

EFFECTIVE REMOTE OFFICE WORK MADE POSSIBLE WITH MICROSOFT TEAMS:

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EFFECTIVE REMOTE OFFICE WORK MADE POSSIBLE WITH MICROSOFT TEAMS:

There is no better collaborating business tool out there for any company that is in the need to work remotely. Microsoft Teams enables your employees to interact in ways technology has never allowed before. Microsoft Teams has the complete office package.

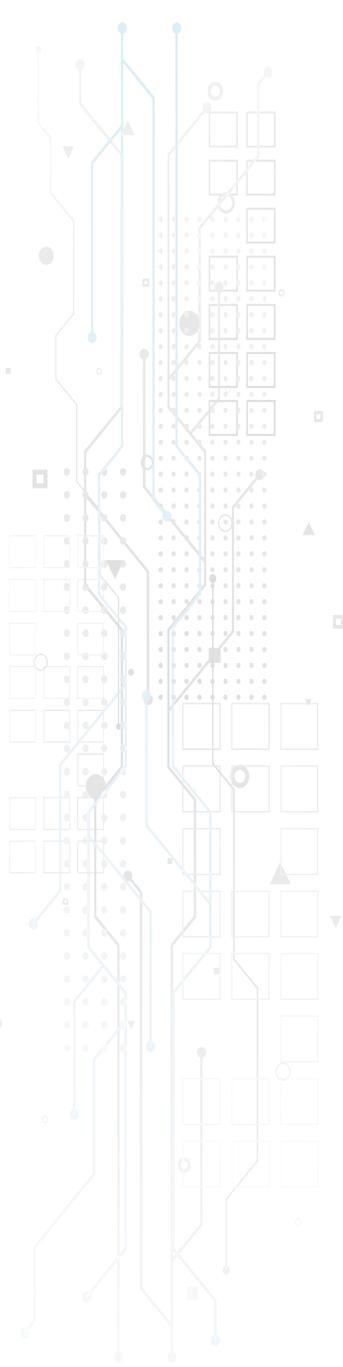
With its multipurpose business features, Microsoft Teams is acclaimed mostly for its voice and video calls and can host up to 250 people and stream meetings with up to 10 000 people. Reduced emails, Direct access to OneDrive, Skype and SharePoint – real-time collaboration and secure internal and external collaboration are amongst some of the benefits that Teams provide.

With such a collaborative tool at hand, working remotely doesn't seem so bad. Teams have completely changed the way we experience working from home.

The most important thing is understanding the current change that we are going through and proactively dealing with that change. We need to design approaches that can help us adapt to the change so that we can be as effective as we were before.

It is important however to consider the shortcomings of Teams meetings versus face to face meetings. It is difficult to assess body language and facial expressions even when you are sitting in a video call. Some people chose to switch off their video. This can make it extremely difficult to know exactly what your employees and customers are doing and what they are truly feeling. Bad connection can also cause people to switch off their video camera Nothing beats travelling to nearby customers and having facetime especially because it allows for pre- and post-meeting exchanges and the understanding of emotion and body language.

Microsoft Teams is an excellent alternative for in-person meetings with flexible communication, including chats, calls, meetings and private and group conversations. Teams is fully integrated with Office 365, allows for access across all of your devices and provides secure internal and external collaboration.



TEAMS – OUR SUBSTITUTE FOR DAILY INTERACTION:

Currently, Microsoft Teams acts as one of our main business tools and in a way, it can be used to strengthen internal and external relationships. Teams can become a powerful tool for applying things like social interaction because of the social nature of our interactions at work. But in the long run, maintaining the strength of relationships only through Teams would be impossible.

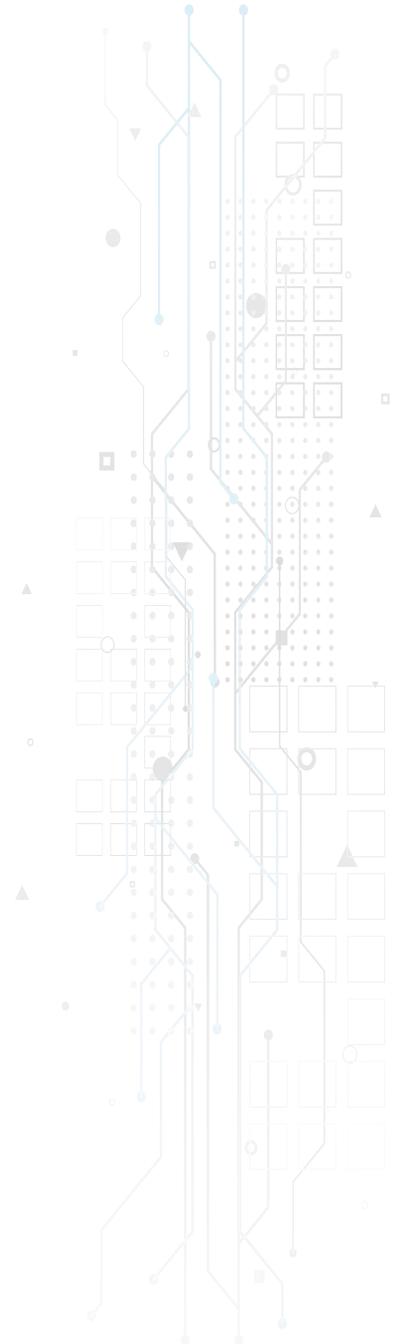
For now, we need to use Teams to empower social interactions that were easier empowered at the office, such as the conversations at the watercooler or drinks on a Friday afternoon, even if we do these things remotely, it is necessary. These social interactions shouldn't be disregarded because we are forced to work from home.

THE IMPACT OF WORKING FROM HOME VIA TEAMS

Any company is built around its people and without being in the company of others, a company would not exist. As a short-term resolution, Microsoft Teams offers the opportunity to keep employees busy with everyday tasks and sustaining productivity. This is a huge benefit and cannot be overlooked.

But as a company, productivity depends heavily on personal interactions, not only for closing deals and persuasion of potential and existing customers but also interactions between employees. Employees might do their work and be highly productive working from home, but over time the degradation of relationships should be considered. Using video is something that should be applied more often in our Teams meetings.

With Microsoft Teams being the collaborative tool that it is, and with the importance it has on a business, we have identified a few rules of engagement for the use of teams – consider them as tips and guidelines.



RULES OF ENGAGEMENT FOR TEAMS MEETINGS:

1. Focus on the call:

Turn off notifications. Receiving notifications during a Teams meeting can reduce concentration. Before going into a Teams meeting, it is vital to prepare yourself to be fully engaged and to make sure everything happens smoothly. Only have documents and tabs open that is appropriate for the current meeting so that you can run through what needs to be said and done properly and efficiently – this will also help the process of sharing your screen.

2. Get your tech right:

Make sure that your tech is in order, things like your microphone and headphones works and if you were listening to music, that it is switched off.

3. Watch out for the quiet people on the call:

If there are quiet people in a meeting, try to include them, this could help strengthen relations. People often have good insights or opinions but hesitate to share them, through including quiet people, good ideas and opinions could be heard.

4. Have a chairperson for the call:

All meetings require a chairperson. The chairperson, in this case, is the person who leads the meeting, giving it direction and setting the tone. This person should be responsible to tell others when to talk and be aware of everything that is being said. The chairperson makes sure there are synergy and continuity in the conversation, he should also consider the pace and agenda of the meeting.

5. Dress appropriately:

When it comes to customers, we want to put our best foot forward – being approachable and professional is essential even when working from home – Make sure to be dressed appropriately, even if the meeting takes 15 minutes of your time. Abide by the dress code and shave. The power of video is unquestionable – people will know what you look like despite not meeting you in person.

6. Respect Confidentiality:

It often happens that someone would share their screen with sensitive information, without noticing that someone who wasn't supposed to see it, joined the call – It is important that whatever that information might have been, it can be trusted that that person would respect the confidentiality and not expose it to anyone. During pre-meetings in a Teams call, people would often talk about the politics or gossips around the office – If something is overheard, the information should be considered confidential and not be shared to anyone if requested.

7. Don't talk nonsense pre-call:

Keep your Teams pre-calls professional. Customers could arrive without you being aware and talking nonsense could set a bad example. However, when you have internal meetings, for example, a stand-up with your team, it is important to strengthen relationships with your colleagues – Schedule time for social interaction via Teams.

8. Late Arrivals:

There are many reasons why someone could be late for a Teams meeting. If you have a meeting scheduled and someone hasn't joined on time, don't phone them immediately, wait for five minutes and if they haven't joined by then, phone. Always make sure that you are ready and prepared, there are enough reminders for you to join in time. If you are late, you should have a valid excuse.

9. Capturing tasks in meetings requires follow-up actions:

Add tasks to Develop. Keep track of your minutes using one note in Teams and assign tasks and activities to people so that they can go into a workflow.

10. Make sure your background is blurred:

Blur your background to protect confidentiality. With Teams' background blur feature, you can hide confidential information in the background (whiteboard) and maintain privacy in your house.

KEY TAKEAWAYS

Teams allow us to be as close to face to face meetings as possible. Although pre- and post-meeting privileges of in-person meetings can't be met with Teams, we have to do everything we can to be able to build, maintain and strengthen relationships with employees and customers.

Professionalism and following the rules of engagement is vital. Remember that Teams shouldn't only be used to do office work, it can also be used for social interaction and many more. Using Teams correctly will make life during lockdown a whole lot easier. Remember to switch your video on!

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT US:



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