(5) tips on getting started with an

Incident notification solution

What is an incident notification solution and why do you need one?

Emergency notification

Keep your team informed throughout an event

When a critical event happens you need to have the ability to communicate with your employees, customers, students or site visitors rapidly and reliably. It is vital that your emergency communication reaches its intended audience by whatever channel is quickest for them to access, to maximise the chances of keeping them safe.

Business continuity

Activate your crisis response and minimise disruption to your business

When a business disruption event happens, every minute counts. The quicker you can activate your crisis response, the quicker you can begin to resolve the disruption and start the journey back to business as usual.

IT alerting

Instant alerting to resolve issues faster

When an IT incident happens, time is money in lost productivity and interrupted customer service. The quicker you can notify your helpdesk and log a ticket, the quicker your service team can begin to resolve the issue and get your users back up and running again.

Incident management

Mobilise your team and manage your incident response

When an incident happens, every minute counts. The quicker you can activate your incident response, the quicker you can begin to bring the incident under control and resume your normal business operations.

Employee protection

Alerting your employees wherever they are

When a critical event happens, severe weather, transport disruption or even a terrorist event, you need to have two-way communication with your employees and be able to track where they are. It is vital that your critical communications are guaranteed to reach them and that they are assured of a response from you when they need urgent help.

Compliance reporting

Notify, confirm and record your compliance event

Are you worried about data protection or health and safety breaches? Are you facing a fine for regulatory non-compliance?

Or perhaps you want to achieve compliance with a recognised international standard such as ISO 27001 or 9001. Then you need to be able to notify the regulator and customers of the event, confirm receipt and record your compliance event for future audit.

What are the key components of an incident notification solution?

Contacts database

Onboard all of your staff and teams

The starting point for a notification solution is knowing who you are going to communicate with and having their contact details on your system ready to go. Crises Control makes this easy through our flexible onboarding options and the ability to create contact groups by team, department or even location.

Audit trail

Automatically record your incident response

A good notification system will automatically record the messages you have sent, and the actions that you have taken.

Crises Control date and time stamps every message receipt and action to an individual user. This generates records that can be used for post incident review, insurance audit or even regulatory compliance investigations.

Document storage

Store your response plans in the always-available secure cloud

The ability to store and distribute supporting documents is vital. Many disruption incidents involve the loss of access to local IT networks. Crises Control provides cloud-hosted multi-media document storage, so that you can rely on being able to access and send out any supporting materials during your event. Performance reporting

Performance reporting

## Measure and improve your team's responsiveness

Being able to set and measure response performance against KPIs, at individual, team and incident level allows you to exercise quality control and motivate your team to raise their levels of engagement.

Task manager

Alerting your employees wherever they are

A task manager module is a very valuable addition to an incident notification solution. It adds the ability to manage the incident as well as communicate about it. A good module will allow you to create task lists, allocate these tasks to owners, set completion KPIs and track when these KPIs have been completed.
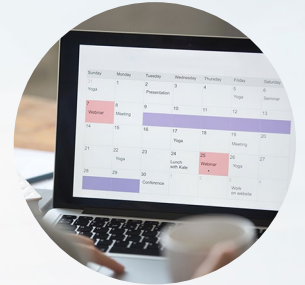
A sophisticated tool will also allow you to delegate tasks to alternative owners if the first owner fails to accept or complete it and create layered task lists with predecessor tasks.

Communications channels

Communications when you need it most

When an incident happens, being able to get your message out there through multiple communications channels increases the chances of it getting through to everyone who needs to know quickly and reliably. Crises Control offers a full channel choice of e-mail, SMS, phone call and push notifications, to suit any mobile device or operating system.

Common pitfalls to avoid when evaluating an incident notification solution

Don't settle for creating your own solution

- Don't be tempted to use free technology, such as WhatsApp, to create your own system
- Such free solutions cannot provide the scalability or functionality of paid for applications
- Some businesses start to develop their own bespoke application
- This route is expensive to create, maintain and develop further
- It is more expensive and less functional than off-the-shelf solutions easily available on the market

Go for a mobile, rather than website, centred application

- Mobile is where the users are, everyone has a mobile phone these days
- Smartphones offer multi-channel communications options
- When an incident takes place, mobile may be the only option
- Website centred solutions will be difficult to operate if you are on the move
- Mobile centred applications combine availability along with user friendliness

Don't pay for more than you need

- Many notification solutions are high cost enterprise applications
- These offer far more functions than many users will ever need
- They are also more complicated to onboard and operate in a crisis
- Why pay for functions that you will not use
- Why risk over complicating your real-time crisis response

Don't commit to big upfront costs

- Most notification solutions demand sizeable onboarding costs
- They also offer only annual subscription packages
- This suits some larger enterprises, but not most smaller businesses
- Crises Control offers a no-cost self-implementation route for SMEs
- It also offers monthly subscription packages for SMEs

Getting started with an incident notification system

Getting started

In making decisions about purchasing and rolling out an incident notification system, you need to bear a number of considerations in mind in order to get the right system for you and to introduce it successfully into your business.

Conduct a needs analysis

- You need to know who in your business is going to use the system and what they are going to use it for
- The best notification systems are very flexible and can be put to use in a number of ways
- Incident management, employee safety and IT alerting are just three of the ways that a solution could be used
- Your use case will usually start with a specific need from a specific team
- Their needs must come first, but it is worth considering who else in the business might have a use for such a system

What existing systems do you have?

- A good incident notification system will be cloud-hosted and will sit outside of your own IT network
- But you may wish to integrate it with one or two of your existing systems, such as your HR database or Help Desk ticketing system
- You need to identify what systems need to be integrated and whether your chosen platform has an API or other solution that can allow this seamless integration

How are you going to roll the system out to your business?

- The best incident notification solutions will be able to scale up and eventually extend to your entire business
- However, the smoothest roll-out plans will be staged, moving from one business unit to another
- Your use case will most likely start with a specific business team and application. They will be champions for the system, start with them
- Make sure that you have buy in from key parties, such as HR, operations and the C-suite
- Build in time for training and education, for your administrators, but also for all system users

Only one company holds the real secret

Built from the mobile app outwards

○ Mobile is where the users are and apps provide the most intuitive interface.

○ When an incident takes place you may have no choice but to be on the move yourself.

Does just enough and no more

○ High cost enterprise applications offer far more functions than you are likely to need.

○ Why pay for complexities you will not use and which might get in the way?

Easy access to customizable action plans

○ Quick start to your incident planning with customizable templates

○ Unique iSOP Wizard with high-value content from our own community

Low-cost, self-implementation business solution

○ A low-cost self-implementation, quick start, version for small businesses

○ The option of a monthly, not annual, subscription package for SMEs

Unique incident library

○ With an Incident Library of more than 200 pre-configured incidents you can get up and running immediately

○ Business continuity management in a box

Killer support

○ Full 24/7 technical support is available whenever you need it, as standard

○ Premium support option offers named a account manager and direct telephone contact