

# Databricks manages SaaS portfolio during hypergrowth using Productiv

Databricks is a software platform that helps its customers unify their analytics across business, data science, and engineering teams. Founded in 2013, the company has experienced rapid growth in the last two years. Databricks more than tripled in size from 400 to 1,300 in 2019. With 50-80 new people joining the company each month, IT was busy managing the new scale and technology to support this growth. All with a workforce that was 30% remote before COVID.

Mike Hamilton, the Head of IT, joined during what he referred to as the “wild west phase” of start-ups. A phase with high-growth, no formal PO process, and departments frequently buying new apps and add-on licenses. As the company matured, IT needed more visibility into the SaaS portfolio and to create structure while remaining nimble. Mike saw the opportunity to think more strategically about the SaaS portfolio and partner with business groups.



**databricks**

**Company:** Databricks

**Employees:** >1,300

**Location:** San Francisco, CA

**SaaS Applications:** 300+

**Key SaaS Applications:**  
G Suite, Okta, Slack, Zoom, Salesforce

**Webinar:** [Watch Now >](#)

## Challenges

### Limited Visibility

The IT department needed to know what applications were being paid for and used across the company. As the company was growing rapidly, they needed to manage the SaaS applications across the organization. “How do we know what we have? How do we use this more effectively? How do we get more seats? Who owns the relationship?”

### Managing Costs and ROI for SaaS

IT needed to be able to manage and predict SaaS costs and manage the overall portfolio. Mike views SaaS as a user or employee tax. It is important to know how much IT should be charging back to departments, and understand how much each SaaS program was being used. “We bought this product, but what percentage of people are really using it?” This wasn’t simply about cost, but also around feature usage and ROI for each SaaS application.

### Shadow IT and Cross-Department Collaboration

A decade ago, IT would have been involved in every software purchase. In the SaaS world however, each department can purchase whatever they need on their own. Mike saw shadow IT as an opportunity, “it’s often departments trying to innovate and get software that can help them be more productive.” His goal was to find a way to help guide and counsel his line of business counterparts. IT could provide guidance around governance and scaling software solutions. The key was awareness of the applications and then promoting open collaboration between IT and lines of business.



We didn’t want to find ourselves constantly redoing the spreadsheet and trying to prove why the numbers are accurate. We wanted more of a data-driven, technology-based approach that would illustrate the ROI and strategic value of our SaaS data. This approach would also help us scale better than a spreadsheet could.



**Mike Hamilton**, Head of IT

## Solution

Mike had managed SaaS portfolios with spreadsheets before and had no desire to go down that road again. He was impressed by Productiv because it provided richer data down to the feature and user level. He needed more than just a cost-management tool, and the engagement data was critical in helping look at the SaaS portfolio on a larger strategic sense for the overall business.



### Manage SaaS Sprawl

One platform to provide a holistic view of hundreds of SaaS apps



### Reduce SaaS Costs

Software that helps IT partner with business units, understand needs, and test and monitor new SaaS apps



### Drive SaaS Value

Usage and feature data that enables IT to improve training and maximize SaaS contracts based on value

## Databricks leverages Productiv to be stay agile, create process around SaaS, and improve cross-functional partnerships with the lines of business

### Manage Process and Costs

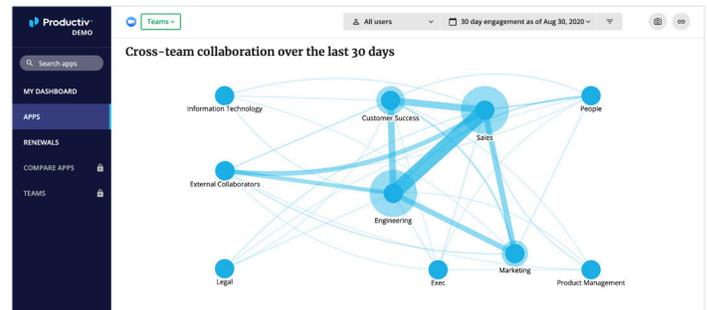
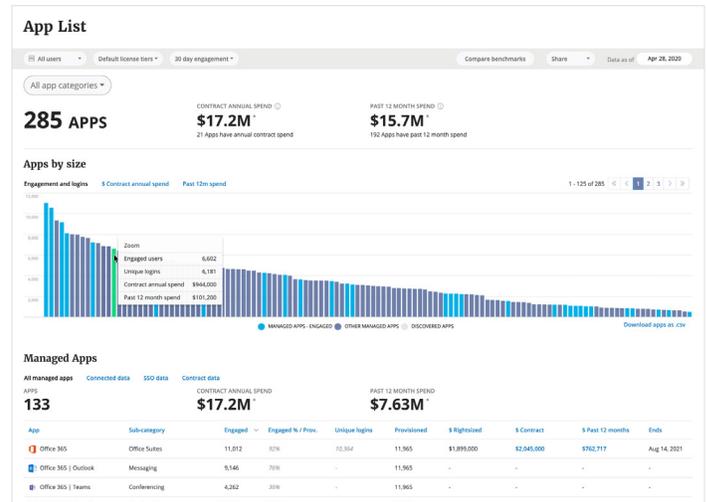
Productiv helps Databricks manage costs and licenses more easily. IT is able to automate licenses, and easily de-provision a license when someone leaves the company. The team is also able to have better conversations with vendors, matching licenses to actual usage and forecasted employee growth.

### Better Employee Experience

Databricks leverages Productiv to improve employee onboarding. Mike highlights the importance of understanding what an employee needs on Day 1 versus Day 30 by tracking adoption over time. The team also looks across feature usage over time to better understand each tool. For example, they looked into why there is a different level of engagement on Day 30 versus Day 90 and see if they need to make changes to the tool, or to the training. Productiv can help them make sure employees have the best tools and features to do their jobs.

### Increased Collaboration With Line of Business

Mike set up a cross-functional executive team to manage the SaaS portfolio. Productiv data helps fuel the conversations on what the company needs. The tool can help prompt discussions and align on "why has adoption gone up?" or "you procured a bunch of licenses but adoption has not gone up. Why is that?" The tool has become critical in aligning IT with other departments and building trust. Productiv has become more than an IT tool, but an overall business tool that helps show user tax and the ROI for SaaS applications in each department.



## Results

Productiv helped IT save hundreds of hours of time on manual tasks and enabled them to be more strategic. Mike was able to add the structure and process Databricks needed, without trying to build and maintain a central spreadsheet with limited use. The tool created richer data and has led to strong partnerships between IT and the Line of Business counterparts.



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