

In Case Of Emergency

SEATTLE COMPANY DEVELOPS TECHNOLOGY TO AID FIRST RESPONDERS

It's been 15 years since **Jim Finnell (MBA '91)** experienced the adrenaline rush of an emergency call as a paramedic. Now his excitement comes from growing a business and building products that help first responders do a better job.

Finnell is CEO of Prepared Response, a company in Seattle that builds and deploys emergency preparedness and crisis management technology, with customers in state and local government, corporations, stadiums, hospitals, and schools.

"It was the craziest thing I ever did," he says of taking a job with Prepared Response in 2002. "We had five employees, no customers, and a

1999 shooting at Columbine High School in Colorado to understand how they could better respond to emergencies.

Finnell can relate: He was a field paramedic in Colorado for nearly eight years before being promoted to management at an emergency services company in Colorado Springs. But, he explains, "If you are a fireman or policeman and suddenly you are put into a managerial position, you don't always have the appropriate skill set."

"I went back to school to understand how to run an organization," Finnell says. "They don't teach you that when you become a paramedic, they teach you lifesaving skills. But as managers we needed to understand operations, accounting, and economics."

Finnell felt he needed the academic background to be successful in his

Information like floor plans, hazardous materials on site, utility shut-offs, contact information, and 360-degree photography (much like those used in real estate to show off a property) about a location is shared with first responders who use Prepared Response technology, either over a secure Internet system or downloaded onto a USB flash drive. First responders can access the information as needed on mobile devices such as laptops and iPads beforehand or even en route.

"Preplanning and information access can shave minutes off for a more effective response," he explains.

This technology is used by 700 public safety agencies around the country in 22 states. First responders need to have technology and tools that are reliable, simple, and work every time; if it doesn't meet that criteria, customers won't use it, Finnell says.

On the flip side, customers such as government entities, hospitals, schools, retailers, and sporting arenas are using Prepared Response to update their own internal information about fire drill procedures, CPR and medical emergency training, emergency contacts, news media information, and safe off-site locations as needed instead of waiting for an annual review of emergency management protocols.

In the past, this information has typically been printed out and put into binders, which quickly can become out-of-date, he says.

Now there is momentum in government and in business arenas to use technology to increase public safety. Crises like shootings and bomb scares show the need for fast and reliable information on both sides, the public and the trained professionals who come to the rescue.

"We are finally seeing the public safety sector embrace web-based technology," he says.

"First responders need information to make smart decisions quickly."

Jim Finnell (MBA '91)

lot of debt. But we were developing technology for first responders to do a better job out in the field."

The company was recognized as one of the state's fastest growing private companies in 2007 and 2009 and was named to the Deloitte Technology Fast 500 program in 2009. President Barack Obama in the 2011 State of the Union Address even mentioned the critical need for fast mobile data for first responders, using the example of a firefighter who can download the design of a burning building onto a handheld device.

That is the kind of data delivery being developed by Prepared Response. The company founders are a sheriff detective and several colleagues from Washington who met with the first responders of the

career. He also had a great mentor at the time, Tom Nelson, who now teaches finance at the University of Colorado Boulder. "Boulder had a great reputation," he says, adding that his degree from the Leeds School propelled his career.

After receiving his MBA, he shifted from operations management to corporate finance and then mergers and acquisitions in the same industry. Then with his broadened background and experience he became a strong candidate for senior executive roles, like his current job at Prepared Response.

"It helps to go into battle with a plan, but unfortunately an emergency is something difficult to plan for," Finnell says. "First responders need information to make smart decisions quickly."



SW
47

YOSHINOBU

Central High School
1113 S. Bascom Ave. Suite 100, San Jose, CA 95128 (408) 270-1402

- Field House
- Parking Garage
- Floor 1
- Floor 2
- Floor 3
- Floor 4
- Basement

Site & Landscaping
Site & Landscaping
Site & Landscaping
Site & Landscaping
Site & Landscaping
Site & Landscaping

Panasonic
CF-30