

## Enterprise Messaging Applications: Hosted vs. CPE

EMA (Enterprise Messaging Application) is based on a fairly common technology used by communities to warn residents about impending storms or other emergencies. But private companies are also rapidly adopting the technology as part of their own disaster recovery plan. And EMA delivers a twofold benefit in that it can be used as a very effective targeted marketing tool. But if you wish to adopt a message broadcast application for your own organization, is it better to go with a hosted or a customer premise (CPE) approach?

The answer in the overwhelmingly majority of cases is to select the hosted solution. Think of it this way, with a CPE deployment you need to have the infrastructure to support the maximum amount of calls that are sent out at any given time. You will need to support this bandwidth year round, including servers, software, hardware, battery backup, etc. Yet you will only use this capacity at most a few times a year, when the message broadcasting application is used.


With a hosted approach, you are only paying for the actual time used when the calls go out. And with a hosted application, the technology resides in a secure Network Operations Center, which protects your business when other communication channels are interrupted.

### EMA: The Advantages

So is deploying an EMA solution worth the effort? Definitely. Picture this scenario: Your corporate offices are damaged by some sort of calamity (flooding, fire, etc.). The disaster recovery administrator for your business logs onto a web site, and selects a pre-recorded message that goes out to all employees to give them an update of the situation, tell them where to report, etc. Or, the administrator could dial into the system, and record a unique message that could go out to specific employees with specific instructions.

Another effective use of EMA is as a new media channel to deliver corporate messaging. Imagine a prospect walking into a car dealership. They provide some basic information, but they are unwilling to commit to a purchase at that time. Several weeks later, when the dealership runs its end of year clearance, the prospect receives an automated call detailing the offer. If they are interested in learning more, they press a key and are automatically connected to a sales person.

How powerful can EMA be in practice? The United Space Alliance is an organization tasked with tracking the space shuttle after each launch. When Katrina threatened both USA's Texas and Florida facilities, the organization recognized the need for emergency fail-safes. With EMA, United Space Alliance can now send an emergency message to all 4000 employees. Each employee has a wallet-sized card with instructions to call in and enter a unique ID number. This allows specific instructions to be



targeted to specific employees, informing each team where to report, and what their assignment is.

### **Vendor Selection**

When searching for a hosted vendor of message broadcasting applications, there are two key things to keep in mind. One is the amount of calls that the vendor can support. The right vendor should be willing to guarantee at least 1000 outgoing calls per minute, and some are even working to double this number. The second component is that your vendor should have their Network Operation Center housed in a secure location. If you are going to use a service for disaster recovery, you want to ensure that it is protected from whatever emergency that may be threatening your company.

EMA is a critical component of the disaster recovery plan in many cities and towns, and it can be a critical part of your own company's disaster recover plan-even a potential new revenue channel for your business. Just make sure you select a solution with guaranteed bandwidth that will be there when you need it.