



8x8 Essentials
Intelligence Research Series

Creating Digital DNA with Microsoft Teams

Explosive growth of Microsoft Teams will springboard
demand for premium telephony capabilities

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Executive Summary



Executive Summary

There is a confluence of two mega trends in the cloud communications industry. UCaaS and CCaaS solutions are combining, and Microsoft Teams usage continues to skyrocket. Businesses may be wondering what the better-together story is.

The answer lies in the platform. Microsoft positions Teams as an enterprise productivity platform, which means opening more APIs and enabling third parties to innovate around and within Teams. SaaS companies like 8x8 are helping customers by adding new capabilities and benefits including improved global reach, cross-platform analytics and support for analog devices such as shop phones,

photocopiers and fax machines. Organizations like common data platforms for the added agility and the need to reinvent business processes to cost-effectively manage customer experience challenges.

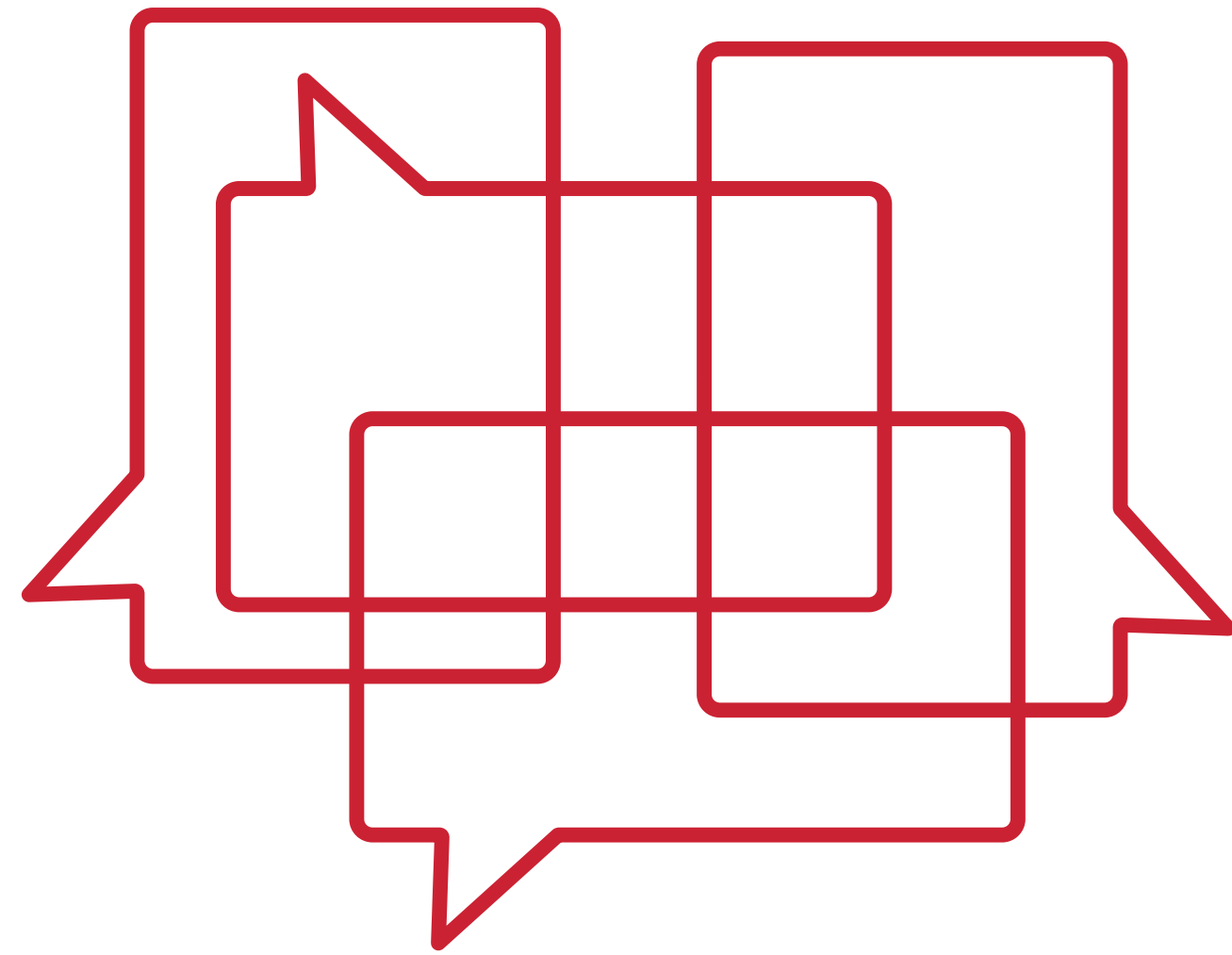
To help our customers better understand these platform trends, particularly how Microsoft Teams can impact their organization, 8x8 presents the latest in our Intelligence Research series to study how IT decision makers feel about Microsoft Teams [direct routing solutions](#), sometimes called [bring-your-own-carrier \(BYOC\)](#) solutions, both for office workers and in contact centers.

80%

of respondents said their organizations are somewhat or very likely to integrate Microsoft Teams with third party telephony providers, as part of BYOC.

One of the most startling findings is that [80% of respondents](#) said their organizations are somewhat or very likely to integrate Microsoft Teams with third party telephony providers, as part of BYOC. If this figure holds true, that portends a huge number of businesses enhancing their Teams implementation with a telephony direct routing solution.

Use this report as part of your Teams telephony due diligence to help you get the most value and performance from your Microsoft investments. Ask questions of potential direct routing solutions providers and your technology advisors. Access [product demonstrations](#), attend [online information sessions](#) and review what your peers are doing. Platform and integration technologies are more important than ever... will continue to be prime considerations in 2022. There will be no more critical examples than Microsoft Teams direct routing solutions.



Survey methodology

Hanover Research, on behalf of 8x8, conducted an online survey of IT decision makers for cloud communications. There were 300 respondents from the United States and 200 from the United Kingdom. Each respondent was employed at a company that had more than 250 employees and had deployed Microsoft Teams within the organization.

Questions covered topics ranging from how respondents felt about Microsoft Teams, whether Teams met their PSTN voice communications requirements and how well Teams integrated with their contact center and CRM systems.

Microsoft Teams: State of the Union

The transition to Teams is going very well, say our respondents. More than three quarters of them view all Teams tasks as easy, and the vast majority of them are satisfied with all aspects of Microsoft Teams. Seventy-eight percent said they expect to continue using Teams more in the future.

Respondents said they are most frequently using Teams with 365 apps such as Word. Unsurprisingly since the survey was administered in 2020, respondents said their organizations used group video chat nearly 50% more than group text chat (Figure 1). Is your organization going to continue to be chat heavy, or will video backlash elevate group text chatting? It is something to monitor to help inform good choices about your needed tools and resources.

Microsoft Teams Capabilities Currently in Use

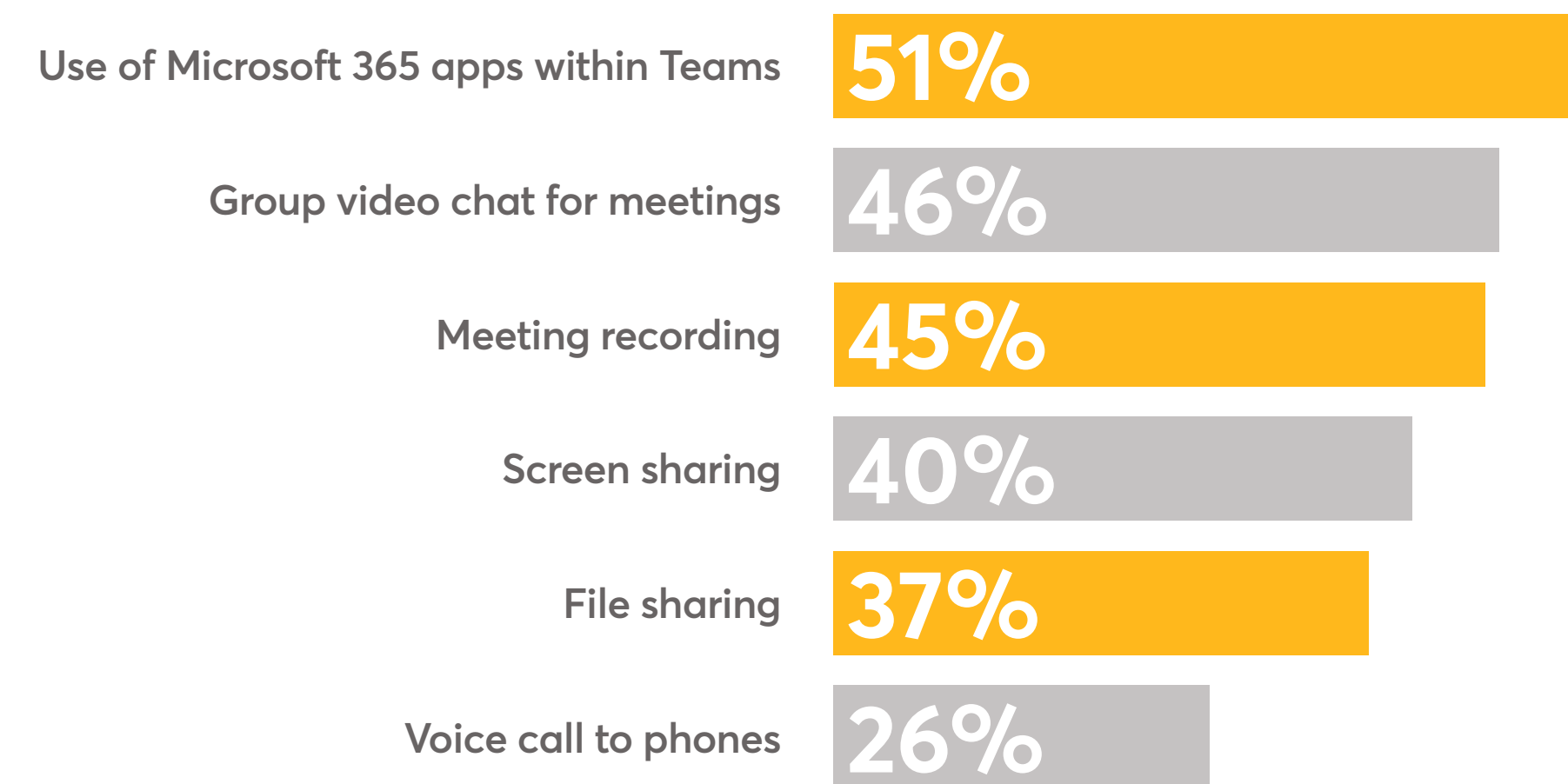


Figure 1

This doesn't mean there aren't potential headaches. Security, in offices and now more commonly in employee homes, is an ongoing concern. Security, respondents said, is the most important thing to organizations when selecting cloud communications platforms. Change management, governance, user adoption and training are all areas that impact an organization's overall experience with Teams or any other platform. Take a look at how our respondents viewed selection criteria for cloud communications platforms and see how that aligns with your cloud communications strategy (Figure 2).

Top 5 Attributes When Selecting Cloud Communication Platforms / Data

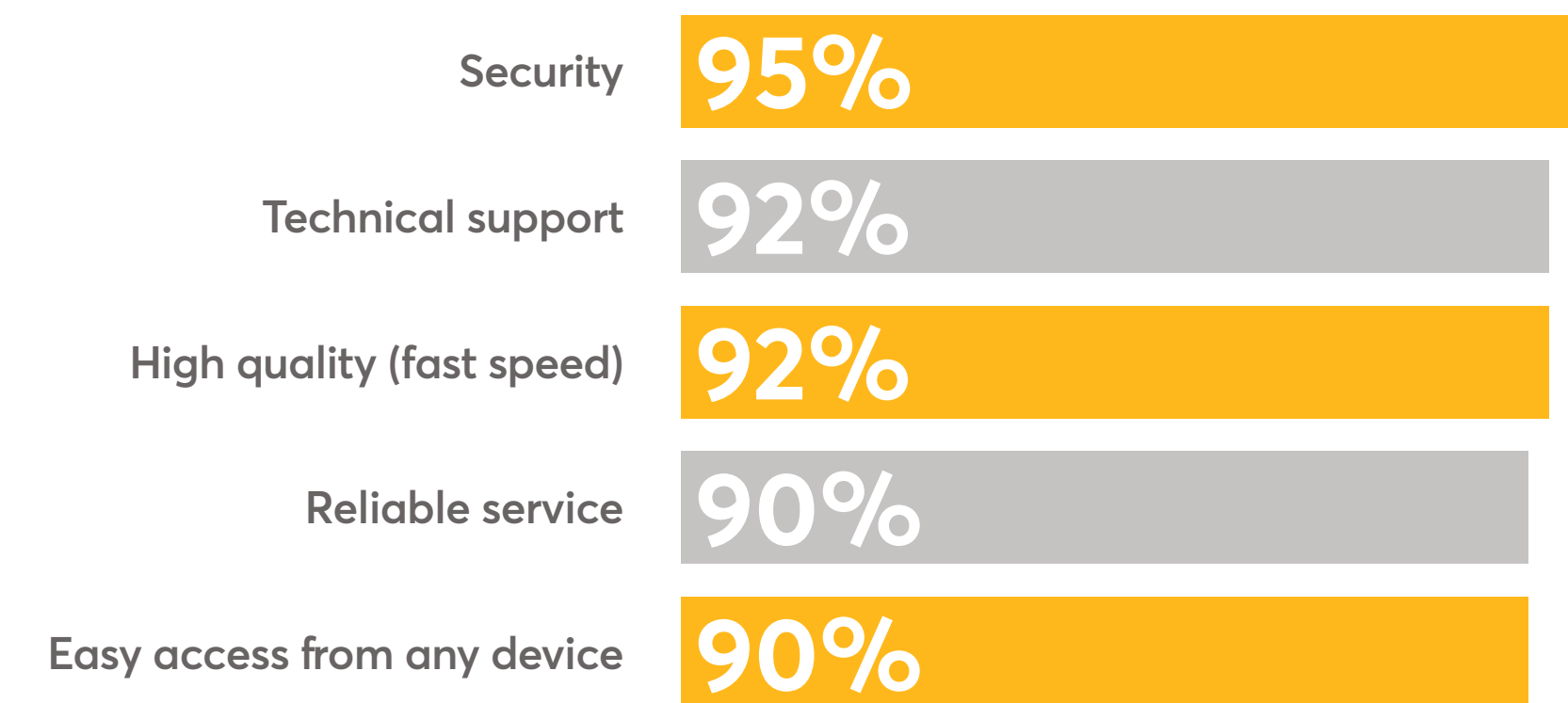


Figure 2

Who wants BYOC?

One of the motivating factors for conducting this study is to better understand demand for Microsoft Teams direct routing solutions. Anecdotally, we know organizations are very interested because as one sales person put it, "it comes up in every customer conversation I have."



Respondents were asked "How likely would your organization be to integrate Microsoft Teams with your existing and/or another third party telephony provider? 80% said either somewhat likely or extremely likely (Figure 3).

Likelihood of adoption of a direct routing solution did not wane if it required additional investments including telephony infrastructure, resources to support user administration and software to be installed on user devices.

Likelihood to Integrate Microsoft Teams with Current/Another Telephony Provider

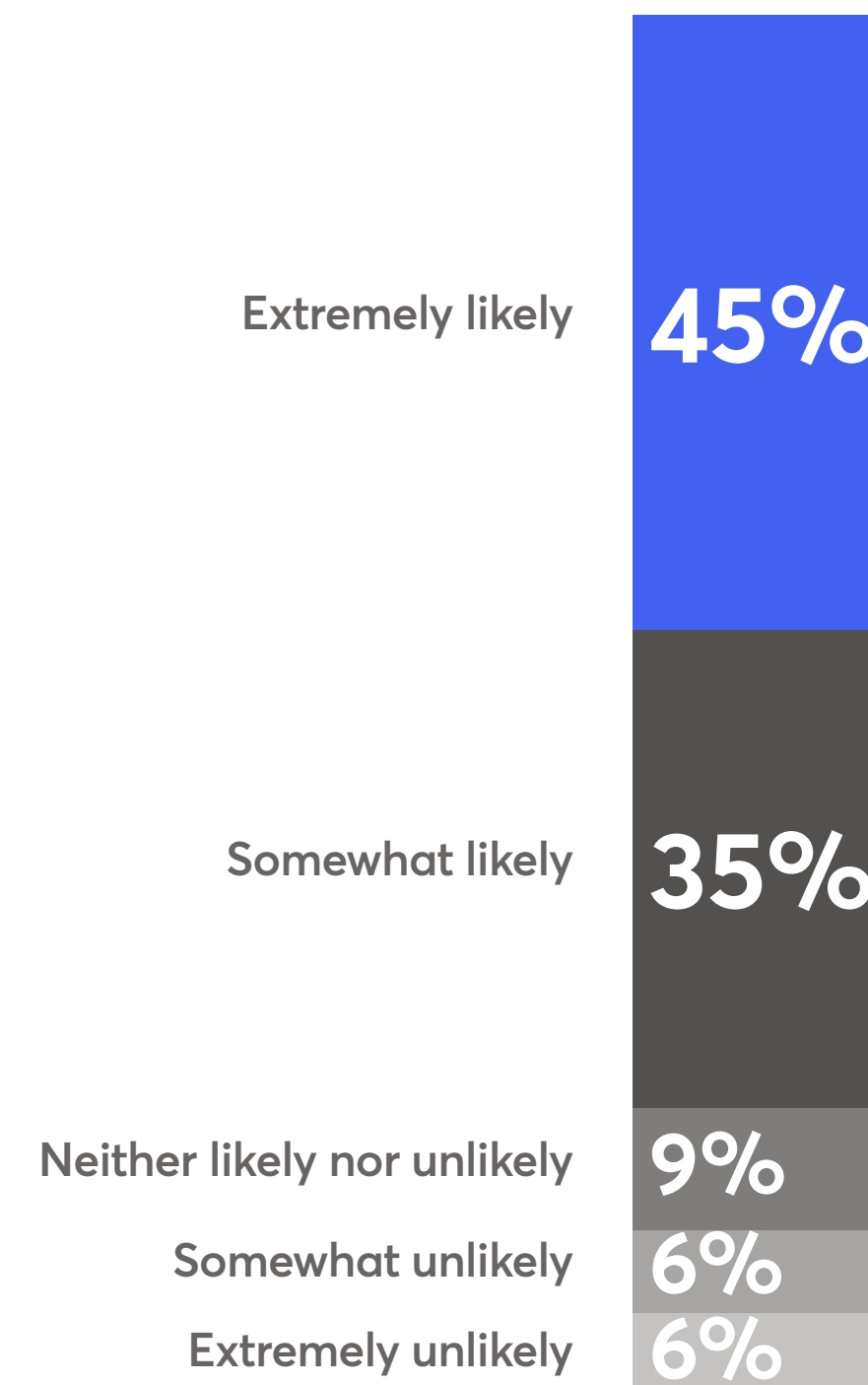


Figure 3

What this means for you.

The obvious interest among end-user organizations to augment Teams' voice capabilities means that they will be able to select from a wide range of direct routing solution options, in addition to being able to choose their own carrier. In a subsequent chapter of this book, we provide a list of questions you can ask a potential provider.

Do your due diligence. Use the competition to your advantage. Work with your technology advisors to understand how each option fits your needs from contact center functions, call reporting quality and integrations with business applications.

You deserve more than just
a cheaper phone bill.

Direct routing solutions are much more than giving an organization a cheaper phone bill. Sure, voice quality is important as well.

We asked respondents about features, available via direct routing solutions but not yet available directly from Teams. We wanted to understand the capabilities that interested them the most.

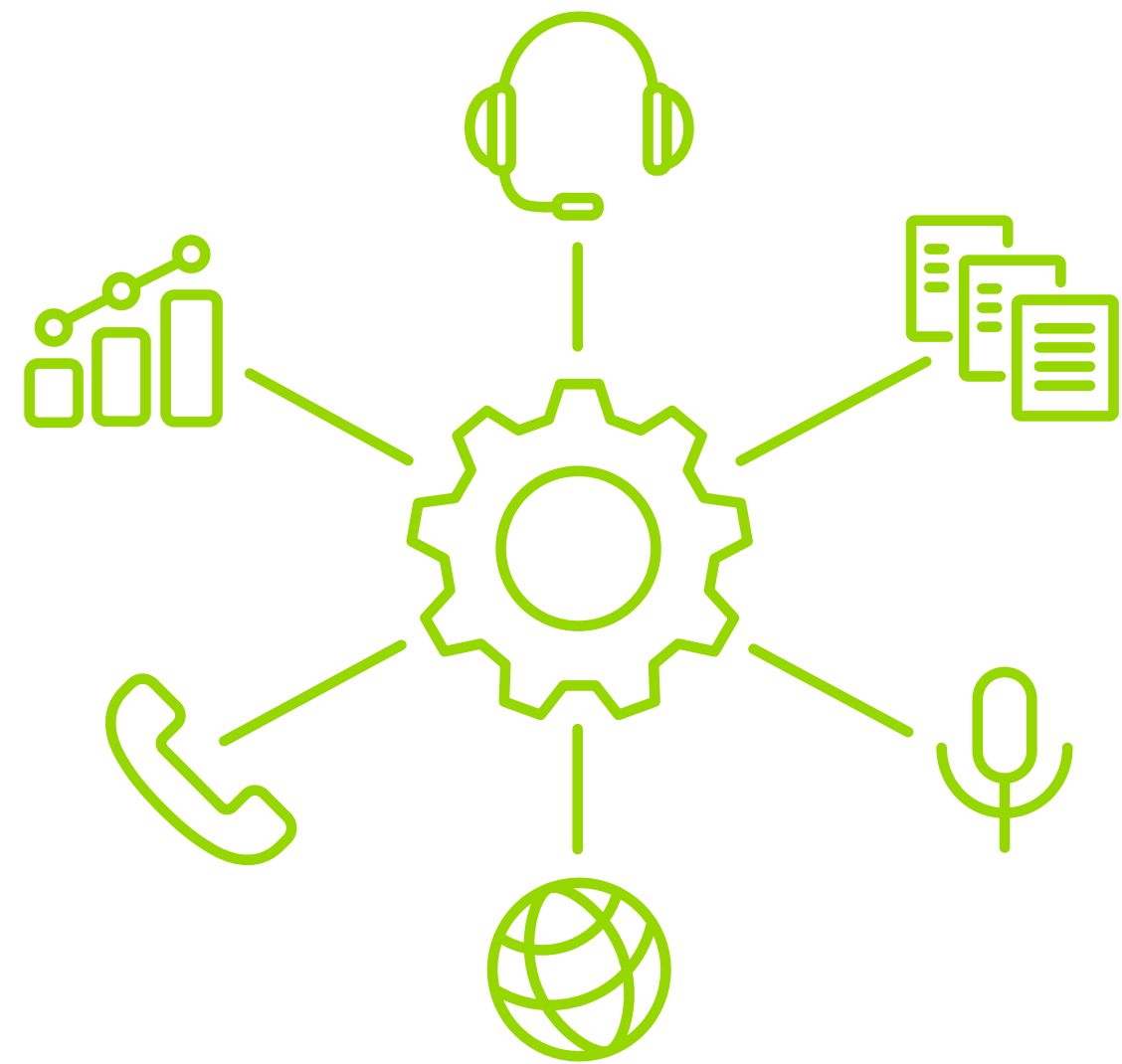


Figure 4 highlights the interest levels which illustrate that reducing phone bills are just a part of the story about the growing demand for direct routing solutions.

Concurrently with the interest for trend, keyword and sentiment analysis, artificial intelligence/machine learning capabilities that accelerate and deepen analysis are improving. Plus, new storage technologies are making it easier to store analytics data, from different apps, in a common repository, often called a data lake. This will help algorithms do their work.

IT Decision Makers' Extreme or Strong Interest in Voice Communication Features Offered by Teams

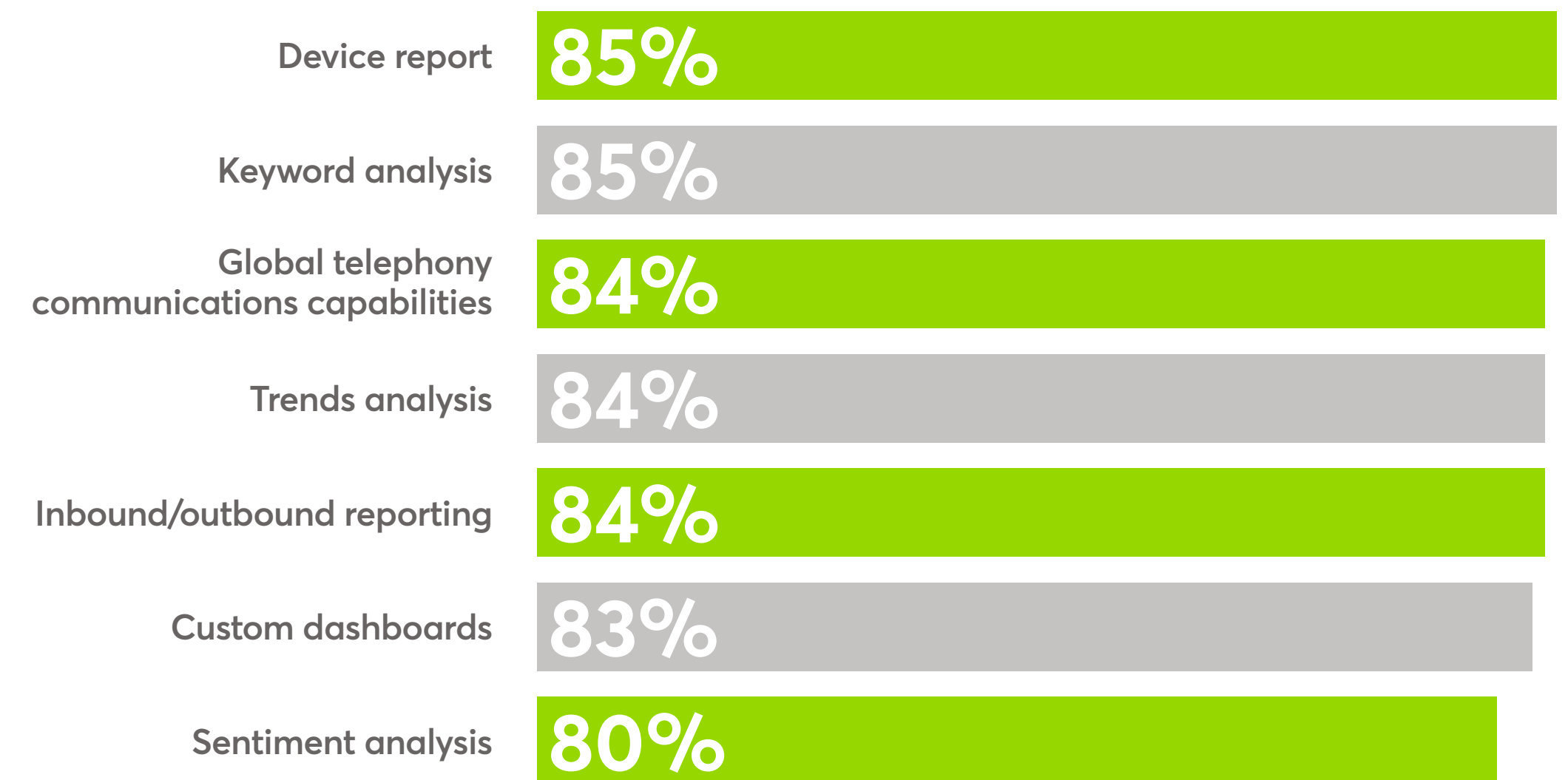


Figure 4

Is your UCaaS strategy
more than voice, video
and collaboration?

As platform and integration technologies mature, the scope of what constitutes unified communications expands. Unified communications is no longer just voice, video, collaboration and text messaging. Ninety-three (93%) of respondents said that CRM systems (e.g. Salesforce) and existing business apps are part of their unified communications strategy.

It will not be long before Internet of Things (IoT) sensors report status and other information to humans within a chat app. Robots too, will eventually need to be a unified communications component in some kinds of organizations.

93%

of respondents said that CRM systems (e.g. Salesforce) and existing business apps are part of their unified communications strategy.



The vast number of choices that organizations have to enable business communications and that speed at which the landscape is changing reiterates the importance of having a documented unified communications strategy. Communications tools are now receiving board-level attention because they are critical to business resiliency. Yet, in our survey, 15% of respondents said they either have no unified communications strategy or are unsure (Figure 5). That number is too high.

The lesson is that before diving deep with any unified communications platform or direct routing solutions, work with your technology advisors to develop plans that allow you to benefit from the applications that matter to your business most in addition to voice and video, for example.

IT Decision Makers' Belief that Their Organization has a Unified Communications Strategy

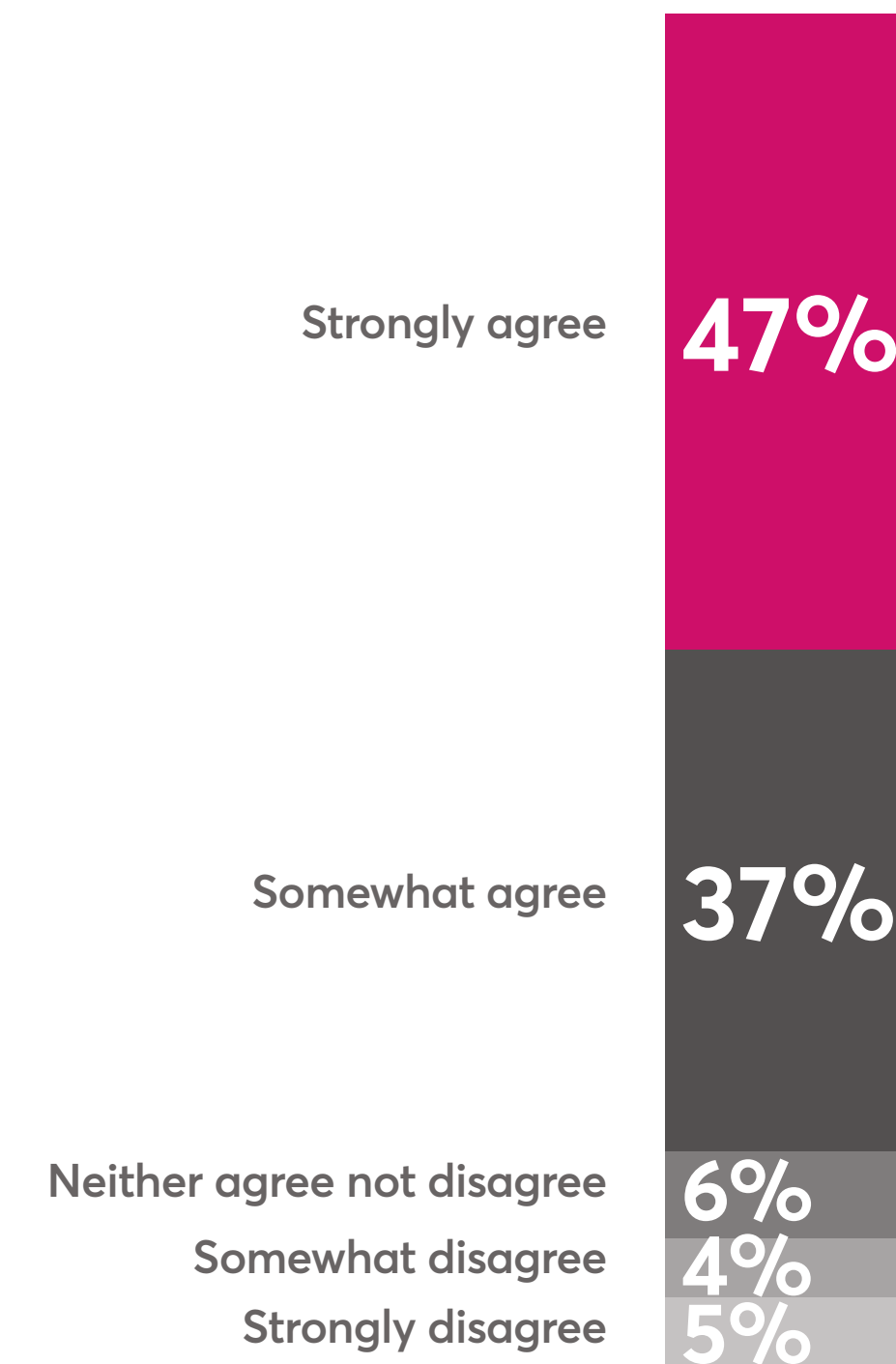


Figure 5

The study examined how important IT decision makers felt contact centers ought to be part of their unified communications strategy. More than three-quarters (79%) of organizations who do not currently use Microsoft Teams as their contact center plan to integrate it in the future.

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Is Microsoft Teams in your contact center?

When people have a great experience doing business with a company, chances are they will want to do more business with it or will refer their friends and colleagues. This is one reason why there is so much innovation and investment in contact centers today.



Our study explored what respondents had to say about Microsoft Teams in the contact center. We were curious about whether they felt that contact center strategy should be separate from the rest of an organization's telecommunications (Figure 6).

Ninety-one percent (91%) said either they somewhat or strongly agreed that unified communications strategy includes contact center strategy. This makes a lot of sense because more products and services are becoming available that lets customers merge both worlds that yield more comprehensive analytic insights. Plus, not every customer interaction flows through a contact center.

It is Important That My Organization Has a Unified Communications Strategy Between the Contact Center and the Rest of the Organization

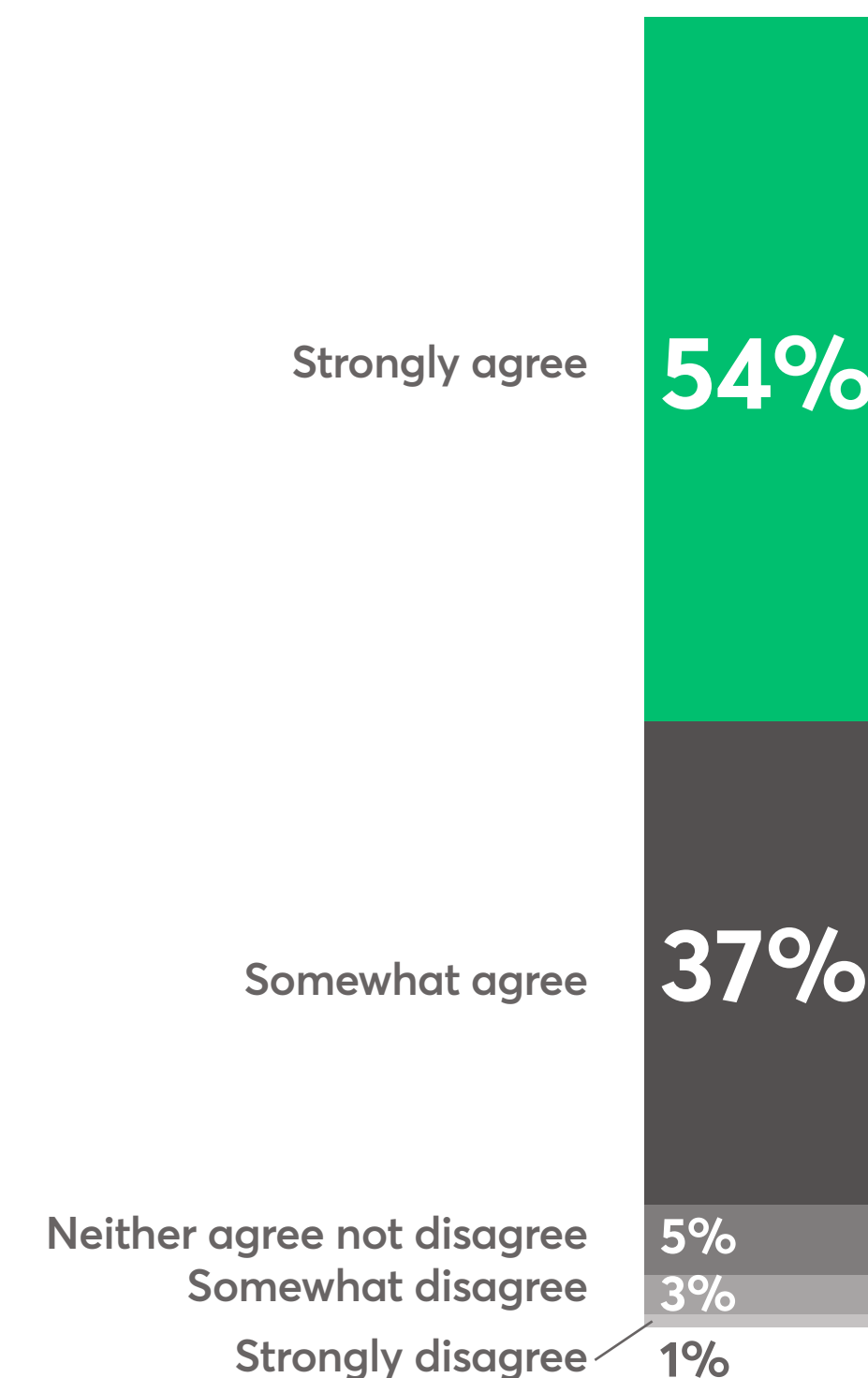


Figure 6

Microsoft Teams is a common thread between office calling and contact center for many organizations. Ninety percent (90%) of our respondents said Teams is part of their contact center with nearly four-fifths saying it is somewhat likely or extremely likely that they will integrate Teams into their contact centers in the future.

64%

of respondents said they currently have on-premises based contact centers.

Direct routing solutions for Microsoft Teams offer similar benefits in office environments as in contact centers.

Sixty-four percent (64%) of respondents said they currently have on-premises based contact centers. We think a lot of them will shift to cloud-based ones in the coming year. If that is your plan, we urge you to:

- Consider the role Teams will play and evaluate how a direct routing solution makes sense for your needs.
- Consider how Teams can deliver more value for you across both contact centers and office calling—make sure your unified communications and contact center planning are tied together closely.

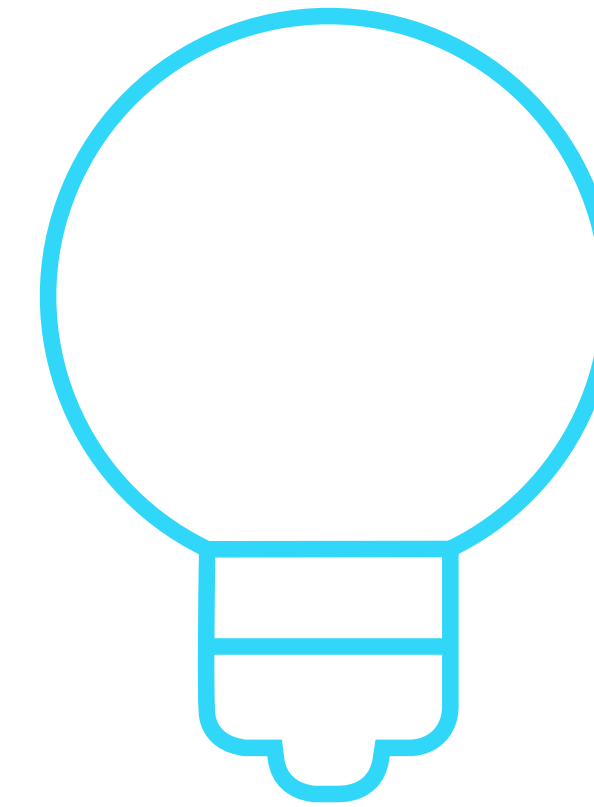
Top questions to ask
potential MS Teams direct
solutions providers.

Here are some key questions to ask your Microsoft Teams Direct Routing provider when adding voice capabilities for Teams:

1. Does your solution still allow users to use the native dialer within Teams?
2. Can you enable non-Teams users to view the presence status of Teams-based clients?
3. Is it possible to enable call recording and how do Teams users playback their recordings without leaving their client interface?
4. How do you enable Teams users to access eFax and other messaging services that are not supported within the standard Teams client?
5. Does your direct routing solution require a Bot or Web extension installation on the end-user device?



6. In how many countries do you offer full PSTN replacement for Microsoft Teams?
7. Do your call plans include unlimited calling? How many countries?
8. Do you offer a Microsoft Teams certified contact center solution? Does it integrate natively on a single platform with your Teams voice calling solution?
9. Does your Microsoft Teams certified contact center allow agents to make and receive calls within Microsoft Teams?
10. Does your certificated Microsoft Teams contact center include omni-channel interactions, and workforce engagement management, for Microsoft Teams?



Does your Direct Routing solution provide key insights into Microsoft Teams calls as well as non-Teams users, across the enterprise workforce and contact center agents?

11. Does your Microsoft Teams Direct Routing solutions support native business application and CRM integrations? Which integrations are supported?
12. Does your Direct Routing solution provide key insights into Microsoft Teams calls as well as non-Teams users, across the enterprise workforce and contact center agents?
13. Does your Direct Routing solution provide speech analytics and quality management reporting?
14. Which security and compliance certifications do your Direct Routing solution support?
15. Does your Direct Routing solution allow users to use the native dialer within Teams?
16. Do you enable call recording?
17. Do you allow Teams users to playback their recordings without leaving their client interface?
18. How do you enable Teams users to access eFax and other messaging services that are not supported within the standard Teams client?

About 8x8

8x8, Inc. (NYSE: EGHT) is transforming the future of business communications as a leading Software-as-a-Service provider of 8x8 XCaaS, an integrated contact center, voice communications, video, chat, and API solution built on one global cloud communications platform. 8x8 is powering all employees globally to connect individuals and teams so they can collaborate faster and work smarter. Real-time business analytics and intelligence provide businesses unique insights across all interactions and channels so they can delight end-customers and accelerate their business. For additional information, visit www.8x8.com, or follow 8x8 on LinkedIn, Twitter and Facebook.

The logo for 8x8, consisting of the text "8x8" in white on a red square background.

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