

**CASE STUDY**

# Supawood unifies its communications with Microsoft 365 Business Voice

Supawood Architectural Lining Systems is a New South Wales-based provider of decorative and acoustic architectural wall and ceiling lining systems. With 20 years' experience designing innovative architectural lining solutions, Supawood has a customer-service centric approach that requires excellent communication as a core

value. National Broadband Network (NBN) upgrades had seen the company retire its old PBX system, however the new VOIP system they were now using only had a basic feature set, and the company was not happy with the quality of service from the provider.

Evonne Grimm, Executive Assistant to Supawood's CEO, says in addition to the need to find a more modern, feature-rich system, the company also needed a system that would allow staff to work seamlessly from home due to the pandemic, so that they could continue to provide professional service to customers no matter where they were located.

"We were in lockdown, and we needed the phone system set up so that all of our staff could work easily from anywhere. Our old phone system had required someone to physically be in the office to answer the phones. We were already using Microsoft Teams for video conferencing and internal meetings and chat, so for us if we went through Teams it was one less new application that we'd have to learn."

The company evaluated other systems, including one from 3CX but ultimately decided to go with Microsoft 365 Business Voice as it offered true unified communications combining telephony with the chat, conferencing, messaging, and scheduling features of Microsoft Teams. Supawood already had a trusted relationship with Alliance Business Technologies, which had been working with the company for eight years and was its preferred partner.

Ross Bain, Alliance Business Technologies Business Development Manager, says a Microsoft Teams Business Voice solution was both the best and most affordable solution for Supawood, considering that it was already using the Microsoft 365 ecosystem and was therefore already licensed to have Microsoft Teams voice calling capability.

"The Microsoft 365 Business Voice solution is both more powerful, and significantly cheaper than competing solutions. Supawood has 49 employees and with each Microsoft 365 Business Voice add-on license costing just \$16, it's a low-cost solution for them. While there's a one-time project cost in the implementation, in terms of recurring costs it's minimal. Being licensed on a per-user basis means it provides both flexibility and scalability. In licensing terms, all they really needed to add was a low-cost voice calling add-on license to their existing Microsoft 365 subscription for inbound/outbound voice calling capability".

Microsoft 365 Business Voice solution is designed for small and medium businesses and adds powerful and flexible telephone features into Microsoft Teams. Microsoft 365 Business Voice provides Supawood with a cloud-based phone system

with advanced features such as dial-in audio conferencing, call transfer, multilevel auto attendants, and call queues with the ability for staff to call from anywhere, on any device through the Microsoft Teams app on desktop, mobile, web and desk phones. Plus, because Microsoft Teams is integrated into Office 365, it features the enterprise-grade security and compliance businesses need.

Supawood's numbers were ported to ABT's telco partner Switch Connect, which provides the telephony part of the equation. Switch Connect is the licensed SIP trunk and VOIP services provider for Microsoft Teams, providing the Direct Routing that allows organizations to add Public Switched Telephone Network (PSTN) calling to Microsoft Teams, so that users can make and receive external phone calls.

ABT's Ross Bain says the result is Supawood gets the full Microsoft Teams ecosystem with all the advantages that it brings, plus they only have to deal with a single pane of glass. "They get all the features they're already using, in the interface they are familiar with, which is elevated to the next level by bringing their telephony requirements into that environment, rather than having to use multiple applications. They've now got all the calling features they need directly within Teams – consultative transfers, music on hold, call park, and cloud voicemail."

Bain says the shift required very little training for Supawood's staff, since they had already adopted Microsoft Teams and it was just an extension of how they were already working. The pandemic did provide some challenges in terms of training, but these were easily overcome. In addition to providing documentation, ABT had a training session with a small core group from Supawood who became the product champions to pass on training to the rest of Supawood's users.

"It gives them more flexibility than competing solutions they evaluated, since each user is licensed to have Microsoft Teams on up to five devices. So they can be running it on their mobile, on a tablet, a desktop or laptop at work and another at home. They have real flexibility to utilise the system from anywhere on a range of compatible devices. They can have their desk phone with them anywhere they have an internet connection. You could be sitting on a plane at 30,000ft and as long as it had internet access the receptionist at work can be transferring calls to you and you can be making calls out using your office number."

Joseph Baca, Alliance Business Technologies Project Engineer, says other than training the implementation was done entirely in the backend, without down-time or need for user interaction. ABT first created a Proof of Concept (POC) demo environment configured with a dummy inbound line and 10 dummy users/phone lines before moving on to the full deployment once the client was satisfied and had signed off.

Supawood's Evonne Grimm says that after some initial hesitancy from some staff about switching to a new system, the users have now adapted. "We like that it connects to all our existing Microsoft apps, and that it didn't require much training for everyone to become familiar with it. There are some features Microsoft could add that would be useful. For example, we have KPIs around call response and a dashboard that gave us some analytics on that would be great, but having all our communications unified into a single Teams-based solution has given us the system we need for the business to service our clients professionally no matter how challenging the environment is."



 **1300 705 062**

 [sales@abtechnologies.com.au](mailto:sales@abtechnologies.com.au)

 [www.abtechnologies.com.au](http://www.abtechnologies.com.au)

 10A/121 Evans Road, Salisbury, QLD, 4107

