

Queens Health Network Communication in Hospitals

NYC
HEALTH+
HOSPITALS

Customer: Queens Health Network

Industry: Healthcare

Location: New York, United States

Employees: 5,500 across two major hospitals



BACKGROUND

Queens Health Network (QHN) is a major healthcare provider in the borough of Queens, New York.

Saleh Ghasemi is the Director QHN Technical Services, leading a team of 40 responsible for all the desktops, service desk and helpdesk, web-based applications and intranet across 5,500 users in two major hospitals and satellite clinics.

A major part of Ghasemi's role is to provide business continuity in a 24/7 organization and manage all the IT communications between Technical Services, Administration Services, patients and hospital staff.

Key Challenges

Ghasemi had been frustrated by the available hospital staff communication channels not being fit for conveying urgent IT notifications. Staff were most commonly using mass broadcast emails and the intranet.

Ghasemi explains that, "Emails became irrelevant to people. After a while they were not even reading them because they all sound the same and look the same."

In common with many healthcare environments, the limitations of email were glaring. "We couldn't really communicate with everybody in our organization because

we still had a good population of people who did not have email accounts. And if they did have email, they did not have computers to access them in an emergency or even a regular basis."

QHN needed an internal communication platform which delivered emergency and outage communications fast, reached staff with no email access and improved readership of messages by addressing the problem of email fatigue.



Solution

While researching hospital communication channels online, Ghasemi found Everbridge Engage. A better solution with “bells and whistles” that pop up on screen and get staff attention. In March 2011 the Technical Services team implemented four new staff communication channels across QHN.

Desktop alerts ensure high impact to get employee attention immediately, whether via desktop, mobile or digital signage.

Desktop tickers display scrolling text across the bottom of employees’ computer screens to provide fast updates with low intrusion.

Screensavers are powerful visual tools for staff reminders or promoting the organization’s values, events and initiatives.

Staff surveys provide an easy way for staff to anonymously submit feedback or suggestions, and for managers to take a workplace temperature check.

A **staff quiz** can test understanding of important business topics in a non-threatening format.

Application

The IT department uses desktop alerts as an IT outage notification tool to communicate both scheduled and unplanned outages, and to keep hospital staff updated with any issues around system downtime.

“We find it to be very effective because you can focus desktop messages to certain groups. Let’s say certain clinical applications and PCs that have that application on it. You can send that desktop message only to those people and specifically tell them what you expect them to do”, said Ghasemi.

Outside the IT team, Everbridge Engage is mostly used by the clinical administration departments that need to be able to notify hospital staff in the event of an emergency such as fire, infant abduction or hazardous material spills. Color-coded templates have been created that administrators can quickly use, just by changing out the description information.

Other hospital departments use Everbridge Engage for news and information updates. For example, Ghasemi says that the solution’s channels were used in preparation for joint commission audits. “It’s a good tool for letting people know what is going on and be aware of auditing presence in an area.”

QHN also use the staff survey and staff quiz tools to collect information and for training purposes. For example, resident clinical staff need to be educated on certain procedures and processes. But it’s difficult to get doctors, students and everyone else together at the same time. So, presentations and training documentation have been created that embed a quiz at the end, which staff take once they have gone through the material. IT then sends the relevant department a report of who has taken the quiz, together with trainees’ marks. The department then manages the communication back to staff.

While IT has total access to Everbridge Engage and can communicate with staff in both hospitals and issue emergency or back-up communications, they have also set up administrators with varying levels of authority that can create and send messages relevant to their own department or hospital.

The QHN team have created staff groups in the Everbridge Engage database to expedite the communication of emergency events and administrative updates to appropriate staff only.

Results

Everbridge Engage messages are now preferred by Queens Health Network staff over emails. Ghasemi says that, “Especially the administration thinks it is an effective way of communicating with the rest of the population.”

Better management of hospital communications has been an area of strength for Everbridge. Ghasemi affirms that, “One of the major benefits of this system is real-time. You have a lot of control over when, who and how to send these messages to. That is one of the major benefits of this system that you cannot get via other conventional communication.”

Other hospitals within HHC have become aware of the [Everbridge Engage] tools and have asked about how they could be used throughout the corporation. For Ghasemi it’s a validation of the decision to introduce the tool. “I expected this tool to be very effective and it is.”

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-Saleh Ghasemi

Director QHN Technical Services,
Queens Health Network



ABOUT EVERBRIDGE

Everbridge, Inc. (NASDAQ: EVBG) is the global leader in critical event management and enterprise safety software applications that automate and accelerate an organization’s operational response to critical events in order to keep people safe and businesses running. Everbridge is based in Boston and Los Angeles with additional offices around the globe including Auckland, Bangalore, Beijing, Kolkata, Hong Kong, Lansing, London, Malaysia, Oslo, San Francisco, Singapore, and Stockholm.

