

Communicating in Teams

Below are some tips that will help enhance your overall Teams experience.

- **Download the Teams app to your computer and phone.**

If you have Outlook on your device, you should have Teams too. Plus, you get some added features from the app.

- **Configure your notifications.**

The desktop and mobile versions of Teams have lots of toggles. If you're over - or underwhelmed by the notifications you're getting, make sure you get them right. Check **Settings** in the desktop app or **Notifications** on your mobile device.

- **The like button isn't for sentiment.**

Give a thumbs-up as an equivalent for "got it," "sounds good," and "okay." This saves multiple unnecessary and annoying "I acknowledge" responses.

- **Reactions are meant for sentiment.**

The thumbs-up is good for acknowledging a message, which can help keep work on task. Love, laugh, wow, sad, and anger should probably be reserved for less formal messages and jokes. But it depends on your organization.





Conversations

Persistent chat is the name of the game with Teams. While it might seem like you're using iMessage, WhatsApp, or Android Messenger, you're definitely not. These are some ways to keep things organized, easy-to-follow, and clean.

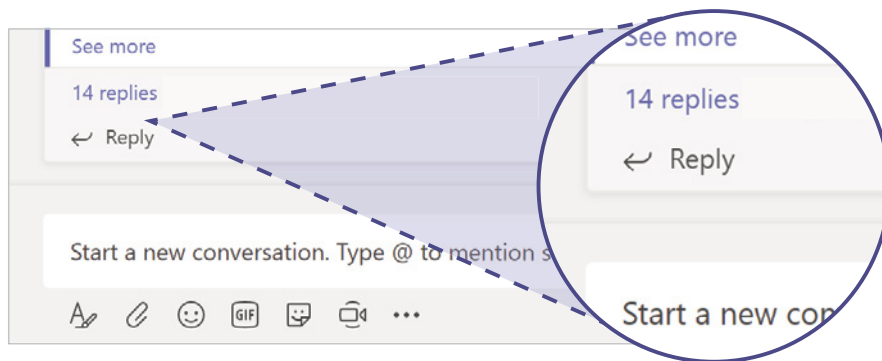
- **@mention individuals to get their attention and a response.**
@mention-ing is equivalent to placing someone in the To or CC field of an email. Use @ accordingly; don't overuse it.
- **Press backspace/delete after inserting an @mention to remove surnames or extraneous information.**
Sometimes Teams includes job titles, locations, or "Guest" in user names, wasting valuable space. And sometimes you just want to be informal with your colleagues.
- **Don't @mention a Team or Channel unless you really need to.**
Nobody likes more notifications than is necessary.
- **Urgency in conversations is comparable to urgency of an email.**
Don't expect an immediate response even if you @mention someone in a conversation. Expect the response time to be similar to if you had sent an email. Use the ! button to mark a message as important.
- **Use subject lines when starting new conversations.**
You wouldn't send an email without a subject, would you? Subject lines make conversations easier to find.
- **Use announcements appropriately.**
Announcement message types have an image banner with large text. Don't overuse announcements; they take up a lot of space and too many will dilute their importance.

- **Match your meme and gif usage to your organizational culture. Don't go overboard.**

They take up space, not everyone likes them, and you may not be as funny as you think you are. Keep a specific channel for fun stuff where memes and gifs are fair game!

- **IMPORTANT** **Don't mix up *Start a conversation* with *Reply to a conversation*.**

These are different boxes and it's difficult to recover if you start a new conversation when you meant to reply to one.



- **Don't invite external guests unless everyone agrees to it first.**

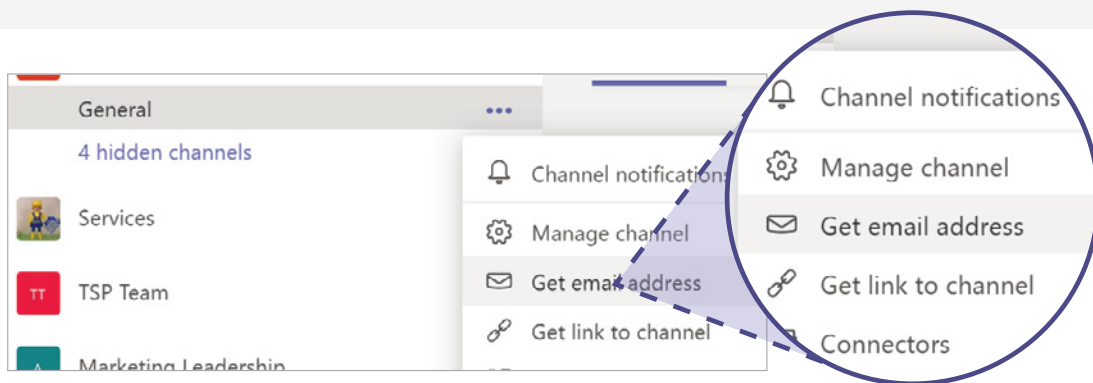
Guests have access to almost everything in that Team, including past discussions. Be sure everyone's okay with that. You may need IT approval to share externally.

- **Try to keep messages short and concise.**

No one likes a long email and even fewer like long chat messages. Keep things on point and try to avoid telling your life story.

- **Forward emails to Teams for internal discussion before responding via email.**

Each Channel has an email address. Any external emails that require discussion should be forwarded to a Channel and discussed there. Only respond via email once everyone is in agreement in Teams.



Meetings & Calls

Teams isn't just some chat app. It's also your new home for audio and video conferencing. In fact, Teams will soon replace the cloud version of Skype for Business. So, Teams is a full-fledged telephony solution. Many of us are already fluent in how to deal with online phone calls and conferences. Here are some of the ways you can ensure a positive experience when using Teams.

- **When scheduling your meeting, if you're inviting an entire Team, use the *Select a channel to meet in* option.**

If you only want certain individuals (including external guests), don't use this option. Anyone not in the Team will not have access to the associated chat.

- **Meetings and calls are better on the desktop app.**

The web version of Teams is great, but not as feature-rich as the desktop app.

- **Use video when circumstances and internet connection support it.**

Video facilitates a much more effective meeting than audio.

- **Use background blur to minimize distractions.**

You can't see what's behind you. Everyone else can. Let's not risk an embarrassing situation.

- **Stay on mute when you're not talking.**

Nobody wants to hear you cough or listen to your dog whimper about needing to go out.

- **And mute everyone on the call if background noise is an issue.**

Plenty of people will forget to mute themselves. If they won't do it, you should.





- **When sharing webpages, zoom in.**

This helps your attendees see what you're showing, which is usually smaller on their end. Ctrl/Cmd + = will zoom in most browsers.

- **Use chat to help share resources and information during meetings without causing a distraction.**

It's helpful to share web addresses, contact names, spellings, and other supplemental information while someone else is talking. These chats are part of the Channel/Private Chat, so everyone can refer to them after the meeting, all without disrupting the call.

- **Record your meetings for future reference.**

The videos can be useful for training and people who were absent. Microsoft Stream can even auto-transcribe what was said. Meeting recordings will automatically appear in the meeting chat and can also be found in Stream under *My content*.

- **External attendees can join your meeting right from a browser.**

There's no need to download a plugin or install an app to join a Teams meeting from the outside. Almost all features are currently supported (e.g., screen sharing, video conferencing) in Edge and Chrome (not IE or Firefox).

