

Zoom vs. Microsoft Teams vs. Google Meet: The Video Conferencing Verdict

Unvarnished Reviews Research

This report synthesizes data from 85,000+ verified user reviews and practitioner community posts collected from G2 (55,863 Zoom Workplace reviews, 15,900+ Microsoft Teams reviews), Capterra, TrustRadius, Gartner Peer Insights, Spiceworks, and Reddit r/sysadmin and r/technology. Pricing data reflects vendor pricing pages, CostBench verified pricing data, and independent procurement analysis current as of June 2026. Full research methodology at unvarnishedreviews.com/methodology. Research Notes available on request at editorial@unvarnishedreviews.com.

The Verdict Up Front

Zoom holds approximately 55.91% of the video conferencing market, by far the most dominant position, and 55,863 G2 reviews at 4.5/5, the largest validated review base in the category. It scored 9.5/10 for video and audio quality in a six-month independent evaluation. Its AI Companion, meeting summaries, action item extraction, smart recaps, real-time transcription, is included at no additional cost on all paid plans. Microsoft Teams charges \$30/user/month extra for comparable Copilot AI features. The CFO's question, "why aren't we just using Teams, which is already bundled with our Microsoft 365 licenses?", is the right question to ask before every Zoom renewal. The honest answer is: for organizations that primarily need meetings with external guests, cross-platform reliability, and AI meeting intelligence without a separate subscription, Zoom delivers a measurably better meeting experience at a cost that often undercuts Teams+Copilot. For organizations that primarily need internal meetings with document co-authoring and already run M365: Teams at zero incremental cost is the correct answer.

Microsoft Teams has 320 million active users globally, a number that reflects deployment at scale across the M365 installed base more than deliberate choice. Its video conferencing quality is solid; its meeting interface is more complex than Zoom's; its AI Companion equivalent (Copilot) costs \$18-\$30/user/month extra depending on plan. For internal meetings in Microsoft-stack organizations: Teams at zero incremental cost is compelling. For external meetings where guests join from outside the M365 ecosystem: Zoom's guest experience, join from any browser without an account, no forced download, is consistently documented as superior.

Google Meet is the browser-first, zero-friction video meeting tool for Google Workspace organizations. No download required for any participant. 60-minute free group meetings, longer than Zoom's 40-minute free cap. Native integration with Google Calendar, Gmail, and Drive. For organizations running Google Workspace: Meet is the correct answer at zero incremental cost. For external-heavy meeting workflows requiring breakout rooms, webinars, or advanced moderation: Meet's feature set is less comprehensive than Zoom's.

The video conferencing decision follows the same pattern as messaging: build-vs-buy. Teams for M365 organizations. Meet for Google Workspace organizations. Zoom for organizations that prioritize meeting quality, external guest experience, and AI meeting intelligence across any platform or ecosystem, and are willing to pay \$13-\$25/user/month for that experience.

Platform Ratings and Market Position

Platform	G2	Capterra	Market Share	Active Users
Zoom Workplace	4.5 / 5 (55,863 reviews)	4.6 / 5	~55.91%	300M+ meeting participants
Microsoft Teams	4.4 / 5 (15,900+ reviews)	4.5 / 5	Dominant in M365 base	320M active users
Google Meet	4.6 / 5	4.5 / 5	Growing	Billions of meetings

Zoom's 55,863 G2 reviews represent the largest independent validation dataset in the video conferencing category, more than three times Teams' review base. Google Meet's slightly higher G2 rating (4.6/5) reflects the satisfaction of users for whom "simple, free, works in a browser" perfectly matches their requirements.

The AI Comparison: The Finding That Changes the Cost Narrative

The same AI cost analysis documented in the Slack vs. Teams vs. Google Chat report applies here with different numbers, and an equally striking conclusion.

Zoom AI Companion: Included at no additional cost on all paid Zoom Workplace plans (Pro, Business, Business Plus, Enterprise). Features: meeting summaries, action item extraction, smart recording with highlights, message drafting assistance, real-time transcription, next steps identification. Previously a paid add-on; included as of 2024 on all paid tiers.

Microsoft Teams AI (Copilot): \$18-\$30/user/month additional cost depending on M365 plan tier. The full Microsoft 365 Copilot for enterprise is \$30/user/month on top of E3/E5. Copilot for individuals (Copilot Pro) is \$20/user/month.

Google Meet AI: Gemini AI features for Meet, meeting summaries, transcripts, translated captions, are included in Google Workspace Business Standard (\$12/user/month) and above. Not all AI features are available in entry-level Workspace plans.

The 100-user cost comparison for AI-enabled video meetings:

Configuration	Annual AI Cost
Zoom Business (AI included)	\$0 additional (AI in plan)
Teams (M365 included) + Copilot at \$30/user	\$36,000/year
Google Meet (Workspace Standard, AI included)	\$0 additional

For organizations that specifically want AI meeting summaries, action items, and transcription, Zoom's bundled AI makes the cost comparison fundamentally different from the "Teams is free" starting assumption.

The Free Tier Comparison

Platform	Free Group Meeting Limit	Participants	Recording
Zoom Basic	40 minutes	100	Local only
Microsoft Teams Free	60 minutes	100	No
Google Meet Free	60 minutes	100	No

Zoom's 40-minute free group meeting cap is the most consistently cited limitation driving paid upgrades, and it is now the shortest free tier in the category. Google Meet's 60-minute free tier and Teams' 60-minute free tier both exceed Zoom's free offering. For organizations evaluating free tiers specifically, Google Meet and Teams offer more generous limits.

What Users Actually Report

Zoom: What Works

G2 reviewers with 55,863 reviews consistently identify three strengths: video and audio quality, ease of use for external guests, and AI Companion value.

Zoom's 9.5/10 video and audio quality score from a six-month independent evaluation is the clearest technical differentiation in the category. Practitioners consistently describe Zoom as the most reliable platform for external client calls, where the guest experience matters as much as the host experience. The ability for external participants to join from any browser without downloading software, without creating an account, and without friction is specifically called out as a competitive advantage for sales calls, client demos, and cross-organization collaboration.

AI Companion's inclusion at no extra cost on paid plans, summarizing the meeting, extracting action items, generating smart recaps, is documented as eliminating the need for separate third-party transcription tools. Practitioners specifically note that this bundled value removes a \$10-\$30/month per-user expenditure on tools like Otter.ai or Fireflies.ai.

Zoom Workplace's expansion beyond video meetings, Team Chat, Whiteboard, Zoom Phone, Zoom Rooms, is cited by organizations that have consolidated their communication stack onto Zoom as reducing tool fragmentation.

Zoom: What Doesn't Work

The "paying for things we don't need" complaint is the most revealing Zoom criticism in the current review corpus. A Capterra reviewer states directly: "We use Phone, Video Conferencing, Zoom Rooms and digital signage. As we don't use the chat, email or storage functions this makes it feel like we are paying for a lot of things we don't need." As Zoom has expanded from a video meeting tool to a unified communications platform, the bundled pricing carries features that pure video conferencing buyers don't use.

The add-on accumulation pattern. Zoom Phone (\$13-\$22/user/month), Zoom Webinars (\$66.67+/month), Zoom Rooms (\$41.58-\$49/room/month), and additional cloud storage (\$10/month for 30GB) are all separate line items. A 50-person organization using Zoom Pro + Zoom Phone + basic webinars easily spends \$25,000+/year, significantly above the headline Pro pricing.

Cloud storage fills quickly. Pro and Business plans include only 10GB of cloud recording storage, approximately 10-15 hours of recordings. Organizations that record meetings regularly hit this ceiling and face additional storage charges. Only Enterprise includes unlimited recording storage.

The free plan is increasingly uncompetitive. The 40-minute group meeting cap feels punitive when Google Meet offers 60 minutes and Teams offers 60 minutes free. For organizations evaluating whether to pay for Zoom or use a bundled alternative, the free tier no longer demonstrates Zoom's superiority.

Renewal uplifts of 5%-40% are documented in CostBench pricing history. Organizations on multi-year Zoom contracts should negotiate price caps explicitly before signing.

Microsoft Teams: What Works

Capterra reviewers consistently identify document co-authoring, Microsoft 365 integration, and zero incremental cost as Teams' meeting strengths.

For internal meetings where participants are reviewing a Word document, editing a spreadsheet together, or presenting from PowerPoint, Teams' ability to co-author documents inside the meeting interface without switching applications is genuinely differentiated. Practitioners describe collaborative document review in Teams as the most integrated meeting-plus-document workflow available.

Recording meetings, available on Business Standard and above with automatic transcription, is specifically praised for accessibility and compliance, with recordings stored directly in SharePoint for easy organizational access and governance.

Zero incremental cost for M365 organizations remains Teams' most powerful argument. For internal meetings with M365 participants, the quality differential between Teams and Zoom does not justify the cost differential for most organizations.

Microsoft Teams: What Doesn't Work

External guest experience lags Zoom. Teams' external guest access, requiring guests to either have a Microsoft account or navigate Teams' guest join flow, is consistently documented as more friction than Zoom's browser-join experience. For external-heavy meeting workflows, practitioners describe Teams as creating more pre-meeting friction than Zoom.

Screen sharing performance issues are documented across G2 and Capterra. One Capterra reviewer notes: "the actual presentation tools, such as sharing the screen, which could become significantly lagged or the sharing of multimedia through the call present audio issues for some participants." For meetings where screen sharing quality is critical, product demos, training sessions, this pattern is relevant.

AI at premium cost. Copilot's \$18-\$30/user/month additional cost is the most significant Teams limitation for organizations that want AI meeting intelligence. The cost comparison with Zoom's bundled AI Companion makes Teams increasingly expensive for AI-enabled meeting workflows.

Resource demands, Teams' memory and CPU consumption on end-user devices, is a documented complaint for organizations with older hardware. Teams requires more system resources than Zoom for equivalent functionality.

Google Meet: What Works

Capterra reviewers consistently identify zero-friction browser joining, Google Workspace integration, and simplicity as Meet's primary strengths.

Google Meet's browser-first architecture, no download required for any participant, available instantly from a Calendar invite or Gmail, is the most frictionless meeting join experience in the category. For organizations where meeting participants frequently include external contacts who should not be asked to install software, Meet's browser-native approach is a genuine usability advantage.

The integration with Google Calendar, automatic Meet link generation for every calendar event, eliminates the separate step of scheduling a meeting in a video tool and adding it to a calendar. For Google Workspace organizations, this integration removes meaningful daily friction.

Gemini AI features for Meet, summaries, transcripts, translated captions, are included in Google Workspace Business Standard and above at no additional charge, making Meet's AI value comparable to Zoom's bundled model for Workspace subscribers.

Google Meet: What Doesn't Work

Feature depth trails Zoom for complex meeting workflows. Breakout rooms, meeting templates, participant polling, and webinar-scale functionality are less mature in Meet than in Zoom. For organizations that run structured training sessions, all-hands events, or external webinars, Meet's feature set creates limitations that require workarounds or supplementary tools.

Google Workspace dependency for full features. Meet's most capable features, longer meetings, recording, AI transcription, require Google Workspace subscriptions. The genuinely free tier (60-minute meetings, 100 participants) is more generous than Zoom's but less featured than Zoom's paid experience.

External collaboration with non-Google users follows the same pattern as Google Chat, the experience is optimized for participants with Google accounts and is slightly less seamless for participants without them.

Pricing Reality (June 2026)

Zoom Workplace

Plan	Price	Key Features
Basic (Free)	\$0	40-min group meetings; 100 participants
Pro	\$13.33-\$16.99/user/month (annual)	30-hour meetings; 10GB cloud; AI Companion
Business	\$18.33-\$21.99/user/month (annual)	300 participants; SSO; AI Companion
Business Plus	\$22.49-\$25/user/month (annual)	Zoom Phone Unlimited included
Enterprise	Custom (250+ hosts)	Unlimited storage; dedicated support

Key add-ons (separate from base plan):

- Zoom Phone: \$13-\$22/user/month
- Zoom Webinars: from \$66.67/month (500 attendees)
- Zoom Rooms: \$41.58-\$49/room/month
- Additional cloud storage: \$10/month for 30GB

The honest cost range: Zoom Pro starts at \$13.33/user/month but realistic costs for most organizations with phone and recording needs land at \$18-\$25/user/month before add-ons.

Microsoft Teams

Plan	Price	AI Cost
Teams Essentials (standalone)	\$4/user/month	No AI

Teams (M365 Business Basic)	Included (\$6/user/month M365)	No AI
Teams (M365 Business Standard)	Included (\$12.50/user/month M365)	No AI
Teams + Microsoft Copilot	+ \$18-\$30/user/month	Full AI

Google Meet

Plan	Price	Meeting Length	AI
Free	\$0	60 minutes	No
Google Workspace Starter	\$6/user/month	24 hours	Limited
Google Workspace Standard	\$12/user/month	24 hours	Yes (Gemini)

TCO Comparison: 50-Person Organization, Annual (AI-Enabled Meetings)

Configuration	Annual Cost
Zoom Business (AI included)	\$10,998-\$13,200
Teams (M365 \$12.50/user) + Copilot (\$30/user)	\$25,500 (Copilot alone: \$18,000)
Google Meet (Workspace Standard, AI included)	\$7,200

Google Meet with Workspace Standard is the lowest-cost AI-enabled meeting solution for Google organizations. For Microsoft organizations, Zoom Business with AI bundled is less expensive than Teams + Copilot for the same 50-person team.

The Decision Framework

Choose Zoom if:

- External meeting quality is the primary criterion, client demos, sales calls, partner collaboration where guest experience matters
- AI meeting intelligence (summaries, action items, transcription) is a workflow requirement and you have compared Zoom's bundled cost against Teams+Copilot explicitly
- Your meeting participants span multiple organizations and ecosystems, Zoom's cross-platform browser join is the most friction-free external experience
- Webinar-scale events, breakout rooms, and advanced meeting moderation are regular use cases
- You are not on M365 or Google Workspace, or you are, but the incremental Zoom cost is justified by meeting quality requirements
- You have audited actual usage, not every employee needs a paid Zoom seat; occasional participants can join as guests

Choose Microsoft Teams if:

- Your organization runs M365 and internal meetings with document co-authoring are the primary use case
- Zero incremental cost is the baseline requirement and AI features (Copilot) are not in the budget
- SharePoint-integrated meeting recording and governance are compliance requirements

- Your meeting participants are primarily internal M365 users rather than external guests
- You have explicitly calculated whether Teams+Copilot is required, and verified it's not cheaper than Zoom Business with bundled AI for your user count

Choose Google Meet if:

- Your organization runs Google Workspace and zero incremental cost is the baseline requirement
- Browser-first, zero-download meeting access is an organizational priority
- Your meeting needs are primarily standard video calls without advanced moderation, webinar-scale features, or breakout room complexity
- Gemini AI summaries and transcripts in Workspace Standard are sufficient for your AI meeting needs

The pre-renewal checklist for Zoom:

1. Audit actual paid seat usage, over-licensing is the most common Zoom waste category
2. Model whether AI Companion eliminates third-party transcription tool costs, if yes, that savings offsets a portion of Zoom's cost
3. Verify whether Teams+Copilot is actually cheaper than Zoom Business for your user count before accepting the "Teams is free" CFO argument
4. Negotiate renewal price caps, 5%-40% uplifts are documented; explicit caps require contract negotiation
5. Evaluate whether Zoom Phone bundle (Business Plus) is cheaper than Pro + Zoom Phone purchased separately

The Bottom Line

Zoom, Microsoft Teams, and Google Meet serve different organizational profiles and meeting requirements, and the right answer is primarily determined by existing platform investment and meeting workflow priorities.

Zoom wins on meeting quality, external guest experience, and AI meeting intelligence bundled at no extra cost. Its 55.91% market share and 55,863 G2 reviews at 4.5/5 reflect genuine category leadership. The add-on accumulation pattern, Phone, Webinars, Rooms, storage, is the primary cost management challenge. For organizations evaluating Zoom renewal: model the AI comparison explicitly before accepting that Teams is the cheaper alternative.

Microsoft Teams wins for internal meetings in Microsoft-stack organizations at zero incremental cost. The Copilot AI add-on cost makes Teams+AI more expensive than Zoom Business for most team sizes. For external meetings, Teams' guest experience is documented as more friction than Zoom's browser-join model.

Google Meet wins for Google Workspace organizations at zero incremental cost and maximum simplicity. Its 60-minute free tier, browser-native architecture, and Gemini AI inclusion in Business Standard make it the most accessible meeting tool for organizations that don't need Zoom's advanced meeting features.

The finding that belongs in every Zoom renewal conversation: Zoom AI Companion is included free on paid plans. Microsoft Teams Copilot costs \$18-\$30/user/month extra. For a 50-person team, that AI cost difference is \$10,800-\$18,000/year, which can exceed Zoom Business's total annual license cost. The "Teams is free so we should cancel Zoom" argument requires honest AI cost modeling before it holds.

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