LiveSafe®

Duty of Care:

Have Smartphones and Collaboration Redefined the Standard?

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Introduction

When it comes to ensuring the safety and security of your employees, the standard for what's reasonable is constantly evolving. Meeting this standard in the past meant installing alarm systems, implementing safety procedures and establishing policies for reporting incidents related to people or property. Typically, employees reported incidents by filing cumbersome reports – often in hard copy form – after days or perhaps even weeks had passed. Some of these processes were automated, allowing for submission via email or online using a company intranet. In either case, a system such as this was assumed to be "reasonable", adequately meeting the "duty of care" standard from a legal and ethical perspective. However, the mobile revolution is challenging this assumption. Organizations now have to revisit what "duty of care" means in a hyperconnected, digital world.

Companies now have at their disposal a powerful new asset: the mobile-enabled workforce. Meeting the new standard for duty of care means fully exploiting this new source of security intelligence to create a safer and secure workplace.

A Mobile-Enabled Workforce

With the explosive growth of mobile technologies and social media, instant sharing has become a de facto behavioral trait for most consumers. With cameras, video recording and GPS tracking, the average consumer has now become the equivalent of a mobile news reporter, constantly capturing and reporting on social media what's happening all around them. These consumers are also employees, bringing to the office, factory floor or hospital facility the same digital capabilities (and mindset) they have in their private lives. The question is, can this sharing behavior be used to identify and report incidents at work in real time, using the multi-media, communication and location tracking capabilities of employee's smartphones? Of course, the answer is yes. But it introduces other questions such as: should employees be involved in such activities? What additional risk does the company assume, now that it knows a lot more than it did in the past about safety and security issues? With a "deputized" force of employee news gatherers inside a company or attending an event, the universe of what's knowable, and thus foreseeable and preventable, could expand significantly. For organizations, there is both opportunity and risk.

A New Approach to Safety

Given this reality, companies may fail to meet the reasonable test if they don't attempt to harness these new digital and social capabilities and adopt a more proactive safety and security posture. In this paper we make the case that, given the proper conditions, the opportunities to improve employee safety, productivity and morale strongly outweigh the potential risks of enlisting your mobile workforce in the cause.

Harnessing the Power of the Mobile Workforce

As the world witnessed the horrific events in Paris last year, the power of social media to serve as a crisis communication tool quickly became evident. Using its new Moments feature, Twitter constantly updated users with breaking news about the attacks. Also, users in Paris created the hashtag "Porteouverte" (open door) to help those seeking safe shelter. The hashtag was included in one million tweets within the first 10 hours after the attack (Goel and Ember). This crisis showed not only the ability of social media to aggregate news, but to crowdsource information in a way that could help people take action to avoid a dangerous situation.

Crowdsourcing Workplace Safety and Security

It's intriguing to think about all the opportunities to use crowdsourcing to improve safety and security in the workplace – particularly in a real-time crisis situation as in Paris. However, the real opportunity for organizations exists not just in responding to crisis situations but in proactively avoiding incidents in the first place. A timely and appropriate response to an incident – be it workplace violence or accident – is obviously important, but what if there was a way to use employee crowdsourcing to simply prevent them from happening at all? An important consideration to keep in mind is that unlike with social media apps, any workplace solution will have to have much greater controls over privacy and anonymity, as well as centralized reporting and administration.

Let's take a look at a few common workplace safety and security issues that proactive employee crowdsourcing could address:

» **Hazardous Conditions** – in a factory or shop floor employees could snap and upload timestamped and location-tagged photos of improperly stored hazardous materials or a wet floor that could cause a slip and fall.

» **Personal Safety** – for hospital employees working the late shift in a high crime area, location-tagging could allow for a "virtual escort" with check-in and emergency notification to provide peace of mind on their walk to the parking lot or public transportation. Features like real-time chat with security could also provide a greater measure of comfort for employees.

» **Co-worker Threats and Harassment** – using anonymous reporting, employees could report on incidents that include co-worker threats of violence or ongoing sexual harassment, allowing for rapid intervention and de-escalation.

» **Property Theft** – a door left unlocked or intentionally propped open can lead to theft of personal items or inventory, particularly when securing large, complex facilities such as shopping malls. Employees could snap and immediately upload timestamped and location-tagged photos of the door and send to security staff.

These are but a few of the many potential uses of crowdsourcing safety and security. By combining the crisis communication-like functions similar to what are found in social media apps with the privacy and anonymity required in a workplace setting, companies can build a more safety conscious culture and greater trust between employees and the organization.

Making the Business Case

As with most issues that deal with risk, small upfront investments in proper mitigation are better than expensive litigation later on. Crowdsourcing enables an "ounce of prevention" approach that meets the duty of care standard in a way that is cost effective for the company, and exceeds employee expectations for a modern work environment. A proactive, crowdsourced approach can impact:

Reduced Cost and Risk – Workplace violence (WPV) events are preventable, and the cost of reacting to a WPV event is 100 times more than the cost of typical prevention programs (Nixon). For hazardous facilities, the annual cost to companies from negligence injuries and illnesses is $250 -$300 billion (Paul). The cost of behaviors like discrimination, bullying, and harassment is $64 billion (Corporate Leavers Survey), and employee theft comes in at $60 billion annually (Leinbach-Reyhle).

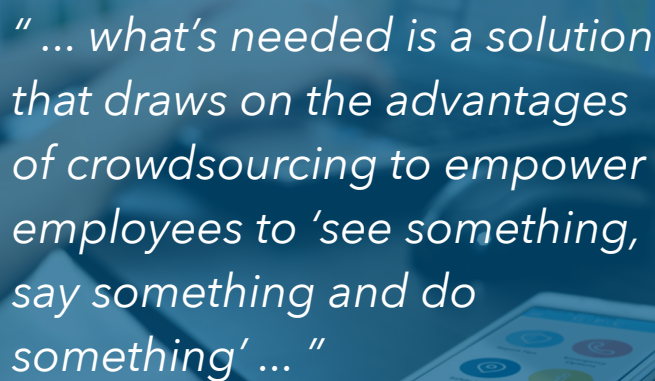| Negligence injuries & illnesses	Harassment	Employee theft

$424 billion

Improved Morale and Retention – Research has shown that employee morale and a safe workplace are highly correlated, with both physical as well as psychological safety as factors related to higher levels of job satisfaction (Behm). Gallup research has consistently shown that greater job satisfaction, or employee engagement leads to greater productivity and lower turnover (Sorenson).

Increase in Employee Empowerment – More than any other workplace safety approach, a crowdsourced process offers higher levels employee empowerment, giving them greater control over workplace safety, knowing that their direct involvement will make the workplace safer.

A crowdsourced approach creates opportunities to tackle safety communications in an entirely new way, that engages employees to ensure a safer workplace while eliminating the need to invest in costly additional security systems and personnel.

Understanding and Managing the Risks

" ... what's needed is a solution that draws on the advantages of crowdsourcing to empower employees to 'see something, say something and do something' ... "

Before engaging your employees as super sleuths, combing the halls of your organization, ready to document any and all violations, there are few things to consider. Specially, you want to understand how your new, expanded ability to uncover safety and security issues might actually increase your liability. Also, you need to think through how you might address the additional volume of issues or tips that are logged, given the staff you have available. Finally, you want to understand how to handle the privacy of employee information.

These risks are not show-stoppers by any means, but they need to be thought through and addressed at the outset of implementing a comprehensive safety solution that has real crowdsourced elements. For companies that want to scale this capability, what's needed is a solution that draws on the advantages of crowdsourcing to empower employees to "see something, say something and do something" while providing the privacy, anonymity, monitoring and controls that a workplace demands.

Introducing Unified Safety Communications

The explosion of digital and mobile capabilities has transformed what's possible with respect to safety and security in the workplace. The act of "deputizing" your employees to be the eyes and ears of your organization must be supported by an "enterprise-ready" solution that has a combination of features found in most enterprise software solutions (e.g. IT Support, CRM, HR, Supply Chain). For example, just as your IT support desk solution provides you with unified identity, security, communications, tracking, reporting and escalation, so should your safety communications. We call this new set of capabilities:

Unified Safety Communications (USC)

Unified Safety Communications (USC) combines the crowdsourcing capabilities of social and mobile, with tracking, reporting and integration features of enterprise-class support solutions. Figure 1 provides a breakdown of the key component of a USC solution. By bringing together all of these capabilities in a single solution, organizations can proactively address safety issues, while effectively managing the tracking and escalation process.

Social/Mobile	**Crowdsourced Intelligence** Users send text, photos, videos and precise location information to report incidents	**Virtual Escort** Users virtually walk friends and colleagues home or to another location using real-time map	**Safety Map** Shows real time location of nearby safety places, such as police stations, hospitals and fire stations	**Broadcasts** Users can receive broadcast messages directly through company app, SMS text, push notification or email	**Location Sharing** Allows real-time location sharing on the user's device, allowing security know the exact location of user
Support	**Advanced Analytics** Access statistical data on usage that includes time series views of tips submitted, emergency events, information about the user base, broadcast messages and check-ins			**Customized Resources** Mobile accessible repository of emergency procedures and resources for organizations available to users even if they are offline	
Integration	**Directory Integration** Enable user database updates and syncing with security dashboard and app communities, directory integration and single sign-on		**Webhooks** Connect dashboard data into existing systems such as Human Resources, Facilities, or case management	**SDKs** Create custom embedded mobile features into existing iOS or Android apps to connect the employee community and security team	

Figure 1: Unified Security Communications Features

The Future is Here

Having implemented the LiveSafe Unified Security Communications platform at the Rio Olympics, Democratic National Convention and Republican National convention, we've seen firsthand how crowdsourced security can work on a large scale. During the Paris attacks, our customers were able to account for all of their employees located in Paris in less than two minutes, compared to up to forty-eight hours for other companies using traditional means of communication.

We believe that organizations, whether they are large multi-nationals, public sector agencies, hospitals or sports venues, can use USC as a way to fulfill their duty of care obligation while creating an environment where people are engaged, happy, productive and safe.

Adopt the use of mobile technology to expand your safety and security coverage and lowering costs with reduced risks by preventing incidents before they occur.

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