



Microsoft Teams



calltower

MICROSOFT TEAMS: Operator Connect vs Direct Routing

Currently at a massive
250M
monthly active users

Microsoft Teams is the communication solution on the front line of the transition to flexible and remote work. Microsoft Teams has emerged as more than just a collaboration tool – it's a service which enables UCaaS functionality, CRM integration, CCaaS, and even productivity tools.

However, for Microsoft users to leverage the full benefits of Teams, they need to access the right telephony and voice strategy. The good news is that Microsoft offers three ways to connect to the Microsoft Phone System. You can use a Microsoft calling plan or access certified Microsoft voice providers through Direct Routing or Operator Connect. For many wanting to take a flexible approach to Microsoft Teams calling with their own voice provider, Direct Routing and Operator Connect seem like very similar solutions.

Let's explore how they differ and how you can choose the right option for your organization.

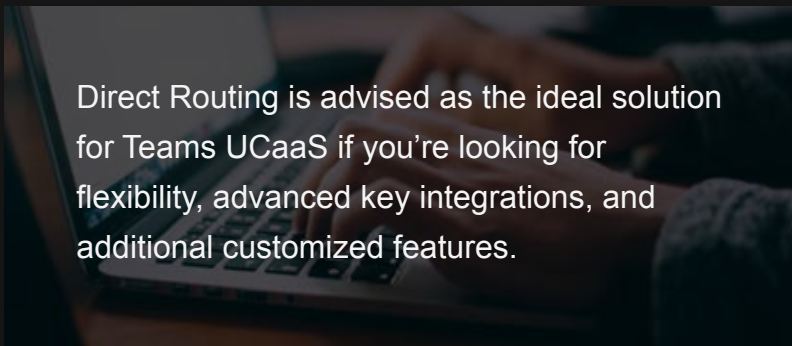
Microsoft Teams Telephony

Direct Routing represents a simple and flexible way for companies to connect to the Microsoft Phone System. Organizations can source SIP trunks from carriers or use managed service providers to get a more end-to-end solution including contact center.

The Direct Routing offering allows providers to configure cloud-based Session Border Controllers (SBCs) to route calls from the Microsoft Phone System to their network for public telephony network access (PSTN). Depending on the Direct Routing solution, you can access additional specialist support to help optimize your telephony offering.

For instance, with a provider like CallTower, you can port existing numbers from your existing carrier, so you don't have to change numbers during a migration, or you can add services such as paging, handsets, headsets, contact center, CRM integration, redundancy services and receptionist console to mention a few.

Direct Routing allows Microsoft Teams users to access their telephony solutions in more countries than you could access with Microsoft Calling Plans. Additionally, unlike with Microsoft Calling plans, Direct Routing gives companies a vast range of routing options to choose from.



Direct Routing is advised as the ideal solution for Teams UCaaS if you're looking for flexibility, advanced key integrations, and additional customized features.

Microsoft Teams Operator Connect

Operator Connect is the recent addition to Microsoft's solutions for calling functionality. The platform enables enterprises to choose their own Teams PSTN carrier – like Direct Routing. With Operator Connect, the focus is on using a certified Microsoft provider via the Office 365 Admin Portal to manage your voice services.

With Operator Connect for Microsoft Teams, IT groups will be able to connect to their provider and assign numbers to their users through a Teams admin dashboard “Operators” tab. This means there is no need for any telephony expertise or carrier negotiations. If you already have a relationship with one of Microsoft’s Operator Connect providers, you can maintain that relationship going forward. The solution makes it easier to connect your telephony solution into Teams with minimal headaches.

You also get benefits like access to existing Operator Connect providers to minimize costs, quick deployment (only minutes to manage phone numbers in the Teams admin center), operator-managed cloud-based SBC and PSTN infrastructure to reduce hardware requirements and enhanced 24/7 support from operators such as CallTower.

Access to existing Operator Connect providers

Quick deployment

Cloud-based SBC and PSTN infrastructure

24/7 support

The Difference

Operator Connect and Direct Routing seem like similar systems, as both solutions allow you to have more flexibility with your transition into Microsoft Phone functionality. If you are looking for a solution for Microsoft UCaaS that does not have the same restrictions or cost as the Calling Plans from Microsoft themselves, either service will work with the right provider.

Operator Connect simply creates an option in the selection of calling options that today’s companies have when moving to Teams. The Operator Connect system differs in that it is a peering relationship between a service provider and Microsoft. The solution also includes a set of valuable APIs which integrate the deployment and purchase process, allowing for more simplicity for provisioning.

Operator Connect takes the UCaaS offerings in Teams beyond basic connectivity, allowing administrators in the enterprise to simply go into their admin account, choose a service provider and administer phone numbers whenever they choose. It’s as simple as downloading applications from an app store.

Making the Choice

Operator Connect and Direct Routing both offer significant benefits to users and are both likely to continue their growth within the Microsoft Teams ecosystem. For companies planning to access Microsoft Teams for their UCaaS and CCaaS solutions, the choice between Microsoft Teams Direct Routing and Operator Connect will be a highly personalized one.

Features	Operator Connect	Direct Routing
DID Management	Microsoft Admin Portal	CallTower Connect Portal
Connectivity into Microsoft	Microsoft Azure Peering Service Carrier	Microsoft Azure Peering Service Carrier
GCC High	Currently Unavailable	Supported
Conferencing	Coming Soon	Add-On/Outbound Only
Contact Center Integration	Add-On	Add-On
CRM Integration	Currently Unavailable	Add-On
Devices	Supported	Supported
Powershell Service Account	Not Required	Required
Ad-Sync	N/A	Add-On
E911 Emergency Services	Included	Included
Mass Emergency Notification System	Add-On	Add-On
International (DIDs)	US & Canada	100+ Countries
Operator Console	Add-On	Add-On
Call Recording	Add-On	Add-On
Compliance Recording	Add-On	Add-On
SMS Text	Add-On	Add-On
Call Masking	Native Teams Calling ID Policies	Calling Party Identity in Connect
Porting to Teams	Supported	Supported
Call Re-Routing/Failover Options	Included	Included
Geo-redundant SBC's	Yes - SBC's connect directly to Microsoft	Yes - SBC's connect to each tenant
Calling Plan License	Per DID uploaded to the tenant	Per User assigned in Connect
Licensing	Unlimited or Metered	Unlimited, Metered or Mix & Match by User
24/7/365 Support	Shared SLA and ticketing between Microsoft and CallTower	Standard Premier Support
M365 Phone System Support	CallTower works with Microsoft	Customer works with license vendor

LET'S CONNECT - DISCOVER WHICH SOLUTION WORKS FOR YOU

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