FACTA™

gosolr

GoSolr:

Brand Launch

Client Name: GoSolr

DBA Design Effectiveness
Awards Entry 2026

For publication

Confidential data redacted

Executive Summary

GoSolr launched in November 2022 to disrupt South Africa's solar energy market by transforming how people access, and emotionally connect to, solar power. Instead of positioning itself as a hardware provider or tech platform, GoSolr presented solar as a service: simple, joyful, accessible, and empowering. Facing a national energy crisis, the brand offered not fear but optimism. Through a distinctive brand world, intuitive digital tools, and emotionally intelligent communication, GoSolr made sustainable energy feel like a personal upgrade, not a complex utility.

The result:

- **+1013% revenue growth** in Year 1
- **+570% customer growth,** from 1,622 to 10,923 households
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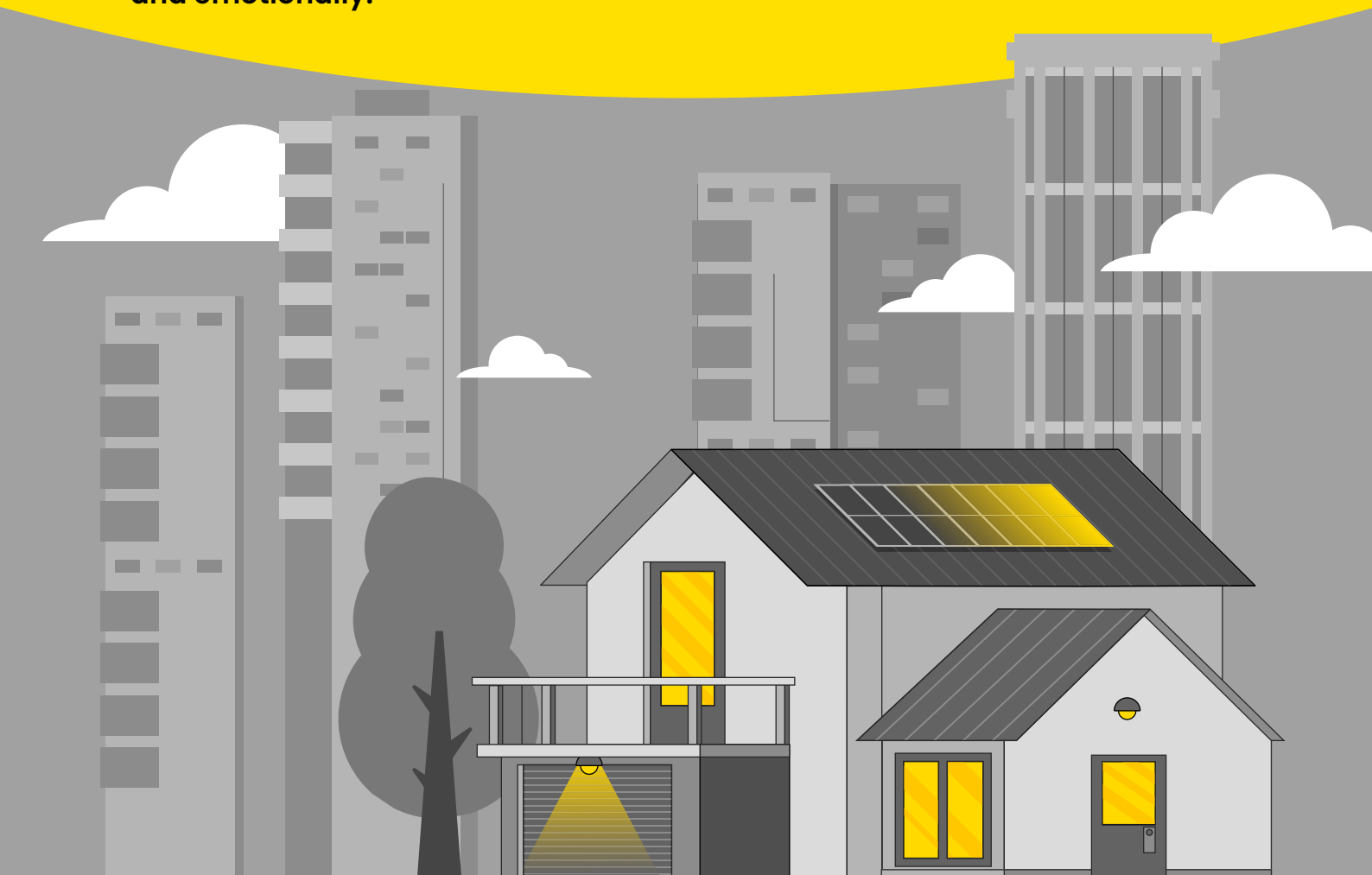
- **100M+ earned media impressions**
- **A design-led disruption now shaping how competitors behave**

In a time of national uncertainty, GoSolr gave people power, literally and emotionally.



Business Context & Challenge

GoSolr was established in 2021 in response to one of the most significant and ongoing national challenges facing South Africa: an unreliable energy supply. Since 2007, the country has experienced rolling blackouts known locally as "load shedding," implemented by the state electricity provider Eskom, in an effort to manage supply shortfalls. These scheduled outages intensified drastically in 2022, reaching up to 12 hours per day in some areas and affecting households, businesses, schools, and hospitals.

Its founding hypothesis was simple but bold: if solar could be made emotionally resonant, easy to access, and delightful to experience, the market could shift dramatically, fast.

Rather than frame solar as a reactive purchase against an energy crisis, GoSolr would make it feel like an upgrade to a modern, independent way of living. And crucially, rather than requiring an upfront investment of tens of thousands of rands, GoSolr would offer a subscription-based model, a low-friction, high-trust entry point that required design to be the glue between product and consumer.

GoSolr identified a gap not just in product, but in positioning.

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The company was therefore not only solving a functional gap in energy supply but also addressing a deeper **trust and comprehension gap** that had kept consumers from adopting existing solutions.

Their challenge to the agency was:
- Build a brand from the ground up that communicates warmth, independence, and clarity
- Establish this brand and digital experience in under six months
- Enable digital-led growth without traditional advertising or partnerships
- Create enough visibility and credibility to acquire and retain thousands of users in a low-trust category

This was a true zero-to-one project, with a narrow launch window, heavy competition, and a brand new customer model that required onboarding, education, and emotional buy-in.

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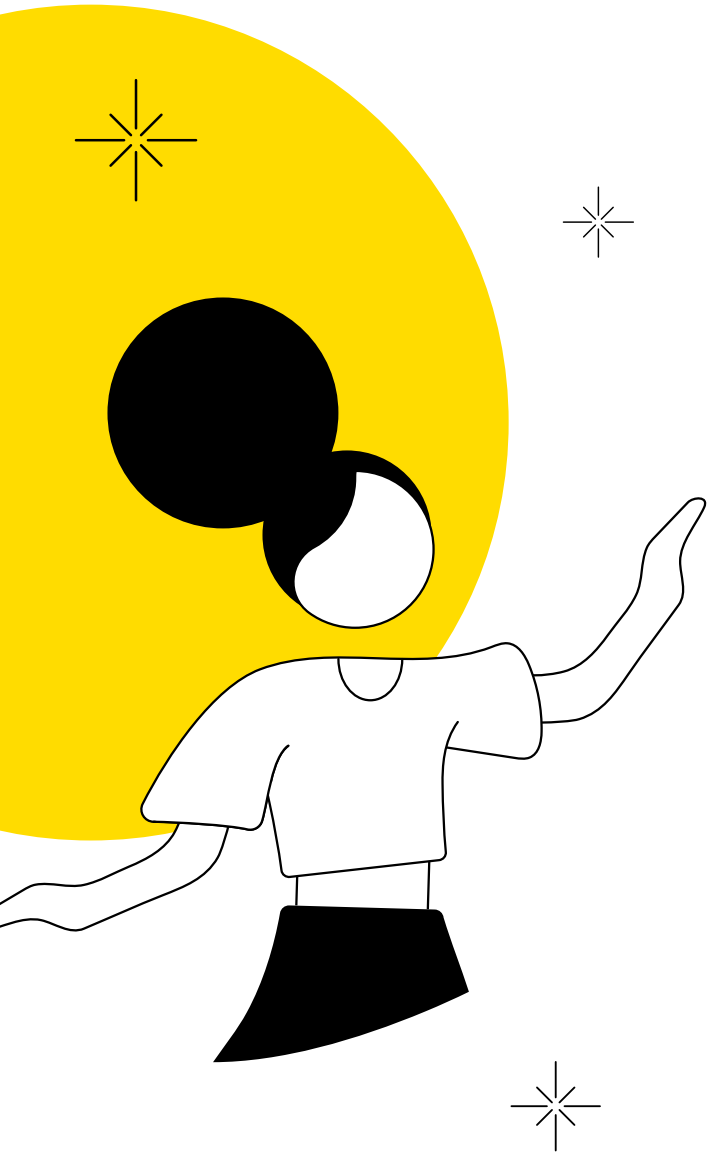
Market Context

In late 2022, there were roughly **137,000 households** using solar across South Africa, a number that had grown steadily over the past five years but still accounted for only **6.3% of the middle to upper income market**, which consists of over **2.2 million households**. The vast majority of South Africans, even those who could afford it, remained off-grid.

This underscored a complex paradox: while demand for energy reliability was high, adoption of solar, the most viable solution, remained surprisingly low. The barriers were structural and behavioural: most solar companies required large upfront investments (often R80,000 or more), long-term installation processes, confusing maintenance requirements, and opaque pricing structures. In addition, communication from providers typically focused on volts, kilowatt hours, and panel configurations, alienating everyday consumers.



The competitive landscape at GoSolr's launch was dominated by three models:

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No provider had yet established a **single, recognisable, consumer-facing solar brand**, one that would behave more like a modern fintech or telco than a hardware supplier.

Design was therefore not a supporting tool for GoSolr, it was the primary lever of trust, conversion, and differentiation.

The market was also geographically skewed. Most adoption occurred in the three major metropolitan areas, Johannesburg, Cape Town, and Durban, due to income, density, and access to installation networks. But that meant enormous untapped potential existed in second-tier cities and peri-urban areas.

In this context, GoSolr's launch represented not just a new business, but a **reimagining of how solar could be bought, understood, and felt,** using design as the language of trust and progress.

South Africa's Solar Landscape at Launch (2022-2023)

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Innovation

From its inception, GoSolr recognised that its most meaningful opportunity wasn't just to offer a different product, but to **reframe the way solar energy is positioned and delivered in South Africa**. Where competitors focused on hardware features, GoSolr focused on service. Where others led with kilowatts, GoSolr led with clarity. The true innovation wasn't in the panels or the pricing, it was in the brand system and customer experience that surrounded them.

The subscription model itself was a disruptive innovation in a category dominated by high upfront costs. But to succeed, this model required trust, simplicity, and desirability. That couldn't be achieved through business operations alone, it had to be built through design.

The brief to the agency was uncommonly broad: to build not just a brand but an entire **ecosystem of trust**, stretching from the first point of contact to the final installation. Design would need to solve across three key tensions:

1. **Complexity vs. Simplicity** — making a deeply technical product feel intuitive and accessible
2. **Scepticism vs. Trust** — earning belief in a low-trust, high-stakes category
3. **Crisis vs. Optimism** — providing a positive emotional alternative to a fear-based market narrative

These tensions shaped every output. The agency worked end-to-end with GoSolr, functioning as a strategic partner across multiple layers:

- **Brand Positioning:** A clear central idea — "We install. You save." — reframed the offer in consumer-first terms
- **Visual Identity:** Every touchpoint would reinforce sunlight, clarity,and warmth
- **UX/UI Design:** The digital experience had to remove anxiety, not add to it
- **Onboarding Flows:** Signup needed to feel like joining a modern subscription service, not buying a machine
- **Content & Messaging:** Every word had to reinforce ease, transparency, and empowerment

This design thinking was applied to both the **customer-facing journey** and the **internal systems**, from proposal generation tools to billing automation.

In effect, design served as the translation layer between a high-potential business model and a hesitant public.

Design Investment

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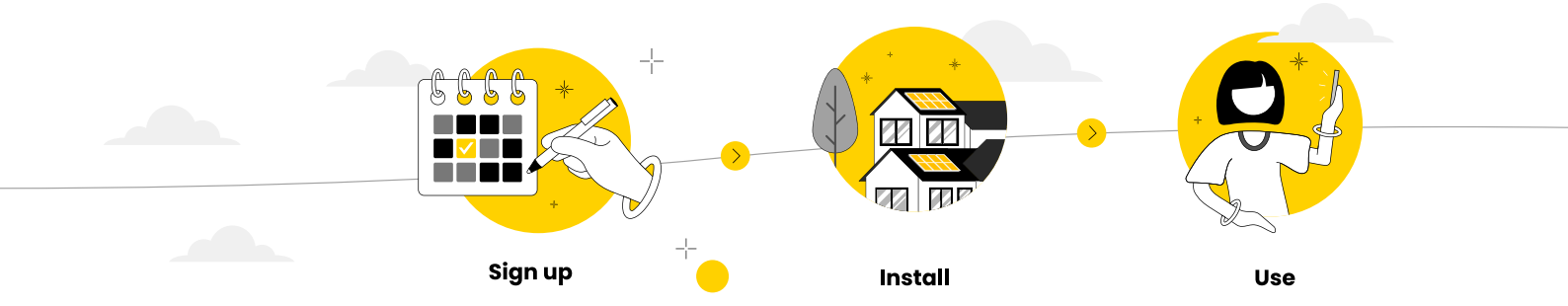


Design Solution + Launch & Budget

The final design solution was holistic, fl exible, and above all, effective. It didn't just convey the brand, it embodied it. Each element was created to serve both strategic and emotional goals.

1. Visual Identity

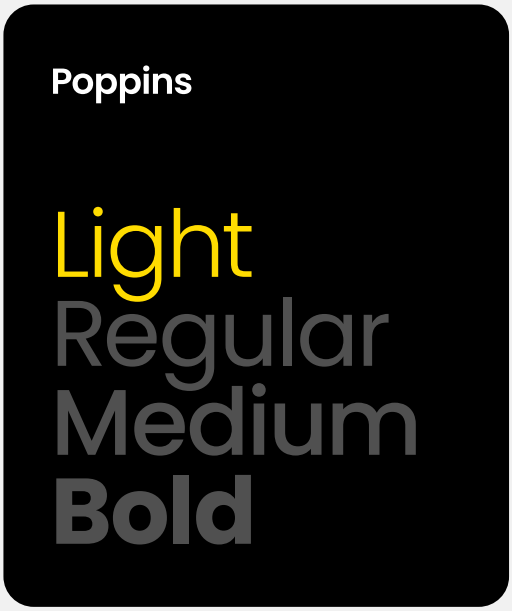
At the core of the brand is a distinctive yellow arc, a visual nod to the sun rising on a new energy future. This became a signature asset across every touchpoint. The colour palette was dominated by bright, solar yellow, complemented by soft greys and calming neutrals.

Together, they connoted warmth, optimism, and reliability, three qualities the market lacked.

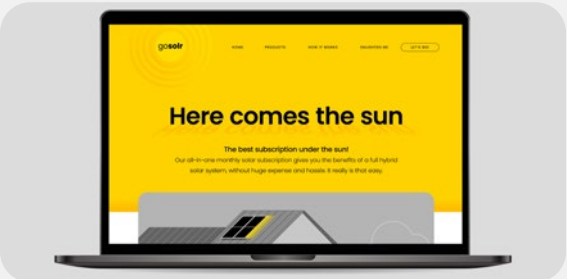
Typography featured a rounded, humanist sans-serif, adding a tone of approachability while ensuring legibility across digital and print media. The tone of voice was assertive yet empathetic, never salesy, always clear.

Brandmark

Typography



Website



Colour palette

2. UX and Onboarding

The website and mobile experience were designed to reduce friction at every step. Prospective customers could generate a custom quote in under two minutes. UX decisions were anchored in user-first principles:

Simple, visual steps
- Transparent pricing
- Clear benefi ts before technical data
- Mobile-first interface design

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3. Tone of Voice and Messaging

GoSolr's copy strategy removed fear and jargon from the decision-making process. It emphasised ownership, freedom, and peace of mind. Microcopy such as "Let's power up," "You're in control now," and "The sun works for you" subtly reinforced empowerment at each stage.

Launch & Budget
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The sun is our source

It's our reason for being.
It's the solution to our country's challenge.
It's the core of our brand.
Everything revolves around it.

The sun will come up tomorrow

It sustains life with uninterrupted pulses of perpetual energy emanating from the core.

Results & Design Effectiveness

Objectives Recap
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Measured Results (FY23 to FY24)

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Customer Experience & Testimonials

At the heart of GoSolr's success is a consistent, confident, and simple customer journey.
The design system, from tone to interface, removed uncertainty and instilled confidence.
In a category where most competitors felt technical and impersonal, GoSolr felt like a human service.

Users consistently praised not just the result (a solar system that worked),
but the **experience** of getting there.

"I signed up in minutes. It felt as easy as ordering groceries; but changed our lives."
— Sarah J, Cape Town

"GoSolr felt like a lifestyle brand, not a utility. That's what made me trust them."
— Thabo M, Johannesburg

"I've stopped worrying about load shedding entirely."
— Heinrich K, Stellenbosch

"I signed up in minutes. It felt as easy as ordering groceries; but changed our lives."
— Sarah J, Cape Town

What the testimonials reveal is not simply satisfaction, but surprise. Customers expected stress, friction, and delay. Instead, they found simplicity, friendliness, and speed.

Trust was not assumed. It was designed.

- The digital funnel was clear and mobile-first
- Copy was encouraging without being condescending
- Design choices made technical decisions feel intuitive
- Branded communications felt personal, not bureaucratic

GoSolr's brand world didn't just convert users, it reassured them throughout the journey, from first click to installation.

Enduring impact & Influence
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Conclusion

Power outages didn't create GoSolr's success, design did.

GoSolr succeeded not by scaring people into action, but by building a brand that made solar feel like a confident choice. In a market known for confusion and complexity, GoSolr brought warmth and clarity.

The design system shaped:
- How the business sounded
- How customers engaged
- How trust was built
- And how fast the model scaled

This is design effectiveness:
A +1013% revenue increase
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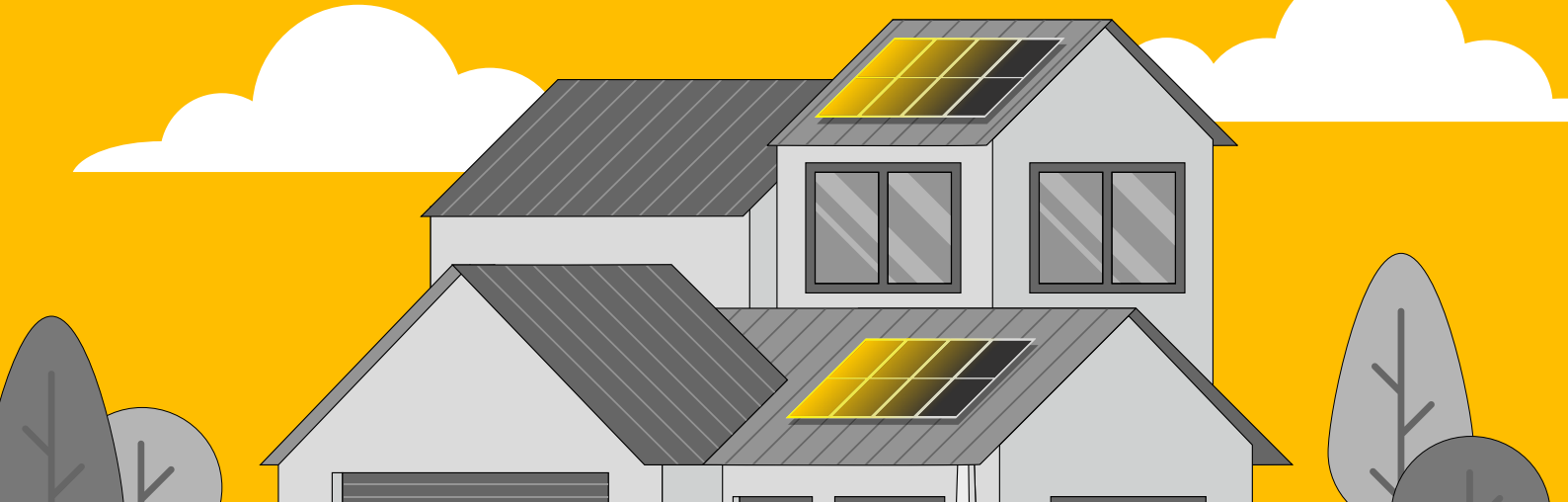
Design built belief.
And belief built the brand.



Credits for Client and Agency

Client:

Thomas Framnes - **Chief Experience Officer**
thomas@gosolr.co.za

Eune van der Walt - **Marketing Manager**
Eune@gosolr.co.za

Agency:

Nick Schilperoort - **Chief Executive Officer**
nick@xfacta.com

Christopher Schilperoort - **Managing Partner**
christopher@xfacta.com

Lori Trope - **Client Strategy Director**
lori@xfacta.com

Elske Nel - **Creative Director**
elske@xfacta.com