

Valentis Group secures a competitive advantage with FirstNet

**Agency/Organization needs**

Connect internal teams and public agencies and locations

**Networking solution**

Sonim XP devices configured with FirstNet Rapid Response and Rapid Response Web Dispatch Tools

**Agency value**

Assist federal, state, and local law enforcement agencies

**Industry focus**

Security and protective services

**Size**

100+ employees

Private security firm brings interoperability to missions

Ask any first responder coordinator for their top pain points, and you're sure to hear "communication" among the top answers. When responders from different agencies respond to an event, it can be difficult for all to communicate securely. They may operate with different devices, a range of security protocols, and different communication networks. Some use push-to-talk (PTT) systems. Others prefer two-way radios. And some prefer cell phones. When these methods don't mesh, responders face obstacles when time is of the essence.

This was security firm Valentis Group's experience before adopting FirstNet®, Built with AT&T. Valentis provides intelligence, security, and protection services for several public agencies and private companies across the U.S. When they were called on to secure a recent presidential campaign event, FirstNet enabled them to coordinate operations with public agencies when connection was needed most.

Communicate across agencies and devices through a single channel

Steve Sutch, Valentis Group Chief Management Officer, has worked in private security since 2006. Before adopting FirstNet technology, communication was a significant challenge. As the organization expanded across the U.S., it needed a better solution than cell phones and two-way radios.

“When we left a client site, we weren’t able to communicate anymore,” Sutch said. “But the bigger challenge was centralizing all our communications. When we established our dispatch center last year, we had no way other than FirstNet to make that work.”

FirstNet is the first and only nationwide, high-speed broadband wireless network built specifically with—and for—first responders and the public safety community. It’s been a game-changer for the Valentis Group, enabling seamless communication across multiple states and sites and interoperability with other public safety agencies.

Reliable, prioritized connectivity

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He appreciates reliable, prioritized connectivity even in high-traffic situations. When a problem arose as a presidential

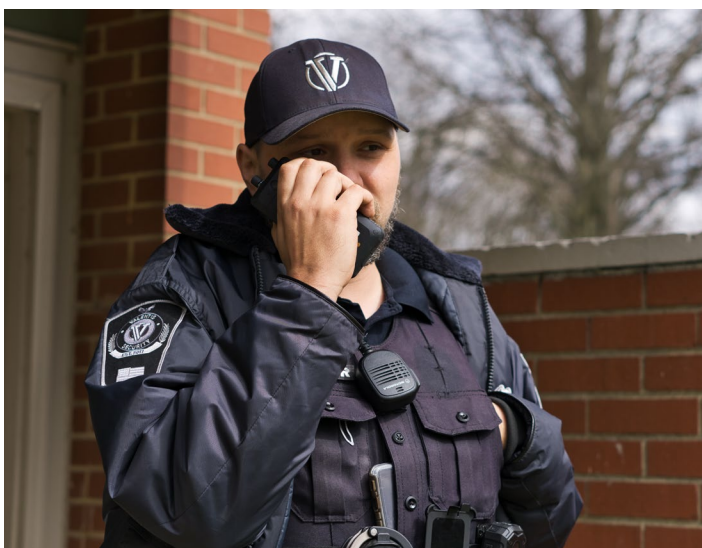
candidate addressed a large crowd, communications from other carriers were interrupted. “It was mass chaos,” he recalls. “Everyone else’s signals went down, but FirstNet was able to boost our signal and keep it alive.”

Powerful dispatch console

Sutch was intrigued when he heard about FirstNet. “We started ordering some devices, but we didn’t understand the full potential of FirstNet until we started to tie it into our communication center,” he said. “And then we realized there was a lot more we could do, which then allowed us to expand to the web dispatch console.”

The FirstNet Web Dispatch Console is a browser-based application dispatchers and supervisors can use to manage and coordinate communications for first responders and public safety personnel on the FirstNet network. It functions as a command-and-control hub, enabling oversight of daily dispatch operations from any location with an internet connection.

The FirstNet Dispatch Console has proven useful during emergencies. “There are times when our officers need to hold the air for a hot call,” he said. “In other words, they need a channel to themselves to deal with an emergency. If the officer can’t switch to a channel that we need them to be on, our dispatcher can move them.”



“The ability to share sensitive, personally identifiable information from our dispatch center down to our officers has been very helpful.”

Steve Sutch,
Chief Management Officer, Valentis Group

FirstNet Web Dispatch Console makes communication seamless

Another benefit is the ability to record calls. “With the FirstNet Web Console, all of the communication between our dispatcher and our officers is recorded, so we can download the calls later for review, quality assurance, or whatever reason we need to listen to them,” he said.

Encrypted technology

Sutch likes many of the features that FirstNet offers, such as the ability to share secure, dedicated communication channels with external agencies. “We can add users from any agency if they have a FirstNet device. Everyone can talk on the same channel without the need to share or bring these extra devices to an event,” he said. *(In early 2026, FirstNet Fusion will enable any responder to join the network.)*

“We’ve also found that the encrypted technology of FirstNet plays a big role in what we do. We share sensitive, personally identifiable information on our devices from our dispatch center down to our officers. Knowing the channel is encrypted makes us comfortable in sharing that information,” Sutch said.

Simple, centralized device management

The FirstNet Push-to-Talk Admin tool enables Valentis to create, edit, and assign push-to-talk services and profiles to individual users. “The ability to use the corporate admin tool to program devices remotely is a good feature. I can update and make changes at any time, move the devices over to the right channel, and have them ready for the operational period that we’re involved in.” Sutch doesn’t have to collect devices to update them. He can make changes regardless of where the devices are located. This saves the trouble of collecting them for updates.

Interoperability sets FirstNet users apart

Sutch’s public agency clients often ask him to use two-way radios because they’re secure and can record calls. “But FirstNet does all that. FirstNet has the same

capability, on steroids, compared to the two-way radio, which is surprisingly still popular.” The Valentis Group uses FirstNet innovations to create a single-source communications plan.

“It’s not uncommon for us to bring in devices to tie everybody in together. Our communications plan relies on a single source without having to carry 4 different radios to communicate and make it work,” he said. “Working with FirstNet makes our ability to operate in environments that have multiple agencies much easier and makes us look that much more professional.”

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Valentis Group continues to expand its use of FirstNet as a critical component of its communications infrastructure. They view it as a key differentiator that helps them compete for new business and projects.

“As we continue to evolve and look to take on more clients, FirstNet is always part of that expansion plan,” Sutch said. “We look at communications as a big part of our business development plan, and having a relationship with FirstNet is a key part of that.”