

Enhancing Emergency Communication Through Mass Notification and Integration

By Michael Zuidema

As the sophistication of security technology continues to expand with an ever-increasing number of choices, it has become critical for campuses to integrate all of their emergency communication systems. But what exactly is the right way to ensure that a university, hospital, school or other organization is satisfied with the end result without compromising the integrity of their security plan? Ultimately, that answer differs from campus to campus.

The multiple platform approach is generally considered to be the most effective, and it is precisely the approach recommended by Code Blue Corp. For more than two decades, Code Blue has manufactured easily recognizable Help Points, like its trademarked cylindrical pedestals and wall-mounted call boxes, which can be found at thousands of campus locations worldwide. While those emergency communication units remain a key component of establishing a safe environment, there are many options that can either accentuate existing security equipment or enhance new products being installed.

Chaffey College Adds Cameras to Its Call Boxes

For example, Chaffey College in Rancho Cucamonga, Calif., ordered 9-foot tall pedestals as part of a multimillion dollar construction project. Rather than sticking with the standard model, Chaffey College included options for Code Blue's 360-degree, 400-watt, six-speaker public address system to deliver maximum audio clarity and range to a broad audience. The college then added an overhead camera mount to integrate with its security cameras.

Video surveillance also can be provided with the dual faceplate feature for either pedestals or call boxes. While one faceplate contains an emergency speakerphone, the second can be used for a variety of applications, including directory listings, access control, CCTV or other security devices.

Additionally, Code Blue's emergency speakerphones are Cisco certified to deliver tested, interoperable solutions that can deploy a broad range of compatible applications, devices and services. This enhances the capabilities, performance and management of existing networks.



The CB 9-d Help Point from Code Blue pictured here has been integrated with a university's video surveillance system. Additionally, the weather-, UV- and graffiti-resistant finish supports the campus brand.

BYU, Tarrant County College Embrace Integration

When an emergency occurs, it's vital to respond quickly and effectively, and software can help a campus improve its response. Of course, high-tech software only does so much if it isn't able to integrate with other hardware.

Code Blue units can easily connect to other mass notification systems (MNS), physical security information management (PSIM) and phone technologies. At Brigham Young University (BYU), for instance, Code Blue's public address system was integrated with InformaCast software to enhance the school's MNS. At Tarrant County College in Texas, Code Blue units integrated with OnSSI to update its video surveillance package.

Another way Code Blue is able to put it all together is through its Blue Alert MNS, which provides instantaneous audio and visual notifications at the touch of a button. The award-winning software has the ability to provide messages not only through public address speakers, but also via digital signs, fire panels, E-mail, text messaging and social media.

Take a Comprehensive Approach

Emergency situations happen in the blink of an eye. Students, faculty, staff and visitors need to be alerted as swiftly and effectively as possible, whether it's an active shooter on campus or a sudden change in the weather. The key to making that a reality is taking a comprehensive approach across multiple platforms to offer the best possible safety and service. As technology continues to evolve and options available to campuses

increase, the need for integration is becoming more and more essential. It's important to consider not only all of the options available, but how they work together before settling on the right plan.

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