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FAQ

3 Reasons Why You Should Use a Dispatch Console

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3 Reasons Why you Should Use a Dispatch System

In today's competitive environment, many businesses are implementing new digital radio technologies, such as DMR and NEXEDGE, which are designed to provide affordable digital communications of low complexity, and enhanced functionality, combining voice, data, text messaging and other supplementary services. However, to gain maximum value from this kind of system, you need to complement your network with a modern and full featured dispatch console.

A good dispatch console will enable you to efficiently coordinate and manage routine, administrative and emergency tasks within your business; sometimes over a localized area, other times over vast regions, depending on your requirements.

Some organizations install a two-way radio network and expect their staff to perform the serious business of coordinating operations through a portable handset on a desk. This can be very inefficient and doesn't make use of the best features of your radio network, especially if it is a digital system.

Here are three reasons why any business should seriously consider installing a dispatch console, regardless of whether you use a dedicated dispatcher or rely on Supervisors to coordinate operations.

Reason 1: Better Productivity

Organizations that use dispatch consoles can expect to benefit from better productivity. This can be attributed to various advantages that create efficiencies in communications. A dispatch console provides you with the ability to communicate with multiple people at the same time in an organized way. This cannot be done with portables on the desk. A dispatch console also enables you to organize your people into groups and communicate with those people (in groups or as individuals) even if they are on different radio networks.

Some of the key features that contribute to better productivity are:

- **Integrated Contacts:** Users on a radio network can have their own ID and belong to one or more talk groups. An integrated contacts function will ensure that people can be contacted easily and identified quickly.
- **Work Groups:** A dispatch console can be setup with combinations of channels (or talk groups) that are used in specific situations. These are called workgroups, and sometimes only a single workgroup is necessary. Each workgroup brings together a number of different radio channels (or talk groups) into a resizable window that can be activated at any time. A workgroup enables a dispatch console operator to use the radio network according to his or her role. This is also very useful when several people share a smaller number of consoles.
- **Simultaneous Access to Multiple Channels:** a dispatch console enables an operator (or Supervisor) to communicate with multiple people or teams at the same time, even if they are on different channels or different talk groups. The operator can choose to listen to a number of channels at the same time and control the level of sound from those channels. The buttons associated with each channel flash various colors and display text messages. This enables operators to very quickly identify where radio traffic is coming from at any point in time.
- **Rapid Recall:** An operator can immediately playback conversations, in whole or in parts, during and after received calls. This means that radio users do not need to repeat key information, as the dispatch console user can always easily refer to the recorded conversation to re-check facts.
- **Linking or Patching:** Linking and patching are particularly useful in situations where you need to operate two or more different types of radio networks, for example, a new DMR network and a legacy analog UHF system. Dispatch consoles make it possible for operators to create links between radio users on different systems. Once a link is established, an operator can communicate with people on different systems at the same time – no need to repeat messages. Additionally, radio users on one system may also be able to talk to users on another system, directly, without manual intervention.
- **Phone Connectivity:** The ability to integrate telephones into a system can be useful for both Central communications staff and radio users. For a dispatcher, for example, the ability to communicate with the phone system and the DMR network, using the same headset equipment, makes life easier and saves time.

Reason 2: Increased Safety

There are a number of features in most digital radios that can be used to increase the level of safety within your organization and ensure that you maintain your duty of care to your employees. Here are some key features of a dispatch console that will ensure that you provide a high level of safety.

- **Location Services through GPS:** Digital radios can periodically transmit GPS coordinates so you always know where your assets are – whether they are people or vehicles. Your assets can be displayed on a map, on the console GUI, and updated in real-time. For advanced location/tracking services, you can setup Geofences that alert you if someone wanders into a dangerous area, such as a hazardous atmosphere, or explosion risk zone, or moves out of an authorized region.
- **Emergency Management:** The dispatch console can generate suitable alert tones on the digital radio network to signal an emergency procedure. This can be designed into a process that can be initiated by a Supervisor, or dispatch operator, and takes place without hampering normal voice communications.
- **Remote Monitor:** Supervisors have the ability to remotely activate the microphone of a radio user and have that user's audio discreetly monitored. This is an important feature when you are concerned about a user's wellbeing and safety.
- **Stun Kill:** You can also temporarily or permanently disable a radio in the field. This is particularly useful if the radio is lost or stolen. It's also an important feature enabling you to disable a faulty radio that may be interfering with normal communications.

Reason 3: Continuous Business Improvement

Real-time communications are important but it's also important to keep track of what happens; who said what, when they said it and where they were. A dispatch system allows you to do this, giving you better overall visibility of your operations. This can then be used to manage continuous business improvement.

- **Call History:** This feature keeps track of all of the calls that are made to and from an operator including text messages. It provides a useful record of recent and missed calls and operators can benefit from this feature by never missing important requests and notifications. For the organization, the call history provides a record of events that is available for review. This can be useful when reviewing the performance of your workforce or retrospectively analysing the circumstances of some event.
- **Short-term Voice Logs:** This is similar to Call History but concentrates on voice communications. Whilst Call History is a record of events, this feature involves the actual "logging" or recording of calls (for a limited period of time). Many organizations use this to review and correct aspects of their operations. It is particularly useful when training new staff.
- **Long Term Recordings:** Dispatch systems also offer the ability to record radio (and telephone) communications on long term storage facilities (usually through third-party devices). This is important if you're serious about managing your workforce or require compliance to specific Occupational Health and Safety standards.
- **Asset Tracking:** The built-in GPS features of digital portables and mobiles enable organizations to track and manage their resources. Dispatch consoles that offer advanced GPS facilities (besides basic real-time tracking mentioned earlier) can be used to performance manage a workforce. You can graphically re-trace someone's movements over a specified period or produce reports to show the history of events for individual users.

A Final Thought

Dispatch consoles are not consigned for use by just dedicated radio communications centers. They provide significant benefits to any organization that wants to get maximum return for their investment in a digital radio network. Fully featured dispatch consoles don't need to be expensive. There are various cost-effective options available.

Disclaimer: The information contained in this document is to be used as a general guide only. Please refer to the Technical Manual provided with your product for more complete information.



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