



JALA GROUP GLOBAL DIGITAL COMMUNICATIONS

5G First Impressions, 5G -in-a-box: a platform for advanced, secure communications for entrepreneurial businesses and the development of new business models



CX-Create

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Sponsored by Oracle for Startups program

The Art of Persistent Customer Relevance

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About this report

Based on direct interviews with the founder, this brief report introduces [Jala Group Global Digital Communications](#), one of the many startups supported by the [Oracle for Startups](#) program.

Jala Group is an exciting and innovative business aiming to democratize advanced 5G communications technologies with a 5G-in-a-box platform developed on the second-generation Oracle Cloud Infrastructure (OCI).

Early beneficiaries will be businesses in the UK. Jala's main co-founder, Andrew Ojwang Blackburn, Ugandan by birth and a British citizen, has ambitions to expand across the African continent before turning his attention to SE Asia. His goal is to help technologically underserved entrepreneurs compete on an even footing with contemporaries in leading economies, helping them create value for their businesses and in the communities they serve.

The theme for this month is around startups in the 5G communications sector and how they are innovating and changing the competitive landscape.

CX-Create is an independent IT industry analyst and advisory firm, and this report is sponsored by the Oracle for Startups program team.

The business context for Jala Group's 5G First Impressions - a 5G-in-a-box platform

Key drivers

Convergence and 5G evolution

The convergence of information and communications technologies has dramatically accelerated in recent years, creating new opportunities for those with the imagination and will to pursue them. In parallel, cloud-native computing, microservices, easier interoperability via the humble API, advances in AI, IoT, mixed reality, and blockchain provide opportunities to create and deliver new forms of value to customers in every industry. And now, 5G is beginning to make an impact, predominantly in wealthy economies where major telecommunications companies have already rolled out much of the required infrastructure. The multi-faceted role of 5G in B2B and B2C markets will be profound. However, irrespective of size, most businesses lack the technical expertise to grasp new opportunities.

A David vs. Goliath story

Large companies with deep pockets will probably look to 5G communications providers or established consultancies and major systems integrators for help. Businesses with fewer resources in wealth and technical know-how and those in countries with underdeveloped communications infrastructure may miss out on these emerging opportunities.

It is against this background that Jala Group Global Digital Communications (JG GDC) was born. With the vision and ambition to tilt 5G advantage towards the technologically under-represented and disadvantaged. In Blackburn's own words:

' We have the goal of disrupting the telecoms industry, being diverse through and through, using our company to benefit everyone, not just the shareholders and leadership team.'

Key observations

- Jala Group becomes a virtual mobile network operator (MVNO)
- Jala Group benefits from Oracle Cloud Infrastructure and the Oracle for Startups program
- Solution overview – 5G First Impressions, a 5G-in-a-box platform providing flexibility at a lower cost
- The future is about expanding into new, underserved markets

Jala Group's story so far

Jala Group becomes a virtual mobile network operator (MVNO)

The company was officially incorporated in November 2020, although the initial development of the business started in July the same year. Blackburn's expertise in communications comes from two decades of employment in major telecommunications companies.

Most commercial organizations rely heavily on proprietary technologies and advice from major providers whose recommendations were not always in the customer's interest. Blackburn felt that the Open Source Initiative (OSI) allied to cloud-based communications offers customers choice and the ability to combine applications and technologies to provide a more tailored solution for their needs.

Twin-track approach to development with a guiding philosophy

Since its foundation, Jala Group has followed a twin-track path, offering its expertise to clients while simultaneously evolving into an MVNO, developing its 5G-in-a-box platform, due for launch in the UK towards the end of 2021.

As well as providing tailored advice based on the individual needs of each business, Jala Group's distinctive philosophy is both altruistic and ambitious: to make the world a better place to live, now and in the future. It is a philosophy in tune with a growing movement of people who share aspirations to make a positive difference in their lives and communities.

From a communications perspective, Blackburn's view is that in a digital-first world, businesses can no longer rely solely on the existing skills of their people and must consider the underlying technology to support their business goals. Nor, if they operate internationally, do they have the time or ability to negotiate rafts of contracts with multiple vendors in each country.

Blackburn's aim stated in the company's strapline is to make communications simple, effective, and effortless.

Jala Group benefits from Oracle Cloud Infrastructure and the Oracle for Startups program

Having researched the market for suitable cloud infrastructure to support the development of its solution, Blackburn was attracted to Oracle Cloud Infrastructure (OCI) for five primary reasons:

1. The security and resilience of OCI, including its self-healing autonomous database
2. Global reach and data centers in every region allowing for unlimited growth and expansion into new territories
3. Scalability to support any workload
4. In his own words: – 'hands down, I was blown away by the performance of OCI.'
5. Oracle 5G Core – a critical component for 5G enablement

The Oracle for Startups program also provided additional incentives, not least a 70% discount for two years on joining the program. He has also benefitted from the attention and guidance of the Oracle for Startups team, who quickly alleviated any initial anxieties he had.

Solution overview – 5G First Impressions, a 5G-in-a-box platform providing flexibility at a lower cost

Jala Group is putting its communications expertise to good use, creating a highly configurable 5G platform for businesses with its 5G-in-a-box, outlined in Figure 1.

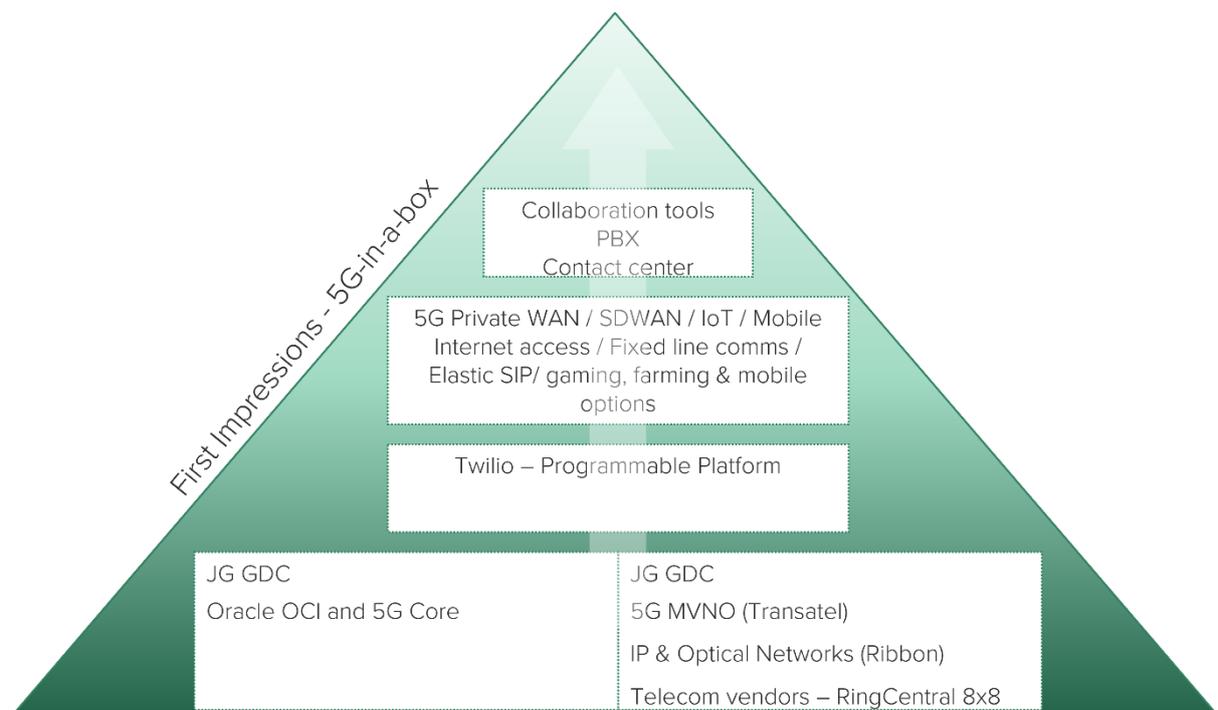


FIGURE 1: 5G FIRST IMPRESSIONS - A 5G-IN-A-BOX PLATFORM. SOURCE: ADAPTED FROM JG GDC

Having opted to develop the 5G communications platform in a cloud-native and open-source environment, Jala Group uses Oracle Cloud Infrastructure and the vendor's 5G core in combination with critical communications infrastructure from Transatel, Ribbon, RingCentral, 8x8, SDWAN Solutions, and numerous other vendors.

Twilio provides a programmable platform addition to enable feature-rich telephony and IoT support. The initial platform will be optimized for gaming and farming, but eventually, options will be added to support other industry use-cases. Later this year, the main goal at launch will be to provide feature-rich telephony across all communications channels, internally and externally, in a modern and future-proof environment. It will also offer programmable and flexible customer engagement and collaboration tools easily configured to meet customers' needs.

Collaboration tools [SOC2, HIPAA and GDPR compliant] comparable to Zoom/Teams will be offered using an open-source approach to avoid proprietary technology entrapment and allow for continuous innovation. It will provide sovereignty over data and communications and reduce expenditure estimated by JG GDC at over 50% compared with other solutions in the marketplace.

Current position

The company is at the early stages of its development and has yet to receive significant funding from investors. Today, Jala Group's revenue comes from the communications advisory services while the 5G platform is under development. However, once the platform is launched in the UK in the final quarter of 2021, it will be available for companies of all sizes, from startups to large enterprises, attracting investor interest.

A prototype solution is already being used to help doctors in GP practices struggling to manage the call volume for same-day appointments due to the Covid-19 pandemic. An automated booking system has been provided. Once proven at scale, this has the potential to solve the high volume, fixed outcome, and repetitive scenarios across industries.

Future direction

The cloud-first architecture will make the platform attractive to businesses seeking to modernize and unify their communications and take advantage of 5G technologies to transform operations, create, deliver and monetize new services or enhance customer experiences. JG GDC will refine the 5G offering for small businesses seeking to grow rapidly and develop options to meet emerging market demand.

Over the coming 12 – 24 months, Jala Group will focus on the UK market. However, Blackburn is already preparing to support governments and entrepreneurs in Africa, currently an underserved market. To expand its platform development bandwidth, he has struck a partnership with Zwart Tech, a like-minded social impact business headquartered in the Netherlands. Zwart Tech helps companies building distributed development teams, sourcing the most talented software engineers in Africa.

Blackburn aims to make Jala Group a [B-Corp-certified company](#) within 12 months. The B-Corp movement started in the UK to promote more inclusive and socially responsible businesses. This is something that Blackburn and his leadership team take very seriously.

Beyond Africa, other underserved markets in his sights include South East Asia.

Leader in a new industry

Blackburn has ambitions to grow the business massively and is aiming to reach \$35Bn by 2027. Once his 5G platform is proven, the next progression is to move into the field of quantum communications and security, protecting information channels against eavesdropping through quantum cryptography.

CX-Create's viewpoint

There is no doubting Blackburn's enthusiasm, ambition, and philosophical zeal. The next twelve months will be a proving ground for the company. By taking advantage of the Oracle for Startups program, future mentoring support, creative partnerships with complementary technology vendors, and its collaboration with Zwart Tech, we expect Jala Group to succeed.

The company should also consider taking advantage of the UK Government's push to support innovative startups through Innovate UK. Oracle introductions to VCs may also prove invaluable in securing investment for the next stage of the company's growth.

Summary details

Table 1: Fact sheet

Solution name	5G First Impressions	Solution category	5G platform for businesses
Key industries	Any	Geographies	UK and eventually Africa and SE Asia
Deployment model	SaaS	Licensing basis	Subscription
Size of organizations served	Small and medium enterprises to begin with, larger as the company grows	Go-to-market model	Direct
Number of employees	3	Key partnerships	Oracle, Twillio, RingCentral, Ribbon, Zwart Tech
URL	https://www.jalagroup.io/	HQ	Manchester, UK

Appendix

About CX-Create

Jeremy Cox founded CX-Create Limited in January 2021, a former principal analyst at Omdia (formerly Ovum) focused on customer engagement strategies and platforms.

He is recognized by major CX vendors, clients, and former colleagues as a leading thinker in customer experience and engagement. Formative experiences in the 1990s at IBM convinced him of the critical importance of understanding the business world from the outside-in. These insights were put to practical use in his former roles as a principal CRM consultant at KPMG Consulting and as an independent consultant supporting public and private sector organizations.

Our mission

CX-Create's mission is to help enterprises and the vendors that serve them remain relevant. The company's primary focus is to track and understand the constantly evolving customer experience world and share those insights with clients. Continuous innovation is also an

essential component of persistent customer relevance, directly and indirectly, which is why we are enthusiastic about startups and the Oracle for Startups Program.

Further reading

- [Four communications industry trailblazers accelerate monetization of 5G and Edge](#)
- [Oracle gives startups a big lift and a boost for continuous innovation](#)

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