SnapComms Customer Case Study

Emergency Planning Communications

- All Bases Covered

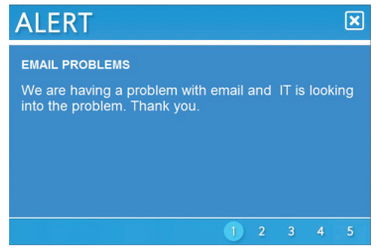
Andrew Jacobs is Head of Security for a bulk material handling plant based in the American Midwest and employing 1,000 staff. This business is the largest of 12 such plants in the logistics division of a global food processing and commodities trading corporation which employs over 30,000 staff and operates more than 265 processing plants and 330 sourcing facilities in some 30-plus countries.

One of the main responsibilities of Jacobs and the plant's security team is the notification of emergency situations and important operational updates to the plant's rescue team, safety and security staff and other employees. They need to be able to convey critical safety and security information to staff instantaneously and to reach key personnel to warn them of emergency situations and enable them to activate their response plans.

VHF radios and pagers are the security team's primary tools for dispatching emergency messages, but these can lose connectivity, be inaudible in a noisy plant environment or turned off during meetings. A reliable backup option is therefore mandatory.

"SnapComms is what fills that void."

Jacobs and the security team are using SnapComms' pop-up desktop alerts as a secondary means of notifying the facility of drills, hazardous weather, plant incidents, and rescue team activation. They are also used to relay other important information such as IT issues.



Notification of an email problem

For Jacobs the software gives him the reassurance that critical information is getting through to his colleagues regardless of where they are, and that he isn't losing valuable time or being constrained by email response times.

"SnapComms enables us to reach more personnel instantaneously where radios or pagers may lose connectivity in some areas of the plant or may have been disabled."

Some of the scenarios they work with are scheduled, such as the weekly drills that take place every Wednesday morning and evening. Other events are unscheduled and can range from IT outages to weather warnings to personal medical issues to fires and other emergencies.

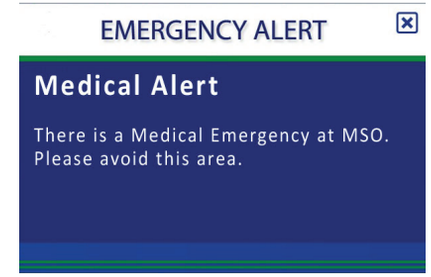
Issuing a weather warning

When the security team is notified of an issue, they can quickly deploy one of their emergency templates and select which computers the message is seen on.

For example, when there is a weather-related warning, they advise the type of event and any shelter arrangements that have been set up for the inclement weather, documenting the time of the initial notification and sounding the "ALL CLEAR" at the conclusion of the event.

"Every time we had to use SnapComms for a real event, it has worked every time."

The pop-up desktop alerts have also been effective in managing emergency medical situations. The plant had a truck driver with a personal medical issue. SnapComms was used to notify personnel to stay clear of the area while medical aid was being rendered.



Evacuating a location

The plant where Jacobs is based is fully compliant with the requirements of the Occupational Safety and Health Act (OSHA) and the way that the desktop pop-up messages have been used so effectively has been a major contributing factor in that accreditation. Emergency planning leaders from other plants within the group have been impressed with the suitability and simplicity of the SnapComms communications tools in emergencies and are reviewing them for use at their own facilities.

As well as being a hit with security and emergency staff, Jacobs confirms that the wider group of employees who have been exposed to the pop-up desktop alerts are happy with this way of receiving information. He certainly sees the potential for using SnapComms more extensively.

"SnapComms is dynamite."

SnapComms is a technology company that helps organizations communicate more effectively with their employees. Our software is used by communications, IT, HR, security and other business functions across multiple industries worldwide. It has numerous applications, which enable organizations to cut through information overload and engage with employees.

SnapComms was established in 2007. We now have more than 200 customers and resellers in North America, Europe, Southeast Asia, Australasia, the Middle East, Africa, the Caribbean and South America. SnapComms has headquarters in Auckland, New Zealand, offices in the United States and United Kingdom and a data center in Toronto, Canada.

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