



CASE STUDY

Cloudli Alerts

The Right Information, at the Right Time:
How a Canadian Municipality leveraged Mass Notifications to Improve Citizen Engagement.



What are Mass Notifications?

Mass notification are a useful tool for municipalities to broadcast important information, emergency alerts and announcements to its citizens. Easy-to-use and simple to administer, mass notification services both improve communication and enhance the safety and well-being of a city's residents.

The Municipality and the Challenge

Like many cities across the country, this Canadian municipality with a population of almost 45,000 residents frequently encounters situations where it needs to communicate with its citizens, particularly related to time-sensitive events and emergencies, including flooding, public safety incidents, emergency operations and weather-related events. However, for these types of situations, the City's go-to notification methods – local newspapers, billboards and mail notices – were not sufficient. These traditional communication channels are simply not well suited to deal with time-critical notifications, and have limited reach and responsiveness.

Because of these limitations, the City decided to adopt a mass notification solution that would permit the immediate transmissions of alerts to its citizens, across a variety of different channels. However, the City quickly learned that not all mass notifications platforms are created equal: shortly after implementing a solution, city leaders became dissatisfied decided to conduct a new evaluation and change suppliers.



Evaluating the Options

To ensure that the next mass notification solution that they implemented was the right choice, the City conducted a study to evaluate the various available options. Central to their adjudication of solutions: reliability, speed and ease of execution, customization options, message delivery capacity and, of course, cost.

Upon completing this evaluation, the City then issued a call for tenders. In addition to the factors noted above, the City prioritized finding a supplier with a flexible solution that could scale at the same rate as the municipality was growing. Additionally, as the City already had several different systems and platforms in place (e.g. citizen data management system, PGmap location map system), it was essential that the chosen mass notification service could easily integrate with these systems. Finally, the protection of its citizens' confidential data was of paramount importance for the City's leaders.

Service Provider Selection

After careful evaluation, the City decided to move forward with Cloudli Alerts, which include notification channels such as SMS, email, phone call, social media and web browser push notifications. Thanks to its user-friendly, customizable platform, and its solid technical support, the City determined that Cloudli's mass notification solution was best-suited to meet their needs. What's more, Cloudli Alerts represented the most cost-effective option for the City's requirements.



Creating Target Groups

To get started with Cloudli Alerts, they first integrated information from its citizens' database into the mass notification platform. Different target groups were then created based on geographical areas, possible situations, and people's communication preferences, enabling targeted messages to be sent to specific audiences. As soon as the system was up and running, the municipality quickly reached a hundred or so different targets. Compared to its previous solution, the Cloudli Alerts platform is able to compile reports on the effectiveness of each campaign in terms of performance statistics for the means of communication used and the targets reached.

Citizen Portal

With Cloudli Alerts' Citizen Portal, the residents of the City are able to provide the precise information needed to reach them optimally, and to specify their communication preferences. So when an emergency occurs or an important announcement needs to be made, the City uses the mass notification platform to send out communications per the preferences its citizens specified in the portal, whether it's via phone calls, text messages or e-mail.



Results

The adoption of mass notification services has benefited the municipality in several ways.

1. **Better emergency communication**

Mass notification services have made it possible to communicate quickly and effectively with citizens in emergency situations, such as flood hazards, weather warnings, catastrophic events or public safety situations. Alert messages are broadcast instantly to a wide range of recipients, delivering vital information quickly. The system has also made it possible to send specific messages to geographically targeted citizens, for example, during the preventive maintenance of water mains carried out by the City. The municipality has also seen a noticeable improvement in the consistency, reliability and speed of execution of its campaigns thanks to Cloudli Alerts services.

2. **Increased responsiveness in emergencies**

In the event of a crisis requiring immediate action, mass notification services have made it possible to quickly ask citizens to cooperate. For example, in emergencies such as flood evacuations, health warnings or utility failures, clear and precise instructions can be sent to many people in a short span of time, leading to a faster and better-coordinated response. As citizens receive messages in real time, they can react quickly and take the necessary measures to keep safe.

3. **Spreading important, reliable information**

Cloudli Alerts' mass notification service ensures that vital information from the City is disseminated reliably and consistently. Citizens can be informed of upcoming events, road closures, obstructions, health warnings and more. This prevents the spread of rumours, and incorrect or incomplete information.



Results

4. **Broad, diversified coverage**

Thanks to a mass notification system, the City can now expand its reach using different communication channels such as SMS, email, phone call, social media and web browser push notification. This guarantees maximum coverage and effective delivery of messages to the entire population, whatever their age, location, or communication preferences.

5. **Proactive emergency management**

The mass notification service helps the City to take proactive measures to manage emergencies. As is the case with spring floods that surge almost every year, the City can send out preventive safety instructions, evacuation instructions, protection strategy recommendations, and other relevant information to help citizens prepare for and respond to emergencies appropriately.

6. **Resource savings and increased flexibility**

The municipality's communications department also saved on resources and effort. For example, Public Works, which used to distribute door-to-door paper notices to citizens, can now put its time to better use. The system is user-friendly, making it simple to train team members and assign tasks to available staff without needing computer experts on-hand to program the system. Unlike the old system, which required employees to commute to the municipal offices to use it, messages can be sent to the population with Cloudli Alerts via the web platform, from home, at any time of day, evening or on weekends, offering greater flexibility.

The implementation of a mass notification system helped this Canadian municipality improve communications with its citizens, and increase their responsiveness while enhancing public safety. Cloudli Alerts has become an essential tool for the City to guarantee fast, reliable and efficient communication, and to offer peace of mind to city leaders and citizens alike.



Ready to Learn More?

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