

COMMUNICATING WITH THE ENTERPRISE



What can Captain Kirk teach us about communicating within the modern Government enterprise?

Time Travels..... When William Shatner loomed large on our screens some 30 years ago, the iconic flip-up communicator he used seemed a space-age away from reality. Now, 'clam-shell' phones place mobile communications across the planet within the reach of Primary School children, blowing their weekly pocket money on pay-as-you-go tariffs.

Such dramatic transformations in technologies and the societies using them now pose fresh challenges to the Government entities whose role it is to serve shifting public demands. A society in which instant communications tools are commonplace has different expectations of the Government bodies its taxes pay for. When those expectations aren't met, the same communications technologies can be mobilised by a disgruntled minority to sway majority opinion to a devastating effect. Perhaps no time is this power more evident than in the run-up to a General Election.

While few political mandarins reasonably aspire to emulate Kirk's commanding presence at the helm of their own enterprises, Science Officer Spock could doubtless offer us 5 key lessons drawn from his experiences on the Starship, that we can all use today.

SPOCK'S LOGIC:

1. Possess the right tools:
to organise the troops and get your message "out there" when you don't have the right equipment to start with. To be effective in its role, any organisation must have the right tools for the job. This extends to the need to communicate effectively with all stakeholders. Within Government Departments and Agencies, this will certainly include employees and senior management grades, but may equally include sister agencies, suppliers, the media, key third parties and the public.

Each organisation may have its specialist applications, but they share the same core need to communicate the right message, to the right people, in the right format and at the right time. Among COMAH communities, for example, a specialist stakeholder group to consider is the households within the Public Information Zone (PIZ).

2. Take Control from the Bridge
A principle of effective management of any organisation in dynamic circumstances, is to "communicate with the 'coal face', but command from the centre". Operatives closest to the action are usually best-placed to relay information about latest developments. A central command and control function is better equipped to collate and interpret such information from multiple sources. This field data can then be overlaid onto prevailing Policy, to achieve sound decision-making, before broadcasting instructions and updates back out to the dispersed organisation and wider stakeholders.

Without a centralised bridge function, Government bodies run the risk of descending into rudderless chaos every time the status quo is disrupted, assuming such a state ever existed.

3. Hail all Frequencies
The medium of communication must suit the target audience. If you want to get a simple, but rapid response back from your dispersed team on a key issue, SMS text broadcasts are likely to prove a better choice than email. The ideal solution should make communicating with all stakeholders easy. This should be an enterprise platform that covers voice, pager, SMS text, web, fax, email, PDA, BlackBerry, mobile and SmartPhone media exchanges with relevant stakeholders.

4. Safe at Warp Speeds
When looking to engage a unified messaging engine, get your 'Scotty' to check it over to make sure she can take the power! When considering the potential 5 year typical life-span of a platform within your enterprise, ensure that your evaluations encompass maintaining data security and scaling up to cover extreme application scenarios. Solutions like EmergencyCall from Criticall can send 1000 SMS messages in a minute, for situations where every second counts. At the entry level, such enterprise-class solutions can be had for as little as a few hundred pounds a month, placing them within easy reach of most departmental budget holders.

5. Maintain a Captain's Log
Government departments have long operated under regimes where compliance and audit considerations are paramount. Recent legislation changes have further highlighted the far-reaching implications of such seemingly innocent items as emails.

As real time messaging gains importance within the enterprise, the need to keep an auditable record of messages sent increases with it. Modern unified messaging hubs can make it easy to keep track of what messages were sent to who and when.

EmergencyCall even has a GPS/LBS module that enables you to track where the message recipient device was at the time the message was sent. With such powerful tools now at your disposal, communications throughout your enterprise can quickly become energised!

While your own Government enterprise may be on a mission to execute its legal mandate and prevailing Government policy, rather than to seek out new worlds, the 'new world' of telecommunications will be seeking you out anyway – ready or not!

Find out how to become master of your own enterprise notification universe by taking the interactive product tour at www.criticall.co.uk/tour
Alternatively, call Criticall on 0870 351 4908

