Layered Solutions
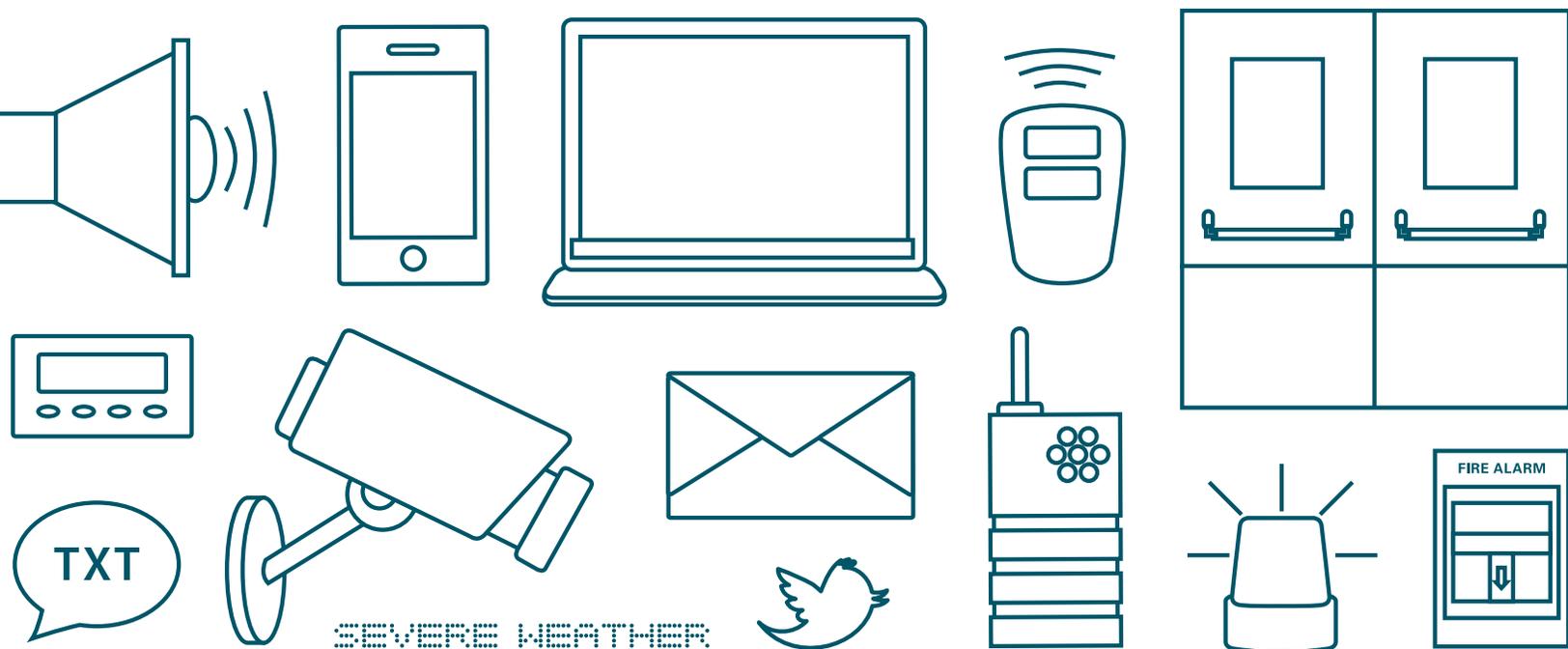
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18 WAYS TO

Enhance Operations, Profits, and Emergency Response with Integrated Communications

TXT

SEVERE WEATHER

FIRE ALARM

Introduction

As market conditions evolve, so do customer expectations of your organization. Audiences are growing short on time and attention, and **_demand you communicate better and faster_**, with content that's actionable and relevant to their experience: whether that's messaging that helps their buying journey, avoids pesky delays, or resolves crises with minimal harm or risk.

Get it wrong and customers will shun you and move on to a competitor. **Get it right and they'll reward you with their credit cards.**

Perhaps you're keenly aware of these expectations, but the thought of upgrading your communications capabilities (and the cost that might incur) feels like an uphill climb.

The good news: You can increase your communications capabilities dramatically using tools you already have.

In this resource, we'll cover:

- Technologies you can integrate and automate to triple the benefits you get from them without added burden on your staff, or a big startup cost. (Again, you likely already have many of these technologies.)

- Possible uses to enhance your operations, profits, emergency response, customer and staff experiences.

By the end of this resource, you'll have at least one or two (or several!) ideas you can implement right away, or with little investment to enjoy greater rapport and engagement with the audiences you serve.
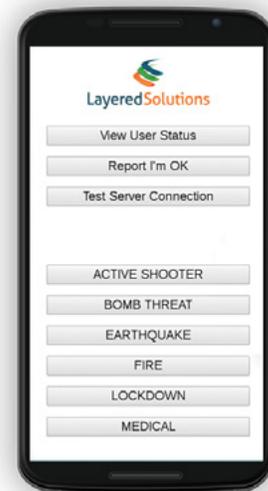
Technologies you can (and should) integrate

Before we discuss applications, it might be helpful to clarify what tools we're talking about. Put simply, most technologies used for routine, mass or emergency communications have the potential to be integrated, including:

- **Audio PA/Intercom**
- **Email, SMS Texting, Pagers, Browsers**
- **LCD Panels**
- **Digital Signage**
- **LED Signage**
- **Visual PA**
- **Mobile App**

- **PC Alert (Pop-ups)**
- **Phone System**
- **Fire Alarm Systems**
- **Security Cameras**
- **Two-Way Radios**
- **Door and Card Access**
- **Wireless Panic Buttons**

To integrate, automate and centralize the management of these tools, you'll need software that can make them "talk" and play well with one another, as well as other tools you add in the future. That's a much more palatable investment than buying all new devices and revamping entire systems.
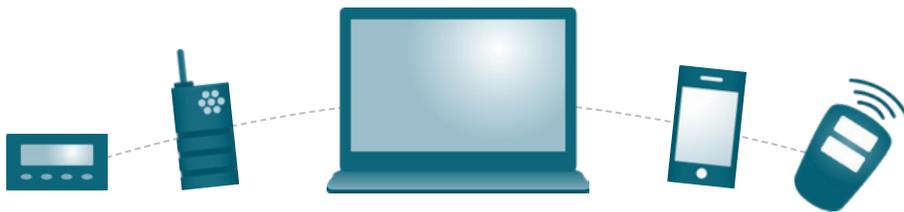
Problems you can solve or prevent with integrated communications

Let's get to the actual ways you can benefit from integrated communications.

We'll organize them below as "everyday" and "emergency/safety" uses, although some applications cross over into both categories. In any case, all applications contribute to your organization's financial health: whether that's through engaging buyers more effectively, increasing staff productivity, or preventing losses.

EVERYDAY USES

1. **Improve customer experiences** with interest-based communications, service/product updates, promotions, automated support, new releases, contract renewals, deadline-driven specials, back-in-stock notifications, and so on. By integrating your communications tools, you can disseminate pre-programmed or in-the-moment messages across multiple communications channels (say, digital signage, email, phone, audio) with just a couple of clicks.

2. **Direct buyer's attention,** despite the distractions vying for their time and dollars**.** For customers shopping on-site, digital signage is a great way to showcase testimonials, lesser-known services, and success stories. And with integrated signage, you can synchronize content across several locations, or deploy custom content for each location.

3. **Motivate employees and accelerate performance goals.** Display real-time performance metrics as gentle nudges to keep employees focused and motivated to meet performance objectives. Similarly, celebrate employees' special dates, achievements, milestones and initiatives for improved morale and engagement.

4. **Enhance visitor experience.** Reduce confusion and help guests to your facilities feel at home with visual messaging that can be customized to individuals, locations, audiences, and more. This may be as simple as welcoming a guest by name on a digital display, displaying location maps, or suggesting ways visitors can benefit most of their visit.

5. **Conduct polls/surveys.** Gather immediate feedback from staff, customers, partners, donors and more.

6. **Improve regulatory compliance.** Comply with industry or governmental regulations with greater ease by instantly/automatically issuing safety and procedure reminders, industry code requirements, documented notifications, and more.

7. **Solve staffing issues.** One hospital we serve used to spend hours each day to coordinate shift openings, employee absences, scheduling changes and deadlines across various offices. They've since automated all of that, letting integrated communications do it for them.

8. **Niche-specific needs:** Solve communications issues specific to your industry or business model. For some of our clients, that includes student updates, parent communications, bell scheduling, manufacturing floor alerts, patient care coordination, volunteer engagement, tenant communications, and more.

9. **Enhance partner, affiliate or reseller support** with instant notifications on product/ service launches, availability of resources, service delays, updates on terms, contractor engagement, and more.

10. **Strengthen company branding.** Use digital displays to showcase your work, success stories, new product launches, branding videos and more in lobbies, waiting rooms, trade show booths, and select areas across your facilities.

11. **Create additional revenue streams.** Reap added revenue by displaying ads for partners, sponsors, events, or non-competing brands that benefit your audience.

12. **Alert staff/users of IT hiccups:** Help shrink downtime, risk or frustration by improving the way you communicate when the IT network is down, scheduled maintenance, virus alerts, update reminders, outages and more.

SAFETY/EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT USES

13. **Reach everyone, everywhere** — especially during emergencies — no matter their location, communications barriers or distractions. Layering your communications in various formats means no one misses out on crucial (perhaps life-saving) instructions because they couldn't hear, slipped into a private room, or their phones died.

14. **Automate emergency plans.** Would your employees know what to do, at a moment's notice, during an emergency? Or are they scrambling through manuals trying to figure out who needs to do what? To prevent that, you want to anticipate possible scenarios, clarify protocols and automate as much as possible, so the only decisions your staff has to make during a crisis are two or three clicks to deploy pre-programmed messaging to all target audiences.

15. **Enable faster crisis response and resolution.** Real-time building maps, actionable messages, and emergency system integrations mean first responders can solve issues faster, and people can rush to safety with minimal confusion or panic.

16. **Deploy first responders instantly.** Automate first responder notifications, with the option to share security camera views and building maps while first responders are en route to your building.

17. **Overcome communications hurdles** like language barriers or physical impairment. How will you reach non-English speakers, sight or hearing-impaired guests and associates? Bypass those communications barriers by using pre-programmed messaging and pairing visual displays with flashing lights and sounds — a must if you ever need to evacuate or direct people to safety.

18. **Ensure employee safety.** In some scenarios (like school buildings) you'll need staff to check in and confirm they're safe or call for help while on the move. Enable them to do so quickly with a tap on their mobile device, with the option to integrate GPS information.
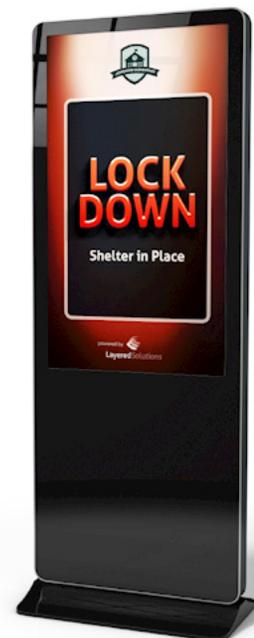
Budget Considerations

We get it: It's hard to justify new tech when money is tight. Again, there's no need to throw out technologies you own today and invest in a massive makeover to implement many of the applications above.

Use what you have now and squeeze more value out of it through an easy-to-use, integrative software. (We'd love for you to consider us!) Then gradually add more tools or capabilities as funds become available.

Because the applications for integrated communications are so wide and affect many areas of your business, it's worth noting that you can reasonably pull from various department budgets (e.g., marketing and emergency preparedness) to fund that integration.

Parting Thoughts

The bottom line is that to remain competitive in today's market you need a way to reach multiple audiences — customers, employees, partners, suppliers, first responders, the community at large — in an instant, ensuring they receive information that's highly relevant to their interests and, at times, their safety.

By layering and integrating your communications, you can counter obstacles like distractions, physical impairment, limited access to technology (like dead phones or being away from a computer), language barriers and more, to ensure no intended recipient falls through the cracks and misses out on your messaging.

YOUR TURN

Schedule Your Complimentary Consultation

What are your greatest routine or emergency communication challenges?
We'll help you solve them with tools you already have. You'll walk away with actionable insight, whether or not we end up working together.

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