

CASE STUDY: Ontario Ministry of Government Services

ONTARIO, CANADA: HOW THE MINISTRY OF GOVERNMENT SERVICES USES SEND WORD NOW® TO SUPPORT OVER 68,000 GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEES



The Ontario Ministry of Government Services, Infrastructure Technology Services (ITS) Service Management Branch; which provides government I&IT to businesses and Ontario Citizens throughout the province, is respected as a responsive and innovative leader in customer service. Citizens of Ontario depend on the ITS to maintain and improve front-line public services through management of the government's technology resources. As ITS proudly states, "whether it is in Toronto, Ottawa, Thunder Bay, or any of the other cities and communities in this great province, the work of ITS impacts the life of every Ontarian."

The Issue

At the Ministry of Government Services IT Service Desk in Ontario, Canada, the quick and efficient distribution of information across a broad network of employees and I&IT stakeholders is of the utmost importance. Without a dependable IT Infrastructure, the Ontario Government's functions would be impacted significantly, in turn affecting its service to Ontario's citizens.

The MGS IT Service Desk provides a central point of contact for IT-related support for over 68,000 Ontario Public Service employees. Its mission is to provide prompt restoration of IT services to its customers following an unexpected service interruption and to supply its stakeholders with updates on its remedial measures, via consistent, reliable and effective communications. The IT Service Desk supports more than 1,000 mission critical applications

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-Justin Stiles
Incident Manager for the
IT Services Desk

regarding public safety, manages the Government network environment, and responds to all IT questions.

A dedicated Incident Management Team is responsible for activating an elevated awareness protocol when a major incident has been identified.

On a day-to-day basis, there are over 700 scenarios that can potentially trigger Priority Notification communications from the Incident Management team. So when the IT Service Desk needed a communications solution that would out-perform standard e-mail distribution lists, it turned to Send Word Now.

The Solution

The Incident Management Team, which operates within the IT Service Desk at the Ministry, sends out Send Word Now alerts to affected customers any time that there is an IT disruption, amounting to approximately 500 communications a month. The team monitors and manages all IT activity and major incidents within the Ontario Government. It operates 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, throughout the entire year.

The IT Desk reaches 90% of its 2,000 contacts through the use of e-mail and BlackBerry® PIN, and the remaining 10% via phone. When their e-mail server is down, the team takes advantage of Send Word Now's multi-modal functionality and communicates through voice contact points. With Send Word Now's dynamic groups feature, which allows users to populate groups automatically based on pre-determined values, the Ministry IT Service Desk can target its communication specifically depending on the situation.

It manages over 300 groups and 30 templates within its account. Justin Stiles, the Incident Manager for the IT Services Desk, explained that competitor platforms "would have crippled the organization" with their difficult and complicated operations procedures.

"Making use of Send Word Now's reliable and seamless functionality, we've also implemented a high profile communication protocol enabling our team to instantaneously pull together participants to address high visibility issues affecting large number of clients, applications, and our infrastructure," Justin explains. "As a result, we continue to excel on delivering dependable, quality services to the citizens of Ontario."



By running quarterly tests of the system, Stiles and his incident management team can remain confident in their ability to notify employees, and customers of IT disturbances with just the click of a mouse. When recently simulating a disaster, the team effectively used Send Word Now alerts to engage its business continuity team, its board room executives, and its vendors to quickly address and resolve the "emergency"

The Competitive Edge

Although Send Word Now faced fierce competition from companies based within Canada, its robust communication platform set it apart. The software's integration with the BlackBerry® network, as well as its dynamic group functions, stood out to the Ministry of Government Services as unique and valuable tools for its IT operations. By tailoring its services to the needs of its customers, Send Word Now consistently provides innovative notification solutions that outmatch its competitor's offerings. Through the use of dynamic groups, multiple points of contact, and unique features such as Get Word Back, customers can take advantage of Send Word Now's customizable platform to maximize their communication efforts. Send Word Now's BlackBerry® integration even allows administrators to send alerts while away from their computers, providing them with the flexibility they need during time-sensitive situations.

Send Word Now is the leading provider of on-demand alerting and response services for both routine and emergency communication. The easy-to-use, web-based emergency notification service is used by government agencies, municipalities, universities, non-profit organizations and businesses, including many Fortune 500 companies, to ensure fast, effective, two-way communication in real-time. Send Word Now's Alert Tracer® provides a full audit trail of messages sent and received for after-action reporting and follow-up. Designed to reach anyone, anywhere, anytime, with any device over any type of connection, Send Word Now's mass notification system is capable of transmitting hundreds of thousands of voice and text messages in minutes.