

WHITE PAPER

Mobile Apps and Mass Notification for Safety and Productivity



Regroup Mass Notification

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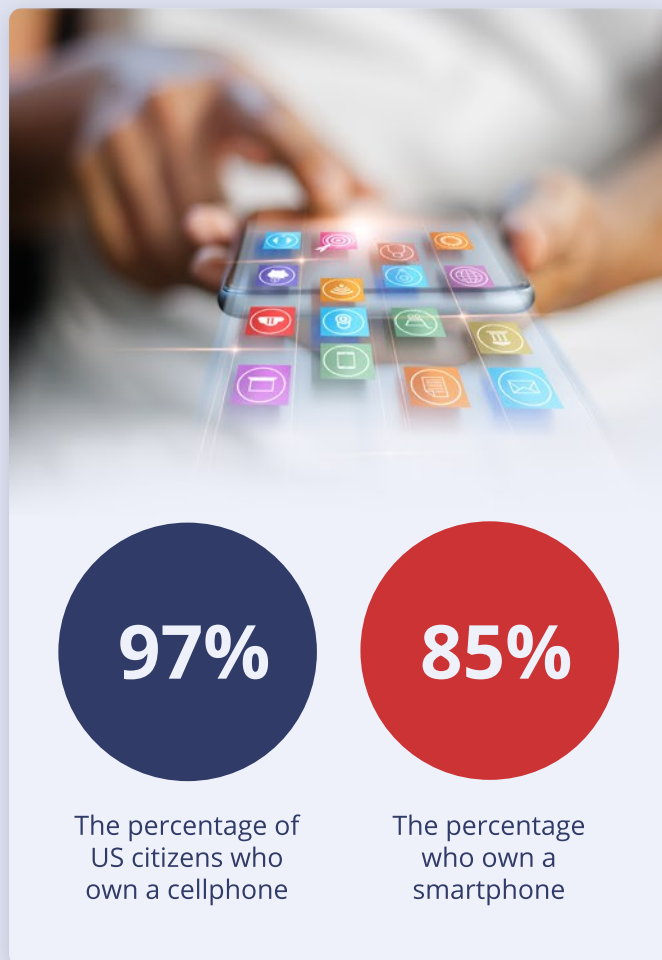
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Introduction

Over the years, mobile apps have enjoyed tremendous growth and popularity with individual consumers. From social media to newsreaders and from productivity to personal growth, mobile apps occupy a large part of our daily lives and, in many cases, help us to find answers and better manage our time.

In a business environment, mobile apps can improve communications within the organization, improve productivity, reduce costs associated with antiquated communication tools and even provide employees with tools for safety and security. With a well-established communications plan, businesses can look to mobile apps to boost productivity while ensuring the safety of their employees.



How Mobile Apps Have Evolved

Since the late 1980s, handheld cellular phones have grown exponentially in popularity. Once large, clumsy devices (weighing as much as 4.5 pounds) with limited number-to-number, audio-only capabilities, cellular phones have evolved over the years into smartphones and indispensable tools for the vast majority of Americans and individuals worldwide.

Pew Research Center¹ estimates that approximately 97% of US citizens own a cellphone of some variety and roughly 85% own a smartphone.

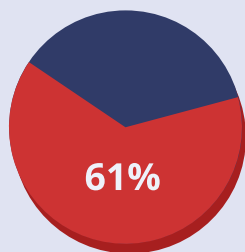
In the early 2000s, smartphone platforms began to gain traction with consumers with, BlackBerry, Nokia and Windows Mobile technologies among the most popular. Improved hardware, enhanced lithium-ion battery life and faster wireless communication standards combined to make smartphone technology popular with individuals, replacing PDAs, palm-sized personal computers and personal media players.

In 2007, Apple Computer introduced the iPhone with a large, easy-to-use touchscreen that set the standard for all smartphones to follow. This new form factor and accompanying technology gave consumers a more “personal technology” experience and ushered in various uses beyond telecommunications. The Apple App Store soon followed with downloadable third-party software for many applications and uses. Eventually android would publish its own mobile app repository.

Soon, smartphones came equipped with onboard cameras, larger storage capacity and robust operating systems from multiple vendors. These developments would make the user experience uniquely personal and spearhead greater sales, early adoption and customer loyalty throughout every demographic. By 2013, the iOS and Android platforms had become a marketplace duopoly in the mobile device industry, quickly edging out less popular competitors.

Digital Consultancy, Perificient2 reports that, in 2020, approximately 61% of visits to US-based websites were from mobile devices. Globally, mobile devices accounted for 68.1% of all traffic. And owners utilized their mobile devices for various functions, including social media, news, financial reports and entertainment.

Mobile devices have become a familiar and relied-upon part of our daily lives. Businesses increasingly embrace smartphones and mobile apps as part of their daily operations. With popular business apps and custom business app development more accessible, greater numbers of companies and organizations are reaping the benefits of adding mobile functionality to their operational approach.



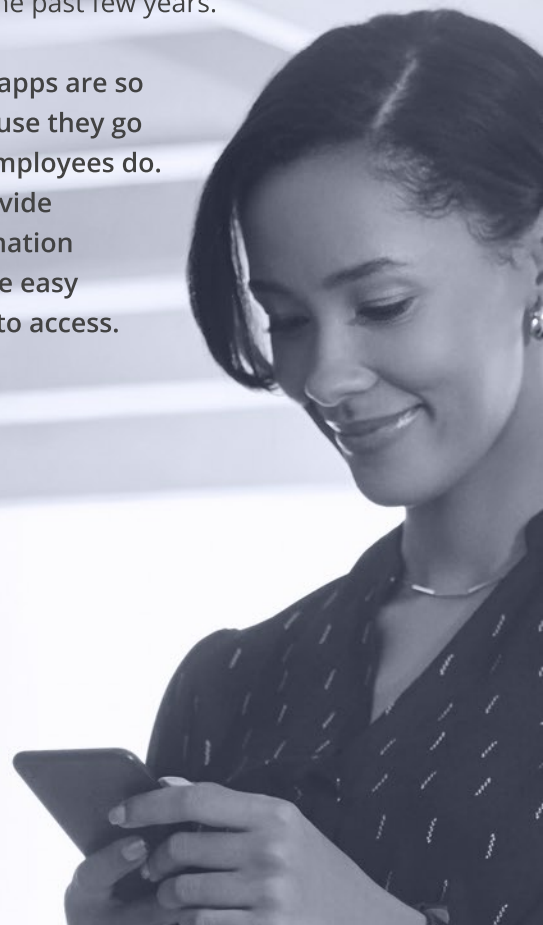
The percentage of visits to US-based websites that were from mobile devices.

Mobile Applications for Safety

In 2011, a survey conducted by Harmon.ie revealed that roughly 60% of work interruptions involved digital tools like email, text messaging and social media. Understandably, these findings explain why many businesses restrict mobile device use during work hours. Today, mobile devices are not just accepted in most workplaces; they are encouraged thanks to applications used to improve productivity or increase safety.

Even more than profitability or operational resilience, businesses of all varieties have an obligation to ensure the wellbeing of their employees. During shift work and while on-premises, employees have a shared right to security and safety in the workplace. For that reason, mobile apps that specifically assist companies in supporting workplace safety initiatives have become increasingly popular over the past few years.

Mobile safety apps are so effective because they go everywhere employees do. Many also provide specific information quickly and are easy for end-users to access.



Some of the most popular workplace safety apps for mobile devices include:



American Red Cross: First Aid

Available for iOS, this mobile app from the American Red Cross can help employees prepare for and respond to workplace accidents.



WorkPose

This app is useful for employees who spend their days at a desk and provides guidance on improving posture.



OSHA Mobile

Used to ensure OSHA standards and recommendations are adhered to in the workplace.

Several apps can help employees protect themselves from fatigue, high noise levels, excessive heat and other potentially hazardous conditions.

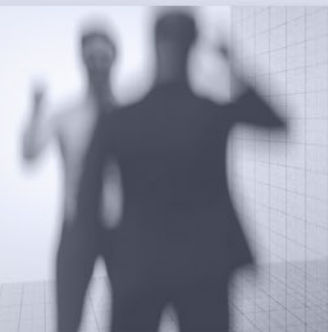
Companies that use mass notifications can gain a serious edge in security and employee safety. Used to alert employees of dangerous conditions, security breaches, suspicious activity and more, a mass notification platform that incorporates mobile device functionality can instantly alert large numbers of people to potential hazards.

The right mass notification solution for occupational safety must include a mobile app to receive alerts when power outages or cellular tower disruptions occur. Further, the right mobile app should allow individual users to contact team leaders or administrators to report dangerous conditions. This enables a proactive approach to employee safety as well as facility security.

Safety Use Cases for Mass Notification and Mobile Apps

20,000

Injuries in the United States in 2020 from workplace violence



When a critical event or emergency occurs in the workplace, knowledge is the most effective tool for keeping people safe. Dissemination of action guidelines to potentially affected employees can mean the difference between safety and tragedy. The National Safety Council³ indicates workplace violence as the cause of over 20,000 injuries in the United States in 2020 alone.

However, workplace violence is not the only safety concern for companies and organizations. Severe weather, natural disasters and even utility failures can create hazardous conditions for on-site workers. Remote workers can also be negatively affected by many factors.

For these reasons, using a mass notification system that incorporates mobile app functionality is essential for maintaining a safe and secure work environment. Some examples of how critical alerting can be used to keep employees safe include:



Active Shooter or Deadly Force in the Workplace

These scenarios can include an individual armed with a firearm, bladed

weapon, vehicle, or other implement whose use constitutes deadly force.



Bomb Threats

Typically written or verbal, the immediate threat is the any explosive or incendiary device that can cause death, injury and destruction of property and assets.



Psychological Crisis

This can include suicide threats, threatening or violent behavior, disruptive behavior and even harassment of others.



Fire

One of the most serious threats to personal safety and property, fires can create additional hazards such as smoke and loss of structural integrity.



Hazardous Materials

This threat includes any agent (biological or chemical) that has the potential to cause severe harm or illness to human beings and the immediate environment.



Severe Weather

Severe thunderstorms, flash flooding, tornados, hurricanes and winter storms can create dangerous scenarios for on-site, traveling and remote workers.

In these and other situations, team leaders and administrators can rapidly circulate advisories, action guidelines, evacuation instructions, shelter-in-place notifications and all-clear announcements.

Using a mass notification system that incorporates its own mobile app will improve the circulation of important information to employees, regardless of their current location; this can save lives, reduce injuries and improve outcomes.

Mobile Applications as Business Tools

The business world has been reluctant to allow mobile devices to be used by employees during the workday. As we've seen, though, their many applications and benefits greatly outweigh the risk of interruptions when safety is top of mind.

Moreover, smartphones and other mobile devices are the perfect companions to business communication plans, giving employees communication tools such as access to corporate intranets, email, collaboration technologies and more. Used properly and with care, a smartphone in the workplace can increase productivity and shorten turnaround times for certain projects. And, since employees with families and other obligations may be understandably wary of giving up their smartphones during work hours, it makes sense for businesses to accept the technology as part of their employees' lives and the corporate landscape.

According to a 2018 Emergence Study⁴, 80% of the global working population is on-the-go and, effectively, deskless. This can present enormous communication challenges for companies dependent on schedules and other production goals.



More than two years of pandemic (and the accompanying public health ordinances) have created a global workforce of remote employees in virtually every profession. Small Business Trends reports that over 36 million Americans may be fully remote by 2025⁵.

These numbers don't consider professionals who travel for work. From home health care professionals to salespeople, even locally-based businesses may have dispersed workforces with which they must maintain close contact.

For nearly every scenario, businesses can improve overall communications and reduce lags and other hurdles by accommodating smartphones as a reality of their employees' daily lives and necessities.

Business Use Cases for Mass Notification and Mobile Apps

The practical applications for mass notification and mobile app support are virtually endless. General notices, notifications of staff or shift shortages, policy updates, production notes and even planned wellness checks for remote and traveling employees are all compelling reasons to have such a communications plan in place.

Though use cases specific to industries may seem widely varied, the result is often a more productive work environment, reduced disruptions and a more cost-effective approach to day-to-day business operations.

Some of the ways businesses and organizations use mass notification and mobile app accessibility include:



Healthcare

Used to manage staffing requirements, collaborate on patient care and disseminate certification and compliance requirements.



Entertainment and Hospitality

Notify service personnel and vendors of product shortages, sanitation needs and other guest services.



Logistics

Notify workers and stakeholders of supply chain disruptions and areas of vulnerability; wellness check for drivers.



Manufacturing

Alert teams when outages and lines down occur; direct purchasing and planning staff of materials alternatives.

With these and other business applications, it becomes clear that mobile apps make sense for employees and mass notification is a tool that no business can do without. Staying in close contact means a more productive workforce, irrespective of the industry.

Combining Both Concepts for Safety and Productivity

A fast and reasoned response to disruptions and critical events is essential to maintaining a safe environment and minimizing operational threats in business. Companies across all industries have recognized that their team members are easier to reach and collaborate with when employees are equipped with smartphones and other mobile devices.

Relying on a mass notification system that incorporates a mobile app for recipients can help improve responses to everyday business challenges and keep employees safe during a critical event.

As we've discussed, employee safety should be the paramount consideration of any organization. However, business continuity is also a concern that deserves every tool available to support operational resilience and the company's overall health.

As more enterprise businesses use mass notifications as a critical business tool, improving workplace safety becomes easier. Several objectives can be more easily achieved with a single platform:

Communications are Faster and More Reliable

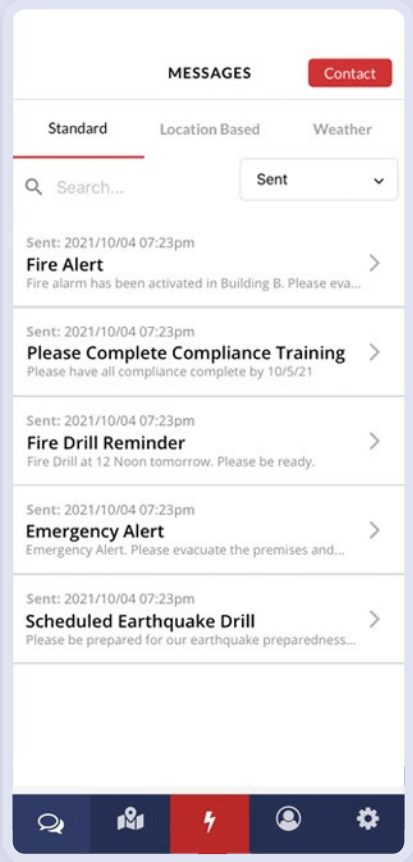
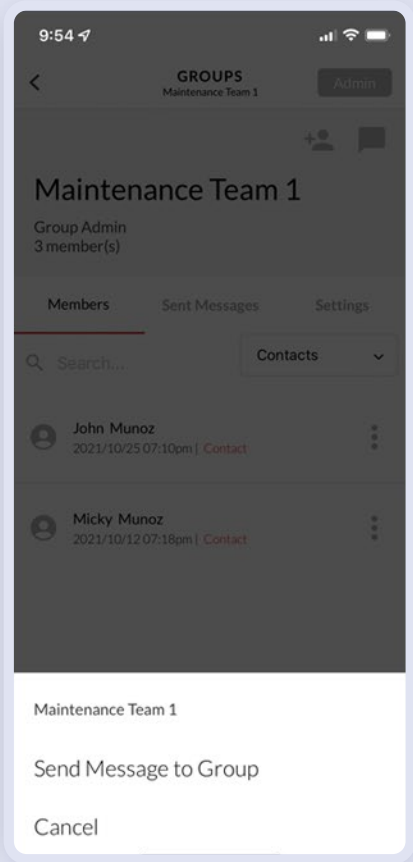
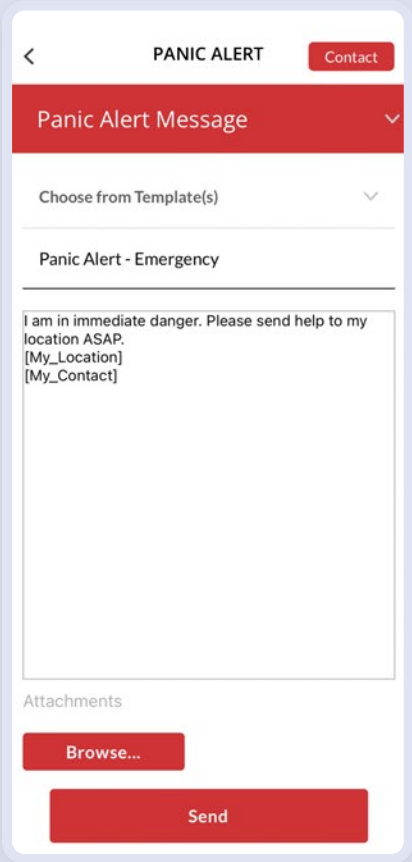
With mass notification and the accompanying mobile app, critical alerts and essential business notifications are virtually instantaneous. Incorporating templates for specific messaging helps to improve accuracy when moments count.

Collaboration is Easier and More Convenient

Giving employees the ability to conference with others quickly can promote collaboration. This goes beyond traditional conference calling and allows team members to share links, documents and other types of information.

More Efficient Responses

Mobile alerts can benefit IT teams and other business-critical stakeholders to mount a more rapid response when disruptions occur. It also allows security personnel to communicate more effectively and discreetly when employees or facilities are at risk.



Conclusion

Mobile apps and mass communication make good sense for business. They allow timely dissemination of information during times of crisis and can complement business communications plans with a cost-effective tool for all employees. They create a faster and more reliable mode of communication than traditional tools like email and voicemail. They incorporate familiar, comfortable technologies that employees need little — if any — training to use.

Before any communication or emergency plan is established for your company, you must take the time to identify potential vulnerabilities and consider all actionable information your employees need to respond to unforeseen emergencies effectively. It's also worthwhile to assign your own action team with clearly defined roles and responsibilities. This can minimize confusion and promote more expeditious action.

Consider consulting with your local law enforcement and emergency response resources to better understand potential threats to employees (both on-site and remote).

Ultimately, the safety and security of employees are the company's responsibility. By introducing a smart communication plan for emergencies and routine activity that incorporates mobile apps, you can remain one step ahead of crisis at all times and ensure the smooth operation of your business.

