

# Mass notification system brings streamlined security to Boston University community

Cloud-based Send Word Now from OnSolve sends voice, text and email alerts to the community across three campuses

The safety of students, faculty, staff and visitors is a top priority for Boston University. As a result, BU can have anywhere from 15 to 30 officers working their safety and security command center at once. When an emergency arises, Director of Emergency Management Stephen Morash must quickly determine team members can report to the scene the fastest.

Morash uses Send Word Now from OnSolve to notify his officers, who reply through the app with their status (en route, on site, etc.) and their estimated time of arrival on the scene. When appropriate, Send Word Now is also used to send alerts to the university's 33,000 students, plus faculty and staff.

"Four or five clicks of a computer mouse and you can get a message out to 46,000 people in under 30 seconds," Morash says. "That's pretty good."

## Job one

When Morash came to BU in 2005, command center communications consisted of a telephone tree. "I'd call two friends, they'd each call two friends, and so on," he recalls.

Not surprisingly, his first priority upon arrival was to overhaul that system. He selected Send Word Now as the exclusive notification provider and implemented it to alert upper management of weather-related school closings, security incidents, or planned utility outages that could jeopardize experiments at the research university.

Two years later, a gunman killed 32 people on the Virginia Tech campus, and BU fast-tracked plans for an alerting system that would include the entire university, which is spread over three campuses. After considering 13 vendors, the university chose Send Word Now from OnSolve once again.

"It was the easiest to use, it allowed us to conveniently update contact information, it was the least expensive, and we knew the customer service was terrific," Morash says.

## Targeted messaging

Using Send Word Now's cloud-based software, Morash can send voice, text, email and other alerts to the entire community or target particular groups, such as department, building or police

department zones. He can also communicate with city counterparts who are on the same system.

To get started, Morash provided OnSolve with a spreadsheet of contact information for BU community members, who choose how to be notified.

"I was shocked at how easy it was," Morash says. "And it allows the university to easily notify folks if they're in harm's way."

The system was used extensively during the Boston Marathon bombing and subsequent manhunt, but it's also used for road closures, fires and other situations that affect the campuses.

"OnSolve adapts to suit our needs and are always available," says Morash. "I can't say enough about Send Word Now staff and support."

