

# Business Solutions

Implementing Enterprise  
Real Time Notification On A Budget

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- All large-scale and listed enterprises will typically have a Business Continuity Plan (BCP) developed.
- Those Plans will vary in completeness and effectiveness, but will all rely at some point on effective, timely communications between groups of people to minimise detrimental impact of any incidents on the enterprise.
- When allocated corporate budget is a key limiting factor, the Head of Business Continuity within an organisation may have to sanction the use of the 'CallCascade', or 'Call-Tree' method of communication, although this method is known to be fraught with flaws.
- The purpose of this paper is to highlight how an *Entry Level*, automated notification system from Criticall can *begin transforming the credibility and effectiveness* of your organisation's Business Continuity and Crisis Communications plans for as little as **£4k** per year.

## Proven Weaknesses Of The Call-cascade Model

- It relies on all the relevant Group and individual contact details being kept up to date at multiple levels in the organisation. If this is already being carried out manually, the implementation of a single central, online, automated system will **immediately** save a large amount of administration. Criticall's

*EmergencyCall* offering is available over the internet and is sufficiently simple to use that individual end users (or their responsible Managers) can administer their own details online.

- If one person is meant to call 5 people, but cannot get hold of 2 of them, 40% of the downstream call tree is delayed in being contacted (if at all) due to failure at the very first level.

- There is no consistency of message from one contact to the next and there is no audit trail of data to confirm who has been told what and when.
- There is no central view of how far the call-out exercise covered by the call-tree method has reached at any point in time, which inhibits incident management.
- Typically the call-tree method does not allow those responsible for managing a given crisis to maintain control. People lose confidence in the ability of the approach to keep them informed and start to take matters into their own hands, by ringing people back up the communications chain and asking for updates.
- Overall, the call-cascade, or call-tree approach is slow, inaccurate and not auditable. It should therefore only be used as a last resort, in the absence of justifiable alternatives.
- We believe the Entry Level *EmergencyCall* offering from Criticall provides your organisation with just such an alternative.

## What Is Provided With An Entry Level Solution

A Full Product Tour is recommended.

More technical details on the EmergencyCall hosted ASP service can be found elsewhere on Criticall's web site at [www.criticall.co.uk](http://www.criticall.co.uk). Listed below are 10 key benefits that your organisation will gain from moving to the service, even at the Entry Level:

**1. One Data Source:** All details of all relevant Groups, Group Members and Recipients of the proposed messages can be held in **a single online database**, which is accessible to authorised individuals 7x24. This includes their names, the contact devices listed for each individual and the priority of each of those devices in a call-out. These details can be printed off periodically to ensure you have an up-to-date, back-up paper list for audit purposes.

**2. Speed:** It will be possible to select pre-defined Groups by a single click of the mouse, selecting them online from a menu. This Group can be made up of thousands of recipients, listed either individually, or within a hierarchy of subgroups which have been chosen and set up by the enterprise.

### 3. Choice of Communication

**Medium:** It will be possible to choose the method of communication to best suit the situation. If the relevant device

types are listed, an individual can be contacted by SMS text, pager, email, instant email, voice to land line, or voice to mobile, or satellite phone. For example, if the BC team typically always carry their mobile phones with them, the best method of communication on a daily basis may be via SMS texts. Alternatively, the call-out parameters can be set to attempt all device types for an individual in sequence, until they respond. In each case, you will be able to record a unique message relevant to the given call-out, whether by voice, SMS/pager (usually 80 characters plus headers and footers), or email (up to 300 characters).

### 4. Electronic Acknowledgements:

It is possible to receive a positive, timestamped confirmation from individuals contacted by phone, or as an option, by responding to an SMS text. This acknowledgement will trigger a change in status of the record of the individual to "acknowledged". This is represented by a **green** update on the web callout monitor, giving a clear and visible sign that they have heard and understood the relevant message. Failures to contact are highlighted in **red**.

**5. Incident Control:** At any point in time, the online call-out monitoring screen permits visibility of a call-out in progress, so that the person(s) responsible for managing a given

incident can see at a glance who has responded and who has yet to acknowledge.

**6. Audit Trail:** A full audit trail of historical call-outs and all contacts made can be viewed online, or printed off as a report. The details can also be extracted as a file and exported, permitting further data manipulation after the event.

**7. Reporting:** The Reporting module permits the running of various standard management reports that make the job of managing business continuity easier. For example, one report provides a list of all Recipients in the database who have no contact devices listed for them. These will be people for whom there is no centrally listed means of contact, in case of an emergency. These individuals can then be approached to encourage them to provide details, for health and safety reasons.

**8. Compliance:** The access to a reliable and effective system for rapid communication in a crisis makes the performance of full, live tests a more realistic proposition. It also engages the user community's involvement a lot more, if they know their responses will be visible centrally and auditable. The PAS56 standard recommendations for Business Continuity recommend at least two live BC tests each year ([www.pas56.com](http://www.pas56.com)). Business insurers

will also offer more competitive premiums to organisations that can demonstrate that they have made adequate provision for managing the business in a crisis.

**9. Cost:** The implementation of an effective, automated notification system will enable an organisation to respond more quickly to a real-life crisis and so reduce the negative financial impacts on the business. In most enterprises, there is a very real trade off between speed of response and losses the business suffers, between the time of the business impact and the point at which normal operations are restored. These cost savings will pay for the cost of such a system many times over.

**10. Planning:** With an automated system, it is possible to test and hence predict how long certain communications will take. This allows better quality planning for how to deal with various threats to an enterprise's operations. For example, if test exercises to the senior Business Continuity Response Team show that they can be sent SMS messages consistently within 5 minutes, it would be possible to schedule voice conferences at only 5-10 minutes notice. This in turn means that the ad hoc voice conference becomes a far more realistic tool in the business of controlling an incident, or crisis.

## COST BREAKDOWN

- One of the many attractions of the hosted ASP service solution offered by Criticall is that it saves time and money on implementation, and gives passes on cost savings to you from significant economies of scale on daily running.
- The Entry Level system takes 3 man days of effort to set up per customer, for which a one-time fee of £3,750 + VAT is charged. This includes a one-time upload of customer-supplied data in the correct format. Any further data integration, or bespoke tailoring of the system beyond the Entry Level offering is separately chargeable.
- The annual licensing charge of £4k + VAT provides 7x24 access to the system, with an overall predicted system availability of 99% annually
- **5-10,000 free messages** are provided within this price, dependent on the number of recipients to be listed and maintained in the database. This is designed to permit two free tests per recipient per year, as recommended in the PAS56 best practice standards. Beyond

this, a small charge per block of additional messages will apply.

- Use of up to two voice lines concurrently will be provided. For an average 30 second message length, this means that over 100 voice calls can be made to telephones within an hour.
- The typical throughput for pager, SMS and email messages is over *1000 per hour*. Hence, for larger scale call-outs, we recommend that SMS/pager messages are sent out before voice calls, by making the relevant devices the first in sequence for each recipient listed in the database. This ordering can be carried out as part of the initial data load.
- Initial Train-the-Trainer training will be given over the internet to up to 3 individuals at once. This will be backed up by electronic User Guides on the various system modules.
- Support hours with this option are Monday-Friday, excluding Public Holidays, between the hours of 0900 and 1730, UK time.

## ADDITIONAL OPTIONS

**1. High Availability:** The details given above are deliberately aimed at those looking for a least-cost initial solution to evaluate within their enterprise. The High Availability option is for those organisations looking for the highest levels of service. Additional benefits with this option include: dual resilient sites, in different geographic locations, using different service providers; data backed up and synchronised daily; unlimited numbers of recipients in the database; access to support 7x24, including ability to initiate call-out on customer's behalf in case of extreme emergencies; and some bespoke tailoring of the product so suit specific customer requirements. This option costs an extra £10-15k per annum, dependant on complexity of requirements defined.

**2. High Throughput:** This option has some overlap with the High Availability option. It is intended for organisations which expect to have throughput demands which exceed the capacity of the 2 lines in the Entry Level offering. Criticall provides potential customers with a simple Excel spreadsheet sizing and pricing tool to self-assess their own sizing requirements. Input to the sizing formula consists of: how many target recipients within 1 hour, pro rata; how many people calling back into the system in the same period (to

acknowledge); average number of devices per recipient; and average message length. Other factors like length of proposed contract and number of rings before abandoning a call are pre-set in the formula. As a guide, allow £1k per line (at 10:1 contention ratio) per year, assuming a 3 year contract.

**3. Bespoke Tailoring:** Organisations can increase the tailoring of the look and feel of the solution to suit their business and how it wishes to operate. In particular, customers may wish to develop screens that better reflect the structure and provisions of their existing Business Continuity Plan. For example, if a BCP has 10 categories of threats listed, the customer may wish to have separate screens defined with relevant parameters from drop down menus for each of the 10 threats identified (eg Bomb threat, flood, IT mainframe outage). A pre-recorded message would then be played to suit each specific scenario, rather than the callout initiator having to record their own unique message each time there is a callout. This option permits the recording of messages in multiple languages, if required, for example.

To find out more about the aspects of our notification offerings which are most significant to you, please visit the relevant area of the main web site at [www.criticall.co.uk](http://www.criticall.co.uk).



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