

A New Way to Work, A New Way to Mobilize Microsoft Teams



Over the last few years, Microsoft Teams has become one of the dominant communications platforms, particularly in the enterprise space. As the world adapts to the hybrid future of work, however, new challenges are beginning to emerge.

Organizations are struggling to unify communications between users working onsite, work-from-home users, hybrid users, and those who spend the bulk of their time traveling and working from mobile devices.

Teams has been well-suited for users who are working from a PC or tablet, either in the office or at home. For many such users, in fact, Teams has completely replaced the Desk Phone since inherently it can be used to make internal calls. And it can be used for external calling when combined with a Dial Plan solution such as Verizon Calling with Microsoft Teams or Verizon VoIP for Operator Connect. The same cannot be said for smartphone users. To place or receive Teams calls, those users must first open the Teams app. On the surface, the requirement for a user to open the Teams app prior to placing a call might seem to be little more than a matter of convenience. However, the way that Teams works on a smartphone causes some problems.

First, if someone attempts to contact a mobile user through Teams (using that user's Teams number as opposed to their mobile number), the call will fail unless that user has the Teams app open at that moment. Second, some organizations are subject to regulatory requirements mandating that they log, or possibly even record, all calls. Calls placed outside of Teams (through the smartphone's native dialer) are not centrally logged in the way that a Teams call would be. Third, calls placed or received through the Teams app are treated as data calls, potentially leading to call quality issues in areas with limited data bandwidth.

Verizon Mobile for Microsoft Teams

Through its strategic relationship with Microsoft, Verizon is the first US operator to offer Microsoft Teams Phone Mobile, delivered as Verizon Mobile for Microsoft Teams. With Verizon Mobile for Microsoft Teams, the smartphone itself becomes a Teams endpoint. This means that the device is natively capable of placing and receiving Teams calls without the user needing to run the Teams app. Users can make and receive Teams calls using the native keypad on their smartphone the same way as any other [non-Teams] calls.

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Derek Peabody, Director of Product Management in the Verizon Business Group, explains that making a Teams call using the smartphone native dialer allows you to do things that were previously not possible. A shining example, according to Peabody, is compliance recording. As Peabody explains, “If you're a stockbroker, then every single conversation you have has to be recorded. Doing that on a native smartphone has historically been extremely difficult, if not impossible. It's usually a very clunky process, requiring multiple apps to be used. But that ability to extend all of the power of Teams into that native smartphone, and not change how the end user uses that smartphone, is the big deal here.”

A Centralized Platform

Verizon Mobile for Microsoft Teams also helps organizations unify their employees around a centralized communications platform - namely Microsoft Teams. Historically, organizations have found Teams to be a less-than-perfect fit for some employees, depending on their job roles. For example, salespeople who are always on the road might use Teams for attending online meetings, but most of their day-to-day phone calls likely go through a standard mobile number rather than routed through Microsoft Teams.

Conversely, Verizon Mobile for Microsoft Teams makes it possible for all of an organization's employees to use Teams as their primary communications platform, allowing businesses to save money by eliminating redundant calling solutions. Consider an organization with some employees who work onsite and others who work on the road. Users who are dedicated to the office are issued a VoIP or a wireline Teams (a Teams desk phone) experience, while field workers are issued mobile devices. The overall benefit is that

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organizations can mix and match the calling service each user uses from a Teams perspective, and align that choice of service to how each user works. In other words, each user can work in the way that makes the most sense for them based on their job requirements.

For businesses, call quality is essential to delivering a great customer and employee experience. Calls made via apps face the problem that they are treated as data, sometimes resulting in choppy/less-than-clear call quality. With Verizon Mobile for Microsoft Teams, Teams calls are treated as voice calls on Verizon's 5G/LTE network meaning that they receive the highest level of prioritization resulting in the exceptional call quality that you expect from a mobile call.

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Another benefit of Verizon's native use of the Verizon voice network is that it is possible for users to communicate through Teams when the Teams app simply cannot be used. According to Peabody, "By using our high-priority voice network, you're improving the experience and call quality for those end users. This is especially impactful when you are in a low-data-coverage or no-data-coverage area, but you have voice, which does still happen in the United States. If

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that happens, you can still at least have a voice call, whereas if you only had the app, and you were in a no-data-coverage or low-data-coverage area, you would really struggle to even do voice." As such, Verizon Mobile for Microsoft Teams is an ideal solution for organizations that have employees who travel to areas with little or no Internet connectivity.

Seamless Microsoft Teams Transitions

As mentioned, Teams users who are working from Verizon Mobile for Microsoft Teams are not limited to voice-only calls. Suppose that after a few minutes of talking, one of the two users on a call realizes that they need to share a document with the other user. At this point, the user who is on Verizon Mobile for Microsoft Teams simply opens the Teams app and the call is elevated or "uplifted" into the full Teams experience. This allows the users to collaborate on the document in the usual manner. Likewise, if the user wishes to view the shared document on a bigger screen, they can sign into Teams from a PC or a tablet without disconnecting the call.



Conveniently, Verizon Mobile for Microsoft Teams uses standard Microsoft 365 and Teams Phone Standard licenses. This means that an organization that is already using Teams may be able to add Verizon Mobile for Microsoft Teams without making significant changes to its existing Teams licensing. All that is required from a licensing perspective is a Microsoft Teams license and a Teams Phone Standard license. Hence, an organization with a Microsoft 365 E5 subscription already has what it needs since that subscription includes both Teams and Teams Phone licenses. Alternatively, an organization can use a Microsoft 365 E3 subscription and acquire the Teams Phone license.



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The only requirements from the Verizon side are that the organization must be a Verizon Business Wireless customer and that the smartphones must be HD voice-compatible (which nearly all current generation smartphones are). The one caveat to this requirement, which should not be a problem for most organizations, is they must have a corporate-liable, (business-provided) Verizon mobile phone number. This simply means that the organization, not an individual user, must set up and pay for the Verizon Wireless account.

This leads to the issue of pricing. According to Peabody, one of Verizon's main objectives is to make things as easy as possible for its customers. To that end, there are no-cost tiers or sliding price scales. The cost to add Verizon Mobile for Microsoft Teams to a corporate-liable smartphone is \$4 per month per line.

Although it may be tempting to look at Verizon Mobile for Microsoft Teams purely from the standpoint of the convenience that it brings to end users, organizations today cannot afford to adopt a new solution without first considering the security and compliance implications. However, organizations will find that Verizon Mobile for Microsoft Teams actually simplifies their security and compliance efforts. If an organization is already using Teams, it will undoubtedly have already set up various policies within the Teams platform. Because Verizon Mobile for Microsoft Teams is a Teams-native solution, those existing policies can be applied directly to mobile devices without modification.

Additionally, devices with Verizon Mobile for Microsoft Teams can be managed using Microsoft Intune or any other mobile device management (MDM) solution to apply security policies directly to the devices.

Learn how Verizon enables high quality external calling and anywhere collaboration across hybrid work environments with [Verizon Mobile for Microsoft Teams](#).

