

Self-service government

Citizens expect a seamless customer experience from federal agencies with easy access to modern digital services

MOST CITIZENS HAVE high expectations for customer service from their government, however agencies can struggle with manual process and siloed information to deliver timely services to a more demanding public, but the cloud can help.

A recent survey showed that around 39 percent of respondents have not seen an improvement when engaging with the federal government over the past two years. About 40 percent of respondents reported wait times over five minutes when using the phone, and 33 percent had difficulty finding information on federal web sites.

As a result, agencies need to double down on their commitment to digital services. That effort will enable them to deliver new features, such as self-service capabilities so users can find answers and conduct business on their own.

“Digital is the future,” said Justin Brooks, director, Customer and Industry Workflows, Federal, at ServiceNow. “The government can be better at executing the business of government and delivering services.”

All agencies can improve their customer service, communications, and cross-agency functions, whether they deliver “high-impact” services or not, Brooks said. “Every agency or program exists to deliver something or some service.”

The goal is to have a customer service management cloud-based platform such as ServiceNow that can integrate the front, middle,

and back-end operations for a seamless customer experience. ServiceNow is able to automate requests, offer intelligent routing, connect teams and provide real-time information.

ServiceNow provides self-service offerings and omni-channel communications to improve customer service, integrate tasks and teams for better collaboration, and support employees in the field. Automation, machine learning, and predictive analytics help agencies prioritize, scale responses, and enhance efficiency.

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One example of that multichannel solution is Recreation.gov. The site is a multi-agency partnership offering citizens a single place to go for information, trip ideas, and reservations for national parks, campsites, and other outdoor adventures.

ServiceNow provided an omni-channel interface with chat, email, and telephony and

integrated the customer service portal to the main Recreation.gov website to provide access to knowledge articles.

“Overall the customer satisfaction scores have improved dramatically and there is a significant reduction in the average time for resolution,” Brooks said.

In another use case, the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service revamped its manual, home-grown permit management system to create an omni-channel solution with a self-service web portal. The site, dubbed ePermits, allows customers to apply and track permits online for such activities as importing or exporting live animals and plants.

The HHS Office of Child Care is another example of digital transformation. The office, which supports low-income working families through child care financial assistance and

improved early care and education, replaced a 15 year old legacy system with a technical assistance tracker so that it could efficiently provide resources to state agencies.

“It’s a great example of rapid digital transformation,” Brooks said.

ServiceNow also helped create the Army Maintenance Application so that Army families living in military housing have a digital solution to report any maintenance concerns such as leaking roofs or electrical problems related to their living quarters, and track the status of the requests.

ServiceNow plans to add capabilities targeted at its government customers to improve agency customer service management and IT service management, he said. “It will help agencies fuel mission-oriented innovation, deliver great customer experiences and resolve customer cases faster.” ■



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