C.J. HOOD Case Study - Incident Notification Strategy for Public Area Safety

Loud noises, gun shots, explosions, smoke, people screaming and running.

Summary

At U.S. airports, human stampedes can occur when only one of the above has happened. Mass uncontrollable panic is causing injuries, disruptions to security procedures, and costing airports and airlines millions of dollars. Following are a few examples of recent causes of crowd panics at domestic airports. Passengers, visitors and employees in public areas had no way to assess the danger as accurate or false as well as information on how to get to a safe area.

- a disgruntled traveler (LGA October 2017)
- domestic violence disturbance outside baggage claim in passenger pickup area (DAL June 2016)
- a costumed visitor carrying a plastic sword (LAX August 2016)
- a bomb exploding or an excited crowd watching Usain Bolt win a gold medal on a monitor in a waiting area. (JFK August 2016) *Still theoretical, no confirmation of the cause*
- five people killed, six wounded, 37 injured in a baggage claim public area (FLL January 2017)
- mass shooting a mile from the airport (MCI October 2017)

While key airport employees and emergency personnel have access to mass notification systems sending secure, compliant messages to internet-connected devices, a large group is left vulnerable: public area passengers, guests, concessions and contract employees do not get sent information.

"You hear screams first, then you see a stampede of people, running, diving in corners…running as if running for their lives," said Jay Carson who was in JFK that chaotic August evening in 2016. Mr. Carson, a screenwriter and former spokesperson for Hillary Clinton, was in Terminal 1 with his wife.

In Las Vegas on October 6th, 2017, as bullets tore through a concert crowd, a pack of 300 plus people ran about a mile to McCarran International Airport breaching its perimeters. MCI has a multiple layered security plan which worked in that instance though at what point it became a relief effort rather than a breach is not known. Panic stories are all similar. What was missing in all of the situations was a way to inform the masses, present in public areas, accurately and intelligently.

Challenge

Dallas Fort Worth International Airport plans and implements a staged Life Saver program each year as a test on its almost 30 square mile campus. Like the other 24 of the busiest airports in the country, DFW Airport contracts with Everbridge, Inc., a global provider of SaaS-critical communications and enterprise safety solutions using mass notification texts. Texts are sent to specified emergency management and key personnel whenever an incident occurs. Though the airport responders have facts to help them put programs in place, the largest group in public areas is left vulnerable.

DFW Airport's Emergency Management Department wanted a notification system that would work in tandem with its Everbridge system guiding passengers and employees through danger and false alarms. Though the airport has a myriad of video monitors throughout, they wanted a signage information system that would display high intensity visual messages to attract attention. Furthermore, the signs had to operate through a power loss, and had to display messages visible for several hundred feet through smoke and debris.

Solution

High resolution full-color LED dynamic message signs provided by the C.J. Hood Company were designed for the on-site signage. Information displayed on these message signs would be launched by the Everbridge communications process within its platform of instant emergency notification. Hood's software integration with Everbridge software was completed and tested in the months prior to the Life Saver exercise. The successful combination of these components developed the MOSYS program.

For the DFW Airport test, five message signs were located above five exit doors in the Rental Car Terminal. Each sign was designed to communicate wirelessly and without connected power, using POE for operation. Upon the start of the incident, the Everbridge communications platform notified the decision-making people while at the same time triggering the message display on all signs in the public area. Each sign displayed a preprogramed white message, "Evacuate Now", being displayed in an attention-getting flashing mode. The flashing operation immediately commanded attention, the message, consisting of the brightest, highest intensity white LEDs available, was immediately observed and clearly readable from every distant section of the Terminal public area.

Result

Any array of messages concerning the up-to-the minute emergency conditions with instructions for decision-making action can be displayed. Message functionality includes multi-colored targeted or preprogrammed messages in a variety of display formats, displayed either in groups, individual and/or at specific locations.   Plans to add speakers for voice announcements and horns are also being studied. The DFW Airport test of Hood Company's MOSYS technology successfully provided instant, life-saving instructions to the public with high impact, attention getting visual instructions in total and instant collaboration with the Everbridge Crisis and Emergency Management System.

MOSYS by C.J.Hood Company, Inc.

The MOSYS Emergency Notification signage system, integrated within the Everbridge critical communications platform, will add an on-site notification solution for public area safety to emergency management. Integration of the MOSYS system into the Everbridge platform is performed through a Hood Company enterprise application that can automate numerous critical communications, including mass notification, incident management and emergency messaging to people caught and/or trapped in a life threatening incident in public areas.

The C.J. Hood Company, a certified SBE, DBE and WBE, has provided standard Indoor and Outdoor signage systems to the Transportation Industry for more than 32 years. One example, Hood supplied 106 dynamic message signs to DFW International Airport on buses and at Terminal locations. Working with the sign Industry's leading full-color LED sign manufacturer, Adaptive Micro Systems, we have the skills and experience to design and install singles or multiples of MOSYS signage systems throughout the country.

The Army's Fort George G. Meade in Maryland, the Nation's Center for Information, Intelligence and Cyber Operations, has installed almost 500 of our LED dynamic message signs throughout their garrison. The signs form an integral component of a multi-modal Emergency Management program and are programmed to provide a fast flow of information to the public under a variety of emergency scenarios in their public areas. And the system supports NFPA 72 guidelines for visual notification.

Everbridge Inc. and the C.J. Hood Company share a commitment for product innovation, accelerated system performance, customer satisfaction and market leadership. The addition of MOSYS within the Everbridge platform broadens an approach to Mass Notification and Incident Management Initiatives.

John J. Mauro
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MOSYS – Mass Outreach System

Mass – *"relating to, done by, or affecting large numbers of people or things."* (Google)

Outreach –*"an activity of providing services to any populations who might not otherwise have access to those services."* (Wikipedia)

System - *"a group of related hardware units or programs or both, especially when dedicated to a single application."* (New Oxford American Dictionary)