

What to Know Before Transitioning from Skype for Business to Microsoft Teams

A Whitepaper by Netrix, LLC



Since its initial announcement in March of 2017, Microsoft Teams has presented the collaboration question of the century. To move or not to move to Teams. Over the last two years, Microsoft and UC providers alike have gathered a better understanding of what the future holds for communications and collaboration, and with that have determined the role Microsoft Teams can and will play. In this whitepaper you will get:

- A clear understanding of what Microsoft Teams is
- Considerations to make before transitioning to Teams
- A clear understanding of your go-forward options

What is Microsoft Teams?

Per Microsoft's definition, Microsoft Teams is the hub for team collaboration in Office 365 that integrates the people, content, and tools your team needs to be more engaged and effective.

UNIFIED COMMUNICATIONS

Facilitate the use of multiple communication methods, including instant messaging (chat), presence, voice, mobility, and conferencing.

WORKSTREAM COLLABORATION

Reduce or replace email, with core capabilities including notifications, video uploads, optimized search, archiving, persistent messaging, and simple ways to share content.

EMAIL

Not ready to give up email? Teams can receive email messages which becomes part of the threaded conversation, and the associated group mailbox with Teams can be accessed in Outlook natively.

CONTENT COLLABORATION

Enable content productivity and collaboration by storing, sharing, and co-editing various document types in real time, in one central location.

APPLICATION INTEGRATION

Integrate business solutions from Microsoft and their partners directly into the Microsoft Teams UI.

In addition to the traditional unified communications (UC) features of Skype for Business (SfB), Teams is designed around a persistent group chat space that integrates a number of functions constituting a workstream collaboration (WSC) application.

Teams fully leverages Office 365 Groups, enabling it to become a point of entry where members work with a range of Microsoft Office 365 tools in a group context. This means that Teams actually moves beyond just being a WSC application and converges multiple technology categories into a single platform.

This functional convergence results in Teams becoming a multi-purpose activity hub for enterprise teamwork.

WHY YOU SHOULD UPGRADE TO TEAMS

Feature & Capabilities

Teams can already do more than Skype for Business Online and Microsoft promises a rich, intelligent communications roadmap with rapid innovation.

User Experiences

Teams is a state-of-the-art platform that provides a modern, rich experience across devices, including mobile.

Operational Performance

Teams provides improvements in quality and operational metrics thanks to its modern infrastructure.

This functional convergence results in Teams becoming a multi-purpose activity hub for enterprise teamwork.

Is Microsoft Teams the Right Fit For Your Organization?

It may not be. Each organization is unique and Teams comes with its own hurdles that need to be considered before committing to a migration.

CONSIDER YOUR END-USERS: Is Microsoft Teams more than your users need?

It's important to determine if a transition to Teams aligns with your unique organization's communication and collaboration goals. By clearly identifying functionality gaps and future requirements, you'll be able to determine if a move to Teams is the correct step for you.

Microsoft Teams represents a broad range of collaboration and application functions than Skype's "pure" UC stack. Therefore, Teams may provide an expanded set of capabilities that do not align with some organization's unique needs. This addition of unneeded functionality leads to complexity in the workplace at both the end-user and administrative level.

	Skype for Business	Teams
Telephony	✓	✓
Instant Messaging	✓	✓
Unified Messaging	✓	✓
Presence	✓	✓
Meetings (Voice, Video, Web)	✓	✓
Mobility	✓	✓
File Sharing	✓	✓
Calendar Integration	✓	✓
Persistent Chat		✓
Real-time Collaboration & Co-Editing		✓
Keyword Search		✓
Calendar		✓
Third-Party Service Integration		✓
APIs		✓
@ Mentions		✓
Information Barriers		✓
Guest Access		✓
Data Loss Prevention		✓
Custom Apps & Connectors		✓

CONSIDER YOUR TECH STACK: Does Teams overlap with your existing tools?

Another major aspect of vetting a move to teams is understanding areas of functional redundancy and collision. While Teams' functional expansion suits the needs of many companies, some Sfb user organizations may have already invested in alternative WSC platforms, such as Slack or HipChat. By not only auditing your full stack of communication and collaboration solutions, but also surveying end-users you can determine areas of improvement and/or gaps in your organization's technology stack.

CONSIDER THE CHALLENGES: Are you prepared for the organizational hurdles?

Teams enables organizations to work differently, which can lead to operational challenges such as training and user adoption. According to Gartner's Research Circle Survey¹ for WSC, there are three main challenge areas for organizations trying to use WSC platforms:

Cultural

The comfort of using email with attachments is a common example of established behavior and a symptom of a corporate culture that lacks a willingness to share. This exists where there is a perceived loss of control over messaging and documentation.

Training

Training requirements will be significant as employees navigate a new IT environment of channels, bots, team rooms, immersive chat, and APIs.

Collaboration Fragmentation

With the average large enterprise using at least two platforms for conferencing and collaboration purposes (see "Forecast Overview: Unified Communications, Worldwide, 2017"), introducing additional communications and collaboration applications begins to overwhelm employees with choices and questions of how to interoperate.

Explore Your Options

At Netrix, we urge our customers to take a cautious approach to Teams as it matures and explore all viable options. It is important to understand that you are not backed into corner when it comes to your collaboration solutions.

STAY WITH SKYPE FOR BUSINESS

You may be saying, “But isn’t Skype going away?” While Skype for Business Online users are estimated to be fully transitioned to Microsoft Teams by 2020, Skype solution providers such as Netrix will continue to provide SfB solutions and services through 2025.

And with the deployment of Microsoft Skype for Business 2019, users will not only receive additional features such as Cloud Voicemail and Call Data Connector but will also have the ability to integrate their Skype environments with Microsoft Teams. This allows organizations to gradually migrate from their Skype environments while maintaining coexistence between solutions.

Whether you are looking for an on-premises deployment of Skype for Business 2019 or a cloud-based solution such as TetraVX’s sVX, organizations can continue to utilize Skype without the pressure to make hasty decisions.

Teams Consulting Workshop

With expertise on unified communications and collaboration offerings beyond just Microsoft, Netrix can work with you to determine if Teams is the right fit for your organization. We will identify key use cases, workflows, needs and challenges for each developed persona. We will also determine your technical requirements and ensure that Teams satisfies those needs. At the end of this workshop, Netrix can deliver a pilot of your Teams deployment or provide an alternative approach pending the results.

MOVE AWAY FROM MICROSOFT

According to Gartner, 10% of current Skype for Business Online user organizations will choose an alternative to Teams by 2023. Instead, organizations will decide on alternative UC and workstream collaboration solutions that integrate to provide a consistent user experience. At Netrix we provide consulting services to help you decide which alternative solution makes most sense for your organization.

MAKE THE MOVE TO TEAMS

If a migration to Teams is the right fit for your organization, understanding your PSTN calling plan and support options is the next step. Microsoft Teams does not include fully managed services for your end-users or analog device support, nor does it currently include truly dynamic E911 services. Also, Microsoft will require an additional PSTN calling plan that can either be provided from an outside carrier or through Microsoft directly.

Netrix can help you:

- Prepare Your Network
- Deploy Teams
- Transition Your End-Users
- Integrate Your Meeting Rooms
- Manage Your Environment

DIRECT ROUTING BUNDLES FROM NETRIX

At Netrix, we provide direct routing, 24/7 end-user support, and network monitoring so you get the most out of our Microsoft Teams solution. With our services, organizations can leverage cost-effective inbound and outbound PSTN calling through Teams without having to pay for the Microsoft calling plan prices. We act as your carrier and SBC backbone, providing value beyond just PSTN.

	Direct Routing Basic	Direct Routing Plus	Direct Routing Enhanced
US 48 Calling Plan	✓	✓	✓
International Calling Plans*	✓	✓	✓
911 Services	✓	✓	✓
E911 Services	✓	✓	✓
Analog Line Support	✓	✓	✓
Managed Services for UC Workload		✓	✓
Alertpro Network Monitoring & Analytics			✓

*Customized plans based on international requirements

Netrix Microsoft Expertise

As a Microsoft Gold Partner, Netrix has the expertise to support your team's new or existing Microsoft infrastructure. Whether you're looking to use existing licensing and desk phones or have us procure them for you, our Microsoft Certified Engineers are here to guide you through every step of the process.

Our Microsoft expertise doesn't stop at Teams. With a dedicated Microsoft engineering team, Netrix can deploy and support all aspects of your O365 environment. Contact us today to learn more.

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Contact Us

No matter your communication and collaboration needs, Netrix can provide you the guidance and insight to determine the right fit for you organization. For more information on Microsoft Teams, please contact us at info@netrixllc.com