

Case Study: PDA

Top 3 German Bank Takes Crisis Management
Into Its Own Hands

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Background

A top 3 German bank has been a longstanding customer of Criticall's EmergencyCall ASP managed service.

Through this service, the customer is able to remotely manage their relevant staff data, initiate call-outs and then monitor their status in real time as they happen.

Although this customer had not taken up the option, it was also possible for them to initiate call-out by telephone, according to pre-defined IVR scripts. As with many Financial Services Sector clients, the members of the Business Continuity team typically lived outside of London and would usually be 1-2 hours away from the office when at home.

Furthermore, the international nature of the role required the Head of Business continuity to travel internationally, where access to the internet on the move was not always convenient.

"I was able to initiate the call to my Business Continuity team on the train heading into London. By the time I reached the office, the team had been able to hit the ground running a whole 30 minutes earlier"

Head of Business Continuity

The Requirement

This meant that the head of Business Continuity and his team would potentially find themselves needing to use the system when away from ready internet access. Initiation by phone remained an option, but the additional difficulties of maintaining the changing groups behind such phone invocation was considered an unacceptable overhead for the bank. Also, the BC team wanted to retain the ability to monitor the progress of a call-out online after it had been started.



The Solution

The solution was to provide the bank with PDA access to the system. From the multiple devices available on the market at the time in 2003, the O2 XDA was selected. However, the solution works equally well with any device driven by Microsoft's Pocket PC (Phone Edition) operating system, including the HP iPaq and its predecessor the Jornada. Similar devices are available from IBM, Sony, Toshiba, Dell and Fujitsu. New interfaces to Blackberry and other smaller-screen 'Smart' phone devices are available in 2004.

The interface to the web site from the PDA is different, to better suit the physical limitations of the smaller screens. The PDA user enters the relevant EmergencyCall ASP service site URL on the device and then follows the usual logging in process at the front screen. Thereafter, the key fields have been repositioned, to make them more readily viewable for the PDA user.

The source data used by the system is the same, only the presentation format is different. Thus, the PDA user can view call-out status and progress in real time just as effectively as the user sat at their office PC with internet access. This places the great power of the EmergencyCall ASP system directly in the hands of the bank's BC Team, so they can be confident of staying on top of a crisis as it unfolds.

The value of this functionality has already been proven by a live crisis in the UK. The bank's head of business continuity comments:

"We had a building incident that impacted the trading room floor and we had to respond immediately. I needed to get the message to my core team immediately, so that they could begin managing things on-site, while I was travelling back into the office. Using my PDA to access the EmergencyCall system, I was able to initiate the call to my BC team on the train heading into London. By the time I reached the office, the team had been able to take charge of the incident, having hit the ground running a whole 30 minutes earlier. In trading, they say 'time is money'. The time and money saved using the PDA option on that one occasion more than paid for itself several times over. However, I still like to use it occasionally for testing, just to keep my team on their toes!"



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