

Case Study

311 Citizen Attention Center of Panama

Continuous evolution in the public administration thanks to the digital transformation

The Panamanian government continues to innovate in technology platforms in order to provide better service to its citizens. More than 1 million resolved cases per year, quickly and efficiently.

The 311 Citizen Attention Center (CAC), created by the government of Panama, is the communications channel of the Panamanian citizens in which they can report complaints, request services, submit ideas and suggestions about all kinds of issues that affect the nation, with the exception of medical emergencies, fires or public security circumstances.

The CAC is under the responsibility of the National Authority for Government Innovation, which reports directly

to the President of the Republic. Thanks to the CAC, now it is possible to contact 88 government institutions. These include different government agencies, national programs, councils, authorities, institutes, airports, lottery, public media, financial institutions, universities, security forces, and sectors of the judicial branch.

Additionally, 60 municipalities have been added to the system, 70% of the total existing ones in the country.

Citizens can contact the CAC through different channels: by telephone, free calls to 311 from landlines or mobiles, through the web portal, or using social networks such as Facebook and Twitter. Attention is continuous, for 24 hours, every day.

“With the 3-1-1 service, we have been innovating from the beginning, but it has only been in the last two years that we have really tried to go from being a merely reactive model to something much more comprehensive”

Last year, close to one million cases were cared for, with a 90% satisfaction rate.

Almost from the beginning of the operation of the service, a CRM platform has been used, especially adapted to the characteristics of the way of attention defined by the normative in its foundations. In 2014, there were national elections and a change of government; the new authorities understood that 3-1-1 was a State Policy that had to be continued and deepened, so that the guidelines for the evolution of the technological platform were defined while continuing to work on the processes and the incorporation of more organisms.

"We have incorporated a new version of Microsoft Dynamics CRM with RESPOND®, the Rock Solid product, since they were the technologies that were working with good results. At the beginning we only served through incoming calls and our web portal, but it was necessary to integrate a

multichannel platform to provide a better service to citizens" **explains Edgard Tejada, Director of the 311 Citizen Attention Center.**

"The CAC's role is to connect each person who submits a complaint or request with the appropriate agency that can provide the service they need. Each ministry and each entity of the national or municipal government designates a link that works with us to assign each case to the corresponding area of the organism it represents. Prior to this, with each one of these institutions, we developed a process of adaptation to integrate the operation of 3-1-1 with their own internal mechanisms, in order to comply with Panamanian law, which mandates addressing the situation raised by the citizen within 30 days of initiating the case. The mission of our center is to be an effective link between the citizen and the State entities, that

allows Panama to move towards a model of outstanding citizen care worldwide", added the official.

Irvin A. Halman B., General Administrator of the National Authority for Government Innovation, shared that "The National Authority for Government

Innovation is the state agency

in charge of coordinating, for the three State organs – executive, judicial and legislative – as well as the Electoral Court, all the standards, regulations, and

best practices for the procurement and use of information and communication technologies. In addition we have developed shared platforms which benefit the entities in

their quest for greater efficiency and savings, as well as improving the quality of services offered to citizens."



With the benefit of a user-friendly interface and full integration with Office 365, 3-1-1 operators can open cases – whether they have entered via phone, social networks or the website – identify which organization is responsible; characterize the problem posed, according to a vast list of categories; know if there is a quick, standardized response to offer; record all the details given by the complainant, know if that person has made other complaints in the past, and inform him/her how the procedure is expected to continue. The system automatically assigns an identifier to each case; with this it can be tracked to know the evolution of the case.

“For a couple of years now, we have been using a software called RESPOND®, a customization of Microsoft Dynamics CRM which is focused on government and the public sector to provide services for the public. It has a powerful database to store a growing

volume of information reliably, and it works with a performance according to the response times we need in our daily tasks”, added Tejada.

Rock Solid is a Microsoft Gold Partner, and for years, it has developed different platforms integrated with Microsoft Dynamics products to satisfy specific needs; it is the case of RESPOND®, widely used by Central American governments.

“Rock Solid Technologies is one of a select group of partners who excel in some very specific dimensions, which makes it special for Microsoft. I would like to highlight their reliability and resilience. We have enjoyed 17 years of partnership in which the relationship has grown stronger year after year, showing more commitment, more market penetration, more solutions and more projects” added Herbet Lewy, General Manager of Microsoft Puerto Rico and USVI.

As the cases are being brought in real time, the authorities of the Citizen Care Center and the agencies linked to this platform can monitor what is happening; detect early if a topic is causing concern in many people; identify if anybody is going through an extraordinary situation; verify if response times are being met, according to the premises established by Panamanian law, among many other possibilities.

“As we look upon the activity moment by moment, the system gives us a lot of valuable information to evaluate how we are working, what areas can be improved, what are the main concerns of the population, and all that information allows us to make decisions, working with the different State agencies involved and thus improve steadily,” added the Director.

In the first year of operations of 3-1-1, 70% of the enquiries were related to water issues, since it is a critical issue for the population.

Because of this, among the first agencies to connect with the Care Center were The Ministry of Public Works and the Institute of Water and Sewers. Currently, more than 50% of cases involve other organisms.

The operators, having consolidated the information in a single interface, can then search the knowledge base for some data that would allow them to solve the query momentarily, or quickly identify to which sector of which organism to assign it, with the intervention of the official in charge of the corresponding link between the CAC and such institution.

“With the new versions of RESPOND® and Dynamics CRM that we use in the CAC, we can integrate new web channels, mobile applications, online chat and social networks, allowing us to handle and monitor daily complaint processes from a single, more sophisticated

platform, with greater ease of access to information, in less time and optimizing resources. In addition, we have a solid base for developing next business intelligence initiatives” summarizes Edgar Tejada, Director of the Citizen Care Center.

Currently, more than 100,000 interactions are processed per month. Automation streamlines the operation and enables our staff to respond to citizens more quickly and with less effort.

“With this system you can have immediate visibility of all services offered, open or closed cases and their allocated resources, and generate new reports much faster and with more data. The new integrated technology allows access to more accurate information within the profiles of the citizen. We can include geographical coordinates to identify the location of the case or the citizen and are able to make a graphical representation, make appointments, among others.

It facilitates keeping an instantly updated database and a powerful business intelligence system. In fact, the various entities were able to take care of 90% of citizens' concerns in an effective way, and in turn, they have been able to follow, step by step, the evolution of the cases they started” **added the official.**

“The Digital Agenda we have called Panama 4.0 for 2014-2019, envisages concrete goals for updating and developing new platforms, according to the level of maturity of the technology available for digital government and connectivity, making the most of the benefits they offer to modernize governmental entities as regards the provision of citizens' services” **added Halman.**

The capability for both employees of the Center and citizens to follow each case through the number assigned by the system is a qualitative leap of great relevance.

“Now we can be more proactive, communicating with the citizens

to inform them how the issue that motivated their enquiry was solved; In this way, the National Government can provide the highest quality and care in services, and we improve substantially in terms of transparency and accountability. Citizen participation helps us to improve existing services and to think of new ways to serve the population, which is our task and our mission”, **concluded Tejada.**

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