



Miami gets prepared just in time for hurricane season



Customer Profile:

In 2003, the Department of Homeland Security designated the city of Miami a high-risk urban area because of the frequency of hurricanes and easy access by terrorists.

Miami UASI was created to deal with such threats.

Problem:

Miami UASI needed the ability to contact its four counties on a moment's notice to alert citizens, gather emergency support, and execute emergency procedures.

Solution:

Miami UASI uses Intelligent Notification regularly to speed the process of notifying and mobilizing first responders and other key individuals during disasters.

Benefit:

Citizens are protected and public services are better able to stay up and running since the adoption of Intelligent Notification.

When hurricanes or other threats loom, rapid, two-way communication with preparedness and response teams is key to survival.

High-risk urban areas have unique communication needs

In 2003 the Department of Homeland Security designated the city of Miami a high-risk urban area. The designation was in part because of the frequency of hurricanes that threaten the region every June through November, and in part because the city was seen as a possible port of entry for terrorists or acts of terrorism. The Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) program was created to enhance the preparedness and response of such high-risk cities by assisting with prevention, response to, and recovery from severe weather and acts of terrorism.

The Problem: How to alert citizens and mobilize response teams

Due to the high frequency of natural disasters and the potential for terrorist attack, Miami's Urban Area Security Initiative (UASI) needed the ability to contact various agencies and responders throughout its four counties on a moment's notice so that they might alert citizens, gather emergency support, and execute the proper emergency procedures as quickly as possible.

The Solution: Intelligent Notification

During hurricane season the need for immediate emergency response is critical, as is the maintenance and continuity of public services. Knowing this, when Hurricane Ivan made the weather radar, Miami UASI moved quickly to implement protection for all four of its counties. With funds from Homeland Security, Intelligent Notification was successfully put into place in four Florida counties: Palm Beach, Broward, Monroe, and Miami-Dade. Personnel in all of the Miami UASI counties were trained in just one day.

Two days later, Miami UASI used Intelligent Notification to launch alerts to emergency personnel across all four counties when the approach of Hurricane Ivan was imminent. Since that time, the city of Miami has used the platform regularly to speed the process of notifying and mobilizing first responders and other key individuals during disasters that pose a threat to businesses, critical government operations and human lives.

Hurricane Ivan killed 64 people in the Caribbean—mainly in Grenada and Jamaica—three in Venezuela, and 25 in the United States, including fourteen in Florida. Thirty-two more deaths in the United States were indirectly attributed to Ivan.

With Intelligent Notification, Miami UASI can:

- **Quickly launch mass notifications** – Administrators at Miami UASI can send a communication by simply logging into the Web interface, sending an email or making a phone call to launch a notification, using existing message templates or easily creating new ones in seconds.
- **Deliver notifications in various languages or as text-to-speech** – The four-county area has multi-national citizenry, so the support of multiple languages and custom pronunciation by Intelligent Notification has proven invaluable.
- **Track and report all alerts** – The organization benefits by closed-loop communication with detailed reporting of who received alerts, when, and with what responses. This feedback loop is useful for continuous process improvement at Miami UASI.

The bottom line

Miami UASI has responded to the designation of being high-risk urban area by adopting Intelligent Notification to prepare before disaster strikes and to quickly mobilize emergency responders when necessary. Although threats remain and likely always will, the city is prepared to deal with the inevitable interruptions as smoothly as possible. Citizens are protected and public services now have a better chance of being kept up and running.

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