

Enhancing Teams with enterprise-grade telephony

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RingCentral Cloud PBX for Microsoft Teams



Executive summary

Today's businesses depend on a robust communications experience to drive innovation, and phone calls are at the heart of that experience.

However, it's not just about picking up the phone and dialling a number these days. Today's workers and customers connect with each other using several different channels, including team messaging, video, emails, chats, and more.

Microsoft Teams is the collaboration application of choice for many businesses, especially during the 2020 pandemic. As millions were sent to work from home, Teams became a critical tool for making remote work a success.

While Teams provides many essentials for collaboration, one feature has left many organisations hungry for a better solution: **telephony**. The built-in telephony features in Teams often don't meet the needs of modern-day enterprises. This causes them to explore alternatives.

As organisations recover from the pandemic, those who use Microsoft Teams will need a long-term telephony solution that meets the needs of today's workplace.

This eBook will discuss what to look for.

More workers are going remote

In 2019, 10% of companies had a fully remote workforce. This jumped up to 19% in 2020.*



Only 4% of large businesses (250+ employees) will have no remote workers in 2021. The number will have fallen from 12% in 2019.*



* Cavell Group Enterprise Insight Survey 2020

Microsoft Teams' rise to fame

When COVID-19 upended office life, businesses had no choice but to send employees to work from home. That also meant rethinking communication strategies fast. After all, how do employees collaborate without being together in the office?

For many, Microsoft Teams was the collaboration app of choice. It came free with any Microsoft 365 subscription and included a suite of video conferencing, messaging, and file sharing tools.

The bundle made Microsoft Teams a popular choice for businesses. In fact, it became Microsoft's fastest growing business application of all time, with over 115 million daily active users today.

Despite its popularity, Microsoft Teams lacks a mission-critical feature: enterprise-grade telephony. Its built-in telephony isn't included in most Teams packages, and even when purchased as a separate add-on, it comes with a number of limitations in geographic coverage, PBX functionality, and feature set.

When it comes to business communications, **calling is still king**. Phone ranks as the second most popular channel for both internal and external communication.

“77% of businesses provide some of their users with a fixed telephony number for use at work; 20% of businesses provide all of their users with a fixed telephony number.”

– Cavell Group Enterprise Insight Survey 2020

Evaluating voice services for Microsoft Teams

Organisations can add telephony into Microsoft Teams by choosing between two options: Microsoft Calling Plans or Direct Routing.

Microsoft Calling Plans

Organisations can choose to use Microsoft as their telephony carrier by purchasing Microsoft Phone System licences (included with E5 licences) along with Calling Plans, which includes a phone number and a bundle of domestic or international minutes. This route adds simple telephony functions into Microsoft Teams, with Microsoft providing the entire service end to end.

While Calling Plans offers basic telephony functions, it's important to remember that Microsoft is a very new player in the cloud telephony world. Essential details such as uptime SLAs, global availability, and IT user experience might not be up to enterprise standards.

Direct Routing

Organisations can connect Teams to a third-party telephony provider for an enterprise-grade, high-performance solution that connects your Teams and Microsoft 365 deployment to the PSTN networks, allowing users to make and receive external phone calls from anywhere on any device running natively in the Teams application.

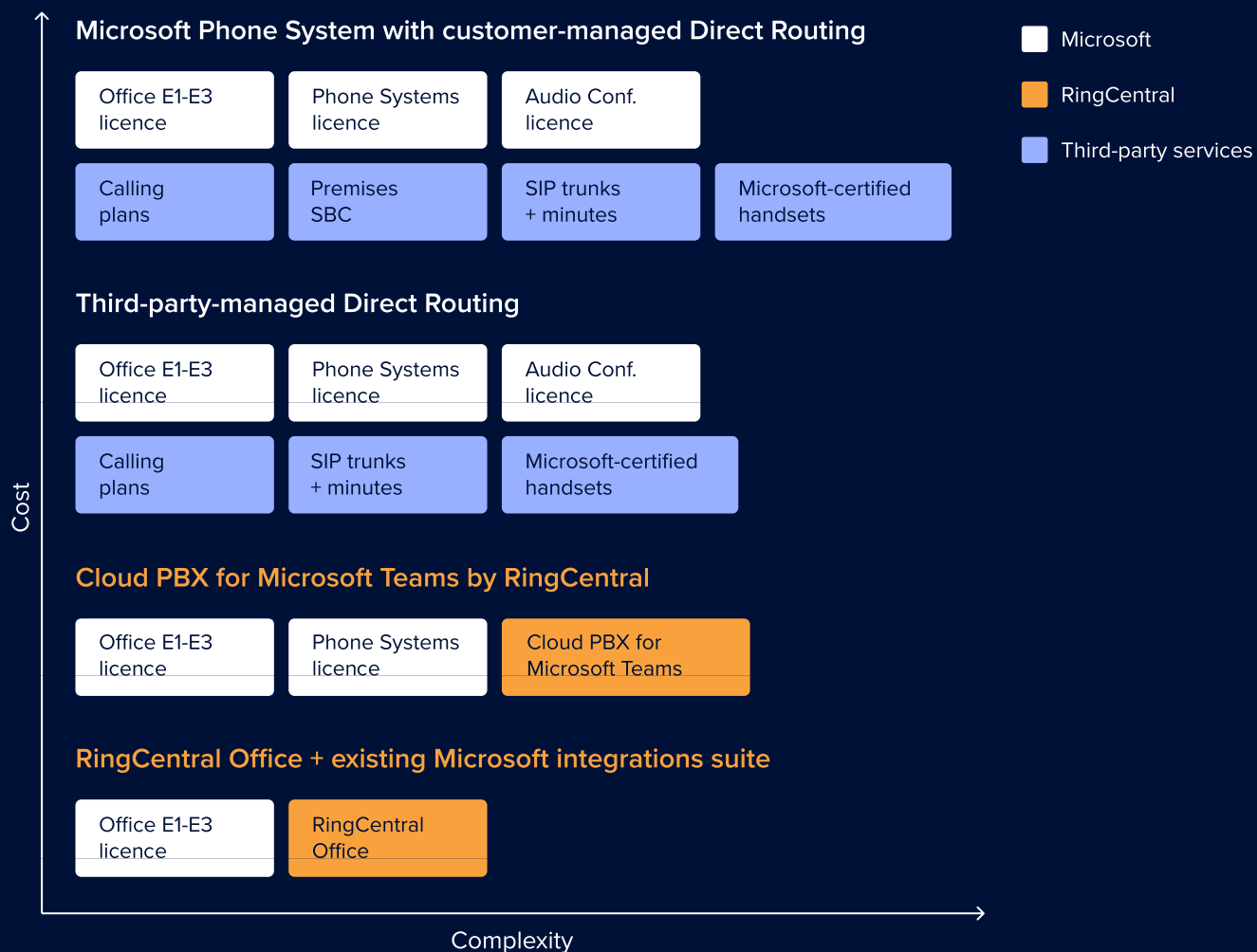
With Direct Routing, enterprises can bring their existing carrier relationships and services directly into Teams. This means being able to take advantage of cheaper call rates, greater flexibility, and better support compared to working directly with Microsoft.

Normally, Direct Routing is enabled via a Microsoft-certified Session Border Controller (SBC), which could require significant technical resources to install and manage. However, **RingCentral Cloud PBX for Microsoft Teams** saves you time and money by taking care of this for you.

“More than 85% of Microsoft Teams users, with the telephony capability enabled, use Direct Routing through third-parties instead of Microsoft’s own Calling Plans.”

– Cavell Group Cloud Comms Market Report 2020

RingCentral for Microsoft Teams reduces the complexity and costs



Microsoft licensing guide for Direct Routing

The below licensing guide simplifies the options so you won't get lost in the Microsoft maze!

Important details:

- Microsoft Teams is included with the following Microsoft 365 packages: Business Basic, Business Standard, Business Premium, Enterprise E3, Enterprise E1, Enterprise E5.
- The Microsoft Phone System add-on licence allows a user to connect to the PSTN.
- The Microsoft Business Voice add-on licence allows a user to connect to the PSTN, but is only available for organisations with fewer than 300 users.

Telephony is an add-on for Microsoft 365 E1 and E3 licences

Plans	E1	E3	E5
Pricing per User/Month	£6	£17.60	£30.80
Email/Calendar/Storage	✓	✓	✓
Productivity Suite (Office Apps)	Online Only	Desktop Versions	Adds Power BI
Messaging and Meetings	Teams	Teams	Teams
Cloud PBX (Phone System)	£6	£6	✓
PSTN/Audio Conferencing	£3	£3	✓
Calling Plan (Domestic)*	£10	£10	£10
Total PBX + Calling Plan	£19	£19	£10
Total Price (with Cloud PBX, Audio Conferencing & Calling Plan)	£25	£36.60	£47
Cost only if using Microsoft Calling Plans instead of Direct Routing			

*£10 Domestic plans include.

RingCentral Cloud PBX for Microsoft Teams: Best of both worlds

So why are Direct Routing integrations like RingCentral Cloud PBX for Microsoft Teams so much more popular than Microsoft Calling Plans?

Native user experience

Building your phone capabilities natively into Teams is a great way to offer users a single, unified communication experience and gives users seamless access to the best-in-class telephony services they need.

Advanced PBX features

Add essential enterprise-grade cloud phone system features like basic call centre IVRs, call recording, call reports etc. in Teams.

Improved resilience and business continuity

Microsoft offers a 99.9% uptime SLA across Teams. This equates to nearly nine hours of downtime per user every year. If Microsoft has an outage, you're able to rely on voice communications from RingCentral, which offers the industry's highest standard uptime SLA of 99.999%, in the meantime.

Expansive global footprint

RingCentral is available in over 40 countries and in 15 languages, providing coverage in your geographies and reducing the overhead of managing multiple bills and contracts.

RINGCENTRAL'S UPTIME SLA

99.999%

which equates to less than six minutes of downtime a year.

MICROSOFT'S UPTIME SLA

99.9%

which equates to more than a business day of downtime a year.

Drive productivity with integrations

Embed calling into more than just your Microsoft apps. RingCentral's robust integration platform includes out-of-the-box integrations with Salesforce, Zendesk, ServiceNow, and 200+ other apps, plus thousands of open APIs to build custom integrations.

Robust analytics

Data-driven decision making is the future. RingCentral's analytics portal provides complete visibility into all your voice communications in Teams so you can identify key trends, set automated alerts, and more.

Security

RingCentral offers best-in-class security via enterprise-grade protection with seven layers of security, giving IT peace of mind to keep data protected.

Cloud telephony expertise

We've been developing cloud telephony technology for 20+ years. Among the list of awards and accolades, RingCentral is a worldwide recognised Gartner UCaaS Magic Quadrant Leader for six years running.

End-to-end migration support

We work with you from start to finish to ensure a smooth and worry-free migration. With a deep understanding of your business, our experts develop a sound migration strategy that minimises disruption to your operations.

“47% of large enterprises—those with 1,000 users or more—chose their telecom’s solutions because it integrates with other key cloud applications.”

– Cavell Group Enterprise Insight Survey 2020

Productivity gains and ROI

Some of the top priorities and expected results for businesses who adopted collaboration tools were improving flexibility, productivity, and general business communications. Businesses found that they achieved these initial outcomes, but also realised unintended improvements in other areas, for example 80% of businesses surveyed reported improved customer experience.

Although giving users new functions and features wasn't high on the list of key adoption drivers, it actually turned out to be one of the main benefits. Innovative functions help users optimise their workflow and, ultimately, deliver positive business outcomes.

Many enterprises contemplate migrating to Microsoft Teams or a cloud PBX solution—but why not have the best of both? With Direct Routing, businesses can leverage both solutions, combining the world's most popular collaboration solution with a class-leading cloud PBX solution.

Easier for employees to work from any location



Better customer contact experience



Introduction of new functionality



Greater integration between fixed and mobile communications



Improved business continuity/disaster recovery/security



Easier management of telecoms through online portal



Better analytics and automation of customer journey



Integrating telecoms into workflows, e.g., voice into the CRM



● Key adoption drivers for a cloud voice solution ● Actual achieved benefits from adoption of a cloud voice solution

RingCentral Cloud PBX: Your Direct Routing partner

Know your users' requirements

What are the key telephony features your users actually need? Creating a clear list of critical function and feature requirements will ensure your business doesn't miss out on key services. RingCentral offers a full range of PSTN services, including numbering and porting, for all your global business locations.

Security and reliability

RingCentral's security and reliability ensure your Team's telephony solution is fit for purpose. Our industry-leading 99.999% SLA ensures your users always have access to the tools they need. Our solution also offers industry recognised security accreditations such as HIPAA, SOC 3, Cyber Essentials Plus, ISO 27001, 27017 and 27018.

Integration is key

RingCentral offers a robust integration platform that will allow your users to work directly from apps they already use (Salesforce, Zendesk, ServiceNow, and more). Access 200+ out-of-the-box integrations and open APIs to customise all your workflows.

Speak to the experts

Telephony in Microsoft Teams can be complex and overwhelming if you aren't sure what you're looking for or what your best options are. RingCentral has over 20 years of experience as a cloud communications provider, with six years as a Leader in Gartner's Magic Quadrant.

Conclusion

Enterprises looking to optimise their Microsoft Teams investment can use RingCentral Cloud PBX for Microsoft Teams to provide the enterprise-grade cloud PBX system their employees expect. With RingCentral Cloud PBX for Microsoft Teams, employees can communicate both internally and externally within Teams in any mode (including voice). The best part? They can do it all within Teams.

Learn more about how integrating RingCentral Cloud PBX into your Microsoft Teams system can supercharge collaboration in tomorrow's workplace.

Visit ringcentral.co.uk/microsoft-teams.

Methodology and approach

Cavell Group commissioned its Enterprise 2020 Insight research covering businesses of varying sizes in the US and Europe to provide unique insight into how businesses have changed their work practices and the impact on the requirements for communication and collaboration services.

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RingCentral, Inc. (NYSE: RNG) is a leading provider of unified communications (message, video, phone), customer engagement, and contact centre solutions for businesses worldwide. More flexible and cost-effective than legacy on-premises PBX and video conferencing systems that it replaces, RingCentral empowers modern mobile and distributed workforces to communicate, collaborate, and connect via any mode, any device, and any location. RingCentral's open platform integrates with leading third-party business applications and enables customers to easily customise business workflows. RingCentral is headquartered in Belmont, California, and has offices around the world.



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