



The Value of All-in-One Critical Event Management

It's time to take crisis management to
the next level with leading-edge CEM capabilities



Introduction

The concept of business as usual is almost an anachronism in the current environment. With overlapping public health, political, and climate crises, 2020 was a wake-up call. On top of those disruptions, a wide variety of critical events are happening every day in enterprises worldwide, from relatively minor incidents to serious emergencies.

Recent data from the Business Continuity Institute shows just how crucial it is to be ready to respond to the unexpected. In a BCI survey¹ conducted shortly before the pandemic began, almost 700 business continuity and risk management professionals from 74 countries rated “non-occupational disease” second to last in their list of 22 future threats. In the most recent survey, of course, “disease outbreak” is at the top of the list.

Being 100% ready for every scenario is impossible in the increasingly complex and unpredictable enterprise landscape. But comprehensive planning – supported by the latest Critical Event Management (CEM) tools – can mitigate the negative impact on your people, assets, and operations. The right CEM platform, offering availability, accessibility, reliability, and advanced functionality, can be the difference between success or failure in your response to any critical event.

What is a Critical Event?

To understand CEM, it’s helpful to first define a critical event. Essentially, it’s any occurrence that’s disruptive enough to pose a meaningful threat to your organization, operations or assets. People, including employees (at home, on-site or traveling), visitors and partners, are your most valuable asset, but other assets that can be affected by critical events include:

 Buildings/facilities	 Product inventory
 IT assets	 Supply chain
 Personal/company data	 Machinery/equipment
 Brand/reputation	

1. BCI survey

CEM Handles Critical Events of All Shapes and Sizes

Internal	External
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• IT outages• Employee injury or illness• Critical infrastructure/equipment failure• Industrial accidents• Loss of key employees/talent• Fraud/theft	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cyber attacks• Natural disasters• Political or civil unrest• Extreme weather• Public health emergencies• Attackers/shooters• Regulatory changes

The COVID context

The pandemic not only brought CEM to the forefront as a C-level priority, but also transformed the traditional organization of work. Over a third of organizations expect more than half of their workers to be mostly remote by 2022, according to CCS Insight.² Remote work is redefining employers' duty of care, creating a need for tools that both locate and communicate with employees wherever they are during crises.

CEM enhances your existing business continuity and emergency preparedness plans by using the latest tools to improve critical event response and recovery. Modern CEM platforms are designed to align with today's realities, which include a dispersed workforce, the increased adoption of collaboration tools such as Microsoft Teams®, more frequent and intense critical events, and the explosion of available data.

CEM enables faster, more informed management by:

- Providing earlier warning of possible threats
- Automating incident response with pre-planned event scenarios and templates
- Delivering real-time, targeted, mass two-way notification over multiple channels
- Integrating with familiar collaboration tools such as Microsoft Teams, Workday® and ServiceNow®
- Offering real-time visibility into people's safety and status
- Ensuring the constant exchange of information
- Enhancing post-event analysis to improve future response
- Keeping detailed incident logs for auditing purposes

².CCS Insight

Interest in CEM is Rising

This is a pivotal time for CEM, partly because of the tumultuous beginning to the 2020s and partly because the risk landscape is constantly changing. Current global conditions present several inevitable – but unpredictable – threats, including political instability, extreme weather, and cyber attacks.

Traditionally, crisis communication and emergency management solutions were mostly used by emergency managers, and business continuity and disaster recovery groups. They all dealt with events and emergencies at their functional level, but in silos. The pandemic, however, made crisis management a top priority for all organizations.

Senior managers are turning to CEM

While many companies have detailed, up-to-date emergency preparedness programs and business continuity plans, they use multiple tools from multiple vendors to execute those plans.

Now there's a push from senior management to take on critical event strategy and communications, and have a consistent set of tools and processes in place to make it more efficient. In order to improve their ability to manage rising threats, they need something better than their existing patchwork of crisis management solutions.

Organizations need centralized crisis communication tools

During the pandemic, organizations need a rapid, accurate way to regularly share information. According to the latest BCI report, 80% of respondents placed high value on the ability to alert a large number of people quickly during a crisis. However, many organizations found their existing emergency communications solutions were inadequate.³

Due to financial constraints, some sectors reverted to collaboration software such as WhatsApp, while others discovered that automatic alerting capabilities (such as weather services or social media alerts) were insufficient.

With key stakeholders from different departments using different messaging applications, organizations struggle to communicate consistently in real time. Unified CEM capabilities can help them centralize collaboration, access data and analytics quicker, and improve overall response times.

To meet this need, a growing number of organizations say they're using software-as-a-service tools to quickly deploy across multiple devices.

3. BCI report

The Stakes – and Potential Costs – are High

The shift toward CEM is also being propelled by the significant price tag of poorly managed critical events. Companies are responsible for both the welfare of their people and the financial wellbeing of investors. Critical events affect both groups – and the costs are potentially huge. For example, BCI pegs the average cost of a safety incident for an organization at USD\$1.8M, and an extreme weather incident at USD\$1.3M.⁴ But there are also many indirect costs, including:

- Loss of productivity
- Negative impact on employee wellbeing
- Customer dissatisfaction
- Reputational damage
- Loss of revenue

The speed, effectiveness, and completeness of managing a critical event determines the severity of these potential losses and harms.

Traditional Crisis Management Tools are No Longer Enough

Organizations are under growing pressure to mount fast, decisive responses to internal and external disruptions, often with inadequate resources. For example, companies may lack crisis management expertise, role clarity, formal processes and plans, and centralized tools.

Typical systems and processes for crisis management are siloed, manual, and disjointed, resulting in slow, reactive approaches – and greater harm to people and assets. The possible negative consequences of a traditional crisis management approach include:

- Incomplete situational awareness caused by an inability to locate and track all people and assets
- Difficulty reaching people across devices and applications, particularly when some stakeholders don't have corporate email access or when primary communication channels are down
- Wasted time rebroadcasting alerts to ensure delivery and responsiveness
- Lower trust and compliance among alert recipients because of doubts about the reliability of information from different sources
- Cybersecurity risks on unsecure platforms
- Fragmented and slow responses with no common collaboration platform across people and systems
- Increased potential for the spread of misinformation

Plan, then practice, practice, practice

It goes without saying that every organization should have emergency preparedness programs and business continuity plans and policies ready and waiting. To get maximum value from those preparations, however, you also need to perform tests and exercises that ensure everyone is aware of their role. There's no time for learning in the heat of the moment.

4. BCI

Your New CEM Strategy: How to Get Started

Today's organizations want and need to move beyond the old, disjointed approach to crisis management. The next generation is CEM, which offers a centralized solution on a common platform to improve your ability to plan for, respond to, and remediate critical events.

Decreased time to identify, tackle, and resolve serious incidents is the key metric for unified CEM platforms. The result: reduced disruption to your business and all its assets, and a faster return to maximum productivity.

Here are some key considerations to factor into your new CEM strategy.

Build a foundation for CEM

If you're planning on introducing a CEM solution to your organization, you can lay the groundwork for success by completing these tasks in advance:

- Ensure all your data sources (such as weather, public health, and public safety information) and internal/external contacts are credible and up to date.
- Take an inventory of your organization's assets, including their locations and the connections between them, and determine the cost of disruption for each one.
- Create partnerships with senior leadership across the organization. Harvard research shows that cross-functional perspectives help organizations adapt dynamically and find new solutions in a crisis.⁵
- Familiarize your stakeholders on their expected roles and responsibilities and create playbooks based on the most common threats to your organization.

Get the Right Capabilities for better, Faster Decision-Making

When the fight or flight response kicks in, even the most seasoned leaders are susceptible to poor decision-making. CEM solutions begin working immediately and efficiently, providing incident response managers with a reliable, data-driven approach that instills calm and confidence. When choosing a CEM platform, look for a solution that can unify and transform your organization's management of all types of critical events through the following capabilities:

Consolidating and improving critical event planning

- Brings approved plans and pre-defined templates and workflows together in one easy-to-find place
- Supports plan management, review, revision, and awareness
- Delivers instant updates when plans change
- Allows live adjustment to any plan

5. Harvard

Alerting everyone, everywhere, on every device

- Unifies all communication channels, from email and SMS to radio and mobile phones
- Targets alerts using static and dynamic recipient groups based on role, location, and more
- Automates alerts through integration with physical sensors or external data sources

Reaching people where they work

- Enables organizations to easily connect with everyone – including the growing remote and dispersed workforce – during critical events
- Integrates with leading productivity tools for enterprise collaboration, including Microsoft Teams, Workday, and ServiceNow
- Allows incident response managers to contact, alert, and account for people directly through integrated platforms
- Maintains accurate contact information with tools that synchronize user information from multiple data sources

Connecting with partners and external organizations

- Enables collaboration with key stakeholders outside the organization, such as first responders, government agencies, and media outlets
- Supports real-time chats with external groups
- Ensures all shared information is encrypted
- Gives administrators full control over communication channels, content, recipients, and PII

Accounting for people's safety

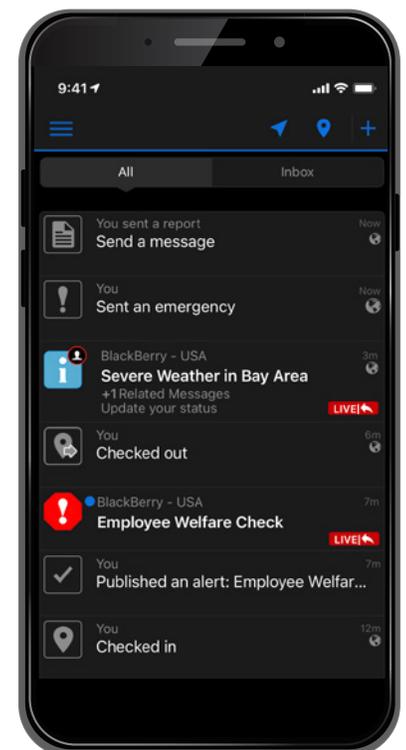
- Automates the task of accounting for personnel
- Provides real-time visibility into the safety and status of all employees and partners (on-site, in the field, working remotely, traveling)
- Offers a centralized dashboard for a complete assessment of everyone's safety and status
- Tracks each recipient to provide a complete record

Getting clear, relevant insights into events

- Enables on-scene personnel to provide real-time status updates and rich geo-tagged media
- Displays events and data over a map
- Improves awareness of the big picture for response managers not at the scene
- Provides one-click “duress” and “track me” buttons for enhanced on-scene safety

CEM for better intelligence during critical events

CEM helps response managers before and during critical events. Real-time risk monitoring of business-critical systems such as IT service management (e.g. ServiceNow) and building operations (e.g. fire and chemical detectors), and predictive scanning of external data sources (e.g. International SOS system alerts), allows earlier detection for a quicker, more informed response. During critical events, CEM extracts key data from all sources (social media, traditional media, weather and geological services, government, and more) and automates the response process. playbooks based on the most common threats to your organization.



Improving event response

- Keeps complete, transparent records of every alert, including recipient actions
- Archives chat
- Provides a centralized dashboard and analytics to assess the response after the fact, both for audit purposes and to shape future responses

Every Industry Can Benefit from CEM

Crises don't discriminate, but certain industries are more vulnerable to critical events because of the nature of their operations, including but not limited to the following:

Industry	Benefits
Manufacturing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inherently complicated, with (literally) many moving parts susceptible to disruptions• Facilities and production can be disrupted by extreme weather, natural disasters, hazardous material incidents, equipment breakdowns, IT outages, or human error
Transportation	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Responsible for the safety of a vast network of assets and people• Relies on tight schedules and strict processes• Entire systems can be grounded to a halt by IT outages, weather events, or criminal activity
Tech and telecom	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Every minute of downtime matters during hardware/software failures, cyber attacks, and system outages• Ponemon Institute estimates the cost of IT downtime to be \$9,000/minute⁶
Financial services	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Faces multiple pressures: accelerating external threats, especially from cyber criminals, and increasing regulator expectations• Sensitive to a range of critical events, such as market volatility, IT failure, and cyber attacks
Retail and eCommerce	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bricks-and-mortar retail is highly vulnerable to external events• Stores can be threatened by weather, civil unrest, construction, and crime• E-commerce can experience major losses within minutes from cyber attacks or outages

Be confident your data will stay secure

Choose a CEM solution that's:

- Secure, with leading certifications
- Compliant with the latest industry regulations
- Trusted by a wide variety of organizations worldwide

6. Ponemon Institute

Be Ready for Any Critical Event

Managing critical events with maximum efficiency is now crucial for a competitive advantage. A single, unified, proven CEM platform is your organization's best defense against known and unknown threats to your people and assets.

BlackBerry® Alert is a complete, cloud-based CEM solution for enterprise. With over 35 years in secure communications, BlackBerry is trusted by organizations worldwide, from the largest governments and security organizations to private companies.

Learn more at www.blackberry.com/alert

About BlackBerry

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