



# REMOTE CLIENT MANAGEMENT:

## The Community Supervision Force Multiplier

In an era where “doing more with less” is the standard operating procedure, government agencies have been forced to make tough choices on where they focus their resources and how to spend their time. Nowhere is this more evident than in community supervision. Today with more than 4 million U.S. adults on probation and parole<sup>1</sup>, agencies seek ways to more effectively spend their time on their highest priorities.

Considerable research has been done to help agencies determine best supervision practices, and provide guidance to help with the development of an effective, targeted supervision approach. Some noteworthy findings include:

- Poorly matching interventions with clients tends to increase recidivism such that low-risk clients placed in programs alongside high-risk clients perform poorly.<sup>1</sup>
- Maintaining realistic workloads positively impacts community supervisions effectiveness at accomplishing justice system goals.<sup>2</sup>
- Evidence-based interventions directed towards clients with a moderate to high risk of committing new crimes will result in better outcomes for both clients and the community.<sup>2</sup>
- Limiting supervision and services for low-risk clients and focusing on those who present greater risk, allows parole and probation agencies to devote limited treatment and supervision resources where they will provide the most benefit to public safety.<sup>2</sup>

“At a time when states are facing historic budget deficits, state leaders can prevent a large share of the nation’s criminal activity and cut corrections costs by helping probation and parole agencies focus their efforts on higher risk offenders, in higher-risk neighborhoods, at higher-risk times through a strategy of targeted supervision.”  
- Pew Charitable Trust

With many agencies increasing caseloads to well over 200 clients per officer, it is virtually impossible for clients to receive adequate attention and interaction from officers to have any substantial rehabilitative effect.<sup>2</sup> Therefore, one strategy that has been employed is remote supervision, providing agencies the ability to redirect resources where they can make the largest impact.

Remote supervision provides agencies and clients (offenders) a variety of alternatives for remaining in contact without the burden of one-on-one meetings. Clients eliminate the need for travel, missed work and the resulting reduction of wages. Agencies have additional tools in their arsenal to communicate with clients and track compliance, ultimately providing the ability to reach more clients, typically with fewer staff resources and at a lower cost.

As these benefits multiply over time, remote supervision paves the way for agencies to impact more lives than ever before. Bottom-line, remote supervision provides a strong value proposition to agencies and clients alike. Trends indicate that as community supervision continues to experience the significant, measurable benefits remote supervision delivers, the share of clients on remote supervision will grow exponentially.

The goal to focus efforts on higher-risk clients, in higher-risk neighborhoods, at higher-risk times through a strategy of targeted supervision can be daunting. That’s why now, more than ever before, it is critical that agencies take a targeted approach to their supervision efforts.

## GENERAL BENEFITS OF REMOTE SUPERVISION

Remote supervision first emerged in the 1960's, and since then the field has experienced considerable growth. New tools have been developed, and as tools and their functions have been developed agencies have seen substantial benefits. Most noteworthy, the reduction of people needed to perform personal supervision events, but, probably most impactful is its ability to increase efficiencies. Simply put, it helps agencies do more with less. Regardless of your agency type, population size or staff level, it is a balancing act to deliver the "right" level of supervision to all clients. Remote supervision helps even out the disparities, and provides more supervision power.

Remote supervision means clients can "self-report," or, perform the conditions of their supervision orders without personal contact with a case manager. This type of supervision is often used with those clients that do not have a violent history and who are low-risk. The clients remain under supervision, but without the need for one-on-one meetings. This paves the way for case managers to have more time to focus on high-risk clients or those with greater needs.

Regardless of the form of remote supervision used, the benefits remote supervision provides agencies today can be attributed to more effective rehabilitation and lower recidivism rates.

- 1 Foremost, the ability to free up case managers so they can concentrate on higher risk and/or higher need clients.
- 2 Facilitates the ability to supplement required contacts (in some instances, with the potential to increase contacts without the addition of staff).
- 3 Reduces the burden on typical probation/parole waiting room scenarios including issues of over crowding, long wait times and the extensive security requirements when high- and low-risk clients are mixed.

From a client perspective, remote supervision saves significant time by eliminating travel, wait time, and time away from work, in addition to scheduling limitations that in-person meetings entail.

In addition, the cost differential between one-on-one supervision and remote supervision is a critical factor for agencies and clients. In most cases, the cost of remote supervision for a month can be less than the cost to supervise a client on probation/parole face-to-face for one day.<sup>4</sup> A client's out-of-pocket costs vary, but with the possibility to receive violations for failure to pay their fees ensures it is always top of mind.

Bottom-line, everybody wins when remote supervision is part of the supervision plan. As low-risk clients are managed with remote supervision tools, high-risk clients receive the benefit from increased case manager attention. Agencies are better able to meet the needs of all of their clients, and the community benefits from more consistent supervision of all clients.

## IDENTIFYING THE BEST SUPERVISION MIX

Just as there is not a “one size fits all” path to community supervision, there is not a single tool that handles all of an agency’s needs. In fact, agencies require a broad variety of supervision tools to effectively reach all population levels. In addition to a diverse range of clients, agencies must also weigh internal resources and other factors, such as client profiles, to determine the optimal mix of supervision platforms. The following reviews the primary benefits and issues with each of the current remote supervision platforms.

In its 2020 report, the U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics states that approximately 1 in 58 adults in the United States was under community supervision at yearend 2018<sup>1</sup>

## A REVIEW OF TRADITIONAL REMOTE SUPERVISION OPTIONS



### MAIL IN REPORTING

Is typically the lowest cost to implement, but requires extensive front- and back-end labor for distribution, data-entry and filing for compliance tracking and provides no ability to verify if the client actually completed the form that was submitted.



### KIOSK REPORTING

Provides locations and time periods that can better accommodate clients work and travel schedules, and eliminate lengthy waiting room visits. Kiosks require a secure location and have high maintenance and hardware costs. In some cases, Kiosks can be equipped with biometric authentication to verify the client.



### ELECTRONIC MONITORING

Is a form of supervision managed with electronic monitoring (EM) devices. EM provides agencies the ability to track a client’s movement within the community and monitor compliance with conditions of release that contain geographic boundaries. EM has high monthly costs, and, in some instances substantial hardware and maintenance costs. Additionally, EM provides no interaction with the client other than compliance of location.



### PHONE REPORTING

Provides clients the flexibility to report using a standard telephone from home or work. Verification that the client is the one who submitted the report is typically done with a voice biometric. Phone reporting provides no interaction with the client other than compliance of a contact, and provides little or no flexibility of the types of questions that are responded as all clients are treated the same.



### WEB REPORTING

Using web-based portals provides clients the flexibility to report with their own computers from home or work, or use public workstations in libraries or rental venues. Verification that the client is the one who actually submitted the report is not available.

## SMARTPHONES: THE X FACTOR IN TRANSFORMING REMOTE SUPERVISION TO REMOTE CLIENT MANAGEMENT

As technology continues to develop, so does the ability for smartphones to support and empower community supervision – both for agencies and the clients they serve. A key differentiator from other remote supervision tools is their ability to be substantially more than a compliance monitoring tool, in fact, smartphones enable agencies to elevate remote supervision to true client management.

Smartphones provide the ability to integrate instantaneous client communication, personalized client contact and electronic monitoring services into a single application that will save time and money for agencies and their case managers.

### UNPRECEDENTED AGENCY VALUE

Each of the traditional remote supervision methods offer agencies an alternate method to collect remote contacts for a specific client segment. With the introduction of the smartphone comes a new era in remote supervision that includes dynamic communication and interaction with the clients under remote supervision. Agencies can now remotely supervise clients of all types, in multiple scenarios, with a reach and accuracy never before possible.

With the innate ability to intertwine technologies, agencies that incorporate a smartphone app can provide enhanced levels of communication and supervision that combine 24/7 secure biometric client access with a variety of supervision services. As technology has evolved, smartphone supervision has advanced to incorporate full systems that can integrate with an agency's case management system and provide added supervision capacity including interactive appointment notification and acknowledgment, distribution of contact questionnaires, secure messaging between and client and their case manager, and live video calls.



More than any other form of remote supervision, smartphones allow agencies to incorporate targeted supervision for all clients.

## SMARTPHONE-ENABLED REMOTE SUPERVISION PROVIDES:

- **Nearly universal coverage.** Pew Research states “smartphone ownership rates have skyrocketed (since 2013),” with a reported 85-percent of U.S. adults estimated to own a smartphone.<sup>5</sup> Clients generally have their phones with them wherever they are. This provides agencies the possibility to enact remote supervision to all client populations literally 24/7/365. Anyone who has a smartphone can be eligible for remote supervision.
- **No boundaries.** Smartphone technology provides access to a client wherever they may be, either temporarily or long-term. Agencies can access rural and interstate compact clients, as well as those traveling or previously out-of-range, with ease.
- **Reallocate and reduce case-management workloads.** Because smartphone-enabled remote supervision facilitates automated remote contacts, check-ins, and other supervision events, agencies can automate administrative, banked, and low-risk client contacts. This significantly reduces the workloads of case managers, while at the same time affords them more available time to attend to clients with greater needs.
- **Timely interventions.** Unlike any other form of remote supervision, smartphones enable the prompt collection of information and enable automated monitoring. Case managers receive triggered notifications when needed, and have -- at their fingertips -- the data needed to swiftly increase or decrease supervision based on client’s level of compliance with terms of supervision.
- **Reduced data entry.** Smartphone-enabled remote supervision works in parallel with an agency’s supervision management system, reducing the need to enter data multiple times. Smartphones enable clients to update and verify their life-changing events; case managers don’t need to enter the data into the system again, and the information in the agency’s integrated system is always up to date.
- **Robust client engagement.** With a smartphone, clients experience expanded flexibility and access, and are empowered with the ability to manage their obligations. Not only can they respond to supervision requirements such as check-ins and questionnaires, smartphones allow clients to actively participate in their rehabilitation through self-management of their obligations, as well as initiate direct one-on-one communication with their case manager.
- **Enhanced officer safety.** Through the expanded client access of a smartphone, case managers can perform curfew checks without the need to leave the office, disrupt their work schedule, execute late night field visits, or put their safety at risk in the field.

## WHAT WORKS?

One of the most difficult questions agencies often ask is do they have a targeted supervision strategy that works today, and can support their needs in the future? It’s important to keep in mind long- and short-term objectives when developing a global supervision strategy. An effective, balanced supervision strategy should:

- Help the agency operate effectively
- Address the root of the problem
- Provide a targeted approach
- Meet the diverse needs of the client population
- Build a strong foundation for the future

## A NEW VISION FOR SUPERVISION

For most agencies the goal is to focus resources on clients with the highest needs or are higher risk, but the reality of demanding case-management workloads, and resource limitations can take priority. Many will tell you the ultimate goal of supervision is to reduce recidivism or the rehabilitation of clients. However, as you delve deeper into rehabilitation you understand that rehabilitation is the problem, and to truly affect rehabilitation you must treat the core of the problem by changing the behavior(s) that drive clients.

The principle behind Risk–Need–Responsivity (RNR) and criminogenic needs assessment is the premise that treatment should be tailored to address the criminogenic need factors that relate to the behaviors driving the client. If you change the actions behind the criminal act, your ability to positively impact recidivism increases.

What is the best way to efficiently and effectively combine supervision and behavior modification?

### THE SMARTPHONE ADVANTAGE

Today people routinely use their phones for mobile computing – to shop and pay bills, communicate, maintain appointments and schedules, obtain addresses and directions, and so much more, including supervision.

Conservative estimates state people check their smartphone 46 times a day, and collectively access them over 9 billion times a day. As consulting firm Deloitte recently stated, “The long-standing promise of delivering content to any screen is finally becoming a reality, enabled by advances in network technology and higher speeds.”<sup>6</sup>

### UNPARALLELED CLIENT REACH

Smartphone-enabled supervision provides agencies a dynamic vehicle to connect with clients - wherever they are. Because smartphones are part of most client’s everyday life, the supervision device is unobtrusive and essentially always available. And, because over 85-percent of phones used in the U.S. are smartphones<sup>5</sup>, the learning curve is short and client buy in is simplified.

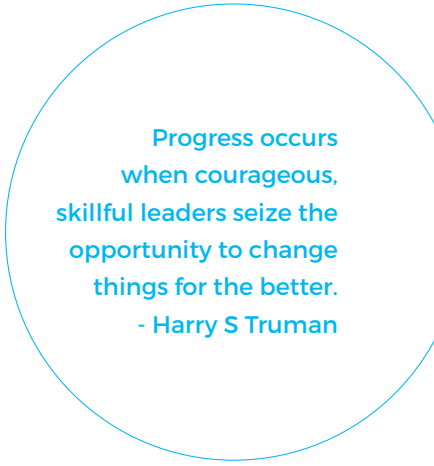
### SMART TECHNOLOGY DELIVERS SUPERIOR SUPERVISION

Smartphone technology is a game changer for remote supervision. What makes smartphones an essential component in a targeted supervision plan?

**Low-cost solution.** The costs and benefits associated to remote client management are significantly less for agencies and clients than a combination of remote supervision technologies or face-to-face supervision.

**Best-in-class technology.** Since their inception, smartphones have led the technology revolution, and with backing by some of most innovative companies in the world this trend isn’t likely to change.

**Future forward.** As the technology behind smartphones continues to evolve, users can be assured that smartphone-enabled remote supervision will remain the most innovative option available in the marketplace. Just as biometrics and GPS add invaluable capabilities to smartphones today, there are other technology developments in development today (and promises of advancements than cannot even be imagined today) that will continue to empower remote supervision into the future.



Progress occurs  
when courageous,  
skillful leaders seize the  
opportunity to change  
things for the better.  
- Harry S Truman

## SMALL STEPS DELIVER LARGE STRIDES IN BEHAVIOR MODIFICATION

For many years behavior modification has played an integral role in client-centered supervision programs. Central to many behavior modifications programs is the goal to hold clients accountable, yet missing from many supervision solutions today is a platform to effect change. That's where smartphones have the potential to offer the greatest advantage.

An example of pervasive computing, smartphones marry wireless computing with biometric authentication capabilities – such as facial, voice and fingerprint recognition – with other intelligent functionality including the capacity for data collection and artificial intelligence.

## IMAGINE THE POSSIBILITIES

Today smartphone supervision technology provides the framework for smart supervision – recommendations, reminders or push notifications sent to clients based on their actions, or lack of action. These capabilities are at the core of behavior modification.

Just as the latest technological advancements such as unfettered access, two-way messaging, location tracking and data collection have added increased functionality and bandwidth to supervision, tomorrow's technology promises to take supervision to a level never before achieved. The client has the free will to decide their path, but with smartphones the technology exists to deliver personalized behavior modification support.

## AN EFFECTIVE SUPERVISION STRATEGY

The goal to focus efforts on higher risk clients, in higher-risk neighborhoods, at higher-risk times through a strategy of targeted supervision can be daunting. cFive Solutions strives to empower agencies to achieve this goal by delivering software that connects innovative community supervision agencies with the information they need to reduce recidivism, improve lives, and keep communities safe.

cFive Catalyst bridges the client-supervisor relationship with intelligent supervision management services and a client-facing mobile app that automates interactions and information gathering, and, improves communication and engagement, client accountability, and client behavior.

---

## SOURCES

<sup>1</sup> *Probation and Parole in the United States, 2017–2018*. U.S. Bureau of Justice Statistics. (Updated) August 2020.

<sup>2</sup> *Probation and Parole's Growing Caseloads and Workload Allocation: Strategies for Managerial Decision Making*. The American Probation and Parole Association. May 2007.

<sup>3</sup> *Putting Public Safety First: 13 Strategies for Successful Supervision and Reentry*. The Pew Center on the States. December 2008.

<sup>4</sup> *Supervision Costs Significantly Less than Incarceration in Federal System*. United States Courts. July 2013.

<sup>5</sup> *Smartphone Ownership 2021*. Pew Research Center. April 2021.

<sup>6</sup> *2017 Telecommunications Industry Outlook*. Deloitte. 2017.

cFIVE™ is a trademark of cFive Solutions, Inc.

Pew is a trademark of Pew Research

Deloitte is a registered trademark of Deloitte Development LLC, a Member of Deloitte Touche Tohmatsu Limited

All other trademarks used are the properties of their respective owners.

© cFive Solutions, Inc.