

UNDERSTANDING PROVIDER DIFFERENCES

Questions To Ask Emergency Notification Vendors

There are a multitude of emergency notification service providers in the market today. At times, it can be difficult to determine which vendor is right for your organization's unique and often complex needs. When evaluating competitive offerings or developing a shortlist of potential providers, ask the following questions, which are strong indicators of a company's ability to meet your requirements:

RELIABILITY

- Do you offer a 100% Uptime Guarantee in your Service Level Agreement (SLA)?
- If you do offer a 100% Uptime SLA, do you exclude downtime for maintenance?
- Is your company's calling capability based on old-style, dedicated telephone lines, or does it utilize new technologies, such as VoIP and SIP, for real-time scalability and greater resiliency?
- Do you have an international affiliate network in place to monitor ongoing infrastructure capabilities around the world?

SUPPORT

- Do you offer *live* 24x7x365 Customer Support?
- Is Customer Support staffed by actual technical experts (and not an answering service that will attempt to locate the help you need)?
- Is Customer Support staffed by actual employees, or is it outsourced?
- Will Customer Support launch notifications for me if desired at no additional charge?

SECURITY

- Is my data encrypted both in transit to the service *and* at rest?
- Does your company have multiple, geographically dispersed, active-active data centers for maximum redundancy?
- Is your service DIACAP certified, meeting rigid U.S. Department of Defense standards?
- Is your service SSAE 16 SOC 1 certified?
- Does your organization conduct third-party penetration tests at least annually?
- Does your service provide for digital signatures, single sign-on and two-factor authentication?

CUSTOMERS & AWARDS

- Does your company have more than half of the Fortune 10 as clients?
- How many currently *active* customers does your company have?
- Out of the customers you have, how many are based on partnerships with third parties?
- Is your customer retention rate over the past three years greater than 95 percent?
- What awards and honors has your company received in the past three years?

FUNCTIONALITY

- Are all of the following communication modalities available through your service *without* the need for additional customization or integration?
 - Land, mobile and satellite phones
 - Email
 - SMS (Short Message Service)
 - BlackBerry® PIN
 - Instant Messaging
 - Pagers
 - Alertus® Beacons
 - Desktop Alerting
 - Cisco® IP phones
- Do you offer a fully integrated and proprietary Incident Management System (IMS)?
- Can I manage my contact data through any of these methods?
 - On-demand entry
 - Customer Service import assistance
 - Import Wizard
 - Recipient Self-Update (email notifications sent to contacts with a secure link for updating records)
 - Recipient Self-Registration (web portal for contacts to sign up for alerts)
 - XML via Secure FTP (SFTP)
 - Application Programming Interface (API)
- Do you offer a fully integrated and proprietary Interactive Voice Response (IVR) designer for creating and managing inbound call flow menus?
- Can you easily manage alerts in multiple languages, including a wide variety of text-to-speech languages and dialects?
- In addition to standard reporting, do you offer the ability to analyze a detailed audit trail of system events?
- Does your system allow for polling of recipients from within the notification message?

FINANCIAL VIABILITY

- Is your company showing year-over-year revenue growth?
- Is your company profitable?
- Has your company declared bankruptcy or opened under a new company name in the last five years?



About Send Word Now

Headquartered in New York City, Send Word Now is the leading worldwide provider of critical communications solutions. The company's easy-to-use web-based and mobile solutions are deployed by businesses, government agencies, universities, and non-profit organizations to ensure fast, effective, communications when it is needed the most.

Send Word Now's enterprise-class notification system is capable of transmitting hundreds of thousands of voice and text messages in minutes while providing a full audit trail for after-action reporting and follow-up. Its conferencing and workflow solutions keep employees informed and connected to the people and information they need.