
MicroAge
Breakthrough
teamwork tools

Introduction

You've seen the impact high-performing teams can have in business. But what if they could achieve even more? What if they had an environment that helped them be more creative, to share ideas instantly and easily across geographies and generations while staying in sync with each other? In a world where collaboration is how innovative work gets done, teams need work spaces and tools they're comfortable using. And it's up to business leaders to make it easy for them to get both.

The very nature of teams is evolving rapidly. There has never been a workforce with a more varied spectrum of workstyles, with more working millennials than ever, remote working commonplace, and productivity tools that reach far beyond email and phones. Teams are spread across time zones and composed of people inside and outside traditional IT barriers, such as firewalls.

As a business leader, you need to make sure your organization provides collaboration tools that suit different personalities, skillsets, and needs. Because what works for one person or team may not work for another. You also need to accommodate the diverse workstyles of the multiple generations now in the workforce. Millennials have been using chat and social media their whole lives and want the same engaging, real-time experiences at work. Other generations favor the traditional voice, email, and document based apps. All tools need to interoperate seamlessly because everyone expects the fluid digital experiences they're used to from their day-to-day lives as consumers.

But extending modern collaboration to meet these many requirements only succeeds if your platform can successfully unify people into high-performing teams, regardless of their needs and preferences. Right now that's a problem, as 75 percent of American workers say their employers don't give them access to the latest technology to do their job efficiently.[1]

So, what is the right technology solution for modern collaboration and teamwork? It must be flexible enough to meet all your teams' communication needs, become a single hub for teamwork, be customizable, and stay secure.

Microsoft Teams—the hub of teamwork within Office 365—can help your employees work together seamlessly. Teams is built for teamwork, and for fostering a new level of creativity and collaboration within your business.

Such a hub is possible. With scalability, app integration capabilities, ease of use, and automation at the forefront of the tools you use, you can create higher-performing teams that collaborate more effectively with their colleagues every day.

Here's what your teamwork tools should empower you to do.

[1]Gartner - Anticipate and Exploit the Top 12 Future Work Trends.

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Chapter 01.

Communicate without effort

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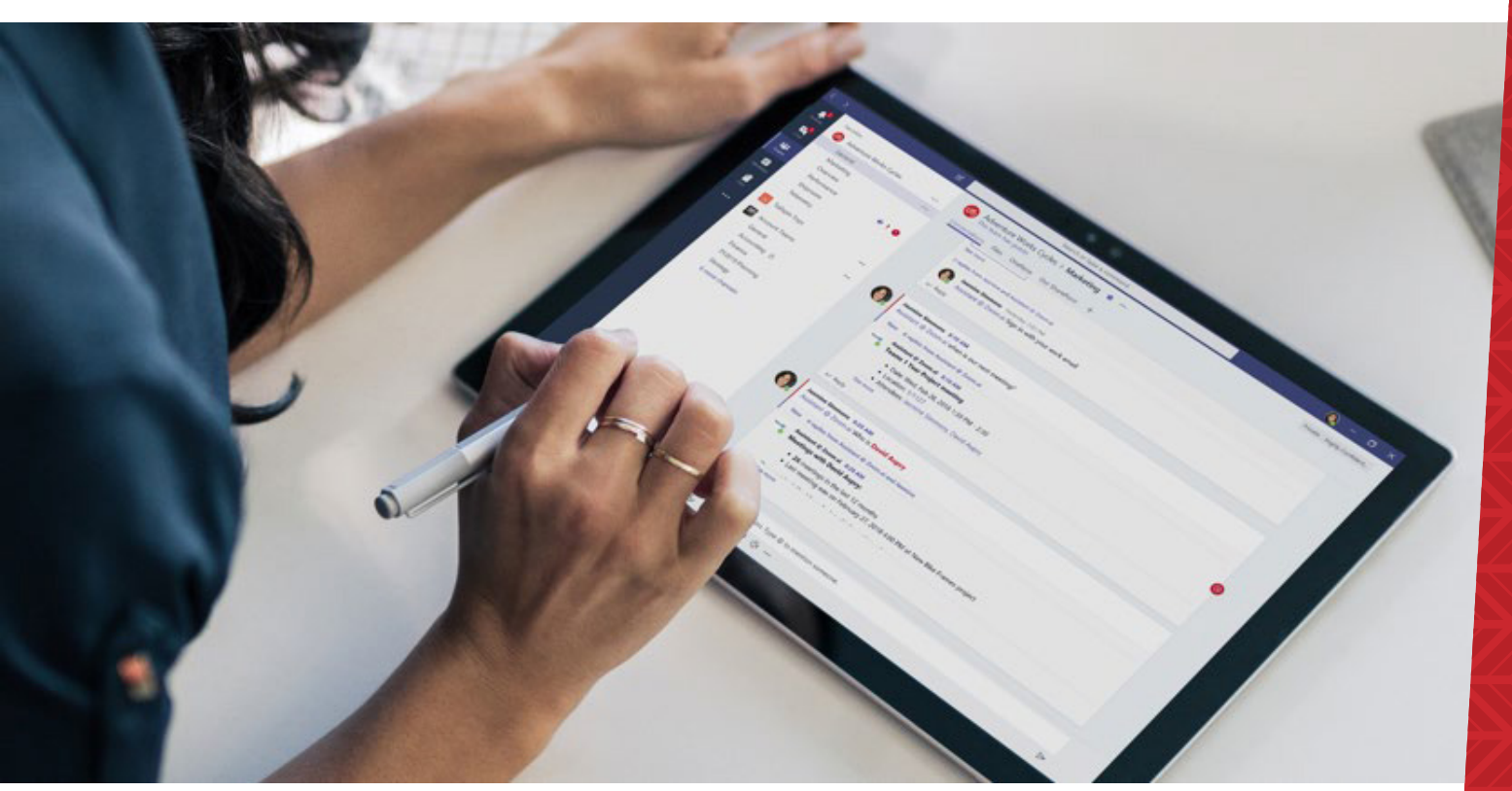
Communicate without effort

Great ideas often start small, among a few close collaborators, then quickly grow to include a larger team that helps bring them to fruition. To keep that momentum going requires intelligent communication capabilities.

Employees need to be able to communicate freely and scale up or down as needed, bringing additional team members into the conversation while giving everyone a way to stay informed about what's going on. One-on-one, small group, and large group conversations should all be supported, and from the devices and locations of their choice.

Microsoft Teams, the hub for teamwork in Microsoft 365, makes it simple for teams to communicate in real time, make fast decisions, and share content in an open and transparent way. Teams cuts across organizational boundaries by allowing private chats, group chats, or team conversations that are visible to the entire team. Work that traditionally required an in-person meeting happens right in the hub—through chat, calls, smaller group video conferences, and shared files—faster than before, from virtually anywhere and even with guests outside your organization. This allows your teams to be more connected and enables individuals to manage a greater flow of information.

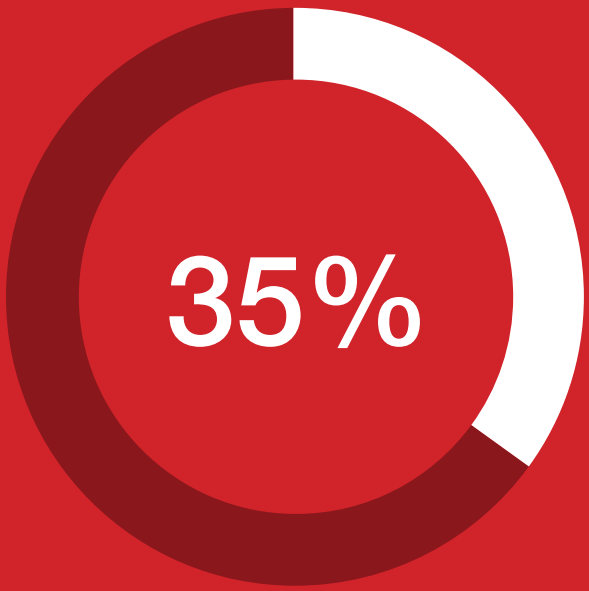


Chapter 01.
Communicate without effort

With Teams, employees can co-author in Word, PowerPoint, or Excel. They can share ideas in an instant over the Teams chat app. And they can modernize their teamwork with Office 365 Groups. They also can use Teams to flag critical actions and inputs with @ mentions. They can easily find the files and content they need with cloud-based storage and version control.

Bringing all the conversations to one place also lets you reference them later or easily bring new members up to speed. The conversations persist so other team members can view them, making insights more discoverable. Don't remember a decision made months earlier? A quick search reveals an entire record of the conversation. New members just joined the team? Adding them will give them access to group conversations and files in one go.

Employees who use social messaging tools internally can see as much as a 35% reduction in time spent searching for company information.[2]



[2] "The Social Economy," 2012, McKinsey Global Institute.



Chapter 02.

Be more productive through better integration

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Be more productive through better integration

When teams use disjointed applications, siloed information can make collaboration feel like a complex, time-consuming effort. They'll waste time locating files, remembering different logins, or switching between apps.

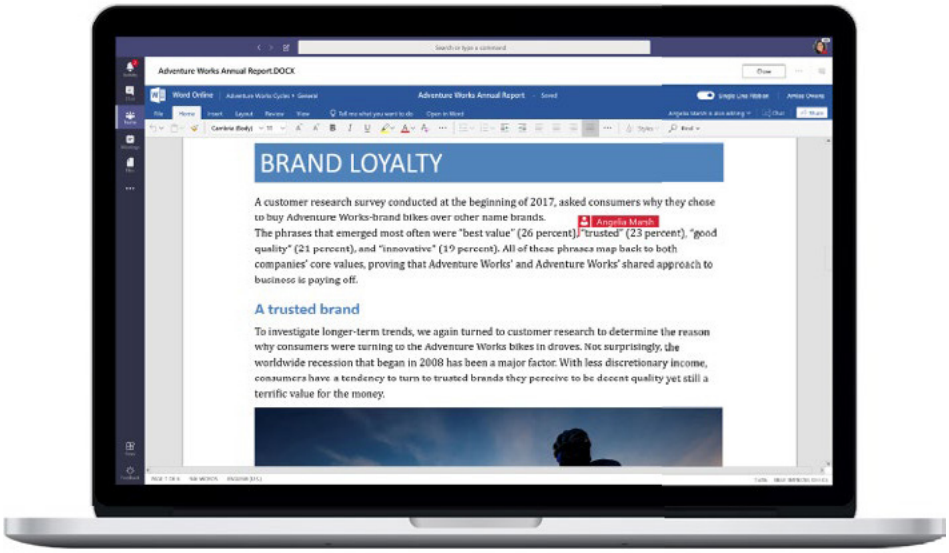
Your teams need flexible tools to work with. When tools are integrated with the business applications they're already using, work happens faster, enabling a frictionless communication and collaboration experience.

Teams helps solve one of the biggest workplace challenges: time wasted as employees look for content, tools, contacts, and conversation threads. Imagine how much more effective your people would be if they had instant access to everything they need—right in Office 365. Microsoft Teams uses powerful, integrated search capabilities and built-in access to SharePoint, OneNote and Planner, so team members can find what they're looking for—instantly. Because every document shared in Microsoft Teams is saved to the cloud, team members work from the latest version—no searching.

Review documents within your chat

What's more: an integrated solution can directly affect your bottom line. Last year, organizations that successfully adopted a unified communications system saw huge returns, compared with those that did not.

When your applications work together as well as your teams do, productivity soars. Consider this: new employees will only have to sign in to and learn one new program instead of six, and they won't have to toggle between apps. With fewer passwords to remember and fewer blockers, your team can focus on what matters most: their work. And IT doesn't have to worry about managing multiple services or shadow IT.



Chapter 02.
Be more productive through better integration

Ultimately, all teams should be able to collaborate across distances. With a complete voice and online meeting solution, virtual teamwork is as easy and engaging as it is in person.

Microsoft Teams lets you fully embrace the upside of teamwork—frictionless sharing that makes good ideas exceptional. Seize the potential for dramatic innovation by supporting a collaborative culture, and your enterprise can:

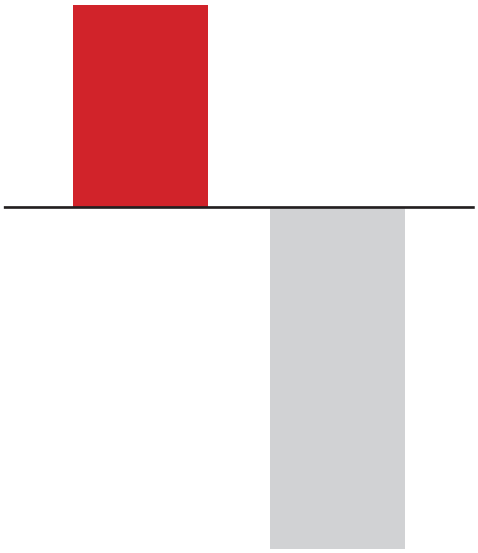
- Help creativity and increase ideas to improve.
- Accelerate time to market.
- Deliver higher-quality products and new customer experiences.

Teams also enables visual communication between teammates. They can easily share pictures and video, whether for clarity, emphasis, or simply a lighthearted response. Need some face-to-face contact? Users can launch a video call from a conversation in seconds.

The connection between unified communications systems and increased operating income[3]

Successful adoption: +19.2%

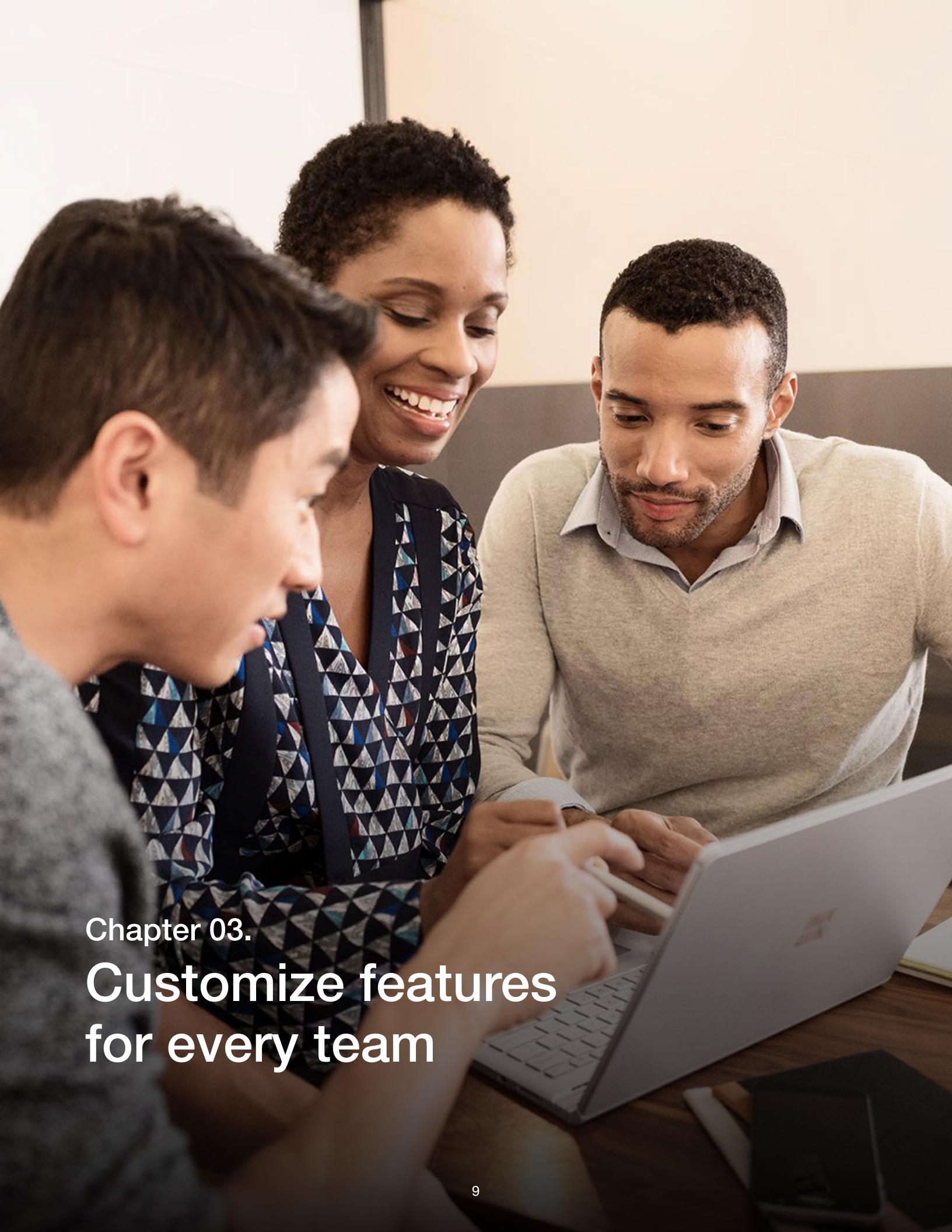
(operating income)



Unsuccessful adoption: -32.7%

(operating profit)

[3] "Are Workers Ready for the Workplace of the Future?" 2016, Information Age.



Chapter 03.

Customize features for every team

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Every team is unique and needs a shared space to work together—one they can reshape and call their own, whether they are inside or outside the organization.

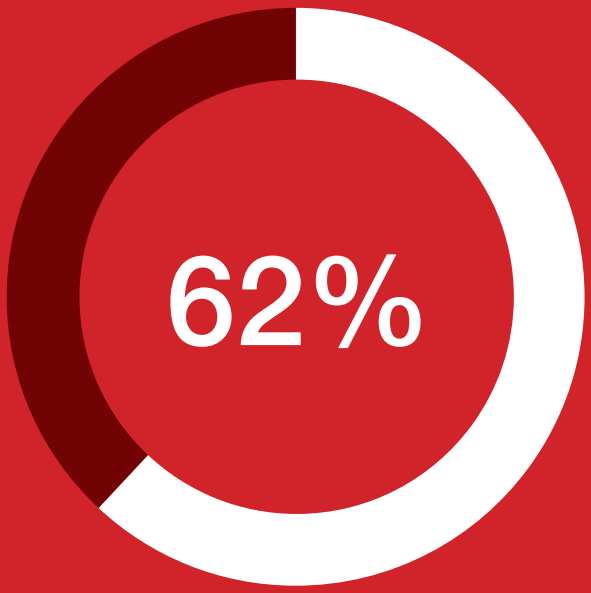
And no two teams work alike. Your sales team may use chat to share updates on leads and website analytics, while your customer service department might rely on quick calls to resolve customer request tickets.

Your tools need to account for your teams' unique needs with hubs that are customizable.

Teams should be able to pull preferred tools into their hub and have multiple conversations and work threads, as well as pin important files for easy reference. Intelligent communications including automation, notification settings, and chatbots can provide additional support to ensure everyone has what they need.

With Teams, you can integrate apps from Microsoft and third-party partner services to tailor your process, increasing teamwork and productivity.

62 percent of global employees agree that artificial intelligence assistance could make their jobs easier.[4]



[4] "Dell & Intel Future-Ready Workforce Study Global Report," 2016, Penn Schoen Berland.

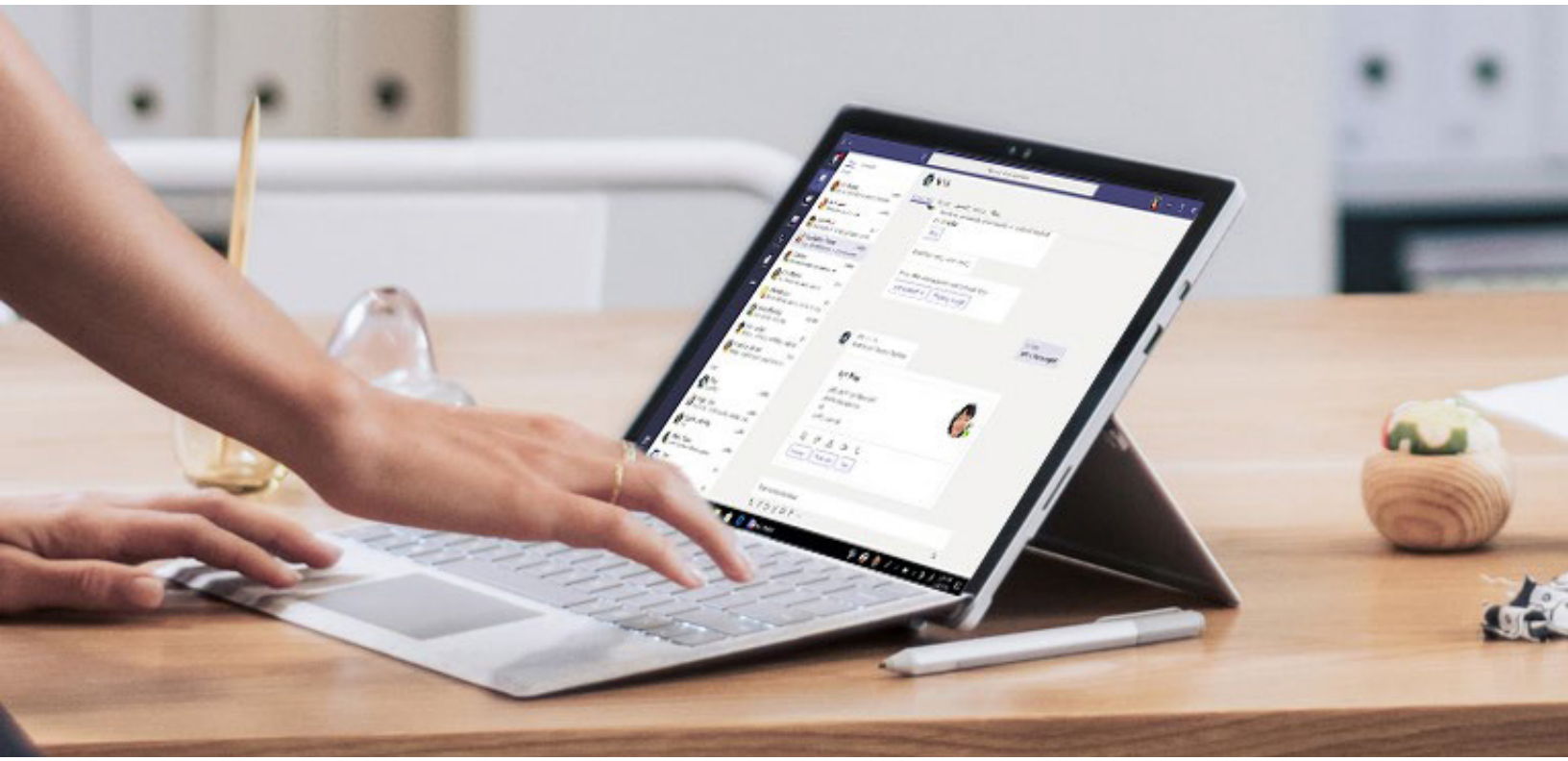
Chapter 03.
Customize features for every team

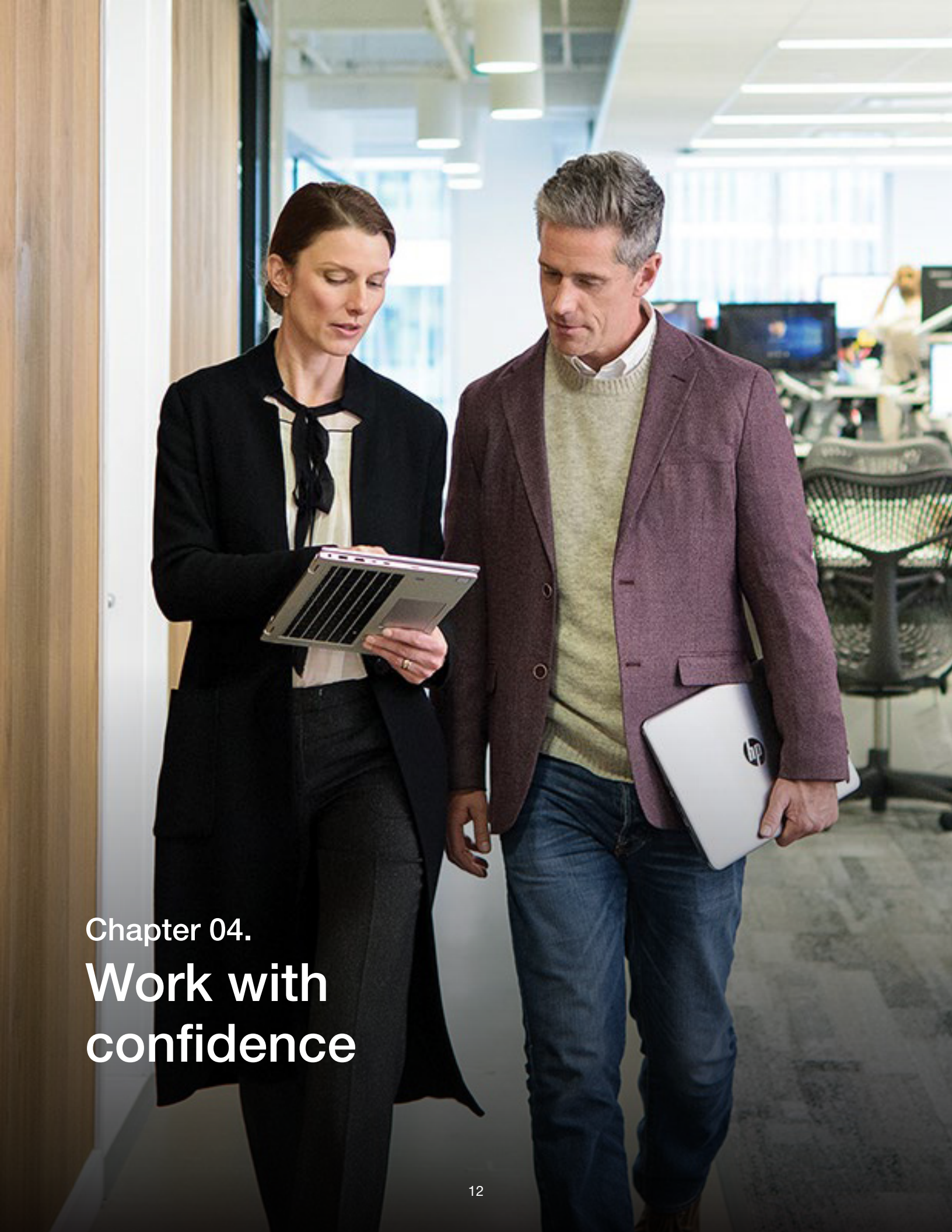
Microsoft Teams enables threaded conversations within a channel to keep conversations organized and key stakeholders informed. Work that has traditionally required an in-person meeting happens in the channel instead.

It also enables users to customize and automate their chats with dozens of first-party chatbots and third-party app integrations.

Chatbots can instantaneously improve employee efficiency. Instead of relying on an employee to pull data or retrieve an alert or email, chatbots alert teams when an action is needed or a report is ready.

Giving employees the ability to customize their chatbots and teamwork hubs means they can receive alerts and notifications as they want. Integration with third-party apps means the work you used to set aside time to complete can come directly to you.





Chapter 04.

Work with confidence

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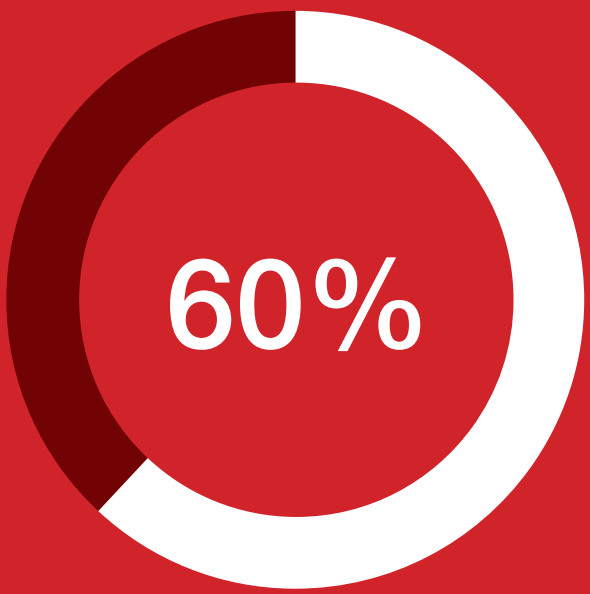
When collaboration is needed, employees will find a way. Whether company-approved or not, workers will still use instant chat solutions, shared document spaces, and more—giving rise to shadow IT, management complexity, and security risks. Your IT managers are probably on the alert for tools that don't hold the same security and compliance standards as the rest of your business applications, but some unauthorized tools might still slip through.

However, it is possible to provide secured solutions without putting an additional burden on your IT team. Microsoft Teams provides industry leading security and compliance capabilities, with data encryption for at-rest and in-transit data in company cloud storage and email. You benefit from the Office 365 hyper-scale, enterprise grade cloud: it's the capabilities you're used to, with security, privacy, and trust built directly into the service. Compliance leadership, multifactor authentication, and secure guest access help protect sensitive company information from multiple angles. Plus, because everything is from one vendor, IT won't have to worry about another set of security and compliance issues— or another possible breach point.

Nearly 60% of IT pros believe sensitive files/information should not be shared via group chat apps.[5]



[5] "Business Chat Apps in 2017: Top Players and Adoption Plans," 2017, Spiceworks.



Chapter 05.

Checklist

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Once you know what to look for, choosing the right tool can reinvigorate your entire collaborative process.

Checklist:
What to look for in your teamwork tools:

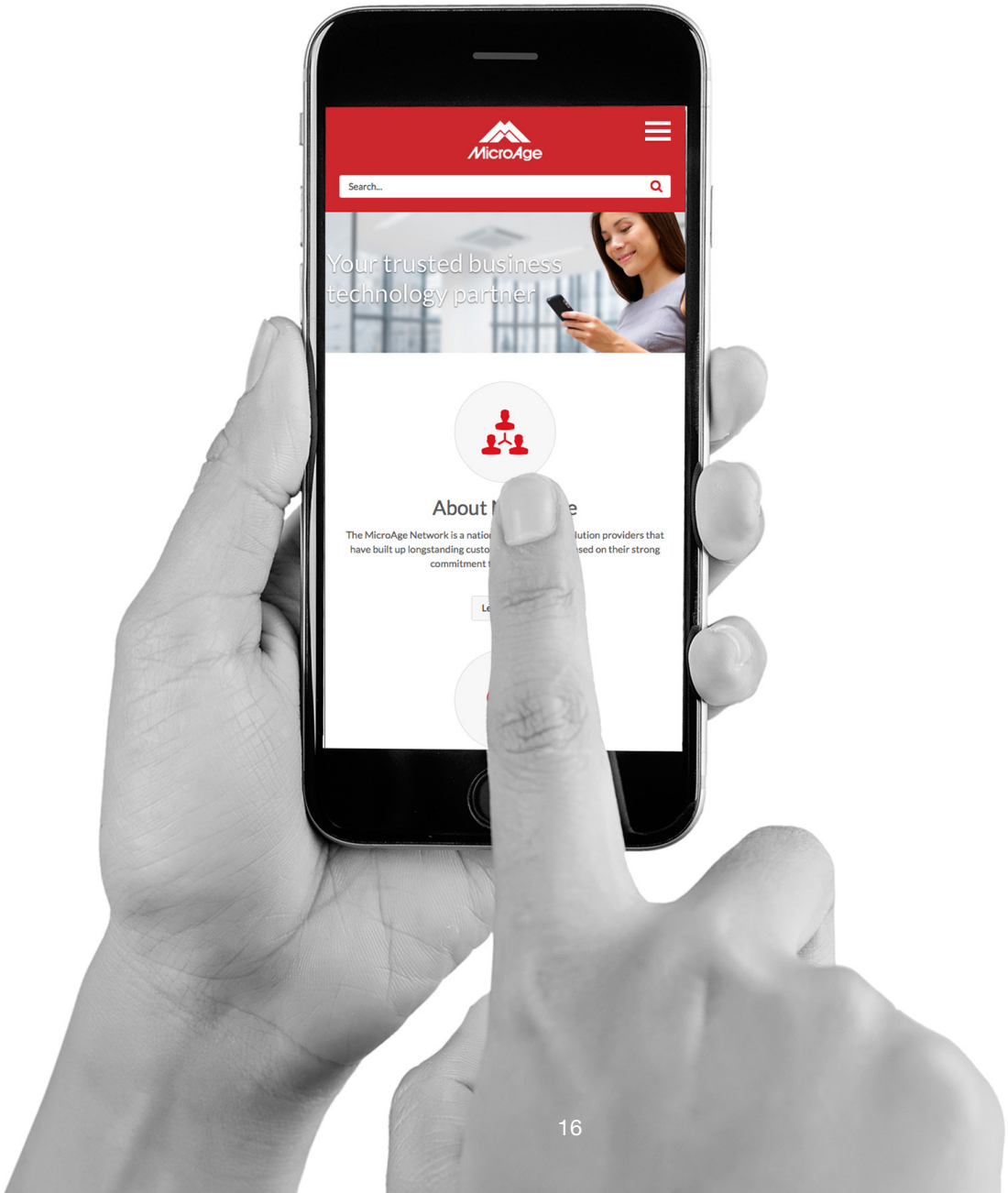
- ✓ Unified communication
- ✓ Business application integration
- ✓ Customization and scalability for teams
- ✓ Easy search for files, content, and people Automation
- ✓ Ease of use for employees and IT
- ✓ End-to-end security

Conclusion

Microsoft Teams cans help take your team collaboration to the next level. A level that will be conducive to creating ideas, sharing information and collaborating. A level that uses tools that are familiar and easily integrate to what is already in place or tools that can help your team get even better. All with the peace of mind that comes from a platform that is built for security and compliance. If you are ready to take your team collaboration to the next level have a chat with a partner like MicroAge. From determining your needs to integration to training we can help.

About MicroAge

Operating in Canada since 1981, the MicroAge network delivers IT Services and Solutions through 36 locations from coast to coast. We provide businesses with access to over 300 knowledgeable, certified technicians, national service delivery, logistical support and distribution, and of course, Managed IT Services. MicroAge helps businesses of all sizes leverage their technology investments to address their business requirements. We offer peace of mind to allow you to focus on your business while we take care of your IT.



Contact **MicroAge** to learn more about Microsoft Teams.



www.microage.ca