

# MICROSOFT 365 APPS EXPLAINED: **SO MUCH MORE THAN OFFICE**

Microsoft 365 is a massively powerful suite of products—but many organizations are missing out on much of that power. This wide-ranging business productivity suite is the spiritual successor to Microsoft Office and contains the legacy Office apps you're used to, like Word, PowerPoint, Outlook, and Excel.

But if those four apps are all you're using, you're missing out on so much Microsoft 365 has to offer.

If there's a weakness to Microsoft 365 as a business productivity suite, it's the sheer size and scope of the thing. There are so many apps and utilities packaged within Microsoft 365, but most users only use a handful—often because they don't know what they're missing in the newer or lesser-known apps available to them.

So in this E-Book, we'll gather all the best Microsoft 365 apps—the ones you're already using, plus apps you may not know about yet. You'll find quick explanations for most Microsoft 365 apps, along with use cases for each.



# PRIMARY APPS

We'll start with the top-tier, most widely used apps. You probably already use several, maybe all, of these. We won't go too deep on these; there's plenty of content already published about each. We'll point out a few new features you may have missed, though.



## WORD

Microsoft's venerable word processor is the gold standard in document creation. Use it to write, edit, and collaborate on documents for virtually any purpose.



## EXCEL

The longstanding spreadsheet app helps businesses organize and display data, and it just keeps getting better. You can now import data from photos using your mobile device, turning a printed or handwritten table into editable Excel data, and the automated formula tools intuitively follow what you're doing better than ever before.

Advanced users can integrate Excel with Power BI as well for even more powerful insights.



## POWERPOINT

Create slide-based presentations for meetings, training, or any other situation where you need visuals to reinforce a message. The modern version adds better themes and powerful AI-driven design suggestions.



## OUTLOOK

Microsoft's desktop-class email and calendar app is the gold standard in the business world. Use it for business email, room reservations, and more. Integrations with Microsoft Teams allow you to schedule real-world, hybrid, or virtual meetings in just a few clicks or taps.



## ONENOTE

Microsoft's digital notebook experience is popular on college campuses and has its uses in corporate settings, too. Create dedicated spaces for dynamic note-taking, sketching, list creation, and plenty more. (But consider whether a Teams channel is a better place to do this work.)



## ONEDRIVE

OneDrive is Microsoft's cloud storage and file sharing service. Say goodbye to finicky and unreliable on-premises network storage. Teams and individuals can move business content to OneDrive, enabling seamless collaboration on nearly any file across the Microsoft 365 suite.

Word of warning: without some structure of governance or controls, OneDrive can get chaotic. Set good policies before you switch so you can avoid the chaos.



## TEAMS

By far the biggest change since the Office of yesteryear, Microsoft Teams transforms business collaboration and communication, yet the app is difficult to categorize. (Microsoft doesn't even try to give the app a category name.) Teams includes team-based and one-to-one chat, robust yet easy-to-use video meeting capabilities, and Team-based digital workspaces that can be deeply customized to suit your needs.

Create a Team for any project team, department, division, or whatever assortment of personnel makes sense. Then users added to those Teams can create multiple channels and spaces within a Team, open instances of other Microsoft 365 apps within a Team, collaborate on files, share resources, and much more.

If you haven't explored what Teams can do (or if you're using it as a glorified instant messenger and nothing more), this app could be the biggest productivity enhancement in the entire suite.



# LESSER-KNOWN APPS

Beyond the big names you'll find a world of lesser-known apps that greatly expand your capabilities and broaden the impact that Microsoft 365 can make. We'll cover the most relevant ones here.



## BOOKINGS

If you've seen Calendly or a similar service in action, you have a pretty good idea of what Bookings can do.

Scheduling meetings can be a huge time loss, especially for busy leaders and managers that hold regular one-on-ones with their staff. Bookings turns the process inside out: a department manager drowning in one-on-ones can use Bookings to set available hours. Then the manager can send a link to employees, inviting them to book the meetings.

For sales reps, managers, and others with numerous smaller meetings, Bookings can greatly simplify the process. Best of all, it automatically integrates with your organization's Outlook calendar.



## DEFENDER

Microsoft Defender goes by a variety of similar names depending on the package or context, but the gist is always the same: this is Microsoft's threat detection and security service. It's powered by AI and can help stop attacks before they occur across your Microsoft cloud footprint.

Most users will never see or interact with Defender, but it's doing powerful, essential work behind the scenes and is a huge value-add within Microsoft 365.



## EDITOR

Microsoft Editor is a browser extension available for Chrome and Edge that helps users write stronger content anywhere. It's the Microsoft flavor of Grammarly, more or less, or a souped-up version of the writing assist tools in Word.

Microsoft 365 users gain access to premium features that check for clarity, concision, and level of formality as well.



## ENDPOINT MANAGER / INTUNE

Endpoint Manager and Intune are two endpoint management and mobile device management products. They help organizations keep devices up to date, roll out new software remotely, and maintain the integrity of their network and cloud resources no matter which devices users want to use.

As your company grows, provisioning equipment — much less keeping track of what devices are where and keeping them all secure and up to date — morphs from time-consuming to downright overwhelming. Endpoint Manager and Intune help organizations manage devices remotely, securing them and keeping them up to date.



## KAIZALA

Kaizala is an interesting one: think of it as Teams, but for field services and industrial contexts. It offers some intriguing capabilities you won't (yet) find elsewhere in the suite, but if you're not already using Kaizala, don't start now. Anytime you hear "this app is like Teams, but...", there's a good chance Microsoft is getting ready to absorb the app into Teams.

Sure enough, Microsoft will soon be sunsetting this app and rolling its functions into Teams.



## LISTS

Lists is a list-making app. It isn't sexy or flashy, that's for sure. But sometimes you just need a powerful list, and you don't want to launch a resource-heavy app like OneNote.

If that sounds like something you need, then Lists is for you. And of course your Lists lists sync across devices and are available in other M365 apps.



## PLANNER

Planner is Microsoft's answer to Asana or Trello. It's a lightweight project management tool built for Kanban boards and agile teams.

If you need to organize or assign tasks, but a fuller project management solution is too bulky or complex, Planner is a compelling option. Its native integration with the rest of the suite surpasses the integrations available for third-party competitors.



## POWER APPS / POWER AUTOMATE

These are low-code tools for building simple apps and automations for your teams. Automate simple tasks and create powerful simple apps to solve challenges unique to your context.



## POWER BI

Microsoft's business intelligence and self-service analytics platform can do a ton of heavy lifting in the realm of data. Analysts, data scientists, and others working with data and analytics can accomplish a lot with Power BI.





## STREAM

Stream is a seamless live and on-demand video platform that can accommodate up to 10,000 attendees for live events. Think of it like private YouTube for your business. If you use video, Stream gives it a home. (It also powers recorded meetings in Teams for people who view them after the fact.)



## SWAY

Sway is a massively underrated gem: imagine PowerPoint, Word, and some kind of Adobe product had a baby (weird, we know), and you'd essentially get Sway. Quickly and easily create beautiful newsletters, flyers, presentations, and visually engaging printed communications that look fantastic and translate well across mediums.



## TO DO

A to-do list app with categories, labels, a calendar, and deep integration with your Outlook calendar (and available as a web app on your mobile device!).



## VISIO

Visio is a workflow, diagramming, and flowcharting tool. Build flowcharts, swimlanes, workflows, diagrams, or even floorplan mockups.



## VIVA AND VIVA INSIGHTS (FORMERLY MYANALYTICS)

Now that Microsoft 365 is running in the cloud, it has access to all sorts of data on user patterns and performance. Viva Insights harnesses the power of that data, providing insights and recommendations at both a broad scale and at the per-user level. Data privacy is maintained, so employees won't feel singled out.

If you feel like your teams are drowning in complex processes or struggling with prioritization, Viva Insights may help team members uncover unproductive habits or patterns, improving performance and wellbeing.



## WHITEBOARD

Whiteboard is a collaborative digital canvas for use during virtual or hybrid meetings. It's perfect for collaborating using free-flowing ideas, diagrams, and whatever else you can draw up.



# ANY IMPLEMENTATION QUESTIONS?

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Microsoft 365 has so much to offer, but with all that power, implementation can be a challenge.

If you have questions about moving to 365, how to implement it, or how to maximize the value of your Microsoft 365 license, reach out to our team. We're happy to help!



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