Call Centre Everywhere

How the Democratic Alliance, South Africa's main opposition party, set up ad-hoc call centre operations anywhere, while bringing costs per seat down

Executive Summary

The Democratic Alliance (DA) has been operating call centres for years for campaigning and voter interaction purposes.

The mission of this project was to overcome physical boundaries (office-based call centres): Party activists and supporters should be able to act as calling agents anywhere in the country.

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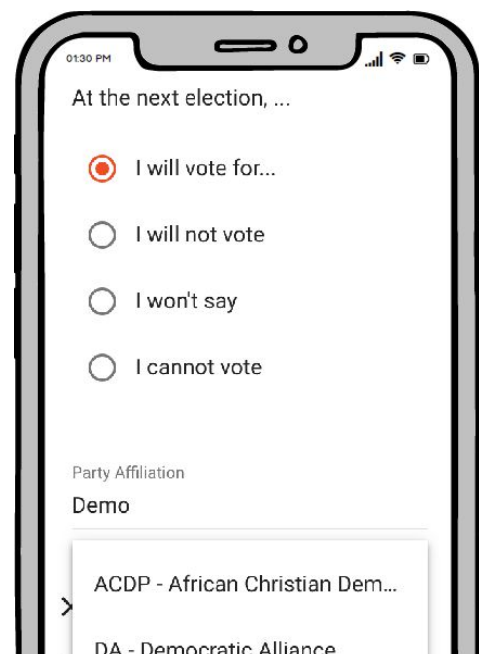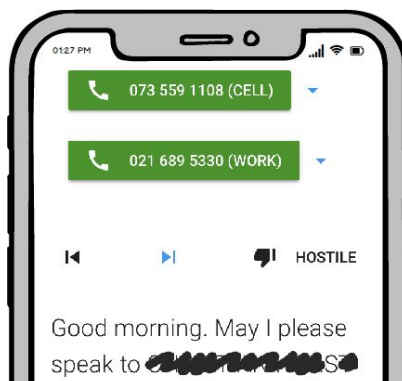
Challenges Faced

Seasonal campaigns for the DA's calling operations are expensive and inflexible, as fixed costs per call centre seat are high. Moreover, the system that had been in use and grown over the years was suboptimal when assigning agents (different regions, languages spoken).

Scripts were hard to adjust or adapt: High coordination effort was required when call scripts had to change; spread sheets and paper came to the rescue, but it was too easy to make mistakes.

Project Approach Taken

Together with the DA's experts on their calling operations, we designed an agent front end to call from any modern device (Android, iOS, PC), without the need to install anything on an agent's device.

Logicalis SA (Pty) Ltd provided telephony connectivity: We co-designed a secure and flexible mechanism to allow for country-wide calling, that scales to 100s of concurrent calls easily.

The actual software development was done with the help of Uber5's tools: They enable end user configuration of scripts, flexible access control, and authorization. Further to that, open source programming languages and databases were used.

"This is the kind of project that large teams of experienced developers tackle. We didn't have that luxury. We needed a master software engineer, able to quickly learn about new technologies and collaborate with other service providers in the stack. Uber5 / Chris Oloff were able to tackle this gargantuan challenge and deliver the product through continuous incremental improvement and scaling upgrades. The result is a solution that is highly flexible, can be managed by a non-technical administrator and - the ultimate test - has made millions of phone calls possible by thousands of users."

Warwick Chapman

Executive Director: Information, Democratic Alliance

Results and Stats

Call centre agents can now be remote, local activist groups can set up their own "popup call centre". No investment into office or infrastructure required, teams use existing or even private premises.

Agents love the guidance by flexible scripts: Localised to geography, language and demographic, only what is relevant is on the screen at any time. Any feedback gets processed in real time, and updates relevant systems and databases of the Democratic Alliance, QA is immediate.

1,600+ agents	More than 1.1m calls	25,000 targeted campaigns