

Proactive Crisis Communication Raises the Bar on Customer Care

case study

Successful communication can mitigate effects of a crisis, and an emergency notification system is a key element in any good business continuity plan. The following examples are of two recent emergency situations, one involving a fraud attempt, and the other a major natural disaster. In each, technologies developed by Twenty First Century Communications (TFCC) were used to directly resolve problems caused by the crises and to provide exemplary service throughout the events.

Customers of Lakeland Electric were targeted by scam artists posing as Lakeland's own collections agents. Callers identified themselves as representatives of the company and told customers their bills were overdue. The customers were told they were required to make payments in person at Lakeland's offices. It appeared to be an attempt to cause people to vacate their homes, making them vulnerable to break-ins.

Using TFCC's Emergency Notification System, the utility was able to successfully communicate a warning to its entire residential client base of 69,000 individuals – immediately and in a single afternoon. Not only did the company protect its clients, but it also protected its good name by ensuring consumers that their electric provider valued their safety and well being.

No communication challenge approaches the scope of that which the American Red Cross experienced at the end of the 2005 hurricane season. It was the most costly and destructive season to date, including the highest number of named storms and the most Category 5 storms ever recorded. The American

Red Cross experienced an unprecedented demand for emergency assistance and the largest disaster response in its history.

During the aftermath of hurricanes Katrina and Rita, friends and family desperately needed to locate one another and turned to the American Red Cross for help. The Red Cross needed a reliable automated solution with live agent capacity to facilitate communication, and they needed it up and running immediately. Twenty First Century Communications provided 1-877-LOVED-1S, a "virtual call center" and on-demand IVR, and brought it online in less than 24 hours. TFCC handled more than 380,000 calls from displaced individuals in search of lost loved ones; the hotline helped to reunite over 44,000 friends and family separated as a result of the hurricanes.

TFCC's technology truly saved the day, allowing the American Red Cross to provide a vital service to thousands of people, raising the bar on customer care. The virtual call center was so critical in fact, that Twenty First Century Communications was recognized by the Red Cross for its extraordinary support. Rick Davis, National Director of Emergency Communications for the Red Cross, praised TFCC: "Your ability to anticipate our needs and have support ready at our beck and call was nothing short of uncanny. Your efforts in support of the Red Cross were of great significance and they had both a positive and abiding impact on our hundreds of thousands of customers," he said.

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are more suppliers than there are bona fide buyers. The shakeout is beginning to happen now. You'll see some players naturally exit the market in 24 months or so and consolidation taking place sometime after that," he predicts.

But is it just evaluating so many vendors that's slowing the buying process?

"No," says Quattrocchi. "The notification market is still really in its infancy, and there is probably a lot more hype than there is reality. In fact, most market segments have been slow to adopt notification technology."

Quattrocchi says his experience shows potential buyers are "constrained by budgets," their own "bloated decision-making bureaucracy," or a "lack of focus on emergency

notification as a priority." While he says he sees the market "taking off in some small segments," like healthcare, government, and education, Quattrocchi feels the business sector is lagging behind. "The vast majority of Fortune 1000 companies do not have notification systems in place," he says.

While budget most likely is a problem for those in government and education, focus is the problem for businesses, he says. "If you look at Fortune 1000 businesses, they certainly have the budget, but it's just not something that is top of mind. And many companies are having problems because they don't see a return on investment," he says. "Frankly, there's still a lot of tire kicking going on and not a lot of action."



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many choices in emergency communication systems. Before you decide, **take a look at the facts.**

Twenty First Century has been providing the industry's most reliable critical communications since 1989. Operating off of the **largest platform in North America**, TFCC offers unparalleled speed and capacity. No other provider can match TFCC's high-volume inbound call handling, and our best-in-class hosted solutions deliver **flexibility and functionality that cannot be matched at any price.**

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