Red River

EVERYTHING YOU NEED TO KNOW
ABOUT THE MICROSOFT
MIGRATION
FROM SKYPE TO TEAMS

Developing great technology requires a strong culture of continuous improvement. Microsoft embodies this philosophy and is always striving to create better and more efficient products designed to improve your business.

That's why Microsoft is creating a new cloud phone system called Teams Calling, resulting in a single, powerful collaboration platform. Customers currently using the online version of Skype for Business will eventually need to migrate to Teams, where they will enjoy new voice features, better call quality and tight integration with the rest of the Office 365 ecosystem.

What's not changing is Microsoft's unparalleled commitment to providing cloud chat, voice, and video while still offering secure on-premise and hybrid solutions. Microsoft calls this their "Intelligent Communications Vision."

Don't expect the same Skype for Business experience on Teams. Microsoft will leverage the a cloud-based backend infrastructure that delivers a much better user experience, along with clearer video and audio, as well as new artificial intelligence (AI) driven features. This backend infrastructure is actually the original Skype consumer global network that was not used as the infrastructure for Skype for Business. Skype for Business was actually the Lync on-premise solution hosted from Microsoft data centers. The original Skype consumer global network is much more advanced with presence in over a hundred Microsoft data centers, and with peering arrangements with thousands of global service providers, you're never far from the Microsoft network.

This guide will teach business owners and office staff everything they need to know about Microsoft's new Teams Calling application and transition away from legacy Skype for Business.

GET TO KNOW
THE NEW TEAMS

Microsoft has developed a vision for an intelligent and intuitive set of communication tools. With the transition from Skype, Microsoft Teams will become the core communications offering for Microsoft Office 365 customers.

Initially, Teams was primarily an collaboration platform designed to compete with Slack and some of the other business focuses IM software in the market. Today, Teams has become a shared collaborative meetings space that enables everyone in your business to come together across organizational and geographical boundaries. In addition to instant messaging, the new Teams offers voice calls, video conferencing, and meetings. Teams is included in the standard Office 365 package, meaning you don't have to purchase a separate license to enjoy its new features. The updated Teams benefits include:

- A much more advanced backend infrastructure in the cloud.
- Consolidation of disparate apps andricher user experiences.
- An integrated communications tool not tied to multiple legacy platforms.
- Superior meetings with a higher quality cloud voice and video package.
- Rapid innovation of UC capabilities.
- The power of AI and the incredible technology garnered from Skype.
- A single client for chat, calling, meeting, and collaboration.

Teams supports scheduling and free/busy calendar availability information. Teams is available across mobile, desktop and browser and integrated with communications and meeting room devices, providing a frictionless experience no matter which device users work from.

WHY IS THIS SO **IMPORTANT?**

Today, teams are dynamic. Members, roles, priorities, and goals can change, resulting in different communication needs. In the new Microsoft Teams, people can choose how to communicate by using these features:

COLLABORATION

Teams allows you to collaborate in private chats or in-group conversations visible to the entire team. The default setting on Teams is to allow for open conversations that transform culture and builds camaraderie between on-site and remote workers. Microsoft recently added guest access, so you can now chat with everyone on your team, whether they're inside your organization or an outside partner.

MEETINGS

Tapping into the cognitive services of Office 365 and the power of Microsoft's collective intelligence (Microsoft Graph), Teams will bring intelligence to calls and meetings. Teams provides one-touch join as well as meeting recommendations based on attendee availability. Team members can share and review information and conversation history to have contextual and informed meetings. After the meeting, team members can access recordings with transcribed and translated text that is indexed so that they can search for content relevant to them.

CALLING

Microsoft offers a reliable, cloud-based telephony plus calling solution for that allows you to connect with anybody. This can enable you to save cost, reduce hardware dependencies, and leverage the power of the Microsoft Cloud.

The telephony feature in Teams is the Microsoft Phone System, which is a fully integrated, software-based PBX. Employees can have individual phone numbers that they can use for both domestic and international calls. This includes voicemail, call forwarding, and emergency calls. For IT, there is reporting, call routing, and auto attendant features.
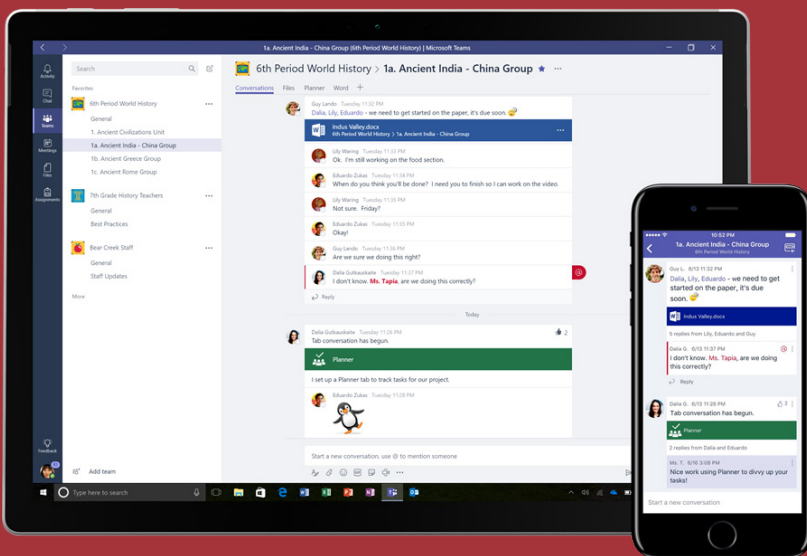
In addition to the above features, the new Teams more tightly integrates with the rest of the Office 365 ecosystem.

Another advantage to having everything in Teams is that it allows you to find and share files and conversations more easily. For example, if you suddenly remember that you need to follow up on something from a recent Team meeting, but don't know what it is, you can perform a search using keywords related to the conversation. Since Teams meetings allow you to transcribe and index the conversations, you can quickly find the point in the conversation in which you discuss the topic and find the info you are looking for.

Behind the scenes, users will benefit from artificial intelligence (AI) that will transform the experience for calls and meetings with faster join times and a better browser experience with no plug-ins to download. Also, it will be easier to take advantage of Microsoft Cognitive Services with translation, transcription, speech recognition, and machine learning.

WHY TEAMS IS A
GAME CHANGER

Today, your company likely has multiple legacy platforms like Slack for instant messaging, GoToMeeting for video, a PBX or VoIP for voice, and Google or Office for documents. This is a complicated and siloed approach that Teams is focused on eradicating. Office 365 with Teams will offer one unified communications hub, taking the complexities of today's business tasks and making them less disjointed.

Computer World points out the obvious benefits of a unified approach in an interview with Gartner research director Larry Cannell, "That's one of the strengths it has over Slack. It is just not about group chat, it also about group file-sharing and content collaboration." The article makes an important point; with legacy Teams, Microsoft was playing catch up to Slack by focusing just on the chat feature. With these new updates, Teams sets itself apart by handling all three types of communications applications, setting it ahead of the pack in a seamless integration under the Microsoft brand. While Slack does have integrations with tools like GoToMeeting, none are native or as smooth as the new Teams.

Some of the big benefits of the new centralized communications tools found in Teams include:

- Companies will save money by dumping all those legacy platforms that struggled with interoperability.

- End users will have an easier time with Teams because they won't have to switch between chat, voice, or video conferencing providers to run a meeting.

- IT will appreciate the fact that it has one less app to manage, especially since Teams integrates seamlessly with the rest of the Microsoft ecosystem.

MICROSOFT TEAMS +
OFFICE 365

How much more productive could you be if all of your Office 365 tools -- Word, Excel, PowerPoint, OneNote, SharePoint, even Power BI -- are all integrated with Microsoft Teams? Here is how Teams improves the rest of the Office 365 ecosystem:

- Users can share, co-author and edit Office and other files right in the app.

- As files are stored on SharePoint, the latest version of the file is always accessible to any member on the team.

- You can take notes with OneNote or access an integrated calendar from Outlook.

- Microsoft Teams is also integrated with SharePoint, Power BI, and planner, so teams can work in a central place with all the necessary tools to pursue team objectives.

- We've built integration with email, so users can forward an email into a Team's channel for further discussion.

- Microsoft Teams leverages the intelligence of the Microsoft Graph. A team member can access org chart information and do searches for contacts within an organization.

In addition to Office 365, Teams integrates with 3rd party apps, allowing you to keep the software that a team needs all in one place.

GETTING STARTED WITH THE NEW
MICROSOFT TEAMS

If you already have Office 365 E5 licensing, then you have the new Teams Calling as part of your existing package. Just add your preferred source for dial tone – either Microsoft's Cloud PSTN or use your existing local service provider by deploying Microsoft's Direct Route service. Direct Route service gives you the flexibility to choose your dial tone source but requires an on-premise Session Border Controller (SBC) to connect your providers' SIP service to the Microsoft Cloud Phone System.

Several telephone hardware manufacturers have developed new phones that will connect natively to Teams Calling. The protocol is different from Skype for Business, but Microsoft has developed a free proxy service to handle the conversion, so you can leverage your existing phones on the new service, like Polycom VVX, Audiocodes and Yealink.

If you are currently using Skype for Business as your main telephony and video solution, then, you will need to migrate your systems to the new Teams Calling platform when the time is right for you. There is no immediate need for concern as Microsoft has not announced any end-of -life for Skype for Business, but we highly recommend a consulting engagement to build your roadmap to Teams Calling.

We know that every organization is unique – both in structure and in style – so we've made it easier to tailor your workspace to the needs of your team. Red River is here to help customize your migration to Teams by including the exact mix of apps and services, which are relevant to specific teams or projects.

For example, we can help you develop the roadmap for the Skype to Teams migration. Red River can help you redesign your telephony for a simple upgrade or a complex overhaul of all your communications needs.

To assist you on your journey to Teams Calling, Red River can help your company:

- Start your process by adopting the Teams collaboration platform, make it part of your business.

- Customize and tailor your workspace to include the apps and services you need.

- Set up the full telephony experience in the new Microsoft Cloud Phone System.

- Integrate third-party applications such as contact centers.

- Develop and implement endpoint and video meeting room options.

- Redesign communications based on compliance.

- Integrate existing business processes.

- Provide training and a 24/7/365 help desk.

- Roadmap and implement telephone new features as they become available.

- Decommission legacy on-premise telephony applications

Whether your organization is small to mid-size or enterprise, Red River is standing by to help you maximize the journey from Skype to Teams. But how is Red River uniquely qualified to help you along this customer journey?

THE RED RIVER – MICROSOFT TEAMS
PARTNERSHIP

Red River is only one of five Microsoft solutions providers in the country selected as the preferred vendor to rollout Teams Calling to Microsoft clients. This is due to our extensive track record of 20 years of experience in telephony and IP technology. In 1999 we were at the forefront of VoIP and today, we are a proud service provider of Microsoft projects, offering managed services, customization, IT road mapping, end-to-end security, and more.

With more than 150 employees, Red River has a 24/7/365 help desk and telecom-related support. We offer our customers a design center and test lab so that on-premise installations of hardware and software are seamless, customized, and effective. We're honored to be selected from a nationwide pool of Microsoft partners to be the exclusive vendor for the Microsoft migration from Skype to Teams.

Contact Red River for a free consultation on migrating to Microsoft TEAMS.

ABOUT RED RIVER

Red River brings together the ideal combination of talent, partners and products to disrupt the status quo in technology and drive success for business and government in ways previously unattainable. Red River serves organizations well beyond traditional technology integration, bringing 25 years of experience and mission-critical expertise in security, networking, analytics, collaboration, mobility and cloud solutions. To learn more, visit redriver.com.