

8x8 Essentials
eBook Series



Connect Everywhere:

Better Voice Communications for Microsoft Teams

Don't settle for app-switching to bring people and apps together.

Learn how to supercharge Teams and other apps with integrated global voice communications capabilities.

Contents



Chapter One:
More tools =
more confusion
Page 4



Chapter Two:
Four answers
on MS Teams
+ voice.
Page 10



Chapter Three:
Teams can't
go it alone.
Page 20



Chapter Four:
Real-world
success.
Page 28



Chapter Five:
As easy as one,
two, Teams.
Page 34



Chapter Six:
Set it and
forget it.
Page 42



Chapter Seven:
Numbers
don't lie.
Page 49



Chapter Eight:
Time to
get started.
Page 59

Chapter

1

More tools = more confusion

Learn why organizations struggle to integrate communications platforms.

We all want communications to be convenient.

We used to have separate physical devices for phone calls, email and chat, and video conferencing. Over time, communications become consolidated into a single physical form factor, which for the most part was a smartphone or a desktop computer. 8x8 addressed both of those markets by combining video, voice, chat and contact center into a single application facilitating collaboration and communication from anywhere on almost any device.



And while the trend of “work from anywhere” continues to grow exponentially, we also recognize a second parallel trend where organizations aren’t just expecting employees to communicate from any geographical location. They expect them to communicate from any contextual application as well. For instance, if you are a sales rep and spend your day in Salesforce.com (SFDC), you want to be able to make customer calls right from your SFDC application. You don’t want to have to exit SFDC to make that call. You want to use the application you are in all the time to do your work. In fact, you may also want that call recorded and made available for later reference in the context of the customer or prospect you just called.

People want additional capabilities. They don't want more tools.

So if users have the communications capabilities in the tools they already use, they are more likely to take advantage of those capabilities. Whether they are the tools used for your business processes like Salesforce, ServiceNow, or Microsoft Teams, you want new functionality to be available in the context that is most convenient for the job you are doing at any one time.

Context counts.

“For years now, some of the biggest productivity killers — ranked at the very top in certain studies — is getting workers to understand how to actually use the growing wealth of communications tools at their disposal.”

Dion Hinchcliffe

Constellation Research



We call out those three applications in particular because they represent millions of active users every day. Microsoft Teams alone has 75 million active daily users. And those users don't just need to communicate with other Teams users. Sometimes they have to communicate with people who are not using Microsoft Teams and need the convenience of making a phone call from Teams to a non-teams user, any time, anywhere in the world. User communications don't only traverse geographical or form factor boundaries, they also cross contextual boundaries.

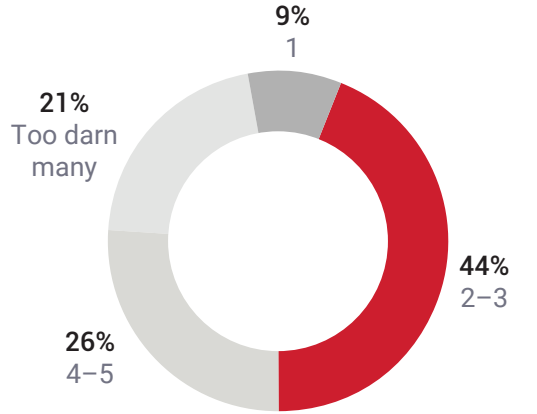
Communications strategy has become increasingly critical to every organization. That may seem like a silly statement. Haven't communications always been critical? Of course they have.

But social distancing norms will continue to reduce our ability to meet face to face in the short term, and will likely have an ongoing impact in the long term. Forward-thinking organizations are not just implementing work from anywhere policies, but broader work from anywhere strategies that also consider the importance of the convenience of communications within the context of how employees spend their time at work.

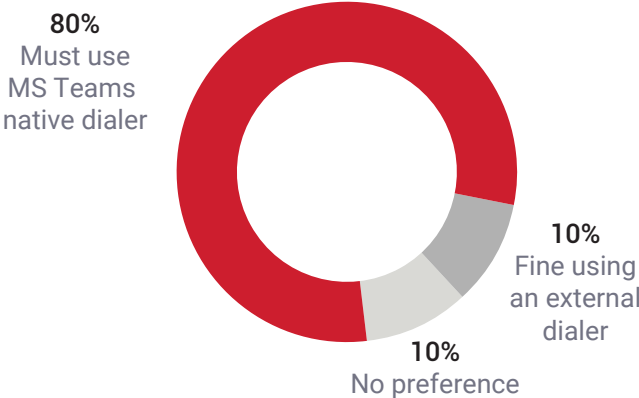
To learn more about how the world of communications is becoming more contextual and why convenience matters, check out this article from Constellation Research, on “[Reducing Team Communications Silos](#)”.

If you are eager to learn how we make communications convenient for Microsoft Teams, then [click here for a 48-second introduction](#) to see convenient communications in action.

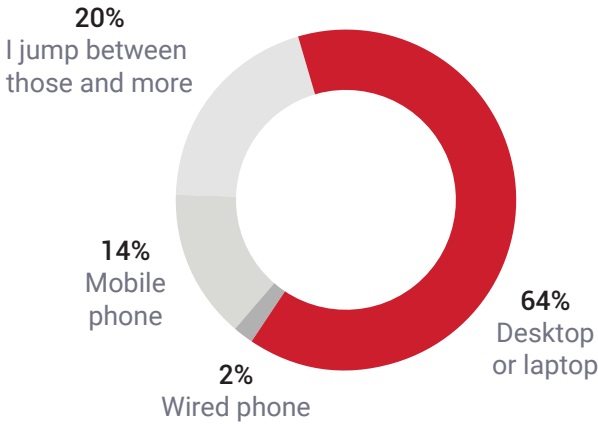
How many communication applications do you use on a daily basis?



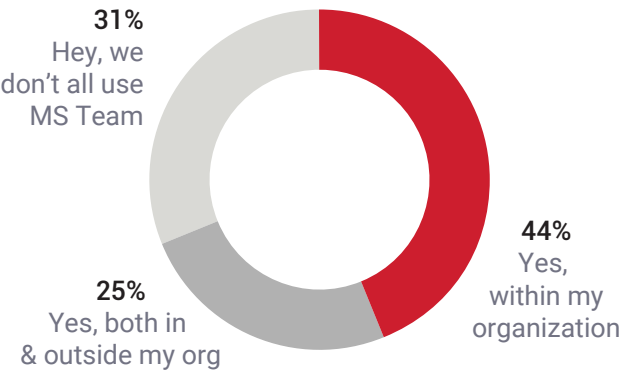
If you were to add, or have added, phone calling capability to your MS Teams environment, how important is it that it use the native dialer?



What is your primary work communications device?



Do you use MS Teams to make phone calls?



Sources: Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter

Chapter

2

Four answers on MS Teams + voice.

How to evaluate voice services for MS Teams.

4 Questions about MS Teams + Voice.

If you've standardized employee communications on Microsoft Teams, you're probably already thinking about how to streamline further and allow users to accept and make phone calls directly from the Teams user interface. After all, they already spend a large part of their day in Teams collaborating and getting work done. This should be simple. But like all technology choices, the devil is in the details.



What kind of telephony coverage do we need?

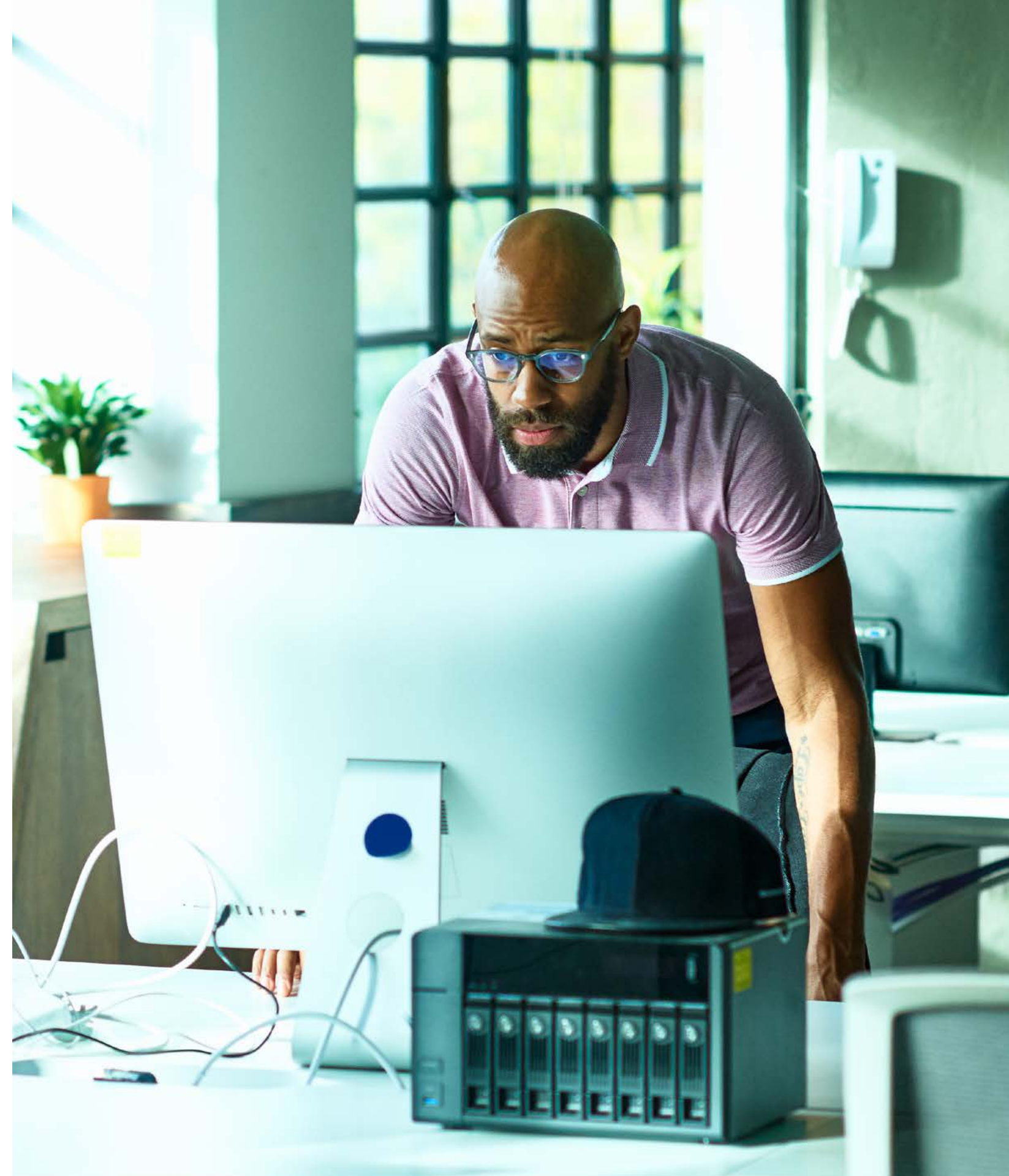
The answer here may seem obvious. But the reality is that many voice services for Teams give you limited coverage of the worldwide public switched telephone network (PSTN). If your business is mostly local, then this may not be a problem and you can use the services provided directly by Microsoft.

But if you require global reach or call center/CRM integration, then you will need a more sophisticated solution that takes advantage of Microsoft Teams Direct Routing capabilities, connecting into worldwide PSTN networks. The good news is that sophisticated doesn't need to mean difficult.

Is it complicated to set up?

If you really want to run a phone company managed by your IT organization, then you're reading the wrong eBook. If, like the rest of us, you would rather focus on enabling your users to succeed, be productive, and communicate globally with ease, then read on.

There are two main approaches to providing voice capabilities to Teams. The first is to use an app bot requiring users to learn new commands to initiate Team calls or join meetings. This approach disrupts the regular Teams workflow and creates user apathy and confusion. There are also some nasty user training implications of this approach we will discuss in a bit, but the administration can be messy because it requires installing and configuring those bots on every desktop or smartphone.





The second is to use Microsoft Teams Direct Routing. This may be more complicated on the back end, but there is no reason your voice for Teams vendor should share that complexity with you. With a cloud vendor, you should expect no Teams downtime to bring voice services online or port telephone numbers, and users should be able to keep their existing phone numbers.

The bottom line is that when adding voice to a Microsoft Teams environment, you can have your cake (full functionality) and eat it too (low complexity of deployment).

Will it require user training?

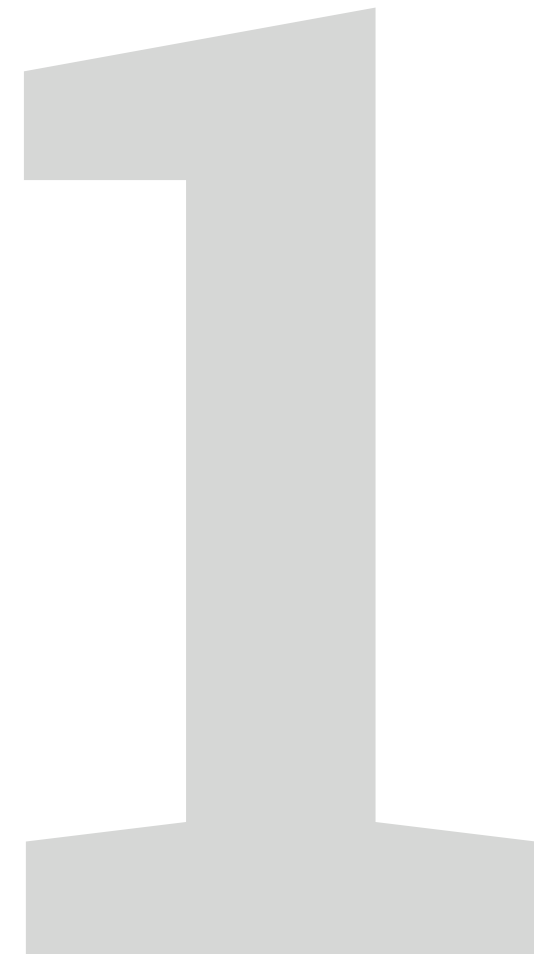
Once again, this seems like an obvious question. After all, we live in a world where people expect to pick up a device and just start using it, without requiring a manual. In the world of voice solutions for Microsoft Teams, you have the same two major options with wildly different characteristics.

Option One

Option One is the bot-based option discussed earlier. While typically less expensive or even free, this approach is onerous for the IT administrator. It starts with a bot installation on the user's desktop and an associated 3rd party app on their mobile phone. If you have hundreds or even thousands of users, this option will quickly stretch IT resources. Users also need to learn new commands to make calls, disrupting the Teams user experience on the desktop, and fragmenting the mobile experience. This approach requires additional user training for both devices adding additional strain on IT.

The result is confused users and excess calls to the IT support desk. Remember, bots require regular updates to support new Teams features and can cause service disruption if not updated on time. So while this might be a reasonable approach for small deployments, it is extremely risky for larger implementations.

So when they say it's free, they mean free like a free puppy. It comes with lots of hidden costs.



Option Two

Option Two is the direct routing approach that fully embeds telephony inside the Microsoft Teams app, desktop or mobile, lighting up the Microsoft Teams native dialer. It also enables native use of features like ring groups, calling queues, call forwarding, and voicemail. Users need no additional training for this approach. The downside? It is going to be slightly more expensive on a per user basis when compared with the bot approach but will result in much fewer end user calls to the IT support desk. The bottom line is that this approach is designed for mid-market to enterprise class organizations and is going to be more cost effective for mid to large scale implementations.





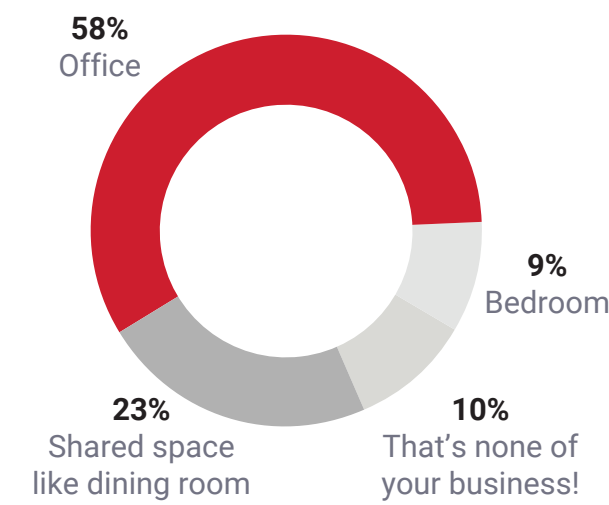
Can I use Teams with my call center software?

If you don't have a call center, this point is moot. But if you do have a call center and are using Microsoft Teams as well, of course you would want to natively support ring groups and calling queues as well as the ability to have full call analytics while your users are dialing from the Microsoft dialer. Make sure to consider how your call center app and analytics are integrated with Teams.

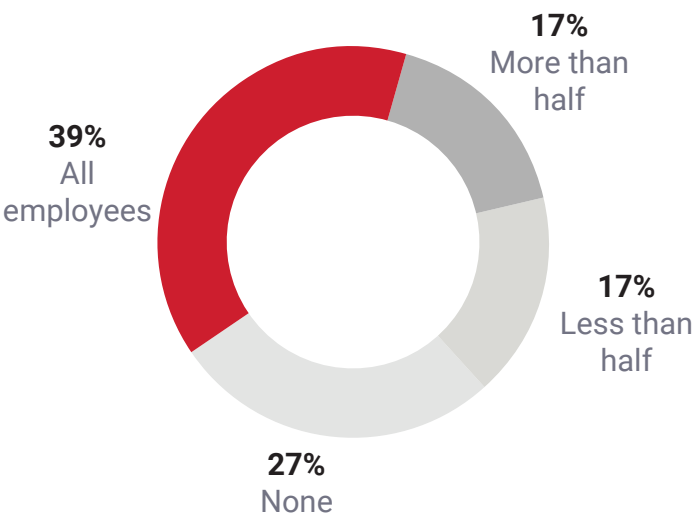
As with any technology decision, you need to consider the pros and cons of each approach, and how it will fit with your environment. Think about your needs first, and then determine which technological approach outlined above will be best for your environment.

8x8 Poll Results

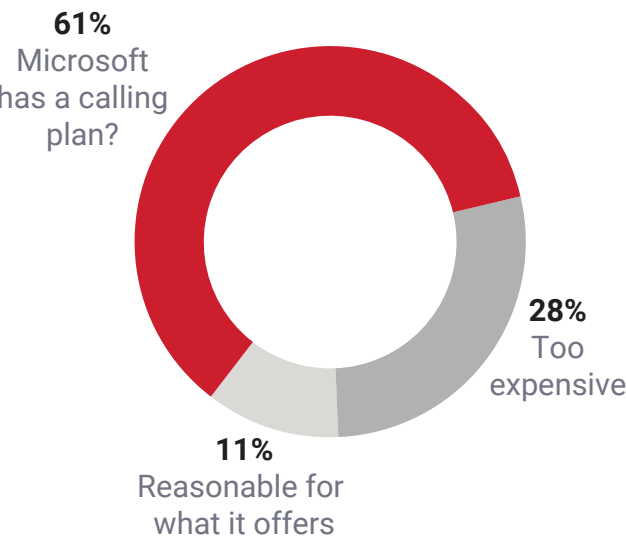
What is your favorite place in your home to communicate from?



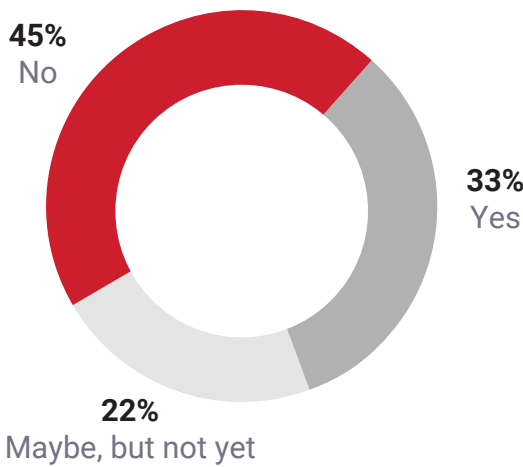
How many of your MS Teams users require phone calling functionality with Teams?



The cost of a Microsoft Calling Plan for Teams is ...?



Is MS Teams ready to provide business-critical voice support?



Sources: Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter

Chapter

3

Teams can't go it alone.

Embed true voice services inside MS Teams to help users reach outside.

Teams can't go it alone.

Kind of. I guess. With lots of limitations and issues. We know, that doesn't sound like a rousing endorsement. And it isn't. If Microsoft had a great solution, we wouldn't have bothered building the 8x8 Voice for MS Teams integration in the first place. Microsoft provides a just-good-enough solution to check the box for some organizations, but not most.

To figure out which kind of organization you are, we've detailed some of the key limitations here. And if it turns out that any of these limitations are a problem for you, then you will want to read past this chapter or contact an 8x8 salesperson or partner.

Limitation #1

Calling Plans



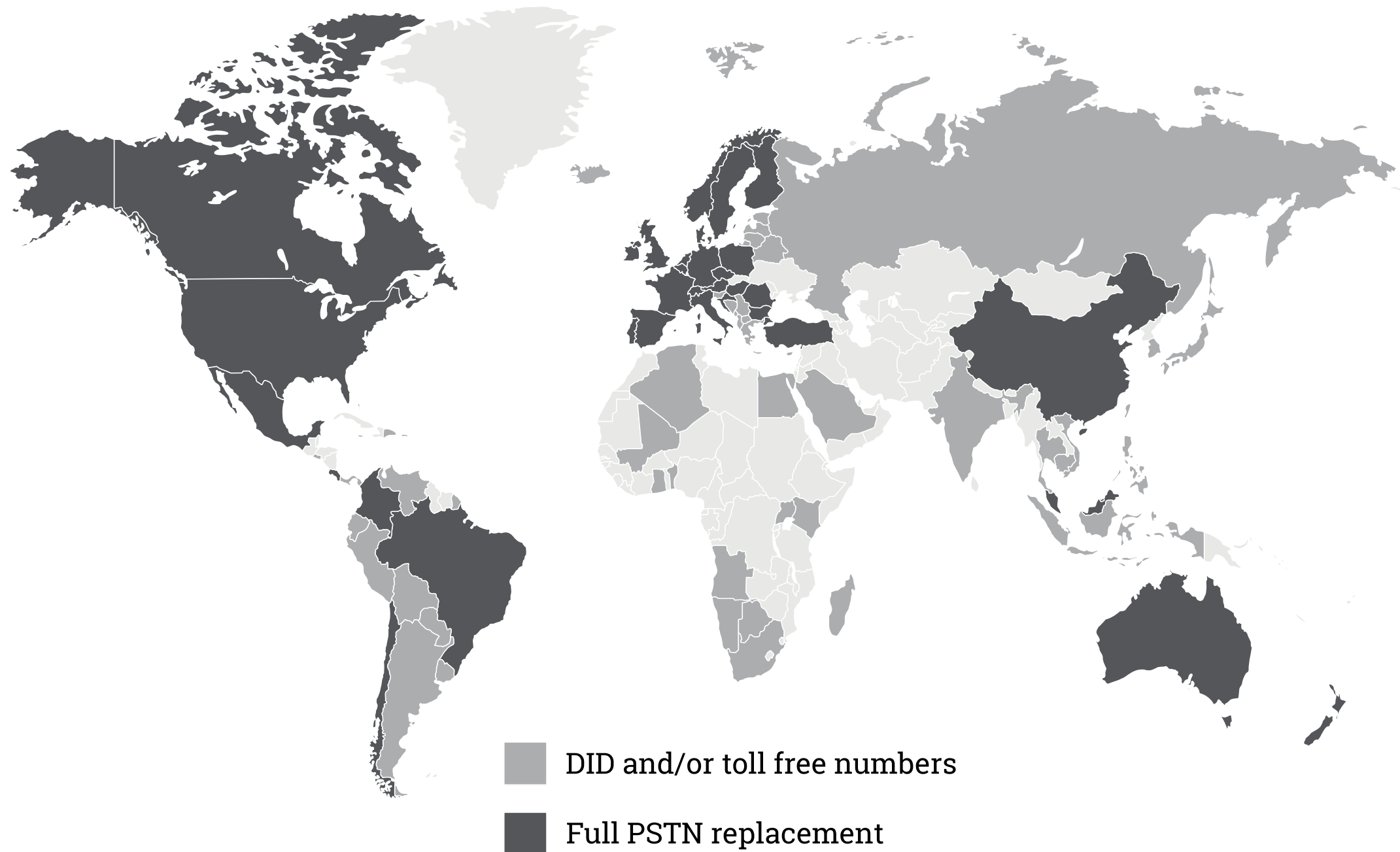
Global Reach and Calling Plan Flexibility

Microsoft calling plans are limited to 10 countries. If your business is limited to operating within those countries, then you might be good to go. In addition, Microsoft forces you to have the same calling plan with limited minutes for all of your employees. That means if you have one employee that requires the most expensive calling plan, then you will have to pay for that plan for ALL of your employees.

The 8x8 answer

8x8 Voice for Microsoft Teams gives you full public telephony access in 38 countries, unlimited calling to 47 countries and virtual numbers in over 120 countries. And you can mix and match calling plans to meet the specific needs of your employees without overpaying.

A Truly Global Presence



Limitation #2

**Calling Uptime
(for optimists)**

**Call Downtime
(for pessimists)**

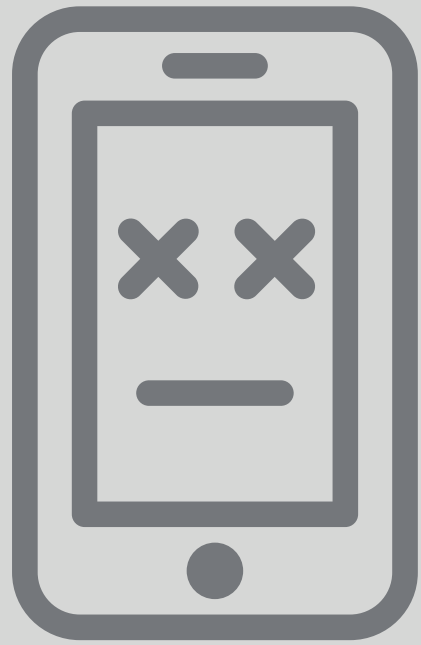


Availability and Reliability

Business-class phone service is just not a priority for Microsoft. Sorry to disappoint. It just isn't. Microsoft only commits to 99.9% uptime. Sounds good, doesn't it? That's more than a business day of downtime per year. Service level agreements are only targets. As downdetector.com shows, Microsoft Teams had 41 outages during the first half of 2020.

The 8x8 Answer

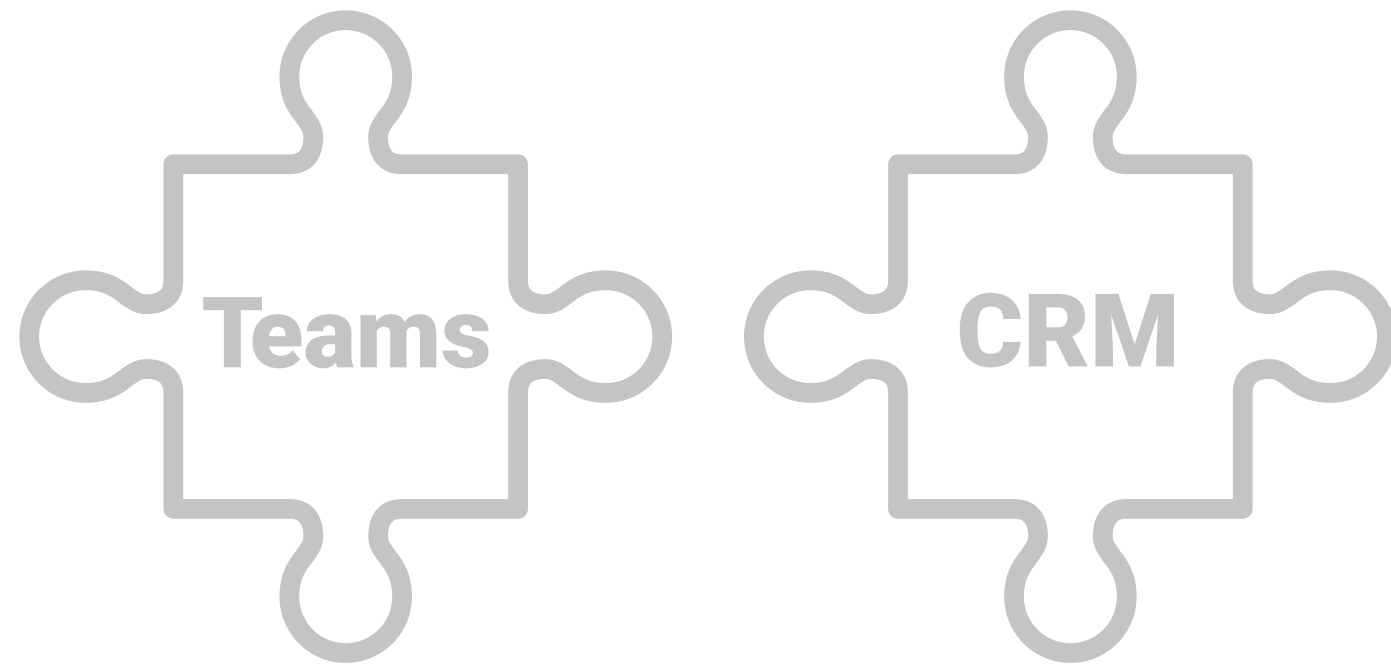
During the same six month period, 8x8 maintained 99.9986% uptime with only one brief outage. In other words, the 8x8 network is 41 times more reliable.



99.9% Uptime equates to more than
a business day of downtime

Limitation #3

Integration with 3rd-Party CRM systems



Ecosystem Integration

Microsoft has no native voice integration with the world's #1 CRM system, Salesforce.com. It is **barely integrated for basic data sharing**. To associate a Microsoft voice call with a Salesforce.com lead or contact, you must do so manually.

The 8x8 Answer

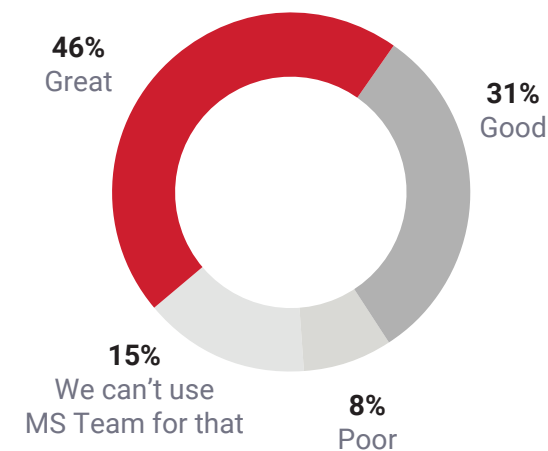
If you use 8x8 Voice for Teams, you can also use our Salesforce integration to make and receive calls from Teams, automatically have those calls registered in Salesforce, and even make and receive calls directly from Salesforce from the same phone number.

The bottom line?

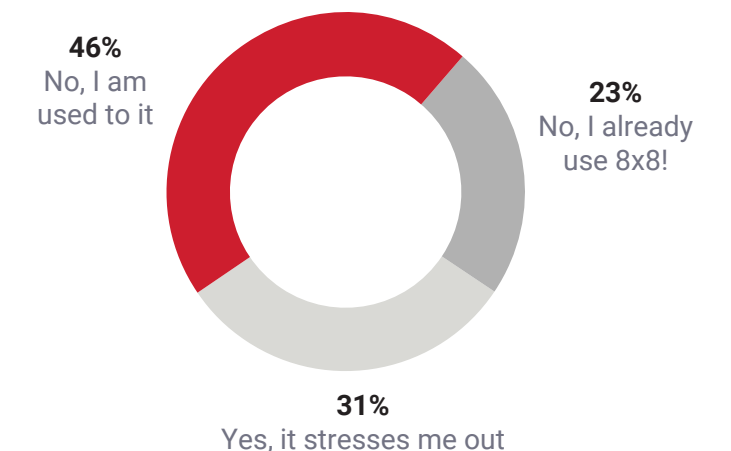
If you're okay with a single calling plan for all of your employees, if call uptime is not critical, and if you don't care about integrating voice services with your CRM system, or other non-Microsoft applications, then maybe you can settle for Microsoft Teams alone. But if you want to break free of any of those limitations, we encourage you to take a closer look at **8x8 Voice for Teams** and reach out to our team with any questions.

8x8 Poll Results

What is the quality of the phone service available from your MS Teams dialer?



Do you find constantly switching between multiple communications applications (voice, chat, video meetings) problematic?



Sources: Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter

Chapter

4

Real-world success.

Read how companies have already supercharged their MS Teams environments.

The Challenge

A global transportation company is headquartered in London. Employees use Microsoft Teams to speed international collaboration between employees, partners, and customers. Employees share files on the go, stay up-to-speed using chat, and connect face-to-face with one-click video calls—all to support and respond to dynamic customer needs.



Company leaders saw an opportunity to connect staff with third-party transport agencies and partners worldwide, leveraging their existing investment in training their employees to use Teams to communicate. Unfortunately, Microsoft did not provide a calling plan that could meet their needs to be able to call customers and partners in the 120+ regions where their customers operate.

The company decided to seek out a third-party telephony provider for Teams to handle local and national numbers and calling services.





The Requirements

As a global business, they required a single-vendor telephony provider, offering a one-stop shop for number porting, provisioning users, a single bill, local support, accessible across all their international operations. Most importantly, a native Teams user experience was vital for their users. They had already invested quite a bit in Teams and in training their employees to use it. Training them to use a separate dialer, where they might have to copy and paste phone numbers, or <alt-tab> between applications constantly, was a non-starter. They wanted a seamless user experience.

Improved responsiveness helps manage customer expectations.

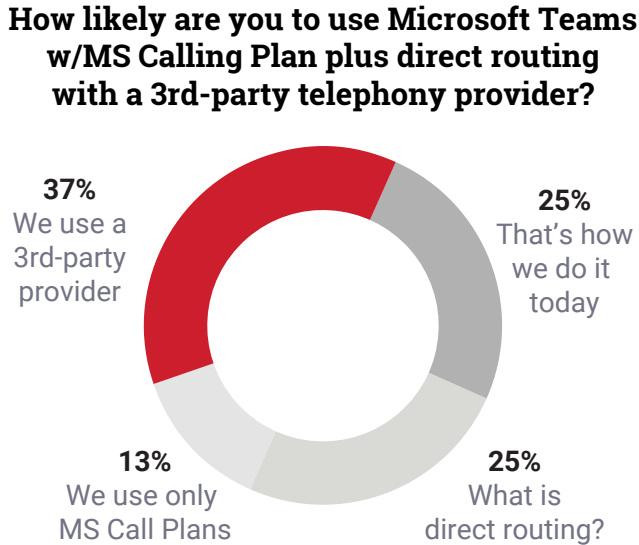
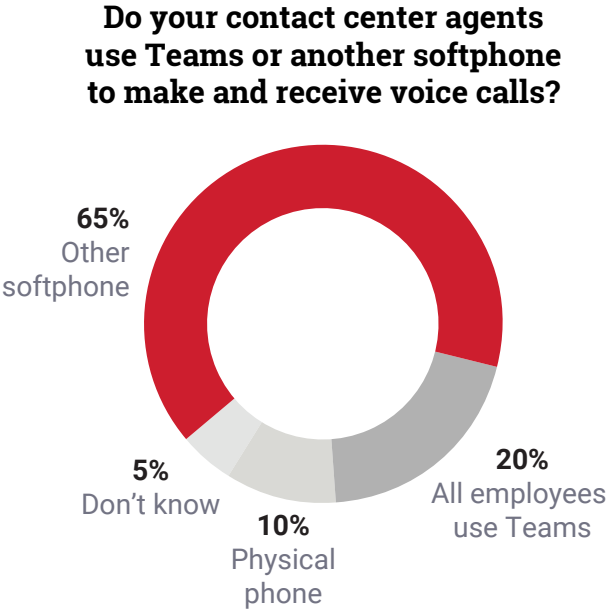
The customer was an early adopter of the 8x8 Voice for Teams solution and uses the product to communicate with many different agencies and partners globally, securing efficient transport of cargo to their destinations. Their staff are in daily contact with internal and external offices, transport authorities, and clients to coordinate the most economical transportation routes.



With 8x8 Voice for Teams, they can now connect a client in Malta, a sales manager in Chile, and a rail operator in Malaysia, all using 8x8 Voice for Microsoft Teams directly from the Teams interface to discuss transport routes, delivery lead times or status of shipments. Direct voice routing for Teams provides the flexibility their business needed. Now, their Teams users can make any number of calls, to any destination with full PSTN telephony replacement in 38 countries. They can use existing phone numbers ported to 8x8, or get new phone numbers including national, local, and non-geographic numbers.

By improving responsiveness to customers and ensuring accurate on-time pick up and delivery, this international transportation organization is able to maintain strong customer relationships while minimizing any disruption to how their employees work, thanks to the easy implementation and use of 8x8 Voice for Microsoft Teams.

8x8 Poll Results



Sources: Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter



Chapter

5

As easy as one, two, Teams.

Learning the new way to connect will be easier than unlearning the hard way.

In Chapter 1 & Chapter 2, we discussed the importance of reducing the number of user interfaces your employees must juggle to limit the frictional cost of context switching.

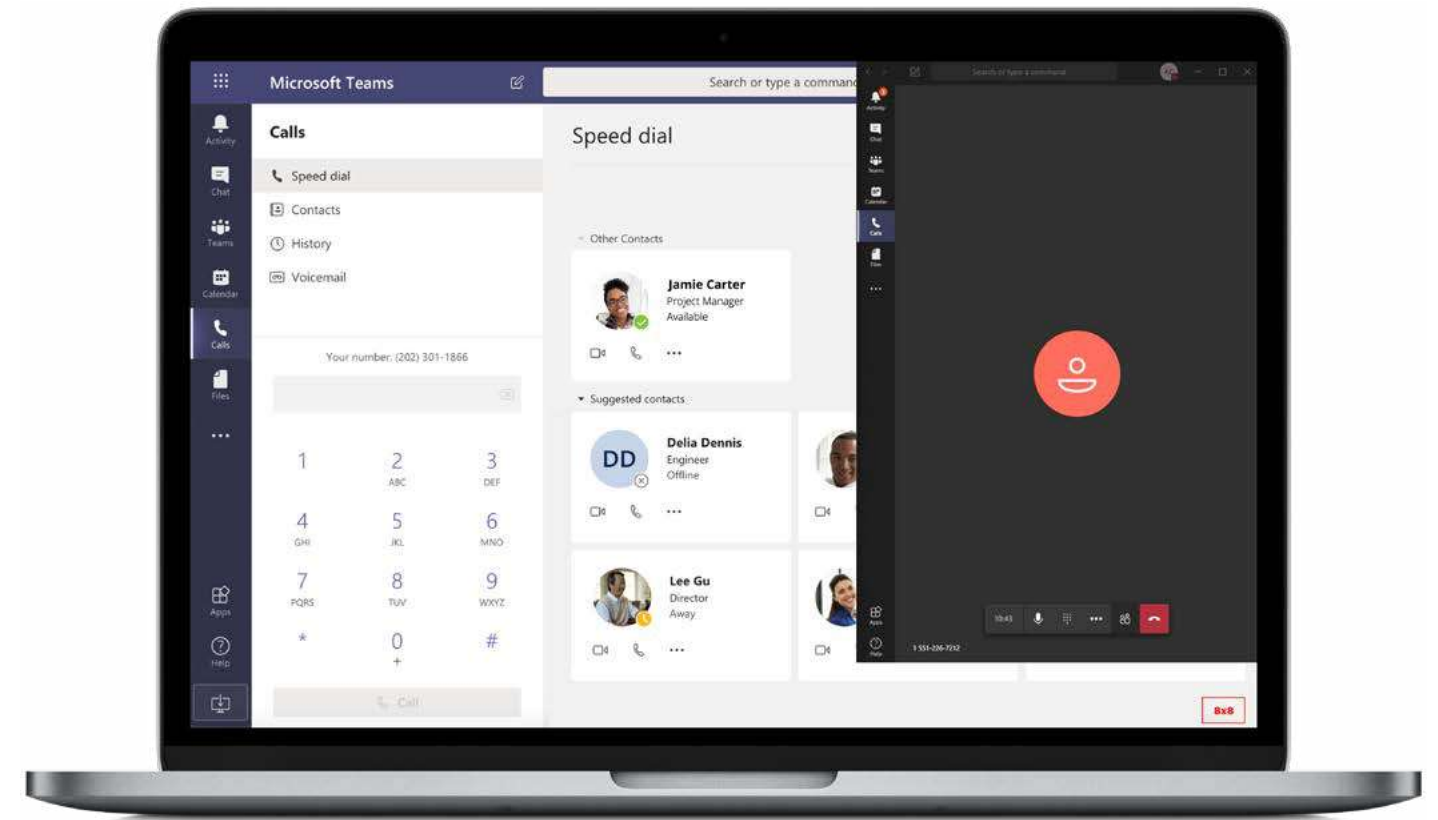
If your company uses Microsoft Teams as its primary communications tool, you don't want employees to have to leave Teams to use a 3rd party dialer... even if that dialer is as awesome as 8x8's.

We get it. And your employees' comfort is our priority. Which is why the 8x8 solution for Teams looks like this.

What's the big deal?

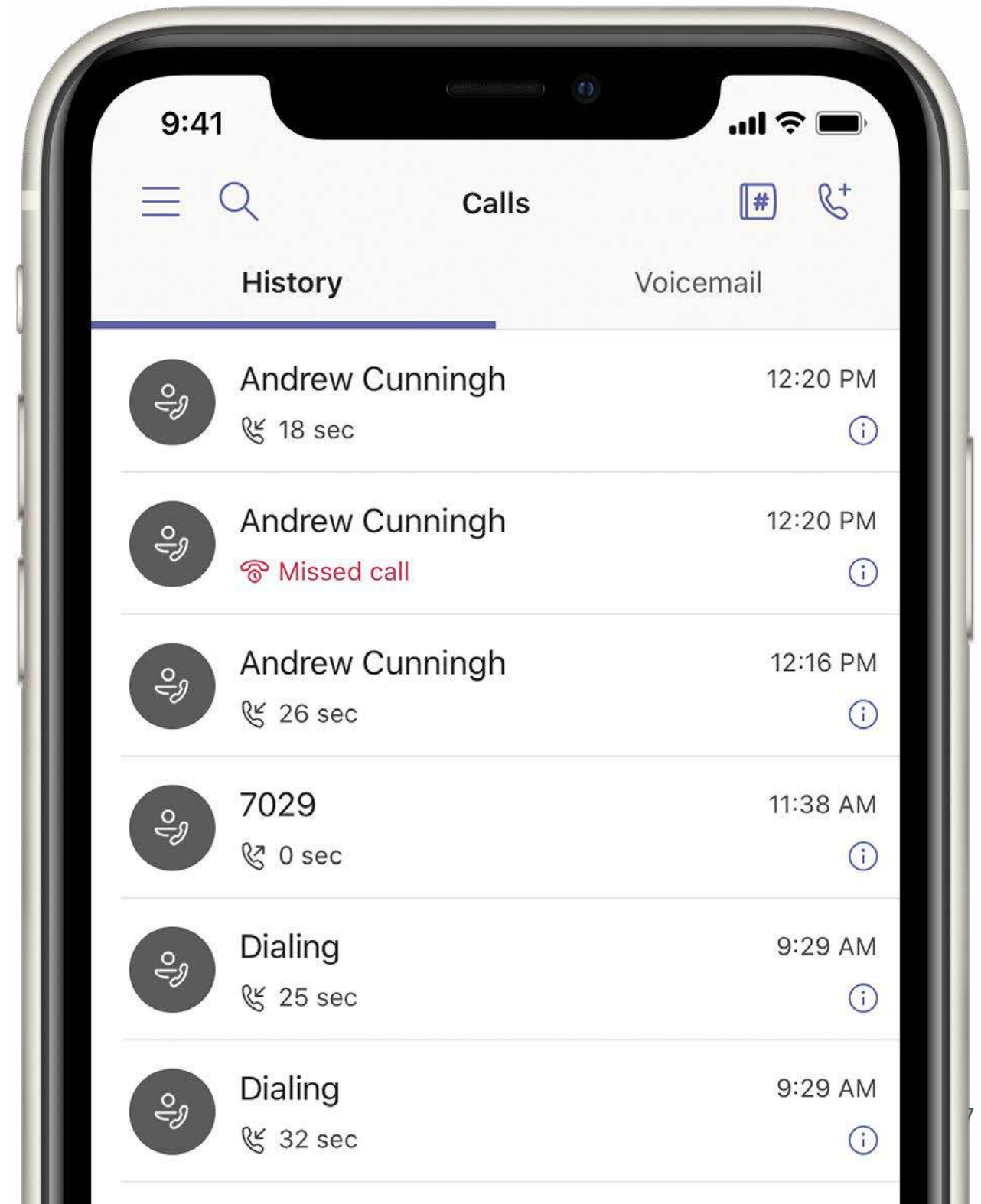
It looks just like Microsoft Teams with a dialer.

That's the point. We have gone to a lot of trouble so you don't have to. When you receive a call, make a call, forward a call, put someone on hold, have a call go into a calling queue or ring group, behind the scenes it's handled by 8x8. But what do your users see? They see the native Microsoft Teams interface. The result? No retraining or special codes to learn, like you do with other solutions. Your users just keep using Teams as they have been.



What about Mobile?

What about it? Once again, 8x8 has gone to great lengths to make our user experience, your user experience. Or rather, your existing Microsoft Teams user experience. We could go on, but a picture paints a thousand words.



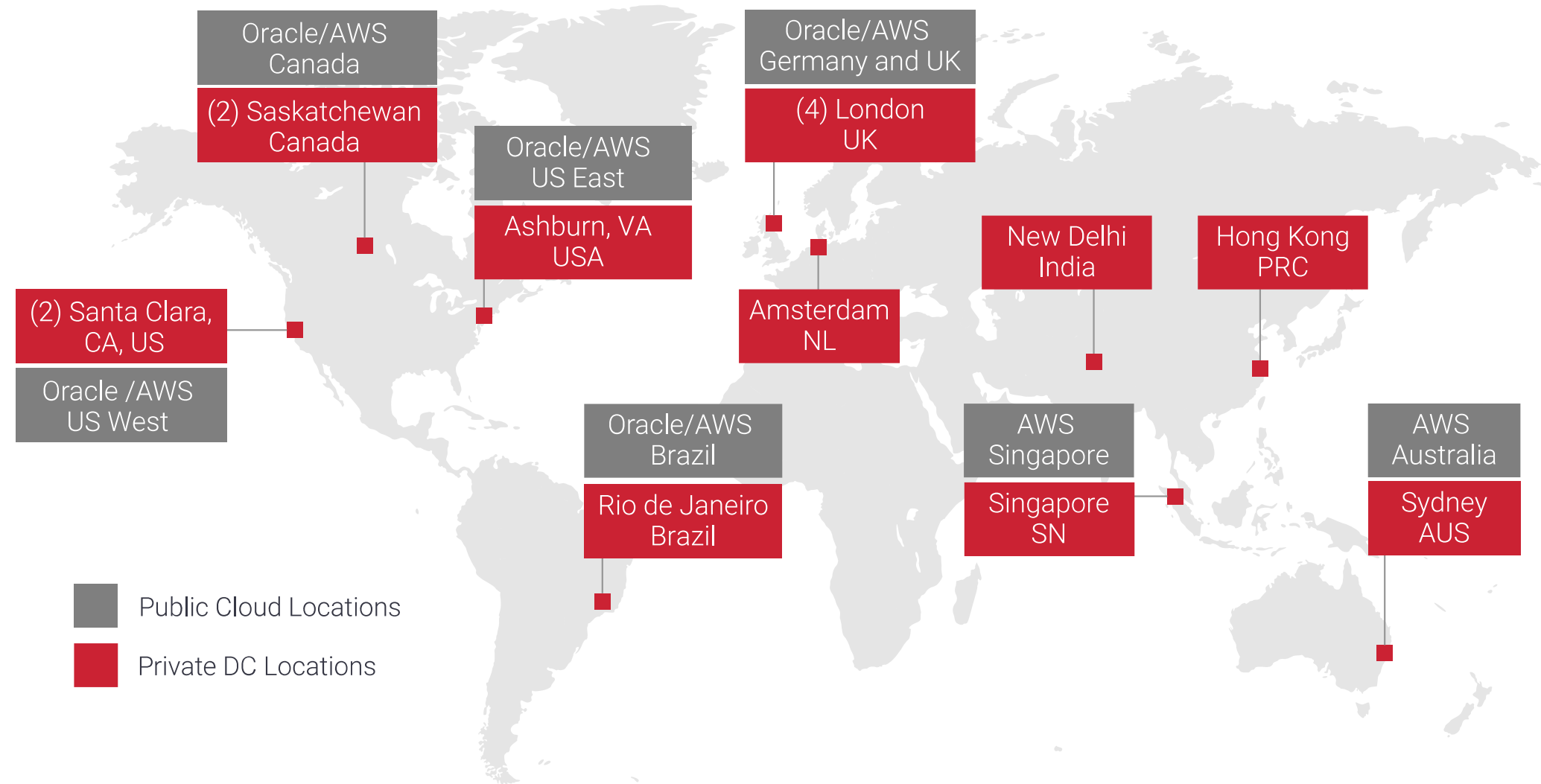
Call center integration, variable calling plans and worldwide connectivity.

The advantages go far beyond native dialer integration. With 8x8 supporting telephony through Microsoft Teams, you can now mix and match your calling plans, with full PSTN replacement in 38 countries, unlimited local and international calls, local (DID) numbers, dial-plans number porting, local caller ID, emergency access and in-country call-routing. Now your organization can build local physical presence. You also get toll-free and non-geographic numbers in 120+ countries so that you can serve customers from virtually anywhere in the world without having to physically be in that location. In addition, we have 15 globally redundant data centers that provide seamless connectivity and built-in disaster recovery. Just one more “little” thing that your users are getting without knowing it.



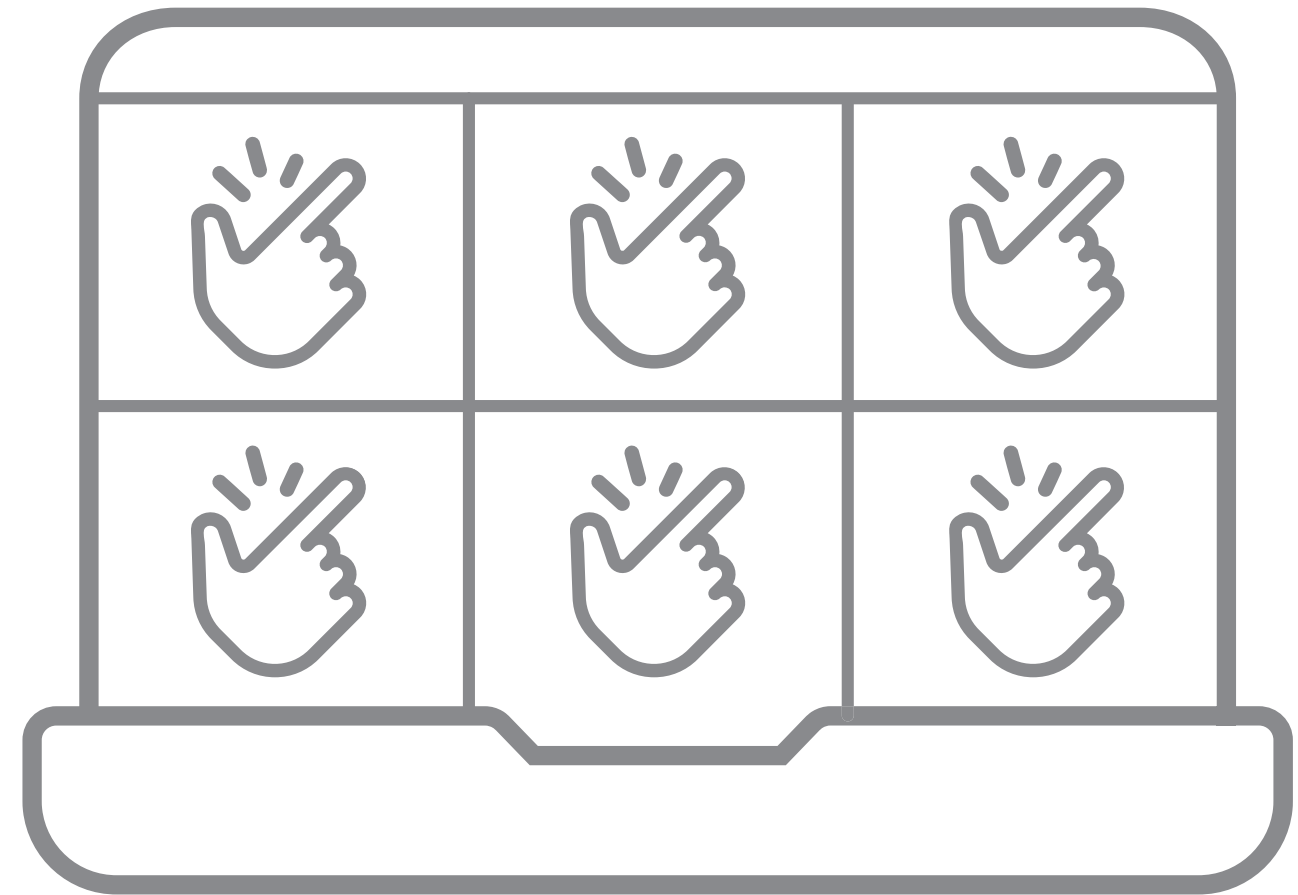
Global Reach™

A global enterprise technology presence



15 geographically redundant data centers plus global public cloud infrastructure provide seamless connectivity and built-in disaster recovery

AND, if you do have a call center and are using Microsoft Teams as well, we natively support ring groups and calling queues with full call and advanced speech analytics while your users are dialing from the Microsoft dialer. Once again, you don't have to worry about training your users on a new UI.

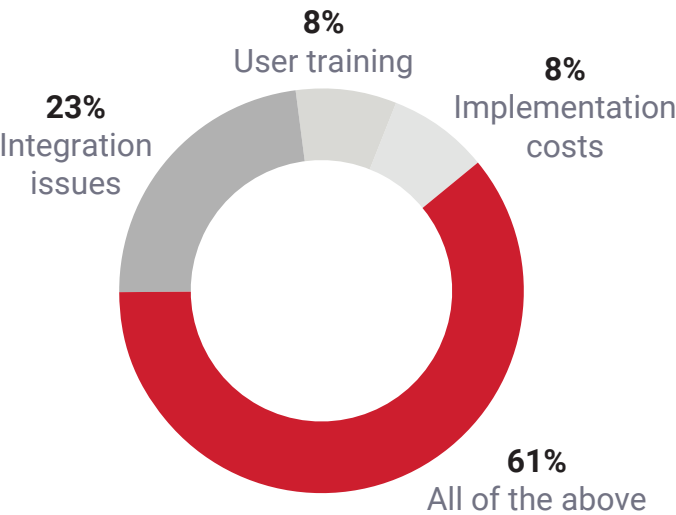


8x8 makes it easy to onboard your Microsoft Teams users to the 8x8 environment, because it is just their old environment.

It's easy to use, because they already know how.

8x8 Poll Results

What's the biggest challenge you expect to face migrating to a new communications platform?



Sources: Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter



Chapter

6

Set it and forget it.

Deploying 8x8 Voice for MS Teams takes less time than reading this chapter.

Supercharge Teams without a superhuman effort.

We know app switching is a leading productivity killer. But as we discussed in [chapter 2](#), direct routing is the best way to save your Microsoft Teams users from app switching, but it often adds more deployment complexity than it saves. This is true only if you decide to do it yourself. To properly handle voice services, you have to hook directly into the Teams Dialpad and handle ring groups, call queues and call transfers.

Fortunately, 8x8 does exactly that. In fact, we've automated so much of the process that it can be completed in three straightforward steps as shown in the video on the next page. Don't assume supercharging your Microsoft Teams environment requires a superhuman effort. [Learn more about the integration here.](#)

8x8 Voice for Microsoft Teams Administrator



8x8 Services Users Account Fringlass Composites

Services

Sync Now

PBX Teams

Country *
United States

State / Province *
California

SIP Domain *
vodssbc.8x8.com

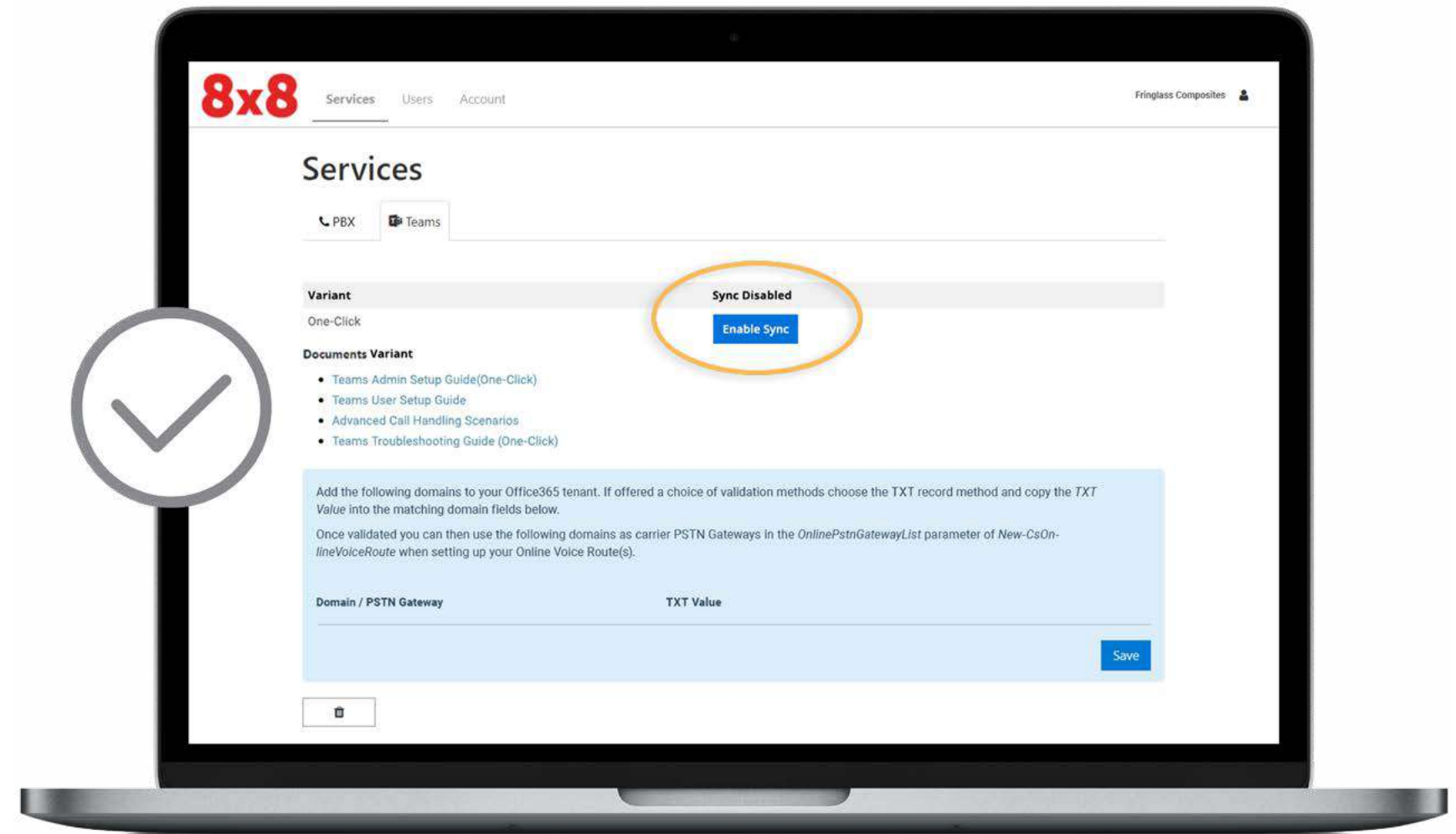
Expiry (seconds)
300

Add PBX

Step 1: Enable.

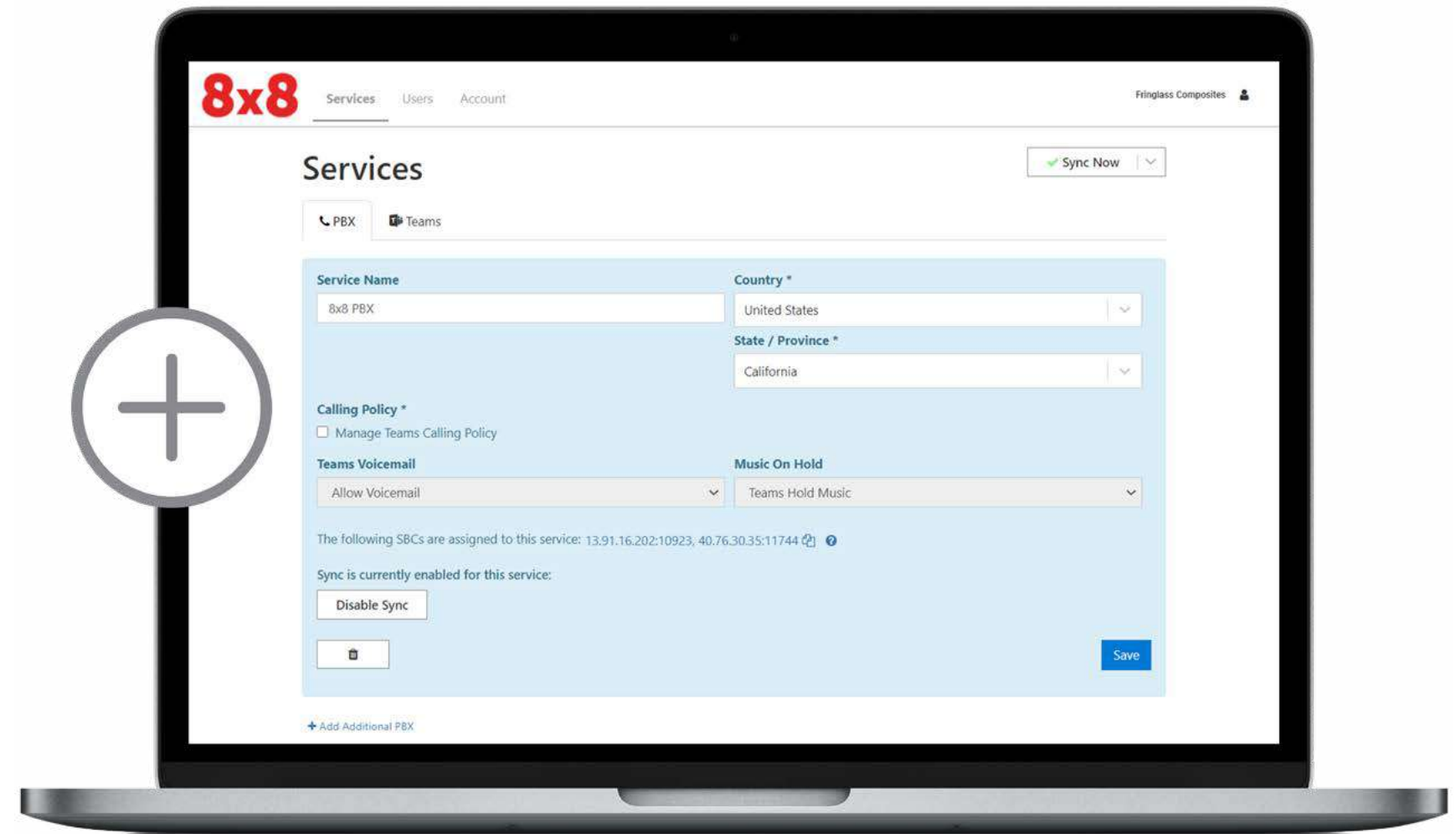
First, navigate to your 8x8 Voice for Microsoft Teams login, and click on “Enable Sync”. You will then be asked to authenticate your Office 365 login.

This simple step connects 8x8 to Microsoft Teams so they can start talking to each other.



Step 2: Connect.

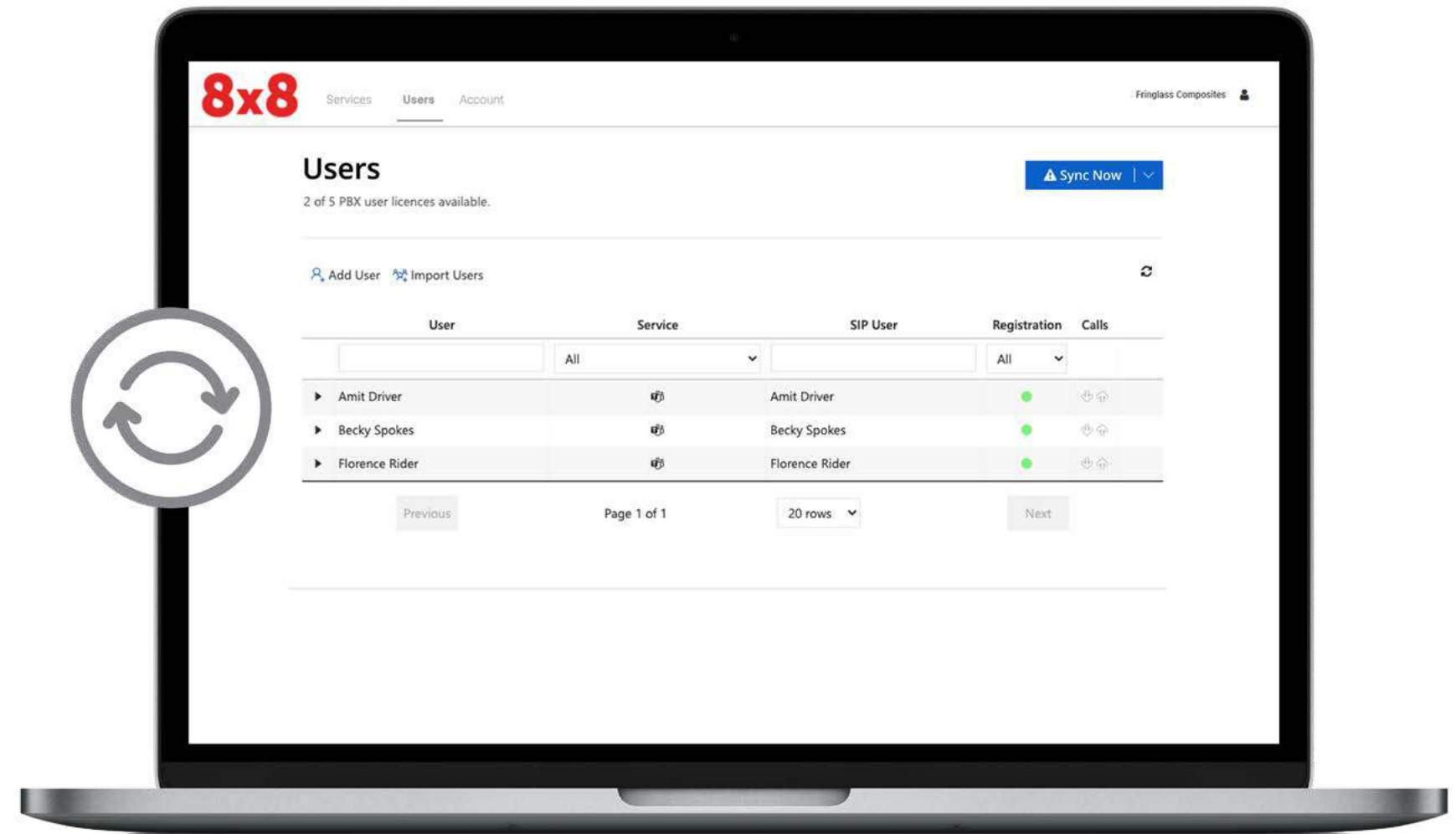
Next, enter your PBX information to establish the connection between Microsoft Teams and 8x8. Customers frequently get stuck here because they assume that they have to preconfigure their Teams users to use voice services when in fact, 8x8 automates that process for you. You just enter the country, state or province, and the SIP domain and then click “Add PBX”.



Step 3: Sync.

Finally, the system uses the unique email address of the Microsoft Teams users to link them to their identity on 8x8. All you have to do is add individual users, or select all users, or you can also import a list of users from a spreadsheet if you have a subset of users who need voice access.

Once you have chosen your users, you ask the system to synchronize users on both systems and wait for the synchronization process to complete. When the matching indicators turn green, users can start making calls right from the native dialer in their Microsoft Teams app, on any desktop, tablet, or mobile device.

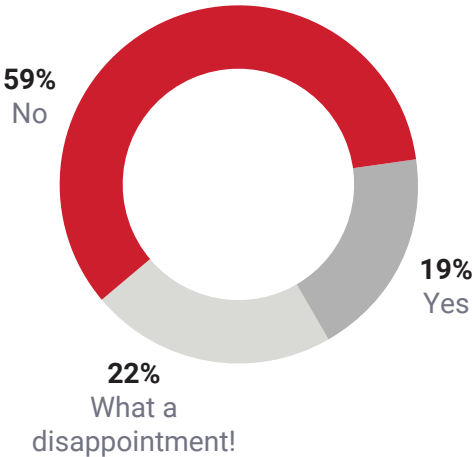


Improving how your Microsoft Teams users communicate couldn't possibly get any easier than 8x8 Voice for Microsoft Teams.

Request your personalized demo today to learn more.

8x8 Poll Results

Did you know that Microsoft offered 120 minutes of free voice services for Teams users on July 15, only to withdraw the offer on August 1?



Did your parents have a landline phone with a super long cord that they tucked under an ear while they walked around the kitchen & cooked?



Sources: Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter



Numbers don't lie.

The proof is in the productivity gains.
Calculate your ROI today.

Chapter

During the writing of this eBook, we ran several online surveys to find out how organizations like yours were using Microsoft Teams, and how they are (and are not) using it to serve broader telephony and connectivity needs.

The results are interesting and make a solid case to re-evaluate how we integrate collaboration tools into the broader enterprise ecosystem.

47%

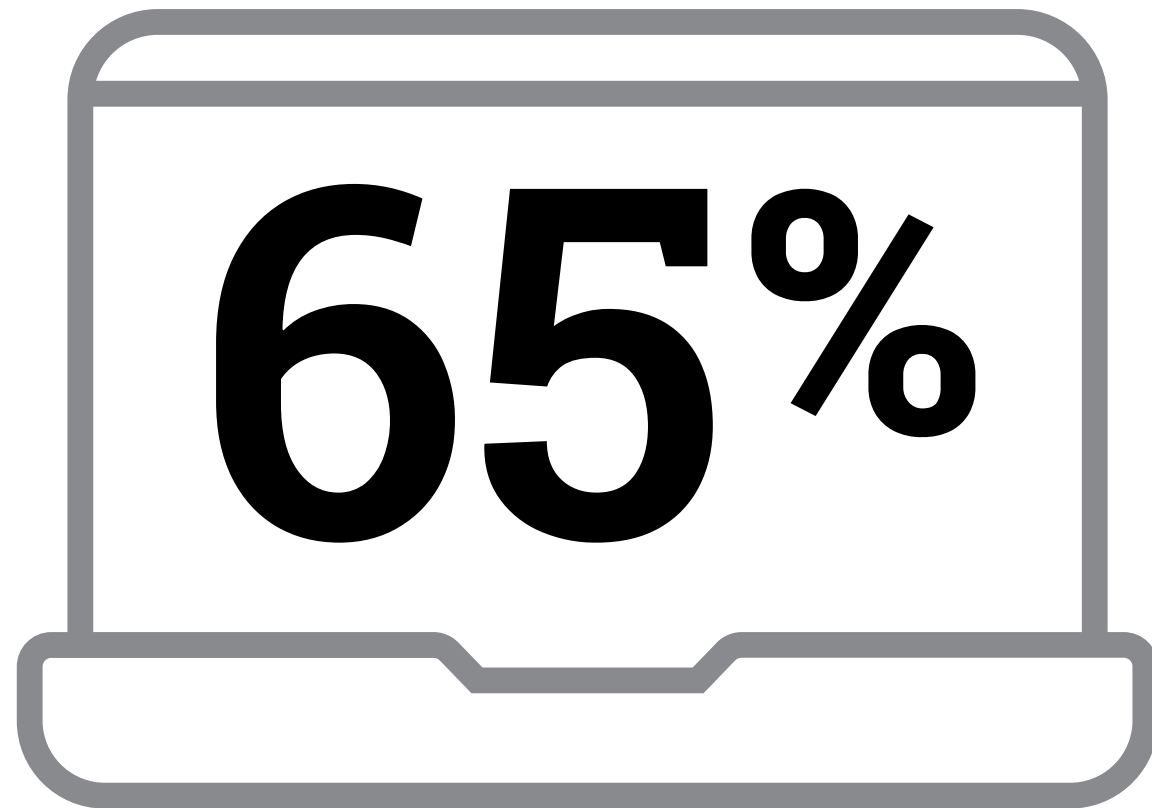
Percentage of those who switch between 4 or more communications applications daily. That's a lot of productivity lost to app-switching.



**Only 11% of respondents think
Microsoft's calling plans for
Teams are reasonable.**

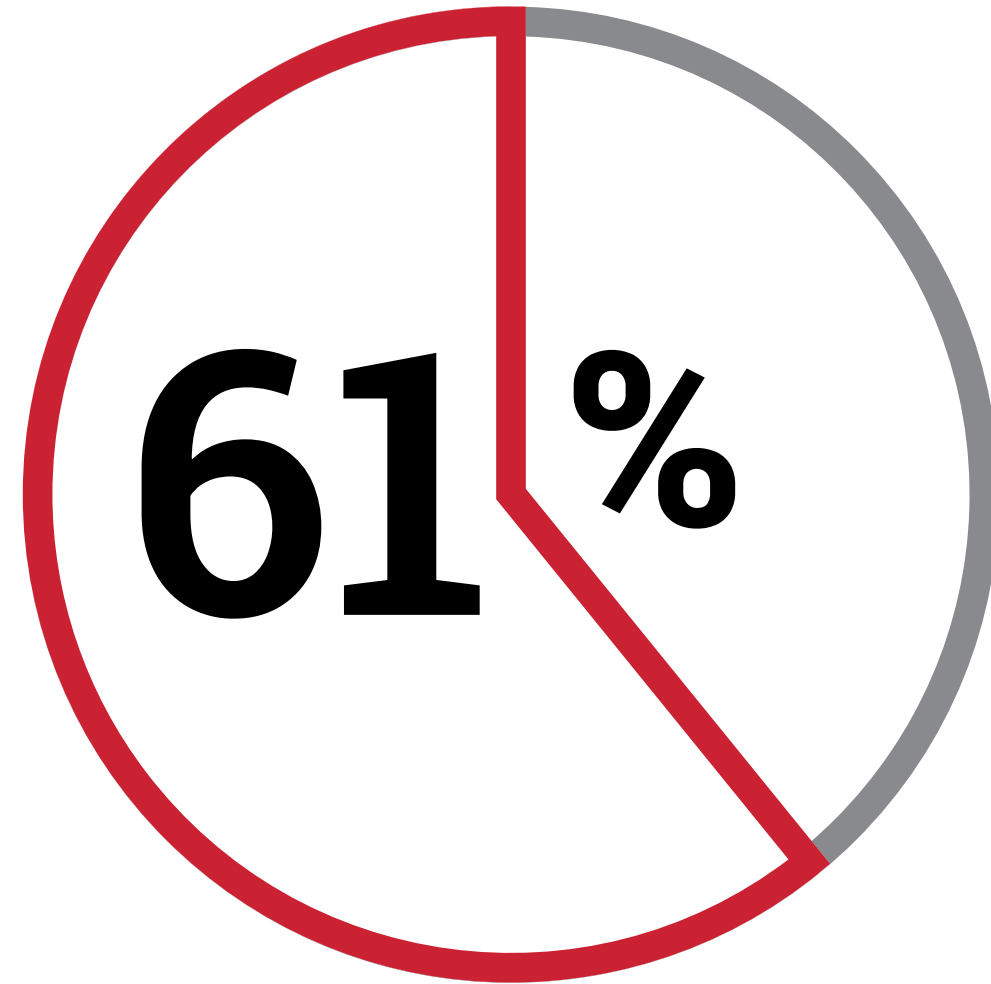
11%





Physical phones are being replaced by apps. 65% of you use computers as primary work communications devices.

61% of respondents would prefer to use the native Teams dialer for all phone calls.

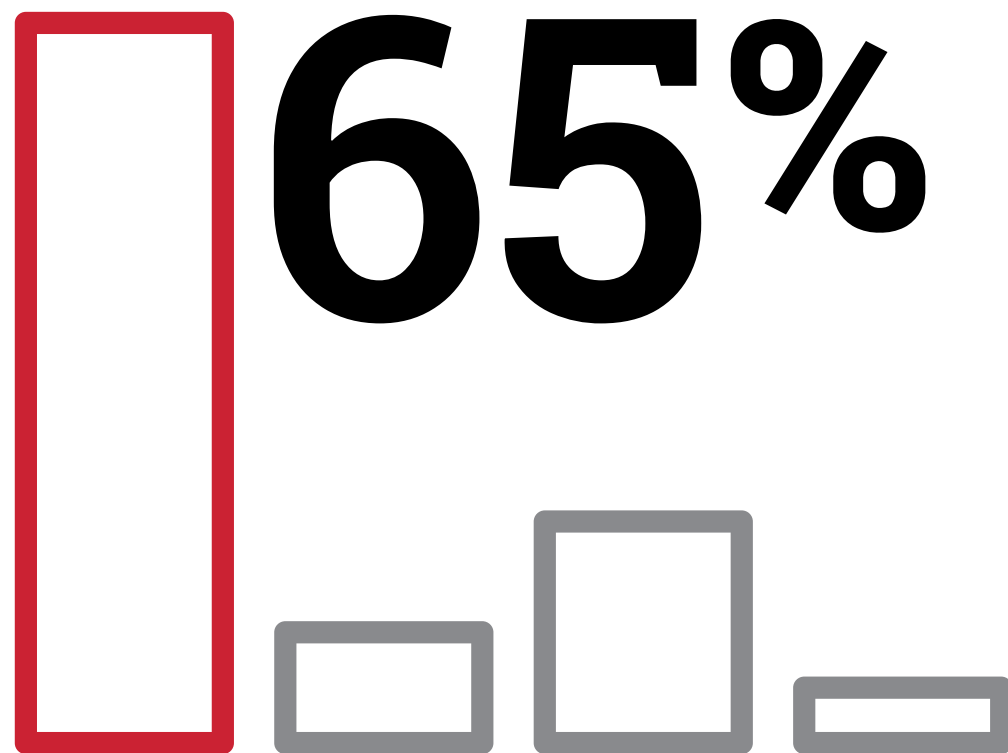




66% of you believe Teams is not prepared to support business-critical communications channels.

**Only 25% of Teams customers
we surveyed use it to make calls
outside of their own organization.**



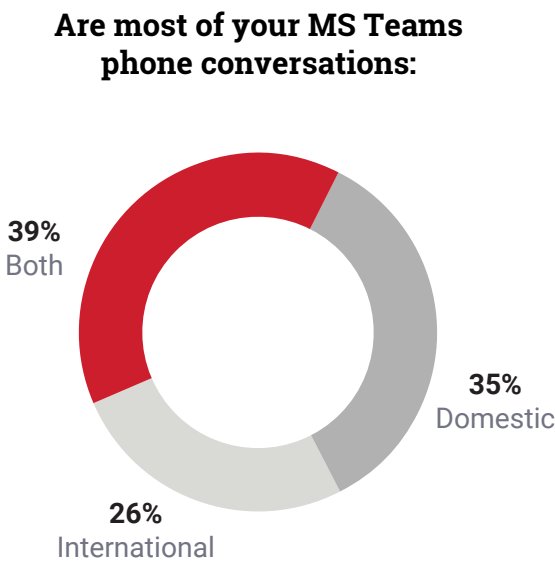
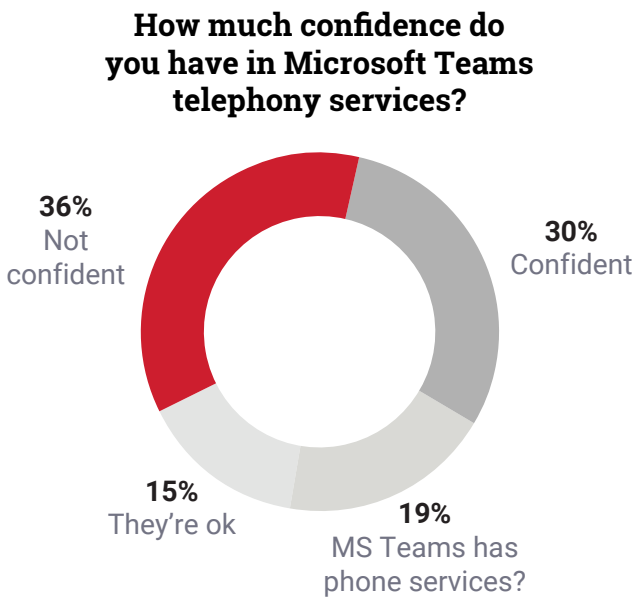


65% of respondents have contact center agents use separate platforms to make up for shortcomings in Teams.

Next Steps

How did your organization stack up? Get your personalized demo and learn how to maximize your investment with **8x8 Voice for Microsoft Teams**.

8x8 Poll Results



Sources: Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter

Chapter

8

Time to get started.

Set up a personal demo and set your MS Teams users free.

Seize the opportunity.

In the work-from-anywhere world, there's real opportunity to streamline communications, connect employees with the world, and improve productivity. For organizations that rely on Microsoft Teams, seizing this opportunity is easier, and more affordable, than you think.

Here are some key insights we've covered as we explored voice services for Microsoft Teams:



Ubiquitous, seamless communications tools have gone from nice-to-have to business-critical. Forward-thinking organizations are rolling out work-from-anywhere strategies that acknowledge the importance of convenience, context, and speed of communications. For Microsoft Teams customers, this means minimizing the **cognitive burden of switching between apps** and integrating internal and external communications in the apps people already use.



When it comes to providing voice services for Microsoft Teams, convenience is king and context is queen. The trick, however, is making sure you get the best of both by using the Microsoft Teams dialer your users are familiar with, combined with direct routing-based phone services.



While you might hope that Microsoft offers robust, flexible voice services for MS Teams, the reality is that Microsoft just doesn't have the quality and flexibility in voice services that most organizations want or need.



8x8 is currently the only vendor that provides both ease of use in a voice solution, combined with ease of deployment and administration.



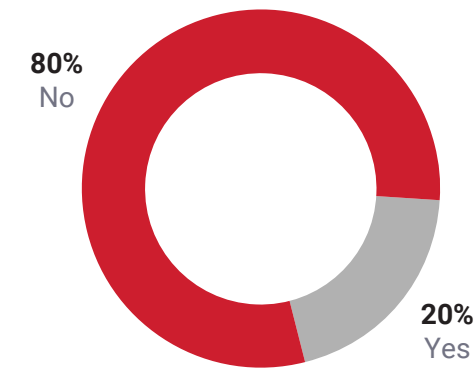
Not only do we at 8x8 think that tightly integrating and embedding 8x8 Voice services into Microsoft Teams is a good idea, but we surveyed a number of people and they believe we have hit the nail on the head with exactly the right voice solution for today's market.

What do you do if you want to learn more?

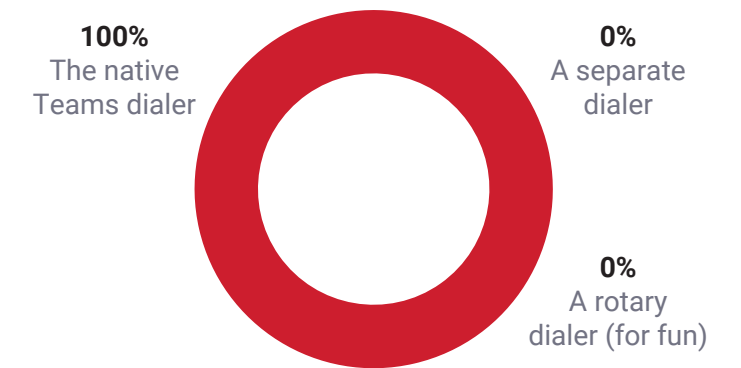
- Visit the [8x8 Voice for Teams product page](#) and watch the pre-canned demo.
- [Sign up](#) for one of our live weekly demos.
- Talk to a sales person to [learn more](#).

8x8 Poll Results

Is your Microsoft Teams system integrated with your CRM system?

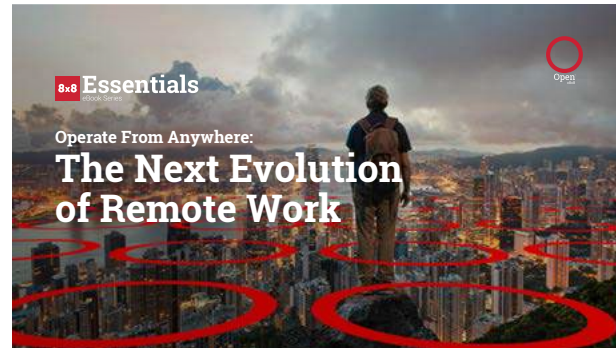


I would consider a 3rd-party phone service integrated with Microsoft Teams if it used:



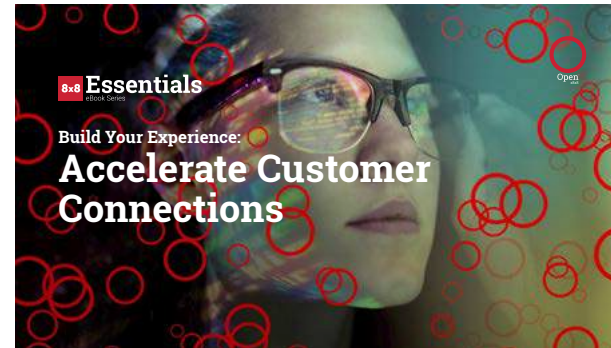
Sources: Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter

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In 2020, we learned that remote work is no longer a nice-to-have perk – it is an operational pillar that enables employees to serve customers, generate revenue, reduce costs, and innovate at any time from anywhere using any device. This essential 8-week guide will provide you with valuable insights to accelerate your organization’s shift to Operate From Anywhere.

[Read the “Operate From Anywhere: The Next Evolution of Remote Work” eBook.](#)



It’s time to reimagine how you connect with customers and embrace a digital-first world. This eBook will give you a step-by-step guide to build and customize your customer experience using transformative APIs, SMS, chat apps, and embedded video.

[Read the “Build Your Experience: Accelerate Customer Connections” eBook.](#)



For smaller businesses, a failed customer or employee interaction could be the last. Find out what it takes to streamline communications, maintain and grow customer engagement, and save money while doing so.

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8x8, Inc. (NYSE: EGHT) is transforming the future of business communications as a leading Software-as-a-Service provider of voice, video, chat, contact center and enterprise-class API solutions powered by one global cloud communications platform. 8x8 empowers workforces worldwide to connect individuals and teams so they can collaborate faster and work smarter. Real-time analytics and intelligence provide businesses unique insights across all interactions and channels so they can delight end-customers and accelerate their business. For additional information, visit www.8x8.com, or follow 8x8 on LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook.

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