VoiceObjects

CDU

Project Reference



A Political Party in Dialog with the Public

As the first political party to do so anywhere in Europe, the Christian Democratic Union (CDU), of the state of North-Rhine Westphalia in Germany, used a voice-operated portal to communicate with voters

Campaign overview:

- Provided information on the political program
- Encouraged dialog between voters and politicians
- Automated call handling
- Part of a cross-media election campaign strategy

Benefits:

- Cost-effective solution due to the use of a voice application service provider
- Highest service standards with 24x7 accessibility
- Feedback functions to allow for quick adjustments to match the communication strategy
- Cross-media connections with the internet – seamless information access
- Effective campaign management

How can political parties inform voters and at the same time learn more about voter concerns?

With a voice-controlled information portal.

With so many concepts overwhelming voters during the political debate in an election campaign, the specific content and political programs often get lost. To offer voters the background information needed to form their opinions, North-Rhine Westphalia's CDU developed a voice portal with quick and easy access via a telephone hotline based on VoiceObjects.

The challenge: The CDU and other political parties have to talk to voters from all segments of society. During an election campaign, this results in high costs and complicated logistics. Yet communicating with the public is especially important for politics. Conventional media cannot provide a direct dialog between politicians and citizens.

Sought: An interactive information medium for everyone.



The idea: Personal presence is of vital importance during an election campaign, and the party needs all its resources to conduct public events, run information booths, and hold other campaign-related activities. The CDU was thus seeking a solution to let the party and its leading candidate to be accessible for discussions with voters. In order not to exhaust the campaign budget and provide accessibility to voters, a quick, cost-effective solution was developed and launched in order to satisfy these requirements.

The solution: A telephone hotline with an automated, intelligent voice application, hosted by a voice application service provider.

By leasing already existing infrastructure enhanced by VoiceObjects functionalities from a voice application service provider, this innovative hotline was developed and launched inexpensively, quickly, and easily without the need for the CDU to provide any infrastructure of its own.

The portal structure was focused on key points of the election campaign. Voters could learn about the party's plans for growth and employment, education, domestic security, and bureaucracy reduction policies. Simply mentioning a key word made it simple to change the subject. The "Latest news" link provided information about future events and public appearances of state parliamentary candidates. People wanting to learn more about leading CDU candidate Jürgen Rüttgers, could easily find information



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"Interactions with the public were strengthened thanks to the options for asking questions and voicing opinions."

Matthias Heidmeier, in charge of the state party's public relations and the portal's content design.

regarding his political objectives and biography provided by himself on the information portal. Callers could also leave feedback in the form of voice messages, suggestions and questions simply by voicing the command "My opinion."

The hotline service was advertised through a number of different channels. The CDU communicated the hotline number in newspapers, on posters, on flyers, at campaign stands, and on the internet.

Result: A modern, barrier-free connection to the public

The results: The CDU won the election. Even if this cannot be attributed directly to using the innovative voice portal it did serve to show that the CDU in North-Rhine Westphalia is very open to innovation. This showed a clear commitment to a region in the middle of structural changes and on the way to becoming a center for technology and media. With the feedback function, the CDU also proved that it was interested in the opinions of the people. VoiceObjects technology even allowed the CDU to evaluate which content was of particular interest to callers and immediately adjust communications in response to these interests.

"Our technology is perfect for setting up interactive information platforms and telephone services that are easy to use. The CDU voice portal serves as an example of how simple, inexpensive, and effective it is to develop and operate an automated information hotline," said Roland Freygang, VP Sales EMEA for VoiceObjects.

"Choosing such a modern medium does more than just highlight the importance of innovation to our party," said Matthias Heidmeier, in charge of public relations for the state CDU.

Voice applications are also the media of the future for e-government

The advantage of such voice applications for political parties as well as for all types of public institutions lies in their unbeatable flexibility and the fact that they can run as applications on existing IT structures. This not only helps protect investments, it also produces quick ROI at a low initial cost. Existing e-government online offerings can quickly and easily be integrated into any voice application with VoiceObjects. This makes them accessible to all citizens – even those without internet service.

"Voice portals like the one the North-Rhine Westphalia CDU chose for its campaign represent a new dimension in communications with the public for political parties and government agencies. A wide range of information and services can be offered on these portals, allowing efficient, barrier-free e-government," explained Bonnie Crater, SVP of Marketing for VoiceObjects.

VoiceObjects

VoiceObjects is the phone application server company. VoiceObjects works with carriers and enterprises around the world to deliver a personalized customer service experience to more than 500 million callers every year. VoiceObjects Server, the company's flagship product, supports phone-based applications at more than fifty leading companies, including Adobe, T-Mobile and Volkswagen Financial Services. For more information, please visit www.VoiceObjects.com.

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July 2006