



ONPAGE | Case Study

Search and Rescue Dogs of Colorado

Deploying Emergency Teams 20+ Minutes Faster with OnPage

Search and Rescue Dogs of Colorado teams deploy search missions 20+ minutes faster with OnPage's BlastIT system.

Search and Rescue Dogs of Colorado (SARDOC) is a non-profit organization based in Fort Collins, Colo., operating statewide since 1983. The organization relies on volunteers (i.e., coordinators and trainers/handlers) and their certified search dogs who are dedicated to finding missing persons in tough terrain and wilderness areas.

Once notified of an incident by park rangers or law enforcement agencies, SARDOC needs to coordinate among volunteers to determine which specialized dog team is appropriate for the mission and deploy the team to the field as quickly as possible. Every second counts when trying to locate subjects before they succumb to the harsh, unpredictable elements of the wilderness.

Faster incident response would also result in higher levels of trust between the organization and requesting agencies (i.e., park rangers or other law enforcement agencies), creating a professional relationship built on reliability, clear communications and consistent processes.

In the Dog House: Challenges with Existing Alerting and Communication Processes

Prior to adopting OnPage BlastIT, SARDOC faced a number of issues that hindered its organizational performance and effectiveness.

Allison Yelton, fielding coordinator of SARDOC, wrestled with a slow and error-prone notification process. She relied on an answering service to speak with the requesting party, notify SARDOC coordinators of the request and then relay the request to the canine handlers.



"The answering service was synonymous with missed pages, long wait times and human errors," said Allison Yelton, fielding coordinator of SARDOC. "It was a long and grueling process."

The answering service did not fully understand SARDOC's work and operations, so even though Allison would take the time to dictate the messages to be sent, the sent messages were often inaccurate. These errors caused confusion among volunteers and delays in responding back to the requesting agency, making the group seem unresponsive and unorganized.

The messages (email and/or text) were not always received by all the handlers and there was no efficient way to confirm message

receipts. Coordinators would have to personally call handlers to make sure they received the alert.

The answering service sent alerts to each handler at different intervals instead of sending them out in one batch, preventing SARDOC from establishing deadlines for responses from the trainers.

Due to these inconsistencies and the time it took to compose the messages, handlers did not receive immediate alerts, hampering speedy incident response. Essentially, this complicated, manual workflow would take over 20 minutes of back-and-forth communications, corrections and clarification. Allison found it difficult to track, coordinate and respond to all the messages coming from the trainers, the agencies and the answering service.

In summary, SARDOC was challenged with:

- 20+ minutes of time wasted in the notification process
- Perceived unprofessionalism
- Communication errors and inaccuracies
- A lack of transparency
- Disorganization
- Some messages/alerts not sent or received by handlers

With these obstacles in mind, SARDOC turned to OnPage to streamline and automate its alerting process, to ensure that all team members received timely and accurate alerts for every situation, every time. Another requirement was the ability to receive message acknowledgements from the volunteers in one central repository. In this way, SARDOC could quickly meet a

requesting agency's demands and focus on saving lives.

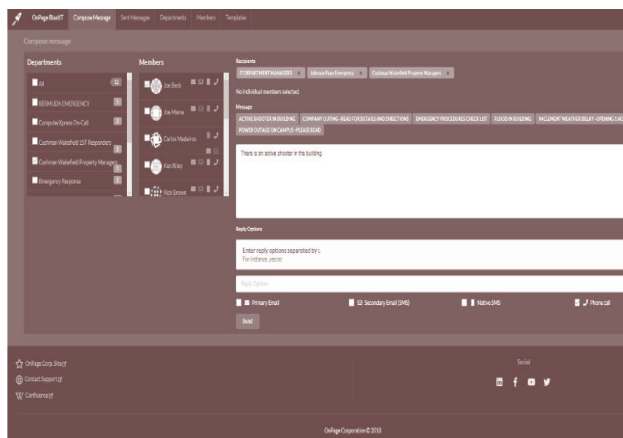
Old Dog, New Tricks: Adopting the OnPage BlastIT System

OnPage BlastIT, an automated and intelligent mass notification solution, enhanced SARDOC's alert delivery and mission performance.

Requesting agencies now simply dial a dedicated OnPage phone number to reach SARDOC directly or by leaving a callback number, briefing the team on the details of a mission and its requirements. This eliminates the need for an external intermediary (i.e., answering service) and its inconveniences and errors.

With BlastIT, SARDOC coordinators simultaneously receive a callback number from the requesting agency and use BlastIT's contact lists to select and mass notify all the handlers and give them details on the specialized dog training and skills required for the mission. There is zero lag time during this process—all handlers receive timely and accurate mission notifications at the same time and coordinators see message acknowledgements within the BlastIT console.

SARDOC also uses BlastIT templates, allowing the organization to compose a single standardized mass notification alert and its details prior to emergencies. In this way, coordinators can select from an already drafted BlastIT template and fill in the specific mission details, to speed up the alerting process.



Handlers simultaneously receive the BlastIT alert via primary email, secondary email, SMS and recorded voice messages and can easily acknowledge the receipt. Handlers are able to select from three quick responses including, “Accept Mission,” “Decline Mission” or “Need More Information.”

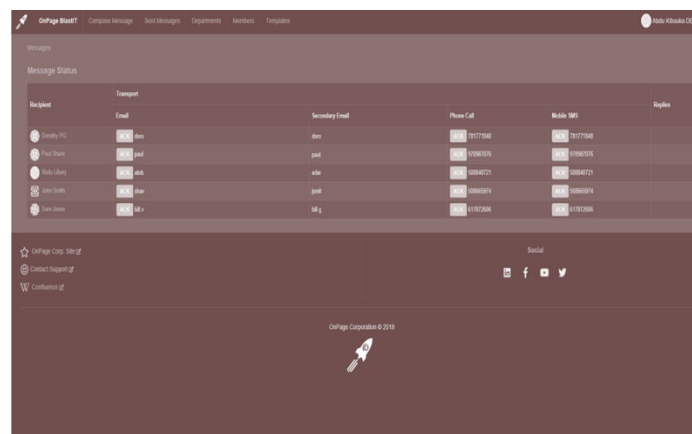
Coordinators can see these responses as they come in within BlastIT and can quickly determine mission assignment.

Alongside mission-based alerts, BlastIT mass notifies SARDOC members about urgent developments and/or occurrences during the mission. For instance, if a missing person is located while the team is being deployed, coordinators would alert their teams, advising them to “Stand Down” and disregard the previous notification. Also, BlastIT notifications can be sent by the organization’s executive board, detailing meeting cancellations, training postponements due to bad weather and other urgent matters.

For a recent out-of-state mission, BlastIT notifications were immediately sent to team members, describing incidents happening in a neighboring territory. With promptness, handlers packed their supplies, rounded up their dogs and commuted eight hours across

state lines, ensuring that they were on site as quickly as possible.

SARDOC was also pleased to learn that BlastIT offers immediate alerting data, equipped with acknowledgement statuses.



With these reports, coordinators have access to team member response behaviors (e.g., whether or not a handler has received a critical alert and which response option they selected). With this data, the team can make adjustments to improve processes and performance in time for the next mission.

Tail Wagging: BlastIT Benefits

It did not take long for SARDOC to notice the benefits of the OnPage BlastIT system. For instance, the solution allowed the organization to:

- Improve productivity and transparency through an automated and intelligent alerting procedure
- Reduce communication errors
- Enhance team collaboration and communication
- Expedite the crisis notification process by 20 minutes or more
- Boost its reputation in Colorado and surrounding territories

BlastIT also eliminated anxieties and misconceptions surrounding missing alerts and messages. The system ensures that notifications are always received by all assigned team members. SARDOC volunteers no longer questioned why they were being left out of mission communications and now feel that their efforts are fully appreciated and valued. They realize that they are seen as essential, productive and trusted members of the organization.

Additionally, BlastIT ensures that the organization is viewed as professional and reliable among requesting agencies.

Equally as important, SARDOC is a non-profit that relies on donations. Volunteers purchase their own gear and medical equipment, while selecting, training and maintaining their own canines. With such expenses and limited funds, it was important for the organization to eliminate costs associated with an unreliable answering service. Not only did the organization eliminate time-consuming alerting procedures, it also adopted a more reliable and user-friendly mass notification system with BlastIT.

Conclusion

As showcased in this case study, the OnPage BlastIT mass notification system streamlines alerting in times of crisis or whenever urgent. It is a user-friendly platform that eliminates the need for an answering service, resulting

in the mass notification and immediate delivery of critical alerts to selected users.

For Search and Rescue Dogs of Colorado, BlastIT boosted its incident resolution performance through immediate handler contact and mission reporting. As a result, the organization was able to guarantee that its certified teams, consisting of highly skilled canine units and dedicated handlers, rose to the occasion when missing persons were reported throughout the year.

About OnPage

OnPage's award-winning incident alert management system for IT, MSP and healthcare professionals provides the industry's only ALERT-UNTIL-READ notification capabilities, ensuring that critical messages are never missed. OnPage enables organizations to get the most out of their digital investments, so that sensors, monitoring systems and people have a reliable way to escalate urgent notifications to the right person immediately.

OnPage's escalation, redundancy and scheduling features make the system infinitely more reliable and secure than emails, text messages and phone calls. OnPage shrinks resolution time by automating the notification process, reducing human errors and prioritizing critical messages to ensure fast response times.

Whether to minimize IT infrastructure downtime or to reduce the response time of healthcare providers in life and death situations, organizations trust OnPage for all their secure, HIPAA compliant, critical notifications needs.

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