

The Role of Emergency Notification in Managing the Unexpected

**Business Continuity Software as a Cornerstone
of Workforce Safety**

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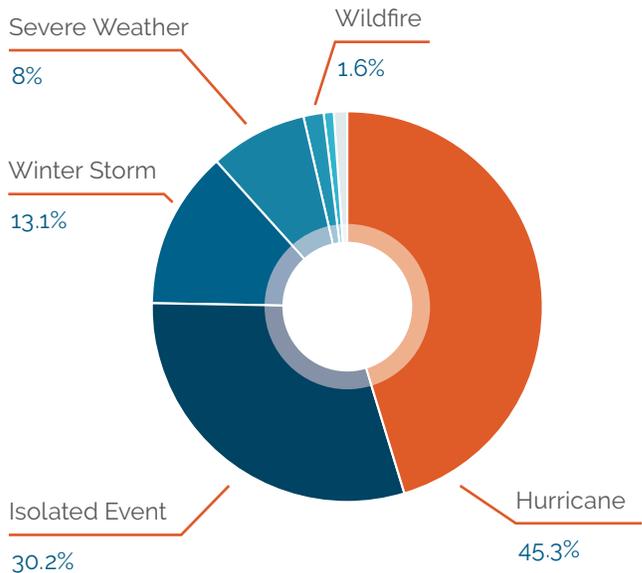
1. Why Organizations Use Emergency Notification Systems

It's not a question of if a critical situation will occur to a given business; it's when it will happen. Business interruptions are increasingly common. Based on the industry data, 40% of businesses have experienced a business interruption in the last five years. Among the most frequent interruptions Agility has recovered, are isolated events (30%) that include everything from a burst pipe and a data loss, to a power failure and theft.

When a crisis strikes, it's vital to communicate about it **immediately and explicitly.**

In studying disasters over the past decade, two major themes emerge. First, while a notification system is imperative, its effectiveness is limited without a trained and knowledgeable crisis team ready and able to respond in an emergency. Second, a notification system works best when it is an integral part of the company's overall emergency preparedness program.

Types of Interruptions Agility recovered





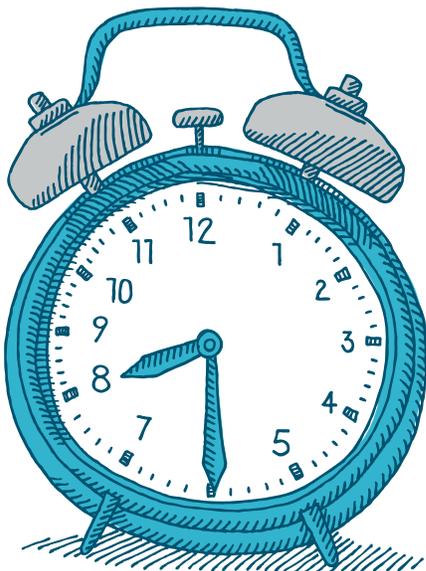
2. Virginia Tech Tragedy

After the 2007 shooting at Virginia Tech in which 33 people died, a jury found the university guilty of negligence for failing to alert students quickly. It took the university more than two hours to notify students of the first incident. Since this tragedy occurred, more sophisticated notification systems have been introduced. But the decisions made that day were a result of untrained officials who made incorrect assumptions. They treated the first shooting as an isolated incident instead of assuming the worst and taking immediate actions.

Tragedies like the Virginia Tech massacre bring to light the importance of having an easy-to-use notification system for sending rapid and reliable alerts. But more importantly, they show how a company's or institution's incident response is directly dependent on the quality of its larger emergency preparedness program.

Statistics about cell phone usage and phone alerts

- 54% of workers want to know about workplace closures via text message
- As of January 2019, 941 children rescued specifically because of AMBER Alert



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When an incident impacts your business, you need:

A trained, tested and knowledgeable crisis team ready to respond quickly and efficiently.

A chain of command in place so everyone knows their roles.

Access to emergency information for all key players.

A system for communication between crisis team members.

A process for keeping your emergency preparedness program up-to-date on emerging threats.



3. Reasons for Implementing an Emergency Notification System

A. Integrated Approach

When you take an integrated approach to emergency response, you'll have an emergency preparedness program that ensures your company's readiness to surmount any crisis.

A simplified and more streamlined system that doesn't require extensive training will allow more people in your organization to use the system in an emergency.

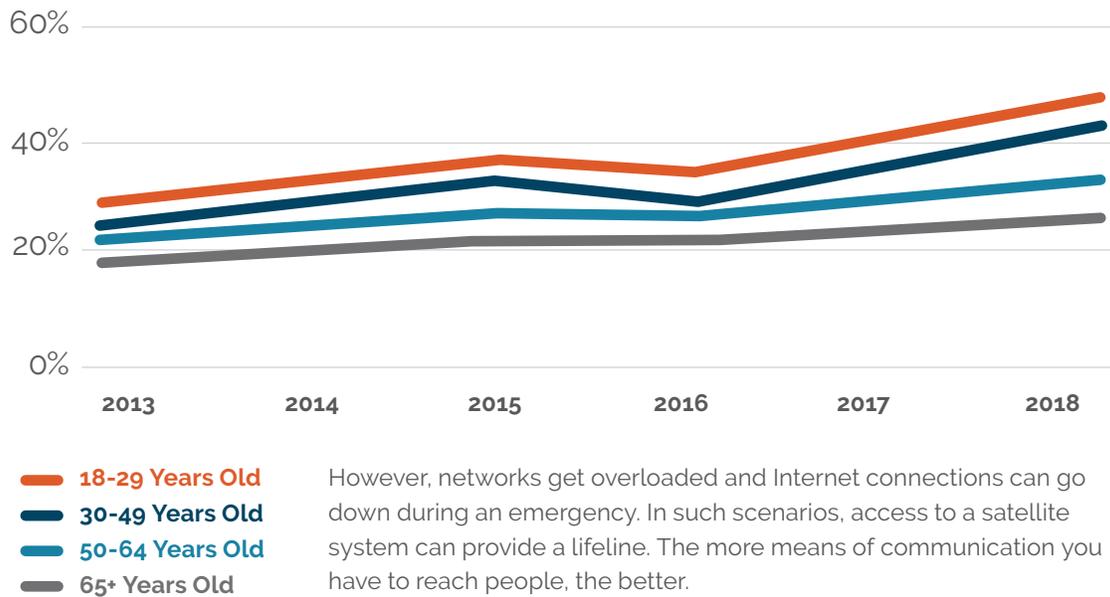
B. The Value of Simplicity

When a disaster or emergency strikes, the time is of the essence. A notification system works best when it's designed to meet a company's specific requirements. For most, this means a system that's easy to learn, implement and operate.

C. Multiple Channels

Today's workforce is increasingly reliant on mobile devices, working from home or at other locations.

Percentage of U.S. adults who do not use broadband at home but own smart phones by a certain age



Source: Surveys conducted 2013–2018. Data for each year based on a pooled analysis of all surveys contained broadband and smart phone questions fielded during that year. Pew Research Center



D. Two-way Notification

Communication is a two-way process. When in an emergency, a two-way response system streamlines the notification process, keeping you in touch with your crisis team and offering lifesaving advantages. With a two-way communication system, you can not only send push notifications, text, email and voice messages from your computer, tablet or smartphone, but you can also receive an immediate response and see who is okay and who needs help and prioritize resources accordingly.

E. Central Access to Emergency Plans

Your crisis team has to have immediate access to the information they need to handle any situation, from a flu pandemic to a cyber attack. Emergency plans and other critical documents need to be up-to-date and readily available during a crisis, not stored in a file drawer. You'll need a system in place to store, update and electronically share your emergency and business continuity plans with key personnel. Many companies like to have flexible security controls which allow them to select who can view individual documents. You need a system to keep organized, informed and up-to-date on preparedness news and trending threats. Seek professional guidance to help you develop emergency plans, update current ones, implement a task management system or prepare for a particular threat or situation.

Emergency Notification Within a Crisis Team

Your emergency notification system is only as good as your emergency response plan. Your plan should include a chain of command and a trained crisis team at each office location, so everyone knows who's in charge and what each team member's role is during an emergency.

Define Roles & Responsibilities

Decide which roles you will need and include detail requirements for each role.

Choose suitable personnel

This team requires individuals who are good decision makers, show leadership skills, and are on-site almost all of the time. Team members should be distributed evenly throughout your building and should comprise 5-7% of your total workforce.

Train, Test, and Practice

Educate members on how to follow protocols, procedures and the plans that you have built. Members should be trained on when and how to activate the crisis team, how to utilize all tools and systems, and any specific procedures that various threats may require.

Operating your emergency notification system should be second nature. Amid a stressful emergency is not when you want to be struggling to remember how the system works. Run tests every quarter at each of your office locations and every six months company-wide. Ensure anyone who is authorized to use the emergency response system becomes familiar with how to send a message. Conduct hands-on group and individual training for a variety of threat-based scenarios your company could face. Testing will also let you know how well your team works together in a crisis.

A human error, caused by lack of training and education, cost a major airline as much as **\$112 million.**

It's important for everyone in your company to be familiar with your emergency notification system and the basics of how it works, as well as the certain types of situations that warrant an alert. During your company-wide testing, require responses from recipients and follow up with anyone who didn't respond. You'll need to know if they didn't receive the alert and why.



4. Conclusion

When disaster strikes, will your company be ready? A comprehensive and easy-to-implement system that meets the needs of your business is the best sleep insurance. Invest in the people, processes, and communication to keep your employees safe and ensure the continuity of your business operations. Choose an integrated approach to your emergency preparedness program. You'll gain the confidence of your co-workers, executives, and clients in your own company's ability to weather any storm.

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