→ ProcessFlows IT Department uses SMS Messaging

For three decades, ProcessFlows has been distributing best-of-breed technology to customers and partners alike. Areas of expertise include Print and Fax, Unified Communications, Complex Solutions, Software Sourcing and Managed Services. One of the fastest growing business units is Unified Communications, who focus on technologies surrounding a single inbox for all message types, call recording and management, voice control, SMS and more.

Having developed and launched its first SMS solution over a decade ago, ProcessFlows has historically found great reception for its text messaging products. Knowing how many organisations have benefitted from integrating SMS, the Unified Communications team decided to look inwards to see if this simple but powerful messaging medium could help improve internal processes.

Too Many Requests, Too Little Time

ProcessFlows' long-running success has resulted in a continuing swell of staff numbers, which in turn means more internal communications to keep under control. The IT Manager, John Freckelton, found that many calls to the internal Helpdesk concerned password resets, most often from staff ignoring warning notifications on their PCs until their passwords expired. As staff numbers grew, so did the number of password reset requests, wasting valuable IT resource and time. They needed a solution that would encourage staff to update their passwords before they expired, thus taking the strain off the IT team.

A bespoke system was created (nicknamed the "IT Toolbox") to query Microsoft Active Directory for upcoming expiring user passwords and send email reminders to those staff at 21 days, 14 days and 7 days prior to password expiry. The staff mobile numbers (both corporate and personal - provided by HR) were also stored, hidden, within Active Directory.
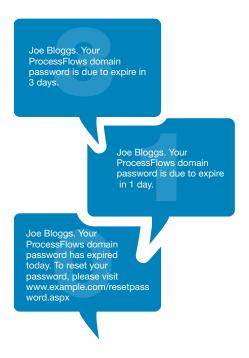
However, even with the new reminder service, password reset requests were still high; users were simply ignoring the emailed reminders.

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Improving Business by Transforming Process

The answer: *SMS Text Messaging.* Where people often ignore emails, text messages are read and opened at a much higher rate. In addition to the organisation's well established Text Message Server product, ProcessFlows have recently developed and launched 123-txt, a cloud-based SMS solution, which is very easy to integrate with any line-of-business process.

Integrating the bespoke password reminder system with 123-txt's powerful API and using the AlphaTag "PF IT Dept", has enabled SMS notifications to be sent to staff 3 days, 2 days and 1 day prior to their password expiry date and then again on the day of expiry, with a link to reset their already expired password.

Password reset requests have since dropped to almost zero, saving the IT department valuable time and saving staff from frustration.

Joe Bloggs. Your ProcessFlows domain password is due to expire in 3 days.

Joe Bloggs. Your ProcessFlows domain password is due to expire in 1 day.

Joe Bloggs. Your ProcessFlows domain password has expired today. To reset your password, please visit www.example.com/resetpassword.aspx

Remote Support Validation Checks

With widespread adoption of home working across many organisations, providing technical support to staff remotely raises new concerns over security and potential identity theft.

A typical scenario; Bob, a new member of staff rings the IT Helpdesk asking for the VPN details, because he wasn't given those details during his induction the previous day. The Helpdesk agent may not have heard of Bob, does not recognise his name, yet he is being asked to provide this 'stranger' with remote access to the company network. How does he validate the request, and how does he verify who he is speaking to?

The answer: **Verification Text Messages**

By adapting the "IT Toolbox" to send out password reminders via the already integrated 123-txt API, ProcessFlows Helpdesk agents can select the caller from the company staff list (pre-populated with staff mobile numbers), generating a random verification code which is automatically sent via SMS to the caller. The caller receives the text and reads out the code they have received. The Helpdesk agent can also see the code on their system, so they can then confirm the code matches and the caller is successfully verified.

PF IT DEPARTMENT

Requested info: @3QKBNAfX56@Tc3

The new verification process allows the IT Helpdesk to provide 24x7 remote support to staff with confidence, helping to keep the business running efficiently whilst ensuring security is kept to a maximum.

Staff Alerts

ProcessFlows IT Department also uses the "IT Toolbox" SMS integration with 123-txt to send out ad-hoc messages to staff, such as notifications of computer system outages, planned system maintenance or any other specific information required by one or more remote members of staff.

The Way to Prove It is to Use It

ProcessFlows, an advocate of using the technology it sells, uses CX-E for call management. CX-E supports a plethora of notification mechanisms, one of which is SMS. SMS within CX-E can be configured using a GSM Modem, SMPP or REST API. The main benefit of using SMS for notifications is when a voicemail or fax is received in to a user's mailbox. These notifications can be customised with message classes (urgent or all) and set for specific days or times of day.

Long Term Change

And what of the results of the different SMS deployments within the business? Freckleton has this to say: *"SMS messaging is an important part of our business communications suite. It's more secure than standard (non-encrypted) email and it's nearly always available, even when mobile data coverage is patchy or non-existent. It provides us with a reliable means of getting important information to our management and staff regardless of day/time/location."*

Through message status updates (within 123-txt) the IT team knows when the message has been delivered to the handset and, more importantly, can be confident that the user has seen the message.

Freckleton continues: *"SMS is also an invaluable tool for notifying our IT team of any critical system issues outside of business hours, whether it be a system fault, comms-room air-conditioning failure, comms-room power loss etc. It removes the need to constantly check emails or other monitoring tools when away from the office, safe in the knowledge that any critical incidents will trigger an SMS message to our IT staff."*

The IT Department has gained a lot in terms of time and resource that was otherwise spent dealing with password resets and verification. The gains in those areas can now be reallocated to other development projects and areas of maintenance, ensuring that ProcessFlows continues to be secure, well-managed and innovative.