Microsoft Teams – Useful Tips

Here are 8 useful tips that can help you get the most out of Microsoft Teams and your Office 365 investment.

Microsoft Team has become a powerful corporate chat application. Teams comes with enterprise Office 365 and there is a free version as well,

Similar to other chat tools, Microsoft Teams allows you to set up multiple channels (discussion areas) for your team, share and store files, and conduct live voice and video meetings. As part of the Microsoft Office suite, Teams integrates with other Microsoft apps like Word, OneNote, Planner, and SharePoint. Indeed, Microsoft has announced that Skype for Business Online will be retired on July 31, 2021.

If you’re already working in Microsoft Teams, try the following tips to get more out of it.

1. Title your chat exchanges.
Channels typically contain numerous conversations. To help a particular chat stand out and make it more searchable, give it a title. For example, if you’re chatting with someone from marketing about a new social media campaign, call the chat “Facebook push with marketing,” and those keywords will pop up when you do a search later on. To name a chat, just click the pencil on the top next to the member names and type the title you want.

2. Using SharePoint to store and share files.

Many enterprises rely on SharePoint as secure file storage and collaboration platform. The good news is it’s highly integrated into Teams. In every channel, you can click the Files tab to share files with team members via SharePoint or access SharePoint files already shared to the channel. Team members can collaborate on files shared to a channel using Office Online or an Office desktop app.

3. You can Forward emails into a channel.

Although some tiny startups skip email and use chat exclusively, Microsoft is well aware of how much most of us in the corporate world depend on email. Fortunately, you can forward any email message to a channel from Outlook.

Just click the ellipsis next to any channel name and select “Get email address.” That generates an email address for the channel. Copy it, and you can use that address to forward Word docs, messages, or just about anything you want to add to the channel. It’s a nifty workaround.

4. Use the mobile apps for on-the-go messaging.

It might not be obvious to many Teams users, but there are mobile apps for Android, iOS and Windows Mobile. The apps keep things simple, emphasizing team chats and channels without a lot of extra layers and features. Teams also run as a web app or a desktop client for Windows or Mac — which means you have a lot of options.
5. Integrate with Microsoft Planner for simple task management.

One perk Teams offers versus Slack and other competitors is that you can use Microsoft apps like Planner inside Teams. (Slack offers thousands of integrations as well, but every Microsoft app is available to integrate from the get-go in Teams.)

Planner, a task-management tool for small teams, is not exactly robust, but it’s a good way to track tasks and then reference them in Teams without a lot of fuss — plus you won’t need a third-party task manager. You can also “pin” the Planner app to any channel to make it more accessible in one click. If you do, Planner shows up as a tab at the top of the channel. Click the plus sign to add a task.

6. Invite others into the fold.

Microsoft Teams is far-reaching right out of the box. You’re not limited to chatting with people in your own team; you can provide guest access to anyone at your company with an Outlook account so you can chat, share documents and more. (Try it — you can search on the name of anyone at your company to find them and start chatting.)

7. Create your own GIFs.

Sprinkling animated GIFs into chats can be motivational for your team, especially for younger workers. A cat leaning back to relax or someone tipping their hat as a thank you can stand out and send just the right message.

You can pick from the animated GIFs included with Teams or use the Giphy app to create your own, which adds an extra layer of personalization to the team chat. Note that although Giphy is built into Teams, the Teams administrator needs to activate it.
8. Use Keyboard shortcuts.

Did you know you can simply press the R key on your keyboard to reply to a thread in the Teams app? Or press Alt-A in Windows (Option-A on a Mac) to quickly attach a file to a message? See all the keyboard shortcuts available in Teams by pressing Ctrl+E to go to the Search field, type /keys, and then press Enter in Windows. Or press Command+E to move the focus to the search field at the top of the screen, type /keys, and press Return on a Mac.

New Microsoft Teams Features

- Linux Support

Teams is actually the first client in the entire M365 suite that has been released on Linux. While Linux users previously could use the web-based Teams, now they can install a client that offers them all the core, rich features that other Teams clients provide.

- Subtitles

Microsoft has introduced Live Captions in Public Preview. This feature will certainly come in handy for those with hearing disabilities or with language proficiency. Or even for those of us that have noisy neighbours (or environments), this feature will be welcomed to help follow along with spoken content during a meeting.

- Add Additional Participants in Meeting Chat

Just like adding participants to individual chats, you can now add additional participants to a meeting chat and be selective about which chat content they can see.

- Meeting Roles

Meeting organizers can now choose between 3 roles (Organizer, Presenter, and Attendee) for participants. The chart below identifies what roles carry which capabilities when utilizing roles in Microsoft Teams meetings.

- Chrome Video Calling

Video calling in the Google Chrome browser is now generally available. Using Chrome, users can now initiate and accept video calls with other Teams users.

- O365 ProPlus Semi-Annual Channel Inclusion

Starting in January 2020, Microsoft is including the Microsoft Teams client in the O365 ProPlus Semi-Annual Channel. This eases the deployment and adoption of the Teams client for your organization if you haven’t already deployed it globally.
• **New Mobility Policy**

If you’ve run into issues with using Teams on a mobile device and using cellular data to make audio and/or video calls, you can now take advantage of the new mobility policy that requires them to be on Wi-Fi in order to do so.

• **Incoming IP Video Policy**

Meetings policies have been updated to allow more control over video management in Microsoft Teams. While previously, you could only restrict outgoing video, now you control both outgoing and incoming video where needed. This can help when trying to manage bandwidth in certain locations.

• **New integration between Microsoft Teams and Microsoft Outlook**

The integration will empower Teams users to share or move any email into a brand new chat channel. New “Share to Teams” button will simply move the email into Microsoft Teams for sharing or saving. This will allow employees to have a private conversation regarding a specific email or simply make the experience between the two systems slightly easier. This feature will not allow a reply to email that can be accomplished using Slack, but will simply move the email statically into Microsoft Teams.
• **A brand new Tasks pane**

The Tasks pane will allow for the user to have a single view of tasks assigned within Teams, Microsoft To Dos, Planner, and Outlook will all be visible. The Tasks pane will be fully customizable to place importance on boards, charts, lists or schedules that are most important to that user.

• **Pop Out Window**

Microsoft has finally released the ability to pop out a chat into a separate window. This will allow for work, chats, calls, remote sessions to sit side-by-side with other apps being used.

• **Private Channels**
This feature allows users to create new channels within Microsoft Teams that already exist, but can choose to allow access to only members selected by private channel creator. Great use of the private channel would be to limit collaboration to users who have a need to know. This will allow facilitating communication between certain assigned people without creating a brand new team. Lock icons will indicate if a channel is private or not, and members of the private channel will only be able to see who and partake in conversations within that channel.