

A professional woman with dark hair and glasses is smiling and talking on a blue telephone. She is wearing a dark blazer over a light-colored top. The background is blurred, showing what appears to be an office environment.

WHITE PAPER

## **Always On CX:EX:** How to Bring Modern Contact Center Capabilities to Microsoft Teams

Hint: Every Microsoft Teams User Is Now a Potential Agent Powered by Exceptional CX Capabilities

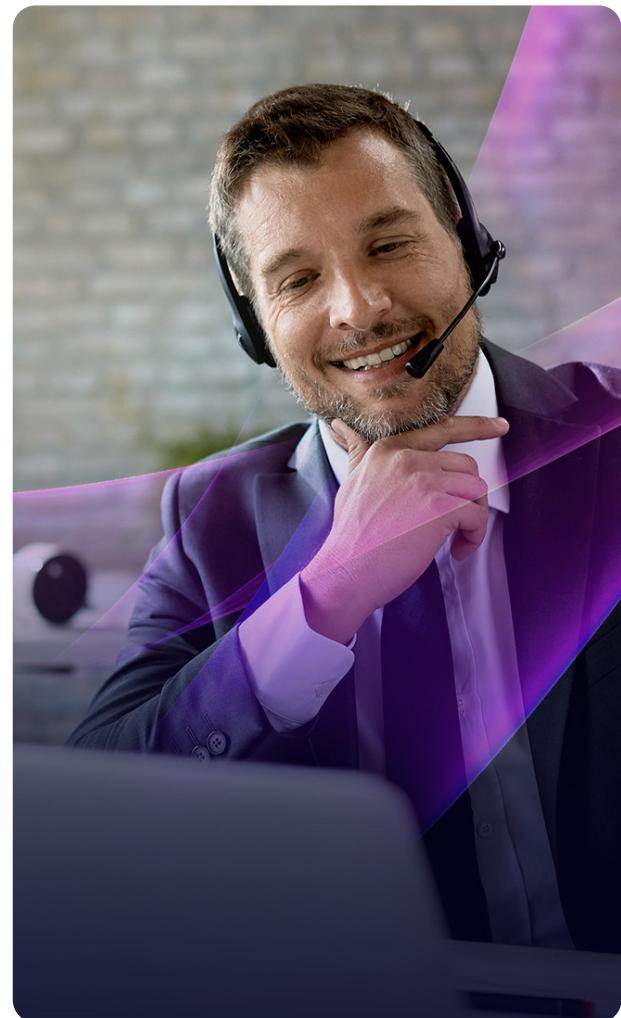


# You've made the decision to migrate to Microsoft Teams - that's fantastic! But have you considered the impact of integrating your contact center with Teams?

## Life Before Unified Communications and Contact Center Consolidation

Typically, an organization's contact center solution is siloed. Living aside from the organizational PBX and relying on people like you to manage the two distinct infrastructures. This separation is a challenge that manifests into multiple challenges leading to a poor customer and employee experience.

1. Only the traditional agents in the contact center have access to IVR, Queuing, Reporting or other contact center capabilities. Other employees within the company are limited to basic PBX functionalities such as basic call routing, hunt groups and a voicemail.
2. Fragmented infrastructure requires its own dedicated maintenance, access and security handling. This setup requires organizations to have network protection from threats originating through two sources: the PBX and the contact center. This is asking for trouble.
3. The service workflow is disjointed. If a call to a traditional agent needs to be escalated to a back-office expert or internal agent, the transfer is blind and results in the loss of important data and reporting associated with the call. The back-office expert or internal agent may not have access to the call history, customer information, or any notes made by the contact center agent, which hampers their ability to provide quick, personalized service.



## Life After Consolidation

But a unified communications (UC) integration presents the exciting opportunity to leverage your UC platform as the vehicle for a contact center. When a contact center solution is deployed on top of an underlying UC, every UC user becomes a potential agent. This is especially relevant for internal business lines, which provide internal and external-facing service.

For example: IT Helpdesk, Sales teams, HR desks, Security teams, Legal team and Travel desks. We refer to the people who sit in these departments as internal agents.

Think about a call arriving at the sales department after-hours – do you really want to miss that call? Think about a VIP HR candidate calling you on a Saturday morning – how about routing that call to a recruiter's mobile? What about your Security team, or your Travel desk's 24/7 availability needs?

Users situated within these departments provide ongoing service to individuals in and out of the organization. Now they can leverage CX capabilities like: Intelligent Routing, After-hour Call Handling, IVR, Queuing and Reporting.

When you have a Contact Center as a Service (CCaaS) that rides your UC, those capabilities are available to every user in your company – and this is the real power of UC and contact center consolidation.

## Build On Top of Your Existing Communication Tools

**Let's face it:** knowing when, how, and what technology to integrate is extremely difficult. With the shift to cloud-based software and the overwhelming usage of UCs like Microsoft Teams, you may be asking yourself:



- Why should we integrate our contact center with Microsoft Teams?
- What are the different types of integrations? Which one is better?
- How long does this integration take?
- How much does it cost?
- Will this integration help our agents and benefit our customers?

## Leveraging UCaaS for CCaaS Capabilities

Your agents and staff rely on UC platforms like Microsoft Teams for their everyday communication with colleagues. For them, the use of this system has become second nature. As a result, you can't overlook the level of convenience that comes with leveraging Microsoft Teams – especially the unified infrastructure and ability to easily spread contact center capabilities across the organization. So, instead of investing in a separate system, think of Microsoft Teams as the single pane of glass for your agents' communication and collaboration efforts.

## Secure Calling Infrastructure

A contact center solution that leverages Microsoft Teams, namely in the Extend and Power models, provides Microsoft-grade calling infrastructure, media quality, encryption, and security. Now you're using the same credentials for cross-company management, which means there's no need to deal with another application. You're also using a single, consolidated platform for UCaaS and CCaaS, you can reduce licensing and maintenance costs and simplify your IT management.

## Invest in the Right Fit

Typically, you have two options for spreading the contact center across your organization:

1. Buying more seats from your existing CCaaS provider
2. Extending your UCaaS solution with CCaaS capabilities

The first option typically means working with a premium CCaaS vendor, which comes with a hefty price per seat. These premium CCaaS vendors provide fully-fledged contact center platforms that often prove too capable for what a typical Microsoft Teams CCaaS user really needs.

Many organizations use under 50 percent of the capabilities within their specialist contact center solution. The bells and whistles typically go far beyond everyday needs, and come with a lot of "nice to haves".

Instead, extending your Microsoft Teams with a CCaaS integration, can add the most critical components for providing quality service, without having to stick to a heavy, detached contact center platform with features you probably won't use.

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# Enhance Customer and Employee Experience

Now that people have access to activities and experiences again, there is a rush to try to make up for lost time. Expectations are at an all-time high. This means service quality needs to be better than it was in the past and on a tighter budget. The key to achieving this is by empowering employees with the right tools and resources to improve employee experience (EX), using customer experience capabilities.

## Remove the Barrier Between Agents & Back-Office Experts

When your organization's Microsoft Teams and contact center are integrated, agents have direct and transparent access to anyone in the company. This allows agents to see others availability and effectively bring in someone from IT, Product, Support and even R&D to provide a detailed solution to a customer issue. Typically, these are all departments that an agent would have limited access to.

By removing the barrier of connection between agents and back-office experts, you are providing agents with the access they need to be more confident and effective at their job. This leads to a better employee experience, and when you have a happier and more qualified agent, your customers have better experiences too.



## Allow Every Microsoft Teams User to Become a Potential Agent

When you already use the Microsoft Teams ecosystem across your organization, it makes sense to leverage the tool you've invested in to enable every UC user to provide great customer experience (CX). The idea here is beautifully simple, yet powerful. As CX technology becomes more commoditized, it presents an opportunity for you to leverage these modern technologies not only for the main service desk but also for other internal business lines, such as the IT Help Desk, HR Desk, Sales teams, Security teams, and more.

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These users receive many calls during the day and can benefit from CX capabilities like intelligent routing, voicemail, IVR, queuing, all while still using Microsoft Teams or other phone systems as the go-to UC.

For example, if a call arrives at the Travel desk department after-hours, with an urgent need, you don't want to miss that call. Similarly, if a VIP customer has a security concern on a Saturday morning, you should route that call to an on-duty security staff's mobile. It's crucial to ensure these departments are reachable, especially if you're a global company.

CX capabilities for internal agents is more than availability. It also means providing reporting to departments like sales. Say you have a department of 200-300 sales reps. Imagine if you had access to who is answering calls, the conversation length, what people are calling about, the amount of calls on a monthly basis, and the result of these conversations. This is information that's worth knowing as a sales leader.

By empowering your internal agents with CX capabilities, you can streamline your workflow and ensure that every customer inquiry is handled efficiently and effectively.

## Important Considerations During the Integration Process:

### The 3 Microsoft models for a Teams CCaaS



Hurdles come when organizations try to combine elements designed in different eras, and with different connectivity methods. Microsoft has [three integration models](#) for a Microsoft Teams integration with a contact center: the Connect, the Extend, and the Power model.

Connecting a modern UC platform like Microsoft Teams, for example, to a CCaaS solution that connects with Teams over SIP (e.g. the Connect model), may entail various challenges.

#### What to Expect with the Connect Model

- Your Microsoft Teams and contact center environments are isolated and connected over a blind SIP transfer
- The call and its media are handled outside of Microsoft Teams
- Graph API is used for presence-based routing, with [throttling limitations](#)
- Reports are glued together from multiple sources of data (contact center & Microsoft Teams)

#### What to Expect with the Extend Model

The Extend model is already a big step forward from the Connect model namely in how it integrates with Microsoft Teams Phone. Contact center calls are brought into Microsoft Teams over Graph API, and optionally via Microsoft Calling Plans or Operator Connect, with full call media handling within the Microsoft Teams ecosystem.

Organizations can design workflows and advanced routing configurations down to the individual and measure the quality of their system and interactions, with full visibility of agents and back-office experts availability, and 100% authentic reporting data arriving from a single calling source.

Key challenges associated with the Extend model are related to both infrastructure as well as UI flexibility and consistency of the agent experience.

From an architecture perspective, the Extend model purely relies on Graph API for presence and Microsoft Teams Phone as the core calling and routing elements for the contact center solution. Optionally, some vendors are also utilizing the Azure Calling Bot to leverage Microsoft Calling Plans or Operator Connect. Such architecture may introduce additional routing paths and latency associated with these multiple underlying infrastructure elements, coming to expression in the accuracy and responsiveness of real-time routing data.

Additionally, the Extend model entails using a Microsoft Teams-native application only, confined to the Microsoft-related limitations and guidelines. This may present difficulties in creating a fully-flexible UI, and in ensuring a consistent agent and supervisor application experience across multiple devices, operating systems or screens (for example: CRM screen, iOS/Android, Desktop Web, Mobile Web, etc.).

## The Unmatched Abilities of the Power Model

The Power model is the tightest integration between a CCaaS and Microsoft Teams.

This model allows a CCaaS to use your existing Microsoft Teams Phone System infrastructure, just like the Extend model, while providing you with a dedicated, fully-flexible and unified agent and supervisor application that acts as a natural extension to the user's Microsoft Teams client across multiple modalities (voice and digital channels) and communication types (external or internal).

Voice integration to Microsoft Teams is based on a native Azure voice application, which leverages the Microsoft Teams Phone System.

From an architecture standpoint, real-time routing decisions and event reporting is carried at high accuracy and minimal time, with fewer routing decision elements and significant reduction of API interactions.

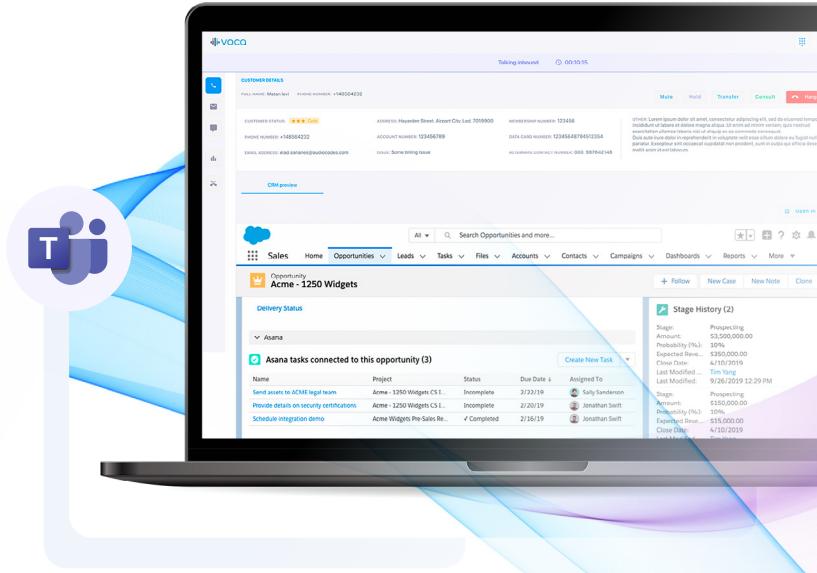
This integration between a custom application built by the CCaaS vendor to Microsoft Teams, is achieved by leveraging a modern set of APIs and SDKs from Microsoft Azure Communication Services.

## The Power Model features:

- Microsoft Teams contact center on top of Azure Communication Services
- Contact center agents & supervisors desktop UI is built as an extension to the Microsoft Teams Voice core
- Microsoft-grade media quality, encryption and security
- Calls are handled natively within the Microsoft Teams ecosystem
- Native call data and single source of reporting
- Direct connectivity to all the organization's Microsoft Teams users



# AudioCodes Voca Brings Modern Contact Center Capabilities to Microsoft Teams



Today's modern workplace demands a new approach to customer experience, one that not only **empowers agents to enjoy their jobs** and provide exception service to customers but **enables internal business lines** to provide exceptional service throughout the organization too.

AudioCodes Voca, a lightweight CCaaS with built-in Conversational AI designed entirely for Microsoft Teams, brings an equal emphasis on **employee experience and customer experience**.

With **Voca as a Native Microsoft Teams App**, you consolidate your unified communications and contact center into one-screen, **allowing every Microsoft Teams user to become a potential agent**.

Now agents have **real-time access to back-office experts** to help improve responsiveness, remove department silos, and improve connection among employees.

**Voca uses the Microsoft Power Model** and offers a unique mix of contact center and voice expertise, making it an ideal solution for organizations looking to modernize their CX capabilities with minimal upfront costs. With Voca, customers can enjoy **a modern CCaaS from day one of their UC migration**, without having to wait for the migration to be complete.

Want to know more about AudioCodes Voca  
Conversational Interaction Center for Microsoft Teams?

Click Here

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