

Meet and Pay

BNP Paribas Launches Microsoft Teams in-app Payment Solution



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BNP Paribas has created a new payments offering embedded within the Microsoft Teams application. TMI asks BNP Paribas and Microsoft to explain the development pathway of this innovative solution.

Just when you thought pioneering payments mechanisms had covered it all, BNP Paribas has launched an integrated solution for Microsoft Teams users that will enable the notion of 'payments through conversation'.

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The solution itself is technically embedded within Microsoft Teams – no other app is required – and is expected to open up a wide range of new use cases. It is initially being targeted at professional individuals and small businesses, enabling them to securely request and accept payments from clients, and covers a wide range of services such as tutoring, travel bookings, and consultation work. The product is also expected to eventually open up new B2B sales channels for larger businesses.

The solution is the result of a meeting of minds, with the combination of Microsoft's innovation know-how, and BNP Paribas' robust payment technology, complemented by the flexibility and agility of the bank's smaller fintech partners, FLOA and Stancer.

Microsoft's technical support has so far been leveraged during the design phase, and in the development of the project's first minimum viable product (MVP). FLOA, BNP Paribas' recently acquired buy now, pay later (BNPL) solution, is on hand to ensure that users will be offered a

'payment by instalment' option. Stancer, a PSP, is taking responsibility for onboarding new clients from the SME merchant sector.

Genesis of an idea

The project was born out of an existing relationship between Microsoft and BNP Paribas. Bruno Invernizzi, Strategic Account Director, Microsoft France, explains how insight into the way the bank uses Microsoft's offerings had been drawn from observations made by the tech giant's own financial services specialist team. That team, explains Invernizzi, is driven to ensure Microsoft clients are optimising product usage, internally and externally.

Microsoft Teams had already been successfully deployed for BNP Paribas' collaborative works when discussions on embedded finance got underway. These led to thoughts on how the bank and Microsoft could combine their expertise. With Microsoft Teams an obvious candidate for exploration of new services – the platform being increasingly used for the bank's internal exchanges – Invernizzi says a 'design thinking workshop' was organised.

This took place in early 2023, inviting key stakeholders to share their thoughts. Attendees included Melinda Fauszt, Global Relationship Director, BNP Paribas, as the Microsoft France client manager. Also attending were Cédric Le Bris, Indirect Sales and Partnerships Manager, Axepta, BNP Paribas. Axepta is the bank's merchant payment solution provider across Europe.

A team of digital and industry advisers, some of whom are former bankers, were on hand to provide inside knowledge of project-related challenges and opportunities. With the workshop focused on how to leverage embedded low-end finance, the session additionally called upon representatives from FLOA to discuss BNPL options.

Finding its way

The conversations considered multiple types of payment integration, recalls Fauszt. "At the end of the day, the best

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idea was voted for, and that was to use Microsoft Teams in an embedded payment project," she says. Adopting an agile development technique, it took the team just a few months to step from an idea to an MVP.

So successful and rapid has the progress been, that Emmanuelle François, Head of Axepta Europe, BNP Paribas, confirms that merchants are able to connect and enable their own customers to pay directly within Microsoft Teams as part of a fully integrated payments flow.

A key part of the discussion phase was that the offering should allow customers to pay using any bank account, to any bank account, says Le Bris. It is, he maintains, purposefully not a closed shop for BNP Paribas account holders.

Accessing the initial target group required the specialist services of Stancer – part of the Iliad Group, a longstanding BNP Paribas client and partner, from the French telecommunications sector. With its experience of providing payments solutions to individuals and small businesses, and its ready integration with BNP Paribas' Axepta solution, it will address essential onboarding functions such as KYC.

In practice, a Stancer payment API connection is being offered to merchants through Microsoft Teams. "This demonstrates how technically open Microsoft Teams is as a platform," comments Invernizzi. Of course, security is a key element of any payment system, and BNP Paribas, via



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Stancer, has been rigid in its application of the latest Payment Card Industry Data Security Standard (PCI DSS) controls, asserts François.

The initial and ongoing development of the new solution is attributed to all four parties, notes Le Bris. He describes the effort as being “truly collaborative”. It’s a model that is well-rehearsed within BNP Paribas, with its own Treasury Board innovation project now being extended to a larger client base (and soon to change its name to the Treasury Lab).

“Treasury Lab is a BNP Paribas event designed to generate new ideas for co-creations and co-ideations with clients,” explains Fauszt. “When it comes to working with our corporate clients, our relationship with Microsoft is highly valued. It’s why we have invited them to participate in the upcoming Treasury Lab talk about AI.”

Reaching out

The new Teams-based payments solution will be offered to larger companies and B2B payments scenarios, says François. For this, initially, France will be the geographic focus for deploying the payment solution. But reach is expected to extend further into Europe, with client feedback at this level suggesting interest in at least testing the idea is gaining momentum. The development of new use-case scenarios, she says, “will be discovered in real life, and we will then try to adapt to each with the help of our partners”.



Cédric Le Bris
Indirect Sales and Partnerships Manager, Acepta BNP Paribas



Emmanuelle François
Head of Acepta Europe, BNP Paribas

The learning process also extends to Microsoft, and how it offers Microsoft Teams to users, comments Le Bris. As part of the workshop phase, it was discovered that, by offering a payments application within Microsoft Teams, companies could start deploying it to monetise their visual presentations. “We will see many new use cases, and even transformations of businesses,” he believes.

This might include coaching and training, and a wide range of remote advisory or design work, for example.

Indeed, the offer of “a new, secure, frictionless commercial channel will enable companies to move closer to their clients”, says François. “As an innovative solution, it has many possibilities.”

Microsoft’s view, says Invernizzi, is that BNP Paribas should now leverage Microsoft Teams for these new scenarios, for both internal and external opportunities, because many of the bank’s clients are already Microsoft Teams users. And with Microsoft supporting BNP Paribas’ global operations, the reach of such a proposition could be set to expand considerably. Indeed, with a worldwide Microsoft Teams user base, the market for new services could well be massive.



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