FirstComm℠

The Managers' Guide on How to Get the Most Out of **Microsoft Teams**

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Introduction

Congratulations! If you're reading this, you're equipped with one of the most popular collaboration tools in the world: **Microsoft Teams.** It's so powerful that it can transform how you work and keep your teams productive from anywhere in the country.

But some of us are still just using it for instant messaging. Don't worry, it happens to us all at one point in time.

Whether you've had it for a month or for several years, it can be easy to get "stuck in a rut" with your collaboration technology and miss out on the advantages it can give you.

Well, no more!

In this comprehensive guide, the FirstComm team walks you through practical ways to **unlock Teams' full potential so your in-house, remote, and hybrid teams can operate quickly, easily, and proficiently, no matter what.**
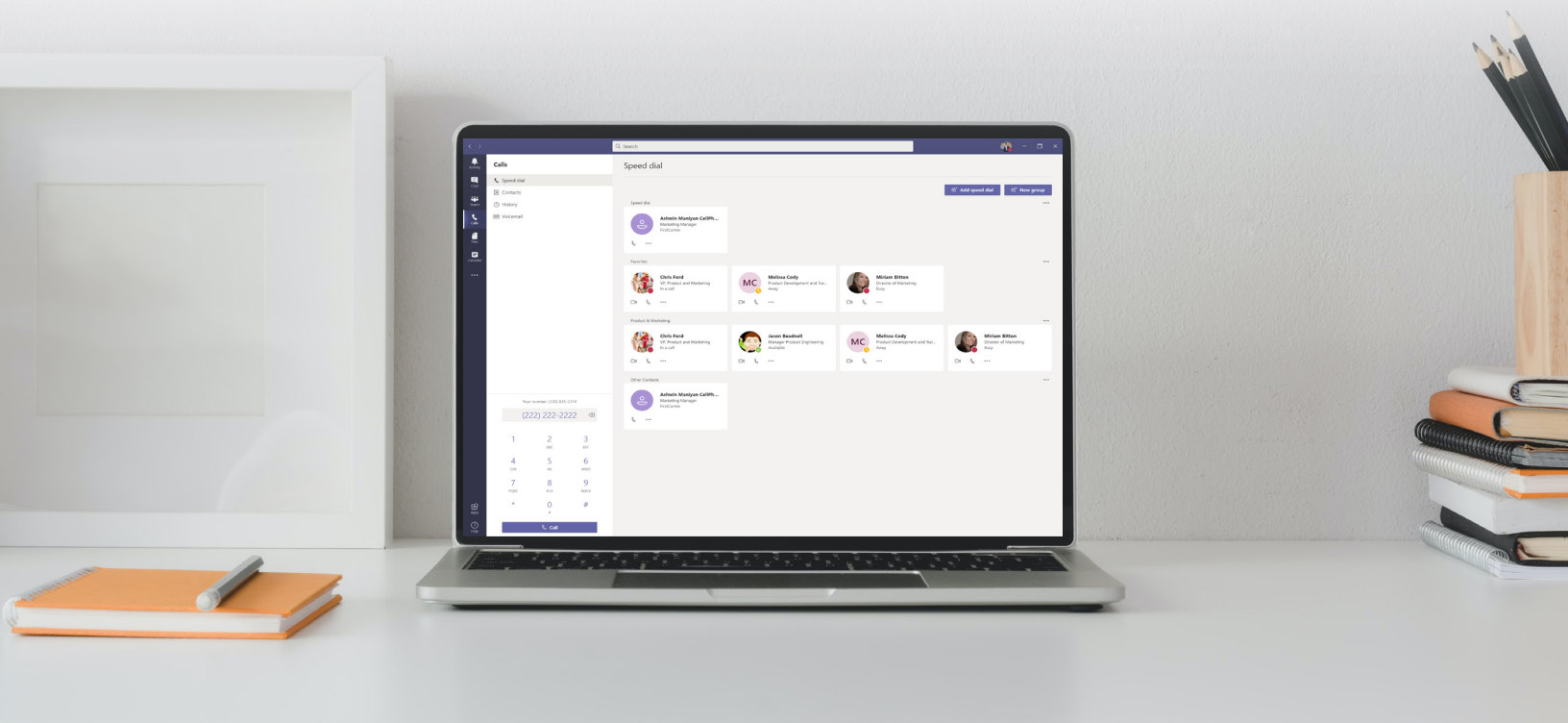
Getting the Most Out of the Basics

With over **320 million active users,** many people are familiar with how to use the basics of Teams. But it might be a struggle to get them to use it daily. So here are a few ways you can help them do so!

Encourage Adoption

Start by promoting awareness and training sessions, so your employees know the ins and outs of Teams' features and functionalities, like:

- What they can do within an instant message.

- How to schedule, setup, and run a video meeting.

- Where to find important information and how to search for it.

You can also encourage them to explore the different channels, chat options, and collaboration tools already available within the platform and emphasize the importance of using Teams for all their communication needs.

Why is this important? Because making it easier for teams to stay on the same page streamlines their day-to-day workflows. When you encourage this type of collaboration, it has a direct impact on your business. Studies have shown that when companies encourage collaboration, **their teams have five times the performance of those who don't.**

And it should be an easy sell, because almost **51 percent of employees** prefer instant messaging over email for internal communications.

Organize Channels Effectively

Create dedicated channels for specific projects, departments, or topics to streamline communication and avoid clutter. We recommend descriptive names and proper categorization to ensure team members can easily find everything.

Wondering what channels to create?
Here's a checklist that can help:

1 Identify common topics or projects that need regular discussion within your team.

✔ **Goal:** To figure out what types of channels you need .

2 Determine the main activities your team engages in – brainstorming, document collaboration, etc.

✔ **Goal:** To find out how your team will use said channels.

3 Figure out what information should be shared company-wide and which should stay within a specific group.

✔ **Goal:** To determine what channels should be public or private.

4 Review your corporate structure.

✔ **Goal:** To see if mirroring that hierarchy would make it easier or harder for employees to communicate.

5 Create guidelines for each channel.

✔ **Goal:** To ensure your team members know what the channel is for and how to use it well.

This checklist will help you build a detailed and easy-to-understand channel structure. Once your team has had some time to get to know the organization, check back in.

Are certain channels being used more than others? Archive the ones that no one uses.

Do your employees talk often and make jokes on channels that should only be about work? Make a "social" channel for the banter.

Have too many channels about similar topics? Consolidate them.

Don't be afraid to flex to fit your teams' evolving needs.

Two Examples of Teams Channel Structures

Walk-In Medical Clinic

- ✓ General
- ✓ Patient Care
- ✓ Administrative
- ✓ Training and Continuing Education
- ✓ IT Support
- ✓ Special Events
- ✓ Team Health (for building up staff morale)

Board of Education

- ✓ General Announcements
- ✓ Curriculum and Instruction
- ✓ Student Affairs
- ✓ Facilities and Maintenance
- ✓ Finances
- ✓ Parent/Teacher Collaboration

When team members know where to go to ask questions or search for answers, it not only reduces the time spent on research but also makes them feel more capable of doing their jobs well.

Utilize @Mentions Strategically

This seems simple, but you'd be surprised how many teams don't use this feature when they need it. To ensure timely responses and notifications, use **@mentions** to notify team members directly in conversations or comments.

This helps draw attention to important messages and tasks, reduce response times, and improve teamwork across the board. In fact, research has shown that improved collaboration **allows employees to do better work, innovate more, and be more satisfied at work.**

Our only warning? Do not abuse this power. If you use @mentions too much, people will start to ignore them. Instead, only use them when you:

- Have an urgent update or request

- Want to call out a team member for their accomplishment(s)

- Remind them of an upcoming meeting or call.

If the message isn't time-sensitive, message them normally.
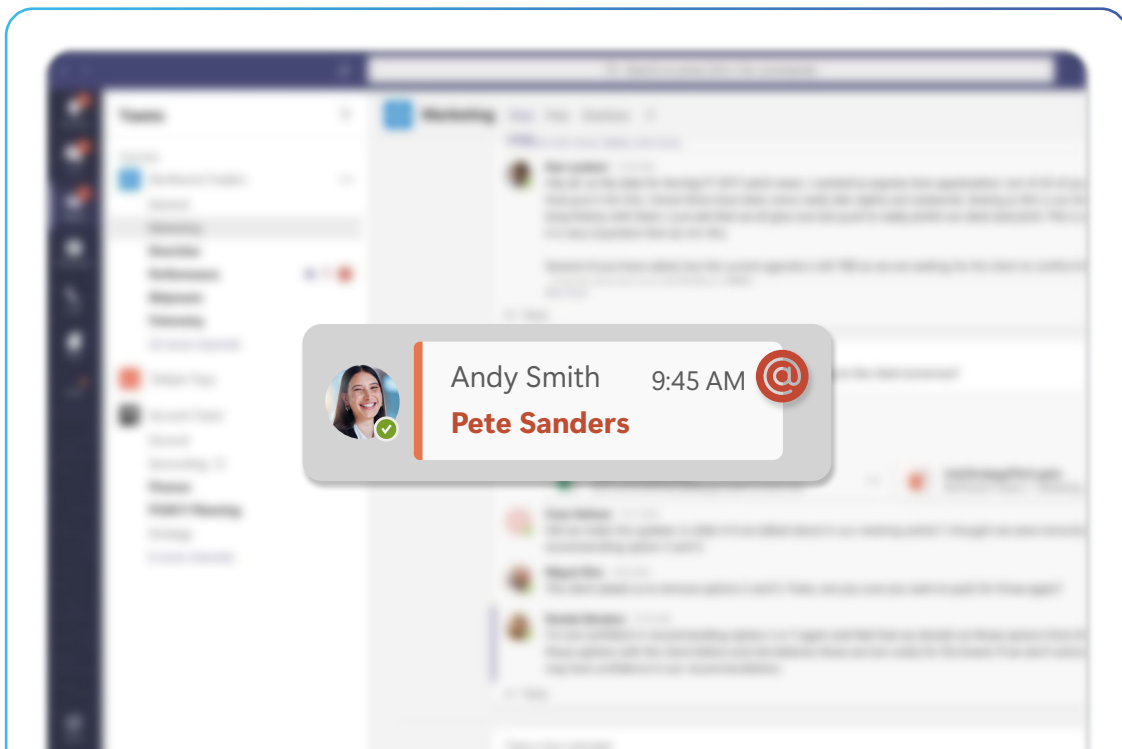
Leverage Integrated Apps and Services

Don't stop with Teams! Bring other platforms into the mix. Take advantage of the wide range of integrated apps and services available in Teams – not just the Microsoft ones like Planner, SharePoint, or OneNote **but others like ClickUp, Salesforce, Zendesk, and more.** Now, all your data isn't siloed away across multiple applications – it's all available in one location.

More accessible data can have far-reaching effects on employee productivity. According to a recent report, **having a tool that integrates easily with others could save employees up to 12 hours of "work about work" each week,** hours which they can reinvest into more critical projects instead of chasing down data.

Unifying Communications Helps Teams Feel Less Fractured! **Sixty-eight percent of employees** say different groups use different communication tools, making it hard to share necessary information. And their work is suffering because of it. Thankfully, Teams can help.
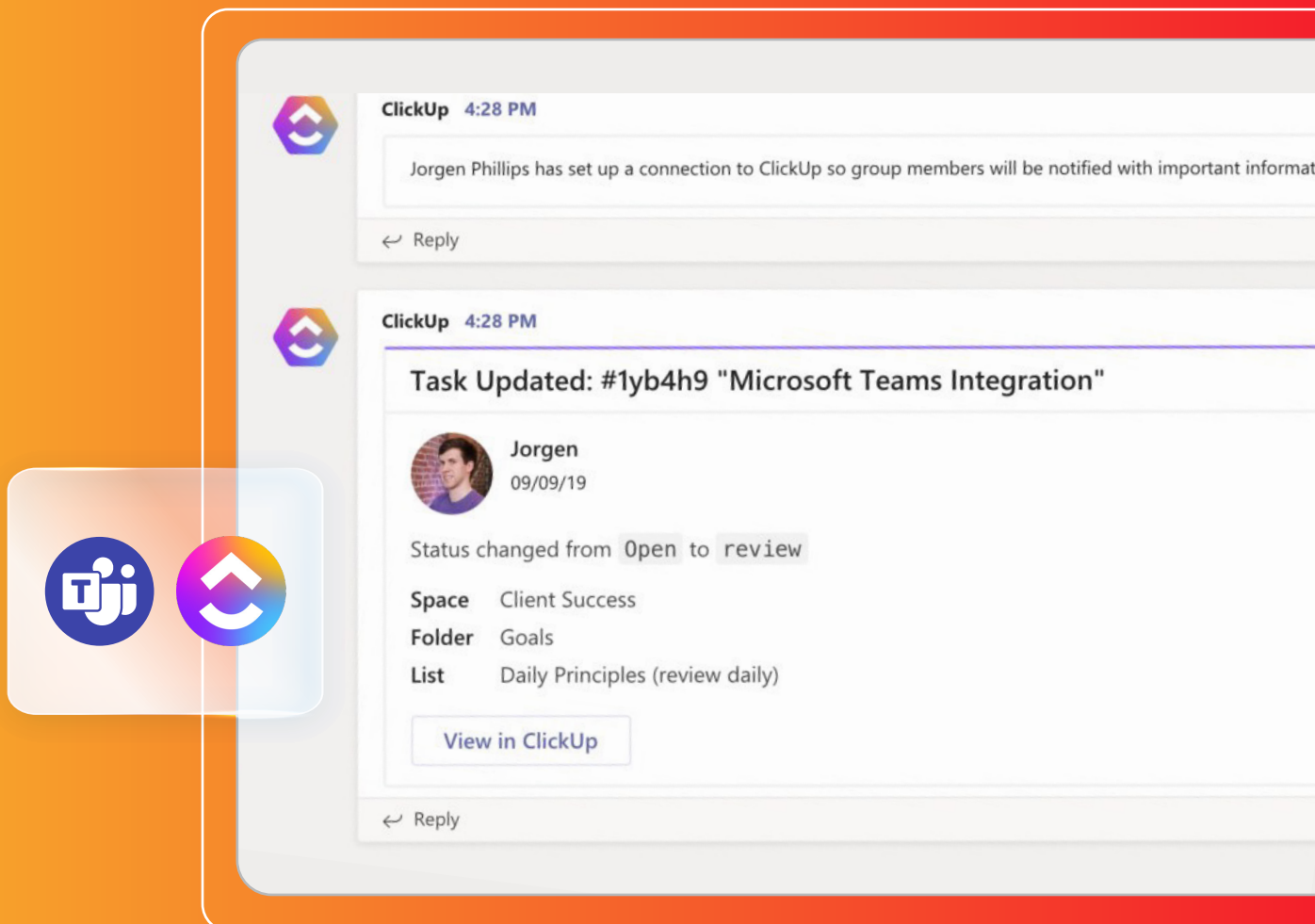
Keep Up with More While Doing Less with Copilot

With constant meetings, overflowing inboxes, and ever-growing lists of tasks, keeping up in today's work world can feel like a Herculean challenge. Thankfully, Microsoft Copilot is here to help you handle the information overload without losing your sanity.

What is Copilot?

Copilot is **Microsoft's AI tool,** available as an add-on for its entire app suite, including Teams. Within Teams, Copilot supports users before, during, and after meetings and in **everyday chats** across multiple channels.

Whether summarizing a meeting, capturing action items, or sifting through dozens of threads for one statistic, Copilot can do it for you for about **$30 per user per month.**

Want to learn more about Copilot? **Check out this playlist of helpful videos.**
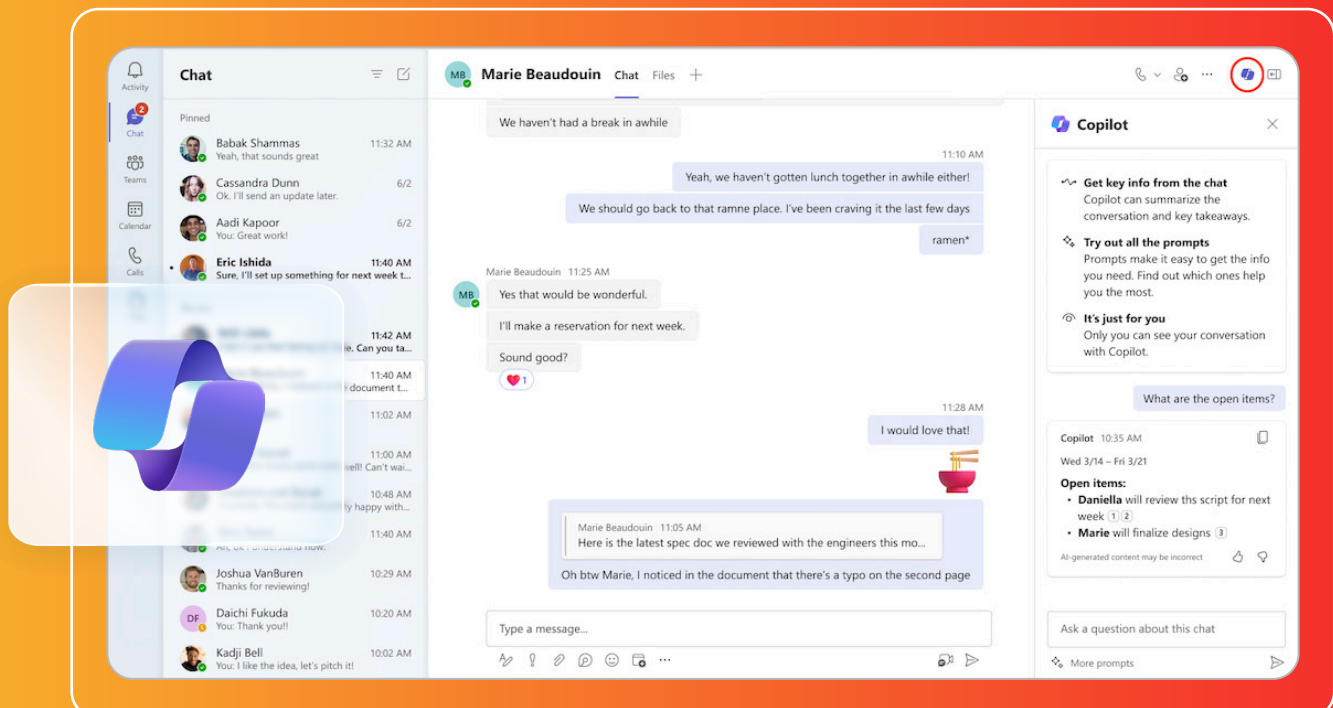
The Benefits of Microsoft Copilotin Teams

Here are some of the top benefits you can enjoy if you add Copilot to your Teams platform:

Real-Time Meeting Transcriptions

Imagine you're in a team meeting, not frantically scribbling notes or trying to remember every detail. Why? Because you've got Copilot quietly working alongside you. It actively listens to discussions, picks out the key points, and summarizes them in real time.

Do you need to know where everyone stands on a particular issue? Copilot can even highlight areas of agreement or disagreement in the meeting, helping you know what to clarify and when.

Better Recaps After Missed Meetings

We've all been there – running late to a meeting or unable to attend. With Copilot, catching up is a breeze. In fact, according to Microsoft, early Copilot adopters reported that they get caught up **four times faster with the AI assistant in their corner.**

No need to pester your colleagues for summaries or sift through lengthy meeting recordings. Copilot provides concise, accurate recaps that get you up to speed – and back to action – in no time.

Supercharged Productivity

Copilot doesn't just take meeting notes—it takes great meeting notes, transforming calls into detailed, well-organized records that are easy to review and act upon. Do you want to weigh different ideas or options? Copilot can create structured tables to help you weigh the pros and cons.

And it doesn't stop there! Copilot can suggest follow-up questions to help keep your momentum going after the meeting ends, helping you easily crush any action items.

Faster Fact Finding

Important information can get buried by a sea of chats and channels very quickly, especially if you're very active on Teams. However, with Copilot, you can get the "need to know" details faster than ever. A survey of early adopters showed that **Copilot can save users 1.2 hours a week.**

You can distill days, weeks, or even months of complex discussion by prompting it correctly into clear, concise summaries. Thanks to Copilot, you can avoid endless scrolling and focus on what matters because it's all right at your fingertips.

How to Get the Most Out of Copilot

Once you've set up Copilot within Teams, we'd recommend taking these steps to ensure you're getting the most bang for your buck:

Draft Engaging Meeting Summaries

Keeping up with your clients can be a job in and of itself. But thanks to Copilot, you can send better emails at faster rates. Ask Copilot to summarize:

- What was discussed in the call
- Any key takeaways you and the client should be aware of
- Any decisions that still need to be made

This will save time and reduce the risk of miscommunication by creating a clear, structured update that can be easily circulated throughout your team and to the client via copy/paste.

Review Before Meetings

Copilot isn't just helpful after a meeting concludes – it can also help you go into a meeting fully prepared. For example, if you're trying to get your team on the same page, ask Copilot:

- "Were there any unresolved issues from our previous meetings?"
- "Can you summarize a few recent discussions this team had?"
- "What was the outcome of our previous meetings?"

Doing this will help you contribute constructively to every internal and external meeting, even if it's your fifth one of the day.

Track Corporate Milestones

Sometimes, goals get lost in the shuffle of everyday life. However, with Copilot, you can easily look through multiple channels to see what you and your team have accomplished so far. No more manually searching through hundreds of chat histories. Now you can ask Copilot to:

- "Summarize the key milestones achieved last week."
- "List the main obstacles we faced in the previous month."

Experiment with Prompts

Different prompts can yield different levels of detail and insight. Through trial and error, you'll be able to find the ones that best suit your needs and communication style. For example, instead of just asking Copilot for a summary after a meeting, you could try:

- "Highlight the main decisions made during the call."
- "Why did the client raise the key concerns?"
- "Who volunteered to take on action items?"

Remember That It's Still Learning

Like all AI and human assistants, Copilot is still learning how to do its job. While it's come a long way since its launch, it will continue to improve over time as it processes more data. You and your team must stay patient and provide feedback so you can overcome this virtual "learning curve" together.

In short, Copilot is a great way for you and your team to stay organized, informed, and responsive in a working environment that moves at the speed of light.

Let's Sum Up

And there you have it – just a few ways to maximize your Microsoft Teams investment. We've talked about using the basics, building better collaboration spaces, and the benefits of upgrading when you're ready.

But if you're looking for even more advice and support, there's one more way to get it – by partnering with a Teams-certified provider like FirstComm.
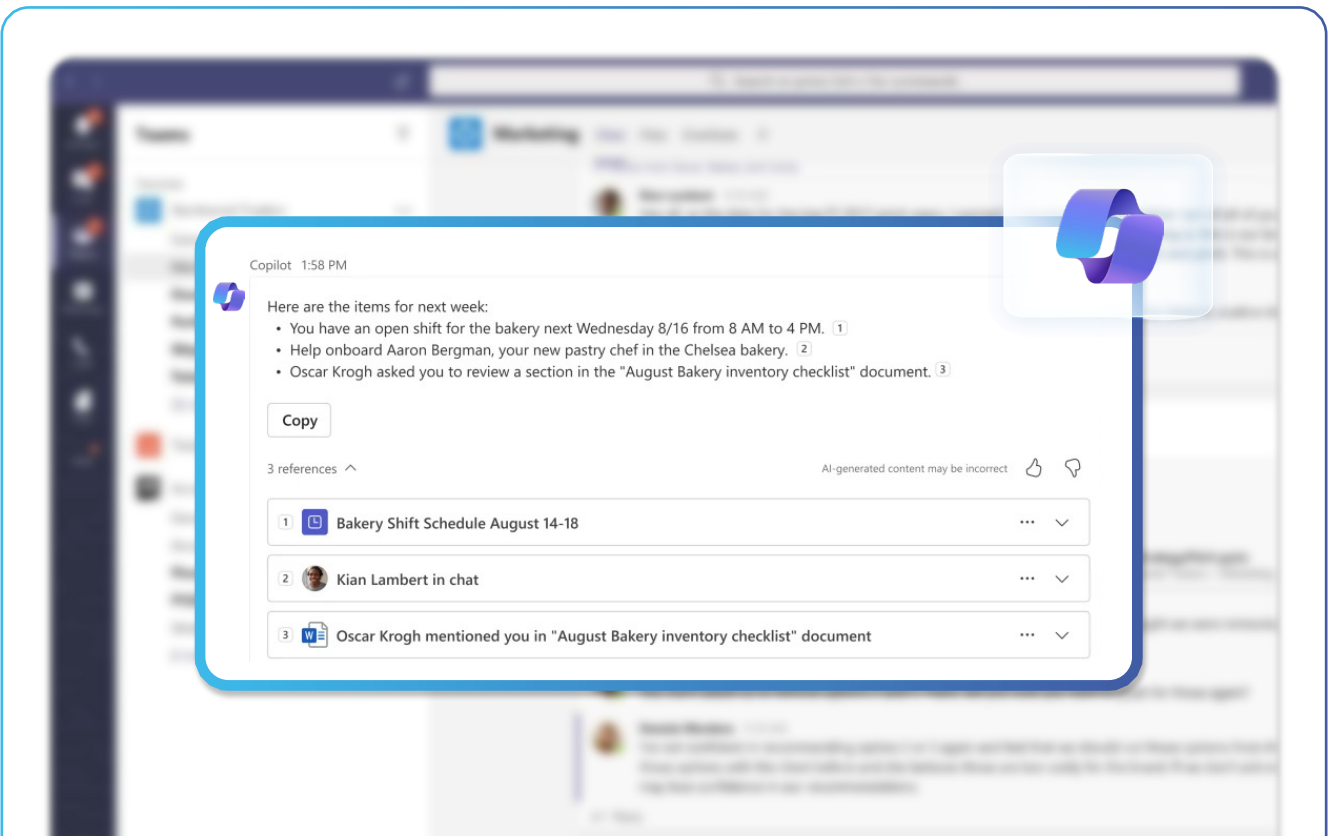
Want to Maximize Your Teams Investment from the Start?

Partner with FirstComm℠

Our experts know the platform inside and out and always seek to understand your goals now and in the future. **With FirstComm by your side,** you'll always have the support you need, from setting up your first Teams instance to expanding to new locations.

And let's not forget the other perks like:

Personalized training for your team

Exclusive discounts on Microsoft Teams products

Top-tier support 24/7/365

And more, all designed to keep your collaboration ahead of the curve.

Ready to see how FirstComm can help you?

Contact our team today, and we'll be happy to get you started.
The best version of Teams is just a click away!

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