



MODERN WORKPLACE

Enterprise-scale secure remote work tools for everyone

Strategies for reliable location-agnostic business success

A necessary revolution in the way we work

2020 has brought a complete shift to a “new normal” for workplace collaboration, communication, and productivity. The idea that remote employees can get their work done and feel connected to each other—with the right tools—is here to stay. Organizations of all sizes have leaned into this notion, investing in tools to engage teams and individuals. Even as we work apart, businesses empower employees to be productive and connected to each other and their business world. These companies have a substantial (and necessity-driven) head start in this new working environment with stable and happy employees.

Necessity is driving these hyper-fast shifts to hybrid work a connected, remote workforce. And these same organizations leaning into new communication tools have also already tried, tested, and refined a host of company-wide systemic structural changes to redefine how they live and work—from now on.

The opportunities of hybrid work

Now, face-to-face interactions—and even phone calls—have become rare or been replaced entirely by data-driven communication modes. Remote or hybrid work is here to stay. Conferencing software services¹ are leading growth in the software category, including cloud-based video conferencing—accelerating the expansion of the collaboration marketplace. With all the growth in the video conferencing category, almost weekly, organizations have access to new tools and innovations that provide:

- **Improved encryption and password protection** for cloud-based video conferencing systems—driven by well-publicized breaches.
- **New 3D technology** in video conferencing solutions for more effective collaboration.
- **Advanced virtual reality (VR) functions** making video conferencing a more engaging and intimate experience while reducing sound and lighting issues.

The good news for productivity: Remotely collaborating teams are 5x more likely to be high-performing.

¹Transparency Market Research 2020 Video Conferencing Market Report.

Shifting to the remote-work fast lane

Organizations can navigate challenges in transitioning to a remote, connected workplace with high-performance collaboration technologies. To meet the sudden scale of all-digital remote work, organizations need to consider:

How to keep IT and capital expense budgets under control as the need for more hardware capacity grows.

Rather than ballooning those line items, consider hardware-as-a-service (HaaS) in the cloud. Like other as-a-service innovations in the cloud age, HaaS enables virtually instant computing capacity scaling without investing in infrastructure or facility expansions.

How cloud providers can expand data-flow capacities to meet demand without downgrading service.

Organizations are already expanding capacity to meet the increased demands of both paid and free users. Look for these improvements from your provider—or consider alternatives who might offer greater value and service.

When your provider might be reaching the limits of their platform.

With the video and data explosion, many providers have exceeded their bandwidth for additional network capacity and require added physical hardware within existing datacenters. Stay on the lookout for new signup limitations or user experience quality and consistency issues. Providers with a scalable and globally distributed architecture can stem the tide better than others.

How to meet security and manageability standards during a tidal wave of data.

The fast inception of video technology for workers across the organization and in educational settings has already resulted in breaches. However, businesses also have to be aware of data collection, security, and user privacy. Now—or sooner—is a good time to ask your provider about their global security, manageability, and monitoring. They should offer you comprehensive support. If not, you've got bigger problems.

Supporting the location-agnostic future

LET'S MAKE "WHERE YOU ARE" MATTER LESS THAN "WHO YOU ARE"

Even for smaller businesses, the norm is becoming a national, or even intercontinental collaboration. The distributed workforce presents both a challenge and an opportunity to better support remote coworkers and collaboration technology. For smaller and medium-sized organizations, this may involve a shift in business model and adoption of flexible video conference tools to grow and change with the business. Unprecedented changes in consumer behavior are appearing every day across virtually every sector—and will moving forward. Not all of them will be what we expect—user demand is unpredictable. Your organization needs to be prepared with a solution built to adapt to emerging technology. That's just one way Microsoft Teams can position your organization for a confident future.

A known quantity for the future

An abundance of remote-work technologies have scaled rapidly and are seemingly in build-it-as-you-fly-it mode. This pace and uncertainty put your business at unnecessary risk. For instance, organizations may have experienced rapid digital transformation, and they might be getting by via shortcuts that are less than ideal. For instance, customers are:

- Sharing videoconferencing licenses
- Forwarding office numbers to employees' personal mobile phones
- Using multiple products that don't "play well"

We recommend looking into Microsoft Teams for the solution to take you through the disruption and into the future—no matter how usage rates are expanding. And at MicroAge Cloud Services, Teams is a part of our culture; it's how we stay connected; it houses all of the capabilities we need every day, and it has become critical to getting every job done quickly, with precision and excellence.

In short, MicroAge is the Microsoft Teams meeting expert.

A Gold Microsoft Partner, MicroAge has a long-standing partnership with Microsoft. For years, the Microsoft on-premises and cloud products have been the driving focus for MicroAge and our clients. Our architects focus on the Microsoft cloud platform, cloud productivity, collaboration and content, mobility management, communications, and messaging. We view security as the foundation for all these productivity services so you can focus on what you do best: growing your business.

We invite you to visit MicroAge.com for more information on our services, and how MicroAge helps you secure, accelerate, and transform your business—powered by five decades of experience, lasting partnerships, client relationships, and the values that guide us daily.



A known quantity for the future (continued)

WELCOME TO THE NEW REMOTE BUSINESS AS USUAL

Deployment of Teams isn't just the purchase of a product. It's a strategic move that's part of your business strategy. Because MicroAge is a certified cloud services provider (CSP), we have the deep knowledge—along with over five decades of technology experience—to support you in integrating your Teams solution into a bold, expansive vision for growth, competitive advantage, and future-readiness.

MicroAge defines, architects, implements, and manages your Teams solution. And our Microsoft experts train your IT leaders and your workforce for a more collaborative, connected work experience.

How to make the remote workplace better than the physical one

Workers who used to stride down a corridor to ask a quick question now open up a quick chat screen. Collaborating on a project across a conference table has been replaced by screen sharing with recording. The morning status meeting is now a Teams call. And phone calls are already being superseded by video. All the functions your office location provided now must be digitized and work just as reliably for your distributed workforce as it does in the confines of your offices. Teams provides you all those functionalities and more—with the levels of reliability and security your organization needs to maintain a competitive edge, including:



CHAT

Communicate and stay up to date with your team.



SCREEN SHARING AND RECORDING

Easily share and record your screen during meetings.



VIDEO MEETINGS

Use built-in group and one-on-one audio or video calling for your meetings.



LIVE EVENTS

Create and expand a live event for your team, audience, or community—wherever they work.

Beyond these, we've identified the six ways Teams is helping our clients thrive at a distance.

The 6 best practices for happier remote teams

1. INTEGRATE COMMUNICATION AND PRODUCTIVITY APPLICATIONS

Ensure easy access to all the resources your employees need, share files on, and use to connect. Microsoft Office apps across the web, mobile, and desktop store content in the cloud by default, making integration the normal state. We recommend using cloud storage like OneDrive, which is as intuitive as saving files on a C: drive. This makes it simple to do real-time coauthoring and commenting across documents in the cloud—a proven gamechanger for your connected workforce.

2. CUSTOMIZE YOUR EXPERIENCE

For a remote workforce, every meeting is a Teams meeting, often with video. Explore features like background blur to block out toddler tirades, barking dogs, or your less-than-clean home office. Recording meetings makes it easy for collaborators who cannot attend to sync up on the most relevant parts.

3. GET MORE FROM MEETINGS THAN YOU EVER DID IN A CONFERENCE ROOM

Make remote meetings more valuable experiences than traditional on-site meetings were. For instance, when you make it a Teams Channel meeting, everything is captured in a single channel conversation for your reference. All the documents, chats, and of course, the recording of everything everyone said is in one searchable location. The single channel improves team performance and saves time.

The 6 best practices for happier remote teams (continued)

4. CREATE TARGETED SELF-SERVICE GROUPS

Within Microsoft 365, you can also collaborate through self-service creation of Office 365 Groups or teams within Teams. These give you the appropriate security, compliance, and manageability for your resources.

5. KEEP MEETING QUALITY ON-POINT

With the increased load and usage from so many people working remotely, service monitoring is crucial to ensure optimal operations. Microsoft actively monitors Teams and application and network performance to check reporting for user satisfaction metrics and service behavior changes.

6. THINK OF TEAMS AS YOUR OFFICE SPACE IN THE CLOUD

For team-level communications, run every call and meeting on Teams, using channels versus separate emails or group chats to eliminate productivity-killing communication gaps and siloes. Turn on your camera to connect on Teams meetings. Use Live Events for large group or company-wide settings. If your organization allows it, record meetings for access later.

Source: "How Microsoft Is Enabling Its Employees to Work Remotely with Microsoft Teams," Lukas Velush, Microsoft IT Showcase Blog, Mar. 6, 2020.

World-spanning network power and reliability

Unlike other collaboration technologies, Microsoft Teams harnesses the unparalleled power of the Microsoft Azure global network to connect users across locations. Microsoft has partnered with thousands of internet service providers to directly connect to their infrastructure and minimize network hops for the best possible meeting experience. Other cloud meeting solutions depend on the public internet to route calls, making quality unreliable.

Top 5 tips for better remote work with Teams

Here are five of the most useful hidden tools to get even more done in Teams.

1. ONE-CLICK INTEGRATION OF INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL COMMUNICATION

To email external partners' content from within Teams with Outlook, click within a chat or a channel on "More options" → "Share with Outlook" – and voilà! An Outlook email opens with the integrated post.

2. TAG! GETTING THEIR ATTENTION FAST

To create the tags (if the feature has been activated by your IT administration), click on "Teams" → "More options" → "Tags." Then easily assign tags to specific team members, departments, or groups. (e.g., Sales, FiBO, IT, Marketing, etc.).

3. USE POP-OUT CHAT FOR A QUICK SIDEBAR

Don't interrupt the whole group or leave to send a text or email. Use "Pop-Out Chat." The Pop-Out Chat opens seamlessly in a separate window without disrupting your flow or experience.

4. KEEP TEAMS IN YOUR POCKET

For the most flexible work experience and connection, download the mobile team app on your smartphone for closer collaboration on all your Teams channels from anywhere.

5. MAKE TEAMS EVEN MORE POWERFUL WITH APPS

Explore the wide range of apps to stay engaged and organized and get even more done with Teams. You can use Excel spreadsheets, edit OneNote documents, manage workflows with Microsoft Flow, and much more.

A path to save up to 6% on collaboration

Find out how a cloud services provider (CSP) can typically save you as much as 6% on your Microsoft investment over a typical vendor while providing deeper insight and support with more strategic value.

Let's do the math



The Digital Transformation Experts®

