



# Beyond Collaboration

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The Ultimate Guide to Implementing  
a Contact Center in Microsoft Teams



In today's increasingly digital world, companies from all industries are moving countless processes and systems into the cloud. Cloud-based platforms offer organizations the scalability, agility, and freedom they need to adapt to an ever-changing environment.

Perhaps the most obvious, and popular solution demonstrating the benefits of this strategy, is Microsoft Teams. With more than [300 million monthly](#) active users, Teams has become the go-to platform for unified collaboration, communication, and productivity.

Ranked at the top of the Gartner Magic Quadrant for UCaaS, and constantly evolving with new innovative features, like AI copilots, and advanced meeting tools, Teams thrives at the center of the workplace. It only makes sense that business leaders would want to expand the benefits of their Teams ecosystem into their contact center strategy.



The only problem? While Teams supports certain telephony and contact center features, it can't offer the robust functionality organizations need on its own. Teams excels at offering collaboration and internal communication tools, from meeting and scheduling features, to chat channels.

However, it lacks extensive reporting, IVR technology, intelligent routing, and even compliant recording capabilities. That's where CCaaS (Contact Center as a Service) partners come in, to bridge the CX divide. The challenge is in finding and implementing the right solution for your business.

# Integrating Microsoft Teams with the Contact Center

Contact center integrations for Microsoft Teams deliver a host of benefits to businesses, their employees, and their customers. With the right solution, companies can create a truly holistic communication strategy, aligning customer-facing and backend employees, boosting collaboration, and even consolidating complicated technology stacks.

A Teams contact center provides a truly unified environment for all communications, access to advanced performance metrics, and opportunities for rapid innovation. However, there's more than one way to bring contact centers into Teams.

In fact, Microsoft offers partners three distinct models, all with their unique benefits, and potential disadvantages. Here's how those models work:



## The Connect Model

Probably the simplest solution for integrating Microsoft Teams with the contact center, the “Connect” model uses direct routing to link an independent contact center with Teams. The solution only uses parts of the Graph APIs in Teams to obtain presence status, and lacks comprehensive integration.

With Connect, the benefit is that solution providers can use existing contact center solution and link it to any communication platform quickly, and easily. Unfortunately, there's a downside. This method doesn't use the Teams Cloud Communication API.

Calls arrive at a contact center solution, which retrieves the presence status of employees in Teams. This places a lot of pressure on service providers to ensure calls are secure and encrypted on their solution, and delivered as quickly, and efficiently as possible.

## The Extend Model

Somewhat more advanced, contact centers built with the Extend Model for Microsoft Teams rely heavily on APIs. The Extend model integrates a contact center with the Teams client using Graph APIs, and the Cloud Communications API in Microsoft Graph.

The result is much deeper integration, fully utilizing the Teams client platform and calling infrastructure. Extend solutions are built on and for Teams. This means solution providers can't simply leverage an existing solution. They need to develop a new, native offering, using the latest Cloud Communication Graph APIs.

While this requires more work from a solution provider, it delivers a more advanced experience. Agents can use Teams more effectively for internal and external communication, benefit from dynamic contextual notes and data from multiple systems, and design advanced workflows and routing configurations for calls.

Extended contact center solutions also don't directly "touch" the call, but tell Teams what to do with this. This means the call and media stream remains within the Teams tenant. Everything from security and encryption is covered by Microsoft. Plus, because everything runs in Microsoft Azure, and the Teams infrastructure, jitter and delays are minimized.

## **The Power Model: A New Solution**

The Power model, coming soon to Microsoft Teams contact center solutions, is another, more advanced opportunity for solution providers. With the Power approach, providers use Microsoft Teams SDKs to build Teams functionality into their contact center solutions.

Instead of simply telling Teams what to do with a call (like in the Extend model), a contact center using the Power model can directly access specific Teams functionality. They can leverage solutions like presence status, call handling, and calling directly.

The goal of the Power model is to offer a true one-app, one-screen contact center experience. Solution providers can provide their customers with a dedicated contact center client, specifically built for the best user experience. Plus, like with Extend, employees benefit from the highest possible video and audio quality, advanced security, and simplicity.

## **Which Model is Best?**

While the Connect model is the most common among Microsoft Teams contact centers, both the Extend and Power models deliver unique, additional benefits. Both of these models deliver higher levels of encryption and security, powered by Microsoft.

Plus, they both prioritize the user experience, giving agents a more consistent, native, and streamlined way to leverage Microsoft Teams for both collaboration and customer calls.

# Preserving Data Security and Compliance

Successfully implementing a contact center into Microsoft Teams requires businesses to consider multiple factors, from the overall user experience to the potential complexity of the ecosystem. One particularly important consideration, particularly in today's world, is compliance.

While cloud communication technologies have become more secure in recent years, with greater access controls, encryption, and privacy standards, there are still threats to overcome.

Preserving security and compliance in the contact center requires a multifaceted approach, combining extensive employee training with strict policies. However, the strategy you use to implement your contact center into Microsoft Teams also plays a role.



## The Security Benefits of the Extend and Power Models

In the Connect model, it's the role of the solution provider to ensure calls are secure, encrypted, and hosted on the correct data servers to comply with internal policies. With the Extend and the Power models, media streams remain within Teams and the Microsoft infrastructure.

This means you gain access to the same security standards already implemented for Teams, and already approved by your organization. Essentially, you get to outsource your data storage needs to the data centers of Microsoft, taking advantage of unique resources and cutting-edge technologies you may not be able to implement on your own.

Microsoft's geographically dispersed data centers ensures you can easily meet your country's regulatory requirements, and GDPR guidelines. Plus, because everything runs within Microsoft Azure, and your Teams infrastructure, you can often achieve higher video and audio quality.

A Microsoft-certified contact center provider using the Extend or Power Model, such as Luware Nimbus, leverages the full power of the Microsoft Azure Cloud, and Microsoft's APIs. This means you benefit from the enterprise security of the Office 365 environment, with minimal additional effort.

# Best Practices for Adoption and Optimization

The great thing about implementing a Microsoft Teams contact center, particularly if you choose the right model, is adoption is usually pretty straightforward. Your employees will already be familiar with the Microsoft Teams ecosystem, and how it works. Plus, the intuitive interface makes it easy to onboard new employees with minimal training.

However, there are still some key steps you can take to boost adoption, and optimize your Teams contact center for better results:

## Choose the Right Model

As mentioned above, while every model for implementing a Microsoft Teams contact center aligns your Teams workflows with contact center features, the experience can differ. With the Connect model, the integration is relatively loose. Solution providers can either give companies a third-party app within Teams, or deliver a standalone client with Teams presence information.

The Extend and Power models create a more seamless, single pane of glass experience within Teams. Users have the opportunity to leverage all of their collaboration, productivity, and contact center tools in the same ecosystem. This means there's less training required because the experience is familiar, intuitive, and aligned.

## Select the Right Provider

Though the Extend and Power models create a more intuitive, native experience for your Microsoft Teams contact center, there will still be new features to discover and leverage. Leading providers can implement everything from in-depth live and historical reporting to intelligent call routing, compliance recording, and CRM integrations into your Teams instance.

To ensure your employees can take full advantage of these new features, it's important to find the right third-party provider. A leading contact center solution vendor, like Luware, will offer access to extensive documentation, knowledgebase articles, and resources.

This helps you master your new ecosystem. They'll show you how to use reporting and analytical tools, attendant consoles, and more with end-to-end support and training.



## Embrace Next-Level Features

Leading contact center vendors for Microsoft Teams don't just bridge the gaps between your CCaaS and UCaaS platforms. They give you all the tools you need to boost the ROI you receive from your Teams instance, and enhance team productivity.

Choose a vendor that can help you to overcome common workplace challenges. For instance, a vendor that supports deep integrations with CRM tools and other solutions can reduce the time employees spend jumping between apps.

A vendor that makes it easy to implement advanced and intelligent call routing based on parameters, skills, and importance, can ensure you're making the most of your human resources. Some vendors can even upgrade your compliance strategies, by giving you comprehensive access to compliant recording tools.

## Leverage Analytics

Implementing your Microsoft Teams contact center and facilitating rapid adoption are just the first steps in optimizing your new CX ecosystem. As your business continues to evolve and grow, and the needs of your customers change, it's important to ensure you're ready to adapt.

A flexible cloud-based contact center on Teams gives you excellent agility. However, you still need the right insights to ensure you're making changes that deliver consistent business results. A leading contact center vendor for Teams will make it simple to access the KPIs and metrics you need to monitor performance.

They'll ensure you can track call volume and first call resolution, feed data into your warehouse, and even combine data from your CRM with your contact center instance. They can even offer access to Power BI solutions, giving you more advanced insights, and opportunities to streamline processes with automation through Power Automate.



## **Scale Your Contact Center**

Finally, make sure you're prepared for the ongoing growth and transformation of your Teams contact center. The SaaS model for Microsoft Teams contact centers makes it extremely easy to add users and change configurations based on your ever-evolving needs.

Leading vendors like Luware even charge for solutions per service, rather than per user, so you can make the most of your budget. What's more, they ensure you can expand your omnichannel communications strategies, leverage new integrations whenever necessary, and configure opening hours, workflows, and IVRs as needed.

No matter how much your business evolves, your contact center provider for Microsoft Teams should make it easy to adapt, without compromising on reliable service and consistency.

## **Embracing the Microsoft Teams Contact Center**

As businesses continue to evolve, alongside customer expectations, companies are rapidly embracing the benefits of Microsoft Teams as a unified platform for communications.

Connecting your Teams solution with a leading contact center system is an incredible way to align your workforce, and unlock new levels of productivity. What's more, as the Teams environment continues to expand, the benefits for business leaders will only continue to grow.

With new solutions like Copilot (including Copilot for Sales and Service), evolving contact center connection models, and enhanced features emerging all the time, now could be the perfect time to invest in the Teams revolution.

If you're already using Microsoft Teams for collaboration, internal communication, and productivity, discover how you can improve the return on your investment with a leading contact center integration. Connect with Luware today, to learn more about their unique approach to unlocking Teams success with the Extend and Power models for the contact center.

