



San Angelo Police Department



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Tracy Gonzalez
San Angelo Police Department

OVERVIEW

Close to 100,000 people call San Angelo, Texas home, and the San Angelo Police Department is charged with keeping each and every one of them safe, while also maintaining normal order of the city. San Angelo's diverse economy is supported by agriculture, manufacturing, education, business and health services, military, tourism, and retirement.

PROBLEM

San Angelo is susceptible to natural, technological and man-made disasters ranging from tornadoes and severe weather incidents, to missing children cases and everyday emergencies. The San Angelo Police Department required a solution to enable them to disseminate critical information and engage the community through social media.

SOLUTION

With Nixle Community Engagement, an Ever-bridge solution, the San Angelo Police department is able to communicate directly to community members instantaneously through multiple contact paths. The police department has also had success with Nixle Tip Watch, an anonymous tipping solution that encourages residents to speak up and engage in the fight against crime in their city.

Q&A with Officer Tracy Gonzalez, Public Information Officer, San Angelo Police Department



TELL US ABOUT YOUR ROLE IN THE SAN ANGELO POLICE DEPARTMENT AND WHY SAN ANGELO PD NEEDED A COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND CRITICAL COMMUNICATION SOLUTION?

I've been with the San Angelo Police Department for nine and a half years, starting off in patrol and then moving on to background investigations. I now head the department's social media efforts as the Assistant Public Information and Social Media Officer. I am responsible for monitoring the department's social media accounts, sending out press releases, and acting as the Nixle administrator.

In my current role with the San Angelo Police Department, social media takes up a big part of my day-to-day activities. This, however, wasn't always the case. I began to notice an issue in the public perception of my department and realized that there was no means to directly communicate with their residents. After doing some research, I found that social media would be instrumental in engaging the community - opening up the lines of communication between the agency and the community it serves.

HOW DID THE SAN ANGELO PD DECIDE ON NIXLE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AND WHY IS IT THE SOLUTION YOU NEEDED (IMPORTANT FEATURES)?

Although social media is a great way to engage the public, social channels are not always the most reliable. As a designated area for disaster relief, the San Angelo Police Department has to be prepared for these potential emergencies and it was clear to us that we needed a more secure and trustworthy means to communicate to our residents during emergencies.

Securing a reliable, reputable, and affordable mass notification system became a focus for the department. Like I said, I had conducted some research on my own time and after discussing with my Chief, we decided that Nixle

was the best fit for the department's needs to empower us with a platform for both notification and community engagement. We were not disappointed - we have found that Nixle has provided us with a secure and reliable means to communicate to our residents.

WHAT OTHER BENEFITS DOES NIXLE PROVIDE?

In previous years, our police department has used traditional means to gather tips and information about crimes in progress. But we've found that tips rarely came in and, when they do, most of them are not actionable. We introduced Nixle Tip Watch as part of the department's overall communication strategy and have received a positive response from our residents ever since.

Personally, I really like the branding that Nixle provides our agency. Residents recognize Nixle and know messages coming through are secure and can be trusted. This makes them more comfortable about replying with a tip to Nixle through Tip Watch.

ARE THERE ANY SPECIFIC CRITICAL COMMUNICATION USE CASES YOU'D LIKE TO HIGHLIGHT?

Nixle Tip Watch was put to the test on April 26, 2013 when an unidentified white male attempted to rob a convenience store armed with a handgun. The detective working on the case had no leads and the case came to a grinding halt. Our department decided to turn to the public for help. We released a press release and YouTube video containing photographs of the suspect and tipsters were encouraged to text any information they had on the suspect to 888777. This public outreach proved to be successful as we received a Nixle Tip with valuable information just 20 minutes after publishing. The suspect was consequently arrested and was sentenced to ten years.

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I've always said that "opening up a good tip is like Christmas morning." With Nixle, we were able to close the case in above average time and Nixle has since become the department's primary source of anonymous tips.

LET'S TALK ABOUT YOUR RECENT SUCCESS STORY. WOULD YOU MIND DETAILING HOW YOU USED NIXLE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT TO TRACK DOWN A MISSING CHILD?

We recently experienced a major success story with Nixle Community Engagement, involving two missing children. We issued an Alert for the missing girls, ages 5 and 10, at about 5:30 p.m., after they were reported missing. About 15 minutes later, a 32-year-old San Angelo woman who had just learned of the alert, noticed the girls walking down the street. The citizen then called police and stayed with the girls until officers responded. The girls were unharmed and later reunited with family members. The rest is history, and this really confirms the value of the solution to enable us to generate anonymous opt-ins (via 888-777) and our registration portal.

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ANY FINAL THOUGHTS ON THE BENEFITS OF NIXLE?

I highly recommend Nixle and Nixle Tip Watch to other agencies – it's easy for both officers and citizens to use. The product is sound on all levels and the support from the

Nixle staff is topnotch. It is also a one-stop shop for public safety agencies. Why use multiple systems that do different things when Nixle can do it all? Using different systems for community relations can increase the risk of inconsistency and irregularity in community engagement. However, using Nixle for everyday communications, emergency notifications and resident correspondence has provided a consistent and reliable means for resident communications.

About Everbridge

Everbridge is a leading unified critical communications platform trusted by corporations and communities of all sizes that need to reach the right people for immediate action, collaboration, and decision-making. Connecting millions of people and internet-connected devices, the company provides reassurance that secure, compliant messages are delivered, locally and globally, received and responded to, no matter the recipient's location. Everbridge is based in Boston, Los Angeles, San Francisco, Beijing and London.

For a full product description, along with best practices and product details please see the Everbridge User Guide and Everbridge University.

