



TEMPLATES • CLIENT OPS TOOLKIT

# Retainer Tracker Template

Track retainers without scope drift - hours/deliverables, renewal dates, usage, and what to do when a client runs hot or cold.

[Download Google Sheet](#)[Download PDF Copy](#)

## What's inside

- **Spreadsheet template** with four tabs: **Clients**, **Retainers**, **Usage**, and **Renewals**.
- Fields for included scope, excluded scope, cadence, rollover rules, owner, and renewal reminders.
- Rollups to spot clients running hot (over-using) or cold (under-using).
- Sample scenarios: under-using retainer, over-using retainer, and missed renewal - with what to do next.



# Tracker sheet structure

Use this layout if you want a simple, reliable way to manage retainers across clients. Keep definitions consistent: what counts as 'usage', what rolls over, and when renewals happen.

## Quick guidance

Write included and excluded scope in one place (the Retainers tab). If it's not written there, it's not included.

## Tab 1: Clients

Store client basics so rollups and renewals have an owner.

Client	Primary contact	Owner	Time zone	Billing contact	Notes
Acme Co	Pat (Marketing)	Jamie	PT	ap@acme.co	Monthly retainer - web + design
Northwind	Taylor (Founder)	Alex	ET	billing@northwind.io	Weekly check-in on Tuesdays
Globex	Jordan (Ops)	Sam	GMT	finance@globex.co.uk	Rollover allowed up to 10 hrs

Tip: Put renewal reminders on the owner's calendar (not 'someone').



# Tab layouts + examples

The template is designed for one monthly reporting cycle. If you bill weekly or quarterly, change the period start/end inputs and keep the formulas the same.

## Tab 2: Retainers

Define scope, cadence, rollover rules, and the numbers you want to track.

Client	Cadence	Included (hrs)	Fee	Rollover (hrs)	Renewal date	Effective rate
Acme Co	Monthly	40	\$6,000	0	2026-02-01	=Fee/Included
Northwind	Monthly	20	\$3,400	5	2026-02-15	=Fee/Included
Globex	Monthly	60	\$9,000	10	2026-02-01	=Fee/Included

## Tab 3: Usage

Log time or deliverables. Keep the categories stable so trends mean something.

Date	Client	Work type	Hours	Assignee	Notes
2026-01-06	Acme Co	Design	3.5	Alex	Homepage concepts
2026-01-08	Northwind	Calls	1.0	Jamie	Sprint planning
2026-01-10	Globex	Dev	4.0	Sam	Bug fixes + QA



# Core formulas (Google Sheets)

These formulas assume you keep StartDate and EndDate as input cells and roll everything up per client. Adjust column references to match your sheet.

Metric	Formula (example)	Notes
Used hours	<code>=SUMIFS(Usage!D:D, Usage!B:B, \$A2, Usage!A:A, "&gt;="&amp;StartDate, Usage!A:A, "&lt;="&amp;EndDate)</code>	Sums hours for the client and date range.
Remaining hours	<code>=MAX(0, (Included+Rollover) - Used)</code>	Keeps remaining non-negative.
Overage hours	<code>=MAX(0, Used - (Included+Rollover))</code>	If positive, trigger a change request or add-on.
Used %	<code>=IF((Included+Rollover)=0, 0, Used/(Included+Rollover))</code>	Format as percent.
Hot/Cold flag	<code>=IF(UsedPct&gt;0.85,"Hot", IF(UsedPct&lt;0.35,"Cold", "On track"))</code>	Thresholds are adjustable.
Reminder date	<code>=RenewalDate-14</code>	Default: remind 14 days before renewal.



# What to do when a client runs hot or cold

A retainer tracker is only useful if it changes behavior. Use the flags to start a short conversation early - before you are underwater or the client feels ignored.

## Under-using (Cold)

- Schedule a 15-minute check-in: confirm priorities and unblock decisions.
- Propose a small backlog: improvements, audits, cleanup tasks.
- If cold for 2+ cycles, adjust the tier or reset scope (avoid silent rollover promises).

## Over-using (Hot)

- Name the tradeoff: what drops if the new request is added.
- Use a change request for add-on hours or a higher tier.
- Add an approval gate: no new work starts without a clear owner and due date.

## Missed renewal

- Freeze new work until renewal is confirmed (keep it calm and factual).
- Send a short renewal note with options: same tier, higher tier, or pause.
- After renewal, add a reminder rule so it does not happen again.

## Utilization vs. profitability vs. burnout (retainer lens)

Utilization tells you whether the team has capacity. Retainers tell you whether demand is predictable. A healthy retainer book means you can plan - but only if you stop scope drift early and protect focus time.



# Related templates

- [Billable Utilization Calculator](#)
- [Change Request Form Template](#)
- [Scope of Work \(SOW\) Template](#)
- [Client Portal Requirements Checklist](#)
- [Design Rate Card Template](#)