

IXD capstone: Teams for Home “Mass Niche”



University of North Texas
MA in Interaction Design

Nathan Smith
ADES 5460
Fall 2024



HOME IN ON WHAT MATTERS

aka: Reaching customers where they're at

PRESUPPOSITION & HYPOTHESIS:

- Teams for Home (TFH) pre-installed on approximately 1.4 billion devices.
- An untapped “mass niche” market could be unlocked via plugins.



“Dear Microsoft”

In 2016, Slack poked the bear by placing a satirical full-page ad in the New York Times.

Wherein, Slack invited (dared?) Microsoft to compete against them in the chat app space.



Dear Microsoft,

WOW. BIG NEWS! CONGRATULATIONS on today's announcements. We're genuinely excited to have some competition.

We realized a few years ago that the value of switching to Slack was so obvious and the advantages so overwhelming that every business would be using Slack, or "something just like it," within the decade. It's validating to see you've come around — being honest here — it's a little scary, we know it will bring a better future forward faster.

However, all this is harder than it looks. So, as you set out to build "something just like it," we want to give you some friendly advice.

First, and most importantly, it's not the features that matter. You're not going to create something people really love by making a big list of Slack's features and simply checking those boxes. The revolution that has led to millions of people flocking to Slack has been, and continues to be, driven by something much deeper.

Building a product that allows for significant improvements in how people communicate requires a degree of thoughtfulness and craftsmanship that is not common in the development of enterprise software. How far you go in helping companies truly transform to take advantage of this shift in working is even more important than the individual software features you are duplicating.

Communication is hard, yet it is the most fundamental thing we do as human beings. We've spent tens of thousands of hours talking to customers and adapting Slack to find the grooves that match all those human quirks. The internal transparency and sense of shared purpose that Slack-using teams discover is not an accident. Tiny details make big differences.

Second, an open platform is essential. Communication is just one part of what humans do on the job. The modern knowledge worker relies on dozens of different products for their daily work, and that number is constantly expanding. These critical business processes and workflows demand the best tools, regardless of vendor.

That's why we work so hard to find elegant and creative ways to weave third-party software workflows right into Slack. And that's why there are 750 apps in the Slack App Directory for everything from marketing automation, customer support, and analytics, to project management, CRM, and developer tools. Together with the thousands of applications developed by customers, more than six million apps have been installed on Slack teams so far.

We are deeply committed to making our customers' experience of their existing tools even better, no matter who makes them. We know that playing nice with others isn't exactly your MO, but if you can't offer people an open platform that brings everything together into one place and makes their lives dramatically simpler, it's just not going to work.

Third, you've got to do this with love. You'll need to take a radically different approach to customer support and partnering with customers to help them adjust to new and better ways of working.

When we push a same-day fix in response to a customer's tweet, agonize over the best way to slip some humor into release notes, run design sprints with other software vendors to ensure our products work together seamlessly, or achieve a 100-minute average turnaround time for a thoughtful, human response to each support inquiry, that's not "going above and beyond." It's not "us being clever." That's how we do. That's who we are.

We love our work, and when we say our mission is to make people's working lives simpler, more pleasant, and more productive, we're not simply spouting the words. If you want customers to switch to your product, you're going to have to match our commitment to their success and take the same amount of delight in their happiness.

One final point: Slack is here to stay. We are where work happens for millions of people around the world.

You can see Slack at work in nearly every courtroom and every technology company across the country. Slack powers the businesses of architects and film makers and construction material manufacturers and lawyers and creative agencies and researchers. It's the only tool preferred by both line scientists and compliance officers. It is in some of the world's largest enterprises as well as tens of thousands of businesses on the main streets of towns and cities all over the planet. And we're just getting started.

So welcome, Microsoft, to the revolution. We're glad you're going to be helping us define this new product category. We admire many of your achievements and know you'll be a worthy competitor. We're sure you're going to come up with a couple of new ideas on your own too. And we'll be right there, ready.

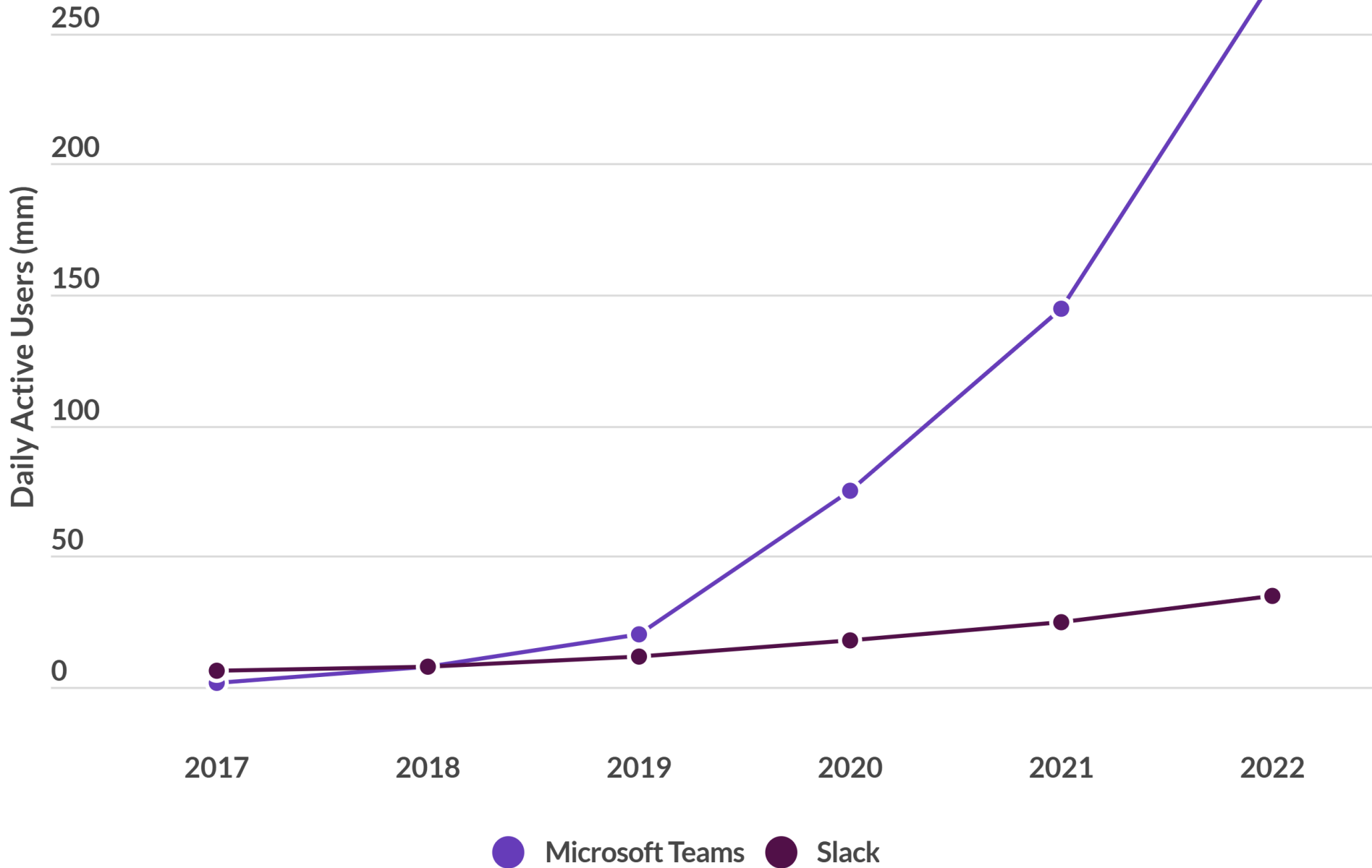
—Your friends at Slack




Where work happens.

Read this letter online at www.slack.com/welcome

Microsoft Teams grew exponentially

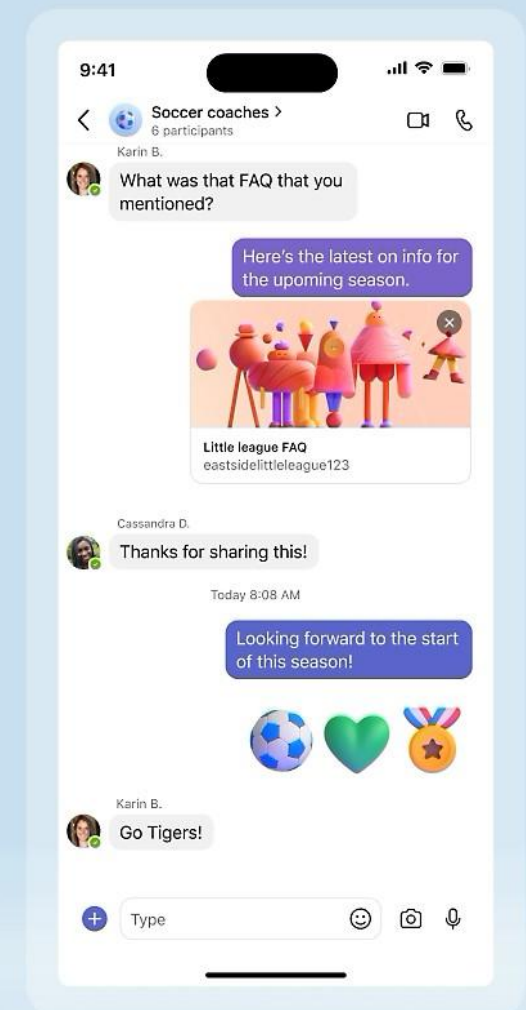
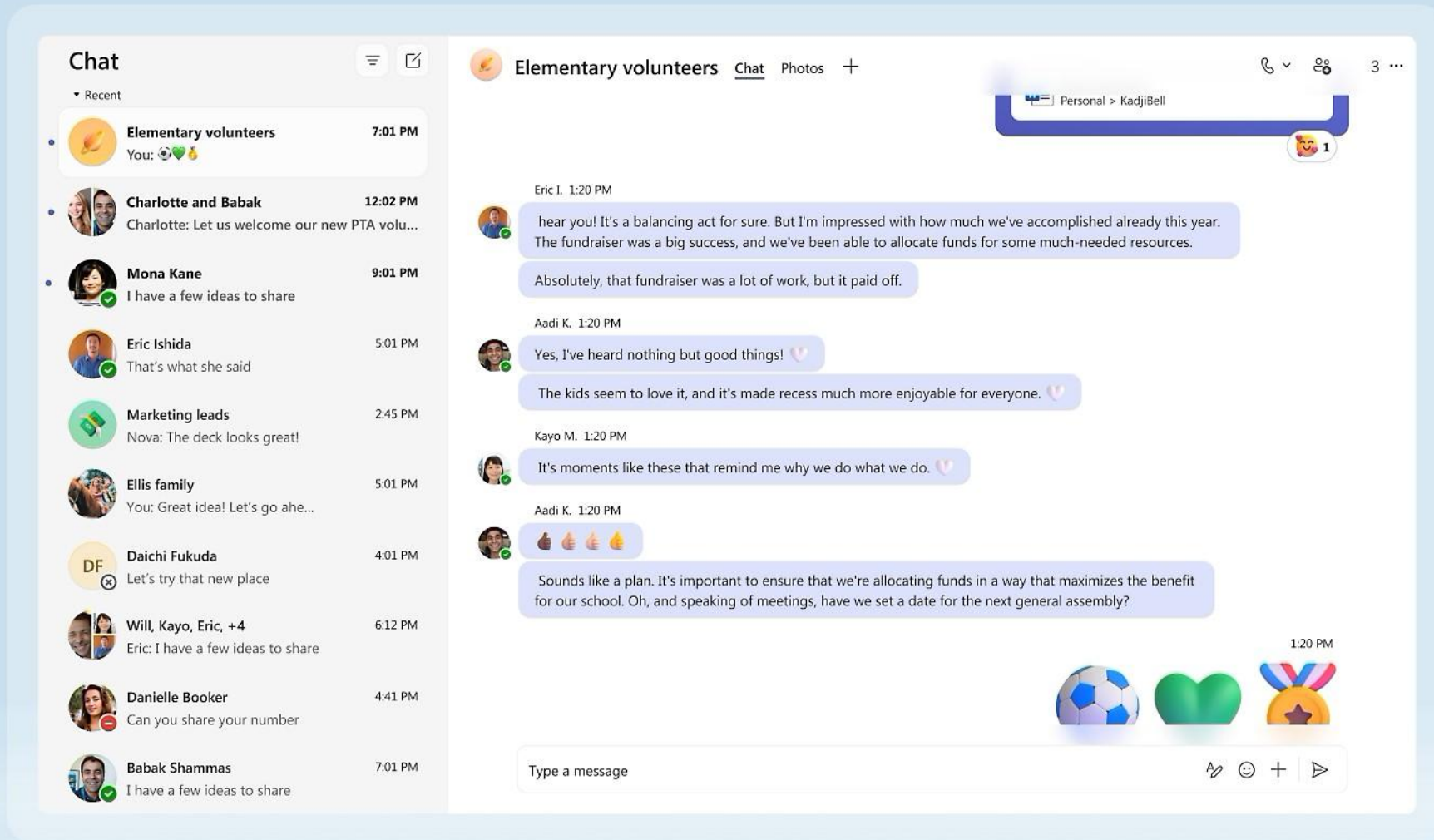


Teams now has 320+ million monthly active users.

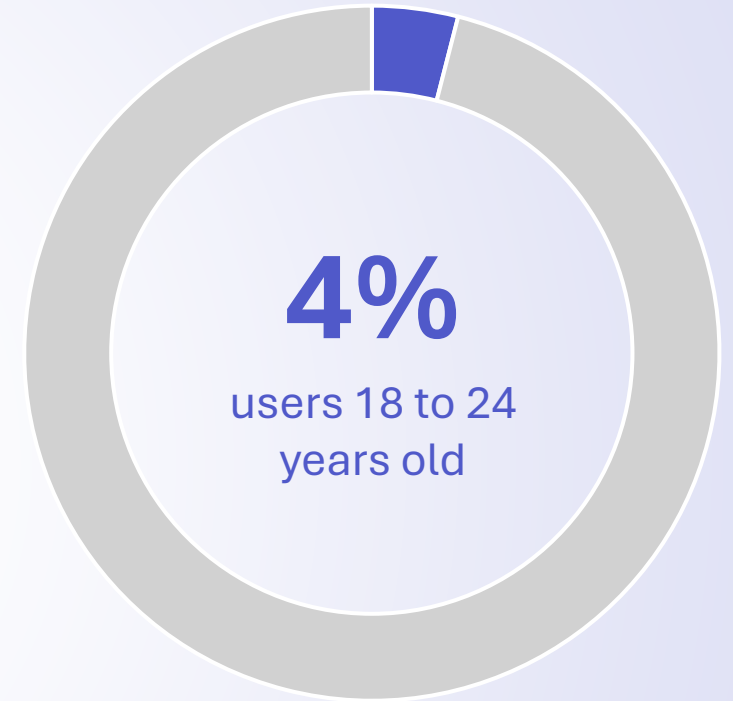
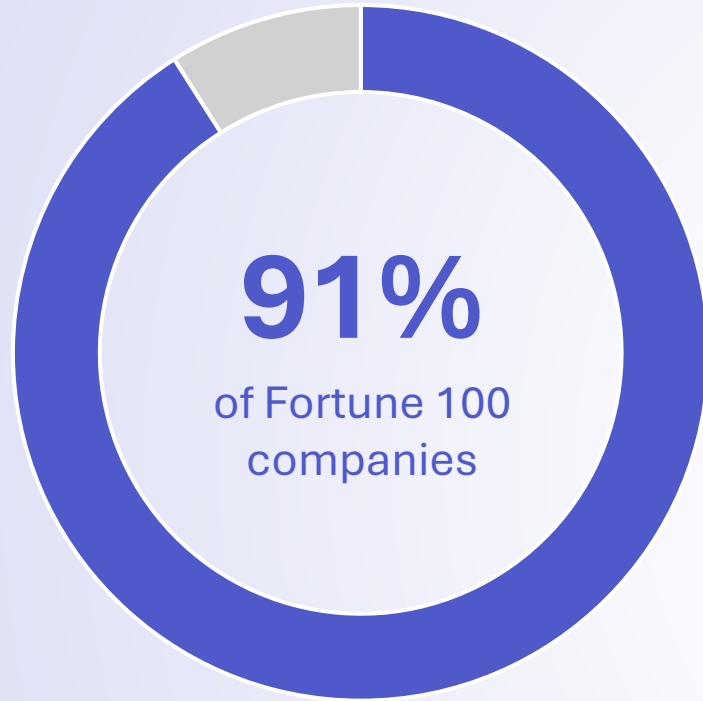
 Teams for Home comprises a smaller (but significant) subset of that overall user base.

Note: Microsoft has more precise internal TFH metrics, but I cannot share those publicly.

Teams for Home aims to be more casual and approachable



Interesting stats: Room to grow?

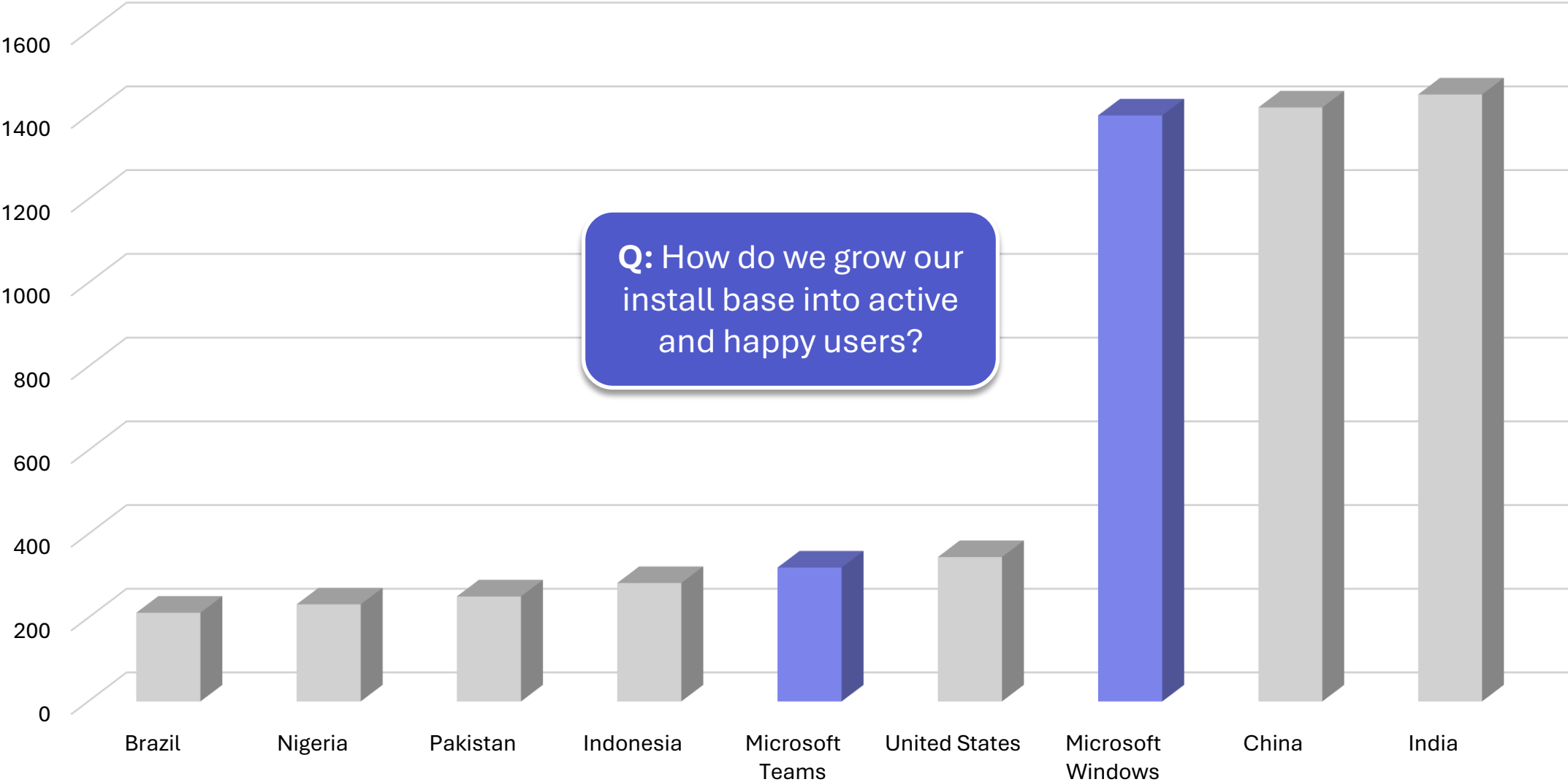


🧐 Translation: Teams is not perceived as a “cool” app.

Not the favorite pick among an emerging workforce.

Google apps and Slack are preferred by startups.

For comparison: Most populous countries (in millions)



Q: How do we grow our install base into active and happy users?

Internal initiative: TFH Customer Love

How might we include more [table stakes](#) features? Some are currently exclusive to TFW. Others are already offered by competitors.

- [Copilot AI](#)
- [PowerPoint Live](#)
- All participants: camera off
- All participants: mic mute
- Audio & Video “test call”
- Easier account switching
- Call recording
- Call transcription
- Camera filters
- Live meeting translation
- N-to-many broadcast
- Plugin apps

I conducted qualitative interviews with users of various apps. Primarily: Discord, Slack, Teams.



Aaron Alexander
Executive Pastor



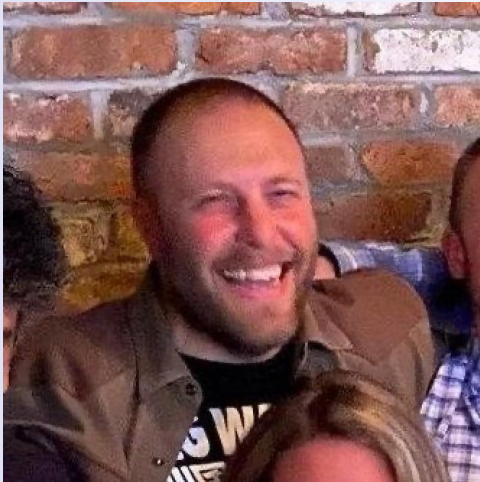
Ashley Crutcher
Director of UX Strategy



Charles Han
VP of Customer Experience



Jonathan Davis
Gaming Community Organizer



Mundi Morgado
Director & Front-End Architect



Scott Grant
Head of Cybersecurity






Shayna Hodkin
UX Writing Lead



Tim Samoff
Program Director – Gaming & Media

Competitive analysis & perception

-  **Teams** is okay as “second place” for business tasks. Bundled with MS Office. Slack is better for text. Zoom preferred for video.
-  **Slack** is simpler. Mature plugin ecosystem. Strategic missteps by [deleting chat history](#) of non-paying users & forced [AI opt-in](#).
-  **Discord** is fun & quirky. Popular with gamers. Voice chat used while gaming. Alternative to Slack after chat retention changes.

Survey

MEETING APP SENTIMENT

I conducted a [survey](#) with users of communication apps.

Asked respondents:

- If they are familiar with plugins for extensibility.
- How often they attend online meetings.
- Interest level in plugins for communication apps.



Please indicate if you agree with the following statements.

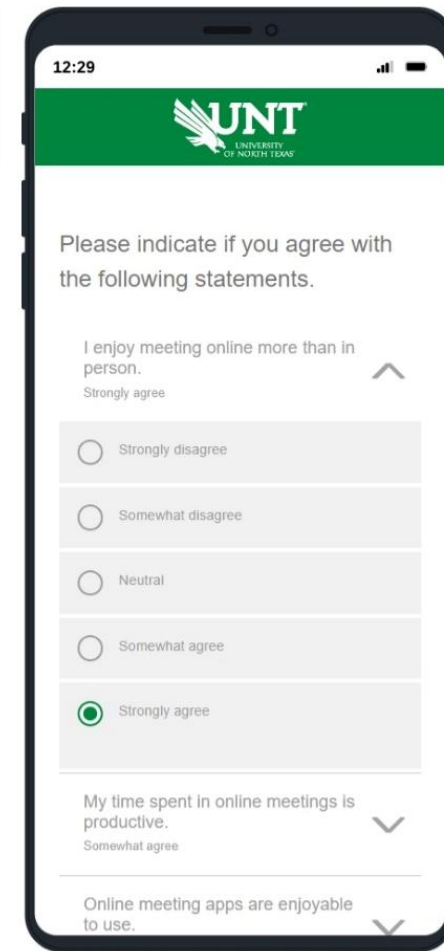
	Strongly disagree	Somewhat disagree	Neutral	Somewhat agree	Strongly agree
I enjoy meeting online more than in person.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>
My time spent in online meetings is productive.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Online meeting apps are enjoyable to use.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

How often do you have online meetings?

- A few times per year
- A few times per month
- A few times per week
- Every day

What do you like **most** about online meetings? Check all that apply.

- Collaborating across different time zones
- Conveniently meet from anywhere
- Meetings can be recorded for later



Based on survey responses...



91%

Are familiar with
app plugins

82%

Have multiple online
meetings per week

74%

Would install a
comm app plugin



Revenue streams for plugin authors

- **Freemium:** Provide base functionality for free. Possibly ad supported. Upcharge for more features and/or remove ads.
- **Per user:** Charge a one-time or recurring subscription fee.
- **Per org:** Could bill an organization directly. For example, a large youth sports club with multiple teams. One family potentially has several players enrolled. No 2x charge for two kids.

A small percentage of overall revenue could go to Teams for Home as the platform provider. Perhaps it would be worth a write-off to gain market share. Potential win-win either way.



I spoke with [Casey Baggz](#). He is in the process of building [Nurl](#), an app focused on tabletop RPG gaming.

He has expressed interest in the possibility of Teams for Home having a plugin system.

A Nurl app for TFH would allow gamers to have richer real-time interactions online.

Nurl Group

Home Encounters Chat Notes Settings

Krezk, Barovia
8:39am
6 days
FESTIVAL OF THE LIGHTS

Add Reminder

Level up!

Group Notes - Quick Add

During a short stop in Vallaki, Sonny and Clover discuss the evil witch with the wereravens at Edwin's inn. The group starts questioning whether they should continue until Surina is awoken from a nightmare vision of Mal being tortured by Baba Lasagna. The group sees (possibly an astral projection) of [Charles](#) approach them with limbs and an eye missing, as well as tattered wings, then he poofs.

Supports Markdown

Publish

Clover / Level 9 Manage Character 3.97 GP Update

HOME SPELLS FEATURES

You are a Human Druid that speaks **Common, Druidic, Halfling, Telepathy** (60ft).

You are proficient in **Alchemist's Supplies, Herbalism Kit, Land Vehicles**.

Cantrips (Spells cast at will)

- Night Shard - Instant Hit** (60FT RANGE - RADIANT DAMAGE) **Damage**
- Poison Spray - Enemy makes Con 15** (10FT RANGE - POISON DAMAGE) **Damage**
- Primal Savagery** (SELF - ACID DAMAGE) **Attack** **Damage**

Features (non-combat)

Wild Shape

CIRCLE FORMS
You can transform into a beast with a CR as high as 3.

WILD SHAPE IMPROVEMENT
While using your feature, you can transform into beasts of CR 1 or lower.

PRIMAL STRIKE
Your attacks in beast form count as magical for the purpose of overcoming resistance and immunity to nonmagical attacks and damage.

Roll for...

Ability Check

Choose Ability

- +7 Animal Handling
- +7 Insight
- +6 Nature
- +7 Perception
- +7 Survival


Saving Throws

- 1 STR
- +1 DEX
- +6 INT
- +7 WIS
- +3 CON
- 0 CHA

+1 Initiative

General

15



**Use case: Keeping up with the home team.
Coaches, parents, extended family.**

🏆 “Just FYI... Your nephew played great today. Here are a few photos from the soccer game. Miss you!”

😊 “Awesome, thanks! Tell him we are super proud. We look forward to seeing y’all during winter break.”

Chat

▼ Pinned

- UNT Welcome Bot 11/12
Wow, that sounds cool. I will take a L...
- Frisc Fusion 08B 11/12
Thanks for all your support, everyone...
- Frisc Fusion 10B 11/12
Let's give it our all and make this a g...

▼ Recent

- Coach Donald, Coach Jonas 11/12
Thanks, I appreciate the carpooling h...
- Coach Matt, Coach Hector 11/12
Don't forget to fill out the tourname...

▼ People you've met with

- John Doe 11/12
john.doe@example.com
- Jane Smith 11/12
jane.smith@example.org
- Michael Johnson 11/12
michael.johnson@example.net

Invite to Teams

Frisc Fusion 08B Chat Shared Photos

Can't wait for Saturday!

11/12, 12:20 PM
I think we should focus more on our counter-attacks. They've been really effective in recent games.

Also, does anyone need help setting up before the game?

11/12, 12:21 PM
Also, does anyone need help setting up before the game?

Yeah, I am bringing a canopy tent for the boys to have some shade. I could use an extra set of hands getting that situated.

11/12, 12:22 PM
Thanks for all your support, everyone. It means a lot to the team. Let's give it our all on Saturday. Go team!

Type a message

Frisc Fusion 10B Home Schedule Videos Roster Recruiting

Upcoming events [More events](#)


Next practice

OCT 17 RSVP: Yes Maybe No
Event: PRACTICE
Start time: Thursday, 10/17/2024, 6:00 PM
Field: 3
Address: B.F. Phillips Community Park
3335 Timber Ridge Drive
Frisco, TX 75034
Map: [LINK](#)

Next game

OCT 26 RSVP: Yes Maybe No
Event: GAME
Opponent: Academia De Futbol Dallas 10B
Start time: Saturday, 10/26/2024, 12:00 PM
Arrival time: 30 minutes early
Uniform: light blue shirt
light blue shorts
light blue socks
Field: K

Latest photo: "Roll call"



Frisc Fusion
[FriscFusionSoccer.com](#)

We focus on constant improvement, teamwork, and skills development. By concentrating on perfecting execution, we believe results will follow.

Practices are held twice weekly year-round, with regular seasons in the fall and spring, and additional tournaments during off-season.

About the team

10 The Frisco Fusion 10B team is comprised of boys who were born in 2010 and 2011. They play competitively in the Plano Premier Invitational League.
[comp.pysa.org](#)

Example: Sports App
It could bring together chat, files, photos, roster, videos, scheduling, recruiting, etc.

Frisc Fusion 08B Home Schedule Videos Roster Recruiting

Next-level plans

As you get closer to high school graduation, we will play in more tournaments that allow you to be seen by collegiate scouts. If you aspire to play at the college level, here is a list of regional schools with soccer programs.

We encourage you to think long-term and pick a college or university that aligns with your educational goals. If you have a school in mind, please let the Frisco Fusion coaching staff know. Where applicable, we can help you get in touch with their athletics department.

Note:
The following list is not exhaustive. You may also want to consider [out-of-state](#) schools.

- [Men's soccer, Division 1](#)
- [Men's soccer, Division 2](#)
- [Men's soccer, Division 3](#)

Austin College
School site: [austincollege.edu](#)
Team site: [acrosos.com](#)
Division: NCAA Division 3
Address: Austin College
900 N Grand Ave
Sherman, TX 75090
Map: [LINK](#)

Midwestern State University

Training programs

During the off-season, there are DFW training programs available to help improve your skills and physical strength. You might be interested in some of these venues, which offer a variety of events throughout the calendar year.

- [EXACT Sports](#)
- [FC Dallas camps](#)
- [Performance Course](#)
- [Sealy Soccer Factory](#)

NCSA
COLLEGE RECRUITING

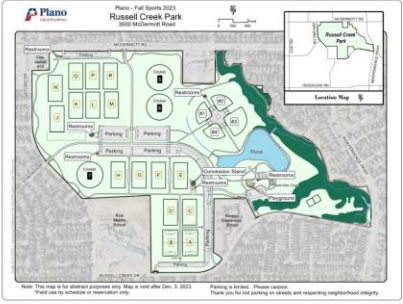
It can also be helpful to create an individual profile on the [NCSA Sports](#) site. Recruiters sometimes use that as a resource when looking for eligible student athletes.

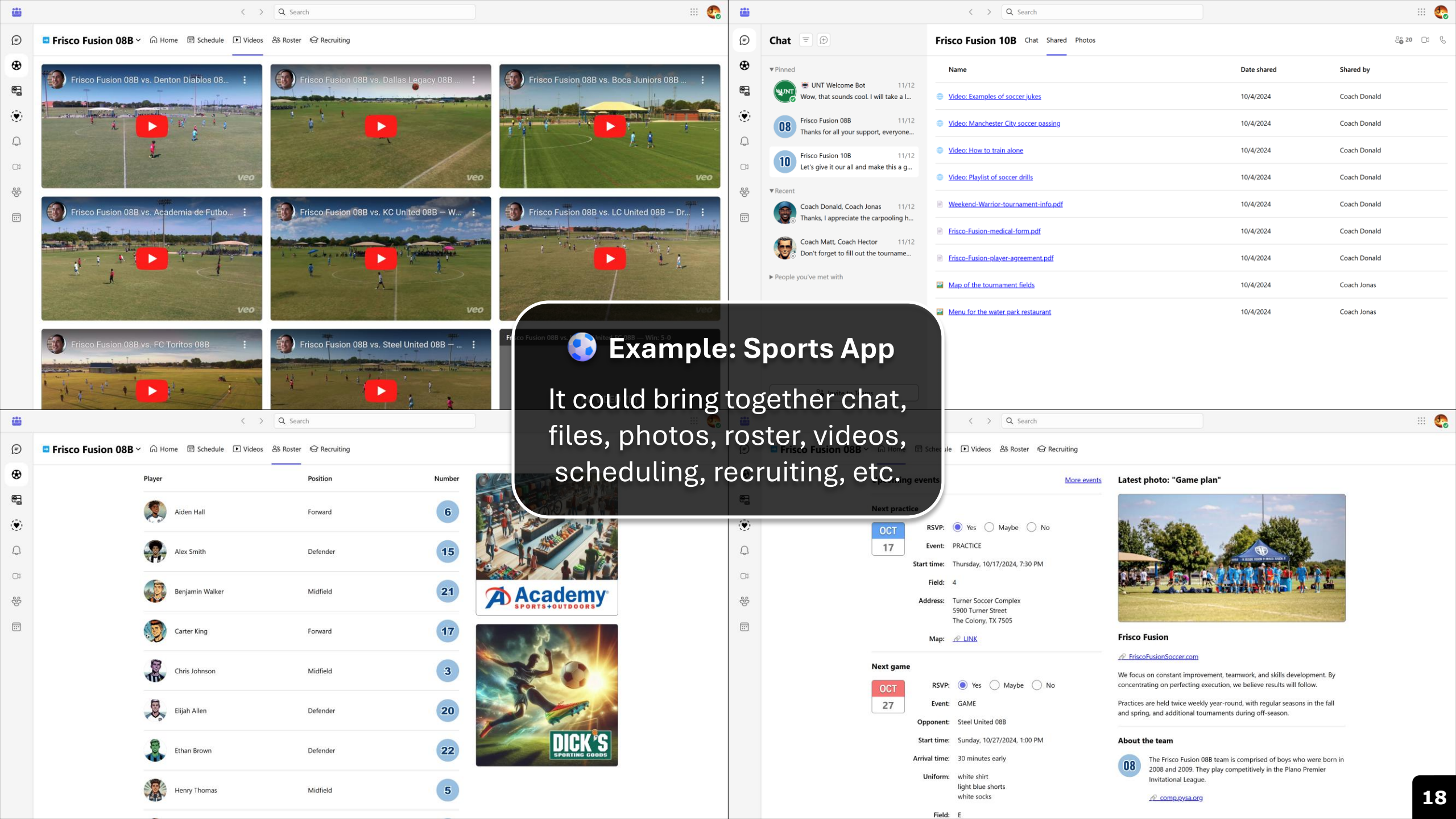
Frisc Fusion 10B Home Schedule Videos Roster Recruiting

OCT 07 RSVP: Yes Maybe No
Event: GAME
Opponent: DKSC Black 10B
Start time: Saturday, 9/7/2024, 8:00 PM
Arrival time: 30 minutes early
Uniform: light blue shirt
light blue shorts
light blue socks
Field: A
Address: Russell Creek Park
3500 McDermott Road
Plano, TX 75025
Map: [LINK](#)

SEP 03 RSVP: Yes Maybe No
Event: PRACTICE
Start time: Tuesday, 9/3/2024, 6:00 PM
Field: 14
Address: Harold Bacchus Community Park
13995 Main Street
Frisco, TX 75034

[Show games only](#)





Example: Sports App
It could bring together chat, files, photos, roster, videos, scheduling, recruiting, etc.

Frisco Fusion 08B Home Schedule Videos Roster Recruiting

Frisc Fusion 08B vs. Denton Diablos 08...
Frisc Fusion 08B vs. Dallas Legacy 08B ...
Frisc Fusion 08B vs. Boca Juniors 08B ...
Frisc Fusion 08B vs. Academia de Futbo...
Frisc Fusion 08B vs. KC United 08B - W...
Frisc Fusion 08B vs. LC United 08B - Dr...
Frisc Fusion 08B vs. FC Toritos 08B
Frisc Fusion 08B vs. Steel United 08B - ...

Chat

▼ Pinned

- UNT Welcome Bot 11/12
Wow, that sounds cool. I will take a l...
- 08 Frisco Fusion 08B 11/12
Thanks for all your support, everyone...
- 10 Frisco Fusion 10B 11/12
Let's give it our all and make this a g...

▼ Recent

- Coach Donald, Coach Jonas 11/12
Thanks, I appreciate the carpooling h...
- Coach Matt, Coach Hector 11/12
Don't forget to fill out the tourname...

▶ People you've met with

Frisco Fusion 10B Chat Shared Photos

Name	Date shared	Shared by
Video: Examples of soccer jukes	10/4/2024	Coach Donald
Video: Manchester City soccer passing	10/4/2024	Coach Donald
Video: How to train alone	10/4/2024	Coach Donald
Video: Playlist of soccer drills	10/4/2024	Coach Donald
Weekend Warrior tournament info.pdf	10/4/2024	Coach Donald
Frisco Fusion medical form.pdf	10/4/2024	Coach Donald
Frisco Fusion player agreement.pdf	10/4/2024	Coach Donald
Map of the tournament fields	10/4/2024	Coach Jonas
Menu for the water park restaurant	10/4/2024	Coach Jonas

Frisco Fusion 08B Home Schedule Videos Roster Recruiting

Player	Position	Number
Aiden Hall	Forward	6
Alex Smith	Defender	15
Benjamin Walker	Midfield	21
Carter King	Forward	17
Chris Johnson	Midfield	3
Elijah Allen	Defender	20
Ethan Brown	Defender	22
Henry Thomas	Midfield	5



Frisco Fusion 08B Home Schedule Videos Roster Recruiting

Next practice

OCT 17

RSVP: Yes Maybe No

Event: PRACTICE

Start time: Thursday, 10/17/2024, 7:30 PM

Field: 4

Address: Turner Soccer Complex
5900 Turner Street
The Colony, TX 7505

Map: [LINK](#)

Next game

OCT 27

RSVP: Yes Maybe No

Event: GAME

Opponent: Steel United 08B

Start time: Sunday, 10/27/2024, 1:00 PM

Arrival time: 30 minutes early

Uniform: white shirt
light blue shorts
white socks

Field: E

Latest photo: "Game plan"

Frisco Fusion

[FriscoFusionSoccer.com](#)

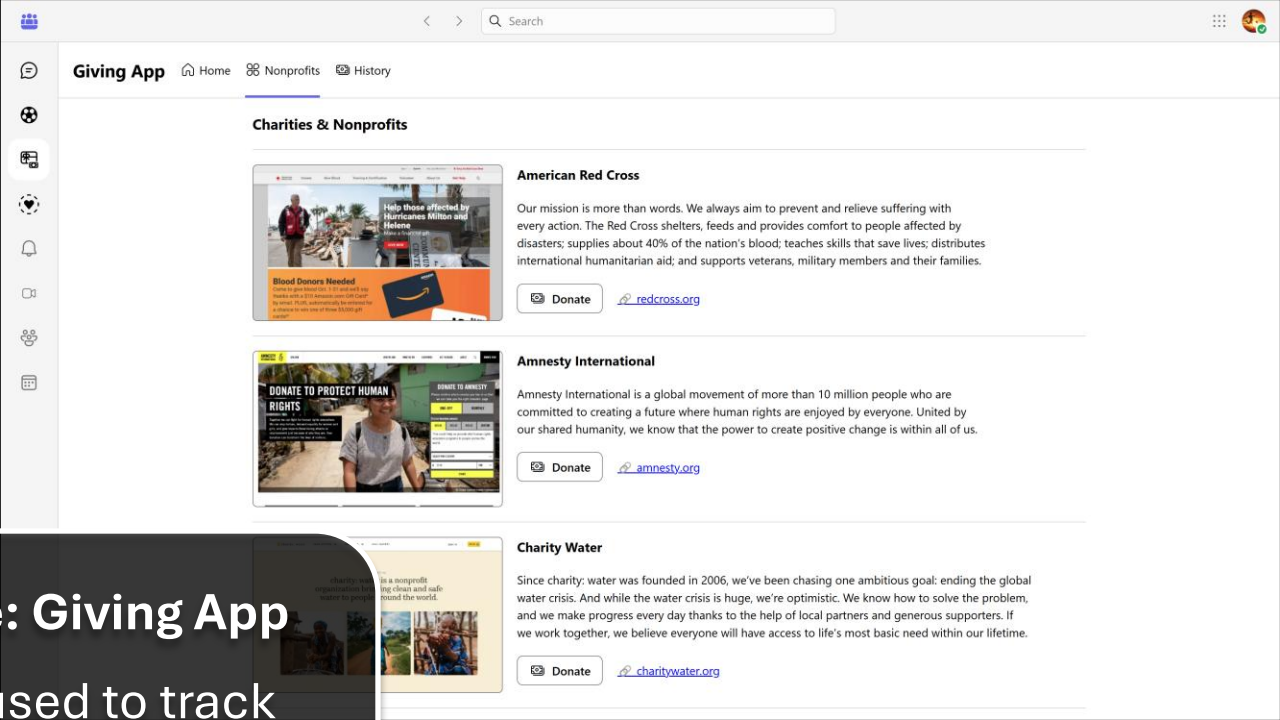
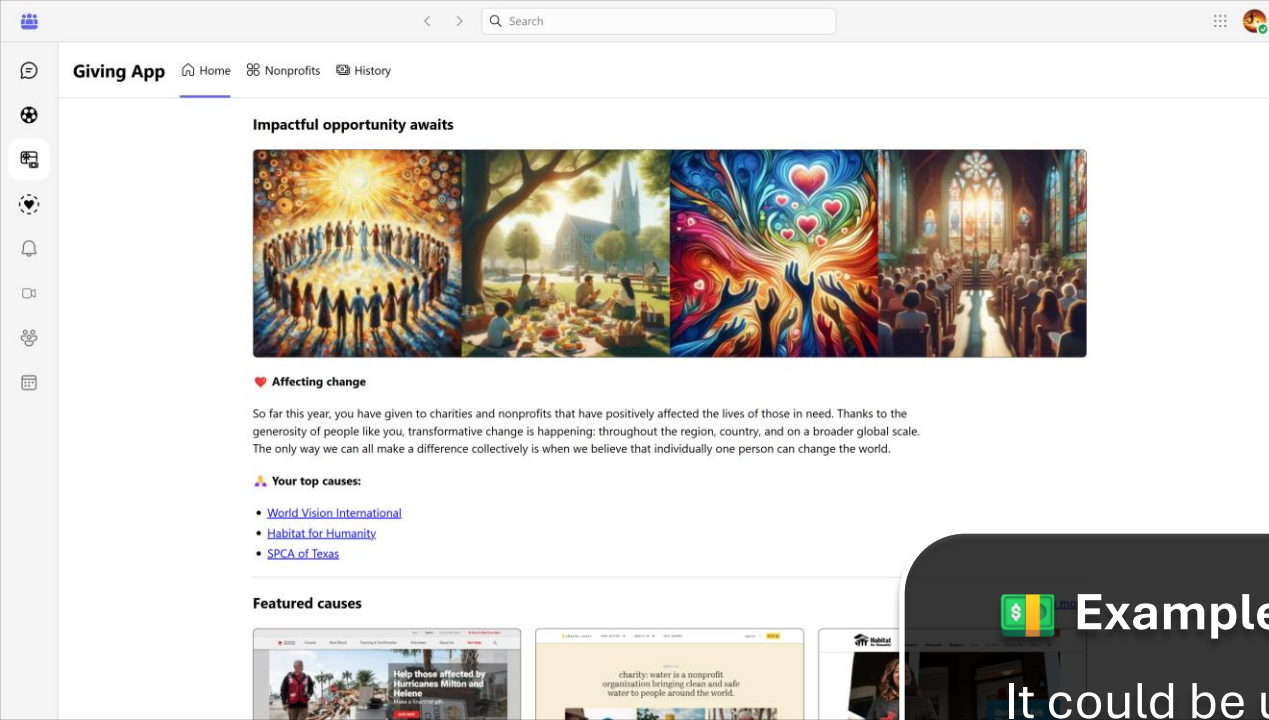
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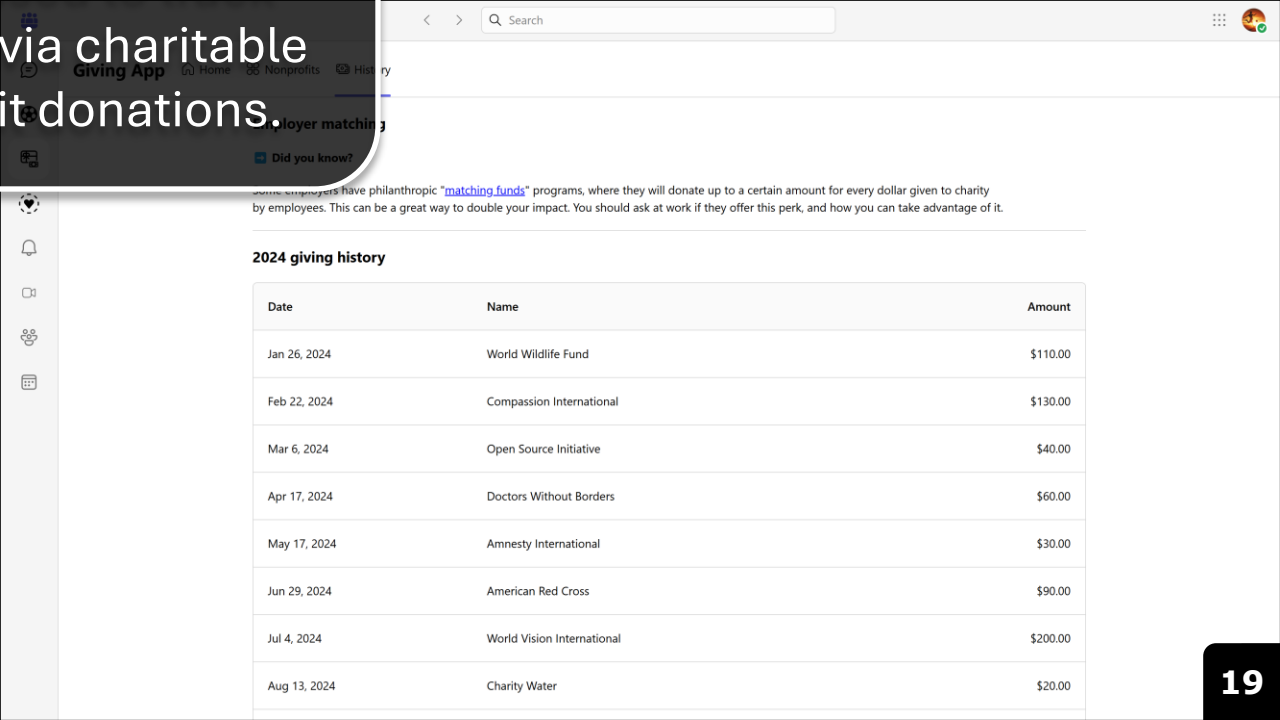
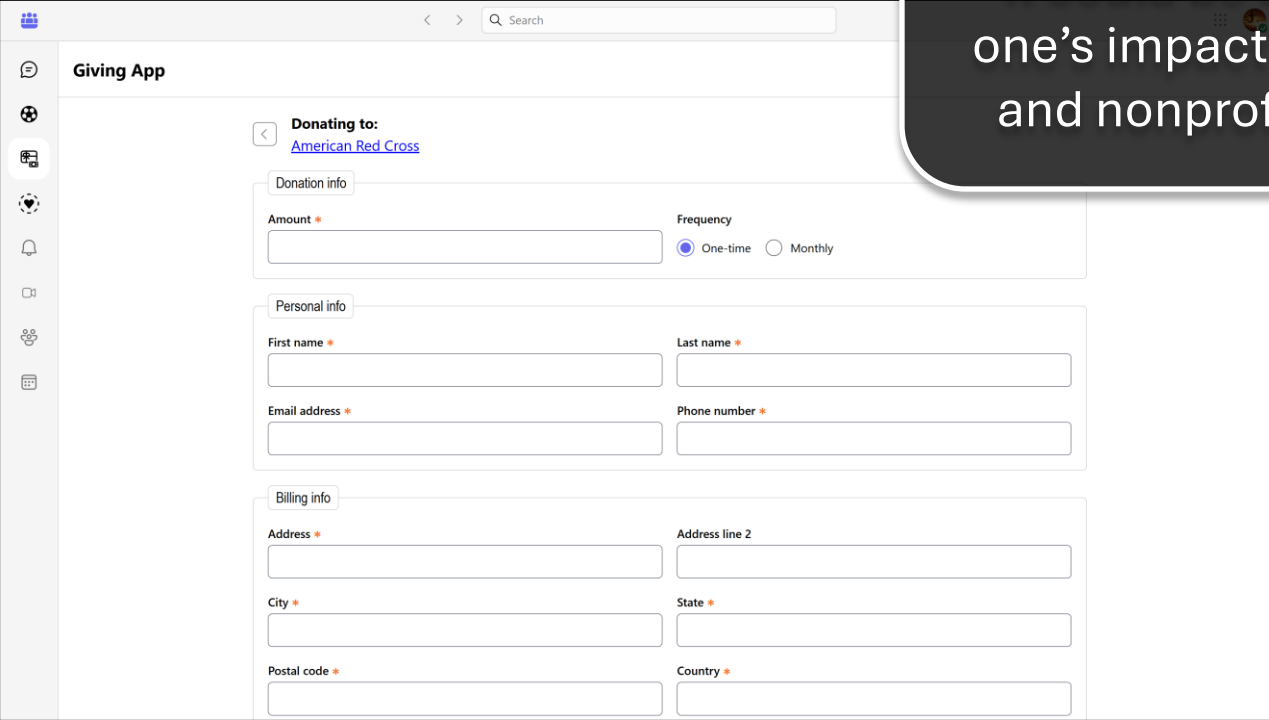
About the team

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[comp.pysa.org](#)




Example: Giving App
 It could be used to track one's impact via charitable and nonprofit donations.



Ministry App Home Events Locations Videos

Latest message



HOPE Decisions, Decisions 01: Wisdom

What's your source of WISDOM?


About us

We are a non-denominational church community located slightly north of Dallas, Texas. We have physical campuses in Frisco, McKinney, Prosper, and regularly stream our services online. Check out the latest message from our sermon series. We look forward to connecting with you soon.

[HopeFellowship.net](https://www.hopefellowship.net)

Upcoming events

SEP 08




Event: [Sunday Worship Service](#)

Date: Sunday, 9/8/2024, 11:00 AM

Description: Join us for a morning worship service with

SEP 10



Event: [Bible Study Group](#)

Date: Tuesday, 9/10/2024, 6:30 PM


Description: Weekly Bible study to deepen your understanding of the Scriptures.

[More events](#)

Ministry App Home Events Locations Videos

Upcoming events

SEP 08




Event: [Sunday Worship Service](#)

Date: Sunday, 9/8/2024, 11:00 AM

Description: Join us for a morning worship service with uplifting music and a powerful sermon.

SEP 10




Event: [Bible Study Group](#)

Date: Tuesday, 9/10/2024, 6:30 PM


Description: Weekly Bible study to deepen your understanding of the Scriptures.

SEP 12



Event: [Youth Group Night](#)

SEP 14




Event: [Community Outreach](#)

Example: Ministry App
It could be used to keep up to date about one's home faith congregation.

Ministry App Home Events Locations Videos


Campuses & Service times

 Campus: FRISCO EAST

When: Saturday 5:00 PM
Sunday 9:30 AM & 11:15 AM

Where: Hope Fellowship Frisco East
9950 Rolater Road
Frisco, TX 75035


Map: [LINK](#)

 Campus: FRISCO WEST

When: Sunday 9:30 AM & 11:15 AM

Where: Hope Fellowship Frisco West
309 Main Street
Frisco, TX 75036

Map: [LINK](#)

 Campus: MCKINNEY


When: Sunday 9:30 AM & 11:15 AM

Where: Hope Fellowship McKinney
1702 W. University Drive
McKinney, TX 75069

Map: [LINK](#)

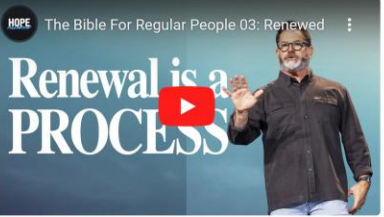
Ministry App Home Events Locations Videos

The Bible For Regular People 01: Regular People



LOVE or CONTROL


The Bible For Regular People 02: Rules



Renewal is a PROCESS

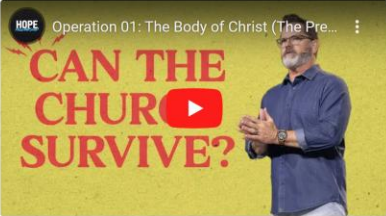
The Bible For Regular People 03: Renewed

The Bible For Regular People 04: Respon...




What is our RESPONSE?

Operation 01: The Body of Christ (The Pre...




CAN THE CHURCH SURVIVE?

Operation 02: The Head and Heart (The H...




IS THE CHURCH HEALTHY?

Operation 03: The Hands and Feet (The C...




CAN THE CHURCH BE KIND?

Operation 04: The Unified Church



WHY IS THE CHURCH DIVIDED?

10 Commandments 01: No Other Gods



NO OTHER GODS

20

All recordings Favorite recordings

No live recordings found Try removing some filters

Entry: capstone.sonspring.com 10:37 AM
 Exit: capstone.sonspring.com Nov. 27
 Duration: 00:16 Clicks: 0 Pages: 1

User ID: 1dpi09w United States
 Windows PC

More details

Entry: capstone.sonspring.com 11:27 AM
 Exit: capstone.sonspring.com Nov. 26
 Referrer: v2.msconnect.microsoft.com
 Duration: 03:34 Clicks: 72 Pages: 1

User ID: l9ghcy United States
 MacOS PC

More details

Chat Frisco Fusion

UNT Welcome Bot: Wow, that sounds cool. I will tak...

08 Frisco Fusion: Thanks for all your support, ever...

10 Frisco Fusion: Let's give it our all and make thi...

Coach Donald, Coach Jonas: Thanks, I appreciate the carpooli...

Coach Matt, Coach Hector: Don't forget to fill out the tourn...

People you've met with

Our goalkeeping has been top-notch. Keep those reflexes sharp!

Can't wait for Saturday!

I think we should focus more on our counter-attacks. They've been really effective in recent games.

Also, does anyone need help setting up before the game?

Also, does anyone need help setting up before the game?

Yeah, I am bringing a canopy tent for the boys to have some shade. I could use an extra set of hands getting that situated.

Invite to Teams

00:24 / 03:34 Skip inactivity

I gleaned UX insights via **Microsoft Clarity**

Nathan Smith

nathan@sonspring.com



Demo: Fake Teams app

<https://capstone.sonspring.com>



My résumé

<https://linkedin.com/in/nathan>



APPENDIX

US Army

THIRD-PARTY PLUGIN IDEA

The US Army has struggled in recent years to meet their [quota](#) for new recruits.

Eligible young Americans typically do not have military service on their radar. Dropoff during the recruiting process has also been problematic.

Having a TFH plugin that reaches interested would-be recruits where they are at could help mitigate this.



Slidetackl

INDIE PLUGIN HYPE

I spoke with [Abel Rios](#). He is in the process of building [Slidetackl](#), an app focused on helping coaches and players improve their soccer tactics.

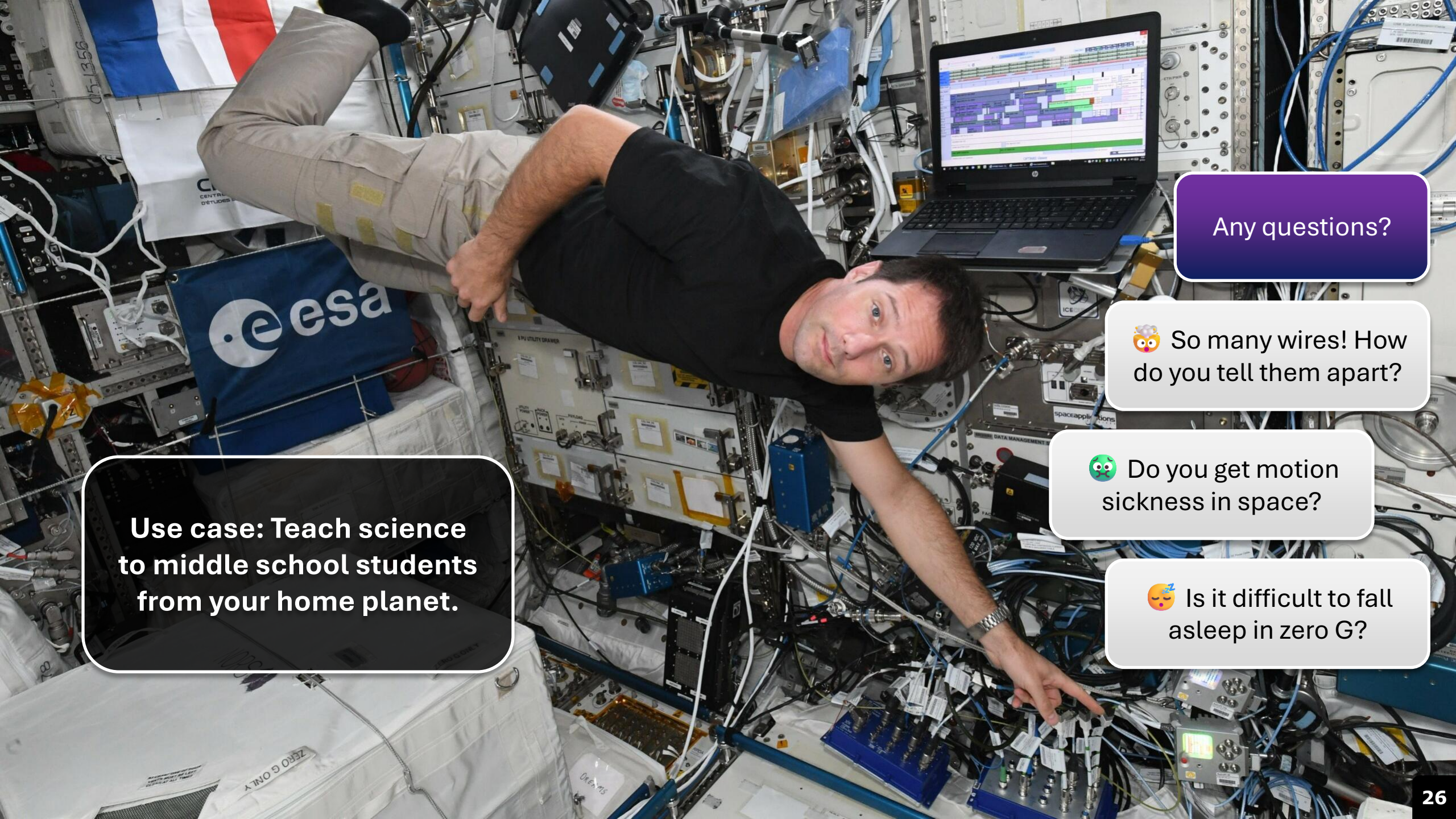
He has expressed interest in the possibility of Teams for Home having a plugin system.

A Slidetackl app for TFH would help clubs to better evaluate their team performance.

The screenshot shows a user interface for a soccer analytics dashboard. At the top, there is a navigation bar with a logo, the word "Dashboard", a search icon, a settings icon, and a "Username" dropdown. Below the navigation bar is a player profile section for Robert Williams, a 2012-born Center Forward who is currently active. The profile includes a circular portrait of the player. To the right of the portrait, the player's name, position, and status are displayed. Below the profile, there are three summary cards: "Goals" with a value of 2, "Assists" with a value of 3, and "Dribbles" with a value of 27. A green "Options" button is located to the right of these cards. The main content area features a tabbed interface with "Profile" selected. Below the tabs is a table of match performance data. The table has columns for Date, Opponent, Position(s), Goals, Assists, Shots, Dribbles, Passes, and a "VIEW" button for each row. The data rows are as follows:

Date	Opponent	Position(s)	Goals	Assists	Shots	Dribbles	Passes	VIEW
1/3/2023	@ 2012B Renaissance	ST	1	0	8	5	40	VIEW
1/10/2023	@ 2012B Versys	AML	1	0	5	3	55	VIEW
1/17/2023	2012B Hot Shots	ST AML	0	1	2	4	30	VIEW
1/24/2023	@ 2012B BVB	AML CAM	0	0	10	2	45	VIEW
1/31/2023	2012B FC Dallas	AML	0	0	7	3	60	VIEW
2/7/2023	@ 2012B FC Dallas	ST	0	2	1	4	35	VIEW
2/14/2023	2012B Renaissance	ST	0	0	9	6	50	VIEW

To the right of the table is a radar chart with five axes: Att (Attack), Def (Defense), Psy (Psychology), Phy (Physicality), and ZT (Zonal Tackling). The chart shows a purple-filled area representing the player's performance across these categories. Below the radar chart is a tactical diagram showing a 4-3-3 formation with blue circles representing players on a field.



Use case: Teach science to middle school students from your home planet.

Any questions?

🤖 So many wires! How do you tell them apart?

🤢 Do you get motion sickness in space?

😴 Is it difficult to fall asleep in zero G?

Use case: Coordinating disaster relief efforts among volunteers.

How are we doing now?

We just got the last of our neighbors out.

👏 Phew. Great job everyone!





Use case: Enabling prison inmates to talk to loved ones back home, without racking up phone bills.



Key assumptions

The following list of presuppositions must be true for the possibility of success.

1. Microsoft implements a TFH plugin architecture [akin to TFW](#).
2. Third-party vendor partners build TFH plugins. Momentum is self-sustaining.
3. TFH user base continues to grow. Interest in freemium plugins catches on.
4. TFH app performance incrementally improves. Achieves parity with rivals.
5. Profit from paying users is net positive and the endeavor “[pays for itself](#).”

KEY PARTNERSHIPS	KEY ACTIVITIES	VALUE PROPOSITIONS	CUSTOMER RELATIONSHIPS	CUSTOMER SEGMENTS
<p>Internal to Microsoft:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Data science • Design • Engineering • Marketing • Product management <p>External business partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nurl • Slidetackl • TeamSnap • US Army <p>Youth sports clubs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • FC Dallas Youth • Frisco Fusion Soccer • Surf Nation Soccer <p>Other religious & non-profit orgs.</p>	<p>KEY RESOURCES</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • API documentation • Developer relations • Desktop app • Marketing site • Mobile app • Web app 	<p>Reach an audience within a key “walled garden” information hub, who thrive on both async and real-time digital communication.</p> <p>Direct applicability to real-world events. Churches, military families, recruitment efforts, self-organized communities, sports teams.</p> <p>Also, there would be a potential network effect of “BYOC: bring your own community.”</p> <p>There would be no set requirements or exclusions. New communities would simply need to be acting in good faith.</p> <p>Meaning, fostering a sense of building people up and not centered around negativity or hate topics.</p>	<p>Would need to “seed” the idea among established groups.</p> <p>Explain value prop and convince communities to give it a shot.</p> <p>Target potential users for whom real-time communication is important.</p> <p>CHANNELS</p> <p>There could be an in-app notification to inform users of the plugin system.</p> <p>We could also advertise in the community: airports, billboards, public transit, sports facilities, conference venues, universities.</p>	<p>I would refer to this as a “mass niche market” for specific use cases.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If you enjoy meeting online to discuss Dungeons & Dragons, use the new Nurl plugin to make your gaming chat more immersive. • If you want to get reminders of uniform changes for your son’s or daughter’s club soccer game, use the TeamSnap plugin. • Ping your recruiter to check on the status of your military application. • Connect directly with those who are homebound or living abroad. Set reminders to follow up with people from the congregation. <p>“Just checking in, how was your surgery? Let’s catch up soon.”</p>

COST STRUCTURE

I think this could be done without greatly increasing the overhead of TFH or the broader Teams organization itself. Ideally, it would end up being budget neutral if we pulled it off successfully. Meaning, hopefully it would pay for itself.

Users would have access to a variety of freemium plugins, which may offer more functionality for a nominal fee. Or their organization (sports team, etc.) could pay on their behalf.

Perhaps there could be unlimited access to otherwise pay-per-plugin by having a Microsoft 365 individual or family plan subscription. That would incentivize paying annually for Office apps. From there, plugin creators could be paid proportionally based on their monthly active users.

REVENUE STREAMS

Depending on the plugin’s revenue model, this could be a recurring subscription from the organization entity. For example, an entire soccer club pays for access to its premium TFH plugin, to be used by all coaches, parents, and players.

Or perhaps it could be a multi-sided billing model, where organizations foot most of the bill but there are additional upsells for individual users.

A plugin could potentially have a freemium model, where it costs nothing to use but non-paying members see tasteful advertising. For example, using a football-related TFH plugin could show notifications about limited time sales at sporting goods stores.

Who-What-Wow style pitch

- [Parents of youth athletes] will be [automatically prompted to coordinate carpooling] by [AI calculating home address proximity]. Location shared after opt-in from both parties.
- Sheet music can be [live edited] by [multiple musicians] working on [different continents].
- [Nonprofit volunteers] can mobilize [disaster relief efforts] through [simultaneously updating areas of influence on a shared map]. Think real-time Figma, for neighborhoods and cities.
- It takes less than 10 seconds for [ISS astronauts] to [sync files] from [their home computer].
- [Coaches of sports teams] will be [automatically alerted to event conditions] by [AI integration with weather and schedule data feeds]. This will update calendar details accordingly.

Steve Blank style pitch: “We help [X] do [Y] by doing [Z].”

- We help [youth sports coaches] [schedule practices and games] via [AI calendar integration].
- We help [US Army recruiters] [give virtual tours to students] by [streaming via a mobile app].
- We help [home-bound seniors] [stay in touch with loved ones] with [easy photo sharing].
- We help [incarcerated individuals] [talk to family] through [regularly recurring meetings].
- We help [mental health doctors] [meet virtually with patients] using [impromptu audio calls].

Mad Libs style pitch

- Our [AI sports trainer] helps [student athletes] who want to [safely maximize performance] by [planning] [healthy meals] and [creating] [training regimens], which is unlike [traditional fitness apps].
- Our [AI sports analyst] helps [coaches and players] who want to [dissect game footage] by [identifying] [key mistakes] and [suggesting] [specific improvements], which is unlike [reviewing hours of video].
- Our [AI equipment procurement] helps [business owners] who want to [make purchasing decisions] by [comparing] [vendors] and [uncovering] [cost savings], which is unlike [basic accounting apps].
- Our [AI academic counselor] helps [prospective students] who want to [evaluate colleges] by [identifying] [scholarships] and [aligning] [extracurriculars], which is unlike [sifting through school catalogs].
- Our [data science app] helps [software developers] who want to [demystify telemetry] by [extracting] [pattern matching] and [interpreting] [large data sets], which is unlike [comparing manual queries].

North Star | Opportunities, Keys to Success, and Risks

Capstone Vision | Vision for the future of the product (based on current research)

Opportunities & the “Why”

Current state & environmental factors supporting the vision

1. Competitors like Slack have made strategic missteps with pricing & data retention.
2. The project can scale with the number of new TFH users, as well as reaching critical mass of interested plugin app developers.
3. Word of mouth can potentially be crucial here, via a viral network effect. Especially for things like casual gaming.
4. TFH has a unique overlap of functionality, whereas other “best in class” apps only do one or two things well. If TFH can execute consistently, it can gain market share.
5. Tech opportunity to make TFH a “hub” with many popular “spokes” of the wheel.

Keys to Success

What you “have to believe” to win

1. TFH has to gradually (or rapidly?) improve over time. TFW and TFH have a reputation for being somewhat clunky to use.
2. The business must deem building a plugin architecture for TFH to be a strategic worthwhile endeavor.
3. The core product and the plugins must both be compelling enough that they will be “sticky” with consumers, who have other options.
4. Metrics that matter will be MAU/DAU and an uptick in either revenue share from plugin creators, or premium TFH subscriptions.

Risks & Roadblocks

What may prevent reaching the vision

1. If we don’t get the execution right, and/or TFH and TFW continue to become more difficult to use over time, due to PC resource usage.
2. We are unable to have comparable ports of plugins on mobile platforms, which may leave non-desktop users feeling left out.
3. A competitor such as Discord or Slack pushes more into a real-time “meeting” space, winning over would-be users.
4. Google unifies their Workspace offering into an omni-app which also offers a plugin architecture.
5. “If you build it, they will come” does not pan out. TFH launches a plugin architecture, but no third-party plugin vendors seem to care.

North Star | Aspirational Strategy Plan

<p><i>Current Pain Points:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communication apps all seem to be lacking in one way or another. • Third-party apps (TeamSnap, etc.) have temporal chat that is not searchable. • TFH itself works pretty well but cannot currently be extended. 	<p><i>Competitor solutions:</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Slack offers a robust plugin platform, but it tends to be more productivity oriented. Chat bots that ping after task completion, etc. • Discord is voice focused and does not tend to have rich functionality within the app itself. • Zoom is great for video calls, but not much else. The chat evaporates if you forget to save it. 	<p>WE BUILD THE NOW</p> <p>6 months</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a TFH plugin architecture in the near term. • Begin seeding the future “app store” with vendors who are interested in early access. • Encourage Microsoft employees to use “hackathon” time to create proofs of concept. • Build example prototype Sports App (name TBD) app for youth soccer organizations. • Begin to tinker with monetization. Subscription fee, ad supported, paid for by org (soccer team), etc. 	<p>WE PLAN THE NEW</p> <p>1 to 2 years</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Soft launch to members of the TFH “Insiders” NDA community. Get feedback, squash bugs, etc. • Encourage dogfooding of plugins by Microsoft employees, garner internal feedback as well. • Have a “friends and family” release, with a few polished plugins for the debut. • TFH Copilot integration with plugins, to help summarize content, offer tips, etc. • Continue revenue payouts to early plugin creators. 	<p>WE IMAGINE THE NEXT</p> <p>3-5 years</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Roll out to general public. • Have a small media blitz. • Get tech reviewers to try a few plugins on a live stream. • Show would-be plugin vendors how they have a path to profitability, with various avenues to make money. • Promote a “best in show” plugin competition, where users can vote on their favorites for a prize. 	<p>STRATEGIC OBJECTIVE</p> <p>2030+ aspirational</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Make some plugins interoperable with both TFH and TFW, where the functionality makes sense. • Have an annual showcase of the best plugins that year. • Continue to explore ways in which AI can be helpful, offered as an API “service” that a plugin can consume. • Possibly integrate popular plugin functionality back into TFH itself. Use that to inform TFW development.
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North Star Vision | Future Quotes from Your Customers

My recruiter kept me informed, every step of the way. Hooah!
— US Army soldier

Tabletop gaming is so much fun, even when we're apart.
— RPG player

I was able to spot ways that I could improve my game.
— Student athlete

I give player things to work on during the off season.
— Soccer coach

I'm able to easily talk with recruits about the process.
— US Army recruiter

Carpooling is easy with the proximity suggestions.
— Soccer parent



The Year is

2030

Fin.

<https://youtu.be/HhU4oE5Ob-M>