InformaCast Enables Facility-Wide Emergency Alerts for NB Coatings

The Challenge

NB Coatings, located in Chicago, Ill., manufactures paints and coatings that adhere to plastic car parts, such as bumpers, running boards, and side mirrors. The NB Coatings campus contains full production facilities for solvent and water-based paints, a quality control laboratory, an administrative office, and a small warehouse.

Former emergency alert procedures failed to reach everyone on the campus due to structural and technical challenges. The company needed a way to send notifications to multiple devices, so everyone would be aware when an emergency occurred.
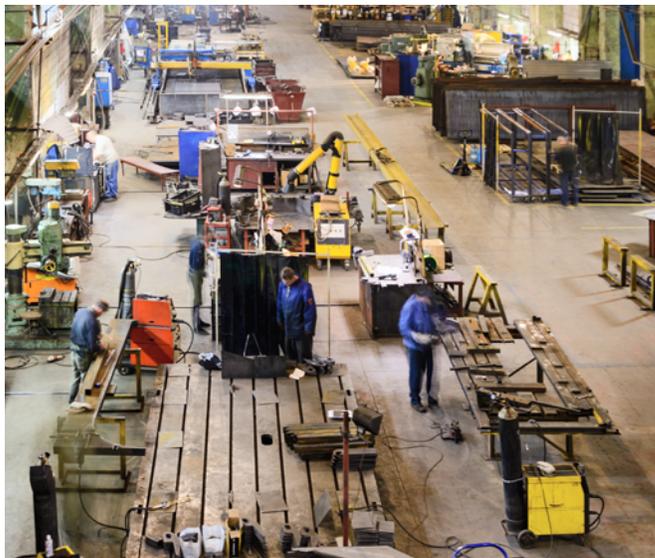
The Solution

Information technology director Mark Dvorscak implemented InformaCast at the suggestion of his technology consultant from Single Path. InformaCast helped him and his team consolidate paging systems and manage everything from a central web portal. This allowed the safety team and other staff to send emergency messages that reach all areas of campus.

Emergency Alert Challenges

The campus faced its first challenge when its Environmental Health and Safety (EHS) department conducted a surprise drill, sending an evacuation alert via overhead speakers.

"A few people had their office doors shut and didn't hear the evacuation message," said Dvorscak. "They were still working in their offices after everyone else had evacuated."

The office buildings on campus provided a structural challenge. Over the years, additions had been made, but some offices were built beyond the reach of overhead speakers. In addition, facilities such as the shop floor were often noisy, and employees didn't have access to computers, email or desk phones to receive alerts.

An InformaCast Solution

Dvorscak and his team used InformaCast to leverage multiple communication methods and ensure all employees, including those in the offices and production facilities, are properly informed of emergency situations.

"The goal was to leverage every available form of communication so our people would receive emergency alerts no matter where they are on campus," said Dvorscak.

The EHS department is now able to reach all overhead paging systems, Cisco VOIP phones, employee email accounts, and corporate cell phones.

"This solution handles just about every scenario we could think of," said Dvorscak.

Alerts During Alternate Shifts

The ability to reach cell phones is especially important when the safety team isn't on-site during second and third shift. InformaCast helps keeps employees safe during these non-peak times.

"If there's an emergency late at night, it's nice to have our EHS team members receive an alert on their corporate cell phones right when it happens," said Dvorscak.
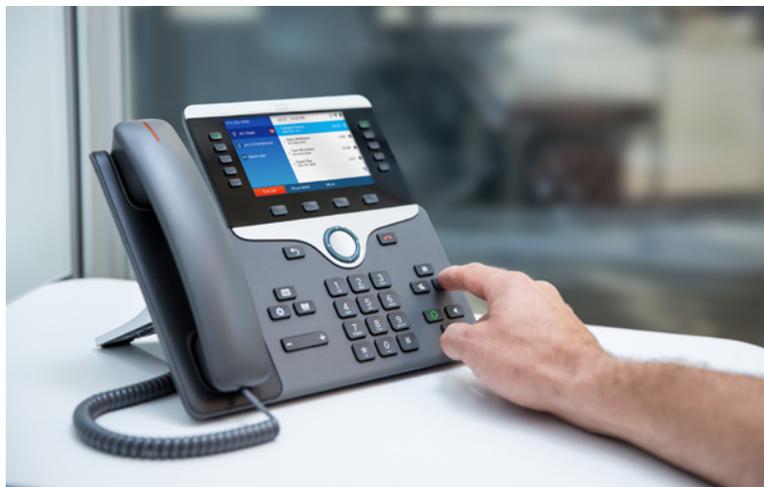
Safe and Cost-Effective

Solvents in some of NB Coatings' products are caustic. That means it can be challenging to find cost-effective tools that work in that kind of environment.

To solve this problem without breaking the bank, NB Coatings integrated InformaCast with existing systems. They configured InformaCast to broadcast simultaneously to industrial speakers in the shop and Cisco VOIP phones and computers in the office. Since NB Coatings already owned this hardware, they were able to save a considerable amount of money.

An Easy-to-Use System

They also tied InformaCast into an Integrated Voice Response (IVR) system, which makes sending an emergency alert to the safety team and/or the rest of the NB Coatings campus easy enough that any employee could do it.

An employee who dials the emergency extension can select a number on the phone that corresponds to the type of emergency he or she is reporting and hang up. The system automatically broadcasts the alert to all of the people who need to be notified.

"InformaCast exceeded our expectations. I'd definitely recommend it to any company that's looking for a communication and safety solution," said Dvorscak.

InformaCast helps manufacturing facilities across the country with emergency notification, security, safety and more to provide safe and secure work environments.

Visit www.singlewire.com/solutions-manufacturing.html for more information about how to implement InformaCast in manufacturing.