Redmond
MAGAZINE

Phoning It In With Microsoft Teams

How external calling capability adds
huge value to the platform

Microsoft Teams is the collaboration hub built at the center of Microsoft 365. Teams is intended to be the vehicle that carries all your organization's collaboration needs to the destinations where your people can get things done.

Collaboration in 2021 can take many forms and must support many kinds of people doing many kinds of work. For those who want to text chat, Teams does that. For those who want a wiki knowledge base, Teams does that too. Out of the box, Teams makes many kinds of collaboration possible all from a single application that is widely available on all the platforms people want to work from these days.

For most of the collaboration options supported by Teams, all you really need to do as an administrator is license your users and show them how to use the client. Maybe that is simplifying things a bit but accessing most Teams features is not much more complicated than that. That's part of the reason that Teams usage was able to rapidly balloon from about 20 million daily active users (DAU) in November 2019 to 145 million DAU by the second quarter of 2021.

Teams is intended to be the vehicle that carries all your organization's collaboration needs to the destinations where your people can get things done.

TEAMS USAGE

Daily Active Users

145m

20m

2019   **2021**
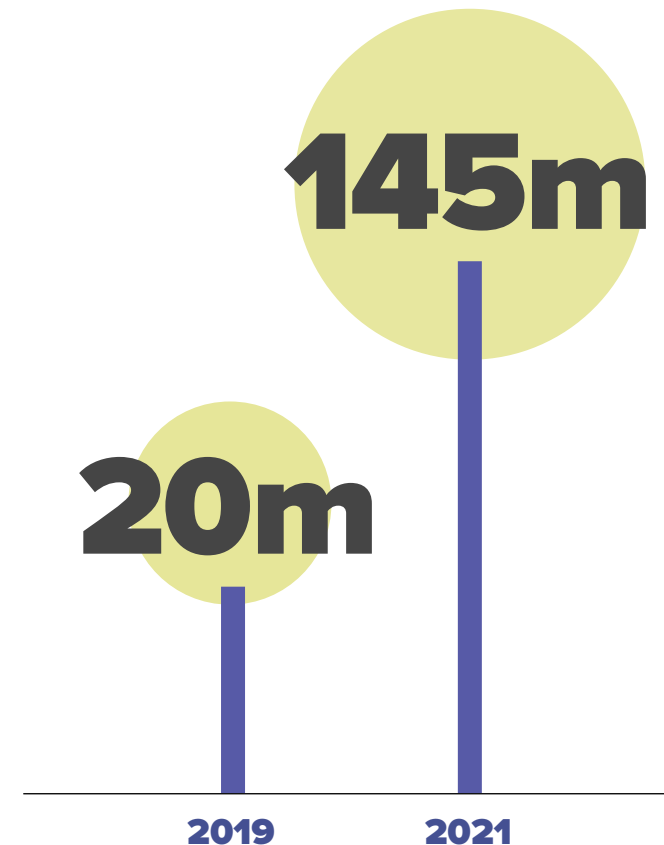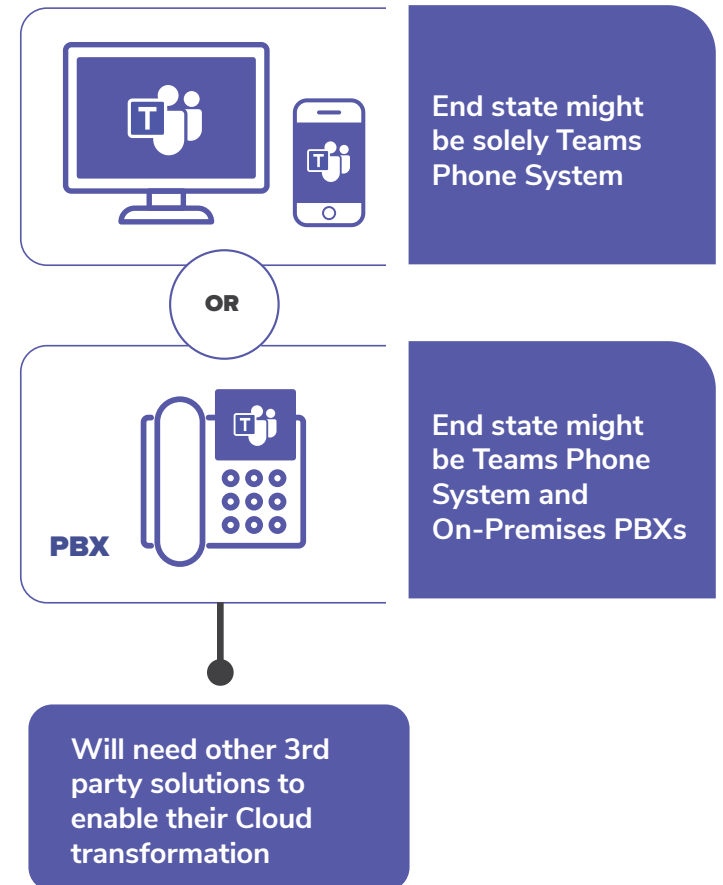
External Calling:
A Complicated Addition

The one feature that can be much more complicated is telephone service.

There is good reason why adding fully functional telephone services to your Teams deployment is complicated. People expect a lot from their telephones and the delivery of that service is so universal and reliable that they do not have much patience for anything short of perfect functionality. Other challenges include handling the volume of calls, supporting mobile devices, as well as integrating with existing investments in calling infrastructure such as a PBX and contact center.

Your organization already has an on-premises telephone system that can ring hundreds or thousands of different devices sitting on desks. But in the new work-from-anywhere world you need to extend that standard telephone service to the devices that people always have with them, and to the Teams clients your investment in Microsoft 365 is providing. OpenText™ CX-E Voice is an essential tool to bridge the gap between your on-premises telephone system and Teams.

Know Your Endgame

Larger organizations generally will need a plan to move to Teams as their Phone System

End state might be solely Teams Phone System

OR

PBX

End state might be Teams Phone System and On-Premises PBXs

Will need other 3rd party solutions to enable their Cloud transformation

Expanding On-Premises Phone Systems

The telephone changed everything by bringing everyone around the world as close as a series of numbers punched into a keypad. While the new cloud revolution is changing many aspects of how and where people do their jobs on a day-to-day basis, telephone dial-tone service really has not changed much. Everyone expects to be able to pick up their device and talk to anyone anywhere in the world, and that expectation is not going to change anytime soon.

While corporate IT departments are making room for new services and new ways of collaborating, the old standby services are not going away. Despite the distinct lack of a "like" button, the average American still makes or receives eight phone calls per day. That is nearly 2.5 billion calls for the 300 million people in the United States alone.

2.5b

Phone Calls per Day
—US

# BYOD is an Important Part of the Picture

Bring your own device (BYOD) is another popular trend in organizations around the world that enables end users to work from the devices with which they are most comfortable. Organizations must be able to support end users who want to use the same iPhone they have had for 5 years right alongside end users who must have the newest Android device every six months. Supporting BYOD does not have to mean organizations have to support end users bringing their own phone numbers or taking those numbers with them when they leave.

Telephone service remains a huge part of how people and organizations communicate. Most mid-size and larger organizations have a considerable investment in this telephone service, and that is an investment most will not be willing to abandon in the move to the cloud. In fact, moving to cloud services does not have to, and in most cases should not, mean completely abandoning your organizations investment in on-premises IT services. A hybrid approach preserving investments in on-premises services is often the most effective.
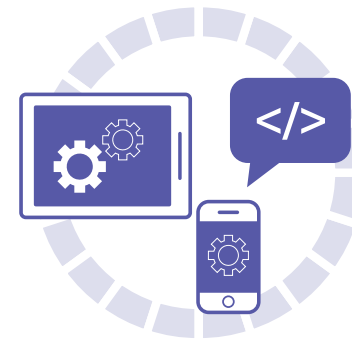
Teams without Phone System
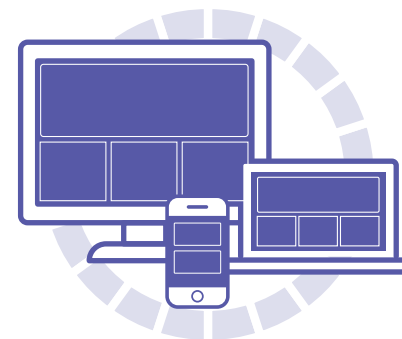
Teams with Phone System and Calling Plan
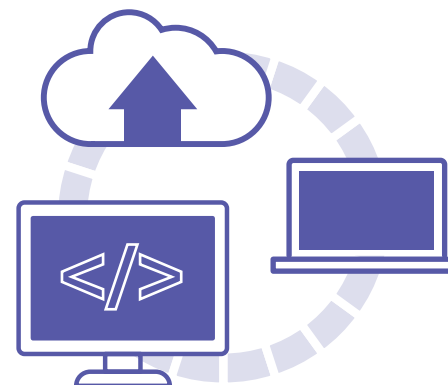
Teams with Phone System and Direct Routing

Finding the Right People

Hiring the right people is important, but in a work-from-anywhere world corporate IT departments need to be able to "find" those people over and over, possibly hundreds of times per day. Each email, each document, and each phone call needs to make its way to the right device for the right person instantly so your organization can keep running.

When it comes to a phone call, "finding" the right person can be either very simple, or very difficult. If everyone has their own personal Direct Inward Dial (DID) phone number, then routing calls to them is simple. Dial that number, and the device to which that number is assigned rings. Simple, right?

Of course, in the modern work environment, many users have more than one device. Many users in a mid-sized or larger organization are going to have a desk phone, a cell phone, and multiple other devices that may or may not act as "soft phones", defined as PCs and devices that can accept a phone call via software.

In a work-from-anywhere world corporate IT departments need to be able to "find" people over and over.

Don't Forget About Contact Centers
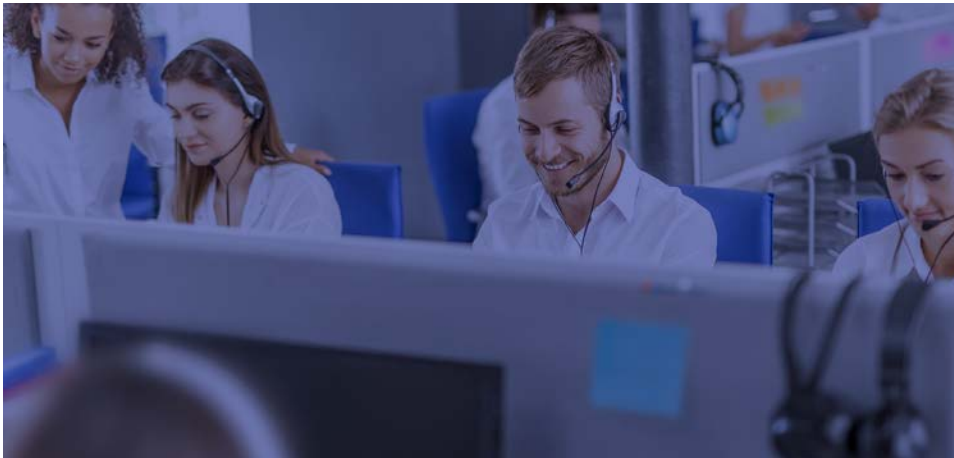
In addition to the problem of a single user having multiple devices, most organizations need a single number to be able to reach multiple individuals. Support lines, Contact Centers, or even shift workers are a few examples of instances where a single telephone number needs to be routed to different individuals at different times or under different circumstances.

Many organizations must deal with the very complex configurations required to support these different end-user needs. For most organizations, the right solution is an on-premises PBX-based phone system. When those organizations move to Teams, it can feel like too much to bring public switched telephone service (PSTN) with Teams.

SINGLE INDIVIDUAL, MULTIPLE DEVICES

CX-E Voice

SINGLE TELEPHONE NUMBER

SINGLE NUMBER, MULTIPLE INDIVIDUALS
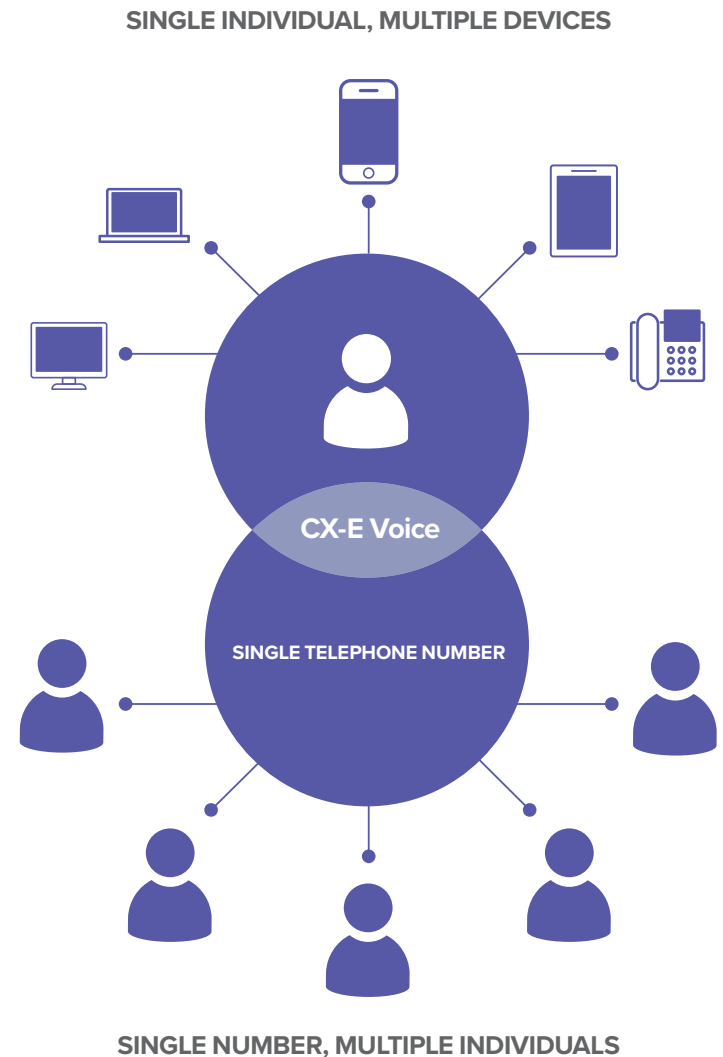
Putting It All Together with OpenText CX-E Voice

Organizations are moving to the cloud at an amazing pace. More and more IT departments are being asked to support different ways for end users to collaborate anytime anywhere with anyone regardless of the devices and applications involved. This trend means that for organizations to be successful it will be necessary to support many different communications channels that work on many different devices from many different locations.

The challenges of deploying and managing an on-premises PBX based telephone system are huge, so many organizations are reluctant to add the additional complexity of integrating Teams in that telephone system. Additionally, customers that use Teams with an on-premises PBX phone system demand a single messaging solution. Users do not want to try to manage two different systems, so CX-E gives them a single place to go for all messaging functionalities.

CX-E Voice
Get More from Your Microsoft Teams Investment

INTEGRATION WITH MICROSOFT TEAMS	
CX-E Voice is the only Microsoft Teams-compatible voice application that covers your entire phone network	Delivers best-in-class voicemail, unified messaging, speech automated attendant and personal assistant

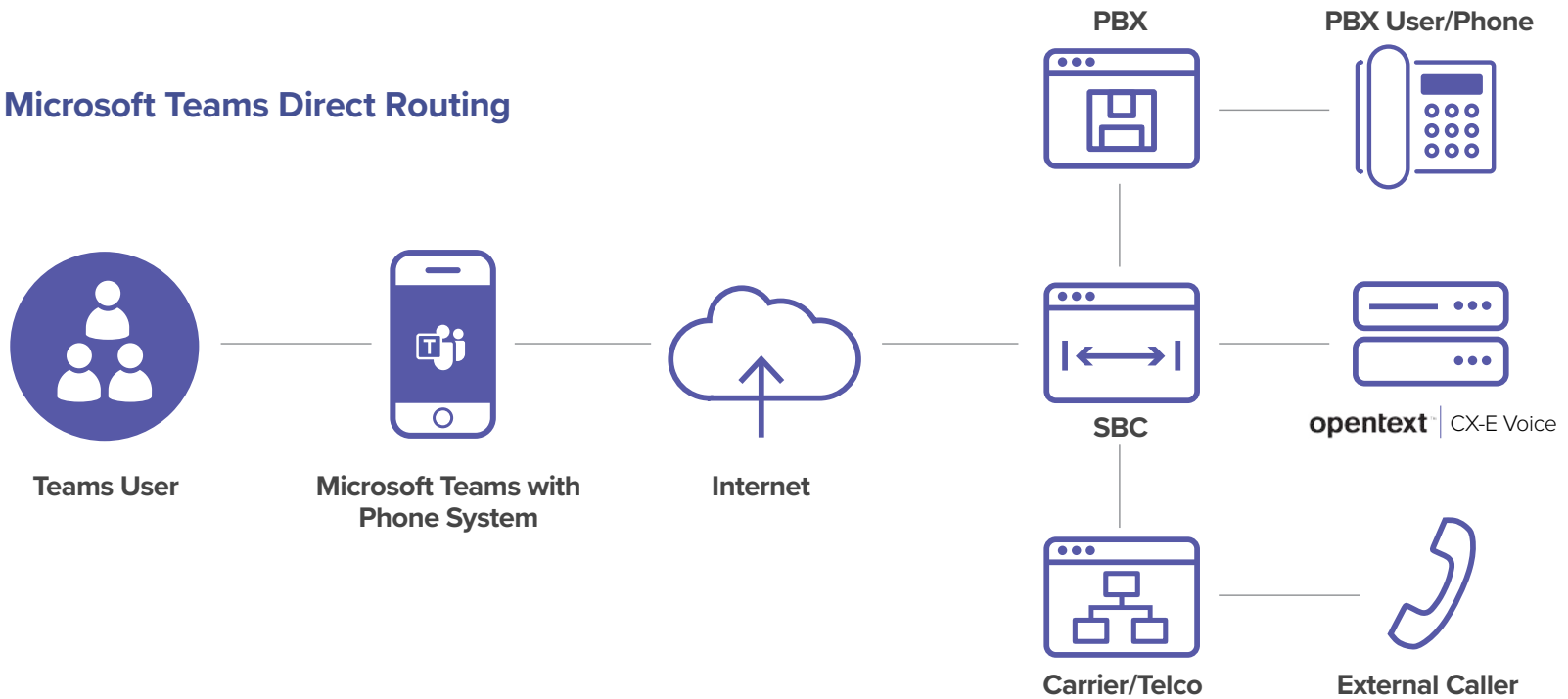| FACILITATES MIGRATION TO THE CLOUD |
|---|
| Enables mixed deployment between on-premises and cloud to protect existing telephony and contact center investments |

MAXIMIZE ROI BY GROWING YOUR TEAMS INVESTMENT	
Organizations that have deployed Teams for collaboration and meetings can now maximize ROI and better leverage the Teams Phone System	Expands Microsoft Teams Phone System capabilities from siloed internal communications to encompass external calls

CX-E Voice and Teams Integration

Microsoft Teams Direct Routing

PBX

PBX User/Phone

Teams User

Microsoft Teams with Phone System

Internet

SBC

opentext | CX-E Voice

Carrier/Telco

External Caller

What is it:

- CX-E Voice integration to Teams Phone System

- Provide voicemail, unified messaging, speech automated attendant and personal assistant functionality to Teams customers.

Why it matters:

- Microsoft Teams has a huge market presence.

- Teams customers are starting to look at using Teams Phone System.

- CX-E is the only alternative to Microsoft Cloud Voicemail and Automated Attendant.

- Customers that use Teams and other PBX technology demand a single messaging solution.

CX-E Voice ties together voicemail, email, and fax into one inbox. Text-to-speech, voicemail transcription, and secure messaging. CX-E supports multiple automated attendants, speech-recognition interfaces, greetings for different departments, multilingual interfaces, scheduled messages.

Deployed on-premises or in the Cloud, CX-E offers seamless integration with all major communications platforms – Avaya, Cisco, Genesys, Google, Microsoft, Mitel, NEC and more – complementing any telephony, contact center and email infrastructure.

CX-E is the only Microsoft Teams compatible voice application that covers your entire phone network. CX-E delivers best in class voicemail, unified messaging, speech automated attendant, and personal assistant features.
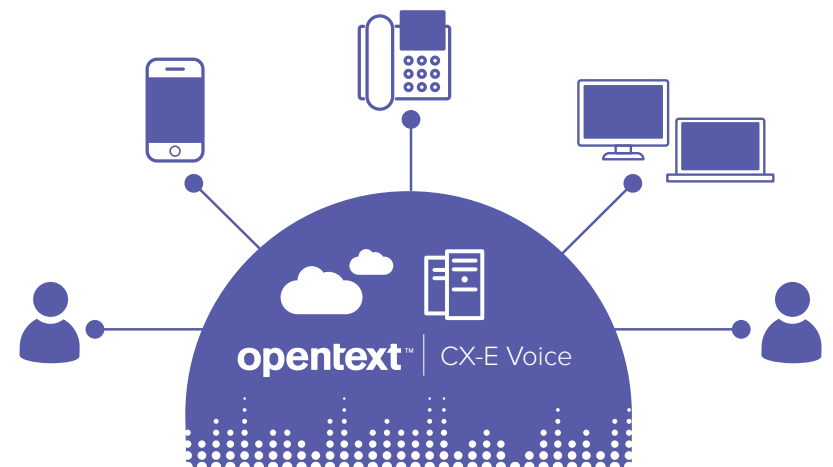
FEATURES

Using OpenText CX-E as the "brains" to tie your on-premises telephone system and Teams together is the best way to deal with that complexity. CX-E can answer your calls via automated attendants or voicemail. Calls can also be routed to your on-premises PBX connected desk phones, end users' mobile phones, or even Teams clients on multiple different devices.

CX-E can work as a personal assistant, a voice directory, an Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system, or a unifiedmessaging management system.

CX-E provides industry-leading functionality with end-to-end voice message encryption, a mobile application, single number reach, smart call forwarding, separated business and personal communications, inbound call screening, mobile number protection, and more.

DEPLOYMENT

CX-E is easily deployed on a Windows Server in your on-premises datacenter, or in several different cloud-based deployment options.

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