



# When Disaster Strikes:

Causecast Instant Disaster Response

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 **CAUSECAST**



## Community Impact Platform

As the leader in community impact technology, Causecast helps organizations better leverage their support for nonprofits and demonstrate an active, world-changing social consciousness. To that end, Causecast recently launched its Community Impact Platform, which provides a state of the art system to make giving and volunteer programs as simple, effective and engaging as possible.

The Community Impact Platform helps organizations engage their constituents through cause, connecting volunteers to nonprofit volunteer and giving opportunities and offering innovative social impact campaigns for group participation. Organizations ranging from corporations to schools to membership clubs use the platform as a way to provide structure and community around group-led philanthropy, using built-in tools to plan, track and report their efforts.

One of the platform's customizable campaigns is Instant Disaster Response, which provides an easy way for groups to immediately address major disasters and galvanize participants to get involved.



## Why Responding to Disasters is Important for Business

Historically, disaster response has been the province of domestic and international relief agencies. But as the public has come to expect increased social responsibility and community service from companies, major disasters have become a rallying cry for corporate involvement.

Indeed, how a company responds to disasters can have implications for the perceived (and actual) integrity of its brand:

Employees of companies that take a leadership role during times of national or international crises often feel a sense of pride and loyalty towards their companies.

Conversely, not responding to disasters can leave employees feeling disappointed and even frustrated with their companies.

Consumers respect companies that step up to disaster relief; when companies stand at the sidelines, the effect can be one of public disapproval.



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## Challenges of Corporate Disaster Response

While disaster response can be seen as a company’s civic duty, ordinary businesses are not, in fact, set up to serve as relief agencies. Mobilizing a company to marshal its resources around disaster response typically becomes a challenge in several respects:

Creating custom campaigns is a time-consuming process that can make it impossible to quickly leverage public interest.

Disaster campaign building is not typically a capability that companies have in-house. This means that overburdened IT and marketing departments are leveraged to do things they aren’t trained to do or third-party vendors must be hastily sourced and trusted to manage costly and sensitive campaigns.

Companies usually don’t have pre-existing relationships with the nonprofits and agencies in disaster zones that must be partnered with in order to provide effective relief.

Because of the costs associated with creating custom disaster response campaigns, only large companies usually have the resources to activate their consumers and employees around disasters.

The challenges of stepping up to disaster response are significant, preventing most businesses from even trying. This is unfortunate, as disaster victims need all the help they can get and companies can reap tremendous cause marketing and employee engagement benefits when they rise to the crisis occasion.

Causecast believes that corporate disaster response should not be the exclusive domain of the Fortune 500. Small and mid-sized businesses can and should participate in the public discourse when disasters strike and leverage their employees and consumers to get involved with associated fundraising and volunteerism. But even large companies with significant resources at their disposal can stumble when it comes to disaster response. Their core business mission is not disaster response and the variables involved - from connecting to the right support on the ground to providing an engaging employee experience - can be overwhelming.

Smart policy would dictate that companies should not overinvest in disaster response by committing to infrastructure they don't need, or underinvest by not having any resources to help when help is needed. As such, the Instant Disaster Response campaign within Causecast's Community Impact Platform is designed to be push-button simple for businesses of all sizes, enabling organizations to automatically galvanize employees around a shared social concern with ease and effectiveness.

Recently, one of Causecast's clients, academic hub Chegg, had the opportunity to implement the Community Impact Platform's Disaster Response Campaign. Chegg relied on the platform to help it effectively support those in need amidst a terrible situation.

## Disaster Strikes

Fast-moving and deadly, explosive tornadoes struck hard on Friday, March 2, 2012, spanning from the Gulf Coast to the Great Lakes, racing through the heart of the Midwest and South and putting an estimated 34 million people across 17 states in harm's way. Survivors described it as "the worst we've ever seen," "like a horror movie," and "as if the gates of Hell had opened up." When the nightmare was over, 74 tornadoes had touched down on 10 states, whole towns had been destroyed, and 39 victims were dead.

## Causecast Responds

When the Causecast team learned about the storm system on Friday evening, an explosive "super cell" of tornadoes had been moving so quickly throughout the heartland that as many as four million people were within 25 miles of a tornado. The team realized that one of Chegg's offices - in Kentucky - stood in the bulls-eye of the storm system.

Kate Stahnke, Causecast's VP of Product, called Heather Hatlo Porter, Chegg's Manager of Philanthropy and Executive Projects, to alert her about the disaster. Laying out the situation as calmly as possible, Kate kept the gameplan simple: here's what happened, we're on it, here are the next steps. Kate felt sure that Chegg in particular would want to show leadership around this disaster - and she was right.

It was time to mobilize.

## Tailoring the Campaign

The helpful thing about instant disaster response is that it's...instant. So launching a campaign was as quick (and easy) as 1-2-3.

1. As Causecast's platform administrator, Kate pulled up the disaster response template, filled in a description about the disaster, and added an appropriate disaster image. Causecast's nonprofit department accessed its library of partners and selected relevant non-profits on the ground that were helping in the recovery effort; these selections were indicated on the campaign as charity choices. With the click of the "save" button, the campaign was now loaded into the system and available to any client using the Community Impact Platform.

2. Kate sent an email to all clients - including Chegg - that a Tornado Disaster Response campaign was available to be customized and pushed out to company employees. Aware that Chegg was already planning to implement this campaign, Kate connected directly with Heather to determine which nonprofits Chegg wished to support. Ultimately, Chegg chose to partner with the Louisville chapter of the Red Cross, so that non-profit was selected as Chegg's campaign recipient.

3. Chegg was able to easily customize the campaign with its look and feel by using the simple campaign interface. Once Chegg tailored the campaign to its needs within minutes, the disaster campaign was ready to be blasted out to the staff. Heather sent an email to all employees informing them that Chegg was supporting hurricane disaster victims through its own response efforts, with a link to the campaign to find out more. She encouraged everyone to roll up their sleeves and join Chegg's fundraising and volunteer efforts.

## Chegg's Employees Step Up

When Chegg's employees started their day on the morning of Monday, March 5, they were surprised to see an email in their in-boxes about Chegg's disaster relief to support victims of the tornadoes.

Within hours, Chegg had already raised thousands of dollars through employee donations. Later, some

*“Our team was amazed to see Chegg mobilize so quickly. Minutes after the email was sent out, many employees were already logging into the system.”*

Heather, Chegg

employees found other ways to contribute, such as sending school supplies that would be needed by affected children and - for the Chegg employees who worked in the Kentucky office - physically showing up to the disaster zone to help.

The maiden voyage of the Instant Disaster Response campaign proved to Causecast the importance of advanced technology in addressing the world's problems - the drumbeat by which the firm marches. Technology alerted Causecast to the disaster, technology created the campaign and technology managed Chegg's employees through the disaster response process. In the end, the pursuit of social good through better technology resulted in a successful disaster response campaign launched after a 24-hour turnaround, one which assisted needy people in a disaster zone and helped a company inspire its employees.

“We were impressed by the whole experience. Given the speed of the campaign launch we would have expected a lot of technical bugs, but the execution was nearly flawless and the customer service throughout was fantastic.”

# Results

\$5,560 Raised for Tornado Relief  
in 24 hours

The screenshot displays the 'Employee Engagement Portal' for 'Chegg For Good'. At the top, a navigation bar includes 'Home', 'Giving', 'Volunteering', and 'News & Announcements'. The main content area features a 'Call to Action' for 'Chegg Supports Tornado Relief' with a 'Make a Donation Now' button. Below this is a 'RECENT DONORS' list with names and photos. A prominent orange progress bar shows the company goal of \$1 and the amount raised, \$5,560. The 'My Snapshot' section provides statistics: 28 nonprofits supported, 168 total registered employees, 409 employee hours volunteered, and \$5,675 in funds raised. The 'Featured Nonprofits' section lists organizations like Animal Aid, Inc., Freedom 4-24, and Dream Center. A 'Time To Volunteer!' section offers a search for good work to do, including a map and a list of events.

Headline of campaign with details

Countdown of days left in campaign callout

Feedback

28 days left

Call to Action

Chegg Supports Tornado Relief

Make a Donation Now

RECENT DONORS

James Kellas  
SC QA

Arlene Leung  
PMO

Eva Lam  
Supply Chain

Heather Hatlo Porter  
Marketing Department

Peter Alley  
SC Engineering

Jennifer Carver  
SC Recruiting & Mana...

Gil Rogers  
Zinch

Charles Geiger  
PMO

COMPANY GOAL \$1

\$5,560

My Snapshot

Company Overview

28 NONPROFITS SUPPORTED

168 TOTAL REGISTERED EMPLOYEES

My Donations

My Volunteerism

409 EMPLOYEE HOURS VOLUNTEERED

\$5,675 IN FUNDS RAISED BY EMPLOYEES

Featured Nonprofits

Animal Aid, Inc. Animal Aid offers cat and dog adoptions, as well as assistance to community members who cannot afford urgent veterinary care. Animal Aid also has multiple volunteer opportunities as well as openings for much needed foster hom ...

EXPAND TO LEARN MORE

Freedom 4-24 Freedom 4/24 exists to raise awareness of the rampant sexual exploitation of women around the world.

EXPAND TO LEARN MORE

DREAM CENTER Our mission is to reconnect people who have been isolated by poverty, substance abuse, gangs, imprisonment, homelessness, abuse, and neglect to God and to a community of support to meet their physical and spiritual needs.

EXPAND TO LEARN MORE

SEE ALL NONPROFITS

Time To Volunteer!

What can you do with your 40 hours of volunteer time this year?

Find Good Work to Do

Volunteer, donate or raise funds. To get started, find a nonprofit by entering key words below.

Volunteer Donate

Enter Keyword(s)

Nonprofit name, cause, volunteer activity, etc.

Enter Zip Code

95054

Search

A. Day Care Work  
Mar 11, 2012  
San Jose, CA

B. Administration Volunteer  
for a Day  
Mar 15, 2012  
San Jose, CA

C. Career Class Presenter -  
Men's Career Center  
Mar 14, 2012  
San Jose, CA

D. Career Class Presenter -  
Women's Career Center  
Mar 12, 2012  
San Jose, CA

SEE ALL EVENTS

Large call-to-action donation button

Prominent progress bar that displays how much has been raised

featuring



***IMPACT TRACKING  
& REPORTING***



***MOBILE VERIFICATION***



***RECOGNITION  
AND REWARDS***



***IMMEDIATE  
DISASTER RESPONSE***



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