



## National Guard follows proactive path to share messages with larger audience



### Client Situation

The National Guard Bureau's (NGB) vision is to be "Always Ready, Always There." The underlying theme is one of consistency and reliability. National Guard members and their friends and family hold NGB to a high standard - period. NGB is held accountable for the safety of this nation, and the lives of each Guard member. This level of safety for members and comfort for families is reliant on NGB being transparent: providing accurate and timely communication, and enabling two-way channels of communication.

"Our goal is to reach more of our audience and provide the most timely, accurate and interesting news and information to National Guard families, retirees and civilian employers." According to Jack Harrison, National Guard Bureau Director Public Affairs and Strategic Communications, "it is time [for the National Guard] to move...into the 21st century."

### Solution

In February 2009, the National Guard Bureau launched a digital communication solution, provided by GovDelivery, as an efficient and cost-effective way to deliver its official publication *On Guard* to Guard members, friends and family.

This communication solution grew from simply moving the delivery of *On Guard* from a printed publication to online delivery, to offering nearly 20 unique subscription topics to all interested stakeholders. NGB made a point to utilize all of GovDelivery's capabilities in improving government-to-citizen communication. NGB launched the GovDelivery Network allowing stakeholders to sign up for updates from multiple sources the first time they register as a subscriber. NGB has dramatically increased its reach by collaborating with 36 network partners, including the U.S. Department of Defense and Homeland Security, Military Health System, and Wisconsin Department of Military Affairs.

Beyond launching the GovDelivery Network, Leveraging Web 2.0 tools such as Twitter®, Facebook® and YouTube® or widgets allows NGB to reach an expanded audience through multiple communication channels. The National Guard Bureau has created its own Information Sharing Widget (a dynamic mash-up of news or content). The widget integrates with GovDelivery's Share This Email capability, allowing viewers of the widget content to post official NGB content to more than 35 social media channels or forward to a friend. NGB email alerts are an ideal launching pad to encourage sharing of NGB content, giving it a 'viral' effect, thus reaching a larger audience.

"If we're not one of the voices out there, somebody's going to be there for us telling our story in a way that is inaccurate," Rich Breitenfeldt, Chief of Social Media in the NGB Public Affairs office has stated. "The conversation is going to be held, and if we're not involved in the conversation we're missing the point of social media. We have to be there, where the people are."

### Results

In December 2009, the United States National Guard Bureau was recognized as an *Excellence in Communications Award* recipient. This award was presented to Harrison for proactively communicating through multiple communication channels to reach the largest possible audience. At the time of the award presentation, NGB had established a large audience of more than 340,000 email update subscribers, reached more than 124,000 unique visitors through a dynamic news widget, and communicated its mission and message to 22,000 blog viewers.

The National Guard Bureau has since grown its subscriber base to 450,000 individuals and sent a total of more than 25-million email updates since GovDelivery system launch in February 2009. The NGB efficiently delivers *This Week in the National Guard* to 483,000 subscribers and *On Guard* to a subscriber list of 450,000.

