

FEMA Case Study in Disaster Recovery and Business Continuity

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FEMA

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FEMA Turns to VoiceNation in Time of Crisis

Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA)

“This is going to greatly reduce our response time. VoiceNation is providing a single point of contact where all FEMA members can coordinate their efforts” and it is safely insulated from any disaster event.” Telecommunications Specialist for FEMA

The Business Challenge

FEMA’s mission is to effectively manage federal response and recovery efforts following any national incident. To accomplish this mission, the organization must maintain what is known as “continuity of operations.”

Simply stated, it is critical for FEMA to be able to communicate with all of its onsite team members in the event of a natural disaster, act of terrorism, or other emergency. This fact was dramatically demonstrated on February 28th, 2001 when an earthquake struck the Seattle Area.

“Seattle is a regional headquarters for FEMA, and when the earthquake hit, the phone trunks for FEMA’s phone system became overloaded and went down,” said a regional Telecommunications Specialist for FEMA. I ended up working outside with a notebook, flashlight and a cell phone trying to restore communications, so that FEMA could coordinate its relief efforts. This clearly illustrated the need for a new way of thinking.”

The VoiceNation Complete Solution

FEMA contacted VoiceNation in early 2007 to deploy a solution to protect FEMA’s important communication channels. VoiceNation responded with a hosted, secure hotline where FEMA team members can call in to receive disaster information updates, including instructions on where to report in the event that FEMA’s normal regional headquarters is damaged in the disaster itself.

FEMA’s Telecommunications Specialist is thrilled. “VoiceNation’s technology delivers a single location outside of a terrorist or natural disaster event area where our team can call for information and guidance,” he declared. “The bottom line is that we will be able to contact regional personnel and have them report to a specific location much faster.”

FEMA normally assigns a unique 4-digit code to each disaster. VoiceNation’s system was easily customized to fit within this process, so that a caller simply dials into one number and can enter the code to get the information they need to do their job. And with the ability to handle 92 simultaneous inbound calls, FEMA’s specialist is confident in VoiceNation’s ability to handle important emergency communications.

“If we were to install a traditional PBX system for all 10 regions, plus headquarters, and upgrade the trunking to handle a higher call volume, and then get one big massive voicemail system with an offsite backup, and then administer and maintain the system, we would be looking at least a \$300,000-\$400,000 investment,” relates this FEMA team member. “With VoiceNation, it’s all covered with one low monthly fee, and we get crisis communications that we can count on. This frees up my organization to do what it does best — respond when the nation calls.”

The Results

FEMA has its mission-critical communications protected during a disaster event \$300,000-\$400,000 saved when compared to other technologies. High call volume capability and robust voicemail platform empower FEMA to stay focused on other disaster recovery efforts.

About VoiceNation

VoiceNation defines itself as what’s next voice communications, enabling businesses of all sizes to compete in the marketplace as a Fortune 500 organization. The company’s hosted platform offers all the features of a corporate PBX at a fraction of the cost or complexity of traditional technology. VoiceNation offers companies a reliable outsourced voice platform, local number availability, voicemail and live answering services, as well as robust disaster recovery services. VoiceNation is proud to serve well-respected clients throughout the United States, including Blue Cross/Blue Shield, Dell and AIG.