5 barriers
to productive teams

Microsoft

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Breaking down the barriers to teamwork

Companies are increasingly focused on how teams can work together more effectively to spark creativity and innovation, make the most of diverse perspectives and dialogues, and maximise efficiency – both inside and outside the organisation.

Naturally, the technology you choose can have a significant impact on employees' ability to collaborate effectively, because:

Employees now work from different locations and devices and need seamless ways to connect anywhere, anytime.

Different generations have different work styles, gravitating to distinct communication tools – which can create collaboration silos.

Security and data protection concerns can limit the ability to share information with colleagues, partners, vendors and customers.

Which path are you on?

There are two common approaches to choosing workplace technologies:

Some organisations take the path of selecting individual, standalone tools based on specific features that satisfy only a small set of specific business requirements.

Other organisations select a unified platform with as much functionality as possible, while only purchasing standalone solutions when absolutely necessary.

Given today's team-orientated environment, the platform approach is the clear winner here. That wasn't always the case. When workplace productivity suites didn't have the breadth, functionality or level of integration to meet the needs of most businesses, it often made sense to purchase video conferencing from one vendor and email from another, for example.

With the maturity of the cloud and advancements in software, a holistic approach to workplace solutions can deliver much greater value.

Let's look at the biggest drawbacks of standalone solutions and the contrasting benefits of a unified solution.

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Barrier 01

App switching and productivity loss

Barrier 01

Workers report spending up to five hours a week just managing technology.[1]

Teams have more tools than ever for working together and sharing information: email, voice, video, instant messaging, file-sharing, co-authoring in real time – the list goes on. While this gives people collaboration options, it can also create inefficiencies. For instance, imagine a team on a conference call where one attendee needs to share a presentation. If the conferencing application is on a different platform than the presentation, everyone now has to spend time signing in to that tool to see the content rather than moving the meeting forward. Depending on cross-platform compatibility, some people could be left out entirely. It may seem like a good idea to evaluate and choose the 'best' tool from each category, but the result can be a fragmented environment that impedes effective collaboration.

The solution

A unified solution enables seamless switching between apps

With a hub for teamwork such as Microsoft Teams, people can choose which tool works best in the moment and easily switch between them as needed. Employees could be getting quick answers in a chat one moment and then instantly switch to a full video and file-sharing work session the next. Plus, because Microsoft Teams is designed to work equally well across computers and mobile devices, workers on the go never have to be left out of the conversation when shifting to a different device.

Experience a shared workspace with your favourite collaboration apps.
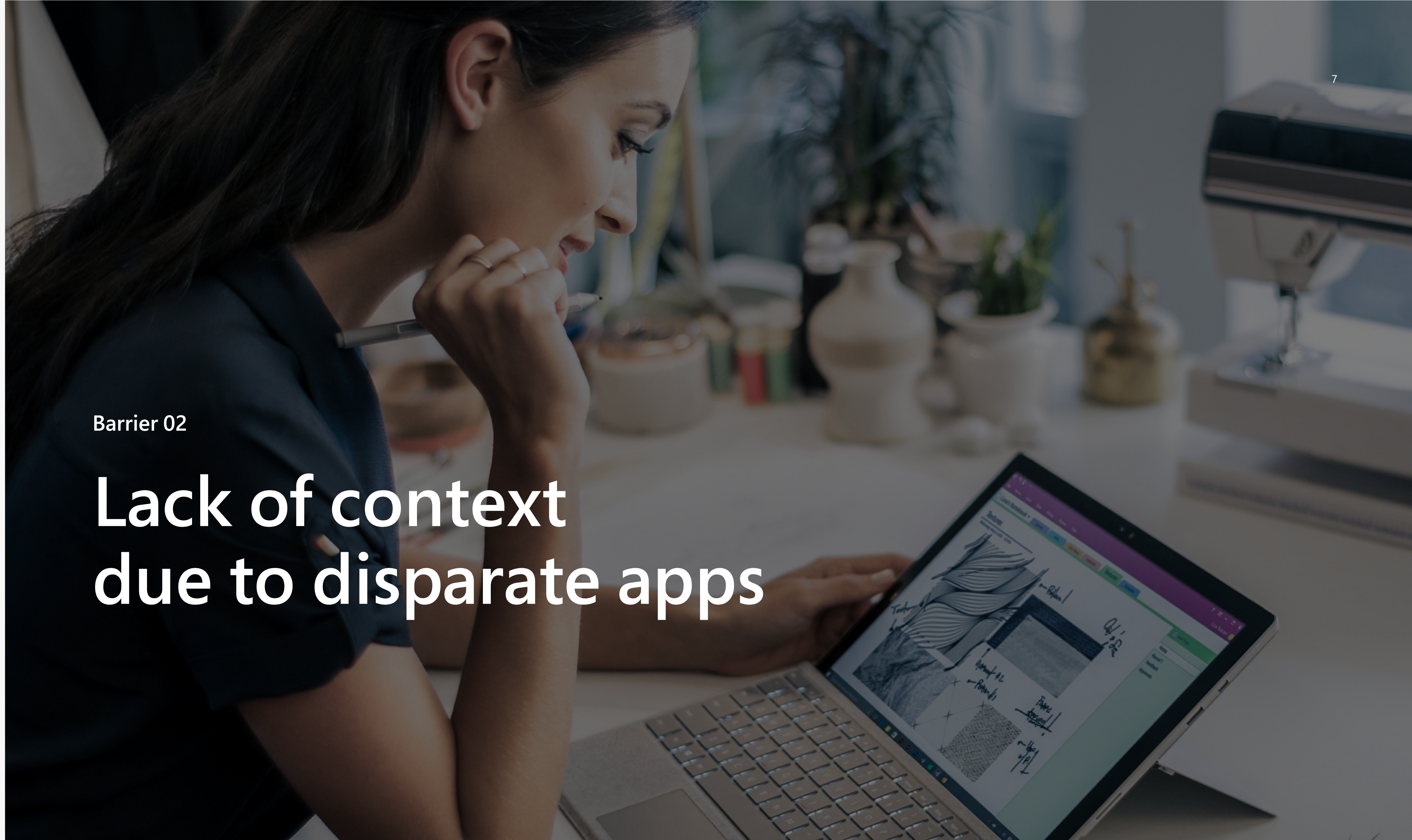
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Barrier 02

Lack of context due to disparate apps

Barrier 02

3.7 million people in the US work from home at least half the time.[2]

With increasing pressure to move faster and outperform the competition, teamwork is always a necessity. Unfortunately, everyone can't be available at all times, and catching up can be hard if people are working with different tools. Imagine a group chat on a standalone program that only one team uses. Members on the extended team aren't available and aren't logged in to that particular tool.

To bring them up to speed, participants might have to copy and paste the chat into an email or send a message telling them to log in and read the results. It's likely that without the full context, the communication will be confusing, reducing the potential for sharing ideas and moving tasks forward efficiently.

The solution

One toolkit = standardised apps across the team that support different work styles

With unified presence information in Microsoft Teams, you always know the availability of other team members. They can easily schedule meetings in advance or spontaneously. When some teammates are offline, they get alerted to the activity they missed and can catch up later by reading their chat history. The ability to record meetings and share files from a centralised location within Teams means people never have to miss out on project progress. Teams lets you easily control permissions: only those within your Teams have access to the chat history and files.

Support different work styles for your people.
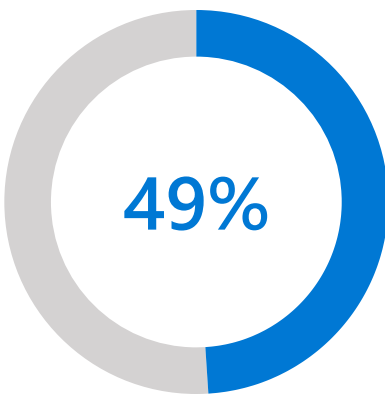
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Barrier 03

Version control and access issues

Barrier 03

49%

49% of workers say the process of locating documents in their organisation is broken.³

In a team-orientated workplace, files and documents aren't static. As the end product of collaboration, they're always being updated with new information and ideas. If you're storing files in a location that's disconnected from your teamwork environment (like another application or a personal drive), it could result in version control and access issues.

Not only do people need easy access to documents from any device, they need the ability to work on them together in real time, whether they're all in the same office or half a world away.

The solution

Get everyone on the same page

When file storage and sharing is integrated with the collaboration tools people use every day, information becomes a living resource that adapts with changing needs. With everything in one place, employees can quickly find what they need using intuitive search capabilities. With Microsoft Teams, you can eliminate the need to track versions across email threads and meeting sessions: everything is in one place, and up to date. Real-time co-authoring is built in through SharePoint: there's no need to check out files or worry if someone else has a file open. Changes are merged in real time and the latest version is always available for everyone to work on.

Reduce version control and access issues.

Try Teams for free now

Barrier 04

Security risks due to shadow IT

Barrier 04

Shadow IT represents 30% to 50% of IT spending on average.[4]

When you choose standalone applications to meet collaboration needs, they're unlikely to meet all work styles and preferences. This increases the risk of employees bringing in apps they use in their personal lives – apps that, typically, haven't been authorised by IT. Not only is your data then at risk because it lives outside of IT's protection, but it also means that you cannot get IT support when you need it.

The solution

Enterprise-grade security with Microsoft Teams

Microsoft Teams caters to a diverse workforce with a variety of work styles and preferences, so your team won't need to look elsewhere. It provides instant messaging, best-in-class meeting solutions, file sharing for co-authoring and collaboration, and so much more – all with the protection of enterprise-grade security and compliance capabilities. It supports key standards including SOC 1, SOC 2, EU Model Clauses, HIPPA and more.

Keep your team secure.

Try Teams for free now

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Barrier 05

The cost
of complexity

Barrier 05

Switching to a cloud-based, integrated productivity and collaboration suite can reduce IT implementation effort by 15%.[5]

Collaboration tools are expected to deliver a return on investment by improving employee productivity and reducing work for IT. But managing disparate tools results in hidden costs. Managing multiple vendor contracts and implementing multiple tools demand time and resources, which can add up quickly. Installation often requires manual updates and additional purchases.

Having many standalone solutions not only slows down productivity due to the additional time spent on switching and searching across apps, but managing multiple security models also increases the risk of losses due to a data breach.

The solution

Simplify and save

By bringing many different collaboration capabilities into one hub like Microsoft Teams, administered through a single console, your IT staff can spend less time managing tools and more time adding value for your company. Systems provided by a single vendor also tend to have lower licensing costs, leaving additional resources for programs to move your business forward. Productivity is higher because a single tool makes training new employees easier and collaboration between teams and departments more efficient.

Simplify teamwork and increase productivity.

Try Teams for free now

Built for teamwork

Fragmented workplace technology can easily get in the way of productivity and can compromise security. Give your employees a hub for teamwork like Microsoft Teams that helps them work together more effectively from anywhere. They'll be able to choose the right tools to make the most of every moment, keep everyone in the loop and collaborate on files from anywhere.

Plus, by keeping data in one location, unifying administrative tools and reducing the number of passwords users have to manage, you'll be helping to keep your business secure while reducing the burden on your IT team.

[1] https://research.hubspot.com/tech-is-making-us-less-efficient

[2] https://globalworkplaceanalytics.com/telecommuting-statistics

[3] https://info.nintex.com/rs/272-JVS-996/images/NintexAMBPEbookFinal.pdf

[4] https://www.cio.com/article/3188726/it-industry/how-to-eliminate-enterprise-shadow-it.html

[5] https://download.microsoft.com/download/e/c/8/ec85a331-a99d-4ff1-9d49-b6ff61d45b72/office365tei.pdf

Make teamwork a competitive advantage for your business

Give it an edge with Microsoft Teams.

Try Teams for free now