Best Practices for Emergency Notification

- Learning from those who have already blazed a trail can make implementing a notification solution more efficient and effective.

- In this chapter, we'll highlight a number of best practices for emergency notification, based on the experience of many different users over years of critical events.

- While any given communication modality/channel alone may have one or more of these characteristics, they cannot individually match the power, flexibility and reach of a well-managed and fully supported emergency notification service.

Deployment Models:
On-premise vs. Hosted

Many organizations have discovered the cost advantage of cloud computing. On-premise emergency notification systems are a thing of the past. Not only do they require costly, dedicated phone lines and hardware, but also the resources to maintain the system.

SaaS-based notification solutions can help reduce your Total Cost of Ownership by eliminating the need for the expensive hardware, staffing, maintenance, upgrades and dedicated infrastructure typically associated with premise-based options.

By paying for software on a subscription basis, you not only minimize your costs, but also save time and resources.

SaaS Lowers TCO

A Gartner Group study on SaaS revealed 94 percent of companies surveyed expected to either maintain or grow their use of SaaS applications in the coming years.

Further, more than 60 percent of respondents cited total cost of ownership as the top reason to choose SaaS solutions.

The More Modalities the Merrier

"Modalities" are the different available devices and communications channels. It is possible in a widespread disaster that some channels might be down or overloaded. Sending alerts through as many channels and devices as possible increases the odds your message will get through.

Keep Your
Contact Data Current

Don't wait for an emergency to find out you have wrong information (e.g., phone numbers, email addresses, etc., for your intended audience). This could result in your message not getting through, putting your people, places and property at greater risk.

Consider using a Self-Update Portal through which people can update their own emergency contact information as often as desired.

Send out notifications reminding people to update their information.

Consider offering small incentives for people to provide data such as personal mobile phone numbers, home phone numbers, etc.

Make Use of Preplanned Scenarios

You already know who must be alerted and mobilized in response to certain situations. You also likely have an idea of the typical critical situations that may require a response. Combining these into saved, ready-to-launch scenarios will save considerable time and effort in an actual emergency.

Make Status Updates

Emergencies are fluid. Make sure everyone has the latest details by sending follow-up messages or making status updates available at specified intervals. Otherwise, your people may act upon old information, jeopardizing their own safety or hindering the response effort.
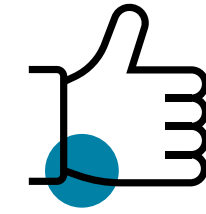
People Need Closure

Once the situation is resolved, activate your emergency notification service again to let people know everything is "all clear." This simple act can help calm fears, enhance focus, improve perception of leadership and get your organization back on its feet even faster.

Remember the Importance of Customer Support

OnSolve One Call Now customer support is accessible 24x7x365. Staffed with solution experts (not an answering service), technical professionals will launch notifications for if you need direct assistance.