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Garry Smith, Global Incident Management Lead
Willis Towers Watson

OVERVIEW

Willis Towers Watson is a leading global advisory, broking and solutions company that helps clients around the world turn risk into a path for growth. The company delivers solutions that manage risk, optimise benefits, cultivate talent, and expand the power of capital to protect and strengthen institutions and individuals.

PROBLEM

With 40,000 employees serving more than 140 countries in offices all over the world, it's crucial for Willis Towers Watson to have a robust system in place for communicating with staff in real time in the event of an emergency or crisis situation.

The company was formed after a merger between Willis Group Holdings and Towers Watson & Co. in 2016, before which there were separate notification systems in place. The challenge post-merger was to integrate these systems into a single platform to ensure a consistent approach to emergency communication across the company.

SOLUTION

Willis Towers Watson opted for Everbridge's Mass Notification™ utilising the platform to share important information, verify the safety of colleagues by monitoring the response to alerts when issued, or to mobilise the company's incident management teams.

The technology is securely linked to the company's HR systems so it accesses the latest available contact details, ensuring that facilities services and business continuity teams are able to quickly communicate with colleagues at targeted locations.

Q&A with Garry Smith, Global Incident Management Lead at Willis Towers Watson

WHAT SORT OF INCIDENTS HAVE YOU BEEN USING THE EVERBRIDGE PLATFORM FOR?

We use the platform when an incident or event could have a direct impact on our colleagues or their ability to work normally, or where colleagues travelling on business may be affected. This has included a wide range of situations, such as weather events, natural disasters, civil unrest and terrorist activity.

For example, while monitoring the approach of Hurricane Irma toward the Southeast coast of America in September 2017, we sent test messages to colleagues based at our offices in Alabama, Bermuda, Florida, Georgia, North Carolina and South Carolina to ensure that they were prepared.

As Irma developed we made the decision to close our 12 offices in Florida, using Everbridge to tell over 700 colleagues to stay home and follow local emergency plans. We were able to verify the safety of all our colleagues as the storm hit, and advised when they could return to the office. We also sent various messages to colleagues we knew were due to be travelling within, into or out of Florida. In total we sent 49 message alerts over the course of the storm.

We also used the platform to contact employees when the terrorist attack took place in Westminster in March 2017. From our travel system, we identified that around 300 colleagues were either in London or heading to London at the time, and were therefore able to inform them of what was happening and advise them to avoid the area.

The platform is also used to support evacuations for incidents or drills at some of our major offices. In built-up areas an assembly point may not be the most practical or the safest option, so we ask people to disperse and send a follow up message when it is safe to return. This dispersal process also allows us to direct people to different entry points to minimise congestion.

WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF USING THE EVERBRIDGE PLATFORM?

Being a global organisation there is generally some sort of incident happening somewhere most of the time. Most

incidents don't require widespread emergency notifications but there are many occasions when we've needed to communicate with colleagues who may be affected, and to account for their safety.

With Everbridge we are able to deliver the right message to the right people at the right time using multiple delivery methods, including email and SMS text. Messages can be sent by local teams or remotely by our business continuity team if needed.

WHAT FEEDBACK HAVE YOU HAD FROM USERS?

We need to continue to raise awareness internally, particularly in terms of getting colleagues into the habit of responding to alerts and messages even if they are not in an area of risk or in harm's way at the time. However, we've had positive feedback from colleagues, especially those who have been notified during incidents. Following Hurricane Irma people were full of praise for the way our local response teams managed the event; they really appreciated the notifications they received and told us that it made them feel valued.

WHAT ARE YOUR PLANS FOR THE EVERBRIDGE PLATFORM GOING FORWARD?

We know we can do much more with Everbridge. At the moment we are focused on simplifying the system configuration and continuing to improve consistency in how we use the platform across our various businesses and geographies. We will be migrating to a unified HR system in 2018, which will reduce our administration and provide opportunities to explore additional functionality.

One thing we would like to do is to extend the emergency evacuation dispersal process we have in place to other office locations, such as those that are subject to extreme temperatures or in congested areas. Also, we recently started to use Everbridge to mobilise IT support for one of our client-facing IT applications, and there may be further opportunities for us to expand this approach to other applications.

About Everbridge

Everbridge, Inc. (NASDAQ: EVBG) is the global leader in critical event management and enterprise safety applications that automate and accelerate an organization's operational response to critical events in order to keep people safe and businesses running faster. Everbridge is based in Boston and Los Angeles with additional offices in San Francisco, Lansing, London, Munich and Stockholm.

