

Whitepaper

Making Teams the Base Of Operations for Your Remote Workplace





'New cloud-based and mobile technology has changed the way we work'

Times are tough for growing businesses. To meet the current challenges posed by the pandemic, organizations need to boost productivity, connect employees, and foster an effective company culture.

This is harder now that employees are working from home, and so the 'base of operations' has had to move online. Microsoft Teams has all the attributes and capabilities to meet these challenges and become this base of operations for a remote and dispersed workforce.

In this whitepaper, we discuss some of the problems posed by the pandemic, the nature of remote working today, and how Teams is rising to the challenge. We have highlighted how Teams integrations, especially with Microsoft's Power Platform, can help organizations take their base of operations and digital workplace to the next level.

Meeting the Challenge of the Times

In the past few years, there has been a significant shift in the workplace. New cloud-based and mobile technology has changed the way we work, giving employees more freedom to work anywhere, at any time. The advent of this 'digital workplace' has transformed how employees communicate and collaborate – and it has the potential to help growing businesses reach new levels of productivity.

Many organizations were in the early stages of digital transformation journeys when the COVID-19 pandemic struck. The workplace has perhaps changed for the long-term. As organizations consider how to optimize remote working, it is essential to adopt a 'base of operations' that helps boost productivity, brings your employees closer together, and fosters company culture.

What Is a Base of Operations?

A base of operations is traditionally the physical headquarters of an organization. You might refer to the city or town you are located in or the name of the building. But now that everyone is remote, the usual base of operations must move online.

In this context, when we talk about a base of operations, we're really talking about how organizations use technology to achieve optimal communication, engagement, and alignment as a business on an ongoing basis.

At Worksighted, we believe there are a few essential characteristics of a base of operations.

It should:

- Enable productivity, communication, and collaboration.
- Help establish and maintain company culture.
- Be flexible, customizable, and adaptable to deal with change.

Organizations must make sure they put in the right base of operations if they are to overcome the current challenges posed by the pandemic.

The problem is only partly a technology one. Yes, employees need the right tools to collaborate and communicate in a remote setting. But it is also an engagement issue, where developing and maintaining company culture is crucial to success. Bringing people together, so they can work better on projects, access the technology they need, and feel part of a unified whole – that's what a base of operations is all about.

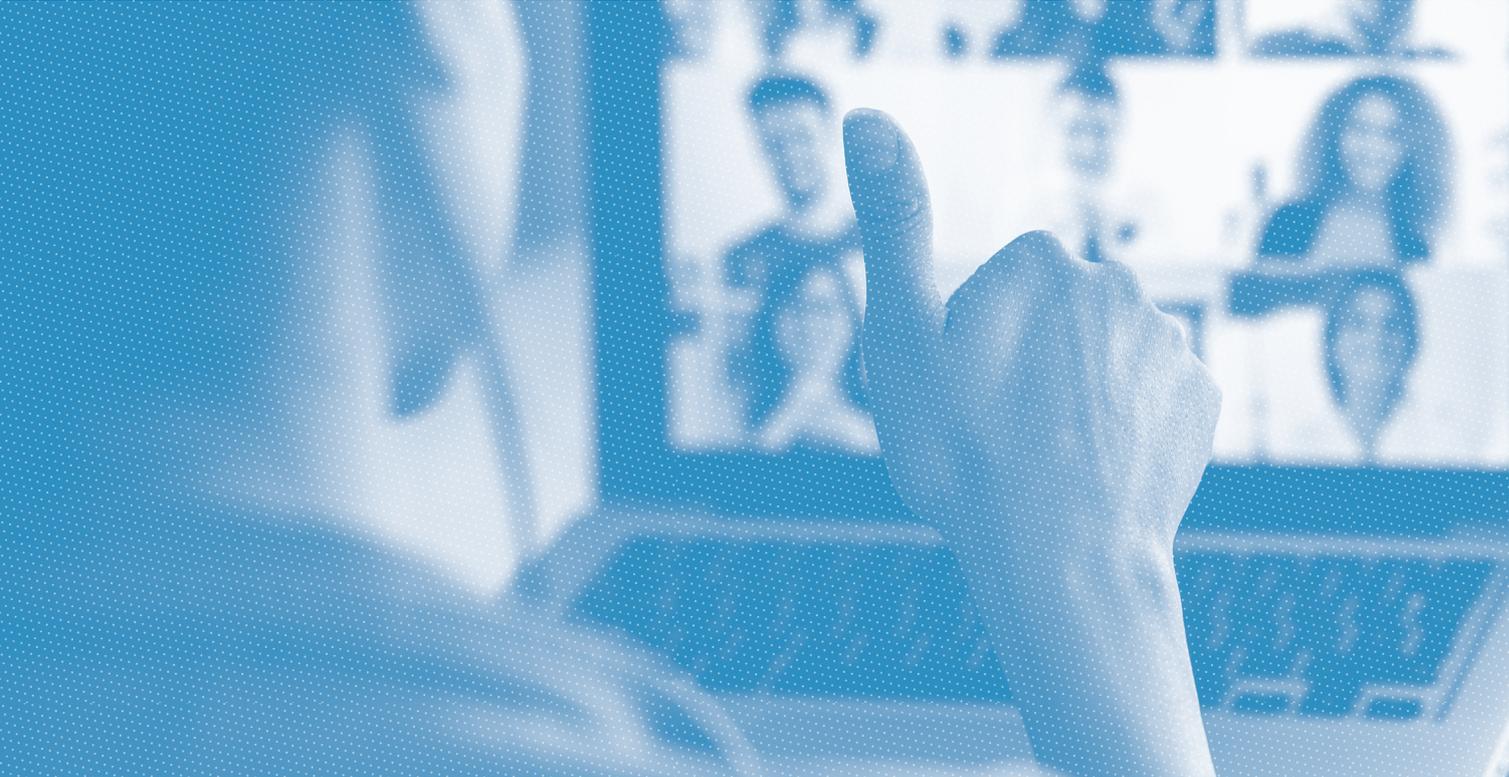
Microsoft Teams: A Rising Star

For many organizations that use Microsoft technology, the answer is staring them in the face. It's Microsoft Teams, the all-purpose communication and collaboration hub at the center of Microsoft 365.

Microsoft Teams was launched in 2017 as Microsoft's answer to Slack, a popular instant messaging application. Microsoft Teams initially proved popular with users, providing a space to quickly connect with colleagues, hold virtual meetings, and swap documents back and forth. But Microsoft had much greater designs for the platform.

Teams has quickly become more than an instant messaging app. It is the portal to the Microsoft productivity suite, connecting users to the colleagues, apps, files, meeting spaces, schedules, and systems that they need for work.

With an increasingly dispersed workforce, it has become a critical aid in establishing and maintaining company culture. This is why Microsoft's rising star is the perfect solution for a base of operations, during the pandemic and beyond.



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Creating a Base of Operations Through Teams

In the recent past, employees would start the working day by logging into the company intranet. Now, it’s much more likely to be Microsoft Teams. But what exactly is it that makes Teams so popular with employees?

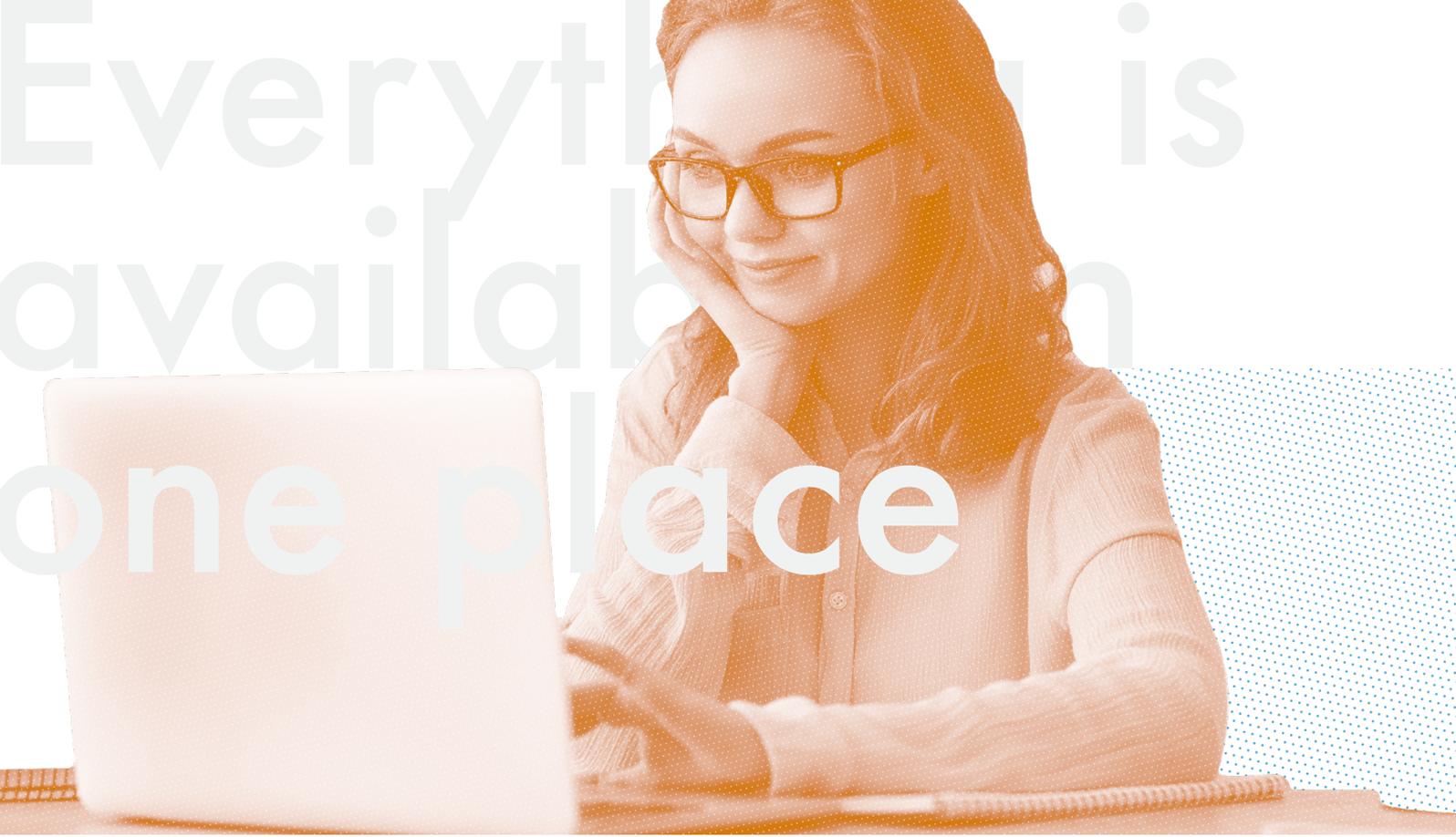
We’ll examine three reasons why Teams is a good option for a base of operations:

 Everything is available in one place

 Access to wide-ranging integrations

 Fosters company culture

Everything is available in one place



Everything in One Place

Microsoft Teams brings everything employees need to communicate and collaborate with each other in one place, creating a seamless user experience. With instant chat, videoconferencing, filesharing, real-time document editing, and more, employees have access to the full range of productivity tools in one window. Here are the main Teams features:

Videoconferencing

Teams can host online video meetings with as few as two people right up to live events containing 10,000 people, with high quality video, audio and screen sharing. Not only can meetings be recorded, but AI capabilities can add captions and translation to help sure no one misses a thing. Break out rooms allow users to 'break out' from the main meeting to collaborate in smaller groups.

Teams And Channels

Teams provides a way to group employees so they can work better together. Decentralized functionality allows employees to hold meetings and create conversations around the topics, projects, and people that matter to them. This creates a joined up and integrated approach to working together.

Voice And Video Calling

Teams is also a hub for telephony and virtual calling, allowing users to make and receive calls both internally and externally. Whether it's a desk phone or an entire call center, Teams provides a secure and reliable phone system in the cloud.

Real-time Collaboration

Integration with Office apps makes it easy for users to upload and share documents, as well as set permissions, so that teams can work on projects efficiently and securely. Microsoft Whiteboard takes this one step further, giving users an interactive space to collaborate, and when used with Microsoft Surface Hub, this allows organizations to turn any room into a fully functioning virtual meeting space.

Instant Chat

Connect instantly with one-to-one or group chat, allowing users to continue the conversation after meetings have concluded. It also helps to reduce email clutter. Chat bubbles allow users to chat efficiently over group meetings and calls, without disrupting the flow of the meeting.

Microsoft Integration and Beyond

One of the core attributes of a base of operations – and one of Teams’ main advantages – is its ability to become the go-to place for work. Microsoft Teams’ integration capabilities make it perfect as a portal for productivity.

Teams has the potential to be greater than the sum of its parts, because of how effectively it brings together technology from around the Microsoft 365 suite. Integration includes:



Office



Planner



SharePoint



Outlook



OneDrive



Calendar

Third-party Integration

The platform also integrates with popular third-party apps, from Adobe to Wrike, and Mural to ServiceNow. The breadth of tools that can be brought into Teams is greater than anything else on the market. This is so important for maintaining productivity while working remotely. Everything is accessible through one window, regardless of where you are working and on whichever device you use.

Fostering Company Culture

A base of operations must bring together your employees in a way that achieves optimal communication, engagement, and alignment. Fostering and maintaining company culture is at the heart of this.

In previous years, this would have been the remit of the company intranet. While the traditional intranet was a place to post company updates and news, it was not as dynamic as Microsoft Teams. Intranets are often static and centralized, meaning that content was often not engaging, relevant, or created by users.

With Teams and channels, users are provided with a constant stream of relevant info and updates from colleagues, tailored to what they need and want to see. Employees are only a few clicks away, so everyone feels constantly connected.



Informal And Friendly

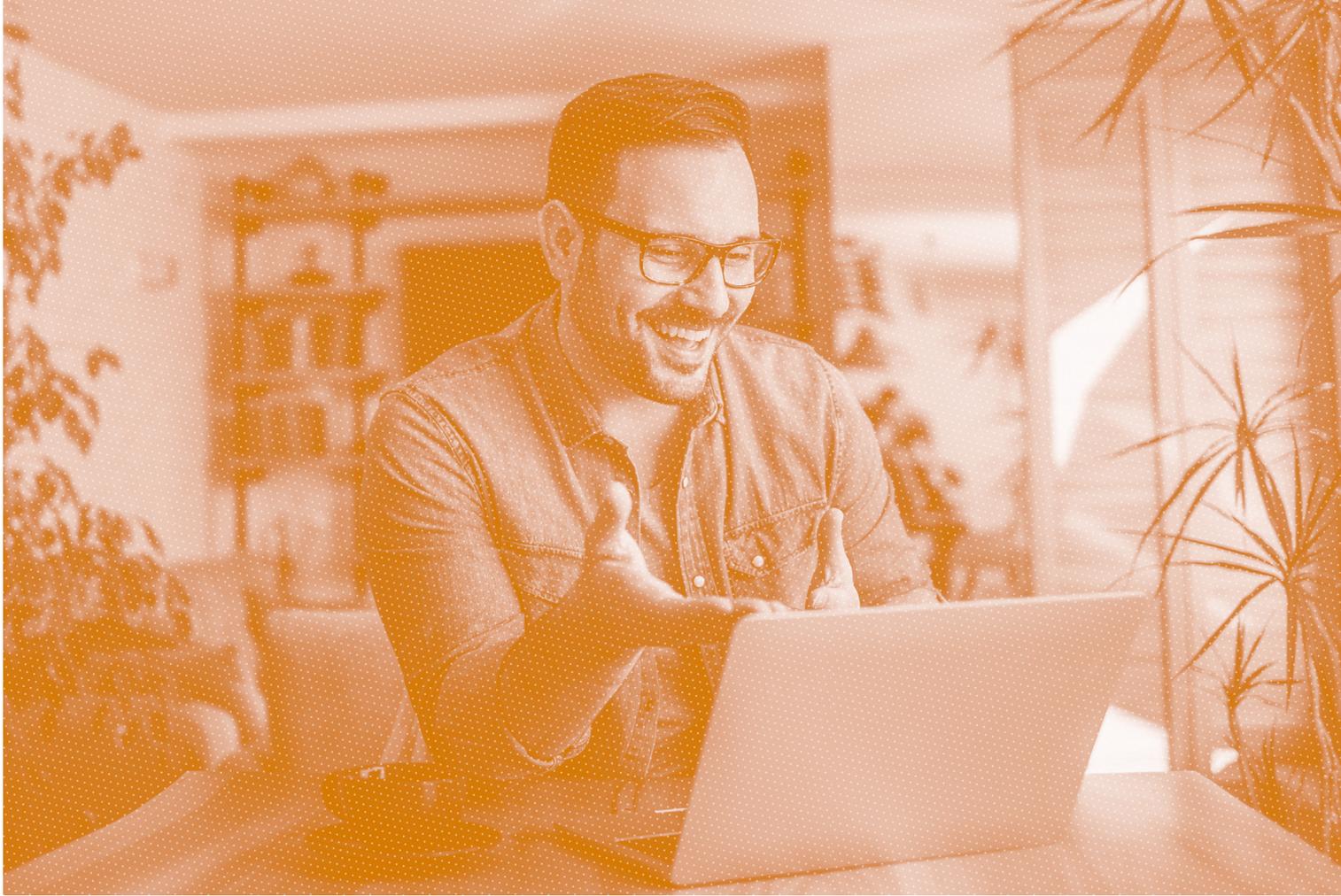
Likes, emojis, GIFs, stickers, and @mentions in chat provide a means of communication that is informal and spontaneous – and can help employees bring their personalities into the mix. Sharing videos and photos can add an extra dimension too. Teams provides an interactive and dynamic space to accommodate the kinds of conversations that might occur naturally in the office, in and around meetings, during coffee breaks etc.



Boost Engagement

Group chat and meetings can bring lots of people together quickly, and can be used to facilitate company social events, e.g. quizzes, all-hands meetings etc. All of this can replicate a close equivalent of the social atmosphere of the office.

The challenges remote working pose are not just a technology problem but also an engagement problem. Microsoft Teams can provide you with a base of operations that supercharges your engagement.



Use Microsoft Viva to Elevate Teams

Microsoft Viva is Microsoft's employee experience platform, designed to boost employee learning, wellbeing, knowledge discovery and engagement across your organization, directly in Microsoft Teams.

This works, in practice, through several modules:

Viva Connections

This module facilitates access to internal communications and company resources such as benefits and policies information. It also allows employees to participate in internal communities such as employee resource groups.

Benefits include: Strengthening company culture and teamwork.

Viva Insights

The Insights module provides personalized insights on employees' own working patterns and experiences, visible only to them. This helps them to protect their time, ensure they're taking breaks, and dedicate time to learning.

Benefits include: Preventing burnout and increasing effectiveness.

Viva Learning

Learning makes training and professional development opportunities more discoverable and accessible within the flow of an employee's work. It aggregates learning resources such as LinkedIn Learning and Microsoft Learn in one place.

Benefits include: Encouraging upskilling and employee development.

Viva Topics

This module provides AI-powered knowledge discovery assistance that connects information and experts throughout the organization. Topics can also integrate third-party services such as Salesforce and ServiceNow, bringing together all your data.

Benefits include: More effective use of in-house knowledge and expertise.

Teams + Microsoft Power Platform: A Match Made in Heaven

We have seen how Teams gives employees access to the tools they need to work productively, to communicate and collaborate with colleagues, and to foster company culture – all in one place. Teams integrates with the wider Microsoft productivity suite and third-party apps to make this possible.

However, we left one integration until last, because it warrants its own section. The final reason Teams is the perfect solution for your base of operations is because of its integration with Microsoft's Power Platform.

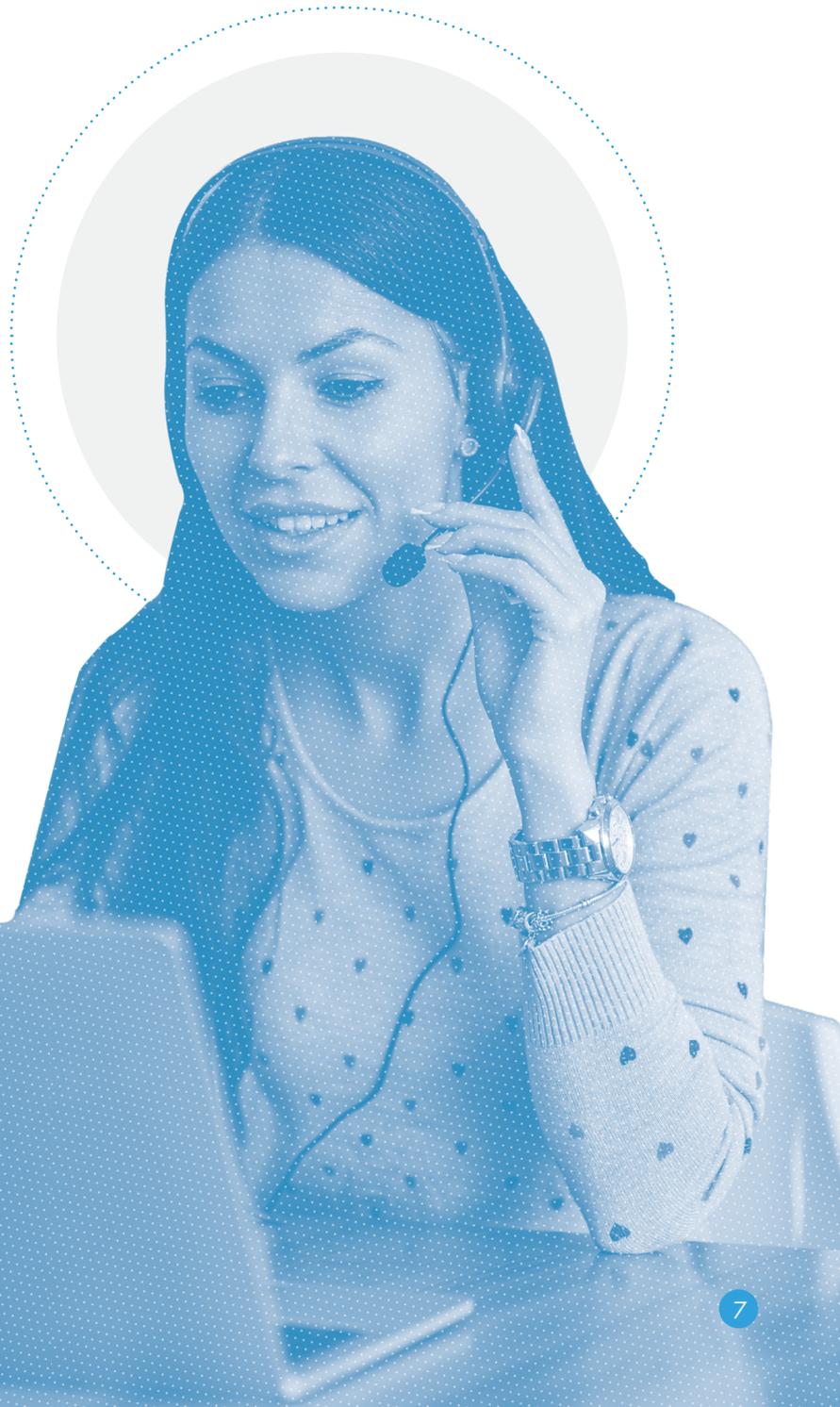
Introducing The Power Platform

Microsoft's Power Platform is a powerful set of tools which allow businesses to build custom apps, automate processes, and analyze data. Microsoft's overriding goal with the Power Platform is to provide low-code tools for non-developers to create apps, workflows, and analytics which would previously have only been the remit of IT teams and specialists. With full integration with Teams, the Power Platform can take your base of operations to the next level.

There are three core parts of the Power Platform:

-  Power Apps
-  Power Automate
-  Power BI

Let's look at each in turn and how they work in Teams.



Power Apps

Microsoft's tool for custom business apps can be seamlessly integrated into Microsoft Teams, meaning unique applications can sit inside Microsoft Teams alongside chats, calendars, and third-party systems. In fact, the integration can be so seamless that end users only ever need to access it through Teams. Whether these custom apps are for expense filing or new employee onboarding, bringing it into Teams makes life easier for everybody.



Power Automate

Power Automate is a process automation technology that sits behind the various apps, systems and software in an IT environment. It allows easy automation of common workplace processes, including assigning tasks, getting signoffs, and circulating information. With Teams integration, flows can be created and managed, approvals reviewed, and new flows launched, all within the platform.



Power BI

Microsoft's enterprise-grade analytics platform helps companies process, understand, and visualize their data. With the Teams integrations, these visualizations can be built in and viewed directly through Teams. Individual reports and charts can also be pinned to chats, groups and channels, fostering collaboration and information discovery around an organization.



Customize Your Base of Operations

The Power Platform lets organizations customize their base of operations and tailor it to meet their unique requirements. It also provides the adaptability to deal with change and overcome the challenges of the pandemic. By bringing your apps, workflows, and analytics into Teams, you can achieve a fully digital workplace, fit for remote working.

By bringing the vast potential of Microsoft Power Platform into Teams, organizations can create a vast and fully functional base of operations that will support and empower remote employees.

Get Started with Your New Base of Operations

Times are hard for all growing businesses. Creating a base of operations fit for the modern workplace is key to succeeding today and in the future. Microsoft Teams is the best option out there. Whether you are using it for video calls, instant chat, or for incorporating custom applications and workflows via the Power Platform – there is unparalleled value at your fingertips, all available in one place.

At Worksighted, we work closely with growing businesses to help them achieve their goals. We can help set you up in Microsoft Teams and make sure you are getting the most from the platform. As Teams is flexible and adaptable to its users, we can help you tailor the platform so that it becomes the base of operations your business needs.

To learn more about Microsoft Teams and the Power Platform, or to get started today, [get in touch with the Worksighted team.](#)