# Overview

As workplace practices have evolved into telecommuting and flexible timings, collaboration is backed by technologies that enable communication through file sharing, instant messaging and video calling. During the Covid-19 pandemic, organizations quickly adopted solutions that support remote working, including TCO 365. This new working methodology has provided opportunities for improving performance, productivity, and work-life balance. Additionally, with highly collaborative tools like TCO 365, there is no going back to the old ways for many organizations that plan to stay less office-centric and more result-oriented in the long run. In other words, collaborative tools have become a necessity and are here to stay.

Apart from useful features that other collaborative tools provide, cloud telephony goes a step ahead in providing a consistent experience to users all over the globe – including security, reliability and control. It provides long-term benefits to businesses as well as employees by eliminating the need for provisioning and maintaining on-premise telephony equipment – thus reducing costs and simplifying the processes. With a solution like TCO 365 cloud telephony, an employee can securely communicate with their colleagues and customers for any device with internet.

As a next logical step, IT leaders should integrate their collaboration tools with business telephony to move to the cloud. A cloud-based telephony system can allow anyone to make and receive calls on their business phone number from any device that has enabled internet, such as a cell phone, tablet, desktop computer, or a desk phone. Microsoft’s TCO 365 cloud telephony can further integrate internal and external collaboration through its Microsoft Teams interface.

So, should organizations looking for such collaboration choose TCO 365? In this paper, we answer questions to help organizations in deciding what steps they need to take next.

# What is Cloud Telephony?

The concept behind cloud telephony is to replace physical Private Branch Exchange (PBX) with a cloud-hosted software phone system. It allows your business phone service to move to the cloud. For smaller organizations with a single office location, cloud telephony system is convenient in terms of no dependency on PBX hardware, whereas for large organizations that have more than one office locations, it provides lesser costs, better management and consistency across multiple sites.

Cloud telephony can also be incorporated into Unified Communications (UC), including video and voice conferencing, instant messaging and fixed mobile convergence. UC provides an integrated experience spread across the enterprise network and is provided as a cloud hosted service.

Cloud telephony streamlines communication within your business and grows along with it. Whether you are planning to hire remote workers, expand your office locations, or hiring in-house personnel, cloud telephony helps make the expansion cost-effective and effortless.

# How Does Cloud Telephony Work?

Cloud telephony works through a Voice over IP (VoIP) service provider. The service provider routes a call when a phone number is dialed. Analog voice signals are converted into data packets and transmitted over the user’s internet connection. The call is then connected to the receiver.

On the user’s end, individual phone extension is replaced with a VoIP desk phone. Instead of connecting to landline, the phone is connected to an existing network. We can also install an application on our phone, desktop or tablet. As cloud telephony works in the cloud, the business phone system can be managed through a dashboard that provides many features such as adding new users, call forwarding, and more.

# Unified Communications as a Service – What do Statistics Show?

According to Gartner, the following trends will be observed in the next three years:

* “By 2022, 74% of organizations will move at least 5% of their normally full-time, on-site workers, who had switched to working from home temporarily, into permanent remote-working positions.”
* “By 2023, more than 50% of large organizations will connect to cloud providers using direct cloud connectivity from their WANs, up from 10% in 2019.”
* “By 2024, 74% of the new unified communications licenses purchased by organizations will be cloud-based, up from 48% in 2019.”

These statistics indicate that very soon, PBX systems will become obsolete and cloud telephony will be widely adopted in the next decade.

# Telstra Calling for Office 365 – Adding Cloud Telephony to Microsoft Teams

Microsoft Teams has been conventionally used by businesses to chat and make internal voice and video calls. However, with time it is now being used for making external calls as well. To do this, there needs to be a way that can connect your call outside your organization. For this purpose, Microsoft Teams has its own PBX in the cloud, known as Phone System. The Phone System adds cloud telephony to Microsoft Teams. But for enabling phone calls, it must be connected to global PSTN network. There are two ways to do this with Microsoft i.e., Calling Plans or Direct Routing using a managed service provider or third-party carrier.

Calling plans by Microsoft are available in only 16 countries. Users in these countries can use these plans by either creating a new phone number or porting their existing numbers. They include minute bundles for making calls outside the organization.

These plans are suitable for small businesses that operate in only one country. However, for larger enterprises that operate in multiple countries, calling plans are not that suitable. This is because a multi-national company will need to avail numerous calling plans to cater to each of the country it operates in. Furthermore, it may not suit a company which has office locations in countries where the calling plans are not available.

Additionally, calling plans only provide fixed call bundles which are not flexible for changing business needs. They are also expensive. Plans that allow users to make international calls start from $24 per month for one user.

On the other hand, Direct Routing solution by a managed service provider is not only cost-effective but also offers more flexibility. For organizations requiring more complex solutions, there is limited assistance from Microsoft. That’s where a service like TCO 365 can help provide technical expertise along with PSTN connectivity to ensure a successful implementation and seamless transition to cloud telephony.

Another advantage of direct routing is the provision of local DID numbers for receiving calls from different countries. Typically, organizations that have more than 100 employees require a service like TCO 365 to make and receive calls via direct routing. Other than few countries where it’s not allowed, the service ports current business numbers to cloud telephony.

TCO 365 manages the cloud telephony system centrally. For economies of scale, the call charges are included for all the users in one agreement. However, billing can be singled out on the basis of business unit or country.

Thus, you can turn Microsoft Teams into a complete telephony solution by adding the Phone System license. Users are linked to Microsoft 365 software suite and can also make and receive direct calls on any device from Microsoft Teams. By further adding a calling plan or managed service provider and gaining a PSTN connection, businesses can enhance their capability to make and receive calls anywhere in the world.

# Adding TCO 365 Cloud Telephony to Teams – How Can Users Benefit?

Cloud telephony is widely used by people who need to make a lot of calls from any location as a part of their work requirement. It allows them to stay easily connected in a seamless manner. They can make and receive calls on their business phoneline, use call forwarding, access voicemail and also avail other features like hunt groups.

In older systems, we could use call forwarding feature on office phones when out of office, but not only was this possible only for inbound calls, it also incurred call forwarding costs. Moreover, it does not work for outbound calls or provide other PBX features for users to use from their mobile phones.

With TCO 365 cloud telephony, users can use their device that runs Microsoft Teams while connected to the internet. It also lets users switch between cell phones, computers, soft phones and meeting rooms. Furthermore, using Teams for all internal and external communication means that users will use the same interface for all kinds of communication, making it easier and more convenient to use. With employees out of office, customers can still contact them any time – making remote working easier. When an employee uses cell phone for cloud telephony, calls are made through data connection instead of per minute call charges. Hence, the cost is lower – especially for a user travelling overseas. Teams with TCO 365 cloud telephony enables efficient, easier communication to get the business done and bring desirable business outcomes.

# Traditional PBX Versus Cloud PBX

Traditional PBX system has been used by organizations for many years. If you are an organization that wishes to keep complete control on all its data on the site and can also afford high upfront costs, traditional PBX is the right choice for you. With a traditional PBX you may also feel more secure, since the legacy system transfers data via PSTN which makes it less likely to be hacked.

However, on-premise PBX are known to be complicated and harder to manage in contrast to their cloud-based modern counterpart. Though traditional PBX may provide you with more control, it costs more overall when making system updates, which not only consume time but are also complex.

An organization that has cloud telephony or hosted PBX cannot have a dedicated on-premise server. Hence, it is unable to control every aspect of the system. But on the other hand, this means that it has less bulky onsite hardware to deal with, and more office space available.

Though some businesses have quickly adopted and embraced cloud telephony, many others are still discovering and deciding upon the tremendous advantages of the technology. By 2025, Cloud computing market is expected to reach $832 billion.

# Why Should Your Business Add TCO 365 Cloud Telephony to Teams?

Based on Microsoft 365 platform, TCO 365 cloud telephony allows your business to maintain a standardized working environment across all the offices. If your business requires employees to move around or work from home, cloud telephony is the ultimate requirement. The platform is centrally controlled by the organization and provides consistent experience to all the employees working from different locations. It also allows network monitoring to check and address any issues with audio/video quality and reliability. Users don’t have to use their personal phones or pay phone bill from their pocket for official calls.

TCO 365 cloud telephony provides better performance, scalability and uptime. It delivers user support and training, since the solution is centralized. It is also possible to provide personal support to each user worldwide in local language.

With TCO 365, you can easily add and remove users, roll out change and update the system. All the management is done centrally, making it secure and flexible while managing and measuring global data usage costs. With a cloud telephony system linked to Microsoft’s access solutions and security improves control and makes it less complex to use. As the call is hosted in the cloud, local network issues can resolved by routing the call another way. If there is a large traffic, its easy to manage the capacity.

It also helps with cost reduction. In conventional PBX systems, organizations have a PBX at every office location. The hardware needs to be managed and maintained at all times. TCO 365 bypasses the need of installing and maintaining PBX for every building. Particularly for an organization that opens a new office while closing down another, TCO 365 cloud telephony provides more flexibility and convenience than an on-premise system.

As the world is moving towards remote working, there is less reason to believe why businesses should tether an employee’s phone number to a single location. By using a globally managed service provider, an organization does not need a regional carrier for every country. It is also possible to save charges on overseas and forwarded calls, since they aren’t routed via PSTN. For large enterprises, this brings economies of scale with operational cost savings over the years.

# Projected Benefits to SMBs and Enterprises

A Total Economic Impact report by [Forrester](https://tools.totaleconomicimpact.com/go/microsoft/voicedtei/) for Microsoft Teams calling solutions describes its costs and benefits for both SMBs and Enterprises. It assumes SMBs to have 100 users and enterprises to have 10,000 users. Considering this, cloud telephony provides the following benefits to its customers.

## Saves the Time of Users

As it’s readily accessible from all devices, it helps organize business processes and considerably reduces the time that it otherwise utilized in initiating and continuing phone calls through online conferencing or PSTN. The benefit is same for both SMBs and enterprises. Employees who mostly work remotely save about 15 minutes every day whereas others save around 7.6 minutes. Because not all saved time can be labeled as productive, if 50% of this time is accounted for productivity, it amounts to $11 M benefit to the enterprise whereas $110K to SMB in three years.

## More Flexible and Less Costly

Conventional calling solutions include Plain Old Telephone Service (POTS), hosted service providers, or PBXs. Cloud telephony not only replaces these solutions, it also eliminates international and long- distance call rates.

## Centralized Support for all Communications

Previously, telephony management needed a different support skillset for the organization than the regular IT support. For an enterprise, this meant that a specialized team had to be assigned. TCO 365 is a part of Teams and Microsoft 365. The voice solution can be managed from a single console along with all other collaboration tools. Moreover, it is much easier to add and remove users. As a result, lesser effort is spent in managing the users and voice infrastructure.

## Business Continuity with Better Security

TCO 365 has complete security stack integrated. The voice service is linked to the user’s identity, which provides better security and user visibility. Since the voice data is hosted in the cloud, with the possibility to remotely work from anywhere, it paves the way for disaster recovery and business continuity in times of an actual security breach incident.

## Happy Customers and Employees

Customers and employees feel at ease with Microsoft Team integrated calls through TCO 365. With easy collaboration and one-click solution, employees feel more productive and can focus better on other equally important tasks.

## Scale Easily and Quickly

TCO 365 makes it easier for organizations to scale their communications according to their needs as the business grows. Cloud telephony offers less hassle to provision and handling management and activation tasks, resulting in improved business agility. Cloud solution also allows businesses to add users within minutes instead of days. You can even add entire departments to the system and make them up and running much faster than a conventional PBX solution.

The user-friendly interface of TCO 365 also makes it easy for administrators to make changes and add/remove users from anywhere within seconds, thus saving them time and resources.

## Innovation-Friendly

Moving from an on-premise PBX system to a cloud telephony system means that the users benefit from a more flexible and innovative communication platform. They work in a modern IT environment and also get the support and maintenance they need, along with regular system updates.

# How to Add TCO 365 Cloud Telephony to Microsoft Teams?

To add complete voice calling service of Microsoft team, we need license for Microsoft’s cloud-based Phone System. This has to be configured and connected to a PSTN network. Currently, each user needs a base license like Microsoft, or Office 365 E1, E3 or F3 to get a Phone System addon license. Microsoft or Office 365 E5 has the Phone System addon already included under the license.

TCO 365 can provide Direct Routing and PSTN connection to enterprises for connecting their calls. It includes global voice calling feature in Microsoft Teams with the Phone System. Direct Routing is possible with the help of Session Border Controller (SBC) interface. SBC is also commonly referred to as a “PSTN Gateway”. For users to retain their already existing phone numbers, there is porting option of DDI extensions and phone numbers into the new system in all the countries where the service is functional.

Once done, the user has to install Microsoft Teams application on their device, which includes Windows, Android or iOS. If they already have Microsoft 365 installed for official work and emails, the transition is easier. For organizations where some form of Unified Communication is already in place, moving telephony to MS Teams is not a very big change. It’s possible to integrate old and new systems together in the start and make a slow transition towards the cloud system.

Finally, we need to train the actual users of the system. Since the new desktop application will provide many more features than the conventional telephone handsets, it is important that all employees understand how to operate the cloud telephony system and embraces it.

The users can then use their TCO 365 cloud telephony system instead of on-premise PBX system. Their DDI numbers are also ported to make them send and receive calls through the MS Teams application, while showing their caller ID for outgoing calls. Managed services work globally, provide more security and are customized to the business’s needs. It also provides flexibility to the business to use voicemail, phone numbers, call flows, calling ID, IVR, advanced call routing, security, and compliance.

TCO 365 includes everything as a fully managed service – system design, integration, migration, user training, and support.

# TCO 365 – A Brief Insight into the Features

* **Cloud Auto Attendant** – Allows users to locate calls to specific departments or users in the organization.
* **Call by Name or Number** – users can make calls by clicking a name or dialing a number.
* **Call Forwarding** – Users can set up call forwarding where calls are directed to voicemail or other colleagues.
* **Group Calls** – users can forward incoming calls to a group or allow them to share a call with other users.
* **Call Transferring** – allows users to transfer a call to another user or transfer call from their PC to their cell phone.
* **Caller ID** – Inbound calls from within the company collect information from the organization directory and show ID, picture and job title of the caller instead of only a phone number.

These, along with many other features including video calling, cloud voicemail, distinctive ring alerts, and call blocking are a part of TCO 365 solution.