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## EMA: Defining a New Communications Tool for Your Business

EMA stands for Enterprise Messaging Application. And it's a technology that you're probably already familiar with, but you just don't know it yet.

Whenever there is an impending storm or other natural disaster, many communities send out an automated phone call to all residents warning them to evacuate or seek shelter. EMA is a technology that makes this all possible. EMA is a critical component of the disaster recovery plan in many cities and towns, but it can also be a critical part of your own company's disaster recovery plan, and even a potential new revenue channel for your business.


Picture this scenario: Your corporate offices are damaged by some sort of calamity (flooding, fire, etc.). The disaster recovery administrator for your business logs onto a web site, and selects a pre-recorded message that goes out to all employees to give them an update of the situation, tell them where to report, etc. Or, the administrator could dial into the system and record a unique message that could go out to specific employees with specific instructions.

This is just what the United Space Alliance has done since Hurricane Katrina. This company has the very important task of tracking the Space Shuttle after each launch. When Katrina threatened both USA's Texas and Florida facilities, the organization recognized the need for emergency fail-safes. With EMA, United Space Alliance can now send an emergency message to all 4000 employees. Each employee has a wallet-sized card with instructions to call in and enter a unique ID number. This allows specific instructions to be targeted to specific employees, informing each team where to report, and what their assignment is.

Your organization can enjoy this same level of protection, but EMA has benefits far beyond disaster recovery. In the same way that EMA can deliver multiple automated calls to a targeted audience in an emergency, it can deliver valuable messages to a targeted market during a sales promotion. Imagine this: A prospect walks into a car dealership. They provide some basic information, but they are unwilling to commit to a purchase at that time. Several weeks later, when the dealership runs its end of year clearance, the prospect receives an automated call detailing the offer. If they are interested in learning more, they press a key and are automatically connected to a sales person.

### EMA: What you need to know

EMA is not a new technology, but there are some new developments that make this product a viable option, even for a small business. Traditionally, companies use customer



premise based (CPE) equipment developed locally at their location to deploy EMA. The problem with this method is that the infrastructure to support such technology is substantial. Think of it this way: If you are going to send out a blast of 10,000 calls, you need a phone system capable of handling the traffic. And since such a blast may only go out a few times a year, you are saddled with the monthly recurring maintenance fees for equipment you rarely use.

Recently, several vendors have developed a hosted messaging solution. Most of these products require a yearly service fee, just for the calls you are going to use. This is definitely the way to go, as you are only paying for the actual time spent when the calls go out.

When searching for a hosted messaging application vendor, there are two key things to keep in mind. One is the amount of calls that the vendor can support. The right vendor should be willing to guarantee at least 1000 outgoing calls per minute, and some are even working to double this number. The second component is that your vendor should have their technology housed in a secure location.

EMA really is a robust application. Just make sure you select a vendor with a solid product who can meet all of your specifications and guarantee the amount of call volume you are looking for.