



Everbridge keeps university connected and aligned during critical events

A university in a large city in the United States uses Everbridge Mass Notification to ensure all students and staff across two main campuses remain informed during critical events. With a large commuter population, the university relies on Everbridge to alert students regardless of where they are in the city.

Highlights

- The customer support is excellent, and we're delighted by how quickly they respond
- We can alert our community, faculty, staff, and students via text, voice calls, and email. We also have Everbridge tied into our social media so we can push alerts



Customer Spotlight

An Interview with Associate Director of Emergency Management

What is your primary use case?

This solution is primarily used as one of our emergency notification methods, and we use many of the solution's features. If there's a significant emergency on campus, we can alert our community, faculty, staff, and students via text, voice calls, and email. We also have Everbridge tied into our social media so we can push alerts there, and we use the RSS feature to push notifications to our primary website.

In one scenario, we had a significant emergency response from police and fire on the campus, and we used the solution to send out messages multiple times throughout the day. Initially, asking people to avoid the area, but also countering rumors and providing updates. In another instance, we had to close a building earlier than planned due to an unexpected incident. Most recently, we've been using what we call timely notifications via email only; it's a requirement under federal law for universities to inform individuals when crimes occur on or around campus. Unless we need people to take immediate action, such as seeking a safe location, we can send alert emails using a template. We have specific users with limited access and can only send out alerts via email using the created template, which is a good feature.

We have two main campuses in Chicago that are relatively close to one another, with our staff spread across both campuses. We typically use the web version of the solution, but a few of us have the ManageBridge app that allows us to use it from our phones, although that isn't our preferred method. Approximately 20 staff split across two departments with different roles have varying levels of access to the platform. I'm in Public Safety which is in charge of security on campus, and we have several users who can send alerts.

However, we typically rely on our Marketing and Communications department, responsible for launching emergency notifications. We work closely with them, and both departments ensure the facts are correct and the language is tweaked before notifications go out. Fortunately, we've had a little time in most emergencies to get the language right before sending the message.

How has Everbridge helped your organization?

Everbridge contributes to our mission; it's conducive to keeping everybody safe and informed about emergencies on campus. It's a great tool, and while we can get information out inside our buildings using speaker systems, fire alarms, etc., for those outside of buildings or on their way to campus, we need to make sure they know to stay away or that they are informed, depending on the situation. The university has a substantial commuter population, so our communication must extend beyond just the buildings. The solution has been essential to keeping that communication running during emergencies.

Everbridge Mass Notification increased our productivity; it's much more efficient than sending out emails as we used to. Additionally, the product we used previously took more time and wasn't as reliable as Everbridge. We can use the solution from any browser and even launch it from our phones if we have to. This flexibility saves time.



“Everbridge contributes to our mission; it's conducive to keeping everybody safe and informed about emergencies on campus.”

Associate Director of Emergency Management
University in United States

What is most valuable?

We like the simulation mode, a relatively new feature for Everbridge. It allows our users to practice sending out alerts, which is especially useful for new users transitioning to the platform, and was only possible after this feature was added. If we can't practice regularly, we'll be more nervous in an emergency which increases the chance of mistakes, and we need to be ready to send out those alerts.

The solution positively affected our mass notification capabilities; we customized our notifications using templates to look a little nicer when sending emails. We can also customize user permissions using the roles feature, which is very nice.

How long have you used the solution?

We've been using the solution for less than a year.

What do you think about the stability of the solution?

The solution is stable; we haven't had any issues so far. It's always been up when we've logged in, the texts go out rapidly, voice calls take a little longer, and emails go through pretty quickly too. In addition to our actual uses, we carried out testing where we sent notifications to everyone, which worked very well.

What do you think about the scalability of the solution?

The scalability is excellent; Everbridge works for a small number of users and many users.

How are customer service and support?

The customer support is excellent, and we're delighted by how quickly they respond. We recently had a minor issue, and they got back to us within an hour or two. They didn't have an answer at first but contacted me to say they were looking into it, which was really good to hear.

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

We previously used a different solution. It worked and was fine functionally speaking; we could send text, emails, and so on, but it wasn't as flexible as Everbridge. Everbridge allows us to customize user roles for who can send what. It also came at a much more competitive price point when we reviewed all the vendors, so we switched due to the usability, flexibility, and price.

How was the initial setup?

The initial setup was relatively straightforward, and the Everbridge representative we worked with assisted us greatly. They helped us with the setup, migration, and ensuring we got our data into the platform so we could contact our users. As with all technical projects, we ran into a few issues, but we managed to troubleshoot them and get them sorted out.

Three to four IT staff members and I were involved in the deployment, though we weren't all working full-time on it. One team member did a lot of the work and prepared our data; the others were available to help troubleshoot issues where required and oversee the process. We set up a daily feed to Everbridge checking the information, including current students, faculty and staff, their mobile numbers, email addresses, etc., is correct. This process is automated and takes place every day at noon, and I get confirmation that it worked, so it is not maintenance per se. If there were an issue with the data, then that is something we would have to look into.

What was your ROI?

It's challenging to quantify an ROI, especially in an area like emergency notification, but we're happy with the product, and the price is good for us.

What's your experience with pricing, setup cost, and licensing?

The product's pricing is the most competitive of the three solutions we evaluated. One feature we have yet to use is the keyword opt-in functionality, which Everbridge included in the price. The opt-in feature is helpful for large-scale events such as graduations, where users who aren't typically included can opt into our notification system, as they'll be on campus for a day or more.

What other advice do you have?

I rate the solution nine out of ten. Before using Everbridge, our challenge was that our previous solution wasn't as flexible, and we experienced some issues with the platform. We also had problems with an internal email tool we were using, which was unreliable and had issues depending on the browser used.

My advice to others evaluating the solution is to consider who will send messages and what type. There's an incident platform and a notification platform in Everbridge; they're the same tool, but the incident platform allows greater flexibility when providing different user access levels. Post-deployment, we had to look into how incidents work because we wanted one group of users to be able to send emails only, for example. The incident platform works well in enabling us to do that.

We plan to leverage the keyword opt-in feature for our next graduation and potentially similar events.

Which deployment model are you using for this solution?

Private Cloud

This case study originated from PeerSpot.
You can find the original review [here](#).