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Education Institution Streamlines Communications to 17 Branches with Everbridge

A higher education institution in the American Midwest relies on Everbridge to contact their staff, students, and faculty during emergencies. With 17 colleges and universities in their remit, complex and manual processes need to be avoided during critical events, and with Everbridge they've found a streamlined solution that meets their needs.

Interview with a Instructional Technologist at an Education Institution

What is your primary use case?

I work for a higher education system with 17 institutions, so Everbridge is deployed across 19 locations. We have 12 colleges, five universities, and two system offices. Each has staff, faculty, and students receiving notifications.

We primarily use Everbridge for notifications about extreme weather and other emergencies. We also use the solution to send other higher education information about tuition payments, registration, etc. We also had grant-funded mental health support during the pandemic, so we used it to announce those services to students.

Right now, we aren't using any other Everbridge solutions, but we are trying to deploy the mobile app.

How has Everbridge helped your organization?

We are a system of 17 colleges and universities, and we previously lacked a single platform for sending mass messages to all locations. Everbridge allows us to reach out across multiple channels, including home phone, cell phone, emails, work email, personal email, etc. You can populate a host of different data types and send a notification using various methods in one swoop.
The safety and security of our students are priorities. Everbridge helps us reach more people, and people are now expecting notifications.
They know the messages should be coming, and I always get messages from people who didn't receive them. Everybody is pleased to be on the list and feels assured that they will be notified.

Everbridge can improve productivity, depending on how you use it. For instance, during COVID,

we had students getting COVID relief checks, but they weren't cashing those checks because they didn't know whether they were valid. We used Everbridge to send mass notifications verifying that the checks were valid. We also followed up with students to notify them to cash their checks because they would expire. Everbridge enabled us to reach out to thousands of people who would've gotten these checks with the push of a button. It saved a lot of staff time and effort.

Everbridge is a time-saver in emergencies. We primarily use the platform for weather-related emergencies. Using the built-in features, I can post one message and have it go out to our mobile devices and post to social media sites like Twitter and Facebook. We also had some security breaches or phishing situations where we could reach all our users to inform them what happened and how to react. It's difficult to reach thousands of students, staff, and faculty. Everbridge ensures we reach everyone.

"Everbridge enabled us to reach out to thousands of people [...] it saves a lot of staff time and effort."

Instructional Technologist,
University in the Midwest United States

What is most valuable?

We find the templates useful. We can pre-write them, save them, and reuse them over and over. For instance, we get snow and ice storms, so we have school delays and cancellations. Instead of drafting a new message for distribution each time, you create a template and deploy it. You can change the date of the event and specific information. It might say that class times will be delayed or we'll be closed for a day.

How long have you used the solution?

I have been an Everbridge admin for two years.

What do you think about the scalability of the solution?

Everbridge's scalability is good.

How are customer service and support?

I rate Everbridge support a nine out of ten. I haven't used technical support much, but our account manager is phenomenal. I can reach her at any time to get help, and she's invaluable to me. She is based on the West Coast. Our account manager is a nice person, and we have a good working relationship. The technical support is highly responsive.

Which solution did you use previously and why did you switch?

Before Everbridge, the security department primarily managed notifications. Each institution had its own separate system, so there was no consistency. Many of our students attend multiple institutions within the system. They would get a notification from an institution via one method and get another notification from the other institution. Now, they get one message from the same platform and know what to expect. I'm an applications administrator, so I've sent messages using many methods, but they're not necessarily mass notification systems.

How was the initial setup?

Everbridge is a cloud-based solution, and everything was set up before I joined the organization. It requires very little maintenance. We update our contact data each night, and it also uses certificates that must be updated. However, the vendor performs all the backend software upgrades.

I handle any records that need to be entered manually and custom notifications. For example, I can make a specialized notification for people who haven't paid off their accounts. I upload those contacts, send out the message, and delete them, so don't duplicate the users in the system and increase the license cost.

What was the ROI?

Students and faculty are so overwhelmed with coursework that they tend to ignore emails. Messages from this system catch their attention. And again, for the various reasons that we use it for, registration, "Your registration hasn't gone through. Your payment hasn't been processed," whatever kind of message, it gets their attention.

The return on investment from that standpoint alone is invaluable. But then let's just unfortunately say that we have a mass shooting or something like that. It would be paid off in just being able to reach that one person and get them to safety.

Overall, how do you rate Everbridge?

I rate Everbridge Mass Notification a nine and a half out of ten.

About Everbridge

Everbridge, Inc. (NASDAQ: EVBG) empowers enterprises and government organizations to anticipate, mitigate, respond to, and recover stronger from critical events. In today's unpredictable world, resilient organizations minimize impact to people and operations, absorb stress, and return to productivity faster when deploying critical event management (CEM) technology. Everbridge digitizes organizational resilience by combining intelligent automation with the industry's most comprehensive risk data to Keep People Safe and Organizations Running™.

For more information, visit Everbridge.com, read the company blog, and follow us on LinkedIn and Twitter.

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