

# CIOReview

ISSN 2644-237X

CIOREVIEW.COM

JUNE - 10 - 2020

The Navigator for Enterprise Solutions



Awarded by CIOReview

COMPANY  
OF THE YEAR

## Orion Communications



Awarded by CIOReview

*The annual listing of 10 companies that are at the forefront of providing Law Enforcement solutions and transforming businesses*

# Orion Communications

## Workforce Management and Data Interface Experts

Over the years, public safety agencies have witnessed a steady adoption of technology, a trend seeping into both their briefing rooms, patrol cars and fire stations alike. Whether it's the city-county government, fire department/EMS, or law enforcement agency, everyone is readily embracing the cloud and data solutions to ensure better scalability, agility, and flexibility. However, considering the complexity of workforce management, factors such as multiple collective bargaining units, scheduling rules, continuous training requirements and outdated manual processes, have made time and labor a premium, and the lack of which, a root cause for several implementation problems.

As workforce management and data interface experts—Orion Communications is perfectly poised to address these challenges. Founded in 1998, the company offers public safety workforce management software that automates operational processes according to agency rules. "Given the complex schedules and different work locations of public safety personnel, agencies need an easy to use, configurable system that can centralize

the management of their workforce. These systems must be easy to access anytime from anywhere, include relevant public safety applications and allow data sharing with other systems," asserts Leslie DeLatta, President of Orion Communications. As an IT and Public Safety industry veteran with over 30 years of experience, Leslie explains that the company has evolved over the years based on its customers' need to centralize the management of daily personnel operations. It's the greatest compliment when the chief of an agency says, "Just call Orion, they can figure it out because they're fearless in the way they go about solving problems," exclaims Leslie.

### UTILIZING DATA-DRIVEN ANALYTICS THAT PROVIDE ACTIONABLE INSIGHTS

Under her leadership, Orion's cloud-based workforce management software simplifies the complexities of managing public safety personnel. It works as a centralized platform for individual or multiple agencies, such as sheriff offices, police departments, fire agencies, and emergency medical services. Orion's solutions include a wide range of applications that increases operational efficiencies and reduces labor cost. Workforce Management PLUS is one Orion solution that offers public safety the much-needed flexibility in managing daily processes for a broad range of personnel. From Firefighters to Investigators, Patrol to EMTs – there are many different policies and compliance rules to manage. Orion's highly configurable software automates various processes using each customer's unique rules. They have replaced outdated ways of collecting data from different systems and are providing agency leaders with business intelligence that generates smarter schedules, eliminates payroll errors and ensures the achievement of operational compliance.

Whether the data revolves around schedules, operational equipment, or training, Orion collects all related data on a daily basis and puts it into its productivity infrastructure to produce the tables for real-time analytics. The data collection process require no human monitoring and Orion's Interactive Analytics software follows a simple user interface. It even allows non-programmers to generate different types of reports and visualizations in the form of pie charts and graphs, just as on spreadsheets. It enables ongoing delivery of analytical reports and visualizations to agency leaders or groups. Because the data fed into Workforce Management PLUS is done in real-time, reports can be generated in real-time. This provides agencies with

timely data-driven insights to better manage their workforce - especially during these critical times of COVID-19. "We are changing the way agency chiefs are looking at the impact of analytics on their staffing, their budget and their planning by bringing actionable data like this front and center," remarks Leslie.

### UNTANGLING WORKFORCE MANAGEMENT COMPLEXITY WITH EFFECTIVE ANALYTICS

For more than two decades, Orion has served the public safety workforce by listening to their customers and designing software based on their needs. What began as the sub poena management CourtNotify solution has evolved into an entire workforce management suite for public safety. Today, the exponential escalation of analytics in workforce management has given public safety first responders 'intelligence on the go' and has profoundly improved their chances of being in the right place at the right time. Orion is making great strides in leveraging interactive analytics to simplify complex workforce management processes for public safety agencies. Through Workforce Management PLUS, the company offers smart scheduling with time and attendance management, plus modules for operational equipment and training management alongside robust security. In early 2020, Orion announced its Interactive Analytics module to compliment Workforce Management PLUS and CourtNotify. "We've architected the system for data analytics about the employees to help our customers manage trends and understand the impact of decisions that they make at the individual level. Through interactive analytics, they can now look at that data and make more precise and productive decisions," states Leslie.

Furthermore, as Orion can integrate with other operational systems used by agency personnel, such as Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) or a Records Management System (RMS), it allows Workforce Management PLUS to enable role-based permission management. For instance, if someone is a Sergeant but is appointed as the Acting Lieutenant for a day, Workforce Management PLUS provides them with the Lieutenant permissions in their CAD or RMS. At the end of the shift, it will remove those permissions and return access capabilities to their original assignment. As a result, permission roles can be easily changed within interfaced systems in real-time. This capability allows customers to automate the adjustment of permission roles with any of Orion's integrated systems based on promotions and other preferences. Between personnel retiring, transferring or being replaced, Orion helps with the continuity and consistency


of running a public safety agency. Since the company's product engine is multi-tenant, this allows multi workforce management within a single agency.

### MEETING AND EXCEEDING CUSTOMER REQUIREMENTS

Steering ahead on its mission to 'Serve Those Who Serve,' Orion has indeed carved a distinctive niche for itself in the market. The company's uniqueness stems from its numerous customer success stories over the years. In that time period Orion has been serving individual agencies and county-wide agency groups. Leslie explains that one such customer approached Orion to help them stop personnel from entering data into their CAD system. They also didn't want to manually enter roll call data every day. This meant developing an application that would, in real-time, update people, keep them updated and current in CAD while simultaneously updating the equipment that they could possibly use. From personnel using a portable radio to those using radios in vehicles -- even if cross-staffed, the challenge was keeping the data updated in real-time to accurately determine the current status of working units. "We are proud to have successfully completed this highly complex project. It involved innovating not just the interface, but also the real-time integration between the two vendors in changing what they were capable of dispatching, based upon a roster change in another system," explains Leslie.

**It's the greatest compliment when the chief of an agency says, "Just call Orion, they can figure it out because they're fearless in the way they go about solving problems"**

She gives the credit of Orion's competitive edge to the expertise of its staff, most of whom are public safety veterans that possess the ability to place themselves in the customers' shoes. "It's our mixed talent pool of both, our young professionals with dynamic coding skills and our experienced public safety experts, that differentiates us in the market," remarks Leslie. Orion has always been increasing its cadence with customers, besides making sure that the infrastructure is in place for the company to continue the support for its networks. For the future, Orion's primary focus is on indoctrinating AI and ML for enhanced interactive analytics with its customer base.

Moreover, Orion supports cloud migration and is making its software suite much more accessible with the ease of cultural change. The company offers both cloud hosting, as well as a SaaS solution. It uses Microsoft Azure Government for its host's facility as it provides FedRAMP certification that provides the highest levels of data security. "Our focus for the year is to enable cultural change management, not throwing the agencies into something totally new right away, but eventually making them comfortable, allowing the tide shift to happen in rhythm," concludes Leslie. 

Leslie DeLatta,  
President

