



Optimal coordination of forces

LOWER SAXONY SWAT TEAM: FAST AND WELL-INFORMED AT THE SCENE OF THE CRIME

Client

Lower Saxony Police SWAT Team (Spezialeinsatzkommando, SEK)

Sector

Public organization – police

Problem

Permanent accessibility, rapid availability and optimal personnel coordination are critical to the success of the SWAT team (Spezialeinsatzkommando, SEK) of Lower Saxony State Criminal Police Office (Landeskriminalamt). To avoid loss of valuable time in an emergency, however, everything must run smoothly from the time of alerting to the arrival of the police at the emergency operations headquarters.

Solution

A one-year test run of **FACT24** convinced Lower Saxony SEK of the benefits of an automated alert service. **FACT24** ran flawlessly from the outset, and has since then ensured rapid and reliable alerting in emergencies. A key added value factor is the availability of clear status reports only minutes after the alert signal has been triggered.

Benefits

- Parallel notification via landline and mobile phone
- Feedback concerning availability and arrival time of the team members within minutes
- Optimal information about the type of emergency thanks to flexible notification messages

Lower Saxony Police SWAT Team (**Spezialeinsatzkommando, SEK**) is summoned in situations of high potential danger such as hostage crises, blackmail, terrorist attacks or organized crimes. In these situations, the team is responsible for protecting and saving human lives. The 95-strong SEK is a department of the Lower Saxony State Criminal Police Office (Landeskriminalamt, LKA).

SEK officers are carefully selected and trained for their outstanding capacity for teamwork, mental stability, good physical condition and high motivation. Ongoing advanced training and state-of-the-art technical equipment are core requirements that enable the officers of Lower Saxony SEK to act and respond professionally in all situations.

Since its foundation in 1975, Lower Saxony SEK has stood for the success of the Lower Saxony police force in combating serious crime, proven in over 1,800 cases.

BASELINE SITUATION AND CHALLENGE::

Permanent operational readiness involves permanent accessibility, rapid availability and optimal personnel coordination. In the era of the mobile phone, accessibility is relatively straightforward. To avoid loss of valuable time in an emergency, however, everything must run smoothly from the time of alerting to the arrival of the police at the operation headquarters. Previously, officers were alerted in sequence via pager by the operation headquarters. All officers contacted had to return the call to confirm receipt of the message and inform headquarters of their availability or estimated time of arrival at the scene. These confirmations were recorded manually at headquarters to provide the director of op-

erations with a status report - a procedure that not only involved extensive manual effort and loss of time, but also blocked valuable telephone lines.

SOLUTION ::

In July 2003, after conducting an in-depth search and analysis, Lower Saxony LKA launched **F24's FACT24** notification and conferencing service as an alternative system for its SWAT team (Spezialeinsatzkommando, SEK). Before full acceptance, however, the **FACT24** service had to prove its merit in a one-year test phase

Benefits of the service

FACT24 was smoothly integrated into the emergency operations headquarters. **FACT24** is not a hardware or software solution but a service, so that no purchases of hardware or program installations were necessary. Only the parameters of the various alert scenarios, the task forces and the officers assigned to them needed to be entered via the **FACT24** web interface. Multiple contact numbers were stored for each SEK member, e.g. landline, office, mobile phone. Once this initial data input is completed, ongoing administration is reduced to updating work such as entering new telephone numbers. Data is transferred via an encrypted Internet connection. In addition, all **F24** systems are protected against viruses and other hazards by an array of security measures.

Initial Test Run

Eight different alert scenarios are stored for Lower Saxony SEK – one for each of the five SWAT teams, one for the command team, one for the 24/7 on-call service and one as a full alert for all team members. The appropriate alert scenario for the incident is activated in seconds by telephone, by calling a **FACT24** toll-free



Rapid emergency coordination:

« If an emergency occurs, we need to be ready to go as soon as possible. **FACT24** is our reliable assistant in ensuring this is possible. The fast, clear status reports issued by **FACT24** are an enormous help in coordinating emergency procedures. »

Willi Lutze, Head of Lower Saxony SEK

service number with voice command menu. After selecting the alert required, the caller can customize the scenario if required or record a voice message giving the latest information on the alert situation.

Once the alert is triggered, the **F24** high-availability alert server rapidly sets the contact procedure in motion. Up to 240 parallel ISDN lines are simultaneously available for notifying personnel, so that even in case of a full alert all Lower Saxony SEK officers are notified in the same second. If team members are unavailable via their mobile phones, the system runs through a predefined sequence of contact options.

Confirmation of availability

To ensure efficient planning of resources, all officers contacted must acknowledge receipt of the alert by confirming their availability status. They use the telephone keypad to enter their readiness status and, if applicable, their estimated time of arrival at the scene. To ensure these procedures are carried out correctly in the event of an emergency, all officers were trained at the start of the test phase and familiarized themselves with operation of the system in numerous test alerts.

Only minutes after the alert, **FACT24** generates an initial report from the confirmations received, presenting the operations center with a summary of all relevant information:

- who was notified
- who is available
- their ETA

This information is reported by fax, e-mail or mobile phone text message to one or more reporting points, depending on the alert scenario selected. The final report and full documentation of notification activities in the **FACT24** alert log can be used in final debriefing or for optimization of alert procedures.

Passed the test

FACT24 functioned faultlessly from the outset and since then has delivered rapid and reliable alert procedures. A key value-added feature is the system's issue of clear status reports only minutes after the alert has been launched. Given this positive response, extending the contract after the "trial period" was a mere formality.



Pictures: Lower Saxony Police Team (SWAT)



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