Regroup

Mass Notification Buyer's Guide

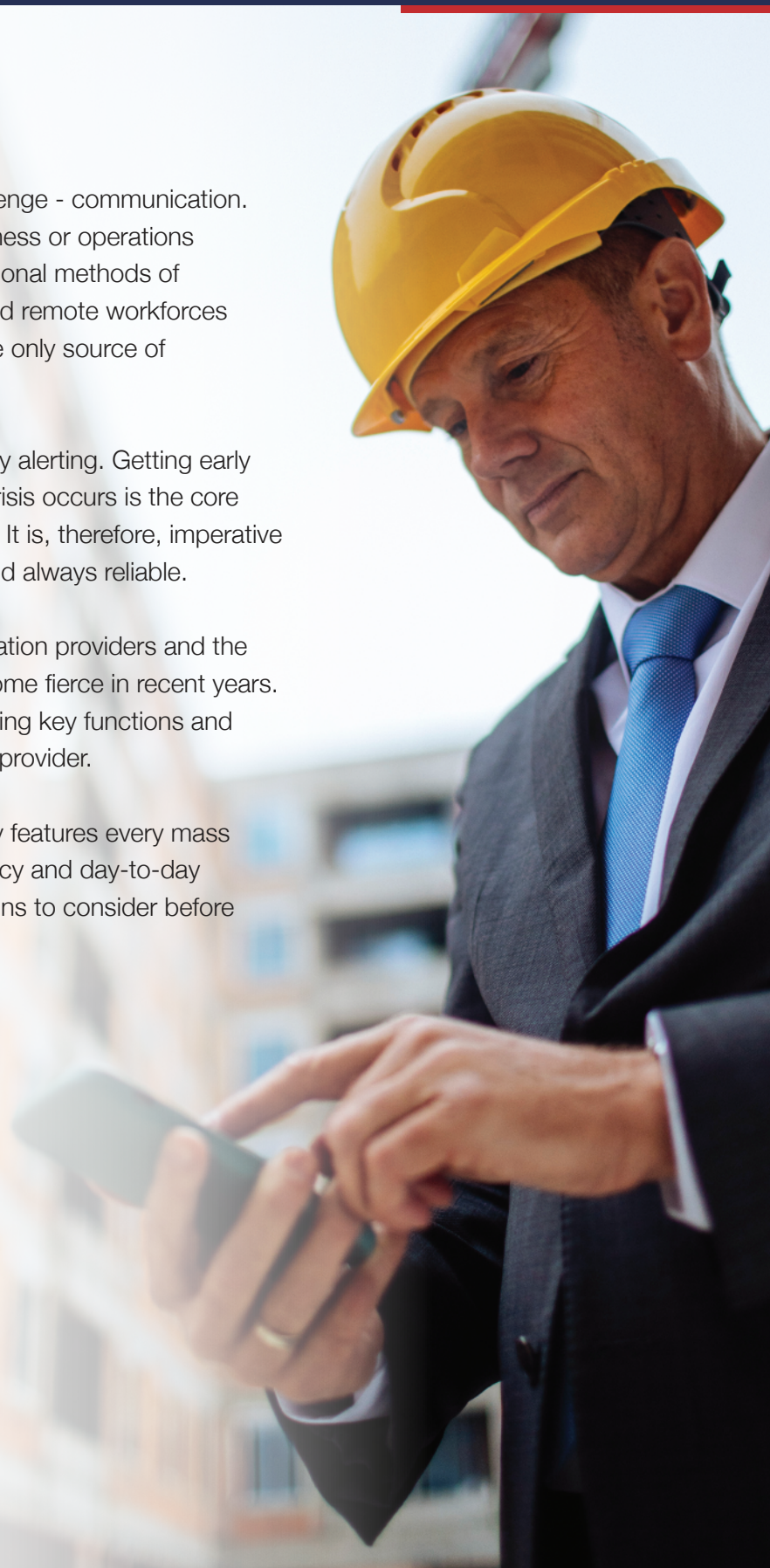How to find the best communication solution for your organization.

Introduction

Organizations of all sizes share a similar challenge - communication. Keeping people informed during routine business or operations can be a daunting task when relying on traditional methods of communication. The new normal of hybrid and remote workforces can create added complications if email is the only source of connection.

Mass notification has its genesis in emergency alerting. Getting early warnings to large groups of people when a crisis occurs is the core component of any mass notification platform. It is, therefore, imperative that a mass notification platform be robust and always reliable.

There are a number of reputable mass notification providers and the competition for subscriber business has become fierce in recent years. As with any business investment, understanding key functions and must-haves is essential to choosing the right provider.

In this Buyer's Guide, we will look at the 8 key features every mass notification platform should have for emergency and day-to-day communications and some important questions to consider before you choose a provider

There are many scenarios that justify a mass notification platform as a key business tool and investment.

The first priority is keeping people safe and informed in the event of an emergency or crisis situation. No organization is completely immune from critical events, and it is important to have a reliable tool for alerting others to potential dangers when crises occur.

Critical Alerting Scenarios To Consider

- Severe weather
- Biohazards
- Active shooter
- IT disruptions, malware infections
- Suspicious activity or person(s)
- COVID-19 exposures
- Fire event
- Supply chain slowdowns and disruptions

There are also a myriad of day-to-day uses for mass notification plan in almost any organization, healthcare facility, educational institution or enterprise business. Used as a complement to your organization's current communication plan and infrastructure, mass notification can help bridge dissemination gaps, promote faster response times and ensure accountability.

Day-to-day Scenarios to Consider

- Schedule changes
- Event updates or cancellations
- Shift coverage requests and requirements
- General reminders
- Employee wellness checks
- Maintenance collaboration
- Training instructions

From the smallest business to large enterprises and from government agencies to schools and universities, basic communication needs vary dramatically. Finding a mass notification system that addresses your specific requirements and can be scaled to fit your organization's future needs can be a confusing endeavor

All mass notification platforms should have three basic features

- Multi-channel message delivery
- Mobile app for recipients
- Reliable client support

However, depending on the type of organization, additional features can be required.

Small Business, Schools, Governments	Enterprise Business and Healthcare Also Need	Every Organization Should Also Consider
- Competitive pricing structure - Automatic message translation - User-friendly Interface - Training and support - Minimum contract duration	- Geo-targeting - Integration with existing systems - Single tenant environment - Threat intelligence - Desktop notifications - API integrations for automation - Single app for all users - Scalable to address organization growth	- Ease of use - Message throughput - Fail-safe redundancies and processes - Fast throughput - 24-hour technical and client support - Multi-channel delivery (email, text, push notifications, voice and more) - Fast, cost-effective onboarding

Regardless of the use case by organization, a reliable platform that performs during power outages or cellular tower disruptions is critical. A cloud-based solution is, therefore, required in times of emergency and for everyday business communications.

1 Easy-to-use communications interface

If your mass notification platform is not simple to onboard and use, adoption will be predictably low within your team. Computer and mobile app interfaces should be familiar so that users with limited technical expertise can get comfortable with the platform quickly.

2 Multiple fail-safe features to ensure alerts can always be launched

Does your platform operate in the cloud? Notification systems that rely on your current network infrastructure can fail during power outages and cellular tower disruptions. A cloud-based platform can overcome outages and continue to deliver.

3 APIs to automate emergency notifications

Does your mass notification provide open APIs? Without them, automations such as severe weather alerts or notifications over products like Microsoft Teams* are impossible. APIs integrate your system for a more holistic environment for more effective messaging.

4 Tools for collecting on-the-scene intelligence to increase situational awareness

Does your mass notification platform provide two-way communications? This feature is essential for coordinating response, enhancing situational awareness and providing instant updates when an event is unraveling.

5 Unlimited all-hazards notification templates to help save time in a crisis

Templates save time when moments count. If a mass notification limits access to specific templates, errors can happen and precious seconds are wasted when imparting important information.

6 Mobile notification apps

A simple-to-use mobile app is an irreplaceable tool for your team members. Convenient and as familiar as texting apps, a mass notification mobile app allows two-way communication, fast delivery and urgent messaging.

7 Desktop notifications

Whether on site or remote, desktop notifications keep your entire team notified of important information. Desktop notifications that are limited in in-house networks often require additional infrastructure considerations and do not reach remote users.

8 Integrations for government and public services

Does your mass notification platform integrate with the National Weather Service, NOAA or IPAWS? These important emergency alert services should be accessible through any mass notification system without additional infrastructure.

Mass Notification Comparison Checklist

	Regroup	Everbridge	RAVE	AlertMedia	KONEXUS	OnSOLVE
Global Messaging Capabilities	✔	✔	✔	✘	✘	✔
Message Throughput	80k text/SMS messages per minute	N/A	36-60k text/SMS messages per minute	10k text/SMS messages per minute	30k text/SMS messages per minute	12-15k text/SMS messages per minute
Unlimited Training & Support	✔	✘	✘	✔	✘	✘
Long SMS (additional characters)	✔	✘	✔	✘	✘	✘
Automatic Message Translation	80+ Languages	N/A	60+ Languages	✘	10+ Languages	50+ Languages
Multi-location Threat Intelligence	✔	✔	✘	✔	✘	✔
Extensive Reporting Capabilities	✔	✔	✔	✘	✘	✔
Minimum Contract Duration	1 Year	1 Year	1 Year	3 Years	3 Years	1 Year
Annual base cost (500 users)	$6,000	$18,000	$7,500	$6,000	$8,000	$8,500

Questions to Ask Mass Notification Providers

1 Will this new system integrate with my existing systems and processes?
Implementing a mass notification system shouldn't require you to completely change the way you do business. Make sure it will integrate with your current systems to save time and resources.

2 What is included (or not included) in the base cost of the system?
Many providers charge high setup fees, fees for integration add-ons and messaging or template packs. Understand ahead of time what you can expect and that there are no hidden monthly costs or up-charges.

3 Does the system have redundancies and fail-safe processes?
To eliminate risks of down time, avoid on-site or location-based mass notification systems that are susceptible to adverse local weather conditions, power outages or cellular tower disruptions.

4 Will the system simplify or complicate contact data management?
The ideal mass notification system makes contact data management easier by enabling integrations with other systems, bulk imports and updates and manual adjustments as needed.

5 What is the minimum length of contract?
Some providers require up to three years commitment on the part of the client. If your needs change, you won't have the flexibility to address them and could be stuck with a platform that no longer suits your organization.

Conclusion

Finding the right mass notification solution does not have to be an overwhelming process. However, it's important to understand cost vs. feature and how the platform integrates with your current infrastructure.

> If it's an easy-to-use platform, integrates seamlessly with other systems, provides flexible messaging options, speedy and reliable delivery and can be customized to your organization's unique needs, it's worth considering.

Always ask for a demonstration of the platform as well as client references or success stories.

Finally, when it comes to a mass notification system, consider how you can make the most of it outside of critical or emergency communications. A platform that complements your current communication plan and can be easily used for routine business is a tool that can ultimate help you reduce costs and increase efficiency.

About Regroup Mass Notification

Since 2006, Regroup Mass Notification has provided a cloud-based, multi-channel mass notification platform for emergency and routine applications. Serving the educational community, enterprise, manufacturing, finance and government, Regroup's continual pursuit of excellence has made it the most trusted name in mass notification and a leading-edge provider of smart communication solutions for clients throughout North America.

See the Demo at **www.regroup.com/demo**

Questions? Get in touch at **855-734-7687** or by email at **info@regroup.com**