Pandemic Ready: How BlackBerry Is Keeping Employees Safe

BlackBerry Limited

Industry:
Enterprise Software & Services

Employees:
4,100

Location:
Waterloo, Ontario, CA

Product:
BlackBerry® Alert

Website:
www.blackberry.com/alert

BlackBerry

These are difficult times.

It becomes more apparent by the day that COVID-19 isn't going anywhere anytime soon, until a vaccine is globally distributed. In light of this, both the public and private sectors have a critical duty of care to their people.

Organizations have a responsibility to keep both employees and citizens informed, aware, and out of harm's way.

To that end, many governments have implemented a series of new protective regulations and restrictions around contact tracing, monitoring, and reporting. If we're to make it through this pandemic intact and, more importantly, stave off subsequent waves, measures such as these are critical. Unfortunately, for many organizations, compliance with these measures is challenging, at best.

Now more than ever, organizations need to establish resilient, sustainable, and flexible communication. Systems and frameworks that allow them to account for people's safety, adhere to constantly changing guidelines, and maintain business continuity across the board are vital. And that's exactly what BlackBerry has achieved.

Forging Ahead in a Time of Crisis

The novel coronavirus has, in many ways, rendered traditional business continuity planning obsolete, adding new and unforeseen layers of complexity to crisis management. Employees are increasingly working from home, remotely collaborating as they isolate. Not only are they physically cut off from the workplace, but they're also working from locations their employer would not typically need to monitor.

"COVID-19 has been challenging enough, but widespread lockdowns and quarantines have added a new layer of complexity to business continuity," explains Laura Beattie, BlackBerry's Director of Environment Health & Safety (EH&S) and Enterprise Business Continuity Management (EBCM). "You aren't just managing the ongoing crisis of the pandemic – at one point or another, your business may encounter an overlapping emergency. For instance, what if, while working from home, an employee is displaced by a natural disaster or other emergency?"

"Without the proper framework in place, it is challenging to account for your staff across various areas of the globe," she continues. "You don't have any insight into their status and well-being. You can't offer assistance to keep them safe, nor can you take measures to mitigate their absence from a business continuity perspective."

This is far from the only challenge facing organizations in Ontario, Canada. Employers in the region must now confirm that any employees returning to the workplace after working remotely are COVID-free. They must also distribute regular health questionnaires as part of their day-to-day processes. BlackBerry quickly recognized that it already had the necessary framework in place to meet these requirements, thanks to BlackBerry critical event management solutions.

A powerful, resilient platform designed to enable communication and collaboration in times of crisis, BlackBerry® Alert is trusted by organizations around the world. Through secure, two-way communications, it provides leaders and their teams with the ability to anticipate, plan for, and manage a continually-evolving risk environment. Centralized and highly adaptable, BlackBerry Alert is founded on BlackBerry's expertise in crisis management, secure communications, and artificial intelligence, and integrates seamlessly with existing tools such as Microsoft Teams® and Workday®.

"When facing a new challenge or requirement, we always look at our own portfolio first. In our opinion, it's something every vendor should do – the best way to demonstrate that your solutions work is to use them yourself," says Beattie.

Enabling Seamless, Compliant Connectivity

Shortly after the new regulations were announced in Ontario, BlackBerry used its BlackBerry Alert platform to establish a check-in and contact tracing process for its 1,700 employees in the region.

The first step was the creation of messaging templates that aligned with the government's mandates around COVID-19 information management. Once these templates were established, BlackBerry implemented processes and workflows to ensure effective communication and data collection from provincial employees.

"Ultimately, what employees want to know more than anything else is that their employers care about their safety and well-being, that they're on the pulse of what's happening, and transparent in what direction they're taking to keep everyone safe. We've leveraged our own portfolio to accomplish exactly that, while also complying with legislative requirements in the regions we do business in."

- Laura Beattie,
Director, Environment Health & Safety/ Enterprise Business Continuity Management, BlackBerry Limited

With the framework established, the next step was to send a geo-targeted communication to all BlackBerry employees in Ontario through the BlackBerry Alert mobile app. This communication outlined to affected employees what the new regulations meant for them, detailed the new verification process, and included the initial COVID-19 questionnaire. All staff were required to acknowledge their receipt of this information, made possible through the BlackBerry Alert platform's two-way alerting feature.

BlackBerry also implemented the BlackBerry Alert platform's check-in feature, which allows employees to update their employer on their location in real time. Upon arrival at any BlackBerry office or facility, an employee is required to use the feature to confirm their health status or verify that their responses to the COVID questionnaire are still accurate prior to entry. This notification is then sent to a secure inbox and stored for record-retention purposes, while the employee is able to enter the workplace and carry on with their duties.

Finally, the BlackBerry Alert platform's auditing functionality was leveraged to ensure compliance with the process, and the central record repository allowed the organization to react quickly to any potential health incidents.

A Comprehensive Picture of COVID Readiness

By leveraging the BlackBerry Alert platform's full capabilities, BlackBerry has created a comprehensive, compliant, and flexible COVID-19 response process. Geo-targeting ensures that only those required to comply with regulations receive alerts, while the mobile app's check-in feature allows for quick contact tracing measures to be put in place should positive cases be reported. And with the BlackBerry Alert platform's auditing functionality, it not only allows for review of each employee response, but also demonstrates both organizational and individual compliance.

Organizations in both the public and private sector have a duty of care to their people to keep them safe, connected, and informed. Amid the COVID-19 pandemic, that responsibility is more critical than it's ever been.

And the first step in meeting it is a platform like BlackBerry Alert.

For more information, visit BlackBerry.com/Alert and follow @BlackBerry on Twitter.

About BlackBerry

BlackBerry (NYSE: BB; TSX: BB) provides intelligent security software and services to enterprises and governments around the world. The company secures more than 500M endpoints including 150M cars on the road today. Based in Waterloo, Ontario, the company leverages AI and machine learning to deliver innovative solutions in the areas of cybersecurity, safety and data privacy solutions, and is a leader in the areas of endpoint security management, encryption, and embedded systems. BlackBerry's vision is clear — to secure a connected future you can trust.

For more information, visit BlackBerry.com and follow @BlackBerry.

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