

“We managed a 50% increase in volume of applications. Thanks to Salesforce”

Ed Brakeman
Managing Director, Bain Capital and ALA Board Member



African Leadership Academy (ALA)

African Leadership Academy is a world-class, pan-African secondary institution that aims to educate and develop outstanding students into principled, ethical leaders for Africa. Since 2008, ALA has sought to find, nurture and connect the best and the brightest youth from 54 African countries to become Africa's future leadership cadre. ALA launched ACN v2.0 (Africa Career Network) to all ACN members, including all MCF (Maser Card Foundation) scholars and ALA students.

Setting the Context: ALA and Salesforce

As a young organization with limited budget, ALA was thrilled to have the ability to utilize Salesforce under the “Power of Us” program run by the Salesforce Foundation. ALA's leadership development program has multiple constituent groups and Salesforce.com offered the ideal solution for managing the relationships between these constituents and various parts of the ALA organization. Unfortunately, as a rapidly growing non-profit organization, ALA's Salesforce implementation across different departments were not coordinated as a result of which data became increasingly complicated and there were problems with data integrity and duplication due to data uploads with inconsistent review and clean-up. Things were further complicated by the creation of two silos of data – Salesforce and a password protected web portal.

Iridium Optimizes ALA's investment in Salesforce to manage its Student Placement process

Iridium optimized ALA's ACN platform into a scalable, user friendly one that allows it's Staff, Students and Graduates to interact with one another, identify opportunities ranging from internships to mentoring to Job openings, and support their graduates at university and through out their careers.

With the first group of ALA alumni to graduate in 2014, ALA anticipated a major scale up of students and graduates. Although ALA was initially just looking for making its CRM solution work, the Academy was quick to identify that it needed to revamp business processes, systems, and technology from the ground up. And that it needed a technology partnership that extended beyond CRM.

Using the Salesforce Platform, Iridium built a robust ACN portal with a fully personalized user experience for prospective students and applicants. The portal consolidates all the information that potential students need in one place and displays necessary information to students at different points in the application process.

“ALA teams were working in silos on various islands of systems. Data integrity & reliability were at high risk and as a result, the communication with the ALA graduates were ad-hoc, intermittent and mainly via email, all this resulting to highly dis-satisfied users. They had made an excellent choice of working with Salesforce, but the biggest challenge was that it needed to be tamed internally along with other islands of systems in place”

Sri Bharatam
CEO & Founder of iridium Interactive

Key Achievements

- Ability to process over 1000 applications, link with over 400 partner organizations, and over 800 students in network
- First ever Full time job postings on the website, in addition to internship postings, including access to fellowship opportunities
- Improved Usability and User experience for ACN Portal with automated Workflows
 - Fully integrated Salesforce.com with other platform pieces with data residing in Salesforce, thus making it easy to track the students applications
- Real time synchronization of all data and objects including Full time Job Postings & Internship opportunities
- Customized Salesforce apps and functionality including My Profile and My Dashboard for Students, User Surveys, Custom Internship
- Search and automated Internship application tracking
- New Student Mentoring & Funding facility
- Searchability of Job/ Internship offering, allowing users to search by country, sector, job function and deadline
- Ability for users to update their own profiles, including latest university and contact information, as well as short bios, pictures, and career interests, mark opportunities as favorites and track preferred opportunities
- Improved automated customer-service capability, allowing ACN administrators to automatically notify candidates of application status as candidates progress through the system avoiding response delays and enabling students to plan ahead
- Improved notification service, including automated weekly digest informing candidates of recently added jobs and internships as well as upcoming deadlines.

“iridiumInteractive helped us to significantly streamline operational efficiency and simultaneously enabled the ACN team to provide additional, high-quality customer service including improved feedback, timely notifications, closely matching opportunities with stated career interests, etc. Initial, qualitative evidence suggests that ACN has significantly improved its internship offering to both ACN users as well as partner organisations. We are excited that these initial investments in upgrading our technology have allowed us to improve our customer service orientation ”

Sharmi Surianarain

Director of Lifelong Engagement, Africa Careers Network, African Leadership Academy

Iridium Interactive's Higher Education and Non Profit Clients



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