

AT&T Global SIMs power emergency wearables

- **Business needs** - A way to provide rapid, reliable emergency communication and response for isolated or at-risk workers
- **Networking solution** - AT&T Global SIMs help enable speedy transmission of voice, data, photos, and geo-location services with the push of a button.
- **Business value proposition** - Enhanced protection for workers
- **Industry focus** - Wearable technology
- **Size** - Startup

About RiskBand

RiskBand, a subsidiary of South Carolina-based Whereable Technologies, Inc., provides sophisticated, wearable wireless devices capable of providing voice, data, photos, and geo-location services with a single push of a button, and a simple-to-use software as a service (SaaS) device management platform. The RiskBand device, called “ARIES,” is a stand-alone emergency response and communication tool that is not dependent upon a smartphone. RiskBand markets its devices and access to its platform to businesses with at-risk employees or lone workers, which include numerous end markets.

The situation

Staff who work alone and those in risky environments need to be able to summon assistance quickly if something goes wrong. RiskBand needed to equip its emergency response and communication tool with fast, dependable connectivity.

Solution

AT&T Global SIMs provide worldwide, end-to-end connectivity to support the innovative RiskBand devices. AT&T Control Center enables RiskBand to quickly provision and manage customers' devices, providing lone workers and those considered at-risk a quick, easy, and reliable way to get help.

Worker safety gets a boost

The pandemic, staffing shortages, and other factors have forced companies to adopt new business models. For example, home delivery and curbside pickup have become essential. Unfortunately, businesses are also having to cope with fewer employees.

As a result, many employees now work alone. RiskBand set out to help companies improve safety for solitary workers and those in risky environments.

The company developed sophisticated, wearable wireless devices that enable employees to send voice, data, photos, and geo-location information in an instant. The sleek RiskBand personal protection device can be worn on a lanyard, belt, vest, jacket, or pants to provide employees near real-time emergency response.

Life-saving emergency response

RiskBand enables retailers, restaurants, hotels, and other businesses to make wearable safety devices a part of their emergency response strategy. Fred Casanova, RiskBand Vice President, Technology and Product Development, said the company's wearable technology is unique. "RiskBand doesn't rely on cellphones for connectivity. It's a stand-alone

emergency response and communication tool that is not dependent upon a smartphone," he said.



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Fred Casanova
Vice President, Technology and Product Development,
RiskBand

RiskBand's unique functionality may well have saved one worker's life recently when the manager of a grocery store accidentally became locked in a meat freezer. The situation was dire because lethal hypothermia can set in within 10 minutes. "The manager's phone was on his desk, but he was able to use his RiskBand to summon help," Casanova said. The device performed beautifully, even though the signal had to penetrate the thick walls of the meat freezer.

Police arrived within seven minutes to rescue the manager. “Our team is pretty proud that we helped save a life,” he said.

The company has also helped protect workers at retail stores, including several national chains. “The product has really performed during robberies, when we were able to dispatch police to the store to make sure employees were safe, and in some cases to mitigate the robbery,” he added.

Companies can customize responses

Nate Candelaria, Director of Technical Assurance, explained how a single push of a button provides two-way voice communications and user profile data. Even if the wearer is incapacitated and cannot summon help, the device supports features that can dispatch assistance by sending near real-time images and geolocation data to trained security professionals who can immediately assess the situation, intervene, and deploy the appropriate emergency response.

RiskBand markets its technology to organizations rather than individuals. “Our product is focused on B2B, corporate sales to businesses in verticals such as banking, hospitality, utilities, public venues, logistics, warehouses, healthcare, and so on,” Candelaria said.

The RiskBand device management platform’s robust architecture enables companies to define their own emergency response structure. “They don’t have to use our preferred partner as their emergency contact center. This is a big thing for many companies. They have the flexibility to have the devices contact their chief security officer, for instance, instead of using a contact center,” he said. “We can configure the system

to meet their needs, so they have a lot of flexibility to use the devices to benefit their business.”



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The right direction

Customers appreciate RiskBand. “We have received very positive commendations from our customers,” Candelaria said. “The takeaway I get from these letters is that this was a need that a lot of companies did not know how to fill, and our product fills that need perfectly. It’s a very positive sign for us that we’re moving in the right direction.”



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Nate Candelaria

Director of Technical Assurance, RiskBand

Casanova is gratified by the companies that turned to RiskBand after first trying another protection device. “Some of the biggest testimonials, particularly from a development standpoint, come from companies that did not initially select our product,” he said. “We’re pretty proud of the fact that after six months to a year, the companies have come back to us and are using RiskBand.”

Cost and coverage

AT&T Global SIM cards provide worldwide, end-to-end connectivity for RiskBand devices. RiskBand staff use AT&T Control Center, a SIM management portal, which makes it easy to deploy, manage, and monetize its devices.

“AT&T Business had everything in one place, almost packaged up and ready to go for us,” Casanova said. “We got the SIMs, we got the portal, and we had a customer account manager that we could go to. And with the right pricing and the right coverage, including international coverage, it was pretty much a no-brainer to move everything to AT&T Business. At this point, everything we build is on the AT&T network,” he noted.

In fact, Casanova said RiskBand became a loyal AT&T

customer after initially selecting another connectivity provider for its devices. “We had been looking around for quite a while and we played around with different third-party providers,” he said. It soon became clear that AT&T offered the best choice. “Basically, it came down to cost and coverage, and AT&T gave us a holistic solution.”

Easy monitoring and ordering

Candelaria likes the ability to monitor the connectivity of the company’s devices. “If we get a report that one of the devices isn’t working properly, we can go check the SIM status in the AT&T portal to make sure it’s activated, that it’s actually being used,” he said.

His team can also place orders in the portal. “There’s an order form right there so I can add a hundred or a thousand more SIMs. It’s a very convenient place to get everything we need done to procure the SIMs, set them up, and deploy them all right there in one place. It’s very useful.”

AT&T Control Center also gives RiskBand engineers access to a library of Application Programming Interfaces (APIs), which enable different applications to communicate by extracting and sharing data. “AT&T Control Center has a very robust API library,”

Candelaria noted. RiskBand uses APIs to make it easy for its customers to integrate RiskBand solutions.

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The advantages of a single provider

Casanova said the ease of dealing with a single provider has been a true advantage for RiskBand. “We don’t have to deal with third parties or go outside the system, and that’s crucial for us as a startup. We just don’t have the bandwidth to manage it. AT&T’s support has been fantastic.”

And Candelaria cited the simplicity of the solution. “It became obvious that AT&T Business was able to check off all the boxes, which made it easy to integrate with, and above all its support was a key factor. If we had a

question, we got an answer quickly, so turnaround was paramount, too,” he said.

AT&T Business was able to help when RiskBand experienced some challenges with the certification of one of its devices. “We were able to reach out and get the AT&T team who actually do the certification themselves and get the information we needed relatively quickly,” Candelaria said.

“Not only did we get a response with AT&T Business, we got resolution. It doesn’t work like that with other companies, so we have been very happy with our choice to move forward with AT&T. Whatever question we ask engages the entire support team,” he said. “As a small company we really appreciate that we can get to the bottom of these issues without a whole lot of hassle.”

Casanova says RiskBand has begun to achieve market penetration because of its robust infrastructure. “We’re hoping for a banner year this year, and we expect AT&T Business to be right alongside us as we start to scale,” he said.

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Director of Technical Assurance, RiskBand