



CASE STUDY

Farm Credit West Establishes Microsoft Teams as Its Collaboration Hub with Orchestry



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it was evident that it would be
our solution of choice, especially
in comparison to out-of-the-box
Microsoft services"

– Matthew Hanson, Teams Administrator,
Farm Credit West.

KEY HIGHLIGHTS:

\$14,400 USD

saved annually on Microsoft
Teams team provisioning.

92%

reduction in time consumed
per team provisioning.

75%

fall in time consumed per
team customization.

• Introducing Farm Credit West

INDUSTRY:
FINANCE



[Farm Credit West](#) (FCW) is a cooperatively owned institution that provides financial services to farmers, ranchers, and agribusinesses. Part of the 100-year-old Farm Credit system, Farm Credit West stands strong with 340 employees and is the largest credit provider to American agriculture.



In Partnership with PixelMill

A group of researchers, technologists, and artists, PixelMill brings over twenty-two years of expertise to the field of web technologies. With [PixelMill's](#) passion for custom solutions and collaboration, PixelMill utilizes SharePoint Online, Microsoft 365, and Azure to ensure digital workplace success.

PixelMill is a leader in enterprise UI/UX research, design, and development. PixelMill's personal experience working with Microsoft tools, combined with the knowledge gleaned from more than 22 years working with organizations of all shapes and sizes worldwide, arms them with a primed perspective on how an effective digital workplace can transform an organization.

With the same grit and determination to help clients, PixelMill started on the journey with Farm Credit West to help them successfully adopt and engage Microsoft Teams. Orchestra became a part of the project to facilitate more efficient utilization of Microsoft Teams through consistent templating and transparent governance to suit the financial institution.

"Even though the prior engagement was based on PixelMill being fully responsible for building out the solution for Farm Credit West, adding Orchestra to the mix became a no-brainer as it added an extra layer of simplicity to the project," shares Danielle Wells, Marketing and Sales Senior Manager, PixelMill.



Collaboration — • Transformation for an Agricultural Leader

Being an agricultural leader with 100 years of client service, Farm Credit West is a robust organization that required an effective collaboration system in place. It was important to them to set up its communication environment correctly from the beginning.

Farm Credit West already had a well-built SharePoint Online platform, which was curated by PixelMill on Modern SharePoint. Farm Credit West's communication and collaboration activities relied heavily on emails, sites on its SharePoint Intranet, and Microsoft Teams chat. Initially, Farm Credit West was only using one-half of Microsoft Teams' capabilities, purely the chat and calling features, for one-on-one communication.



It was important for Farm Credit West to plan and set up its Microsoft Teams platform thoughtfully," shares Carolyn Gjerde, a Business Analyst at PixelMill. "Building it correctly from the start was critical to moving collaboration from its regular SharePoint environment to Microsoft Teams."

It seemed like a practical and strategic step to move towards complete usage of Microsoft Teams and transform it into its primary collaboration platform. Operating in its traditional intranet with content, private libraries for groups, file servers deployed around the enterprise for people to store data and connect remotely, it was time to get real-time collaboration in place. The complete rollout of Microsoft Teams, although pragmatic, is expected to take place gradually. The journey begins with team creation for specific committees and key ongoing projects for Farm Credit West.

"Once I saw Orchestra, it was evident that it would be our solution of choice, especially in comparison to out-of-the-box Microsoft services" shares Matthew Hanson, the Teams Administrator at Farm Credit West.



Orchestra introduced the ability to have a pragmatic, piloted experience throughout the launch and adoption process of the collaboration half of Microsoft Teams. The ability to engage with the platform in such a defined and intuitive fashion was of significant value to us."

- Chris Peterson, Senior Vice President-Chief Information Officer, FARM CREDIT WEST.



Simplifying Microsoft Teams Adoption with Orchestra



Initially, the project started with solely PixelMill taking on the responsibility of creating a simple templating solution for Farm Credit West. Concurrently, the partnership between PixelMill and Orchestra was budding, allowing PixelMill to identify a simpler way to address Farm Credit West's requirements.

"Orchestra introduced the ability to have a pragmatic, piloted experience throughout the launch and adoption process of the collaboration half of Microsoft Teams. The ability to engage with the platform in such a defined and intuitive fashion was of significant value to us," shares Chris Peterson, Senior Vice President-Chief Information Officer, Farm Credit West.

With the aim of delivering the long-term sustainable outcome Farm Credit West was positioning for since the beginning of the project, PixelMill instated Orchestra to create two types of Microsoft 365 Workspace Templates:



Group Workspace Template



Project Workspace Template


With sufficient training and Orchestra's user-friendly interface, Farm Credit West created two more Microsoft 365 Templates with ease:




Department Workspace Template



Committee Workspace Template



Each template serves a different use case for Farm Credit West and some of them are used as outlines and a point of reference, depending upon what each user group requires from its respective team. For example, the Project Workspace Template does not require further modifications/additions when provisioning, but a Department Workspace Template takes the user through an intuitive Workspace Request Wizard that provides the steps for further modification and customization to best serve the employees collaborating in each Workspace.



Critically, having a baseline for Microsoft Teams Templates makes the entire process of provisioning and managing a new Workspace that much more efficient and consistent than starting from nothing each time.

Farm Credit West has yet to make the transition to open the self-service provisioning of Workspaces, but with Orchestry they are well on its way with the guardrails in place to keep its Microsoft Teams and Microsoft 365 environments under control. To date, using Orchestry, Farm Credit West has smoothly onboarded all internal Departments to Microsoft Teams, delivering them the attention and resources required to get the business units up to speed to collaborate effectively in Microsoft Teams. Currently, the Teams Administrator, Matthew Hanson, creates a new Microsoft Teams team by defining the needs of different end user groups and guiding them through the experience. Even though this is a moderated approach to launching Microsoft Teams, Farm Credit West is currently running thirty Microsoft Teams sites in its environment, with the potential of creating five or six more Workspaces each month.

Orchestry Establishes a Consistent and Economical Microsoft Teams Experience

Standardizing the Microsoft Teams Workspace experience outside of Orchestry would require an excessive amount of time, money, and resources. Without Orchestry, PixelMill would have needed to develop the same repeatable solution manually, which would cost at least an hour per team. Whereas within Orchestry, the same is accomplished with just the click of a button and within five minutes.

RECORDING A
92% reduction
IN TIME CONSUMED PER MICROSOFT
TEAMS WORKSPACE PROVISIONED.



The Farm Credit West team regularly utilizes Orchestry's Pre-Built Workspace Templating capability to onboard new Departments into its Microsoft Teams platform. As certain Microsoft Teams Workspaces require customizations to be ready for the respective end user group, having the baseline of a defined Microsoft 365 Workspace Template is crucial for efficiency, consistency, and productivity. Without Orchestry, building a custom Microsoft Teams Workspace would cost about an hour of time, whereas the same adjustments can now take place in under 15 minutes with Orchestry's easy-to-use interface. Not to mention, if/when Farm Credit West wants to make universal updates to its more than thirty active Microsoft 365 Workspaces, they would need to manually apply those updates team by team without Orchestry. **The power of Orchestry means Farm Credit West eliminated the wasteful time-consuming modifying a Microsoft Teams Workspace by at least 75%.**

Given that Farm Credit West has the potential of provisioning five to six Workspaces per month, with Orchestry by their side, **they are saving \$14,400 annually on provisioning and an additional \$14,400 annually if each of these Workspace requires customizations.**



We had used ShareGate before as a solution, but Orchestra proved to be the easier approach for our requirements.

Not only is it economical, but we also envision it enabling the collaboration environment we are aiming for,”

– Chris Peterson, Senior Vice President–Chief Information Officer, FARM CREDIT WEST.



“ Orchestra not only helped us establish these Workspace Templates for the creation of new Workspaces but also enables the successful management of all Workspaces for the long-term, which is why I will happily keep paying the annual licensing fee for a tool that keeps on delivering more value year over year.”

– Chris Peterson, Senior Vice President–Chief Information Officer, FARM CREDIT WEST.

In addition, [Orchestra’s Transparent Workspace Governance](#) provides a consistent platform to establish sustainable Workspace creation, management, and sunseting for the long run. These powerful core Orchestra capabilities enable a consistent administrator and end user experience, eliminating any confusion, duplication and chaos through step-by-step Workspace Requests and Approvals processes.

The naming convention established using Orchestra is also a key element in structuring intuitive findability of any Microsoft 365 Workspace, through radically Transparent Governance alongside Orchestra’s [Informative Workspace Directory](#). Building in these resources from day one means Farm Credit West employees do not waste time across teams and sites as they search for an existing Workspace, positively impacting the productivity of their digital workplace today and for years to come.



What we have been the most impressed about using the Orchestra platform, is not just the product itself, but the direct and immediate support we have received from Orchestra. We highly value their hands-on approach to implementing fully and properly, which makes us feel like a valued customer,”

– Chris Peterson, Senior Vice President–Chief Information Officer, FARM CREDIT WEST.



Easing into the Change with a Trusting Change Management Partner —•

Farm Credit West and PixelMill have a longstanding relationship and they strategized to move towards a comprehensive adoption of each facet of Microsoft Teams across its entire organization. Given its history, Farm Credit West believed in working with a solution provider that was ready to grow alongside them and maintain a direct connection.

PixelMill delivered business success in every sense possible by guiding Farm Credit West through this project and making themselves available for a smooth transition. Carolyn Gjerde, Business Analyst, at PixelMill, created easily consumable SharePoint pages to help train and bring the Farm Credit West team up to speed with its new platform. The documents cover everything from governance practices to Microsoft Teams implementation processes and specific configurations in Microsoft Teams. Resources like video walk-throughs that covered granular configurations were of significance in ensuring a seamless adoption and engagement of the Microsoft Teams platform at Farm Credit West.



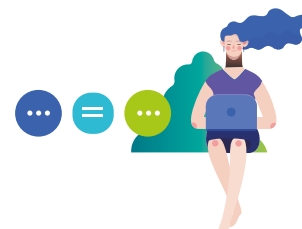
Carving the Path — • Ahead with Orchestry

Hybrid work has embraced us all, including Farm Credit West. Due to this, Microsoft Teams is slowly but steadily establishing itself as the focal point of the Microsoft 365 experience for the organization. Farm Credit West is starting to enable Self-Service Workspace Provisioning in a controlled fashion for certain segments of its employee's base. This will empower some members of the organization to request new Workspaces through the Orchestry Workspace Request Wizard, which includes a carefully curated approval workflow that manages both the approval and then creation of Workspaces.

Additionally, as Workspace provisioning opens, Farm Credit West will benefit from Orchestry's Comprehensive Lifecycle Management capabilities that add comprehensive Archival Policy options to its environment.

With the ability to clean up Microsoft Teams teams and SharePoint sites that have hit their end-of-life purpose, Farm Credit West can retain all the information through Orchestry's Archival Policies, while retiring the Workspace from active usage and discoverability. Farm Credit West can also utilize the 'copy and delete' option for sunseting a Microsoft 365 Workspace with Orchestry, which empowers them to move over all the data and documents to a secure Azure instance before deleting the Workspace SharePoint Site or Microsoft Team.





Work Made Simple with Orchestra

Orchestra is a third-party platform that makes work simple in Microsoft Teams, SharePoint Online and across Microsoft 365. Built and designed by industry experts and Microsoft MVPs, Orchestra arises from the common pain points of the Microsoft 365 ecosystem. It is a comprehensive lifecycle, adoption, enablement, governance, and provisioning platform that empowers both IT Administrators and end users alike.

By using Orchestra, you can benefit from Pre-Built Workspace Templates that help resolve the common challenge of 'what to use when' in Microsoft 365. This is further complemented by features like simplified Self-Service Provisioning, empowering Transparent Workspace Governance, informative Workspace Directory, comprehensive Lifecycle Management, and intelligent Actionable Insights that are crucial to increasing technology adoption.

Ask us how Orchestra simplifies overcomplicated digital workplaces at hello@orchestra.com and get FREE access at <https://www.orchestra.com>.