

INTERACTIVE INTELLIGENCE

Deliberately Innovative

Case Study

Contact Center Automation

- Multimedia Recording & Quality Monitoring
- Customer Feedback Management
- Outbound/Blended Dialing & Campaign Management
- Network-based Pre/Post-Call Routing

Self-Service Automation

- Workforce Management

Enterprise IP Telephony

Enterprise Messaging

### Summary

**Customer:** Varner Commercial Property Consultants



**Headquarters:** Charleston, SC

**Industry:** Real estate

**Challenge:** Find a more efficient and time-effective method for communicating with community residents.

**Solution:** *icNotify*™ provides inbound/outbound notification services for automated messaging with flexible, multi-channel contact options delivered through landline and mobile phones, e-mail, fax, pagers, personal digital assistant devices, and short message service-enabled devices.

**Benefits:**

- Cut costs
- Offloaded employees to devote time to other significant projects
- Improved communication and interaction with residents
- Flexible and intuitive messaging options, such as text-to-speech, for reduced training and faster ROI



# Automated Notification Services Give Property Management Firm a More Cost-effective, Efficient Way to “Get the Word Out.”

## About Varner Commercial Property Consultants

Founded in 1996, Varner Commercial Property Consultants, Inc. is a real estate investment, management, development and advisory firm based in Charleston, South Carolina. Varner Commercial manages, leases and invests in multi-family properties in Charleston and surrounding markets. The company can be reached at (843) 881-5744; on the net: [www.varnercommercial.com](http://www.varnercommercial.com).

## The Challenge

By the summer of 2006, Varner Commercial Property Consultants, Inc. came to realize its need for a more efficient and cost-effective method of communicating with the residents of its communities. Varner Commercial, based in South Carolina, is a real estate investment, management, development and advisory firm that provides commercial and multi-family services. Being a southern-based property management company, Varner Commercial not only deals with routine communication, such as maintenance notices and resident events, but must also be prepared to deal with emergency situations such as hurricane threats. Its past methods of delivering communication, including manually posting hundreds of notices, had proven less than effective and had led them to exhausting end-of-the-day excursions, as well as inflated expenses. Varner Commercial's primary concern is the safety of its residents and manual delivery methods did not ensure emergency information was being delivered properly.

At the time, Varner Commercial did not have the level of communication it wanted with the reduced costs it needed. It did not feel secure in who was actually receiving its notifications. Often, the parents would be uninformed of scheduled maintenance or community events even after multiple notices had been posted. This form of communication was exhausting for Varner Commercial, as employees would have to spend hours posting notices or answering phone calls from uninformed residents. It was also expensive with all the postage, envelopes, paper and time devoted to hand delivering or mailing notices.

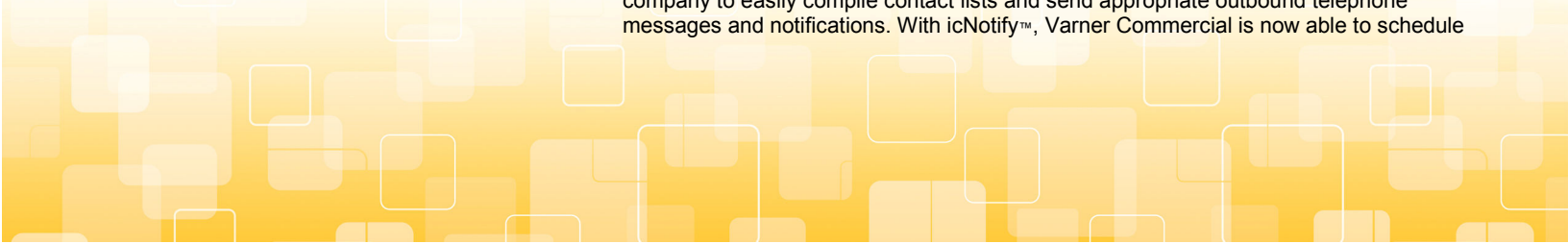
Most importantly, Varner Commercial knew it was not adequately prepared for emergency communication with its residents to inform them when to evacuate due to an emergency (such as a hurricane), where they could go, as well as how and when they could return. Overall, Varner Commercial knew a change was necessary if it was to optimize the company's communication processes.

"In Charleston there is a special need for enhanced communication," said Abigail Woolwine, regional manager for Varner Commercial. She remembers a recent situation where residents had no water because of a broken water main. "We have a 24 hour emergency pager and it went off 400 times in 30 minutes."

When situations arose, or maintenance notices needed to be given, the Varner team would have to spend time walking around to all the residences and posting notices, or dealing personally with uninformed residents and their many questions.

## The Solution

Varner Commercial knew it needed an easy to use, effective communications solution that would save the company time and money. In the summer of 2006, Varner Commercial implemented *icNotify*™ from Interactive Intelligence, which enabled the company to easily compile contact lists and send appropriate outbound telephone messages and notifications. With *icNotify*™, Varner Commercial is now able to schedule



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"icNotify has improved resident communication, and that helps to reduce turnover."

automated outbound calls and define personalized messages for recipients. A self-recorded voice message can be sent by staff members, or Varner Commercial can utilize the text-to-speech option whereby icNotify™ will speak a text message to the recipient. Now the company is able to effectively disseminate information to residents, while concurrently lowering overhead costs.

"It's been wonderful!" Woolwine said. "I no longer have to worry about who is getting the notices. It's going to the parent. It's going to the person who I want to get the information, as opposed to a child coming home from school early, getting a paper notice, and then mom and dad never seeing it. IcNotify™ has improved resident communication, and that helps to reduce turnover. People are happier about living here; they feel more a part of the community because they are informed about everything that is going on."

## The Benefits

Since deploying icNotify™, Varner Commercial has cut expenses, as well as offloaded employees to devote additional time to other significant projects.

"We no longer have to put a piece of postage on everything," Woolwine said. "We no longer have to make tons of copies. We have saved on envelopes, toner, copy paper, and office supplies. Also, we save time. To deliver one hundred notices could take an hour, and that hour of an employee's time has a dollar amount attached to it."

Primarily, icNotify™ has been used by Varner Commercial for maintenance communication, including notifications for pressure washing, pest control date changes, air filter changes, etc. This has helped the company cut costs, but more importantly, it has had a positive effect on the communities it manages.

"More people know what is going on," Woolwine said. "It's startling to find out how many people weren't aware that we were doing things on the property, or having to go into their residence even if we gave multiple notices in writing beforehand. We are now interacting a lot more with the residents."

Woolwine's favorite icNotify feature is the easy to use text-to-speech function, which enables her to type a message for a particular group, then send an automated call. When the intended recipient receives the call, icNotify™ communicates the specified information via voice by translating the text to speech.

"Without icNotify we had to run to the office and print off a bunch of fliers, then drive to each property, walk around, knock on doors and pass out the fliers. Using icNotify, I can sit at my computer at home and send a text-to-speech message, or record my own message over the telephone, and it goes out instantly to every single resident."

"I am the typical person who records my messages 35 times before I say 'okay that's the one I want,'" Woolwine said. "The clarity and accuracy of the icNotify™ text-to-speech function is wonderful. Without icNotify™ we had to run to the office and print off a bunch of fliers, then drive to each property, walk around, knock on doors and pass out the fliers. With icNotify™ I can sit at my computer at home and send a text-to-speech message, or record my own message over the telephone, and it goes out instantly to every single resident."

## INTERACTIVE INTELLIGENCE™

Interactive Intelligence Inc. (Nasdaq: ININ) is a global provider of unified business communications solutions for contact center automation, enterprise IP telephony, and enterprise messaging. The company's innovative standards-based, all-in-one communications software suite was designed to eliminate the cost and complexity introduced by multi-point vendors. Founded in 1994 and backed by more than 3,000 customers worldwide, Interactive Intelligence is an experienced leader delivering maximum customer value through its comprehensive solution-set comprised of premise-based and hosted offerings, including software, hardware, consulting, support, education and implementation.

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