



Government unifies the citizen experience, goes digital

Customer-centric thinking is not new, but the pandemic has given government agencies a newfound impetus to act



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DURING THE PANDEMIC, out of necessity, everyone has been interacting digitally more than ever before. And we're relying more heavily on government services than we have since the Great Depression. Those interactions tend to involve the most important aspects of our lives, such as housing, health care and financial stability.

At the same time, the volume of those demands and the mechanisms for responding to them are changing, which is forcing government agencies to find ways to be more effective and efficient.

If we have the ability to sell luxury items through targeted, tailored and emotion-driven customer engagements, then we should be able to help families keep a roof over their heads and put food on the table with the same level of empathy and personalization.

We need scalable solutions, and we need to eliminate silos and redundancies across government services. We now have proven systems and data to support that effort. The question is: Can government agencies handle the organizational changes and how quickly can they act?

Informed by data and designed around the customer

To achieve that transformation, government must begin by pivoting to a customer-centric approach to

all activities within and across agencies. Digital engagement should be informed by data and designed around the customer, not around internal processes. Shifting to an outward, customer-centric view requires retooling at the system, data and organizational levels.

That shift involves assembling a holistic picture of the customer so that services are delivered in context. Data is essential at every stage of the process and should be used to validate the customer's needs and next steps. Data can also be used to guide customers through the life cycle of their interactions and allow agencies to hand off a customer from one program to another one or even to another agency.

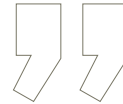
Agencies should start thinking about creating a unified engagement layer that can house everything they know about a customer and that customer's journey over time to ensure a positive, productive experience. That engagement layer also makes it possible for agencies to modernize back-office activities and seamlessly improve the customer experience.

Thanks to the 21st Century Integrated Digital Experience Act, government agencies have been modernizing websites and digitizing forms. But those websites and forms are still disconnected from the data and still fail to address the customer life cycle. Furthermore, agencies must





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also embrace the other elements of the act, including adopting e-signatures, improving the customer experience and moving to shared services.

A single front door for customer interactions

Citizens, businesses and other government partners need a single front door – a place where they can engage regardless of where they are in their particular interaction.

That front door service should include everything they have done and everything they could do regardless of which agency, office, department or person is handling the interaction on the government side.

Many agencies are linking internal programs that are sequential or dependent on one another and building processes around those programs to unify the customer experience. That's an important step in moving toward agency-wide

engagement. However, the ultimate goal is government-wide engagement.

It will take time to evolve, and clearly we can't do all of this overnight. The best strategy is to start small within a program or agency and then build outward from there. ■

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