



Using PIER to Enhance Relationships and Coordinate Collective Action



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This White Paper seeks to underscore the importance of various aspects of communication in building communities of interest that must collaborate and coordinate activities to accomplish established objectives—and how PIER can contribute to this endeavor. These objectives may be as complex as those that stem from federally funded programs or as simple as grass roots efforts among diverse constituencies to achieve a common goal.

PIER, an acronym for Public Information and Emergency Response, is a powerful Software as a Service (SaaS) application that places all of the tools required to communicate in one, easy-to-use application. PIER helps organizations manage Push, Pull and Interactive Communication by providing the following capabilities:

- Situation Status Reporting
- Collaborative Document Production with an audit trail
- Approvals
- Multi-mode Distribution (e.g., RSS Feeds, Twitter, Alertus Devices, etc.)
- Emergency Notifications
- Public and Private web content
- Multimedia uploads
- Inquiry Management with an historical record
- Surveys
- Secure conference room
- Automatic distributions
- Contact Management

PIER's success is based on the fundamental premise of helping organizations develop and maintain trust with those who matter most. But PIER is simply the “platform” that is necessary to be successful. Organizations must do the right thing – but that alone is insufficient today – they must also communicate well.

An effective communication program is based on skilled people supported by the right communication policies that are exercised regularly leveraging the best technology available – and that's what we do.

THE CRITICAL ROLE OF RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

Relationship Management is the process of building and maintaining effective relationships with individuals and organizations that are important to maintain trust in your organization's ability to fulfill its mission. It is the process of identifying key stakeholders who can impact perceptions of your organization, cultivating an ongoing relationship with each individual and quickly communicating any changing news or circumstances to these individuals.

IMPORTANCE OF RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

As public trust in institutions, businesses and individuals erodes, no organization can take their reputation for granted. An increasingly antagonistic media and skeptical citizens make it more difficult to establish and maintain trust. Effective relationship management builds, maintains and strengthens trust in organizations.

Trusted organizations sustain the right to operate, the ability to attract funding, and the power to influence, which is crucial to organizational action.

Organizations that lose public trust undermine confidence, funding and influence.

EFFECTIVE RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

Effective relationship management entails identifying key audiences or stakeholders, determining their communication requirements, delivering the right information and maintaining the relationship so both you and your audiences/stakeholders benefit.

Although communication interests for audiences may vary, they have the same basic requirements: direct communication, updated and accurate information, and answers to their questions.

- Direct communication is information delivered directly to the individual, not information gathered from a news broadcast, website or second-hand account.
- Information provided to stakeholders should be as current as possible, updated as often as possible, and as accurate as possible.
- As stakeholders process information to determine how it impacts them and their constituencies, they need to be able to formulate questions and receive accurate answers as rapidly as possible.

The traditional paradigm of relying on mass media to get the right information to the right people in the right manner is simply inadequate. Delivering accurate information quickly, transparently and directly is fundamental to effective communication today.

PIER'S CONTRIBUTION TO EFFECTIVE RELATIONSHIP MANAGEMENT

PIER provides key relationship management tools to enhance the ability of organizations to coordinate communication and activities, and maximize stakeholder relationships.

PIER is an internet based communication management system that allows storage of key stakeholders' contact information, tracking of every interaction with each stakeholder, fast creation of accurate information and immediate delivery of that information to key audiences via email, fax, text messaging and telephone messaging.

PIER also provides a managed public web presence where all information resides in chronological order,

maintaining a context of communication with the public and allowing detailed review of information at any time.

PIER allows multiple users, access control to protect accuracy and use, unlimited contact records and storage of information. This functionality is available behind secure login, on an encrypted platform that is user friendly and capable of sustaining very high hit volume. PIER is in use by local, state and federal agencies, as well as multiple business and organizations across the country.

PIER is a database driven web presence that accretes stakeholder questions and answers with each individual's contact record, lists all information sent to the same individual, records each user's interaction with each stakeholder and provides comprehensive contact information and notes about each individual.

PIER also allows contextual searches and reporting, so organizations can not only manage individual's contacts, but identify broad issues and rapidly create accurate information in response to these broad trends. PIER provides individual and group analysis and communications.

PIER delivers information directly to individuals, key audiences, specific location or broad audiences via email, fax, text messaging and telephone calls, as well as placing the same information on a public web presence.

PIER has been proven as an effective communications tool in multiple high-profile incidents, in daily issue management and virtual collaboration, to targeted groups and to individuals. Without fail, PIER has functioned as a 'force multiplier', allowing trained communication professionals to do their jobs more effectively and efficiently.

PIER provides a place to load and store key stakeholders' contact information, and to track ongoing 'touches' whether instigated by your organization's communicator ('pushed' press releases, etc.) or at instigation of the stakeholder (inquiry submission, phone call, meeting attended, etc.). This allows every response to an individual stakeholder to be in context of all previous interactions.

PIER allows users to enter the contact information of every official within a specific organization, then send them any new information created that could impact them, and the information can be sent simultaneously to local media. They will know the information at the same time the media does, so if approached for a response they will have the information necessary to respond. PIER users may generate fact sheets or talking points about the latest news and distribute them to the officials as well.

When an incident or issue occurs, the need for effective relationship management is magnified. Under stress, individuals want more information faster, they want guaranteed accuracy and they want their concerns addressed quickly. PIER allows communicators to meet or exceed stakeholder expectations in such times.

In addition to providing ongoing stakeholder management for pre-identified stakeholders, PIER also facilitates communication with the new multitude of stakeholders who suddenly want to know what is going on. PIER's inquiry management and self-registration functionality allow growth of stakeholder contacts throughout a response, while ensuring effective management of their concerns.

As responses escalate, PIER makes it easy to add more users as response resources, maintains approval processes to support an escalating command structure and provides real-time access to latest information for decision makers.

Response communication is where relationship management really shines, as stakeholders identified and cultivated in daily use begin to receive direct, accurate information without waiting for second-hand

reports (media, rumors, alerts). During incidents, the value of accurate information rapidly delivered escalates fast. PIER allows users to communicate directly with stakeholders as rapidly as information can be confirmed and drafted.

In addition, PIER's inquiry management functionality allows responders to quickly answer individual stakeholder inquiries and at the same time identify broad stakeholder concerns and develop information to meet those new concerns. PIER provides the ability for organizations to anticipate stakeholder concerns.

PIER also stores all actions and interactions, so after action reports and hot-washes can quickly identify critical concerns for future use. PIER users get better with experience, and communication flow becomes more and more effective.

**RELEVANCE TO
EFFECTIVE RELATIONSHIP
MANAGEMENT &
COORDINATING
COLLECTIVE ACTION**

Management in an interagency, multijurisdictional environment is considerably more complex than intra-organizational management. Understanding what is going on, making resource allocation decisions based on that knowledge, and coordinating action and communication requires teamwork and processes that enhance information creation, sharing and approval—and that is what PIER is ideally suited for—PIER helps get the right information to the right people right now. As Gerald Baron, PIER's CEO and founder argues, "Effective information management builds cohesiveness, enthusiasm and motivation at all levels within your organization."

As a SaaS model, PIER does not rely on any one organization's IT infrastructure; therefore coordinating the development, approval and distribution of information to a wide variety of platforms and devices is simple. With considerable amounts of money invested to motivate collective action, providing a cost effective technology to help coordinate and communicate actions would be a "force multiplier" for efficiency and effectiveness in an era when organizations can no longer rely on traditional forms of mass communication to get information to those on whom they rely for support.

For additional information, please contact:

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