3+1 Benefits of Non-Emergency Call Automation for Public Safety Answering Points

Many calls received by 911 centers are non-emergencies. Citizens often reach out with requests, such as noise complaints and parking violations, which can affect the availability of 911 call-takers. Moreover, high call volumes can overwhelm call-takers and dispatchers who operate in a highly stressful environment, with one of the highest turnover rates. All these factors just add fuel to the fire at public safety answering points (PSAPs), which are already facing a staffing crisis and budgetary constraints.

How can you ease the burden on your call-taker without negatively impacting emergency call handling and breaking the bank?

Technology is increasingly seen as an enabler for transforming emergency response, improving community safety, and enhancing citizen trust in public services. By implementing automation and offering self-service options for non-emergency calls, you can achieve a significant reduction in call-taker workload, quicker emergency responses, and cost savings.

1. Reducing Call-Taker Workload

With many dispatchers and call-takers experiencing burnouts and a shortage of 911 employees, it's crucial to make your staff feel valued and reduce the risk of burnout. An effective way to reduce their burden without compromising the level of critical interactions is leveraging technological innovations. By automating non-emergency calls and providing your citizens with self-service options, you can enable your call-takers to concentrate on what matters most: real emergencies. Automation and self-service can also work together to decrease liability due to the increasingly long hold times for citizens.

2. Speeding Up Emergency Response

When lives are at stake, quick reaction is essential. If you can minimize the time your call-takers spend on non-urgent calls, you allow them to focus on the emergency calls that come in. Automation can help save precious time in critical moments by re-routing non-emergency requests to alternative communication channels, including a self-service web portal or even a mobile app. It's particularly useful given the heightened citizen expectations for multi-channel communications, which pressures your PSAPs to do more with existing resources. By automating and offering self-service options for non-emergency calls, you can boost operational efficiency without the need for increasing headcount or costs.

3. Optimizing Costs

Operating within a tight budget is another common challenge for public safety agencies. Fiscal pressures often inhibit investment in new systems, which in turn can seriously reduce effectiveness and increase costs. Transitioning from legacy systems to modern technology offers more than just streamlined operations and enhanced efficiency. Digital solutions, such as automation, can lead to substantial cost savings in the long run by expanding call-taker and supervisor capacity and keeping maintenance costs low. Look for open platforms or solutions that can work with your existing PSAP infrastructure and allow extensibility as budgetary and organizational requirements evolve.

+1. Increasing Citizen Experiences and Trust

While PSAPs are first and foremost responsible for keeping communities safe and secure, enhancing citizen experience is an additional benefit non-emergency call automation can bring about. As confidence in state and local government decreases, ways that can help boost public trust are appreciated. Automation can offer quick and high-quality responses to citizen inquiries, along with increased transparency. Meeting your citizens' needs without delay—whether it's getting answers, reporting issues, and tracking progress online—can make them feel seen and served.

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