

## TalkingPointz on Microsoft Teams 2019

By Dave Michels, January 17, 2019

### 1. Overview

1. This research note provides an overview of Microsoft Teams, which received significant improvement and development in 2018. This note focuses primarily on its communications and collaboration capabilities, though Teams is a much broader application.
2. Teams is an Agile application and has benefited from continuous improvements.
3. Microsoft, under CEO Satya Nadella, is highly focused on cloud — specifically, Office 365 and Azure. Office 365 is about workflow, and Azure is about workloads. Teams complements both (Skype for Business [SfB] less so).
4. Teams had a visible role in major Microsoft conferences starting with Ignite 2017 and, in 2018, Build (developers), Inspire (channel), and Ignite (IT Pros). Teams received keynote attention at all except Ignite 2018, where it was nevertheless visible everywhere. At Build 2018, Nadella participated in a Teams meetings demo.
5. Teams hits all four of Microsoft's value pillars for Office 365: Unlocks Creativity, Built for Teamwork, Integrated for Simplicity, and Intelligent Security.
6. Microsoft declared Teams is its fastest growing business application (and likely its fastest developed business application).
7. New metrics announced from Microsoft included 329K organizations now using Teams. That includes 87 of the Fortune 100, 44 languages supported, and 60 customers with 10K or more active users. Accenture was named as the first organization with 100K users on Teams.

### 2. What is Teams?

1. Teams is a messaging-centric workflow application (workstream collaboration) as well as a cloud-delivered service for unified communications and conferencing.
2. Teams provides threaded, persistent chat; can serve as a hub for teamwork, consolidating capabilities of Word, Excel, PowerPoint, SharePoint, and OneNote; and has evolving real-time service capabilities that can replace SfBO: IM, presence, peer-to-peer calling, audio, video conferencing, with PSTN services.
3. Core Office 365 apps can be used as standalone applications and/or accessed as a tab in Teams.
4. Users of Teams can collaborate on and share content in SharePoint and OneDrive for Business.
5. Teams is a multi-platform development environment, and applications can be built on it.
6. Mastering Teams in the future will be comparable to mastering Windows in the past. Note: In 2018 Nadella reorganized Microsoft, and for the first time in three decades the company does not have a Windows division. Teams is positioned to be a cloud-delivered replacement platform.
7. Microsoft is clearly prioritizing Teams. The application received continuous and regular improvements in 2018, and that's expected to continue for some time.
8. Microsoft includes Teams at no additional cost in most of its Office 365 subscriptions: two of three of the small business licensing plans, all of the enterprise plans, its program for nonprofit organizations, the US Government Cloud Community program, all education plans, and the new Firstline Workers plan. Additionally, a freemium version of Teams is available for up to 300 users. PSTN and audio conferencing services are charged separately.

### 3. Teams UCaaS

1. Teams has become Microsoft's primary UCaaS offer.
2. Voice is an add-on to Teams (E3 add-on, included in E5). Teams will drag voice, rather than the other way around.
3. Voice is added to Teams via Microsoft Phone System (formerly known as Cloud PBX). This add-on connects PSTN services to Teams. Users have two options for PSTN services: Microsoft Calling Plans and/or Direct Routing for BYO SIP trunking.
  - a) With Calling Plans, Microsoft provides carrier services, currently in 10 geographies including North America, Western Europe, and Australia.
  - b) Direct Routing requires certified hardware. Customers can purchase it or, often, obtain it as part of a bundled service from carrier partners.
4. Where SfB hid the calling icon from customers that didn't have PSTN services, Teams makes it visible, and users can use it to make on-net peer-to-peer calls. This visibility will drive awareness that Teams can be used for PSTN services.
5. In addition to a GUI, Teams also offers a command-line interface (/calls) for calling.
6. Microsoft made announcements on Teams throughout 2018. A partial listing of features includes:
  - a) Delegation (manager/admin)
  - b) Consultative call transfer
  - c) Distinctive Ring
  - d) DnD Breakthrough
  - e) Call queues
  - f) Auto attendant
  - g) Call park
  - h) Group call pickup
  - i) Shared line appearance
  - j) Call forward to group
7. In December, Microsoft previewed Location Based Routing (LBR), which uses location information to determine and limit routing. This is a critical feature in countries that limit VoIP and PSTN services.
8. To stimulate its ecosystem, Microsoft [announced new calling APIs](#) for Microsoft Graph. These APIs can be used to create applications and reports regarding calls and meetings. These APIs are under preview and subject to change.
9. In addition to app features, Microsoft has also made several improvements for administrators. The...

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