



# With TeamMate, 2600Hz Provides a Better Telephony Experience for Businesses When Migrating to Teams

## Case Study

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[www.2600Hz.com](http://www.2600Hz.com)  
[www.teammatetechnology.com](http://www.teammatetechnology.com)

+1 855-464-2600  
[contact@2600Hz.com](mailto:contact@2600Hz.com)

831 St. Rose Parkway Suite 200 Henderson, Nevada 89052  
United States



## How 2600Hz Established a Niche

The cloud communications market is very crowded, and while a handful of providers dominate, there are dozens of smaller players, especially in the mid-market and below. 2600Hz is one of the more innovative providers, having built their own platform from the ground up with an emphasis on flexibility and openness.

The Kazoo platform is primarily for UCaaS – especially telephony – but can also support CCaaS and CPaaS needs, making it a versatile, fully integrated communications platform. Being API-driven, it's also attractive for partners with a lot of customization needs, as well as branding the solution for their end customers.

**This approach has allowed 2600Hz to build a diverse base of partners, including resellers, MSPs and other types of carriers looking to add UCaaS to their portfolio. A common thread for many partners is the flexibility of the Kazoo platform, which allows them to take a more creative approach in tailoring cloud services to their customers, especially across various vertical markets, where each will have specific requirements for end customers.**

With their core expertise being rooted in telephony, 2600Hz has positioned itself as the right partner for providers who really can't manage the complexities of telephony, and just want a simplified solution they can go to market with. That same expertise also makes them an ideal partner for carriers who want to build their own offerings by providing building blocks like APIs. In either case, the company's marketing message is for partners to view them as the "telephone company in a box," with their expertise running behind the scenes, and partner out in front, offering differentiated solutions to their customers.

## We empower organizations to maximize the value of existing communications platforms by leveraging the capabilities of Microsoft Teams

# Helping UCaaS Partners Upsell Telephony For Teams Customers

No amount of diversification can insulate 2600Hz – or any other smaller cloud provider – from the momentum Microsoft has been building with Teams. Microsoft's long-standing dominance on the desktop remains, and this familiarity – both with IT and end users – makes Teams an easy choice when migrating to the cloud and adopting a UCaaS platform for collaboration.

Aside from Teams being an inherently solid UCaaS solution – for the most part – during the pandemic, Microsoft began bundling it for free with Office. At face value, this looked like a boon for legions of employees who suddenly needed to work from home, and now their employers could support their collaboration needs at no extra cost, along with using software they were already familiar with.

That jump-started Microsoft into becoming the leading UCaaS player, and with Teams becoming entrenched, it's getting harder for others to compete for this massive market opportunity. Having been subject to previous antitrust investigations, and with EU regulators questioning this practice with Teams, Microsoft agreed to stop bundling Teams with Office in April 2023. While this helps level the playing field for other UCaaS providers, 2600Hz needed to address the concerns of partners whose customers are increasingly asking about going to Teams, as well as how telephony should be integrated in this environment.

## An unrivaled CPaaS solution designed to empower Services Provider success

The Kazoo UCaaS platform natively supports telephony, but when end customers have already chosen Teams, partners only needed a telephony solution from 2600Hz, not a UCaaS platform. Knowing that 2600Hz has a strong telecom pedigree, they were looking for something more than off-the-shelf telephony – for two reasons. First, when customers go with Teams, it will not take much for them to take Microsoft Phone System as well – it's an easy add-on, and overall, it simplifies their move into cloud communications.

Aside from this being a threat to the partner's business model, many of these customers don't realize the shortcomings of going with Microsoft for telephony. 2600Hz's partners know that the high level of quality these customers have long-experienced with legacy telephony will not carry over with an all-Microsoft solution. In 2600Hz's eyes, Microsoft may be the Office "expert", but 2600Hz is the telecom "expert", and for partners to bring that total value proposition to their customers, they needed to bring TeamMate into the picture.

# What TeamMate brings for a Great Telephony Experience with Teams

The missing piece was PBX Connector, a proprietary solution developed by TeamMate specifically to integrate telephony with Teams. There are three telephony scenarios with Teams, and PBX Connector addresses the most important ones. First would be desk phones, and whether end customers continue with their PBX or SIP handsets, PBX Connector ensures that the features these phones had when connected to the PSTN will carry over when connected to Teams.

Second would be providing this capability for softphones, which are especially important for home-based workers, since they typically won't have a dedicated desk phone for work. The third telephony scenario would be mobility, which happens to be a strong suit for Teams. While Microsoft can provide a solid user experience for Teams on smartphones, this is not a practical proxy for full-on telephony usage. With PBX Connector, partners may not be able to address 100% of all telephony use cases, but they can support the most important and most widely-used options.

## **An unrivaled UCaaS solution designed to empower Service Provider success**

When migrating to Teams, the focus for end customers is mainly on the user experience on the desktop, and telephony can easily become an afterthought. This isn't surprising, since the desktop is Microsoft's native domain, and they have always relied on third party vendors for telephony. While these end customers may not realize the shortcomings of Microsoft Phone System and Operator Connect, 2600Hz knows what they'll be missing, and with TeamMate PBX Connector, they have a complete solution for their partners.

For some end customers, Microsoft's telephony offerings are perfectly suitable, but for those who do not want a scaled-back feature set, or who want to maintain an enterprise-grade user experience, 2600Hz's partners now have a proven alternative. To illustrate, here are three examples where PBX Connector enables a better telephony experience with Teams.

## **1. Inbound Calling**

Most workers need to manage multiple phones and endpoints – hard phones, soft phones, tablets, desktop, mobile, etc. With PBX Connector, missed calls can all be routed to the phone system's voicemail rather than the Teams voicemail. Not only does the former support shared mailboxes – ideal for teams – but the feature set is richer, especially for transcribing voice messages to email. For collaboration, another advantage is the ability to set up ring groups, so the phones of all your team members will ring at the same time.

## 2. Outbound Calling

This would include standard PBX features like call park and caller ID. Aside from there being more features here than with Microsoft Phone System, they're also more customizable – which is what partners have come to expect working with 2600Hz. One example would be the ability to have different caller ID setting for different numbers, each based on the endpoint's feature codes.

A common scenario here would be when making business calls from a personal device, where you don't want the home number showing. For workers who wear multiple hats, they could now customize the caller ID setting as needed – sometimes calling from Technical Support, and other times calling from Sales or Shipping, etc. Not only does this enhance their professionalism, but for end customers, it now looks like a trusted call that they'll be more likely to answer.

## 3. Call Recording

As compliance requirements evolve, and as fraud becomes more prevalent, this is becoming a must-have capability. Microsoft Phone System does have this, but again, with telephony not being Microsoft's forte, it has limitations that may not become evident until later. With PBX Connector integrating telephony into Teams, end customers now get better call recording capabilities – and at lower cost. Not only are the storage limits higher, but the retention time can go longer than the 120 days with Teams. Features aside, end customers have more flexibility to choose their options with call recording, which also means less lock-in to the Microsoft ecosystem, something that many small businesses would welcome.

**With TeamMate, Service Providers can build a customized and branded Teams Application to integrate call control, end user portals, PBX notifications, and PBX soft keys directly into Teams**

## Conclusion

*Just because Teams is gaining so much traction, doesn't mean that Microsoft is the only – or the best – option for telephony. With TeamMate's PBX Connector, 2600Hz is now providing partners with a viable alternative, and with that, a new way to provide new value to end customers. While Teams will inevitably cut into their UCaaS business, 2600Hz is offering them a path to continue generating revenues directly from customers instead of just becoming a SIP trunking provider in the Operator Connect ecosystem.*



### **Ryan O'shea, UCaaS Product Manager, 2600Hz**

*"As the telco experts, and we know what TeamMate brings with PBX Connector, and while Microsoft may be the Office expert, their telephony experience with Teams is not as good as it needs to be for today's hybrid workforce. Don't just take it from us – go and ask a receptionist or a contact center agent using Teams. They know what they had for telephony before Teams, and they're not getting that now and that's exactly what our partners are providing."*