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Five questions

Amir Moussavian

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Amir Moussavian is president and CEO of MIR3, a Carmel Valley company that has developed a voice-and text-notification system for home phones, cell phones and e-mail devices. Moussavian was previously chairman and CEO of Contigo Software, an Internet communications company that was acquired by Raindance Communications. He also founded HawkNet Inc., a software development and publishing company.



How does your system work?

I've been involved in several companies and there's always been a problem getting ahold of people quickly. People have home phones, work phones, desktop computers, cell phones, PDAs. If you need to get ahold of a group of people in an emergency, you have to multiply the number of messages by the number of devices. With our intelligent messaging, you just send one message. Notification might start with the cell phone. If the system doesn't get a reply, it would try the home phone next, then the office phone, then the PDA and the computer. We use text-to-speech (technology) so it can read the message to you or send it as text. And it requires a response. One response might be to call back to the office. Selecting that option will connect you to a conference call with the other people who are responding.

Who pays for it?

The business or organization sending the notification pays for it, not the person receiving it. As with any technology, it's being used first by early adopters. The Calcasieu Parish Police Jury (in Louisiana) uses our service as part of its community-alert system. There was a robbery at one of the local casinos. They sent a description of the suspects in a notification to 500 nearby residents. They were able to catch four out of five suspects. It has consumer applications, too. A soccer mom might use it instead of a phone tree if the time or location of practice has changed.

Will text messaging and mobile e-mail ever catch on?

We were hoping that text messaging would have caught on more quickly. I think that as phones become easier to use, it will become more popular. New phones have come out with too many applications too quickly.

Why did you start this company in San Diego?

I went to San Diego State University. This is the third company that I've had here. Being in San Diego has helped us to recruit talent from other parts of the country.

Are you an early adopter?

I used to be. I've been in technology for a long time. It used to be that you had to be an early adopter. Now I'm more of a technology realist. I like to try the reliable stuff. I have a camera phone, but I got it to become familiar with the technology. Like everybody else, I took some pictures the first couple of days. It's a fun toy, but I wouldn't have one if I wasn't in this job.