



Inform employees and clients more quickly

THOMAS COOK IMPLEMENTS FACT24 FOR PROTECTING ITS BUSINESS CONTINUITY

Client



Sector

Travel, Transport & Logistics

Problem

At Thomas Cook Group, one of the world's largest leisure travel groups, security staff are aware that in the event of an incident they must be able to rely on emergency plans. A pivotal element of these plans is a system to rapidly communicate the situation and any responsive action to staff and customers. Thomas Cook was thus seeking a communication solution that could automate this process and comply with all time-relevant and security-relevant constraints.

Solution

Today, FACT24 enables Thomas Cook to alert staff with significantly higher speed and security in the event of an incident. Increased call volume from customers is automatically filtered and prioritized by the FACT24 Info Hotline, thus freeing the customer service team from routine duties.

Benefits

- All relevant staff alerted in parallel
- The system safeguards the flow of information by requesting confirmation of contacts and reporting these to the administrator
- Automatic filtering of incoming calls
- Spontaneous telephone conferences
- Documentation of all activities
- Stable communications infrastructure based on redundant structure

THOMAS COOK GROUP PLC is one of the world's leading leisure travel groups with over 19 million customers, 30,000 employees, a fleet of 97 aircraft, a network of over 3,000 owned or franchised travel stores and a number of hotels and resort properties. In the UK, the Group has over 16,000 employees and a fleet of 46 aircraft.

BASELINE POSITION AND CHALLENGE ::

Travel companies need to be sure that they have very robust plans in place for any eventuality or crisis. Potential crises for travel companies such as hotel fires, terrorist attacks or aviation incidents can have a significant impact on their business, customers and employees. Thomas Cook already had plans in place for all these eventualities, but needed to ensure a robust communication infrastructure that would enable instant communication with their incident teams.

Thomas Cook needed a solution that would be simple to use and reliable. The company also needed that solution to be easily managed and updated with new starters and leavers' details. Previously Thomas Cook used a manual cascade process. In the Group's former system, failure to contact just one person could result in a whole section of staff being omitted from the contact chain. The company sought to replace this inefficient process with a solution that would guarantee direct contact with all relevant staff and was based on a stable, reliable communications infrastructure.

Efficient Alerting of Employees

It is also important that Thomas Cook is able to quickly mobilise their incident teams for any situation. A vital aspect was

the ability to monitor staff availability and their travel time to the scene at all times. Thomas Cook also needed a solution, which can store all the contact numbers for each of their employees and which can be retrieve in case of emergency.

Professional Client Dialog

Not only does Thomas Cook consider internal communications key, but the company has an ongoing commitment to its customers. The company has to make sure that the customer services team could cope with a large number of customers requesting information regarding any specific incidents. The last thing that the company wants is for their communication systems to become jammed and crash, or there not to be enough resources to man the phones. Analysis and evaluation of former incidents revealed that up to 80% of incoming calls are not directly related to the incident in question. Thomas Cook thus required a solution that would filter calls to prioritize urgent callers.

REALIZATION ::

F24 delivered Thomas Cook a process that integrated the latest technology into their crisis management plans so that they can easily communicate and manage employees and customers during a crisis with minimal fuss. For this purpose the Notification and Conferencing Service FACT24, a highly secure telecommunications solution, will be used. The Crisis Management team at Thomas Cook is today able to communicate with all their relevant employees effectively, efficiently and reliably at the touch of a button.

Reliable Alerting

FACT24 uses an automated cascade process to trigger voice, text or fax notification messages quickly and rapidly



Quick communication:

« The first hour of an incident is crucial. It is imperative that we make contact with the staff within the organisation as quickly as possible to inform them of the incident and to instruct them that our Emergency Procedures are being invoked. Confirmation that the message has got through is also crucial to the immediate requirement of the Procedures.

FACT24 is an invaluable service that took out the complexity of communicating quickly and easily with our employees and customers during crises. I am very impressed with the technology, expertise and professionalism from F24. We know that if we have an incident, we have the best infrastructure in place to communicate with the right people instantly. We look forward to rolling out FACT24 across more of our key markets. »

Bob Boyce, Director UK Operations, Thomas Cook

to the relevant Thomas Cook employees. If the employee is unavailable or cannot be reached after multiple attempts, the service automatically calls their designated deputies. All employees contacted are asked to acknowledge their receipt of the contact by confirming their availability and their expected time of arrival (ETA) to the scene or office via their telephone keypad. In addition, FACT24 supplies Thomas Cook with ongoing reports on the status of action taken. Initial interim reports are already delivered to the Crisis Management Team while fax, e-mail or text notification and online monitoring is also possible. The personnel responsible can therefore check at a glance who has already been contacted and the ETAs of specific employees at the scene. The web log also enables clients to conduct a final analysis of the communication process as a whole. Being able to find out where employees are and when they will be on the scene is critical in helping the Crisis Management Team manage the crisis.

Management Incoming Calls

An information hotline will also be set up to play a recorded message of relevant information for customers. The Crisis Management Team can update this message at any time. If further information is needed, calls can then be passed on via a query-reply system to appropriate staff members. The line will filter the calls without using up additional resources, prioritises urgent calls and eases pressure on the team.

Professional Partner

The Notification and Conferencing Service FACT24 is based on multiple redundant structures for highest availability. Within

fewer minutes thousands of people can be notified regardless of location. Additionally, Thomas Cook has the ability to draw all key stakeholders in to a conference call.

F24 worked hand in hand with Thomas Cook to implement this project, acting as an expert partner and providing assistance both in mapping crisis scenarios and in providing customer support in the fields of infrastructure and technology updates. Thomas Cook and F24 carried out regular checks to test the system to ensure that it works smoothly and all employees are familiar. All employees are sent a notification message during the test and asked to respond.

Thomas Cook looked for a partner that they could rely on to work together with them during any incident to communicate easily and quickly with all their employees yet put their customer's minds at peace. FACT24 fitted these criteria and gave Thomas Cook the confidence to ensure their crisis management and Business Continuity planning was solid.



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