

The connected
contact centre.
Native integration
with Microsoft Teams.

All your questions
answered.



Maintaining connections in a hybrid world

Organisations across the globe are adopting Microsoft Teams to provide a backbone for greater collaboration and deeper communication. Designed to meet the needs of increasingly virtual teams and organisations, it is a chat-based digital workspace that is part of the Office 365 stack, that provides a central hub for chat, calls, document sharing and online meetings. With Teams, companies can enable hybrid working and move away from traditional PBX phone systems to more flexible, digital alternatives, enabling people to work together in new, multichannel ways. Given its numerous benefits, it is no wonder that within just three years of its release, Microsoft Teams adoption had grown to over 270 million monthly active users.



As they move forward on their Teams journey, organisations understand that integrating it with the contact centre enhances the value you get from the platform. Bringing Teams into the contact centre drives **greater efficiency** (especially around telephony costs), **increases flexibility** (such as by allowing easier routing of interactions), **boosts productivity** (by allowing agents to handle more interactions and bring down average handling time), all while enhancing the customer experience through a more joined-up approach.

However, while Teams does offer some basic customer service functionality, it isn't a feature-rich contact centre platform as far as CX functionality is concerned. To achieve real benefits, companies therefore need to integrate their Teams platform with a best-of-breed specialist contact centre solution, provided by an experienced Microsoft certified partner.

Integrating the two solutions – contact centre and Teams – is crucial to meeting your specific needs.



This guide outlines the different integration options available, helping you to understand the alternatives and what to look for when choosing the best approach to maximise the benefits to your business.

What are the benefits of integrating your contact centre with Teams?

In Microsoft's own words: "For organisations that want solutions with business tools and workflows to drive the customer journey, contact centre integration for Microsoft Teams allows Contact Centre as a Service (CCaaS) solution providers to integrate their solutions into Teams."

Essentially this is about taking advantage of two world class systems built to interact seamlessly together. Bringing them together delivers multiple benefits.





Joined-up, better service through greater collaboration between the front and back office.



The ability for agents to work and **handle interactions seamlessly**, wherever they are working from.



Improved internal communications, which leads directly to better external communications.



A better employee experience as it is easier for agents to get assistance from colleagues, improving retention rates.



Simpler, more seamless collaboration through the tools Teams offers – presence and availability, workplace chat, video meetings, shared document storage and applications integration.



Record the complete customer journey across every contact centre channel, and optionally extend recording to the wider business to include transferred calls, video and text.



Greater visibility of operations through a single, omnichannel queue, call monitoring, and comprehensive performance and activity metrics.



Dedicated agent and supervisor functions, quality coaching and more.



Better use of resources through intelligent rules-based routing, allowing organisations to set rules to route calls dynamically based on range of factors, such as number called, times of day, and call volumes.



Enhanced contact centre functionality through **integrated call monitoring**, real-time activity dashboards and analytics across every channel.



Improve quality through targeted training based on recorded customer interactions within Teams. Identify specific areas for improvement with the goal of perfect customer satisfaction.

Together, this all delivers a working environment that unites the entire business behind your brand.

What are the options for integrating your contact centre solution with Teams?

To support the rapid growth of Teams within the contact centre, Microsoft and its partners are continuously introducing new developments to deepen the benefits for customers. When it comes to integration, Microsoft currently outlines three models, each with different advantages.

1 The Connect Model

This is the original method of integrating Teams and your contact centre solution, using direct routing and the Session Initiation Protocol (SIP).

As calls come in through the public service telephony network (PSTN), they pass through a Microsoft certified session border controller (SBC).



This identifies the destination of the call – if it is for someone in the main business it routes to their Teams client, or if it is a call for the contact centre it routes to the contact centre platform, both via direct routing.

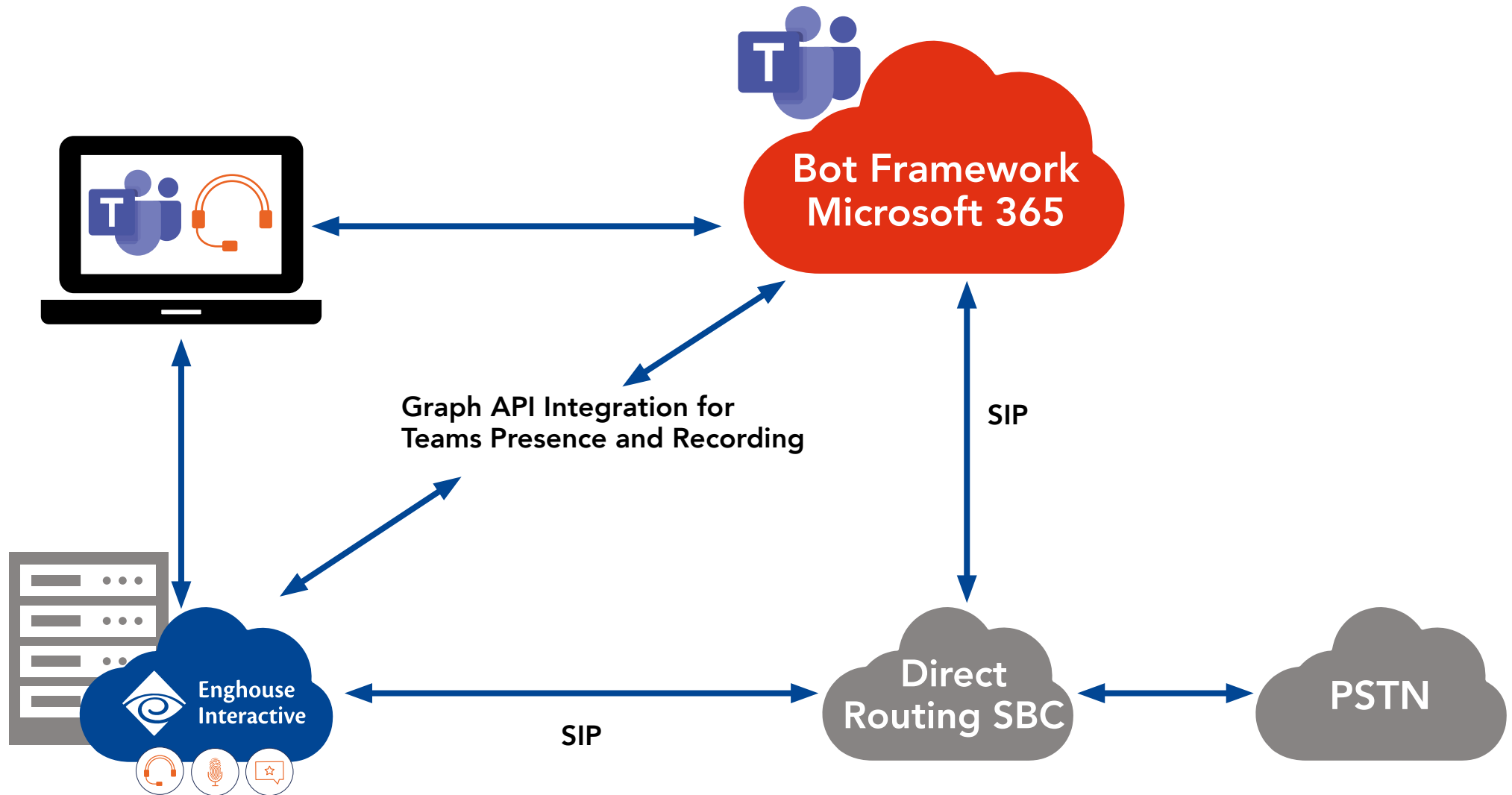
Here it is treated in exactly the same way as any other contact centre call, with the ability to provide hold music and comfort messages to your customers.

The contact centre platform then uses Microsoft Graph cloud communication APIs to check the availability of a suitable agent by looking at Teams presence indicators. Once an agent is free, the call is passed back to the SBC and onwards into Teams.

The Connect model is not native to Teams as the call is held and controlled within the contact centre before being released. It has the advantage of being able to take calls from carriers via direct routing increasing flexibility.



The Connect Model: Microsoft Teams integration for Contact Centre and Recording with Enghouse Interactive



2 The Extend Model

To complement Connect, Microsoft has recently introduced the Extend model, which allows calls to be controlled through APIs in Teams. Unlike Connect, this is a native integration and does not require SIP trunking, as calls are routed directly to Teams.

In the Extend model calls come into the organisation through the PSTN, Microsoft Calling Plans, or Operator Connect and are then automatically routed to Teams. Onward routing is then carried out by a programmable bot in the Microsoft Cloud. This replaces the conference stage in the Connect model, but with the call held within Teams. The contact centre platform uses Microsoft Graph APIs to tell the bot what to do with the call, what messages to give and what routing to follow. When the call reaches the front of the queue, it is then connected to the right agent.

A native Microsoft Teams contact centre allows users to take calls within Microsoft Teams

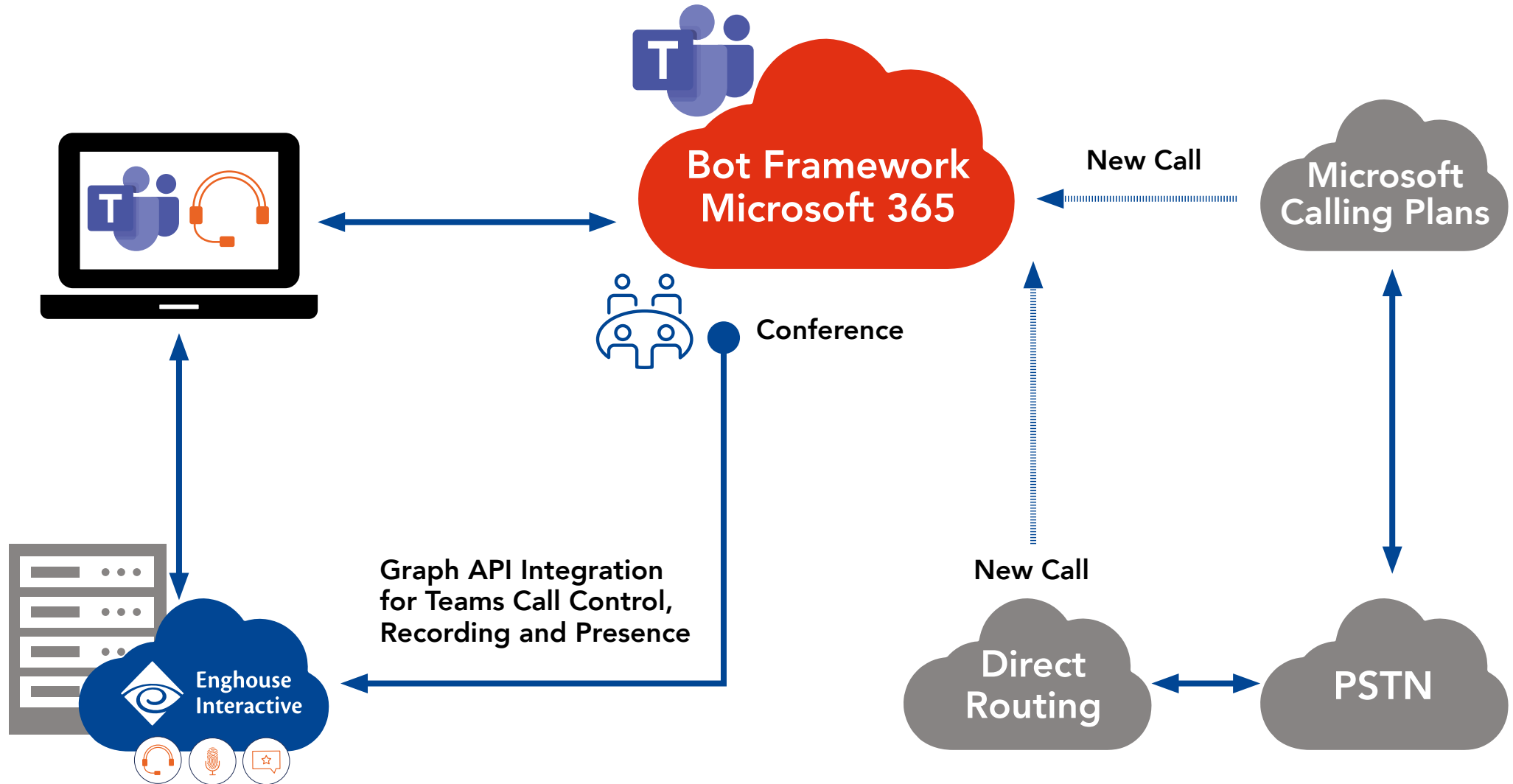
Clearly this is a more straightforward process as the call follows a shorter, more direct path between entering the organisation and being answered, improving quality. This approach also reduces infrastructure overheads, network bandwidth requirements and costs. It also gives greater flexibility in terms of telephony choices as it is truly native. For example, organisations can use Microsoft calling plans without requiring Microsoft phone licenses for all agents, as well as choosing their own carrier. Agents have the same experience when they are using both Teams and their contact centre platform, due to seamless integration. While there is less programming required now there is no SBC or conference, this now happens in the Microsoft Cloud instead.

More importantly, Extend offers potential for future expansion.

For example, organisations will be able to tap into Microsoft Azure cognitive services natively, while the call is ongoing. This allows real-time analysis of factors such as emotion and tone, allowing organisations to prioritise or route calls differently to increase retention and improve the experience.



The Extend Model: Native Microsoft Teams integration for Contact Centre and Recording with Enghouse Interactive



3 The Power Model

The Power model enables solution providers to embed native Teams experiences in their apps. The aim is to provide a seamless, one app/one screen contact centre experience for agents, using Azure Communications Services, and the Teams calling infrastructure and client platform, improving usability and productivity.

The Power model gives full access to collaboration services, direct conversation control and full integration with Teams all in the contact centre UI without the need for a Teams client.

What should you look for in your Teams-enabled contact centre?

To deliver truly excellent customer service, organisations need to bring together Microsoft Teams with a best-of-breed contact centre solution, such as Enghouse Interactive's customer engagement solutions. This will enhance the value of Microsoft Teams and deepen the functionality available to improve the customer experience, increase efficiency and understand more about customers and their needs.



Enghouse Interactive is the natural choice for a Microsoft Teams integrated contact centre for these reasons:

- Enghouse is certified under the Microsoft Teams Connected Contact Centre certification programme.
- Enghouse has a close working relationship with Microsoft, with many years of successfully developing solutions alongside their programmers.
- Enghouse provides flexibility in terms of integration, offering both the Connect and Extend models now, and Power in future. You can even move between models if your needs change.
- Enghouse has extensive real-world experience of installing its solutions and integrating it with Teams in multiple organisations and industries around the world.
- Enghouse offers best-of-breed customer engagement solutions, providing a full range of contact centre features to improve your customer service and enhance your Microsoft Teams operations.
- Enghouse lets you have it your way, offering the ability to easily add new functionality without disruption. Extend your implementation with help from the world's largest portfolio of CX modules, to cover new channels and capabilities, including interaction recording and analytics, conversational AI, and operator attendant console.



"We are one of the first local authorities in Ireland to roll out Microsoft Teams and also one of the first organisations worldwide to integrate Teams into the contact centre. We have a requirement for cutting-edge solutions that are fully integrated with the Teams platform. Of all the solutions we evaluated, Enghouse Communications Center most clearly fitted this need." Danny O'Toole, Head of Digital Transformation, Mayo County Council

Delivering best of breed customer service with Microsoft Teams and Enghouse

Seamlessly bringing together Microsoft Teams with the right contact centre solution enhances the benefits of both platforms, boosting efficiency, control, and the overall customer experience. Integration is key to making the whole process smooth and efficient. Organisations now have the option for a totally native integration (Extend) alongside Connect direct routing. The approach you take will depend on your particular needs, existing infrastructure, and wider plans for telephony.

If you would like to know more about your options and assess the level of functionality your contact centre requires to service your customers effectively, please reach out to your local Enghouse team to chat further. An experienced, Microsoft certified partner such as Enghouse Interactive has the right knowledge and functionality to deliver the model that best aligns with your current and future needs. Our team has an enormous depth of contact centre expertise that is continually enhanced by assisting and advising customers of all sizes and across all industries, all around the world.



About Enghouse Interactive

We are the world's most reliable customer contact technology provider. Our global brand is built on our track record of consistently honouring our commitments to our customers, our staff and our shareholders.

Enghouse Interactive, a subsidiary of Enghouse Systems Limited (TSX: ENGH) is a leading global provider of customer contact software and service solutions that deliver enhanced customer service and transform the contact centre from a cost centre into a powerful growth engine.

Our practices and solutions enable businesses to leverage meaningful, daily customer interactions to extract key insights used to deepen customer loyalty and uncover new opportunities to add value, profitably. Supporting over 10,000 customers, in 120+ countries, Enghouse Interactive works within any local regulatory environment and supports any telephony technology, whether cloud-based or deployed on-premises, ensuring that our customers can be reached by their customers – anytime, anywhere and via any channel.



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