

CASE STUDY | NOVEMBER 2021

TARSUS ON DEMAND USED MICROSOFT TEAMS TO BEAT THE TYRANNY OF EMAIL

From unmanageable email to effective collaboration with one easy migration



Tarsus On Demand is the cloud division of the Tarsus Technology Group, an IT distributor headquartered in Buccleuch, Johannesburg.

Established in 2012, Tarsus On Demand has brought change and innovation to the South African ICT industry by consistently delivering advanced cloud solutions from the Microsoft stack.

THE CHALLENGES

In 2018, Tarsus On Demand leadership noticed that the business was on a hierarchical trajectory and would eventually become organised in silos like other businesses. It was not the future they wanted for Tarsus On Demand, as the company's business model needed to remain as agile as possible.

Email was seen as the culprit behind the transition to a hierarchical structure; it was identified as the primary enabler due to its impact on company culture as well as its functional technology impacts.

And so, a solution to what Tarsus On Demand CEO Anton Herbst calls "The tyranny of email" was sought. The intent was to find the best way to augment email with something that would lead to better and faster communication.

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THE PROPOSED SOLUTION

In September 2019, Tarsus On Demand started tinkering with Microsoft Teams internally. Initially, CTO Brendan Haskins was looking for a way to collaborate across the different businesses and had identified Microsoft Teams as one of the best ways to do that.

But as he engaged more with Teams to see what it could do, he realised just how many other functions the software offered and how those could potentially enable Tarsus On Demand to do more than just collaborate better.

One of those 'other functions' was Teams Voice, Microsoft's cloud-based telephony solution that allows users to phone others (and receive calls) just like they could with a traditional telephone system, but at a fraction of the cost.

In September of 2019, Tarsus On Demand began testing the Teams Voice component for their own use inside the business.



A BIT ABOUT THE IMPLEMENTATION

Rolling out Microsoft Teams across Tarsus On Demand was incredibly simple, needing only Brendan and his team to do it. All they had to do was make sure the licenses were activated, and then encourage all team members to download and use it.

Haskins says "When we moved to Teams, there was no 'big bang' that replaced everything, it was a gradual but smooth process, and nobody thought it was intimidating or scary. We all took to it quite naturally, in fact, as it was like a mix of WhatsApp, Facebook, and LinkedIn - platforms we're all quite familiar with.

"Enabling voice communications on Teams was the most complex part of the rollout, and even that turned out to be quite easy and we had it done in about 48 hours. If we'd done

all of this on any other platform, I'm sure we'd have needed a bigger IT department!

"Doing all of this was part of our drive to ensure that we also use the tech we sell, or 'drinking our own champagne' as they say. Despite early resistance - some people felt Teams was not an enterprise-grade platform and more like WhatsApp - everybody eventually came around, and today everyone in sales, operations, and even finance believes in Teams," says Haskins.

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HOW TEAMS OVERCAME THE CHALLENGES

Teams delivered everything Tarsus On Demand had been looking for. Messaging helped the company to cut down on email volume, and the ability to create channels for different projects and upload files inside chats and meetings helped with collaboration efforts.

"We noticed right away how easily Teams enabled collaboration across silos, opening up our culture in the process and making everything we did faster," says Haskins. "Before Teams, the volume of emails we were all getting was unmanageable to say the least. But now, with group chats and one-to-one messaging allowing us to get the answers we need quickly, the number of emails we have to deal with has dropped off significantly."

Teams Voice also helped Tarsus On Demand be more independent, as they no longer had to rely on the Tarsus

Technology Group's telephony systems. Teams Voice sees extensive use across Tarsus On Demand today, and it has even helped their support teams handle after-hours calls.

For CEO Anton Herbst, the biggest benefit of Tarsus On Demand's adoption of Teams has come from the way that Teams integrates so easily with other applications.

"Videoconferencing became critical in COVID, and the ability to meet virtually with parties that were using other solutions was incredibly useful in the first six months of the pandemic," says Herbst. "But what I like about it most these days is the fact that Teams integrates with Power BI, giving us access to the analytics and data sharing capabilities we need without leaving the Teams environment. Now that's powerful."

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CLOSING REMARKS

While using Teams has done a lot for Tarsus On Demand, there is still much to learn, says Haskins.

"As much as we've been using it, we still have a lot to learn. Clearly, there is no one-size-fits-all approach to deploying Teams inside any organisation, so the best thing to do is to take an iterative or experimental approach to see how it can best help you .

"We don't have all the answers yet, but we know for sure that Teams has helped us be a lot more agile and make decisions faster, and I think that's important," Haskins concludes.

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TALK TO US!

If you'd like help with your own Teams migration, you are welcome to contact us. We know how good Teams is because we use it ourselves, and we'd be happy to help you get similar results!

I'M READY TO TRY