



# STARS® - Air Ambulance Contact Centre

## Remote Life with Risks and Obligations

Living and working remotely or in isolation in Canada is not uncommon and, unsurprisingly, due to the very nature of the country's geography many regions are hard to reach. That means that the stakes are even higher and the work more dangerous. The Canadian Occupational Health and Safety laws mandate all businesses employing lone or at-risk workers must meet their duty of care obligations and demonstrate compliance with federal and provincial regulations. One such organisation helping these remote communities and businesses meet work alone legislative obligations is STARS, a helicopter air ambulance program.



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## Two distinct areas

**STARS Vigilant** - focuses on providing support for lone workers and field staff working across a number of industries such as oil and gas and environmental scientists.

**Critical Patient** - manages patient care services for remote communities and people requiring acute care in the most expedient fashion.

## On a Mission Since 1985

Founded in 1985 by Doctor Greg Powell the organisation's first mission was to fly a critically ill infant to tertiary care in Calgary. Its 24/7, 365 days a year care and support across Western Canada has since grown from there. Covering four provinces - Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba, and Eastern British Columbia - from six bases - Calgary, Edmonton, Grande Prairie, Saskatoon, Regina, Winnipeg - STARS has been on over 45,000 missions since 1985 and handled over 146,000 requests last year alone. Missions are recognised as one of three types, Interfacility, Scene and Search and Rescue. With 34 emergency link centre agents support is broken into two distinct areas, STARS Vigilant and Critical Patient.

The STARS Emergency Link Centre (STARS ELC) relies on sophisticated technology to meet the various needs of its clients and Western Canadians. Tasked with managing and continually evolving this technology is Kevin Hatch, STARS' Technology and Systems Strategist. A communications centre with critical obligations to meet must be reliant and dynamic. STARS is unique in its mandate to deliver lifesaving care at a moment's notice. These life-or-death situations are the reason why Kevin embarked on a quest to find a solution that would deliver the essential information STARS Emergency Communication Specialists (ECS) require to facilitate an emergency response. Supported by STARS Project Manager, Jeanette Petrie, Kevin eventually selected Awaken Intelligence, in September 2018, to meet STARS technology needs.

## Why Awaken Intelligence?

Kevin explains how STARS discovered Awaken and why the British-based business was selected as their preferred partner. “The STARS Vigilant Emergency Communications Centre supports a catered service with unique standard operating procedures influenced by each client. This required a solution to help our agents manage the diversity across our client base and to reliably connect us with the various external systems used by these services.”

“We struggled to find a traditional system either in the contact centre or the public safety telecommunication space that met the diversity of our services or the customised nature of our STARS Vigilant Emergency Communications Centre. Products like Computer Aided Dispatch (CAD) and Client Relationship Management (CRM) software were a fit for some of our business but lacked the flexibility we needed to address the needs of both teams.”

Undeterred, Kevin and his team worked with an external consultant and made the decision to continue the development of their own system referred to internally as ‘Bodhi’. Bodhi is a multi-system program built with almost exclusively off-the-shelf systems like the Feature Manipulation Engine (FME) and Geographical Information System ArcGIS. Bodhi is centred on connecting information sources (external and internal) and then consolidating the output based on the current needs of an agent at a particular time.



- Customisable for the most complex business models
- Flexible in working with various systems
- Allow agent to focus on the call instead of process
- Unified desktops enable agents to provide seamless customer journey in every single call
- Key in handling crisis response services

The team used a variety of database and Geographical Information System (GIS) eventually connecting each to STARS’ legacy systems. Before long the team discovered that Bodhi required a crucial element; a tool to dynamically interact with agents including the crucial need to capture essential data related to an emergency event.

“After a careful selection process and a detailed demonstration, we found that Awaken’s call scripting solution, Synergy, met our requirements,” commented Kevin. “Our decision to adopt Synergy was based on the flexibility of the system - both in how it manages the agent experience and guidance as well with how it streamlines connections. Using Synergy, we can now directly connect to ArcGIS Rest Endpoints, FME Web Services, SQL databases, telephone, and other data sources and systems without having to build separate connectivity systems.”





# Synergy

by Awaken Intelligence

## Flexibility and Interconnectivity

In 2020 STARS handled 146,304 calls of which 113,400 went through the organisation's Bodhi system and were supported by Awaken's Synergy and Dispatch systems. Among all the calls, 25% were lone worker alarms, handled by the six agents working a 24/7 rotation. Four different agents facilitate communications related to the transportation of critically ill and injured patients across Western Canada.

With 34 agents and various services being provided the structure of the centre has become increasingly complex with various systems highly dependent on the functionality of one another. "It's crucial that we are online all of the time. Awaken has been integral in meeting these requirements and will continue to play a key role as we evolve our emergency response processes," concluded Kevin.

## Synergy in Action

Synergy is triggered as soon as an event is delivered to an agent in the STARS Vigilant Emergency Communication Centre, either via telephone or email. From there the agent gathers basic information that is essential to delivering a response. The team then use the spatial database and/or geocoders to translate into a geographical description such as a town name, rural address or intersection. The reference data is then enriched by querying ArcGIS-hosted feature services or other data sources so that an interactive mapping experience can be provided to the support team. All of this information is used to create a clear description and 'reason for the call' that in turn guides the agent's key questions to the caller to determine an immediate action. Taking action generally involves completing a call-out sequence to connect the correct representative(s). It can also call for a transfer, information gathering and disconnect, or other actions relevant to resolving the call. As the agent progresses through the call various statuses are automatically recorded for performance reporting and then in the final stage of handling the call the agent fills in any outcome dispositions.



"Our decision to adopt Synergy was based on the flexibility of the system" – states Kevin

With so much critical information required, Awaken's Synergy and Dispatch solutions interface with a custom database for managing the calls that are captured in Synergy, FME (for data enrichment), ArcGIS (ESRI) for mapping, Twitter, Mitel Phone system, other custom databases for other relevant system information. It is a complex web of workflows, software and APIs, all crucial to the nature of STARS' work that are then simplified at the agent's desk to help provide the most suitable support as quickly as possible.



Kevin Hatch,  
Technology and  
Systems Strategist  
at STARS

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