Implementing Microsoft Teams for a large government department

The journey of a federal agency's transition to a new telephony solution via a single, high-capacity Microsoft 365 tenant.

The process of transitioning to Microsoft Teams Phone and managing its successful deployment can be complex, particularly for large government bodies comprising various smaller departments or agencies. These entities often operate on legacy PBX systems and are transitioning to a unified Microsoft Teams tenant.

This case study highlights how VOSS successfully delivered this service for a large US government organization with a user base of 150,000.

VOSS

The challenges the Government faced

The single tenant
This offers This offers economies of scale but also raises questions about how to divide it into services that can be effectively delivered to each agency.

The mix
Different agencies have unique drivers and requirements, leading to diverse variations of the delivered service, all from a single Microsoft tenant.
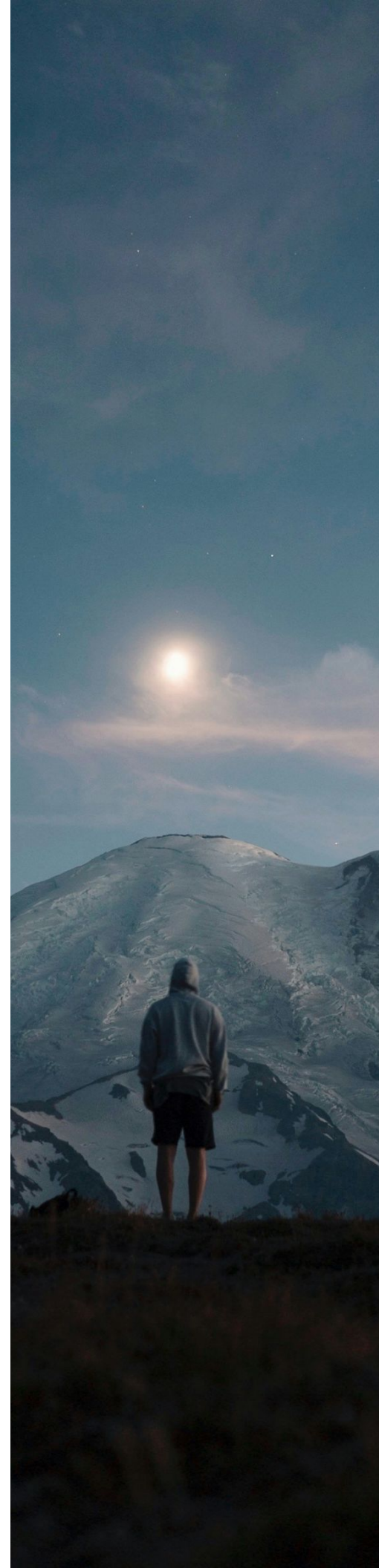
The scale
The tenant hosts over 100,000 users, a similar amount of phone numbers, multiple operator connections, and half a million Azure groups and teams.

Technical complexity
At this scale, hiring technical experts for each agency or a central IT team to manage the tenant is neither practical nor cost-effective.

Two-system syndrome
An existing Cisco PBX multi-cluster system was already providing telephony, which needed to coexist with Microsoft Teams Phone during the transition.

The solution

VOSS delivered the project on the customer's **VOSS Automate** provisioning platform which was already managing the Cisco PBX. This gave the organization confidence that the scale and complexity of the service could be handled.

The organization could use the same platform to manage Microsoft Teams Phone, which brought additional benefits. Regular changes and service administration, such as onboarding new users or migrating existing ones, could be managed through the existing VOSS portal using the same interface and workflows. This facilitated a swift transition to Microsoft Teams Phone without the need for retraining service desk agents on Microsoft technology or new administration portals.

THE VALUE

INBUILT HIERARCHY

Government organizations are increasingly adopting Microsoft Teams as their primary collaboration platform, usually from a single Microsoft 365 'super' tenant. However, this presents the challenge of delivering services to individual government agencies with unique needs and requirements.

In this case, the organization had over 1,000 administrators across multiple agencies. So, giving them access to make changes directly through the Microsoft 365, Azure, and Teams admin centers was not feasible.

VOSS addressed this issue with a built-in hierarchy that divided the tenant into subunits, each with its own services, users, phone numbers, and devices. Each agency could then inherit service definitions from the global tenant while adding its own customization to meet specific needs. This approach allowed for usage reporting at a unit level, enabling each agency to be charged accurately and automatically.

MANAGING THE MIX

These scenarios inevitably involve a mix of vendors, technologies, and operator services, and this project was no exception. It included the existing Cisco PBX, Microsoft Teams Phone, Microsoft calling plans, Teams Phone Mobile, Operator Connect, and two operators providing PSTN access.

VOSS Automate managed this mix in a single portal, offering a consistent view of users, services, and numbers.
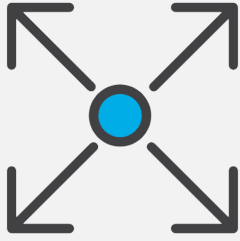
MANAGING THE SCALE

One of the main challenges was managing the scale of the solution and the numerous administrators dispersed across various agencies. VOSS utilized the existing multi-node administration solution, hosted in different physical locations. This provided adequate compute power and resilience in case a specific location went offline.

Integrating Microsoft Teams Phone was cost-efficient and quick. The hierarchy concept provided a way to segment and navigate the large user base. Workflow enhancements for Microsoft Teams minimized training for existing service agents.

NAVIGATING THE TECHNICAL COMPLEXITY

Each agency operates a local service desk to manage daily inbound requests. For tasks such as managing new joiners and leavers, manually working through various vendor portals and running scripts like Microsoft PowerShell was not considered viable for introducing Microsoft Teams Phone. VOSS addressed this issue by:

- **Limiting scope** – Each service desk agent had access only to their respective unit and its users, phone numbers, devices, and services.
- **Defining specific roles** – For service desk agents, aligning with their responsibilities and limiting access and visibility to relevant parameters and controls.
- **Automating and streamlining service charges** – Using workflows, configuration templates, and transaction logging.
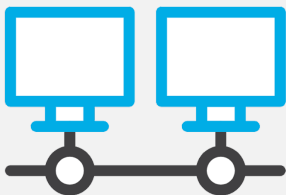
MANAGING DUAL SYSTEMS

Managing an existing PBX system with a large user base and selecting departments for migration is challenging. The critical point comes mid-migration, with users on both systems needing management. Key points of the solution were to:

- Conduct a discovery at the start of the project to clean up and streamline the existing PBX configuration.
- Use the single portal view to provide a unified view of all users within the migration process, coupled with migration workflows to move users from Cisco to Microsoft Teams Phone.
- Regularly synchronize with the underlying UC applications to ensure accurate and up-to-date information.
- Track phone number inventory, allocation, and vendor system.

Conclusion

Carrying out a project of this scale is exactly what VOSS technology is built for. It's exciting to solve a customer's problems at such a grand scale, and we look forward to seeing the advancements that this dynamic UC platform takes in the coming years.

THE VOSS SUITE

VOSS offers a range of services and capabilities that automate workflows, speed up service delivery, lower costs, and generate benefits faster. With a global customer base of large enterprise and service provider customers. More than 10 million devices have been migrated and are being managed and monitored by VOSS.

VOSS Migrate

Using a revolutionary methodology, VOSS Migrate streamlines UC migration projects by automating the discovery, extraction, transformation, validation, and loading of large volumes of data. This saves organizations from the complexities and risks associated with manual UC migrations, ensuring faster and more cost-effective transitions.

VOSS Automate

Offering a wide range of UC management capabilities, VOSS Automate provides a unified point of control across the digital workplace. Seamlessly integrating with UC business applications, it allows for highly customizable workflows, enabling companies to lower operating costs and adapt to evolving business needs with unparalleled automation agility.

VOSS Insights

Complementing VOSS Automate, VOSS Insights enriches the data required for monitoring and fault detection, leveraging self-healing AI logic to expedite issue resolution. By providing deep insights into the UC platform, VOSS empowers companies to continuously improve and optimize their UC environment, delivering exceptional communication experiences for employees and driving business growth as a result.