

Case study | 2018

Making Vital Connections for St Martin-in-the-Fields Charity

The Christmas season is synonymous with giving, so for many people, the BBC Radio 4 Christmas Appeal with St Martin-in-the-Fields is an important part of their Christmas tradition. For over 90 years, BBC Radio 4 listeners have supported the Appeal, set up to help homeless and vulnerably housed people.

In the last two years, Radio 4's 11.5 million listeners have helped raise over £5m to support people away from homelessness. Donations are shared between The Connection at St Martin-in-the-Fields, the busy day and emergency night centre in London's Trafalgar Square, and the Vicar's Relief Fund, which offers one-off grants to people across the UK, preventing eviction and supporting people into housing.

But homelessness isn't just at Christmas.



Background

2017 saw the UK's rough sleeping numbers increase for their seventh consecutive year – a 169% rise since 2010. It makes St Martin-in-the-Fields' work ever more vital, with services running throughout the year. But with homelessness on the rise, annual fundraising has to increase too in order to get people off the streets and back home or into accommodation where they're warm

and safe. Thankfully 2017's Radio 4 Appeal saw the team exceed £3m in donations for the very first time – with more than 3,000 callers over the life of the Appeal. If you consider a lost caller is a lost donation, Sesui's role in providing the cloud contact centre is crucial in ensuring every call, and every donation, gets through.



The brief:

Each year the team at St Martin-in-the-Fields Charity challenges the brief to find new ways of engaging new donors. And like any organisation, they're embracing digital transformation to do this. The brief...

1.

Extend the **"Pop-Up" approach** so a contact centre can be set up, at short notice, anywhere in the country.

2.

Make it possible for donations to be taken throughout the night.

1. A "Pop-Up" approach

In the world of cloud communications, it's now possible for contact centres to operate without boundaries – we think of it as our "Pop-Up" approach. With Sesui Connect, St Martin-in-the-Fields Charity can operate a cloud contact centre without needing to take up expensive building space for a physical hub. In this way, call handlers can work any time of the day or night and from anywhere in the country.

With just a few hours' notice, Sesui can set up a cloud contact centre so that volunteers can take calls from anywhere in the country.

"For eight years, Sesui has provided the magic behind the scenes making sure every call gets through," said Mr Tim Bissett, Director of St-Martin-in-the-Fields Charity. "We're a small team, and on top of our many online and postal donations, we'll handle thousands of calls in just a number of days. The number of donations we receive in the first

week of the campaign would take other charities a year to raise. The only possible way to manage all of this goodwill is through the cloud. Sesui Pop-Up Connect will allow us to take up our posts – wherever we need to – in order to get those calls answered."

Sesui's one of only a few UK providers able to provide real time reporting. It means Tim and his team can see up-to-the-second what's happening with donor calls. If calls start queuing, they can be routed to available volunteers somewhere else in the country. It's vital in reducing call abandonment, which is technical speak for a caller putting the phone down before a connection is made.

2. Automated calls for secure donations after hours

Traditionally, collecting donations by phone requires call handlers to be on point at any time of the day or night. But St Martin-in-the-Fields Charity wanted to securely take donations out-of-hours without needing volunteers on the line. Sesui Support Connect provides an automated calling feature and uses a PCI compliant credit card facility so that donations can be made 24/7. Donors hear a pre-recorded message and then securely enter their card details.

"When people reach out to St Martin-in-the-Fields Charity, even if it's in the middle of the night, we want the team to be able to accept that generosity. Our automated call and payment system allows St Martin-in-the-Fields Charity to do that and importantly, protect their donors' sensitive information,"

Mr Lee Bryant, Managing Director of Sesui said.

Managing costs and overcoming legacy systems

Implementing new systems can seem daunting, especially when budgets are tight, and technology allocation (and resourcing) is tighter still. Sesui's voluntary sector solutions don't cost the Earth and are a pragmatic way for organisations to make the most of what they've got.

Behind every solution is Sesui's award winning software – Call Manager – that elevates an organisation's communications systems into the cloud. Needing only a connection, the software then floats above an organisation's existing equipment. Accessed through a phone, mobile or web app, teams can then stay connected anytime, anywhere, as every voice or video call, email and text message comes through their own, secure, virtual contact centre. It offers the reliability of the cloud, with the nimbleness, elasticity and sustainability of Sesui.

The ability to then integrate call logs into a CRM system ensures the process is fully joined up. At St Martin-in-the-Fields Charity, all of the call logs can now be seen in the donor database, alongside online and postal donors.

The results

When it comes to something like homelessness, people want that human connection. They want to hear how their donation will help make a difference.

97% of charities agree there'll always be a place for traditional channels, and in many cases, traditional channels are favoured, with 62% of charity donations made by phone. St Martin-in-the-Fields Charity's experience further supports that insight with volunteers in 2017 answering more than 3,000 calls – over 1,000 on the first day – with the value of those calls up by more than a third. Calls were answered 80% faster than in 2016 thanks, in part, to the live

reports, which helped Tim and the team to spot peaks in demand. Moreover, call abandonment was also reduced by 80%. By fine-tuning the channel that's most important to St Martin-in-the-Fields' donors, Sesui has supported the team in raising £3 million pounds in a month; a huge milestone and desperately needed given 2017's harsh winter.

“The generosity of Radio 4's loyal listeners is incredibly heart warming. Every year we've got to be ready to handle even more calls. And when another year's done, we then review the previous Appeal's figures and sets the bar even higher; to get more calls answered, more quickly, and help change some lives,”

Mr Bryant said.

If, like St Martin-in-the-Fields Charity, you work in the voluntary sector, and provide vital support to people, or you need support for a fundraising drive, please get in touch with our team for a free demo.

We're Sesui. We make vital connections.

03445 600 600

sesui.com

Info@sesui.com

makingvitalconnections



About Sesui

Sesui's the bright British innovator of award winning cloud communications software - connecting people to organisations when it's critical they get through.

For 15 years we've specialised in untangling communication systems and putting them into the cloud for organisations that provide a vital service in healthcare, travel, manufacturing and the voluntary sector. Our cloud software – Sesui Call Manager – floats above an organisation's technology so they don't need to replace what they've already got. All the reliability of the cloud, with the nimbleness, elasticity and sustainability of Sesui.

Sesui
cloud communications



@Sesui_ltd



@Sesui-ltd



03445 600 600

