

John Lewis Partnership

Large UK Retailer, John Lewis Partnership, Depends on MessageOne’s AlertFind for Crisis Communication

Since 1864, UK residents have known where to go when shopping for clothes, gifts, and even groceries – to the stores of the John Lewis Partnership -- one of the UK’s largest retail businesses with 26 John Lewis department stores and more than 160 Waitrose supermarkets. But where does a leading UK-based business, such as John Lewis, go shopping when they need an easy-to-use, yet powerful crisis communication system? That requires a shopping journey across the ocean and back again, resulting in a crisis management and communication tool for John Lewis with the ability to quickly, securely and reliably distribute critical information in real-time.

BCM Process Uncovers Need for Communications

John Lewis is one of the UK’s largest retail businesses with a network of shops stretching from Aberdeen in the North East of Scotland, to Bristol in the South West of England. With a staff of more than 60,000 Partners, as all their employees are called, spread among headquarters and nearly 200 store locations, the John Lewis Partnership understands the need for operational efficiency and the importance of avoiding business disruption of any kind. As such, John Lewis has been an early leader in investing in a robust business continuity management (BCM) strategy under the leadership of John Lewis’s Assistant General Inspector Russell Husband. During the evaluation phase of the company’s business processes and the ensuing implementation of its long term BCM solution, the organization was able to identify several exposures and vulnerabilities. One of the most critical areas they pinpointed for improvement was the company’s communications structure in the event of an emergency or incident. The range of possible crisis situations for John Lewis could include power outages, a fire at a location, a major product recall or even a natural disaster. The need to quickly communicate with key personnel in some 200 different locations was essential for John Lewis to complete its BCM strategy.

“AlertFind won over our team with its remarkable simplicity, usability and efficiency”

**Russell Husband
Assistant General Inspector
John Lewis Partnership**

Evaluation Leads to Fast Growing US Vendor

With the adoption of its core BCM solution solidly in place, Husband and his team set out to augment that with a crisis communication system that would meet John Lewis’s business needs, integrate seamlessly with the existing BCM system, and yet have potential to grow with the organization. As a leading UK business, the first round of evaluations focused on a few UK-based vendors that offered crisis communication solutions. Two of the primary considerations for John Lewis were to select a system with an easy-to-use and administer user interface, and to ensure an efficient and powerful data management capability. Unfortunately, none of the UK vendors met these important requirements to the extent required.

Looking at vendors outside the UK, the company came across an Austin, Texas-based company called MessageOne — the fastest growing business continuity vendor in the US. John Lewis was interested in MessageOne in large part because Husband had learned it was closely aligned with both IBM, the Partnerships IT provider since 1964, and SunGard Data Systems. These strong relationships with business leaders such as IBM and SunGard provided John Lewis with a solid endorsement to evaluate MessageOne’s solution — AlertFind — for emergency notification and crisis management.

After an initial meeting and demonstration to John Lewis, Husband and his team were very impressed with MessageOne's AlertFind and decided to evaluate this potential solution very thoroughly. The John Lewis team was particularly impressed with AlertFind's ease of set up and activation, as well as the best-of-class data synchronization and management. They realized the importance of maintaining accurate and up-to-date contact information, and were seeking a crisis management system that would integrate with John Lewis's existing business continuity/disaster recovery planning software. While AlertFind is designed to automatically integrate with all leading HR, directory, mail and DR planning systems, John Lewis was using a software product, RecoveryPAC of which MessageOne had no previous experience. That was no problem for the MessageOne team as they were able to provide full data synchronization and management capabilities to ensure that information and contact lists were always up-to-date.

Evaluation Moves to Successful Implementation of AlertFind

After an exhaustive evaluation, the John Lewis team knew they had found the ideal crisis communication system for their organization. According to Husband, "AlertFind won over our team with its remarkable simplicity, usability and efficiency. However, AlertFind is much more than a pretty face — it provided us with the most powerful blend of functionality and flexibility for our widely spread organization with vital communication needs."

John Lewis decided to move forward with a 1,500 person implementation of AlertFind to connect and provide simultaneous, two-way emergency communications between management and the key emergency Partners and IT professionals at each location. The ability to reach any user, anywhere, at any time was critical for John Lewis's retail business, because employee hours and schedules are not always typical or similar. The range of devices available to reach employees provided flexibility and reassurance to the executives, as well as the unique two-way feature to ensure messages have actually been delivered and received.

After a quick and easy implementation process, AlertFind is in place and ready for action in the John Lewis Partnership when and if the need arises. The retail leader has successfully run several test cases and is ready to implement an emergency notification in mere minutes. In the retail industry, an organization must be prepared for most anything and without a robust communications system in place the crisis and recovery process would be significantly hampered. Whatever comes their way – John Lewis is ready to communicate with its key Partners to minimize the risks, ensure safety, and keep business operations running smoothly. Now that's something worth shopping for.

About MessageOne

Headquartered in Austin, Texas and founded by Adam Dell, MessageOne is the leading provider of managed services for email management, archiving and business continuity. For enterprise email and wireless messaging systems, the company's Email Management Services (EMS) provides comprehensive email archiving, storage management and e-Discovery with the total continuity, recovery, and security protection only available from a managed service. In addition, MessageOne's AlertFind provides guaranteed emergency notification and escalation to help companies protect their employees during any crisis or disaster. Millions of users around the world depend on MessageOne for its award-winning managed services.

Contact MessageOne

Call 888.367.0777 (512.652.4500) or visit www.messageone.com to request additional information or to schedule a meeting.

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