Insurance Company Enhances Emergency Message Speed and Reach with InformaCast

The Challenge

When assessing their emergency communication capabilities, Church Mutual, a leading insurance provider for religious institutions based in Merrill, Wis., discovered they were not prepared to manage the dangerous situations many organizations face. Their communications did not offer the speed or reach needed to share information with all of their people in a short amount of time.

The Solution

Church Mutual decided to implement InformaCast mass notification software to help expand the reach of their alerts as well as decrease the time it takes for people to receive messages. Now, along with other systems, procedures, and training, Church Mutual is providing a safe and secure environment for all staff, visitors and contractors.

Identifying Safety Needs

The fact that security is a priority at Church Mutual is evident from the moment a visitor steps into the company's headquarters in Merrill, Wis. Door access control, security guards, fortified glass barriers, and safety instructions are prominent throughout their lobby.

"We live in a dangerous, unpredictable world, which is why our focus is on safety and security," said Vaughn Edsall, physical security and safety manager at Church Mutual. "We put our people first, whether it's staff, visitors or contractors."

As a leading insurance provider for religious institutions, Church Mutual is all too aware of the threats organizations face on a daily basis. This led them to assess their own procedures and tools to understand how they would manage different emergency scenarios.

Church Mutual realized their emergency communication plan did not deliver the speed or reach it needed to share information with all of its people quickly. With more than 800 employees at their headquarters in Merrill, and roughly 300 staff at other offices in Madison, Wis., Denver, Col. and Mechanicsburg, Penn., as well as field reps in all 50 states, they needed a way to alert everyone about safety concerns in a quick and effective manner.

"Even if people were not on campus," said Craig Huss, assistant VP of IT and chief information security officer at Church Mutual, "we needed a method to reach out to them and do it in a quick and efficient way."

Utilizing InformaCast for Mass Notification

The company turned to InformaCast to help with safety and communication. Mass notifications were set up to assist with physical security and safety events, including active intruder, disaster recovery, and business continuity.

"It's rather intuitive," said Huss. "Employees get a message on their home phone, email, desk phone, and mobile device. In some cases, we ask for a response to see if people are ok or if they need assistance." InformaCast is primarily used for emergency communication. It's ability to quickly share information across a company with a large number of employees spread across a wide geographic area, made it ideal for Church Mutual.

There's not just one way we can activate InformaCast if we have an active intruder," said Edsall. "InformaCast gives us a variety of ways to do that, which gives us the flexibility we need. It has literally turned around and changed the way we have conducted ourselves"

Putting InformaCast to the Test

Of course, being prepared is one thing. Putting the system to use is quite another.

"We test constantly to make sure the system is working and functional," said Huss.

That testing paid off during a recent winter weather event. Large amounts of snowfall and extreme cold temperatures forced Church Mutual to close its headquarters. The company used InformaCast to communicate this message to staff.

"In our recent weather situation, getting notifications to people who weren't even yet in the building was a big benefit," said Joe Higgins, IT operations manager. "In that scenario notifications were mostly sent as SMS text messages, but phones calls were also placed that played a recorded message."

With this success, Church Mutual continues to utilize InformaCast as a cornerstone of it's safety planning efforts.

"We feel we've really put a tool in place that helps us bring security and safety to all our employees," said Huss.

According to Edsall, "The tool itself proved to be the most effective communication tool I've seen in my career."

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