20 days, that's it. So but you don't have to, you know, right now pay the difference, the increment or whatever consults, you know, your CFO or your financial or your accountant or whoever you just upgrade, boom, it's automatic. And then you will have just a renewal elbow earlier with the new plan. And that's it. So going and then let's say you do, the sixth person is going back like is going out of the team and you have five people again, just downgrade and again, you get two more days on your plan. And that's it. So we made it also for small teams because we know that they are tight on budget to make sure that The, you know, there is no problem going up and down with it with the plants, because we know the small teams evolve all the time. And we want to give them this opportunity to, to, to just do it with with with Nozbe and not thinking about, you know, paying another hundred bucks an hour or 200 bucks right now, when they don't have to. So and then the entry level plan with unlimited projects, it sounds \$29 so for five people \$29 for seven people \$39. And for 10 people, it's u\$49 dollars per month total, not per user, but total. So I think, you know, we're trying to be very generous and very, again, try and make a price very affordable for small teams, you know, because we want the small teams to do great things.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 56:44

Now, I love the idea of being able to make it even more productive to just upgrade and downgrade users. You know, it makes total sense to give small teams that that perspective. And you know, I work with a lot of small businesses and their ability to be flexible with that kind of environment is Absolutely true. They need that level of flexibility. And it's great to see that built into a project productivity management, and a project management tool in that sense. I wanted to also note that Michael and his team put together a five part series of videos on working from home. And I'm gonna put a link to this in the show notes for folks who want to just get an A kind of a quick upstart in terms of understanding how to work from home and remote working. And so those five episodes are there on the nosy website and very, very helpful for folks just kind of getting themselves oriented to this working from home and remote work environment. So it's a great resource that that they've put together and and then Thank you, Michael, Michael Sliwinski from tNozbe and Nozbe Teams. Thanks so much for joining us here on ProductivityCast.

Michael Sliwinski 57:45

Thank you so much. Thanks again for having me here and then be able to geek out with you. I it was it was a pleasure and and then as you said like we are going to produce more resources for working from home. So, you know, watch them on our blog. It's all coming. You know, we can't wait to help people to also help in this situation. So thank you again.

Raymond Sidney-Smith 58:03

Yeah, well, we'll place will place notes in the show notes to the Nozbe blog and the Nozbe Facebook page and all the other places the Twitter account that you've been sharing stuff on. Regarding work from home, I think that's really, really helpful for everybody, especially in these times. Thank you to Michael Solinsky, from nosy and nosy teams for joining us here on ProductivityCast. While we are at the end of our discussion together, the conversation doesn't stop here. If you have a comment or a question about what we've discussed during this cast, please visit our episode page on productivitycast.net there on the podcast episode page at the bottom of the page, feel free to leave a comment or a question. We read and respond if needed to every comment or question by the way to get to any ProductivityCast episode fast. Simply add the three digit episode number to the end of productivitycast.net forward slash so Episode One would be productivitycast.net forward slash 001 episode two would be ProductivityCast.net forward slash 002, and so on. While I'm at it. If you have a topic about personal productivity you'd like us to discuss on a future cast, please visit productivitycast.net forward slash contact, you can leave a voice recorded message or type us a message and maybe we'll feature it on a future episode. I want to express my thanks to Augusto Pinout for joining me here this and every week on ProductivityCast. And you can learn more about him and his work by visiting productivitycast.net too. I'm Ray Sidney-Smith. And on behalf of all of us at ProductivityCast here's to your productive life.

Voiceover Artist

And that's it for this ProductivityCast, the weekly show about all things productivity, with your hosts, Ray Sidney-Smith and Augusto Pinaud with Francis Wade and Art Gelwicks.