



VERIZON PARTNERS WITH MICROSOFT

So Teams Can Energize the Mobile Workforce

WHITE PAPER

Prepared by

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Zeus Kerravala is the founder and principal analyst with ZK Research. Kerravala provides tactical advice and strategic guidance to help his clients in both the current business climate and the long term. He delivers research and insight to the following constituents: end-user IT and network managers; vendors of IT hardware, software and services; and members of the financial community looking to invest in the companies that he covers.

INTRODUCTION: HYBRID WORK DRIVES MORE MOBILITY

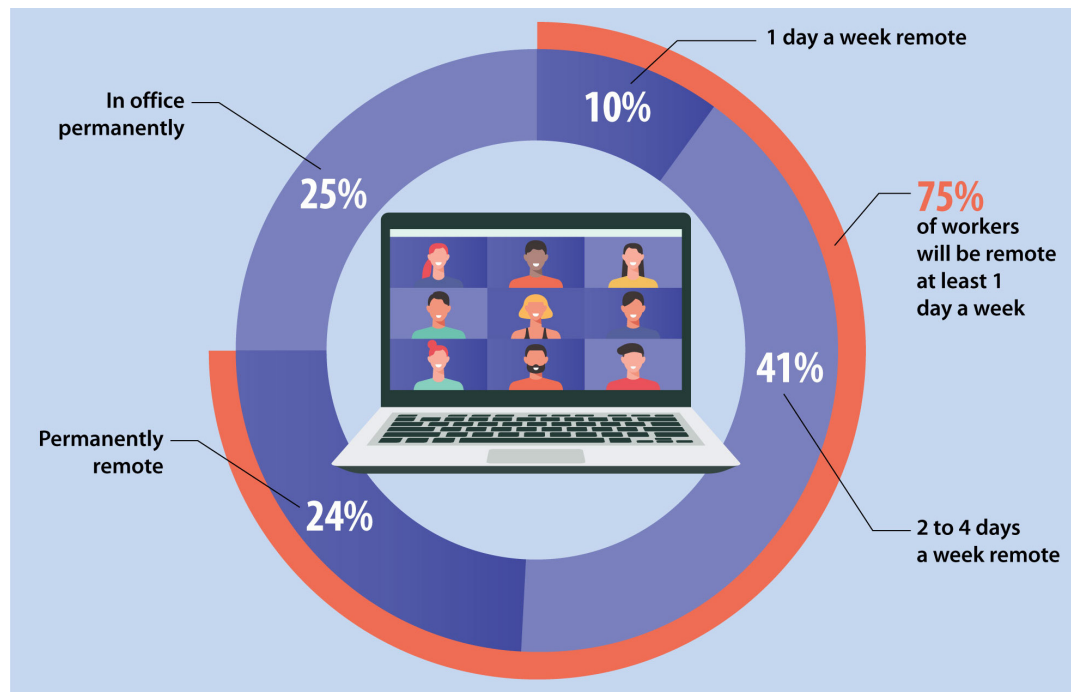
For years, mobile employees have constituted a significant portion of the workforce. Since the start of the pandemic in 2020, the move to hybrid (or flexible) work has increased the number of mobile workers significantly. Despite some grumblings to the contrary (and many supporters of the return-to-office movement grabbing the spotlight), hybrid work is here to stay.

In fact, the ZK Research 2023 Hybrid Work Study showed that 75% of employees will work remotely at least one day a week for the foreseeable future ([Exhibit 1](#)). Ten percent of workers will be remote one day a week, 41% will be remote two to four days a week, and 24% will be remote all the time. Only 25% of workers will be in the office permanently.

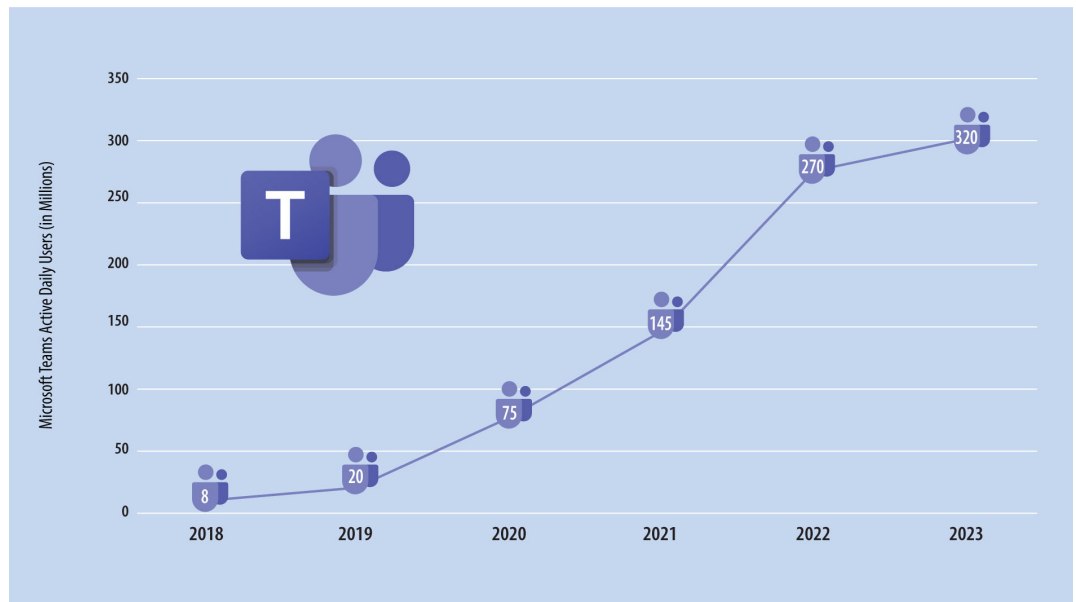
Employees work at various locations scattered around the globe, and they all rely on a disparate set of tools to keep in touch throughout the day. Consequently, the unified communications (UC) vendor community has responded with unprecedented development. Innovation has been happening at breakneck speed, all with the goal of making hybrid work more effective.

The rise of Zoom during the pandemic (and the endless press coverage that it generated for the company) obscures the work that other providers have done alongside that upstart. Buried in the news clippings of the past few years is a startling fact: Microsoft Teams is now the leading UC platform, with more than 320 million active daily users—a massive expansion from just 8 million five years ago ([Exhibit 2](#)). That probably has something to do with Microsoft’s broad reach into most enterprise IT departments in the largest companies in the world. In fact, quite a few have standard-

Exhibit 1: Hybrid Work Is Here to Stay



ZK Research 2023 Hybrid Work Study

Exhibit 2: The Use of Microsoft Teams Explodes

DemandSage and ZK Research, 2023

ized on Teams and don't sanction the use of other platforms. Despite Teams' high adoption rate as a collaboration tool, it has not reached the same level of acceptance as a phone system.

Even though it's such a broadly accepted tool, Teams has a number of limitations that hinder its usability, especially for remote and mobile workers. Teams can be great for workers who are tied to a desk, but it doesn't deliver such a great experience for mobile workers who are on the go constantly. For example, to use Teams, mobile workers typically need to have the app open on their phone or they miss calls. They also need to manage multiple phone numbers or even multiple devices, which can be a burden if they're on the go. Perhaps the most significant issue is that just making a simple call from Teams on a mobile phone can be a challenge. Out of the box, Teams users can't make external calls.

Although Teams is the leading UC solution globally, and it can be the right option for many companies and users, it needs additional functionality to become the complete UC package that many companies are seeking. Most approaches to address these limitations have been Band-Aids that still require multiple apps and really only add another layer of unnecessary complexity. ZK Research has talked to enterprises that have been crying for a truly unified solution that simplifies the user experience and blends the native calling abilities of every phone with Teams' calling functionality.

Verizon partnered with Microsoft to look at the issues, listened to customers, and engineered a way to improve and simplify the Teams experience. Verizon is the first operator in the United States that offers Teams Phone Mobile—delivered as Verizon Mobile for Microsoft Teams (VMMT)—which facilitates the user experience and brings native mobile calling to Teams.



CASE STUDY: Global Manufacturer with 30+ Sites

A global manufacturer headquartered in Europe—with factories in Asia, a call center in India, mobile/field workers in the United States, and a newly acquired subsidiary in Latin America—was looking to connect its global locations and enable external calling around the world using one UC platform. The company also wanted to interconnect factory and call center workers.

The results:

- **Efficient and integrated** global Teams calling solution tailored to each employee role/persona
- Cost effective: **Less expensive** than existing solutions; reduced costs by consolidating multiple disparate systems
- Transformation: **Migrate equipment** from on premises to cloud; move to **outsourcing** model

In this report, we'll look at VMMT and how it can benefit enterprises. Plus, we'll share some case studies that show how VMMT is helping companies with very mobile workforces. Finally, we'll make some recommendations for enterprises that are looking for a solution to help improve the overall experience for Teams mobile users.

SECTION II: INTRODUCING VERIZON MOBILE FOR MICROSOFT TEAMS

Verizon is uniquely positioned to mobilize Teams. As of November 2023, the company is currently the only U.S. mobile operator offering a mobile calling solution for Teams and the only provider offering a complete Teams calling suite. With that connection in place, Verizon was able to engineer VMMT, which provides Microsoft Teams calling directly from the Verizon network. As a result, a user's mobile phone can work as a Teams endpoint—in other words, the experience is seamless.

With VMMT, a mobile device can use a phone's native dialer to place and receive Teams calls even when the Teams app is not running. Workers just use the familiar native dialer to make and receive calls. The cellular network treats Teams calls as voice calls. As a result, the network prioritizes them over calls that run on data channels, which ensures the highest possible call quality. Because the network sees them as voice calls, even when data coverage is limited, users can make Teams calls.

The licensing can be more straightforward, too. VMMT works with all Microsoft 365 and Teams Phone Standard licenses, including E5, E3, F1, and F3. As a result, there's no additional cost from Microsoft to the organization.

VMMT is not a walled garden; it works well with other Verizon services that operate with Teams, including Verizon VoIP for Operator Connect and Verizon Calling with Microsoft Teams:

Verizon VoIP for Operator Connect combines the Microsoft Teams Phone System with Verizon's IP trunking solution, known as Verizon VoIP, which makes placing Teams voice calls (both to and from numbers outside of a company network) quicker and easier.

Verizon Calling with Microsoft Teams expands unified communication capabilities beyond the enterprise network—all on a single platform. Enterprises using Microsoft Teams for collaboration can more simply add enterprise-class calling.

VMMT is well suited for companies with front-line workers who are always on the go but require a single company phone number. In addition, companies in industries with strict compliance mandates, such as financial services and healthcare, will also benefit.



CASE STUDY: Beverage Distributor

A beverage distributor turned to VMMT to improve productivity by extending Teams to its drivers and sales reps.

The results:

- Drivers and sales reps now have a **single phone number** shared across all devices.
- The company reaped **cost savings** as it moved away from BYOD and consolidated multiple UC solutions into one: Teams.
- Drivers and sales reps use Teams on their phone's native dialer rather than the Teams app, which provides **better call quality**.

SECTION III: HOW VERIZON MOBILE FOR MICROSOFT TEAMS CAN HELP AN ENTERPRISE

VMMT offers several benefits that enterprises should consider. First, VMMT takes the term “unified communications” literally. It’s a centralized platform that enables all users—including remote and mobile workers, those on the front line, and people in the office—to access Teams. With the integration of Verizon calling within Teams, VMMT provides a unified business communications experience that is significantly simpler for the worker.

VMMT also includes several other features, including the following:

Seamless call transitions: The transition between a simple voice call and Teams is impossible with some systems. VMMT makes it easy to switch between a mobile voice call and a Teams meeting. How often are you in transit for the start of a Teams call and then in the office for the end? This seamless transition eases the disruption. VMMT also simplifies the process of moving from a voice call to a Teams video call.

A single phone number for business users: Managing multiple phone numbers can be a challenge. And keeping track of the device where a specific call or voicemail came in can be confusing. Having a single number, unified call history, and voicemail simplifies that. Workers can make and receive calls from the smartphone’s native dialer or Teams endpoints using one business-owned mobile number while enjoying the simplicity of a single number across devices.

Better corporate control: The plethora of devices needed to support all the communication tools mobile workers use can be a liability for companies. VMMT can integrate with a company’s compliance recording solution for mobile calls without requiring the purchase of additional apps.

A more secure solution: VMMT can be managed with corporate mobile device management (MDM) solutions such as Microsoft Intune, which enables SecOps teams to apply security policies directly to the device. Consequently, organizations can extend enterprise-grade business policies across mobile devices. Enterprises can configure devices to make calls appear to come from the organization rather than a user’s mobile phone so that their direct numbers are not exposed externally.

Reduced costs: VMMT can lower costs and eliminate redundancies by consolidating mobile, hybrid, and front-line workers onto one mobile number. This removes redundancies and reduces the costs associated with multiple phone numbers and devices as well as duplicate systems.



CASE STUDY: Wealth Management

A wealth management firm chose VMMT to provide a single phone number, shared across all their devices, that employees can use to connect with customers wherever they are.

The results:

- The firm gained the ability to **record all calls on all devices**, which complies with industry regulations.
- The firm also **improved security** policy management for all employee calls.
- Users enjoy **better call quality** from using Teams on their phone's native dialer rather than the Teams app.

Simpler calling process: The ZK Research 2023 Hybrid Work Study shows that workers spend up to 40% of their time simply managing their work. Having one phone number for both mobile and Teams can eliminate a chunk of that inefficiency.

Simultaneous ringing on all Teams endpoints: With VMMT, when a call comes in on Teams, it rings on the smartphone's native dialer—as well as across laptops, tablets, and desk phones. This enables employees to answer and make Teams calls on the device of their choice and to move a call to another device with no delay.

No app needed: With VMMT, there's no need to have the Teams app open. As a result, workers will miss fewer calls and be more productive.

Presence integration: Understanding the availability and location of individual employees is a great advantage when planning meetings or trying to get in touch with perennially mobile workers. VMMT turns a mobile phone into a Teams endpoint, so Teams can update presence based on mobile device status.

SECTION IV: CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The pandemic underscored the need for UC solutions, but it also revealed their shortcomings. Even as one of the most successful solutions, Teams has opportunities for improvement. Seamlessly blending the mobile, office, and remote experience has proven challenging. That's where Verizon Mobile for Microsoft Teams comes in as a solution that eliminates some of the most troublesome limitations.

There are other solutions that enterprises might consider. So, as a guide, ZK Research has several recommendations on what to look for:

Seamless call transitions: Ensure the solution switches between a mobile voice call and a Teams meeting without skipping a beat. In addition, see if the solution can facilitate moving from a voice call to a video call without interruption.

A single phone number: Does the solution offer a single number, unified call history, and voice-mail—all from the smartphone's native dialer? This is critical to reduce complexity and expenses.

Security and control: Does the solution utilize popular MDM solutions that help SecOps teams apply security policies directly to the device? This approach enables both the application of enterprise-grade business policies across mobile devices and compliance recording for mobile calls without additional apps. Make sure the solution you choose has this capability.

The business world is hybrid and is never going back to the way it was pre-pandemic. Remote and mobile workers will continue to grow in numbers, so building solutions that can make the life of a road warrior as seamless as possible will be critical. ZK Research has evaluated the VMMT solution and thinks it ticks the right boxes.



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