Selecting Incident Management Software

This thoughtpiece is designed to help procurement and operations teams select the right software to enable incidents to be managed more quickly and effectively to resolution.

INCIDENTS ON THE WATER NETWORK

Incidents in a water company take different forms:

- Operational
  - Clean water
    - Water quality issue
    - Burst
  - Waste water
    - Internal sewer flooding

RESOLVING INCIDENTS

Resolving incidents quickly and effectively gets ever more important for hitting internal and regulatory targets and avoiding penalties relating to leakage and pollution, and for combatting bad actors whether hackers or terrorists.

The key problems with managing these quickly and effectively to resolution are:
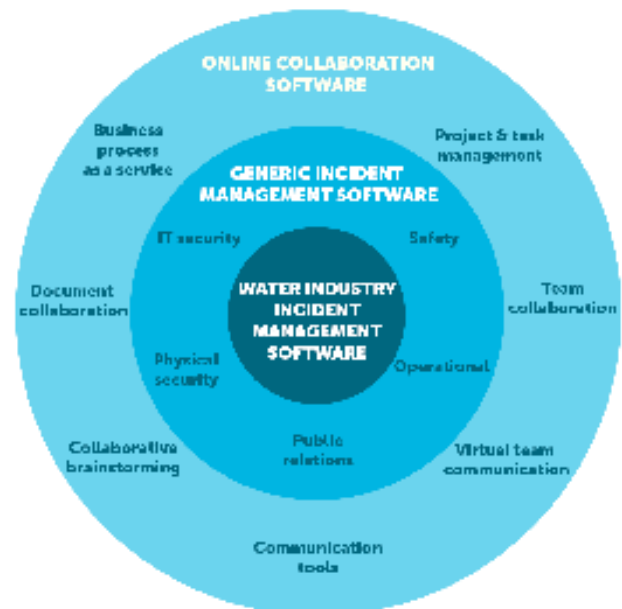
- There isn't one place where a senior decision maker can find a list of current events, showing magnitude and duration
- There often isn't a defined process to follow so steps are missed and actions are duplicated
- All those who need to can't immediately access and share relevant information from wherever they are – at home, in the office, at a plant, in the field; too often many people are ill-informed or everyone has to call each other relentlessly and/or come into the office whatever the day or time
- Learning lessons depends on gathering information and people after the event and this takes a long time during which memories fade and people move on to the next thing.

ESSENTIAL FUNCTIONALITY

These problems define the list of must-have functionality:

1. Dashboard showing location, magnitude and duration
2. Prescribed process for the range of incidents that occur in a water company either an appropriate pre-canned one if you don't have one, or a fully tailorable one if you do
3. Accessibility from all devices in all locations
4. Post-incident report of auditable quality available as soon after incident close as possible

Everything else is an optional extra. Seems easy enough right? What makes it more difficult is that there is a bewildering number of technologies out there that might fit the bill. There are broadly three groupings, with subcategories:

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THE SOFTWARE

Let's start with so-called generic incident management software. This generally comes from one of two worlds: Safety and DevOps (the people who run software platforms). The problem is that it's written very specifically for those worlds and doesn't translate easily into other worlds. Take a look at A1 Tracker, Zoho for Safety or VictorOps, fresh service for DevOps. Or go a bit more generic and try Resolver.

Further afield, there is a host of other software categories that are tangential to the incident management space. You could use some of them to create a solution but each one provides only a small subset of the functionality you need and indeed you may still want or need to use them in conjunction with your incident management solution. You may already have some of them. Those software categories include:

- Business process as a service, the impenetrably named hcaPaaS and hpaPaaS, (high control and high-productivity business process as a service) some of which are business process specific like Salesforce for sales, most are focused on application development – try ServiceNow
- Project and Task Management – try Teamwork or Basecamp at the smaller end or LiquidPlanner at the high end
- Virtual Team Communication – try Slack
- Team Collaboration – try Asana or Microsoft Teams
- Document Collaboration – try Dropbox, Sharepoint, Google Docs, Google Drive
- Collaborative Brainstorming – try Trello
- Communication Tools – try Skype, Zoom or Google Hangouts

The more generic the tool, the further from the centre of our diagram you go, usually the more work you need to do in the software to build your specific process steps and rules.

Each of these technologies has its own functionality set, and before long anyone looking to specify requirements has looked at all of them and written down all the functionality they offer, creating an un-prioritised list a mile long.

But it's only the 4 must-haves – dashboard, prescribed process, accessibility from all devices in all locations, and post-incident reporting – that are required.

Everything else can be prioritised either to help select between software meeting the 4 key criteria; to create a roadmap for future functionality; to plan integration of incident management software with other pieces of software; or accepted as a pipe dream.

Today, only eNet from i2O delivers the 4 must-haves. It also has a roadmap that our clients help prioritise. Let us help you to resolve incidents quickly and effectively, to hit internal and regulatory targets and avoid penalties relating to leakage and pollution, and to combat the threat of bad actors.