

EOS software: what it actually needs to do

EOS doesn't require software — Gino Wickman ran it on paper. Here's what breaks first when a growing team keeps doing that, and what a tool has to get right once you switch.

The Sambia Team · September 21, 2026 · 3 min read

sambia.io/articles/eos-software

EOS — the Entrepreneurial Operating System, from Gino Wickman's book *Traction* — doesn't require software. It was built and refined on paper: a scorecard on a whiteboard, a meeting run from a printed sheet. Plenty of teams still run it that way, on a shared spreadsheet and a Google Doc, well past the point most people would call them small.

The real question isn't whether you need software to run it. It's when the paper version starts costing more than a subscription would, and what a tool actually has to get right once you switch.

What the system asks a leadership team to do, every week

- Set quarterly priorities with a single owner on each one
- Read a scorecard of a dozen or so numbers every week, without discussing every line
- Run a structured weekly meeting on a fixed clock
- Keep a running issues list and solve a few of them a week, not all of them
- Maintain an org chart mapped to seats and accountabilities, not names
- Keep a shared vision document people can actually find

None of that requires software. All of it requires *discipline* — and discipline is exactly what a spreadsheet gives you no help sustaining.

Where paper and spreadsheets break down

The failure isn't dramatic. It's a slow drift where the system technically still exists but stops being true, one small skipped step at a time.

THE MECHANIC	ON PAPER OR IN A SPREADSHEET	WHAT GOES WRONG
Weekly scorecard	A tab in a shared spreadsheet	Someone retypes it from memory the night before, so it reflects who remembered, not what happened
Quarterly priorities	A slide or a list at the top of a doc	Status is whatever the owner last said out loud, not what's actually true today
Issues list	A running doc, cleared and rebuilt each meeting	Half the list quietly disappears between weeks
Org chart	A chart in a slide deck	Goes stale the week someone changes seats and nobody edits the file
Meeting agenda	A printed or shared sheet	No timer, no shared view of which segment is running long

None of these is a discipline failure on its own. Five of them at once is why the system quietly stops being real.

What software actually needs to get right

WHAT TO ACTUALLY CHECK FOR		
Scorecard	Pulls from real numbers, not retyped from memory each week	
Meeting agenda	Segments carry real time budgets, not just a list of topics	
Issues list	Carries over automatically between weeks	
Goals	Single owner each, with a visible on-track or off-track state	
Org chart	Tied to seats and accountabilities, not names	

How the pieces map, without requiring any one name for them

THE MECHANIC	IN SAMBIA
Quarterly priorities (EOS calls these Rocks)	Goals
Weekly numbers	Scorecard
Structured weekly meeting (EOS calls this an L10)	Weekly Meeting
Running issue list (EOS's IDS process)	Issue Tracking
Seats and accountabilities (EOS calls this the Accountability Chart)	Org Chart
Shared vision document (EOS calls this a V/TO)	Organizer



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The terms in the table above — Rocks, L10, IDS, Accountability Chart, V/TO — are EOS's own. We use them here only to describe what the same mechanics are called elsewhere; Sambia is an independent product, not affiliated with, endorsed by, certified by, or sponsored by EOS Worldwide, LLC.

None of this requires calling it anything in particular. The same six mechanics run a leadership team whether the framework came from a book, got inherited from a previous job, or was never named at all — the software underneath doesn't care what the method is called, only whether the numbers are read, the meeting ends on time, and issues get solved instead of discussed.

Software doesn't make a team run the system properly. It makes it obvious the week they don't.

What the software is actually for

If you're evaluating options

- Does the scorecard update from real numbers, or does someone retype it weekly?

- Does the meeting agenda enforce time budgets, or is it just a shared doc with a list on it?
- Do issues carry over automatically, or does someone rebuild the list by hand?
- Is the pricing flat, or does the piece you actually need sit behind a higher tier? See how the pricing compares. (sambia.io/sambia-vs-ninety).
- Can you get running this week, or does it need an implementation project first?

That last question is the one worth sitting with. **Sambia** (sambia.io/) runs on one \$8/user/month plan with everything included, self-serve, live in about 15 minutes — see how that compares to **Ninety.io** (sambia.io/sambia-vs-ninety), **Strety** (sambia.io/sambia-vs-strety), and **EOS One** (sambia.io/sambia-vs-eos-one). For the meeting itself, a weekly agenda that ends on time (sambia.io/articles/weekly-leadership-meeting-agenda) is the other half of this.

Run your weekly meeting on real numbers

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