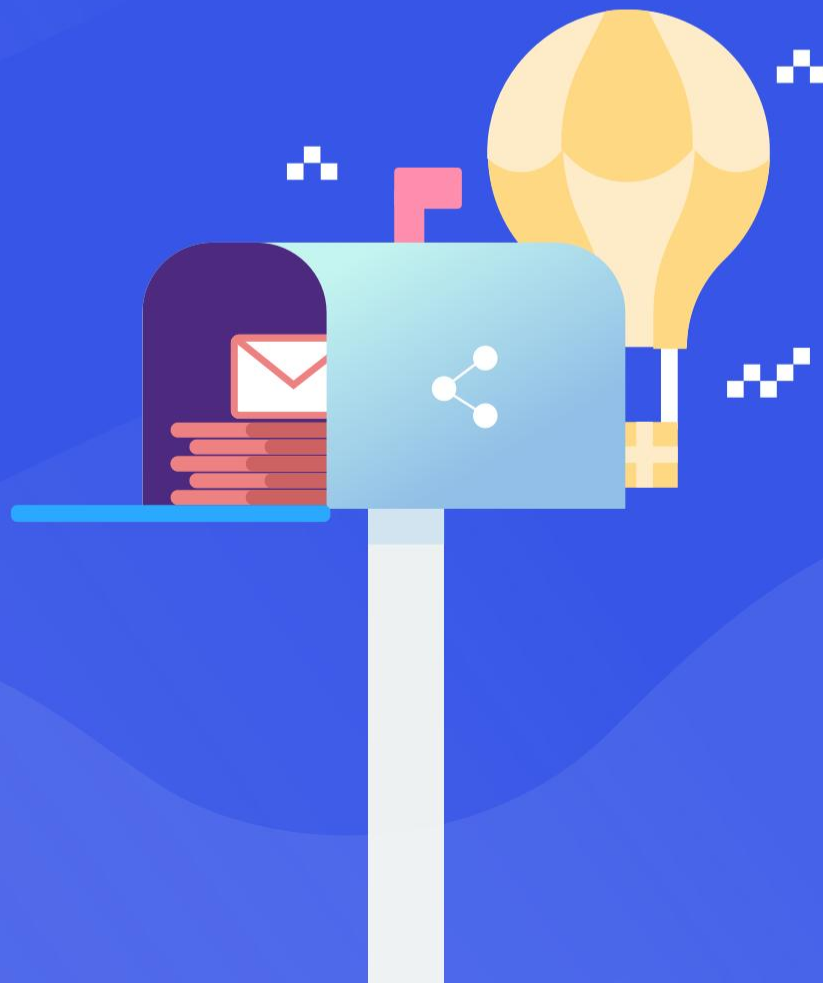




# The Ultimate Guide to Shared Inboxes

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# Email is not dead, it's stronger than ever

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I wonder why nobody talks about replacing email anymore.

It was 2014 when 'email-is-broken' had become the popular talk in the Silicon Valley. People were constantly lashing out how they're submerged in a deluge of emails and that they were 'done' with Email.

It was around the same time that Slack became really popular for team communication. Its Founder Stewart Butterfield was relentlessly [propagating](#) that most companies would stop using Email *altogether* soon.

Justin Rosenstein, founder of Asana, made the headlines too when he said "Email is a counter-productive tool." Messaging apps like WhatsApp and Snapchat took off around the same time. There were dozens of products taking shots at replacing email.

For some time, it really did seem that Email will be thrown away in a corner by the new-age communication applications.

Fast forward a few years.

We still have over [6.32 billion email accounts](#), and the number will become a staggerin 7.71 billion by 2021. Now this isn't what the technology elites had predicted.

Businesses, which were only using Outlook until half a decade ago, have started adopting newer, simpler, and more sophisticated offerings like G Suite (Gmail, Sheets, Docs, Calendar, and more).

Gmail, which was mostly popular among individuals five years ago, has upwards of 4 million businesses paying customers, a number that has [doubled](#) in the past two years.

# Reasons why Email refuses to take a beating

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Email has some *fundamental* strengths that make it unbeatable.

It is available to everyone.

It can easily cross boundaries of teams, companies and organizations.

It is very neatly structured, with conversations stacked under subjects.

It's asynchronous. Email does not come with the expectation of an immediate response.

All of these factors make email very strongly differentiated against the crop of new collaboration tools like Slack and Asana.

In fact, if you remember the Hotmail of 1996 or the Microsoft Outlook of 1999, you'd realize that Email has only improved with time.

The way you receive messages is friendlier and more sophisticated. Most email clients have neat and modern interfaces.

And the one aspect which is going to make a lot of difference — Email does really great on mobile. They are light, don't take much time to download, and fit natively into every device.

It's no surprise businesses never stopped using Email.



## But that does not mean it's the end of Email

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The biggest problem that seems to slow down teamwork is the inability to share information or collaborate with your team without forwarding emails.

Collaboration means more communication and as a result, more emails. It's a vicious circle. Email was not designed for teamwork.

*Does that mean you should start looking elsewhere? Something better than Email?*

The truth is that we are heavily dependant on Email. It is used by businesses of all sizes, across industries, and in locations across the world.

From scheduling sales and product demos, sending quotations and invoices, to sharing lunch plans with your team, Email comes in handy pretty much everywhere.

And that is why there is no question of attempting to kill Email. We'd rather fix the tool we rely on so heavily.

*The first shot at making Email collaborative obviously had to be something that will eliminate forwarding of emails.*

## Making Email collaborative with Shared Inboxes

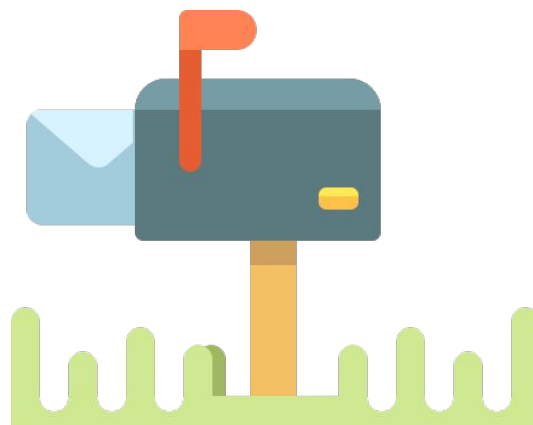
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How do you ensure people stop forwarding emails to each other? The best shot is to create an email account and make everyone a part of it, so that they have direct access to emails arriving there.

This is when group email accounts like info@company and support@company came to exist. And because these inboxes were used by many people on one team, people started calling them Shared Inboxes.

At the outset, this started to work fantastically for companies.

- Entire teams had access to emails arriving at a central email address.
- Different people could start replying to messages in real time.
- The need to forward emails reduced significantly.
- It looked like the end of unnecessary CCing.



Shared inboxes certainly seemed to make Email work for teams. They came with all the promise to be the fix for all issues marrying email collaboration.

But the dream was short-lived.

## Why G Suite / Gmail fails at managing Shared Inboxes

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When you're managing a shared inbox from Gmail, there are two ways to have your teammates access the account:

1. Share the account's credentials with every team member, or
2. Give everyone delegated access.

Whichever way you choose to go, you'll have multiple people accessing the same Gmail account. Well, guess what, Google forbids this.

Every time you have multiple people accessing the same Gmail account from different IP addresses, Google starts blocking that account temporarily.

They send you a few warnings to start with. You don't pay heed to them and your account might get blocked permanently.

I am sure you cannot have that happen, especially when you're using the shared inbox to manage critical functions like sales or support.

For the security standpoint too, it is never a good idea to share an account's credentials with an entire team.

At the same time, you cannot have only one person manage the shared inbox – defeats the purpose altogether huh.

The good thing (well, almost) is that Google does give you an alternative: The Collaborative Inbox.

It does solve the problem at hand. When you use the Google Collaborative Inbox, your team gets the ability to access and handle shared inboxes without having to actually log into them.

## Google's Collaborative Inbox is not that 'collaborative'

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The Collaborative Inbox does make a few things easy when compared to plain old Gmail.

- It lets your team manage shared inboxes without having to log in to them,
- It lets you delegate emails to your team without having to forward them.

And that's it. Everything beyond this goes on to give your team a hard time.

It takes you outside Gmail

The Google collaborative inbox UI looks nothing like Gmail. It looks completely different from any other Google application.

Your team will have to spend a lot of time just getting used to it. The UI is not intuitive like Gmail (which has an awesome interface)



On top of that, they will have to keep swapping between their Gmail inbox and the Google collaborative inbox – there is a good chance some information will fall through the cracks.

### You will have a hard time tracking emails

Let's say you're running customer support from Gmail and you start using the Google Collaborative Inbox.

An email arrives and one of your teammates replies to the customer from their personal inbox. Unless that person has copied the group email address in the reply, you will not be aware of that. Nobody in the team will know that the email has been replied to.

You and the rest of the team will always be in the dark about the status of emails.

### There's enormous room for duplication of work

When you and your team don't know if an email has been handled, there's always a slight chance someone else might start working on it.

Imagine you're running a sales team using the Google collaborative inbox and two sales executives end up replying to the same prospect. You've ruined your first impression right there. For all you know, you'd lose the client for being unprofessional.

The problem is that even when you've assigned the email to an individual, the rest of the team would not know about it. To them, the email looks unattended unless they see a reply.

### Your team's inboxes will get clogged up

Inside a Google Collaborative Inbox, the only way to communicate to a teammate is email.

Have a question to ask? Send an email, and you get a reply via email. Have a status update to ask? Send an email, and you again get a reply via email.

When email is the only way you can exchange information with someone, you unnecessarily clogs up everyone's inboxes.

### You'll not be able to measure team performance

When you run your support or sales, it is absolutely important that you keep a keen eye on how well is the team dealing with emails.

Inside a Google Collaborative Inbox, if you're looking to monitor team performance, all you'd know is the number of emails received and sent.

Running a support or a sales process without knowing how well does your team manage emails is like driving a car with your eyes shut.

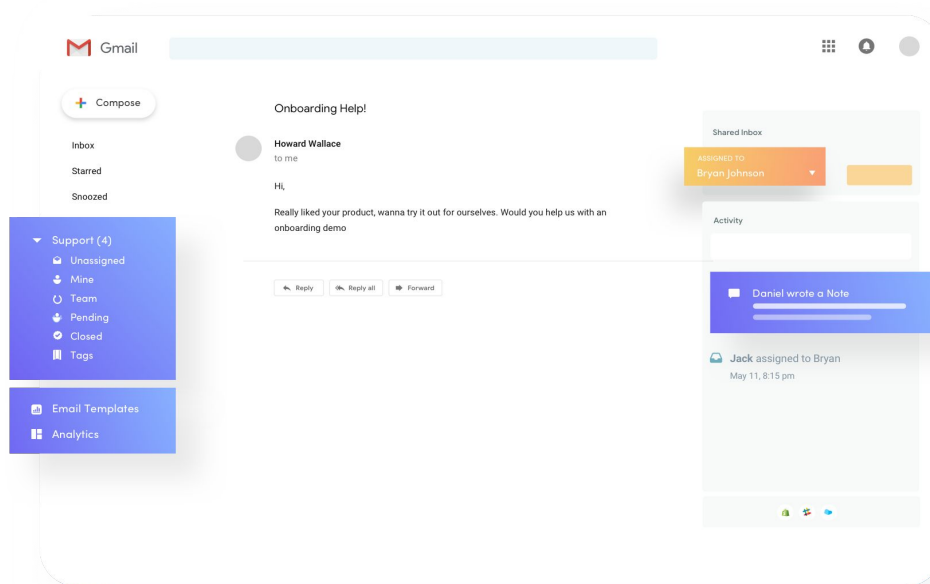
*The Collaborative Inbox does not look so collaborative after all.*

# Reimagining Shared Inboxes

Owing to the uncollaborative nature of the Collaborative Inboxes, the world certainly needed something much better to manage shared inboxes.

And this is why we built Hiver. To make managing shared inboxes easy. To make Email truly collaborative, minus the lapses we've just discussed.

Everyone loves Gmail. I am sure your team is pretty hands on with it already. Hiver ensures you and your team do not have to leave Gmail for managing shared inboxes.



## Manage shared inboxes right from Gmail

With Hiver, you can convert your *shared email accounts* or *Google Groups* into shared inboxes.

Support@acmecorp.com, sales@acmecorp.com, and more – you can manage all your shared inboxes right from Gmail.

Your team will not have to adopt a new behaviour for managing shared email accounts. Using Hiver is a piece of cake for anyone who's comfortable with Gmail's basic functionality.

You'll get started in minutes, literally.

## Delegate emails to your team effortlessly

How do you delegate an email to a teammate? It just takes two clicks from the right panel in Gmail.

Your teammate can start replying on that email thread the moment you assign it to them. You do not have to CC them.

When you delegate emails without forwarding them or CCing anyone, you're doing everyone's inbox a huge favor.

The endless threads we were talking about before — Hiver puts an end to that.

Every email has a status — Open, Pending, or Closed. Everyone on your team can see the status of emails. Tracking emails is a breeze.

## Never miss an email again

Hiver ensures your team is always on top of emails.

When you enter a shared inbox, the default view is 'unassigned' which shows *only* those emails that nobody has started working on.

You can go ahead and assign them to your team. There is no way you're missing an email again

## Zero room for duplicated efforts

When you assign an email to a teammate, everyone who is a part of the shared inbox can see that. Your team will always be on the same page about *who* is working on *what*.

Despite that, if two people somehow overlap and start replying to the same email, Collision Alerts will quickly come to rescue.

Also, replies to emails inside the shared inboxes are visible to everyone. They don't have to be CC'd on those threads.

## Your team doesn't have to write internal emails

As opposed to clogging inboxes with internal emails, your team writes Email Notes that appear right next to the thread they want to discuss.

Because Notes stay right next to the email you're discussing, you don't have to spend time building context.

## Get deep insights into your team's performance

When you run support from a shared inbox, I am sure you'd want to know how effectively your team is managing emails.

Hiver gives you access to crucial support metrics. From response time to resolution time — the Analytics Dashboard has it all, right inside Gmail.

# Six reasons why teams love Hiver's Shared Inboxes

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When you manage shared inboxes the right way, the first difference you'll notice is that your team becomes really efficient at managing emails.

The team's workflow becomes more structured. Your teammates become more organized. They work together and not against one another.



Let's dive right in to see why teams love Shared Inboxes

## 1. Shared Inboxes reduce email clutter, significantly

The old-school way of sharing information or delegating a task was forwarding emails or CCing people. All it means was more email and cluttered inboxes.

When you manage shared inboxes the Hiver way, you don't have to forward emails or CC anyone to delegate a task to them.

Gathering feedback from your team, or coordinating on the next steps in the process – can be achieved by internal-only comments.

Inboxes get the much needed breather.

## 2. There's more transparency in your team

The old-school shared inboxes were really good at confusing teams. Your teammates would never know who is working on what. They would often step on each others' toes.

Inside Hiver shared inboxes, everyone knows who is working on what. Each person can see which types of questions get priority, who generally works on what type of questions. Everyone on your team will know where to turn when they need information.

When all your teammates know how things work on a day-to-day basis, it is easy for them to see the bigger picture. They feel more empowered and make better decisions.

### 3. Shared Inboxes foster team collaboration

The first thing you'd want to do when you want them to collaborate on solving problems — make internal communication seamless.

The **old-school** way of sharing information was shooting an FYI email to the entire team. Even when someone wanted to ask a question, they sent an email to the boss. Inbox clutter was rampant.

When you use **Hiver** to manage shared inboxes, your team gets the ability to talk internally without sending Emails. You can write Email Notes to your teammates instead.

Notes are like chat messages that appear right next to the email thread you want to discuss. Getting help from teammates becomes a delight when it does not involve emails.

### 4. Your team is ridiculously responsive

A [study](#) by InsideSales.com tells us that the odds of connecting with that lead decrease by over 10 times in the first hour after their inquiry. Be it sales or support, you'd want your team to be swift at responding to emails.

The old-school way of managing shared inboxes involved forwarding emails to delegate and discuss tasks. That would usually take long and response times took a hit.

When you manage Shared Inboxes the Hiver way, your teams become more responsive than ever, here's how:

- Everyone on your team knows exactly what they have to work on. There's zero confusion.
- With Notes, it becomes very easy to communicate with your teammates. Asking questions does not require sending or forwarding emails.
- Also, when every team member has access to all the emails in the shared inbox, it is easy for them to find a situation similar to the one at hand, and take inputs from there.

With accountability, transparency, and seamless internal communication, there is no way your team will lay eggs on an email.

## 5. Your team sends contextual responses

The ability to gather information quickly plays a big part in making email responses better.

The old-school shared inboxes were a wormhole for emails. You would not have access to email replies unless you were copied on them.

When you manage shared inboxes the Hiver way, you can review your teammates' emails and take out the best of everyone's work. That lovely email your colleague has sent to a customer last week — you have access to that.

*I'd like to remind you that you don't have to be CC'd on an email to be able to see the replies. Everyone has access to all emails inside shared inboxes they're a part of.*

Hiver helps you identify the most persistent support queries or the ones that take the most time to resolve. Based on this intelligence, you can train your team how to handle them effectively.

Oh, getting help with email replies becomes easy too. You can have your teammates improve your message by sharing a Draft with them, as opposed to forwarding the email to them.

## 6. Onboarding new teammates becomes easier

Good onboarding is more important than we think. Here's a couple of stats from [Click Onboarding](#), an onboarding software company:

- 69 percent of new employees are likely to stick with you for three years when they experience great onboarding,
- 20 percent of employee turnover occurs within the first 45 days of a person's tenure.

The old-school way of managing shared inboxes involved forwarding long threads of emails to new employees while onboarding them.

When you use Hiver, it becomes very easy to onboard new people on your team. The moment you add someone to a shared inbox, they'll get access to the conversations inside them.

- Your new teammate will get a quick grasp on how you deal with different types of messages.
- They will know whom to reach out to when they need help.
- They'll know what kind of replies made customers happy.

Shared inboxes help new employees get up to speed quickly.

*It's no surprise that teams across functions use Shared Inboxes to manage emails – customer support, sales, operations, human resources – any team that has more than one person handling an inbox deserves better than just Email.*

## How to do excellent customer support from Shared Inboxes

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In customer service, the best experiences are delivered by teams that work together and collaborate with zero bottlenecks.

Teams where agents share information and help each other solve customer problems faster than teams that work in silos.

But, like we discussed at the beginning of this eBook, Email was not designed to function as a team tool. The age-old forwarding and CCing are notorious for cluttering inboxes and causing confusion.

Where do we go from here then? Most teams get stuck in a limbo at this stage.

### *Help desk tools are a pain to deal with*

The enterprise-grade help desk tools with complex categorizations, numerous priority levels, and alien interfaces are best avoided.

You don't want your team to spend weeks learning how to use a help desk software, and then keep switching between the help desk and the inbox for the rest of their lives.

Also, it becomes extremely difficult for support teams that use help desk softwares to collaborate with the rest of the organization (marketing, sales, accounts).

Your agents love Gmail. There's no reason they should switch to a complicated help desk software.

### Get your Gmail to work for customer support

You're better off retaining the simplicity and familiarity of Gmail – you just need a solution that helps you manage Shared Inboxes better. That's where Hiver comes into the picture.

Hiver adds [capabilities](#) to your Gmail inbox to make doing customer support from inside it an absolutely seamless and enjoyable experience.

### Delight customers with swift responses.

When you clearly assign emails to your teammates without hassles, everyone knows exactly what they have to work on – they send quicker responses to customers

[Automate repetitive actions.](#) You'd want your team to focus on solving customers' problems, and not on trivial and repetitive tasks. Automate processes which do not involve conscious . Setting up something like Round Robin assignment takes less than a minute.

[Solve customer problems quickly.](#) You'd want your team to work together to be able to solve problems quickly. Internal emails are known to be a timesuck. With Notes for Email, your team shares information without bloating inboxes.

[Make your agents more efficient with intuitive reporting.](#) Know *which agents are doing great* and *who needs coaching* to do better. Identify persistent questions and train your team to handle them effectively.

# How to manage sales emails like a champ with Shared Inboxes

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Managing sales emails is not an easy job. Most teams struggle to engage with the prospect at different stages in the buying cycle.

I'll cut to the chase quickly. You'd want your sales team to use a shared inbox if you can *relate* to any of these:

- I assign demos to my team by forwarding emails
- I forwarded three emails to my teammate yesterday – wondering what happened
- My team took too long to reply to a prospect's email
- Two of my salesmen ended up responding to the same lead
- A salesperson forgot to follow-up on a hot lead
- I write emails to my team for internal chats
- I have many unattended emails in my inbox

Knowingly or unknowingly, you're losing out on deals and opportunities – only because you do not manage your emails very well.

When you use Hiver to manage your sales shared inbox, you close all of these gaps, without even leaving your Gmail inbox.

**Keep your team on top of every lead.** Assign every email specifically to a teammate. Effortlessly stay abreast emails waiting to be handled. You can rest assured nothing falls through the cracks.

**Send blazing fast quotes/proposals.** Nobody likes to spend time on mundane jobs like assigning emails to your teammates. Automate assignment based on rules you specify. Internal-only comments will help you team discuss leads quickly.

**Write winning emails.** Writing a persuasive email when you have a hoard of other things to do can get tricky. Use Email templates, and share them with your team too.

**Build context for future reference.** Internal discussions are saved right next to the email conversation. While you communicate with a teammate, you are creating resources to get quick help in the future.

**Never forget a follow-up.** Set up reminders and focus on the important stuff.

## How to manage internal Help Desks with Shared Inboxes

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It's no longer a secret that engaged employees play a big role in business success. You treat them right, they work harder for you in return.

Most companies have an *internal email address* where employees send requests ranging from need-a-new-mouse to insurance questions.

To take care of your employees' needs, you'd want your teams like IT, HR, Finance, and Accounts to work in sync with each other.

Allow me to explain how Hiver ensures you take good care of your employees.

Every email becomes a ticket. The moment you send an email to the central email address, Hiver converts it into a ticket so that it can be assigned to your staff.

Assigned the email to John when Serena is the right person for the job? Fret not. John can reassign the email to Serena in two clicks again.

You can have emails **automatically assigned to the right team** based on rules. For example, every email with 'invoice' in the subject line gets assigned to the Accounts team automatically.

Every email you assign to someone bears a status — Open, Closed, or Pending. **Knowing the status of tickets is instantaneous.**

A lot of these requests are similar to each other and your team can use **Email templates** to send acknowledgements.

Want to move a request from say HR to Accounts? You don't have to forward emails for that. Hiver lets you **move emails from one shared mailbox to another** in just a few clicks.

You can create **Tags to categorize requests**, and assign them to a teammate all at the same time.

## Wrapping up: Shared Inboxes do a lot more than managing emails

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When you manage your emails well, you're doing a lot more than saving time. You keep customers happy. You close more deals. You take care of your employees' needs.

In a way, you're also fostering a culture of accountability and transparency. Your teammates know exactly what is expected from them. They know what the rest of team is up to. You're eliminating the frustration that generally comes with the lack of visibility.

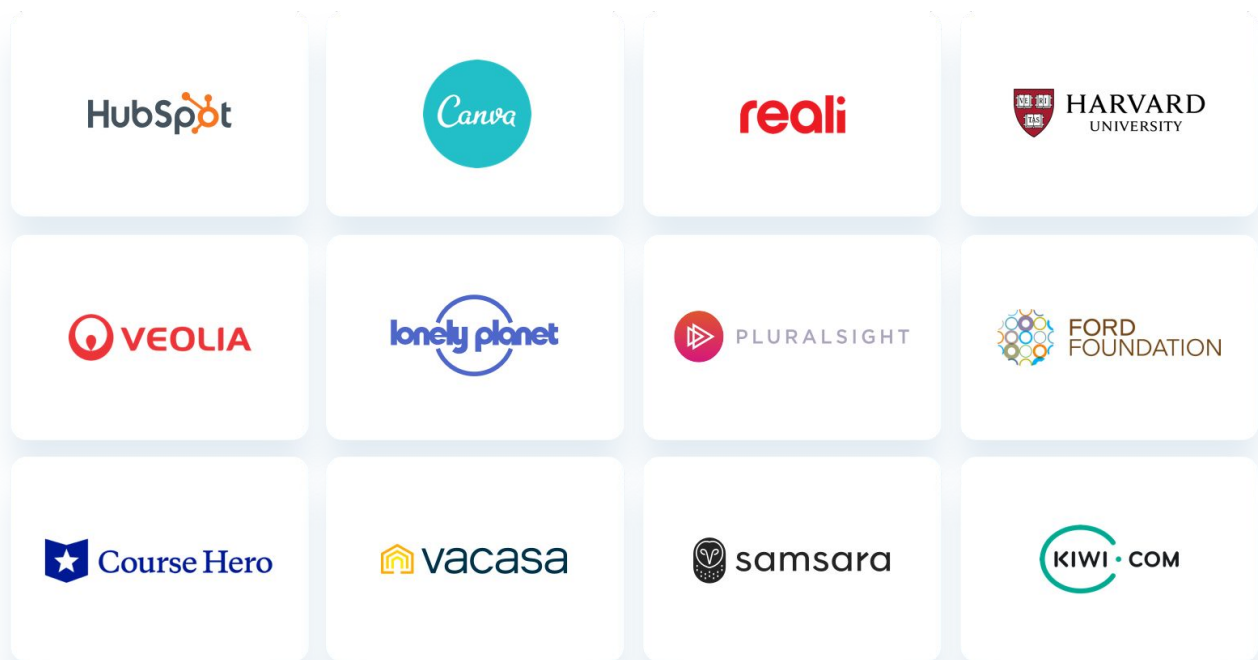
When people know how things work on a day-to-day basis, it is easy for them to see the bigger picture. They feel more empowered and make better decisions.

The biggest shift shared inboxes bring about: they make workplaces more collaborative. Your teammates start to feel they're a part of something bigger than themselves.



Hiver is a Gmail-centric customer service solution that helps teams across the organization collaborate on shared inboxes like services@, orders@, support@. It's the most frictionless, natural way for teams to handle customer email communication as it works right inside Gmail.

Hiver helps over 1500 companies - ranging from new-age unicorns to traditional enterprises - deliver a better experience to their customers.



Start your 14 day free trial

Request a Demo