

What's your plan?

# **Making the Business Case for Emergency Management Technology for Higher Education Institutions**



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The number and intensity of natural and human-caused disasters is steadily increasing, and colleges and universities are finding that in order to protect health and safety of students, faculty, and staff, they need to find more efficient and effective processes for managing preparedness and response to emergencies and crises large and small.



The COVID-19 pandemic affects colleges and universities more than any event has in recent years, causing shutdown of campuses, shifting of learning delivery, and underscoring the need to reevaluate emergency response processes to protect health and safety of students, faculty, and staff.

Natural disasters have also taken a major toll on higher education institutions. Record hurricane seasons in recent years brought numerous tropical storms and hurricanes from the Atlantic, threatening or impacting the Atlantic and Gulf coasts and spawning tornadoes and bringing heavy rain and flooding in inland areas. In the west, wildfires have dramatically increased year after year in number and size, burning hundreds of thousands of acres, damaging or destroying homes and other structures, closing roads and highways, causing unsafe air quality, and prompting evacuations in communities, and temporarily closing schools, businesses, and other organizations.

But there are dozens of other types of natural and human-caused disasters, as well as infrastructure-related incidents that can impact campus safety and the health and wellbeing of people on campus. Higher education institutions need complete preparedness and response capabilities to be ready for any crisis or disaster.

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According to a **Juware survey**, the top concern for emergency managers at higher education institutions was a tie between infrastructure disasters and active shooter incidents.

## Impact of Critical Incidents on Campus

A recent study by research organization Forrester found that all of the companies they surveyed suffered **at least 1 critical event in the past 24 months**. The vast majority of companies, in fact, said they experienced multiple events in that 2-year span, with 96% of respondents saying they had between 4 and 10 critical incidents.

Obviously, higher education institutions are businesses too, so these statistics also hold true for them. However, colleges and universities have their own unique circumstances depending on the size of the school, the campus setting, number of people on campus, etc.

The Forrester study cited businesses experiencing incidents including theft of physical/intellectual property, IT failure, cyberattack, utility outages, executive protection threats, brand reputation threats, supply chain disruptions, acts of terrorism, and active shooter situations. Colleges and universities must be prepared to respond to these same types of critical incidents.

## Importance of Comprehensive Preparedness and Response Capabilities

It's proven that the faster a organization can respond to a critical incident, the less costly the disruption will be. So, better processes for responding to a crisis makes good financial sense.

To prepare adequately and respond effectively, colleges and universities need Emergency Management technology that supports incident action plans, enables centralized, accurate, and timely situational awareness across multiple locations, delivers an effective means of tracking important information and data, and provides strong communications capabilities that facilitate collaboration with students, faculty, leadership, and local, state, and federal emergency management response agencies.

Unfortunately, studies have shown that many higher education institutions do not have sufficient capabilities to respond effectively to critical incidents. Improving these processes represents a significant opportunity to reduce the financial impact of operational disruptions, mitigate damage to property, protect the school's brand reputation, and ultimately, save lives.



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## Making the Business Case for Emergency Management Technology

Naturally, there are always other business needs with varying levels of importance competing for funding and leadership buy-in. The health and safety of students and staff is obviously a compelling reason for upgrading your institution's emergency management capabilities. But how do you make the case to your institution's leadership, who might feel current processes are "good enough"? You need hard-hitting facts and data that illustrate logistical, operational, and most importantly, financial, justifications for a comprehensive emergency management platform.

Here are 5 key questions and points to consider when making your case for a comprehensive emergency management platform:

**1** What are your goals?

You've identified emergency management capabilities as an area where your school could improve. So, what do you hope to achieve? What outcomes would be meaningful to you, to other stakeholders or departments, and across your entire institution? How would you measure success in these areas?

To create a more efficient and safer environment campus-wide, emergency managers and safety and security teams need technology that provides greater situational awareness, enhanced communications and collaboration capabilities, automated workflows, and integration with area emergency responders and healthcare facilities. Addressing these needs can help create a more efficient and safer workplace.

Some of the key aspects of emergency preparedness and response that many college and university leaders identify as areas of improvement include:

- + Preparedness planning and procedures
- + Communication and collaboration
- + Response and situational awareness capabilities
- + Critical incident training and exercises
- + Recovery and mitigation processes

What are the top goals for improving your school's emergency management processes? How does your current process align with these goals? How would new processes improve alignment?

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### 3 What specific emergency management processes need to be addressed or improved?

The best way to assess your current capabilities is to review after action reports from a past crisis or disaster and evaluate what aspects of that response could be improved.

An effective, comprehensive critical incident platform replaces insufficient and impractical manual processes to give colleges and universities the tools they need to standardize emergency response and management processes as well as day-to-day incidents or activities, giving leadership, safety and security teams, and emergency management teams the capabilities to plan and respond to:

- + Severe weather, including storms, hurricanes, tornadoes, winter storms, flooding, and wildfires
- + Active shooter incidents
- + Campus violence and terror-related incidents
- + Cybersecurity and other IT-related incidents
- + Workplace safety and security activities
- + Compliance with the Clery Act and other applicable local, state, or federal regulatory mandates
- + Campus-wide activities, including large scale events such as lectures, sporting events, concerts, and other events
- + Facilities safety and operational status

An effective critical incident management platform allows organizations of all sizes to maintain complete situational awareness of actual or potential incidents, and to respond effectively and recover quickly.

Do you have capabilities that give you a common operating picture with real-time comprehensive views of data pertaining to critical incidences and occurrences? Do you have automated workflows to track information, make critical decisions, request necessary supplies and aid? Do you have standardized communication tools to maintain contact with students, faculty, leadership, staff, and other stakeholders? Are you able to schedule, perform, and track training exercises with everyone who would be impacted by a critical incident?

What are some specific areas of concern in your emergency management processes that could be improved? How have past incidents affected your institution? Where have current processes failed and how could it have gone better? How could you improve collaboration and how would that help? Offer specific examples.

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## How does an emergency management platform provide a return on investment?

Studies have shown that downtime from critical incidents such as natural disasters, cyberattacks, infrastructure problems, or workplace violence can cost a company as much as \$336,000 per hour. So, a power outage, gas leak, or critical incident lasting only 8 hours, or one workday, could still cost your organization over \$3 million. A longer outage, or several incidents over the course of a year could be even more costly. A Gartner study calculated that downtime incidents on average can reach 87 hours per year, which equates to almost \$30 million in losses from downtime per year.

How do these types of incidents affect your institution short term and long term? Explore potential risks or limitations and areas where inefficiency, inaccurate data, or ineffective collaboration could affect your school.

Effective emergency management processes often have the effect of enhancing revenue by reducing or eliminating errors, hours spent on manual tasks, and potential disruption costs.

What is the financial cost for your college or university of past incidents causing operational disruption, or damage to facilities, equipment, infrastructure, or brand reputation?  
How could more effective and efficient processes reduce, mitigate, or eliminate these costs?  
What are some specific measurements you could show to illustrate these improvements?

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## 5 Putting it all together

So much is on the line when considering upgrades to your emergency management processes and technology. You need to have plenty of supporting information and documentation, and the support of colleagues and key stakeholders.

Most importantly, you need to be able to clearly illustrate the need for comprehensive emergency management technology and how it will improve the institution's capabilities to respond in any incident or on a daily basis for all types of activities, incidents, or events.

While effective emergency management technology makes solid financial sense by reducing the impact of operational disruption, the human aspect and benefit is that it helps safeguard the health and safety of people, a feature that is immeasurable in strictly financial terms.

What are your institution's goals and vision in terms of its commitment to students, faculty, and staff members? How does protecting health and safety align with your institution's philosophy? This is the more intangible and esoteric but vital and persuasive quality that should be included in any business case for emergency management.

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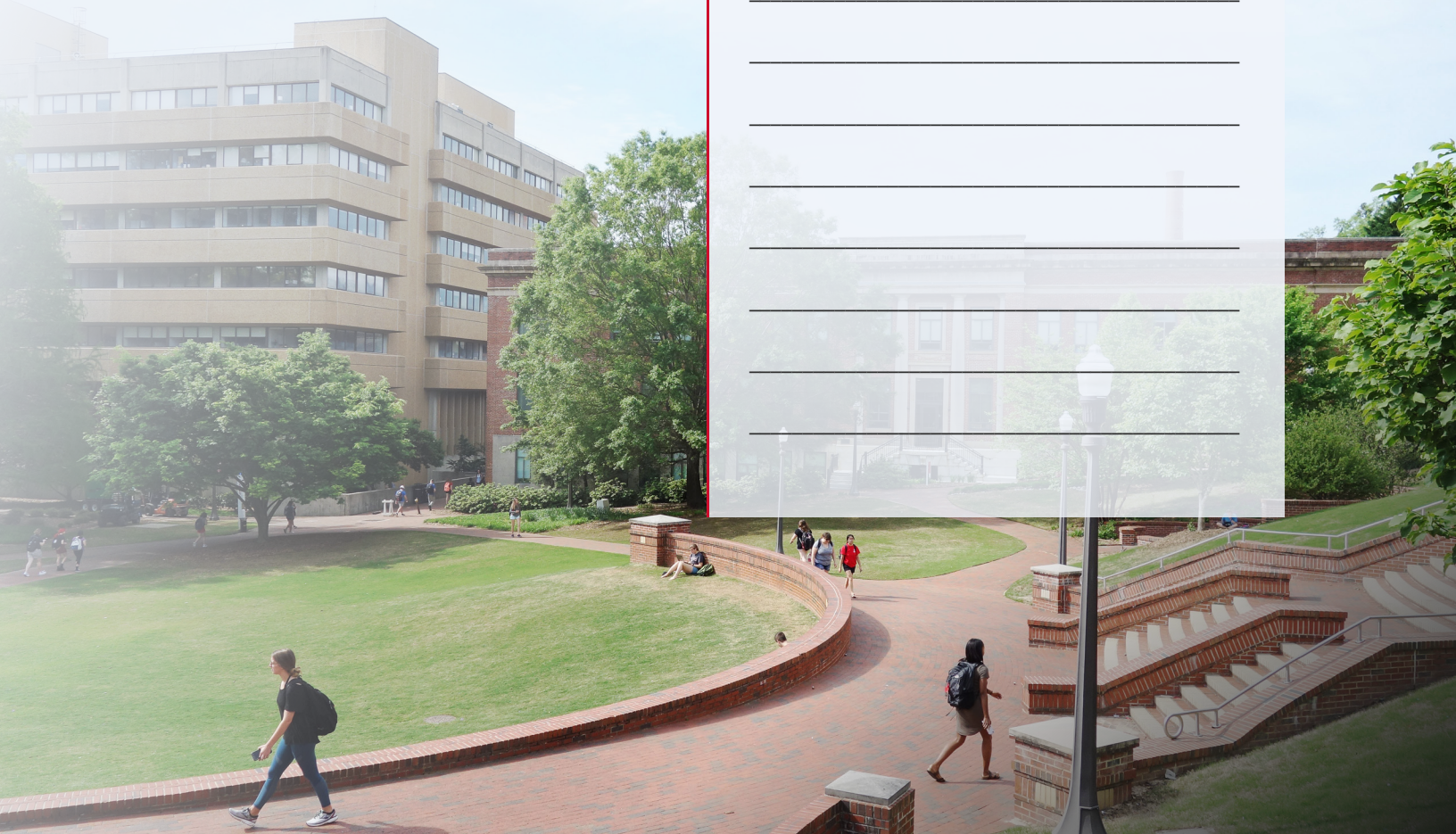
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## Emergency management technology makes good business sense.

A Critical Incident Management solution is an investment in your organization's future, protecting your people, property, facilities, operation, and brand from catastrophic results in the event of a natural or man-made disaster.

### Juware works with higher education institutions to help them Prepare, Connect, and Respond

At Juware, our mission is to strengthen and optimize information sharing to empower preparedness and response – to protect people, property, and brands.

Juware solutions for Education help create a safe and secure environment for learning, while also supporting daily operations. Colleges and universities across the U.S., as well as Fortune 500 corporations, healthcare facilities, and government agencies, rely on Juware solutions

every day to provide situational awareness and improve communications as well as information management before, during, and after all types of critical incidents.

Our emergency management experts are here to help you unlock the information, data, and resources you need to make the case for solutions that will help your higher education institution avoid disruption and keep people safe.

TALK WITH US

