

HOW SATTERFIELD & PONTIKES CONSTRUCTION WAS PREPARED FOR AND RECOVERED FROM A RANSOMWARE ATTACK

THE PROBLEM

A SIMPLE EMAIL FROM A SOPHISTICATED RANSOMWARE ATTACK PARALYZED THE MANAGED SERVER, WEBSITE, AND EMAIL FOR 10 DAYS

Unfortunately, cyber crime has been on the rise the past two years; statistics show an increase of 600%. As more workers are remote there are new opportunities for attack, and no size or type of business is immune.

Satterfield & Pontikes (S&P) is a construction company based in Texas that does work nationally. In 2020, an employee clicked on a phishing email from a sophisticated ransomware attack, which damaged their shared server, locked up their entire system and crashed their website. Risk Management contacted Human Resources to request assistance communicating with the 350 employees spread over Texas; apprising them of the situation and instructions on how to proceed were critical. The HR Director was out of the office on a fishing trip, making the situation more complicated.



S&P NEEDED TO:

- Communicate the situation to all employees
- Instruct everyone of immediate next steps, including to log out of all systems and suspend email
- Start mitigation steps, including contacting their cyber insurance provider
- Launch an interim website

And they needed to do all these things, quickly, while their system was crippled - including communications.

THE SOLUTION

SIMPLE, IMMEDIATE, MULTI-CHANNEL MESSAGING

S&P was able to limit the impact of the attack because they planned ahead. In addition to cyber security training for all employees and insurance, S&P prioritized communication preparedness and carefully considered how best to do so with their employees - field work meant those employees primarily used their phones. Because they were not at a desk but instead often on a jobsite or in a meeting, S&P knew they needed to plan messages on multiple channels to be effective. A mass notification tool was the most effective and secure method.

Even though the HR Manager was out of the office on a fishing boat, he was able to use the mass notification system, RedFlag, right from his phone. This started their communication sequences immediately with just a few clicks, ensuring everyone knew what was going on and what actions to take. Zeke Smith, HR Director, was grateful *"RedFlag was super simple to read and use."*

WITH REDFLAG, S&P WAS ABLE TO:

Use existing recipients lists

Quickly adjust templates they had already built out, enabling sending messages immediately

Employ multiple channels, including voice calls, texts, and two-way chats and message acknowledgements

Utilize the RedFlag platform for major communication for almost two weeks while email was spotty and unreliable

THE RESULTS

EFFECTIVE AND TIMELY COMMUNICATION

Typically a crisis of this magnitude would last at least 15 days, but S&P was able to recover in only 10. The ability to immediately communicate effectively with employees reduced further problems and helped employees feel informed and safe.

The biggest benefits S&P found with RedFlag:

- **PREPARED AND READY.** Recipient data was current and communication templates were previously set up. S&P was prepared to communicate immediately, rather than scrambling in the moment of crisis.
- **IMMEDIATE AND EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION.** Even from a mobile device, in a remote location, S&P was able to send multi-channel alerts in just a few clicks.
- **QUICKER RESOLUTION OF THE CYBER CRISIS.**

While they were prepared for crisis, S&P used this experience to reflect and make some changes to be even more secure and ready for next time. They have imagined other situations, such as a spill or fire, and created procedures and templates. S&P also reevaluated server security and moved to Microsoft Azure, which means they can also send out RedFlag alerts via Microsoft Teams. And finally they incorporated mass notifications into many parts of their employee experience - profile setup now includes multiple contact options and recipient groups. Another unexpected use for RedFlag has been around Covid protocols, announcements, and communications.

"This was the easiest way to facilitate - I cannot imagine the nightmare of doing it manually." said Zeke Smith, HR Director



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