



Pivotal Data gives crisis counselling contact centre a lifeline

Press release

LifeLine Western Cape is one of 16 LifeLine centres in Southern Africa. The organisation aims to improve emotional wellness in individuals and communities throughout South Africa by providing counselling.

This non-profit organisation (NPO) provided these services via a contact centre operated with an on-site PBX solution.

However, LifeLine Western Cape needed to upgrade its technological capabilities to gain greater flexibility within the organisation, help collect important data and, most importantly, keep up with shifting consumer engagement preferences.

During the level 5 national lockdown, the NPO sought ways to keep counsellors safe at home by connecting them to callers remotely using a mainstream VoIP solution.

“However, this best-effort workaround did not deliver the quality of service we required, even on the best internet connection. This negatively affected customer service at a time when more people were experiencing stress and trauma due to the pandemic’s impact,” elaborates Samantha de Gouveia, Admin Manager at LifeLine Western Cape.

The organisation also faced spiralling telephony costs related to maintaining their existing on-site solution. “We had no control over our telephony services, and on-site technical support for any issue was costly. We needed more flexibility with our phone system, with an adaptable solution that could maintain continuity of service throughout lockdown and the pandemic,” continues de Gouveia.

LifeLine contacted Pivotal Data based on a recommendation and discussed their challenges.

Customer	LifeLine
Industry	Crisis Counselling
Solution	Pivotal Voice
Challenges	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Inflexible legacy PABX system that could not support WFM agents. • Unable to collect important data to improve service delivery. • Unable to meet shifting consumer engagement preferences to elevate the customer experience. • Spiralling telephony costs to operate and maintain on-site PABX.

“We ran the risk of falling off the map during Covid due to a lack of capacity and poor call quality, but Pivotal Data saw an NPO in need and wanted to help out,” states Glynis Depper, Counselling Consultant at LifeLine Western Cape.

The Pivotal Data team assured us that the functionality of their Pivotal Voice cloud-PBX solution would address every challenge we highlighted,” recalls de Gouveia.

“We decided to donate a Pivotal Voice cloud-PBX solution to LifeLine Western Cape to help connect more crisis counsellors to people who require support in dealing with psychological and social stresses and trauma. It was an easy decision,” comments Bruce Arnold, Chief Executive Officer at Pivotal Data.

According to Arnold, Pivotal Voice – the company’s flagship cloud- based PBX solution – was the best-fit solution for LifeLine Western Cape’s needs.

“It delivers a centralised web-based platform with access to telephony capabilities that would revolutionise the way the NPO counsels.

The solution's functionality allows LifeLine Western Cape counsellors to receive calls from a mobile application that they can load onto their mobile device to enable remote working capabilities," explains Arnold.

Importantly, the fully redundant digital back-office telephony solution can scale to meet changes in caller volumes and counsellor capacity. Since implementation, LifeLine has doubled its call capacity, increasing from 1,500 to 3,000 calls a month, with the scope and capabilities to grow that figure even further.

The telephone management system (TMS), and the data collection and reporting functions offer valuable insights and statistics into LifeLine's day-to-day operations, including anonymised information on the age groups they counsel and the regions where callers reside.

"This granular reporting provides important information that we share with current and potential funders and donors," continues Depper.

This reporting was previously done manually, which was time-consuming and inefficient.

The solution's functionality has changed the way we work. It frees counsellors from these administrative requirements and gives them more time to engage with those in need," adds Depper.

Beyond improving operational efficiencies, the new solution helps LifeLine realise cost savings.

"It is user-friendly and intuitive. It is simple for counsellors to register and log-in to start taking calls. And the voice quality of those calls has been superior to what we've previously experienced."

Depper says this has been a hugely exciting improvement to their service. "I've been part of LifeLine for 30 years and I've never been more excited about a development in our operating capabilities."

The team hopes that the Pivotal Voice solution will allow the organisation to once again provide 24-hour support, a service LifeLine Western Cape discontinued years ago due to safety concerns around counsellors travelling to the contact centre at night.

In addition, the solution positions LifeLine favourably to meet shifting trends around engagement preferences as many people who reach out to the hotline for help now prefer to use WhatsApp for its privacy and low cost.

LifeLine plans to make these instant messaging capabilities available in the near future, and will look to add additional channels should the need arise.



"We're extremely grateful for Pivotal Data's offer to donate the solution. It means we only have to pay for outbound minutes and can realise other cost savings that help to extend our budgets. It still brings me to tears to think of their generosity. The team got us back up and running in a big way," concludes de Gouveia.

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