



CASE STUDY

When Disaster Hits FEMA Answers!

M&C Associates Maintains Reliability of IVR Systems

FEMA, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, has a critical mission serving our Nation:

“To support our citizens and first responders to ensure that as a Nation we work together to build, sustain and improve our capability to prepare for, protect against, respond to, recover from and mitigate all hazards.”



FEMA

For 35 years, FEMA has led America to prepare for, prevent, respond to and recover from disasters with a vision of "A Nation Prepared." Within months of the September 11th attacks, the agency was tested in unprecedented ways, and FEMA was actively directing its "all-hazards" approach to disasters toward homeland security issues. Finally, after the most devastating natural disaster in U.S. History, it introduced the Post-Katrina Emergency Reform Act. This significantly reorganized FEMA, and included a more robust preparedness mission for FEMA.

Being prepared for disaster in any moment means having an infrastructure that can be depended upon. When disaster hits, the National Processing Service Centers (NPSC) of FEMA are ready, taking calls and directing those affected to receive appropriate assistance from the FEMA help line.

The IVR system provides intelligent call routing to those in need of FEMA individual assistance. Applicants may call to register for assistance, check on the status of their application, change their information on an existing application, or speak with an agent. The system provides self-help access to information 24 hours a day, seven days a week in English and Spanish. With a need to answer more than 1.5 million inquiries with an average wait time of 20 seconds, the reliability of the IVR system is critical.

FEMA Readiness and Reliability!

FEMA must always be ready for unexpected disasters, and to ensure readiness, direct calls from survivors, give support staff ability to answer calls and provide help, a dynamic call center environment supports the calls. The call center is a complex telecommunications infrastructure, and at the heart of it is an Interactive

Voice Response (IVR) system to handle the call volume. The overall health of the IVR system is an integral part of FEMA's ability to be ready 24x7x365.

If FEMA is available, watching out for the disasters and the Nation's survivors, then who is watching out for the IVR system to ensure that it is ready for the calls when disaster hits?



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Infrastructure Availability!

Because reliability is vital to FEMA's IVR system, they selected the team of Arrow S3 and M&C Associates for their mission-critical support contract. Arrow S3. This contract includes immediate 24x7 maintenance protection to the NPSC Call Center, supported by the Disaster Assistance Division and FEMA HQ Senior Management.

M&C Associates provides Hardware and Software Maintenance for two MPS-1000 production systems, each with 1,536 ports, as well as an MPS-500 lab system. Each MPS-1000 consists of eight (8) Sun Solaris Servers and eight (8) 192-port IVRs running multiple applications.

"M&C Associate's engineers and software developers were required to pass extensive security clearances before they were given access to the FEMA systems," says Jason Friend, Director – Federal Sales & Business Development for Arrow S3. Jason continues, "M&C overcame many challenges including a lack of physical access to one of the IVR systems. M&C has been able to improve system functionality through proactive service, and they react quickly and efficiently to problems when they do occur."

Service and Refinement!

With over 14,000 FEMA employees across the country – at headquarters, ten regional offices, National Emergency Training Center, Center for Domestic Preparedness/Noble training Center and other locations, FEMA coordinates the federal government's role in preparing for, preventing, mitigating the effects of, responding to, and recovering from all domestic disasters, whether natural or man-made, including acts of terror. FEMA continues to refine, redefine, and reshape their way of doing business to better serve the American people.

At M&C Associates, we consider our customers' success to be the most important reason for the continued success of *our* business. Meeting and exceeding their expectations gives testimony to the high standards our customers have grown to expect, especially in the areas of quality of work, trust and reliability. *"We are proud of the FEMA Maintenance project and its continued success in serving the Nation in its time of critical need," Lou Marianacci, President & CEO, M&C Associates LLC.*

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