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- » Figuring out where to sign up and sign in

Chapter **1**

Getting Up and Running with Microsoft Teams

When Microsoft Teams was first announced, the market was already filled with chat programs. Microsoft even purchased the most popular one, Skype! So why did Microsoft decide to create more software that was redundant? Well, that was several years ago, and since then, Teams has surpassed SharePoint as the fastest-growing product in Microsoft's history.

In this chapter, you see what makes Teams so special. First, you take a quick spin around the Teams interface and learn some of the basic Teams terminology. Then, you get up and running with the Teams app in a quick tutorial that helps you find the Teams app online. After that, you find out how to sign up and sign in. Let's get *Team*-ing!

Wrapping Your Head Around Microsoft Teams

Microsoft Teams is a relative newcomer to the world of business communication software. It was first announced in 2017, and when I first heard about it, I wasn't sure what to make of it. I had been using Skype to chat with friends and family for years, and I had used Lync (later rebranded Skype for Business) for business communications. Since its announcement, Teams has been integrated with just about every product Microsoft offers and has swallowed all the features that used to make Skype for Business so great. You can make phone calls, chat, conduct meetings, share your screen, and make video calls, just to name a few of the features Teams offers.

Microsoft Teams as a communications platform, replacing Skype for Business, is nice, but that is not what has made it the fastest-growing product in Microsoft history. What makes Teams so special is that Microsoft has invested heavily in making it the face and entry point to almost all other Office services. For example, I wrote this book using Microsoft Word and could do so from right within the Teams app.

In addition to integrating with Microsoft Office, Teams also integrates with many third-party applications, as shown in Figure 1-1.

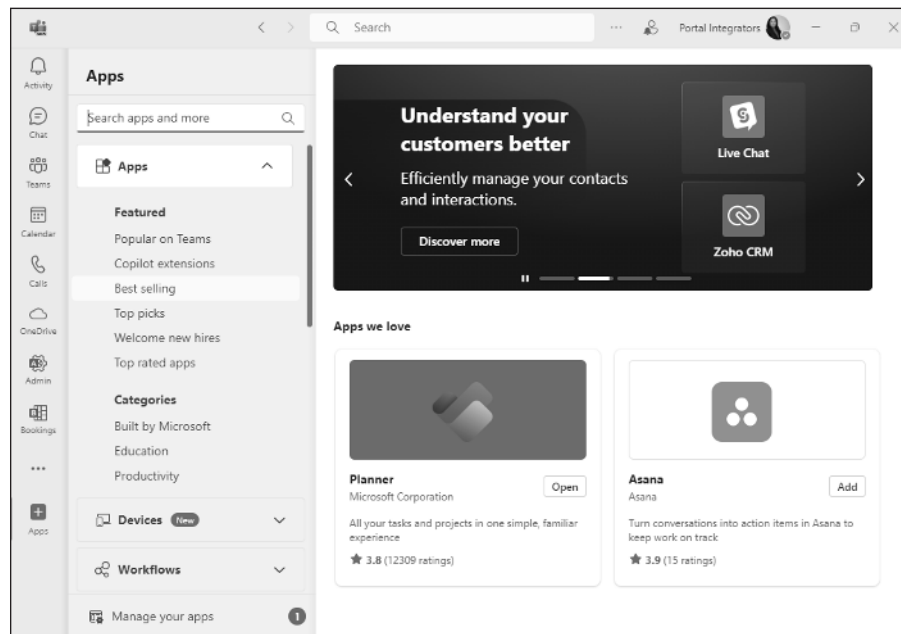


FIGURE 1-1: Some of the apps that integrate with Teams.

To be fair, the big competitor to Teams called Slack (<https://slack.com>), is also racing to integrate other software and be the primary business tool you use for communications and productivity. Slack had a head start — hitting the market in 2013 — and became incredibly popular very quickly. However, Microsoft had a big advantage in that so many people already used Office products, so when Microsoft integrated Office with Teams, it was an easy move for users to start using Teams. In fact, in 2020 it was announced that there are more active users of Teams now than Slack. That is a big milestone!

Don't get me wrong; I still use Slack in my consulting business since some of my clients only use Slack and don't use Teams. I also use other apps, such as Google Workspace (<https://workspace.google.com>) and Zoom (<https://zoom.us>). Zoom has become extremely popular for video calling, especially for groups. However, Zoom is focused on video calling and lacks the integrated capabilities needed to do effective remote work and collaboration.

Microsoft Teams is becoming the one app to rule them all in the Microsoft world. It has become the entry point for Office applications as well as other non-Microsoft software. This is the reason it has grown so quickly. If you are using Microsoft 365, you may find yourself using the integrated services through Teams instead of trying to remember how to use them independently.

TEAMS AND HYBRID WORK: A PERFECT MATCH

The COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 changed the way many people around the world work, communicate, and collaborate. Governments around the world introduced stay-at-home orders, and those workers who could work remotely were told to do so. Although working from home was not a new concept, the COVID-19 pandemic forced the arrangement on almost everyone seemingly overnight. Most organizations did not have a remote-work policy in place; pre-pandemic, managers often dealt with the issue on a case-to-case basis. However, that all changed when the pandemic hit. Any job that could be done remotely became remote-only, and workers immediately adapted to it. The pandemic may be behind us, but remote work is here to stay.

Microsoft Teams and other virtual collaboration tools helped with the work-from-home transition by helping to maintain resiliency in team dynamics. The pivot from working together in person to working together virtually was made easier. Like many others, my routine went from attending many in-person meetings to attending all virtual meetings. I found that I rarely thought about where the other person was physically located anymore. Once these tools are embraced, anyone can work from any location with the only requirement being a stable Internet connection.

Getting Familiar with Teams Terminology

Just like every other software program out there, Microsoft Teams has its own set of words. But the good news is that the list is short! Whew. Throughout this book, you explore the concepts of Teams in detail, and keeping the terminology in Teams straight can be a challenge. For example, you may eventually find yourself inviting one of your teammates to your Teams team. Or asking what Teams team your coworker is talking about. Once you get used to it, the terminology will seem normal.

To get a jump on the terms, here are some quick definitions:

- » **Teams:** Use the term *Teams* (uppercase) to refer to the product itself.
- » **Team:** A *team* (lowercase) is a group of users. You can specify settings for teams and have multiple teams within Microsoft Teams. For example, you may want to create a team for accounting, a team for legal, and another team for external contacts.
- » **Channel:** A *channel* is a group chat within a team. A team can have multiple group chats with the idea being that you can create a chat for different topics. Chapter 5 covers how to send chat messages to others on your team via channels.
- » **Thread:** A *thread* is a specific topic of discussion within a channel. For example, one person may start a new thread in the channel, and then others can reply to that thread. You can have multiple threads going in a channel at the same time.
- » **External/guest user:** An *external* or *guest user* is a user who is not part of your organization. For example, you may be a consultant and need to communicate with the company's accountant. You can invite that person as a guest user to your team. For a look at working with people outside your organization, see Chapter 8.

There are, of course, many more terms that you will become familiar with as you continue on your Teams journey, but these are the basic terms to get you started. Once you get familiar with the relationship between Teams, a team, a channel, and a thread, you have all the knowledge you need to dive in further and get productive.

Getting Started with the Teams App

Now that you have an idea of what makes Microsoft Teams a useful tool for online collaboration and communication and got a glimpse at some of the Teams terminology, it's time to dive in and take a look at the app for yourself.

Microsoft Teams is available either as a free, stand-alone app that you can download from the Internet or as part of a bundle of software, such as Microsoft 365. The free, no-commitment version of Teams offers features such as unlimited messages and search capabilities, 10GB of shared storage across the app, and audio and video calls between members.



TIP

The more robust version of Teams is available through a subscription to Microsoft 365 and provides all of those features as well as a whole host of others, including 1TB of storage per organization, Exchange email hosting, access to OneDrive, SharePoint, and other Microsoft 365 services, enhanced security features, and 24/7 phone and web support among other administrative tools. A snapshot of the various Teams versions is shown in Figure 1-2. More details can be found at www.microsoft.com/en-us/microsoft-teams/compare-microsoft-teams-options.

The screenshot shows a webpage titled "Find the right Microsoft Teams for your needs". At the top, there are three tabs: "Business Plans", "Teams Phone Bundles", and "Home Plans". Below the tabs, the main heading is "Find the right Microsoft Teams for your needs". Underneath, a sub-heading reads: "Stay connected and share content any time to learn, plan, and innovate—together. Get more with Teams Essentials or get Teams online as part of Microsoft 365." The page displays three subscription cards:

Subscription Plan	Price (per user/month)	Notes
Microsoft Teams Essentials	\$4.00	(Annual subscription—auto renews) ¹
Microsoft 365 Business Basic	\$6.00	(Annual subscription—auto renews) ¹
Microsoft 365 Business Standard	\$12.50	(Annual subscription—auto renews) ¹

Each card includes a "Buy now" button and a "Try free for one month" link with a right-pointing arrow. Below the "Try free for one month" link, there is a "See trial terms²" link.

FIGURE 1-2: Teams comes in many different flavors depending on your needs.

Getting Teams for free

You can sign up for Teams for free without buying the Microsoft 365 bundle. You won't get all the integrations and benefits Microsoft 365 provides, but you will get Teams.

To sign up for the free version of Microsoft Teams, follow these steps:

1. **Open your favorite web browser and go to <https://www.microsoft.com/en-us/microsoft-teams/free>.**
2. **Click the Sign Up For Free button.**
3. **Enter your email address and click Next.**

If this is the first time you are using a Microsoft service, you will need to create an account and verify your email address. Click to create a new account. A code will be sent to your email address, and you will be asked to enter it.

4. **Enter your existing Microsoft account password and click Sign in.**

Once you verify your account (or sign in with your existing account), you will see a Welcome to Teams screen, as shown in Figure 1-3.

Congratulations! You are now using Microsoft Teams for free.

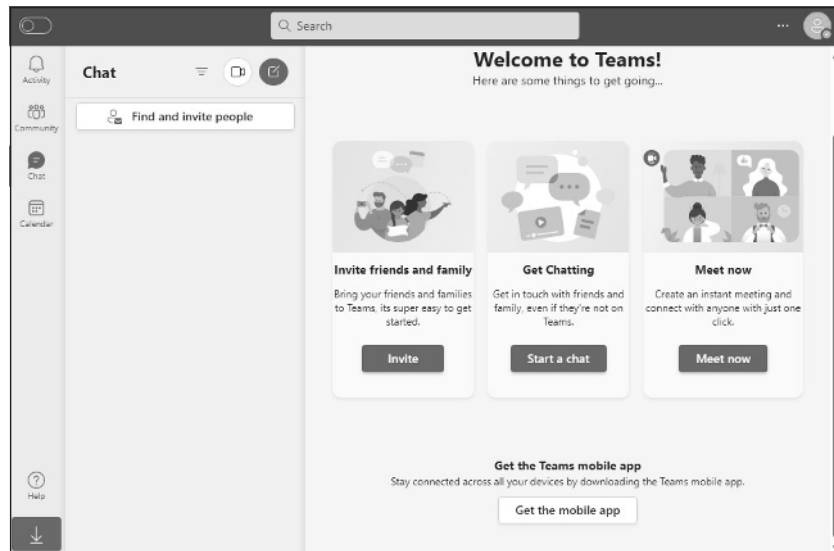


FIGURE 1-3:
Getting started
with the
web-based
version of Teams.



TIP

From the web-based version, you have the option to download the desktop app or the mobile version of the app. I cover installing the Teams client on a desktop in Chapter 2 and installing it on a mobile device in Chapter 7.

When you invite guest users to your Teams channel, they will go through a process similar to the one you just went through to sign in to Teams. However, instead of having to navigate to the Microsoft Teams website, they will get an email inviting them to join your Teams channel. External access is a popular topic; it is covered in depth in Chapter 8.



TIP

I have found the value of Teams comes from how it integrates and works with other Microsoft software, such as Office. For this reason, I recommend using Teams with Microsoft 365 instead of as a stand-alone free messaging app like What's App, Messenger, or Viber. I talk about accessing Teams through these subscription-based services next.

Getting Teams through Microsoft 365

Another way to sign up for Teams is by signing up for a Microsoft 365 subscription. Microsoft 365 offers a free trial, so you can get started with it without having to pay upfront. Here's how:

1. **Open your favorite web browser and navigate to www.office.com.**
2. **Click the Get Microsoft 365 button, as shown in Figure 1-4.**

To get Teams, you will need a business plan subscription. (The personal plans do not include Teams.)

3. **Click the For Business tab to see the available business plans, as shown in Figure 1-5.**

You can choose between the Microsoft 365 Business Basic plan or the Microsoft 365 Business Standard plan, which includes the latest Microsoft clients like Word, Excel, Outlook, and PowerPoint. For this example, I chose the Microsoft 365 Business Premium plan.

4. **Scroll to the bottom of the page and click the "Try free for 1 month" link under the Microsoft 365 Business Premium plan.**
5. **Provide the requested information and walk through the setup wizard to get up and running with Microsoft 365.**

Note that you can use your name as a business name and choose that your business size is 1 person. Next, you will be asked to choose a domain name that is <your choice>.onmicrosoft.com. This is your Microsoft 365 domain. In this example, I chose teamsfd.onmicrosoft.com for the domain. You can always add a custom domain later down the road if you prefer. For example, I could connect teamsfordummies.com to our Microsoft 365 account and get email there, too.

Once you have filled out the information, your free trial will be created. This can take a few minutes, so be patient.

6. Click the Get Started button.

A tutorial walks you through adding a domain and additional users. Once you walk through the setup, you are presented with your Microsoft 365 dashboard where you see a quick tutorial. After the tutorial, you are presented with the Microsoft 365 main landing page.

Congratulations! You are now up and running with Microsoft 365 and Microsoft Teams.



FIGURE 1-4:
The main
office.com
landing page.



You can always get back to your Microsoft365 dashboard by opening your web browser, going to www.office.com, and logging in with the username and password you created.

			Only includes apps
Microsoft 365 Business Basic	Microsoft 365 Business Standard	Microsoft 365 Business Premium	Microsoft 365 Apps for business
\$6.00 user/month (Paid annually—auto renews) ¹	\$12.50 user/month (Paid annually—auto renews) ¹	\$22.00 user/month (Paid annually—auto renews) ¹	\$8.25 user/month (Paid annually—auto renews) ¹
Buy now	Buy now	Buy now	Buy now
Or try free for one > month	Or try free for one > month	Or try free for one > month	Or try free for one > month
See trial terms²	See trial terms²	See trial terms²	See trial terms²
Learn more >	Learn more >	Learn more >	Learn more >

FIGURE 1-5:
Choosing a
Microsoft 365
Business plan.

