Launching a Successful Mass Notification Platform

Tips for ensuring the success of your notification system and improving your communication plan.

Introduction

Over the years, mass notification systems have become increasingly popular with higher education institutions, enterprise and healthcare. Because of its cloud-based environment and the ability to send large numbers of alerts at once, mass notification has surpassed technologies like email for sending and receiving important information during emergencies and everyday business.

The evolution of mass notification has enabled organizations of virtually every size to create a more cohesive, reliable protocol for communicating to their networks. This technology has become a more commonplace business tool for nearly every industry. Because of its inherent simplicity and reliability, more organizations have adopted mass notification as their go-to for communicating.

As with any business tool, adoption of a mass notification system requires a number of considerations in order to be successful. In this white paper, Regroup explores some of the questions to ask before implementing a mass notification solution, how to ensure success and how to make the most out of the solution you deploy.
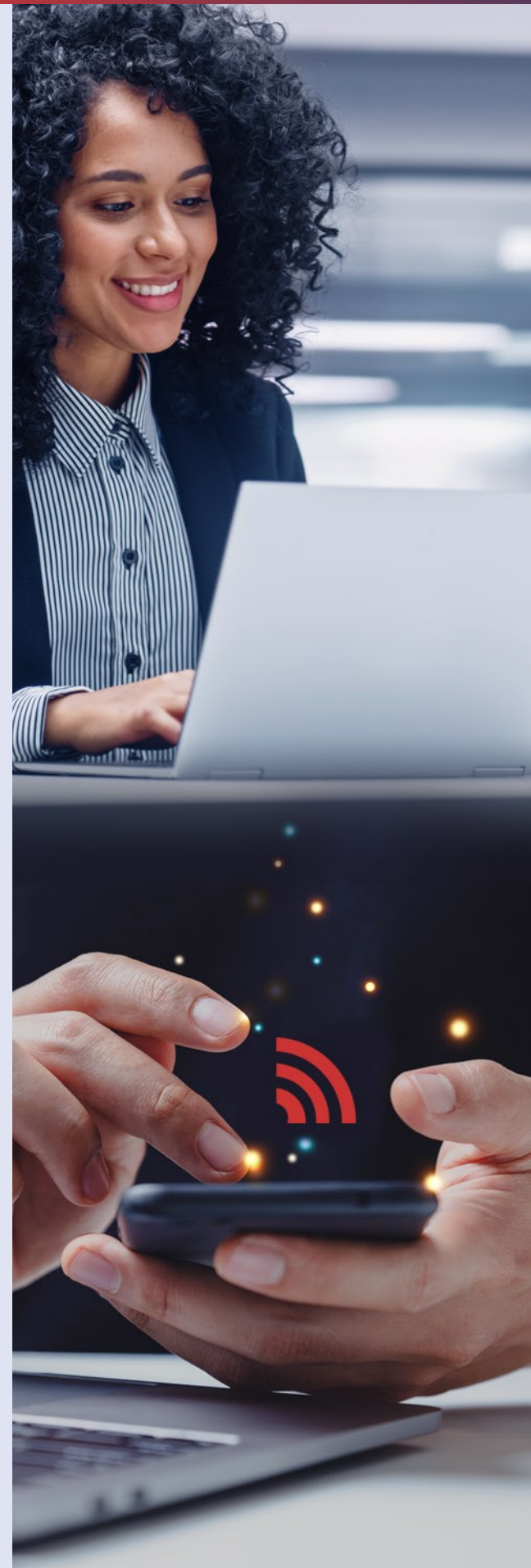
What is Mass Notification?

Mass notification is a mass alerting system that delivers timely notices to a variety of channels. Typically speaking, email, push notifications, text/SMS and voice call deliveries are part of a mass notification system's capabilities. Widely used to alert others of emergency situations, mass notification is most often used in cases of active shooter events, severe weather, criminal activities and other hazardous situations.

More recently, however, more organizations have adopted mass notification as part of their overarching communication plan. Using such a platform, organizations communicate schedule changes, venue closings, policy updates, meeting notices and more. Because of its generally simple-to-use interface, a platform like Regroup makes sending and receiving notifications as easy and familiar as sending email. With little training or onboarding required, mass notification can be the perfect complement to practically any communication scheme.

Additionally, many mass notification platforms can use integrations to create a more holistic experience for network users. These integrations to databases, automated alert technologies and educational tools make adding mass notification to a technology stack a smart choice for many organizations.

With more businesses turning to remote and hybrid workforces, the demand for mass notification has increased dramatically. Having the ability to quickly reach an entire network, irrespective of the individual's location, has become advantageous to all types of businesses. Additionally, enabling two-way communication with remote workers can prove beneficial when areas experience power outages or cell tower disruptions.

As a business tool, mass notification is indispensable for keeping people safe, informed and productive. But, how do we ensure success when implementing one?

Setting Expectations

As part of your plan to implement a mass notification platform, it's a good idea to set expectations. This involves discussion on how the platform will be used, what success looks like and what problems or pain points you intend to address.

Expectations will naturally differ from one organization to another. Healthcare organizations may see mass notification as a tool for communicating patient updates while a larger venue may use it for alerting concession suppliers of product shortages. Whatever the use case, mass notification can help bridge communication gaps by ensuring prompt delivery of important information during routine business or in a crisis.

Take the time to identify your goals before implementing a mass notification platform. Do they include:

- **Reducing communication costs**
- **Improving inter-organization communication**
- **Crisis communication**
- **Keeping dispersed workforces close**
- **Keeping clients informed**
- **Reducing redundancies**

Defining expectations early in the process can help stakeholders understand the benefits and limitations of a mass notification system. And, since expectations may change or evolve over time, having a system that is scalable and flexible needs to be factored into the equation.

Identifying Needed Features

Not all mass notification systems are created equal, and feature sets can vary significantly from platform to platform. Once you've made the decision to implement a mass notification solution and defined your expectations, understanding which features are most important to you becomes light work. Obviously, the ability to send notifications to a variety of channels is a predominant consideration. However, depending on your organization's size, you may have other needs that some platforms are unable to effectively address.

Consider your organization's growth trajectory, remote, traveling and hybrid workforces, whether you have multiple facilities and how likely you are to employ mass notification for emergencies as well as your day-to-day operations.

As an example, larger enterprises may use mass notification as a complement to their threat monitoring and risk mitigation efforts to reduce the exposure to cyberattacks and other IT disruptions. Conversely, a mid-sized healthcare organization might utilize mass notification for alerting others to suspicious activity, announcing schedule changes or policy updates and notifying allied health of patient updates and requirements.

For nearly every scenario and business case, having the appropriate feature set will ensure the success of your organization's mass notification launch.

What features do you need the most?

Multi-channel delivery	Cloud-based - no new hardware needed	Mobile app	Desktop notifications	Messaging templates
Comprehensive reporting	**Two-way communication**	**Push notifications and SMS**	**Third-party integrations**	**Automated alerting**

How to Get the Buy-In

For any business process to be successful, buy-in (from the top down) is crucial. Once leadership has embraced the concept of mass notification as an emergency and routine communication tool, the next meaningful step is to promote organization-wide adoption.

Not every individual is enthusiastic about new technology. For this reason, deploying a mass notification solution to your organization requires a bit of finesse. It's important to clearly explain how the organization — and individual team members — can benefit from such a platform and how the addition of mass notification to your communication strategy can improve productivity.

Additionally, used as a communication tool during emergency situations, mass notification has the ability to protect lives. For this reason alone, buy-in is fundamental.

Getting the buy-in from your stakeholders and team members can be more successful by following these steps:

Provide Adequate Training

A common complaint in virtually any workforce is lack of training, particularly with software and processes. Keeping that in mind, launching a successful mass notification system within your organization will require some attention to training.

Since mass notification platforms are typically quite easy to use, onboarding can be a very simple process. However, taking time to explain each feature and how it can be utilized is important during onboarding. This ensures wide adoption and a more unified environment for your communication needs.

Your team members will also need guidance on why the platform is used, when and how.

For instance, manufacturers can often experience disruptions in production due to late deliveries and supply chain disruptions. Traditionally, procurement specialists may have used emails or phone calls in their attempts to secure alternative suppliers. With mass notification, a purchasing lead can now announce their requirements through multiple channels, like email, push notifications, mobile app, desktop notifications, intranets and even social media.

Conversely, when an emergency — such as severe weather or an active shooter — occurs, team members should know how to quickly launch a simple, accurate alert to the entire network or a geofenced region. This not only serves to protect team members, it can help protect assets and property.

Provide Adequate Training

Ensure your entire team understands the platform and its uses.

Simplify the Process

Take the needed steps to make communication easier for all.

Avoid Message Fatigue

Use mass notification when appropriate so your message isn't lost.

Simplify the Process

For the sake of ensuring adoption and success, organizations should always strive to make their processes simple and easy to understand. In the case of mass notification, success means your platform is easy to understand, get familiar with and use.

Notification templates go a long way in making the experience simple and familiar. A mass notification solution that incorporates predefined message templates will almost certainly be well adopted and used as intended.

Other considerations for ease of use include a familiar and uncluttered interface, a mobile app that performs as expected and desktop notifications that deliver a simple popup to grab attention. These all combine to create a user experience that even the most technologically resistant team members can easily become accustomed to.

Avoid Message Fatigue

We can all find ourselves inundated with multiple emails, reply-all emails and other notices that don't apply directly to us or our duties. As a result, recipients can often feel overwhelmed and critical and other important communications may be overlooked. This is known as message fatigue.

This can be avoided with a few simple strategies in your communication approach.

A mass notification platform that incorporates geofencing as part of its functionality will allow you to target notifications only to those in a specific location or facility. This means you can keep notifications more directed and effective while not including those who are not impacted. When coupled with automated alerts from the National Weather Service or NOAA, geofenced messaging allows you to not only target those in affected areas, but to alert those entering or exiting the geofence.

You can also use mass notification to create groups for delivery. This is especially useful in environments like healthcare, manufacturing, enterprise and large venues where departmental messaging makes sense.

Finally, planned messaging (wellness checks, schedule updates, policy notices) should be kept brief and to the point. This allows employees and team members some breathing room in taking action or responding.

Conclusion

Mass notification is the communication tool that has gained tremendous popularity in recent years. As a solution for emergency situations and routine business, mass notification is the simplest and fastest way to get important information to large numbers of people.

Because of its capability to reach multiple channels and hundreds of people at once, enterprise, education, healthcare and government have come to rely on mass notification for the greater part of their communication protocols.

To ensure the successful implementation of a mass notification system, planning, conversation, coordination and adoption are all necessary parts of a larger whole.

Start with identifying your needs. Visualize how features can best be used. Provide the needed training to get everyone onboard. Finally, keep processes simple, direct and efficient. With these simple approaches, your organization can swiftly and efficiently put into place a powerful tool for critical events and routine business. With buy-in from your team members, mass notification can quickly become an irreplaceable part of your overarching communication strategy and a cost-conscious solution for keeping everyone safe, informed and productive.

Your Next Steps

If your organization is ready to explore the benefits of mass notification, consider your needs and the needs of your team members. Define what you hope to accomplish and how best to implement a platform that addresses your requirements.

Regroup Mass Notification provides a customizable and scalable solution that is designed to be a powerful emergency alert system as well as a versatile routine communication tool.

Let us show you how you can put the power of mass notification into practice by scheduling a demo, calling us toll-free at **855-REGROUP** or emailing us at **inquiries@regroup.com**

About
Regroup Mass Notification

Since 2006, Regroup Mass Notification has provided a world-class cloud-based mass communication solution that is robust, reliable and easy to use.

Trusted by education, healthcare, government and enterprise, Regroup provides customizable, scalable solutions for emergency alerts, routine communication and integrations with the platforms you use every day.

Learn More   **regroup.com   855-REGROUP   inquiries@regroup.com**

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