

8x8

Solve for X

The CX.EX Journal | Issue 11

Welcome to Solve for X

This issue focuses on empowering organizations with seamless customer communications experiences, taking a look at the importance of Microsoft Teams and the opportunity to apply its proven success with internal collaboration to external communications.

The digital transformation revolution is in the optimization phase, resulting in organizations discovering ways to operate not only more efficiently, but more intelligently. With the growing number of options, it is more important than ever to cut through the distractions and focus on solutions that can adapt to dynamic business and market requirements and justify a clear ROI.

Read on to learn why 8x8 partners with Microsoft to complement its Teams offering. View the 8x8 for Microsoft Teams portfolio. Plus, learn what matters when selecting a telephony provider for Microsoft Teams.



Talon Morris
Director, Product Marketing

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Why We Partner with Microsoft Teams: It's All About the Customer

Bryan Martin, CTO, 8x8

As CTO, I talk with our customers and potential customers on a daily basis, and with more than 320 million active users, I'm not surprised when organizations say that they're using—and want to continue using—Microsoft Teams in some form or fashion.

To provide the best experience and service to our customers at 8x8, we focus on collaboration over competition, as evidenced in our [Technology Partner Ecosystem](#) and our partnerships with select vendors in our space, including Microsoft.

We work with partners to complement their capabilities. With Microsoft, this has been the case for decades, going back to their NetMeeting offering in the 90s, Response Point in the early 2000s, the many shades of Skype for Business, on through to the now wildly-popular Microsoft Teams.



Today, our related portfolio includes [8x8 Voice for Microsoft Teams](#), offering Direct Routing as a Service with full PSTN (public-switched telephone network) replacement in over 59 countries. It also includes the [8x8 Phone App for Microsoft Teams](#), as well as our latest offering, [8x8 Operator Connect for Microsoft Teams](#). With this addition, 8x8 is now the only Operator Connect provider that also delivers a [Microsoft-certified contact center solution for Teams](#).

As a trusted customer experience and employee experience partner, our integrations with Microsoft Teams are by design and are a differentiator, delivered with the best customer business outcomes in mind. However we add value, we strive to help our customers reach the summit of their success by using 8x8 in conjunction with our ecosystem of partners.

[Read More](#)

“ Intentionally-engineered success is part of our core DNA. Unlike competitors who look to replace the competition entirely, we work to embrace it where it adds value. Our company and our customers are better for it. ”

Bryan Martin, CTO
8x8

4 Fundamental Benefits of 8x8 for Microsoft Teams

Talon Morris, Product Marketing Director, 8x8

Today, hundreds of thousands of users around the globe rely on 8x8 for real-time customer communications within Microsoft Teams. If you're currently evaluating Microsoft Teams Phone providers and you haven't yet heard of 8x8 for Microsoft Teams, this provides an informative overview.

What is 8x8 for Microsoft Teams?

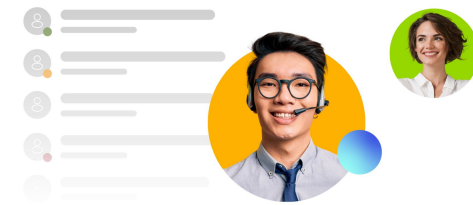
The 8x8 for Microsoft Teams offering includes a complete, Teams-first portfolio of native integrations for external communications that is:

- Built on 8x8's reliable infrastructure
- Backed by a platform-wide 99.999% uptime SLA
- Trusted by over 400,000 Microsoft Teams users
- Flexible with full PSTN replacement in over 59 countries, optional unlimited calling plans, and mix and match licensing
- Offering a complete portfolio for native Teams calling



The 8x8 for Microsoft Teams portfolio consists of the following native offerings:

Taking a closer look to the right, why does this make 8x8 for Microsoft Teams one of the best Microsoft Teams customer communications solutions on the market?



1. 8x8 Voice for Microsoft Teams:

Direct-Routing-as-a-Service for advanced communications and global reach

2. 8x8 Operator Connect for Microsoft Teams:

Purpose-built and Teams-certified for fully native deployment and calling

3. 8x8 Contact Center for Microsoft Teams:

A Teams-certified omnichannel contact center with free on-net calling

4. 8x8 Phone App for Microsoft Teams:

Cost-effective and native PSTN calling without additional software or licenses

The four fundamental benefits of the 8x8 solution

1. Reliable: 8x8 has built integrations on a [high-availability infrastructure](#) backed by a platform-wide 99.999% uptime SLA. This industry-leading, financially backed SLA ensures the highest possible uptime, achieved through four levels of redundancy across infrastructure, platform, data, and geographic regions.

Customers recognize voice as their most business-critical workload, and 8x8 delivers on this promise by providing redundancy to ensure business continuity, enabling internal and external communications when and where they are needed most.

2. Trusted: 8x8 is the only UCaaS provider to be recognized [12 times as a Gartner Magic Quadrant Leader](#) that has also been recognized nine times by Gartner in the CCaaS Magic Quadrant. With over 400,000 Microsoft Teams users, 8x8 offers a Teams-certified contact center solution and provides free on-net calling across all 8x8 for Microsoft Teams products for calls to/from contact center agents.

As the only Operator Connect provider with a first-party Teams-certified contact center, 8x8 underscores its commitment to reliability, innovation, and excellence in customer experience. These distinctions make 8x8 a trusted choice for organizations looking to enhance their communications infrastructure in Teams.

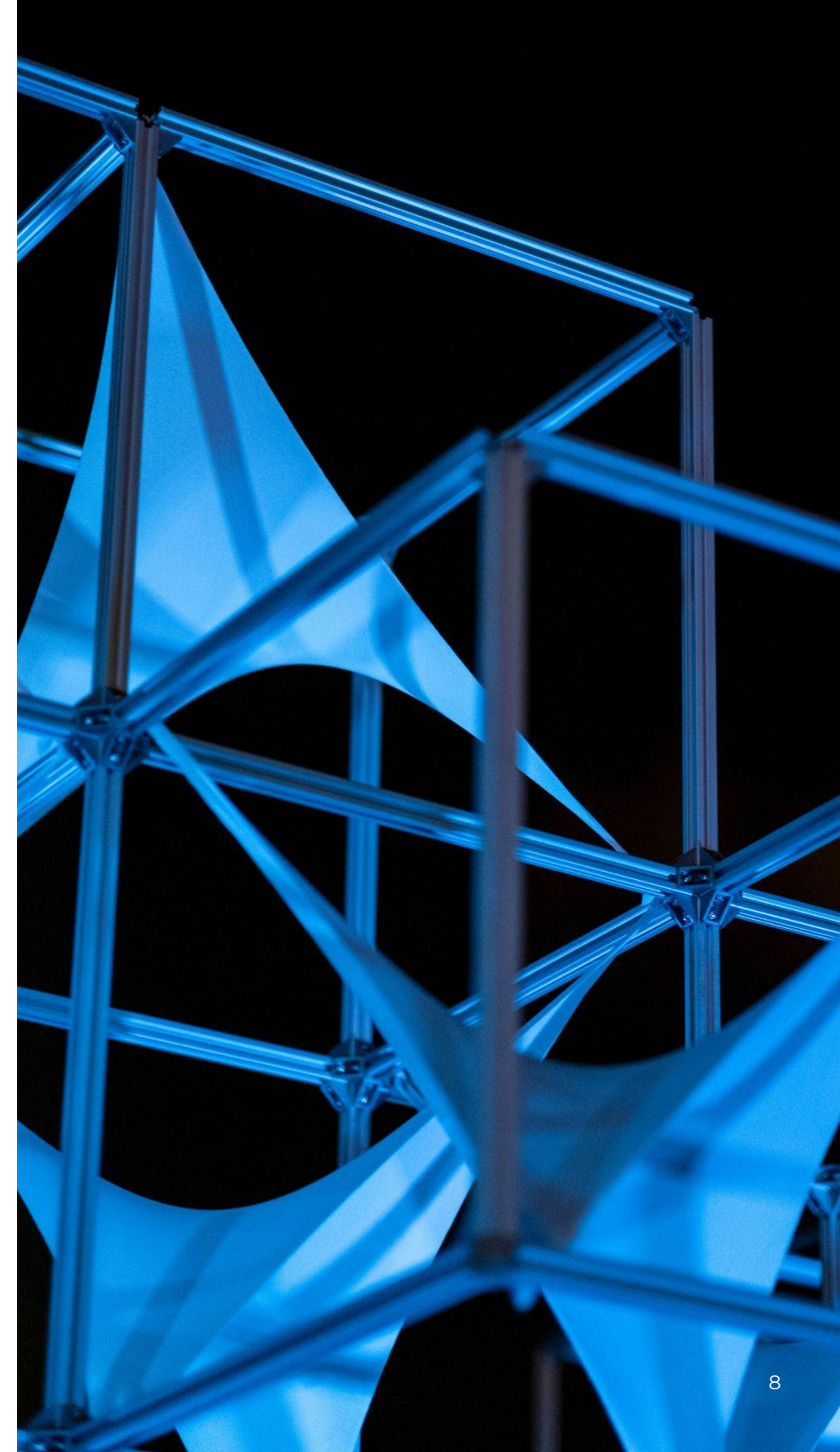


3. Integrated: 8x8 fully integrates into the Teams experience, achieving multiple solution certifications for Microsoft Teams. The [Teams-certified 8x8 Contact Center for Microsoft Teams](#) and 8x8 Operator Connect for Microsoft Teams meet all structured program requirements. 8x8 Voice for Microsoft Teams and 8x8 Phone App for Microsoft Teams leverage certified SBCs, ensuring compliance with integration requirements. 8x8's approach minimizes training and deployment overhead, seamlessly complementing Teams to prevent IT from managing and end users from learning additional applications.

With over 50 integrations into top business applications such as Microsoft Dynamics, Salesforce, Zendesk, and more, 8x8 provides turnkey solutions that enable businesses to operate how and where they need. This includes streamlined deployments for increased productivity and global reach, covering over 86% of the world's Gross Domestic Product (GDP).

4. Complete: 8x8 offers the most comprehensive [portfolio of Microsoft Teams integrations](#), suitable for any business, user type, geography, and complex deployments. The technology adapts to unique business profiles with purpose-built solutions for each persona across the organization, from the front desk to the back office to the contact center. Organizations can create seamless customer experiences with a right-size solution that integrates disparate functions into a single platform.

[Read More](#)



Selecting the Right Microsoft Teams Phone Service

Irwin Lazar, President and Principal Analyst, Metrigy

Sixty-two percent of the more than 1,400 companies participating in Metrigy's Workplace Collaboration MetriCast: 2023 global research study are now using Microsoft Teams, primarily for inter-company chat and for video meetings. Adopters are often at an inflection point as they consider the best way to integrate calling into Teams, and to extend Teams into their contact center to optimize customer engagement.

There are a variety of options for adding PSTN calling into Teams. Organizations can adopt Microsoft's own Teams Phone features, typically at an additional license cost; or they can integrate a third-party calling platform into Teams. Those who go the Microsoft Teams Phone route must then obtain PSTN connectivity separately from the Teams Phone license. Here, they can purchase calling directly from Microsoft via Calling Plan, or



connect their Teams Phone instance to the PSTN through a third-party service provider. The third-party service provider option provides yet even more choices (and flexibility). Teams Phone customers can obtain services from Microsoft Operator Connect-certified providers who are able to directly connect their PSTN access to Microsoft through Microsoft Azure. Or, Teams Phone customers can leverage Direct Routing which allows them to connect new or existing Session Border Controllers to SIP trunking providers.

However, Microsoft Teams Phone isn't the best Teams calling option for everyone. Our research shows that of those using Teams for meetings and chat, 65% plan to use, or continue to use, a separate provider for PSTN calling. There are a number of reasons for this:

- Companies may have existing investments in enterprise phone systems that they do not wish to replace
- Employees may need access to calling features that Teams Phone does not support. Examples include SMS/MMS messaging and fax
- IT and business leaders may not want to put all their eggs in the Teams basket such that an outage takes down all internal and external communications and collaboration
- Companies may have existing contracts with other telecom service providers
- Geographic availability limitations of Teams calling plans

Of those using
Microsoft Teams for
meetings and chat

65%

plan to use, or will
continue to use, a
separate provider for
PSTN calling.

Source: Metrigy Workplace Collaboration
MetriCast survey of 1400 companies

Buyers should do their due diligence

Buyers should do their due diligence and select communications partners who:

- Support a variety of Teams calling approaches, including the ability to support both Teams Phone and third-party UCaaS and CCaaS connectivity with presence federation
- Support for a variety of Teams Phone PSTN access approaches including Direct Routing and Operator Connect
- Enable Teams users to manage their phone features and place and receive calls within the Teams app, without having to switch to a different app
- Have the geographic reach and scale to support both current and future needs
- Have the experience delivering flexible solutions for extending calling into Teams
- Provide a minimum of five-9s (99.999% reliability) including support for failover scenarios to protect calling even in the event of a Teams outage
- Provide Teams Certified omnichannel contact center platform with appropriate analytics to evaluate system performance and customer engagement.

Four Questions That Should Always be Asked When Comparing 8x8 Phone App With 'Free' Teams Integrations

There are a number of offerings in the marketplace that, while they appear to be 'free' can come with considerable costs in the long-run. There are four key elements that those involved in the CX experience should consider:

1. Do the 'free' Teams calling integrations keep users within Teams?
2. Do the 'free' Teams calling integration providers require software and configuration outside of Teams?
3. Do the 'free' Teams calling integration providers require you to acquire more licenses than your business needs?
4. How many vendors are needed to meet your communication needs, and how much complexity does that add to your operations?

[Watch our video and see how 8x8 outperforms 'free' Teams integrations](#)

Learn more from 8x8

Learn more from the experts at 8x8 on the following topics:

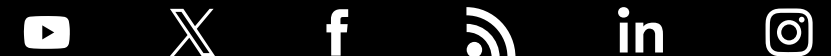
- [8x8 for Microsoft Teams](#)
- [Customer Experience Insights](#)
- [Industry Trends](#)
- [Moving to the Cloud](#)
- [Remote and Hybrid Working](#)
- [8x8 and the Contact Center](#)



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