20 things to know about Microsoft Teams for 2020
Overview

Microsoft has announced the retirement of Skype for Business Online (July 2021) and end of support for Skype for Business Server editions (January 2024), which means it’s time to consider the next step in your digital transformation strategy. As a result, you’re probably starting to look at replacements for Skype, including its successor, Microsoft Teams. So, what’s the best path forward for your company?

While every client situation is different, our general recommendation is to start by answering some questions about your organization:
• What is your organization’s communication and collaboration strategy?
• What is your organizational culture? How do you want your communication and collaboration investments to help support what is best about your organization?
• How does your organization best adapt to change?

NTT is the trusted partner to drive your digital transformation with an end-to-end approach preserving what is best about your organization while maximizing the value of your current and future technology investments. In fact, our Cloud Communications division was recognized by Microsoft as their 2019 Intelligent Communications Partner of the Year, expressly because of our experience and strength in guiding Skype for Business Users to Microsoft Teams.

To that end, we compiled a list of the top 20 most commonly asked questions by our customers regarding Microsoft Teams—particularly as it relates to Skype for Business Online and Office 365—to help you determine the best path forward.

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What is Microsoft Teams?

When you have a consistent place to create and make decisions as a team, there’s no limit to what you can achieve. Microsoft Teams brings everything together in a shared workspace where you can chat, meet, share files, and work with business apps. Teams can be many things to many organizations, but the value of teams is best determined by the needs and nature of your business in four specific areas:

- Communication: Get your team on the same page with group chat, online meetings, calling, and web conferencing
- Collaboration: Work better together on files with built-in Office 365 apps like Word, Excel, PowerPoint, and SharePoint
- Customization: Add in your favorite Microsoft apps and third-party services to keep the business moving forward
- Security: End-to-end security, administrative control, and compliance—all powered by Office 365

Who is using Microsoft Teams?

More than 13 million people now use Teams daily and more than 19 million people use it weekly. With availability in 53 languages across 181 markets, Teams is powering teamwork for customers around the world, including Emirates, FedEx, Lexmark, The Adecco Group, KONE, and McCann Worldgroup, among many others.

It seems we need to move from Skype for Business Online to Teams. What’s my timeframe?

Microsoft has made the [Skype for Business to Microsoft Teams Capabilities Roadmap](https://docs.microsoft.com/en-us/microsoftteams Roadmap) available so customers can assess the capabilities for Teams relative to their needs, and plan their move from Skype for Business Online or Server to Microsoft Teams. If you’re currently using Skype for Business Online, there are critical dates you need to be aware of:

- Skype for Business Online will be retired on 31 July, 2021
- Skype for Business Server 2015 will go out of mainstream support on 13 September, 2020
- Skype for Business Server 2019 will go out of mainstream support 9 January, 2024

Clearly, there’s still time before Skype goes away, but why wait? Implementation and adoption may take longer than you expect, and your organization is missing the robust features Teams offers!

Is Teams superior to Skype for Business?

Yes. Any Skype for Business user knows that chat conversations can easily derail, especially in groups. Teams offers persistent and searchable threaded chat and content that is easy to follow and reference. More importantly, however: in addition to an improved communication and collaboration experience combined with “best in class” enterprise security and compliance, the true value of Teams lies in its use and reliance on Microsoft’s Common Data Service for Apps, which enables teams to be customized to the specific needs of your business.

We’ve got your back. Now – 2020 - is the perfect time and opportunity to get the answers you need about the future of Skype for Business and Microsoft Teams.
What are some of the main differences between Skype for Business and Teams?

One of the primary differences between Skype for Business and Microsoft Teams is how Microsoft Teams combines chat, presence, audio/video conferencing and calling with teams, channels and files. Channels are dedicated sections within a team to keep conversations organized by specific topics, projects, disciplines – whatever works for your team! Channels are places where conversations happen and where the work takes place. Files shared in a channel (easily access on the Files tab) are stored in SharePoint.

How is Teams administered?

Microsoft Teams is built on Office 365 groups and similarly administered through the Office 365 admin center and offers the same enterprise-level security, compliance, and manageability as the rest of Office 365.

For whom is Teams best suited?

If you’re an existing Skype for Business user, Teams is the perfect tool for you. It’s easy for existing Skype users to adapt, as the tool feels familiar. If your company does not currently use Skype for your communications, further investigation into Teams is definitely worthwhile to evaluate if the features meet your specific needs. The team at NTT would be happy to demonstrate Microsoft Teams and help you determine if Teams is the best option to meet your needs.

If you’re an Office 365 customer who is currently not using Teams or Skype for Business as your enterprise communications platform, or if you’re an Office 365 customer looking to improve your ROI, you should look into Teams as soon as possible.

How does Teams work with Outlook and other features in Microsoft 365?

A new integration between Outlook and Teams makes it easy to collaborate, no matter where the conversation is taking place. Users can move an email conversation, including attachments, from Outlook to a Teams chat or channel conversation by clicking on the ‘Share to Teams’ link in Outlook. Users can also share a conversation from Teams to an Outlook email by clicking on the ‘more options’ icon in a conversation. This feature will roll out in early 2020.

Users can also get actionable ‘missed activity’ emails, which make it easy to stay on top of any missed conversation in Teams. These missed activity emails show the most recent replies in a conversation, and allow you to respond directly from within Outlook.

Tasks in Teams provides a new unified view of your personal and assigned tasks within Teams. It consolidates your tasks across Teams channels, Microsoft To Do, Planner, and Outlook. Users have smart views including tasks assigned to them, the priority as well as start or due date. Users can select the view that works the best for them—list, boards, charts, schedules—to get things done. This feature will be available to users in early 2020.

The new Yammer app for Teams makes Yammer communities, conversations, and live events accessible right within Teams. IT admins and end-users can also pin the app on the navigation rail in Teams to provide easy access to Yammer, helping everyone stay up-to-date with their Yammer communities and participate in organization-wide conversations. This feature will also be available to users in early 2020.

How do I make the shift to Teams?

You should start your journey by familiarizing yourself with Microsoft Teams. You can do that whether or not you’re an existing Microsoft customer by visiting http://teams.microsoft.com/.

Upgrading from Skype for Business to Teams is more than a technical migration. It represents a transformation in how users communicate and collaborate, and change is not always easy. The ideal upgrade approach should address the technical aspects of your upgrade as well as encourage user acceptance and adoption of Teams, driving a positive user experience and business outcome realization.

NTT is committed to helping make your transition from Skype for Business to Teams a success. In addition, Microsoft is providing robust guidance built around a proven, end-to-end upgrade success framework designed to help you plan and execute the upgrade to Teams. Guidance is designed for every stage of the upgrade journey, whether you are just getting started with planning, already running Teams alongside Skype for Business, or ready to upgrade to Teams.

Can I make a channel within a Team private?

Teams in Microsoft Teams are comprised of channels, which help delineate and separate content within a larger Team. Microsoft has recently introduced (in preview) the ability to create channels within existing Teams that can only be viewed and accessed by selected team members. Create a private channel through the privacy settings of the new channel.
Is Teams secure and compliant?
Microsoft Teams is built on the Office 365 hyper-scale, enterprise-grade cloud, delivering the advanced security and compliance capabilities customers expect.
Teams is Tier D-compliant, including the following standards: ISO 27001, ISO 27018, SSAE16 SOC 1 and SOC 2, HIPAA, and EU Model Clauses (EUMC). Within the Microsoft compliance framework, Microsoft classifies Office 365 applications and services into four categories. Each category is defined by specific compliance commitments that must be met for an Office 365 service, or a related Microsoft service, to be listed in that category.
For more information about Microsoft Teams Security and Compliance, visit the Microsoft Trust Center.

Can Microsoft Teams help my organization conduct more inclusive and effective meetings?
Microsoft Teams has a ton of new features coming out that help you create more inclusive and effective meetings:

Microsoft Whiteboard is available in Teams Meetings via the share tray. The Whiteboard provides teams an infinite digital canvas for meeting participants to create and collaborate whether they are in the same room or working remotely. This feature is already general available.

Live Captions in Teams Meetings makes meetings more inclusive, giving participants another way to follow along with the conversation, while addressing the needs of participants with different hearing abilities or language proficiencies. The feature will start rolling out as a preview in U.S. English later this year with plans to expand to other languages in the future.
Does Microsoft Teams have specific solutions for the healthcare industry?

Microsoft recently introduced features valuable for professionals in the healthcare industry:

Virtual Consults offers a simple way to schedule and conduct B2C virtual consultations via Microsoft Teams, including healthcare patient consults, client meetings, and job candidate interviews. Attendees can easily join the virtual consultation via their web browser or Teams mobile app. Teams has enabled virtual consults through its new external appointments functionality and is now in private preview.

Patient Coordination in Teams enables healthcare professionals to streamline patient care. By entering patient information into Teams’ secure platform, physicians, nurses, and other care team members can centralize and digitize information. Imagine how this can facilitate communicating and collaborating around patients in various scenarios such as patient rounding, multi-disciplinary team meetings, and discharge huddles. Patient Coordination in Teams supports enterprise-grade security and enables HIPAA compliance. This feature should be available in public preview in early 2020.

How do devices work with Teams?

The short answer is that Microsoft Teams works very well on all PC and Mac devices, as well as tablets and mobile phones, making it easy to connect wherever users are, with whatever existing device they have at hand.

However, Microsoft Teams is designed to work on Surface devices including Surface Laptops and Surface Hubs. Microsoft has been and is continuing to make huge investments with other hardware partners in the device space. A few examples:

Microsoft is expanding their Cloud Video Interop partnerships, including Cisco their newest partner. This partnership will allow customers use Teams meetings with Cisco Webex Room devices and SIP video conferencing devices in their meeting rooms, starting in early 2020.

With support from industry vendors, Microsoft has pioneered a new approach enabling Microsoft Teams Rooms devices to connect to meeting services from other vendors via browser-based technologies. Microsoft is working with Cisco and Zoom to enable a direct guest join capability from the respective video conferencing devices to the video meeting service using the web app. They plan to add support for other vendors over time. These solutions are expected to be generally available in early 2020.

Collaboration bars for Microsoft Teams are a new category of devices from Microsoft partners to convert small spaces into online meeting and collaboration spaces. These affordable, simple-to-install, and easy-to-manage video conferencing solutions attach to existing displays, TVs or touchscreens in minutes for high-quality video meetings. These devices enable experiences like one-touch & proximity join, content sharing, and whiteboarding. Poly’s Studio X Series and Yealink’s VC210 device will be the first two partners, with devices launching early this year.

New Microsoft Teams speakerphones have a dedicated Teams button, offering a seamless interaction with Teams. The first speakerphone to be certified is already available today from Yealink (model CP900), which will soon be followed by additional speakerphones built for Teams from their other peripheral partners.

New enterprise Phone System capabilities, such as emergency calling, call queue functionality, administrative control, Phone System for Government customers like GCC High and the Department of Defense, as well as advanced functionalities like music on hold, call delegation, and voice mail management have either already rolled out or are rolling out in early 2020.

Additionally, Microsoft has also announced partner enterprise voice advancements such as Contact Center and Compliance Recording that will make Teams Phone System a great cloud solution for enterprise customers. More information on these advancements should be available soon.

Microsoft continues to work with its OEM channel partners to introduce innovative hardware and devices for Teams.
What third-party applications integrate with Teams?

As mentioned earlier, Microsoft Teams integrates with and relies on Microsoft’s Common Data Service for Apps which enables the integration of off-the-shelf and bespoke applications. “Out of the Box” Teams can integrate a catalog of more than 300 third-party applications. Some of our favorites include:

- Adobe Creative Cloud
- Evernote
- Jira Cloud
- Pickit Images
- Smartsheet
- Trello
- Wrike
- Zendesk

Can I build my own applications to integrate with Microsoft Teams?

Yes. The Microsoft Teams developer platform makes it easy to integrate your own services with Teams, whether you develop custom apps for your enterprise or wish to run SaaS applications for teams around the world. Using the Teams developer platform, you can create two classes of apps:

- Apps that any organization using Office 365 can access via the Teams Store
- Apps that you publish to your tenant’s Teams App Catalog, which are only available to your organization (known as line-of-business apps)

The key concepts and guidance for developers are applicable to both classes of apps, however you must go through a formal submission process to publish apps available to all users.
What are the differences and overlaps between Teams and SharePoint?

Let's think of how you store information or file folders at your office. You likely maintain file cabinets for older files you want to refer back to occasionally. You know you need to keep them for reference, but you likely don't put your hands on them multiple times each week.

Now think about the information you need and access each week. You don't have time to go chase down a file that often; it's likely you put that information on a sticky note at your workstation or tack it on a cubicle wall.

In this analogy, and the way most of us use it, the file cabinet is SharePoint. It's great for large audiences and serves as a largely static repository of documents we need to access occasionally. Microsoft Teams is that sticky note we make sure is in our eyesight, a hands-on real-time knowledge base that's accessible anytime.

The best part, however, is that Microsoft Teams information is built on and shared with your SharePoint document library. Files shared within a Teams conversation are automatically added to the SharePoint document library, and permissions set in SharePoint are automatically reflected within Teams. In short, Teams makes SharePoint user friendly and enjoyable.
**What is the user experience if our organization doesn't have SharePoint in Office 365?**

An important user benefit of Teams is Office 365 integration, which includes file sharing through SharePoint in Office 365. This makes it possible to find files in one place for teamwork, including chats, team members, and everyday tools.

If you don't have SharePoint enabled in your tenant, Teams users are not always able to share files in Teams. Users in private chat also cannot share files, because OneDrive in Office 365 (which is tied to the SharePoint license) is required for that functionality.

However, if your tenant has SharePoint enabled and a single SharePoint site has been provisioned at any point in time, then users will be able to share files in a team.

**Will Teams support Cloud Connector Edition (CCE)?**

Microsoft has confirmed that there is no plan for further development of CCE past version 2.0.

There is a path for CCE clients looking to connect on-premise PBXs or deliver voice to hard-to-reach places with Skype for Business Online, through at least 2020.

Skype for Business Server 2019 will have a hybrid co-existence with Teams, which will support PBX coexistence and local call breakout via gateways.

A new model for Skype for Business Online calling integration has been introduced that is an alternative to CCE for complex use cases. Arkadin Our team is happy to help if you find yourself in this situation.

Skype for Business Server 2019 will have a hybrid co-existence with Teams, which will support PBX coexistence and local call breakout via gateways.

**What are the license requirements for Teams? What do I need if we want to use Microsoft Teams as a solution for voice?**

Microsoft is available in Office 365 Suites. Depending on the size of your organization, Microsoft has several different purchase and licensing options to enable organizations to make telephone calls using Microsoft Teams.

Customers require Microsoft Office 365 E5 or Microsoft Office 365 E3 license as well as Microsoft Cloud PBX in tandem with a calling plan in the country in which the call is originating.
Moving toward Teams

Without proper planning and on-staff expertise, digital transformation journeys may be knocked off-course or plagued with costly delays. No matter the complexity, Arkadin Cloud Transformation Services (ACTS) offered by NTT will enable your enterprise to achieve its UC goals with our end-to-end approach.

Arkadin Cloud Transformation Services guides enterprises through the digital transformation journey, delivering greater ROI for Skype for Business and Office 365 deployments.

Cloud Transformation Services combines the Skype Operations Framework with our own proven consulting and managed services to help you fully realize the benefits of your unified communications solution. By focusing your efforts and spending time upfront in planning and assessing your organization's situation with NTT, we help you avoid exponential time and expenses fixing potential issues down the road.

Start your digital transformation journey

Arkadin Cloud Transformation Services offered by NTT guides enterprises through the digital transformation journey with our end-to-end approach to UC. Contact us to schedule a discussion with a cloud communications expert or visit the website below to learn more about our complete cloud solutions.

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