Dialpad | **charity: water**

Delivering Clean Water Around the Globe

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PHOTOGRAPH BY JEREMY SNELL

charity: water

Our mission is to bring clean and safe drinking water to every person on the planet.

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charity: water is an international nonprofit, founded in 2006. Its goal is to solve the water crisis. 100% of public donations go directly towards building valuable water sites in developing nations. In early 2015, the charity: water team deployed Dialpad across the globe. This is their story.

Delivering Clean Water Around the Globe

With Dialpad on their business phones, charity: water's team stays connected with donors and sites around the world. The entire non-profit runs just like a tech startup, frequently scaling up or down on any given day.

Since staff are scattered across New York, Ethiopia, Cambodia, and the UK, things are constantly in motion. People travel to meet donors, visit the field to coordinate with partners, and run fundraisers alongside supporters. On top of all this, charity: water's footprint is truly global.

17,673 water points have already been established across 24 countries. Thanks to ongoing efforts in places like Ethiopia and Bangladesh, 5.6 million people now have access to potable water.

charity: water

663 million people are currently without clean drinking water.

But with so many moving parts, the challenge is keeping projects and people in sync—even when staff are out in the field. Enter: Dialpad

At headquarters in New York, every team member has the option to have a personal Dialpad line. Staff can also use phone booths and conference rooms connected to Dialpad, designed for meetings and private calls.

By moving their entire phone system into the cloud, charity: water slashed IT costs, threw out antiquated hardware, and took control of global communications.

"We read through all the MSAs and SLAs. All of it was top-notch. It was clear that security is a high priority for Dialpad."

— Ian Cook, Head of IT

Ditching Wires & Legacy Hardware

Prior to Dialpad, charity: water struggled with an aging phone system that couldn't quite stretch to meet the needs of their modern, on-the-go team. Instead of driving radical transparency, the platform fragmented daily conversations.

"It was a rat's nest of wires running all over the place. I had no visibility into what was going on. If I needed anything done, I had to go through a third party. I wanted to bring that control in-house."

– Ian Cook, Head of IT

When they started designing a brand new office space in Tribeca, this legacy phone network was a big part of what their IT department wanted to upgrade. Donated years prior, it was in need of a revamp.

The equipment included an on-premise server and a set of IP phones. Everything was reliant on old hardware tucked inside a closet full of wires and managed by a third party.

Unfortunately, this meant little flexibility when it came to managing users. Even simple tasks like adding a person to a directory or setting up voicemail notifications became a headache.

"We would go back and forth... someone would off-board and we'd have to reach out and have our vendor remove them from the system. Often this took three or four attempts," explained Ian.

Depending on a third-party for basic admin controls made it impossible to scale quickly. For Ian, it made sense to start looking for a more practical way to handle calls.

"I wanted my team to be able to scale up and down easily with the phone system we chose. Dialpad is amazing in that respect."

— Ian Cook, Head of IT
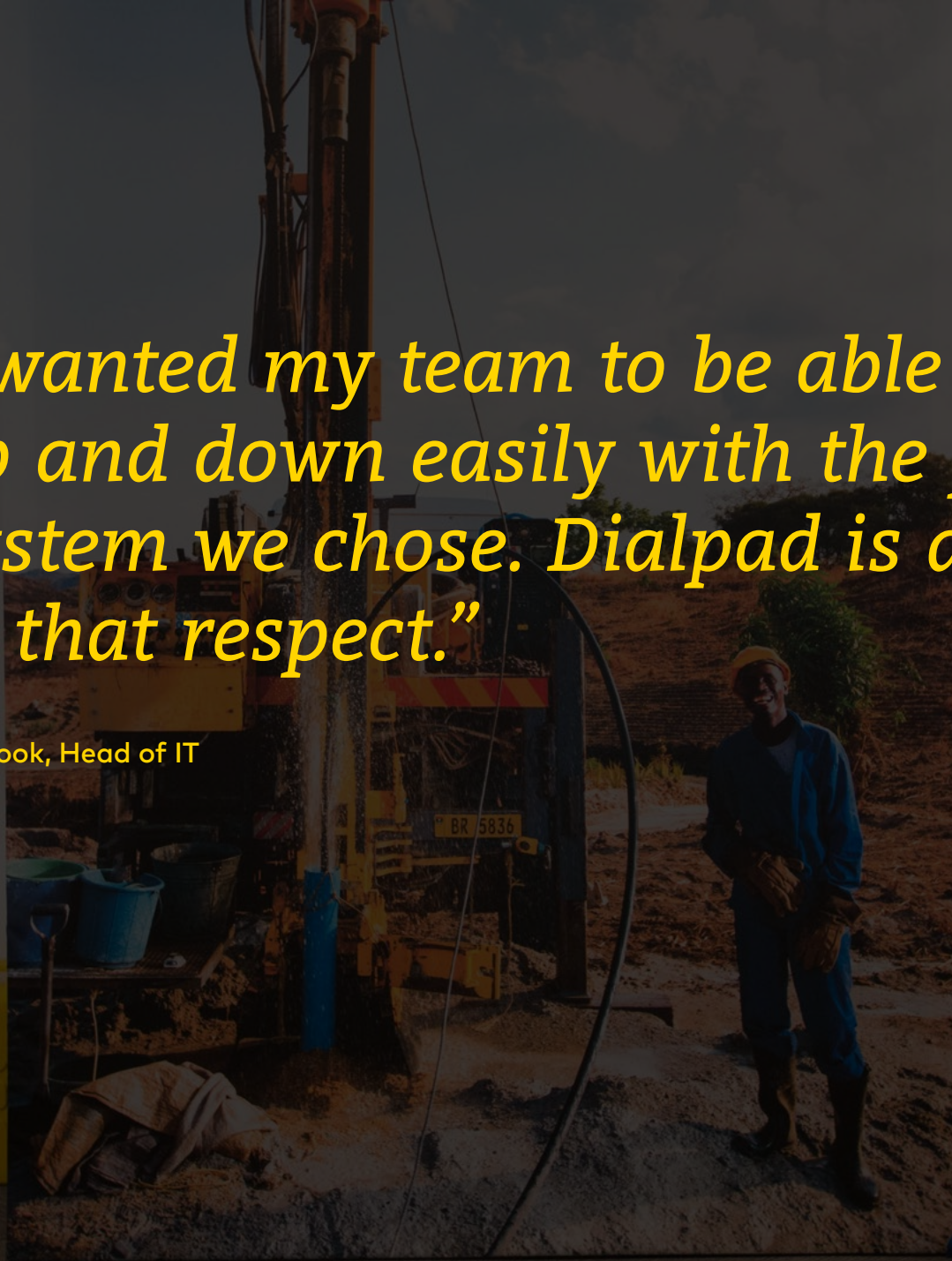
Working On-The-Go

For most of the charity: water team, their office is a fluid concept that shape-shifts daily.

"We're traveling all around the world to meet with prospective and current donors. Staying connected is very important to us."

Before Dialpad, taking calls strictly via desk phones meant being stuck at the office, unable to stray far. It was a tough roadblock that didn't support the team's fast-paced culture. Far from making things more efficient, using a legacy phone system simply slowed everyone down.

Case and point—staff managing charity: water's global water program are regularly off-site, sometimes taking just their smartphones along for the ride. The last thing they wanted was to give out personal cell numbers as business lines. Instead, they needed a solution that followed them into the field and instantly patched through time-sensitive calls.

"They might be at a coffee shop meeting with a prospective donor, but they really don't want to miss a call coming in from another partner. So they'll activate Dialpad on their mobile device," explains Ian.

This newfound mobility makes it easier to kickstart meaningful conversations and build donor relationships. By using Dialpad to ring multiple devices at once, remote staff now have the tools to stay connected, no matter where work might take them.

Playing Nicely with Google Apps for Work

From Cambodia to New York, Google Apps is the office productivity engine powering charity: water's day-to-day projects. So when the time came to move their phone network to the cloud, choosing a system that fit intuitively next to existing software was at the top of IT's wish list.

Ian's team wanted to avoid managing a disjointed network of cloud tools at all costs. To them, it was important to find a solution that played nicely with their team's favorite productivity suite.
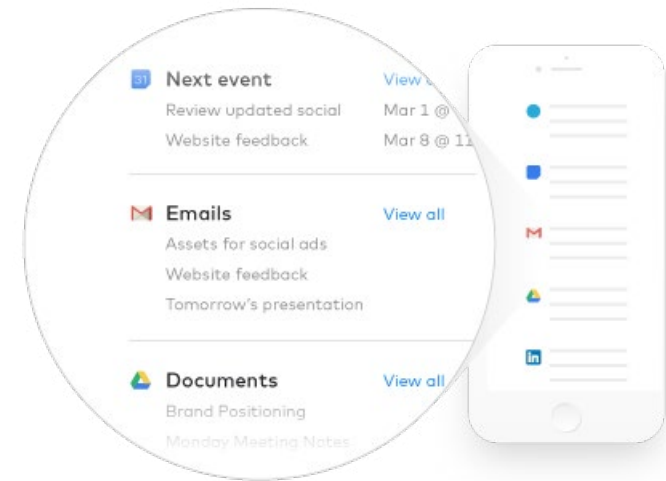
"We use Google Apps every day—it's critical to our business. So having Dialpad integrated with Google Apps made it that much easier to make a decision," said Ian.
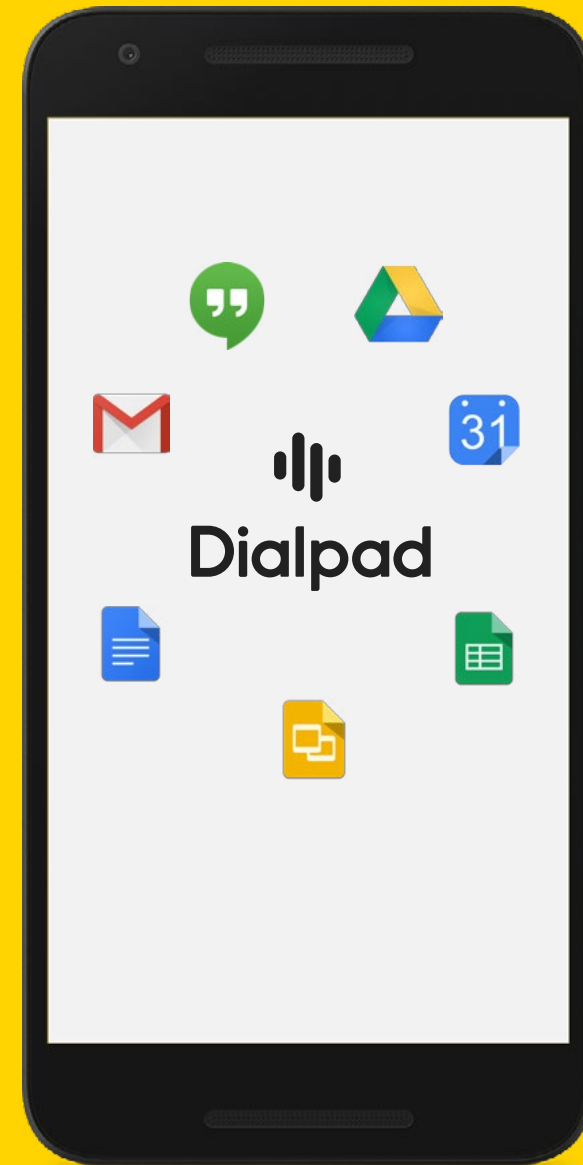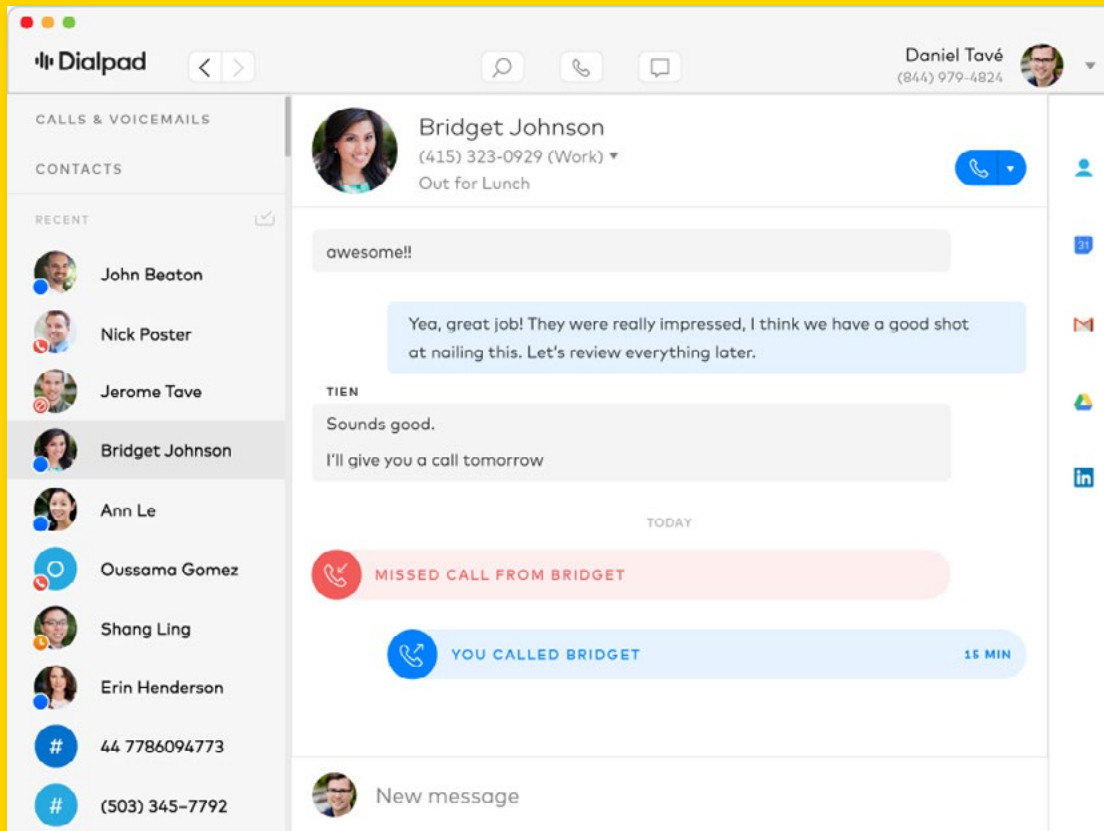
Dialpad's tight integration with Google Apps instantly brought richer context to everyday conversations. From one interface, teams can view recent emails, shared files, and upcoming calendar events—all while on the line. For those on-the-go, the extra transparency makes it easy to take calls away from the office without missing a beat.

"Dialpad was the only phone system we found that was built from the ground up for organizations like us that heavily use Google Apps for Work. That's what sold us right away."

— Ian Cook, Head of IT

Cutting Costs & Boosting Team Happiness

As a global nonprofit, one of charity: water's priorities is finding ways to reduce overhead while still providing flexible tools to employees around the world. When IT turned to the cloud as a possible solution, it was an opportunity to meet both targets.

First, saying goodbye to their legacy phone system meant eliminating hardware and cutting IT spend.

"I'm always looking for technology that creates better efficiency and saves us money. With Dialpad, there were huge cost savings, around a couple thousand dollars a year," said Ian.

"Our staff members have done nothing but rave about performance. They love the ring-all-devices feature."

This flexibility also means Ian's staff has a much easier time supporting end users.

"It relieves so much pressure off IT because employees no longer need to make a request every single time they want to change settings. Passing off tasks that would've normally been support tickets is such a huge win."

No matter where they are, teams now work closely with donors and partners while operating at an unprecedented level of independence.

Empowering
A Modern Workplace

Thanks to charity: water, thousands of wells, pipes, and water treatment systems have been built in developing countries around the globe. But success is only possible thanks to staff, donors, and partners, who travel the world campaigning for new sites.

This is where cloud tools like Dialpad have made the biggest impact. By making it easy for the nonprofit's global network to stay in sync, Dialpad helps teams more effectively check-off their to-do lists:

"Most of our staff travel or they're stuck in meetings and can't answer calls." But with voicemail-to-email, "all they do is open their inbox and click listen once they're free."

To the relief of Ian's IT team, Dialpad's admin console turned out to be convenient and intuitive.

"It's an amazing IT tool—the learning curve was so small. From a single dashboard we're able to add or remove users, assign phone numbers, and see our entire billing history."

Whenever a space needs to be turned into an ad hoc meeting room, teams simply create a new department line. Setup, maintenance, and scalability issues no longer plague IT. And as a result, staying connected and productive at charity: water has never been easier.

"It simplifies my job so much, and that's exactly what I look for when I switch to a new service," said Ian.

Building a Brighter Future

Africa. Asia. Central & South America.

3 continents. 24 countries. 5.6 million people served (and counting).

To keep up momentum, charity: water stays nimble by using the cloud to coordinate efforts around the world. Whether it's networking with donors, building water sites with international partners, or staying connected with coworkers across the Atlantic, tools like Dialpad give staff the freedom to maneuver at scale.

By moving to the cloud, charity: water left behind an archaic phone system and brought their business phones into the 21st century. They removed administrative roadblocks, cut costs, and paved the way for a leaner IT department.

But most importantly, the move gave charity: water employees greater agility to continue bringing clean water to those who need it most.

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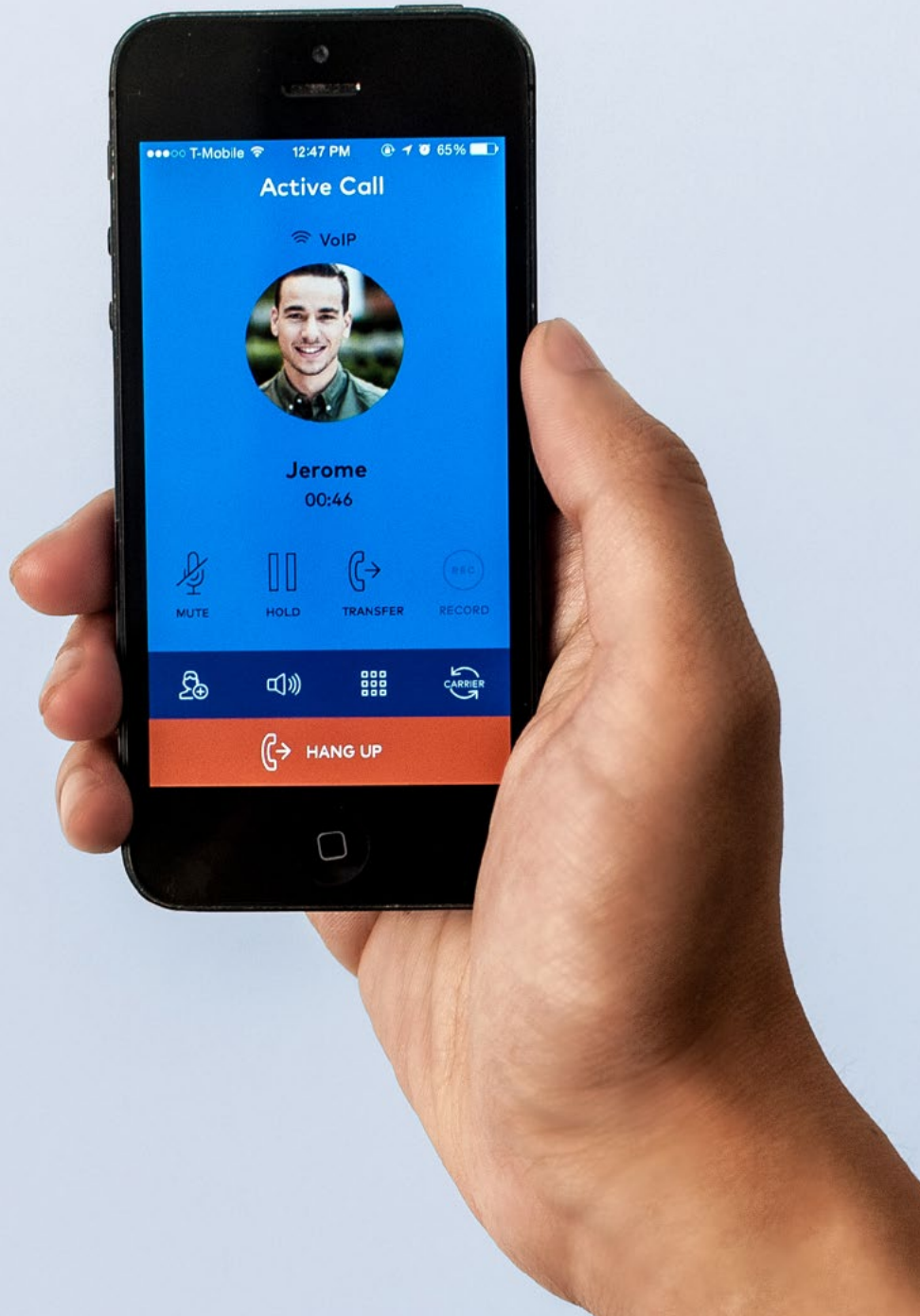
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Dialpad is communications for the modern workplace delivering an experience that employees and administrators love. Available on any device, anywhere, Dialpad includes voice, video, group messaging, SMS, MMS, mobile VoIP, conferencing, screen sharing, document sharing, and integration with Microsoft Office 365 and Google Apps for Work. A pure cloud solution, Dialpad enables a new office communications system to be completely up and running in a matter of minutes.

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