

vs WhatsApp

The real incumbent. Most first deals replace a foreman's group chat, not a rival product. Nobody procured it, so nobody defends a budget: you are arguing with a habit, and habits are beaten with a specific question, not a feature list.

WHEN YOU MEET IT

Almost every deal under 300 workers, and most above. A group per site, run from the site manager's personal handset, often with a second group for the subcontractors. Usually raised early and cheerfully, because they think it settles the conversation.

WHAT THEY'LL SAY

WhatsApp is free, and everyone's already on it.

The lads read it straight away. It's the fastest thing we've got.

We've got a group for every site.

We can see the blue ticks.

WHAT'S TRUE ABOUT IT

All of that, mostly. It is free, it is instant, adoption is universal and the crews genuinely like it. Nothing you sell will be faster to send a message with, and you should say so. WhatsApp also shipped on-device message translation in September 2025, so "it doesn't translate" is no longer accurate on its own.

WHERE TEAMTALK WINS

- ✓ **Translation is sender-side.** You publish once; every worker reads it in their language, captions included. WhatsApp's is a reader action, long-press and Translate, per chat, and it says "translations occur on your device where WhatsApp cannot see them", so nothing is reported back to a sender. Its help page adds the feature "is currently not available on the WhatsApp Business App".
- ✓ **Ticks are not a record.** Recipients can switch them off and they cannot be exported. A tick means displayed on a device, not read by a person, and says nothing about the people never added to the group.
- ✓ **Broadcasts fail silently.** WhatsApp's own words: "Only contacts who've added your number to their phone's address book will receive your broadcast message." A list holds 256, and a monthly broadcast limit is rolling out in some countries.
- ✓ **Offboarding.** When the site manager leaves, the group, the history and every worker's mobile number leave with him. A departed worker stays in the group until someone remembers. TeamTalk revokes on a leaving date and keeps the record.
- ✓ **Data protection.** The group makes a personal handset a processing location for personal data about every worker in it. You remain the controller and carry the liability, with no access, no retention control and no way to answer a subject access or erasure request.
- ✓ **Doing it properly is not free.** The WhatsApp Business Platform has been priced per message since 1 July 2025 and needs a business solution provider, template pre-approval and a developer. A daily toolbox talk is unlikely to qualify as a "utility" template.

THE ONE LINE TO SAY

"Keep WhatsApp for the banter. Move anything you'd have to defend onto a system that produces a record."

THE TRAP TO AVOID

Never say WhatsApp is dangerous, and never suggest banning it. Every manager in the room runs a group, and you will lose them in one sentence. Draw a line instead: notices that need a record. That is a rule a site manager can actually enforce. **And do not characterise the ICO's action on private messaging in government unless you have the primary source open.** The report is *Behind the screens*, 11 July 2022, and DHSC received a reprimand, not a fine. There is no 2024 report. The statutory argument stands perfectly well without it.

vs Microsoft Teams and Viva

The "we already pay for it" objection. It is usually raised by IT or finance rather than by the person with the problem, and it breaks on three things: identity, read receipts and translation. All three are documented by Microsoft.

WHEN YOU MEET IT

Any organisation with a Microsoft estate and an IT function in the room. It rarely comes from the HSEQ lead, who knows perfectly well that the bricklayers are not in Teams. It comes at the point where the deal has to be approved.

WHAT THEY'LL SAY

We've already got Teams. Why would we buy something else?

Can't we just use a Teams channel, or Viva Engage?

IT won't sign off another tool.

We can turn on read receipts.

WHAT'S TRUE ABOUT IT

Teams is a good product and they do already pay for it for office staff. Microsoft 365 F1 is a genuine frontline SKU at **£2.30** per user per month, and F-SKUs have no seat cap or minimum. The "500-seat rule" that circulates relates to Enterprise Agreement minimums, not F-SKU eligibility: do not repeat it, because an IT manager will correct you. Read receipts and message translation both exist.

WHERE TEAMTALK WINS

- ✓ **Read receipts are structurally unfit as a compliance record.** Microsoft's own documentation: they work in "1:1 and group chats 20 people or fewer", they do not exist in channels at all, the default policy is user-controlled so a worker can unilaterally switch off your proof, and they "aren't captured in eDiscovery reporting".
- ✓ **Translation is recipient-side and opt-in.** The "Translate messages" policy translates into the language set in the user's own Microsoft 365 profile. Admin-gated, user-configured, no sender-side guarantee and no per-recipient confirmation.
- ✓ **Every worker needs a provisioned identity and a paid licence.** There is no unlicensed participant model. For agency labour, subcontractors and three-month site staff that is an IT project per person, plus password and MFA support for a population that has never had a corporate login. TeamTalk is a QR code and twenty seconds.
- ✓ **The real number.** The cheapest credible Microsoft stack for tracked frontline comms is F1 at £2.30 plus Viva Employee Communications and Communities at £1.54: **£3.84 per user per month** on an annual commitment. For 500 workers that is roughly **£23,000 a year committed**, before the identity project, and it still does not deliver proof of receipt.
- ✓ **Viva Engage is never standalone.** It is a communities product and always an add-on on a base Microsoft 365 seat, so the licence question does not go away.

THE ONE LINE TO SAY

"Teams is built for people with a work email and a laptop. How many of the subcontractors on your sites have either?"

THE TRAP TO AVOID

Do not try to displace Teams, and do not argue with IT about Microsoft. You are not competing for head office; you are the layer for the people Microsoft cannot license without a project. Say that out loud and IT usually stops objecting. Keep the read-receipt limits in your pocket for the IT manager rather than the HSEQ lead: they are the only argument you need, and they are in Microsoft's own documentation, so nobody can wave them away.

vs Blink

The toughest direct competitor, and a genuinely good product. Blink does mandatory reads with an export, so never claim proof of receipt as your differentiator here. The wins against it are real but narrow, and they hold up because they are specific.

WHEN YOU MEET IT

Three hundred to five thousand multilingual workers, usually where somebody owns internal communications. UK-founded, with a strong UK logo wall including Stagecoach, Go-Ahead, First Bus, National Express, JD Sports and Costa Coffee, and it holds Cyber Essentials Basic and Plus, ISO 27001 and SOC 2.

WHAT THEY'LL SAY

Blink already does mandatory reads.

It's £2.95 a head, and there's no minimum.

They've got Stagecoach and the NHS.

They're Cyber Essentials Plus. Are you?

WHAT'S TRUE ABOUT IT (BE FAIR, ALL OF THIS IS)

Mandatory Reads turn a document into a sign-off that staff must actively acknowledge; acknowledgement data pulls into Excel or CSV; reminders can be targeted only at the people yet to confirm. Activation works by phone number or a shared group code with no email. Near-miss forms are unlimited at no extra cost. Offline mode is real. The critical comms page claims 40+ languages. It is the benchmark in this category and you should say so before you differentiate.

WHERE TEAMTALK WINS: FOUR HONEST POINTS

- ✓ **The export is a paid add-on.** Blink's published pricing lists "Reporting and exporting data" as a separately priced add-on on all three tiers. The compliance artefact you are actually buying may cost extra. Ours is included on every plan.
- ✓ **No video captions at all.** Not translated, not even auto-generated. A site manager's forty-five second phone video about a changed lifting plan is the format sites actually use, and captioning it in each worker's language is the one thing nobody else in this market does.
- ✓ **No QR onboarding.** A shared group code is the nearest equivalent. There is no printable join card that gets a whole site enrolled in one break.
- ✓ **Multilingual sites pay the top rate.** Advanced multi-language publishing sits in Pro at **£3.75**, so the site with five languages, the one that needs this most, pays the highest published price.
- ✓ **No UK data residency.** AWS with the region unstated, and the privacy policy states data is transferred outside the UK and EEA, including to the US. For NHS trusts, councils, care providers and unionised accounts this is a live procurement question.
- ✓ **Rollout.** Blink's own competitor guide gives two to six weeks for a typical SMB rollout, and six to twelve weeks for larger or multilingual ones.

THE ONE LINE TO SAY

"Blink is a good product and it does mandatory reads too. If you had five thousand staff and an internal comms team, I'd tell you to look at them. If you have sites, look at us: captions in their language, a card that gets a site on in one break, the export included rather than an add-on, and UK hosting."

THE TRAP TO AVOID

Do not claim confirmed receipt as a differentiator here, and do not rubbish them. Anyone who has seen Blink will know, and you will lose the rest of the meeting. The other trap is certification: **Blink holds Cyber Essentials Plus and ISO 27001 and TeamTalk does not yet.** If procurement raises it, answer with your current Cyber Essentials status and a written information-security roadmap. Do not bluff, and do not promise a certification date you have not booked.

vs paper toolbox-talk sheets

Not a vendor: a habit with a clipboard, and the record you are actually replacing. It is the easiest displacement on this list and the one most often fumbled, because the person in front of you probably designed the form.

WHEN YOU MEET IT

Every construction and facilities conversation, and most catering ones. The sheets live in a lever-arch file in the site cabin, or as photographs in somebody's camera roll, or scanned into a folder on a shared drive that nobody has opened since the last audit.

WHAT THEY'LL SAY

We already do toolbox talks, and everyone signs the sheet.

We scan them in at the end of the week.

The auditor's never had a problem with it.

It works. Why would I change it?

WHAT'S TRUE ABOUT IT

It is genuinely evidence, it is accepted practice, it costs nothing to start and it works when the power is off and there is no signal in the basement. Take it seriously: the HSEQ lead in front of you almost certainly designed the form, trained the supervisors on it and defended it in an audit.

WHERE TEAMTALK WINS

- ✓ **The sheet is in English, and so was the talk.** A signature proves attendance, not comprehension, and regulation 10 of MHSWR 1999 asks for information that is *comprehensible*. The question that lands: "what language was the sheet in?"
- ✓ **Finding one, a year later.** Produce every briefing a named operative received on a named date, across four sites, in under a minute. A lever-arch file cannot. A CSV export can, and so can a printable per-worker record.
- ✓ **The chase.** A sheet records who turned up. It never records who did not. The reach page hides everyone who has confirmed and leaves you the outstanding list, and reminders go only to that list.
- ✓ **The people who were never in the room.** Late starts, night shift, agency cover, the subcontractor who arrived at eleven. They get the notice on their own phone, in their own language, and it is recorded.
- ✓ **Everything between the talks.** A signature captures one briefing. Every rule change, permit suspension and revised muster point in between is undocumented.
- ✓ **Wet, lost and left behind.** Sheets go missing, ink runs, folders leave with the manager. A record held once, centrally, does not.

THE ONE LINE TO SAY

"Same evidence, in every language, chased automatically, and still searchable in a year."

THE TRAP TO AVOID

Do not position this as replacing the toolbox talk. You are not. The talk still happens, face to face, exactly as it does now: you are replacing the clipboard and adding the languages. If you get this wrong, the HSEQ lead hears you telling him his safety culture can be done on a phone, and the meeting is over. Say "the talk stays, the paperwork goes" early, and mean it.

vs Staffbase and Workvivo

Enterprise internal-communications platforms, sold to a comms department your prospect probably does not have. Beatable on entry price, on time to go live, and, in Workvivo's case, on acknowledgement. Note that Bellway Homes is a named Staffbase customer, so expect Staffbase in any housebuilder conversation at group level.

WHEN YOU MEET IT

Two thousand employees and up, with an internal communications function, or any conversation that has drifted above a division to group level. Sometimes it arrives as a rumour: "group are looking at something." Find out whether it is signed or still a slide.

WHAT THEY'LL SAY

Group are already looking at Staffbase.

We've got Workvivo for engagement.

We want one platform for the whole company.

WHAT'S TRUE ABOUT THEM

Staffbase is a mature enterprise intranet plus employee app, employee email, SMS and digital signage: 1,500+ enterprise customers, 70+ languages, built-in translation, incident reporting and no-email login. **Read confirmation is not documented publicly, which is not the same as absent**, so do not claim they lack it.

Workvivo (now part of Zoom) has a strong brand, Auto-Translate, and the best subtitle controls in the category: enable or disable subtitles, download auto-generated files, upload your own SRT and edit or remove custom ones.

WHERE TEAMTALK WINS

- ✓ **Workvivo has no acknowledgement reporting.** None appears anywhere on its site or in its product changelog. Its frontline page offers only "identify those who have not yet received your critical comms": that is reach, not per-person acknowledgement. Its subtitles are auto-generated but not auto-translated per viewer.
- ✓ **Entry price.** Workvivo's own site publishes the floor: "\$20,000 yearly for companies with 250-2,000 employees". Staffbase publishes no price list at all; third-party benchmark data puts the median annual contract near \$28,500, with implementation from \$15,000 to \$75,000 on top.
- ✓ **Time to go live.** Staffbase's own pricing page says **90 days**. A site that mobilises next month cannot wait for that, and neither can the notice that has to go out on Monday.
- ✓ **UK data residency.** Neither offers it. Staffbase is explicit: EU (Azure Frankfurt), US (Azure Virginia) or Australia only. Workvivo publishes no data residency at all.
- ✓ **The buyer.** Both are sold to an internal communications department. A three-hundred-person contractor does not have one, and the HSEQ lead who actually has the problem has no route to that budget line.

THE ONE LINE TO SAY

"That's an intranet for head office, bought by a comms team, at twenty thousand a year and ninety days to go live. Your problem is on site on Monday. Let us be the frontline layer underneath whatever group buys."

THE TRAP TO AVOID

Do not fight a group-level platform decision head-on: you will lose, and you do not need to win it. And do not claim Staffbase has no read confirmation. It is undocumented, not proven absent, and being caught overclaiming once costs you the account. If group has already signed, position as the site layer and price accordingly. If it is still a rumour, get live on three sites before the procurement finishes, because a working pilot with confirmed reach beats a slide.