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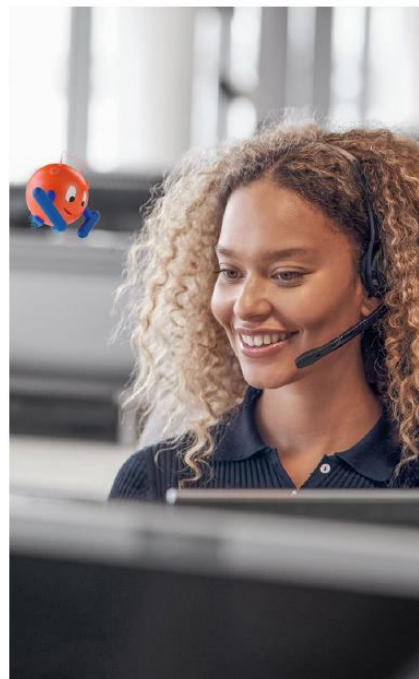
Achieving a paperless future through automation and AI

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Going paperless is the first step toward better customer service.

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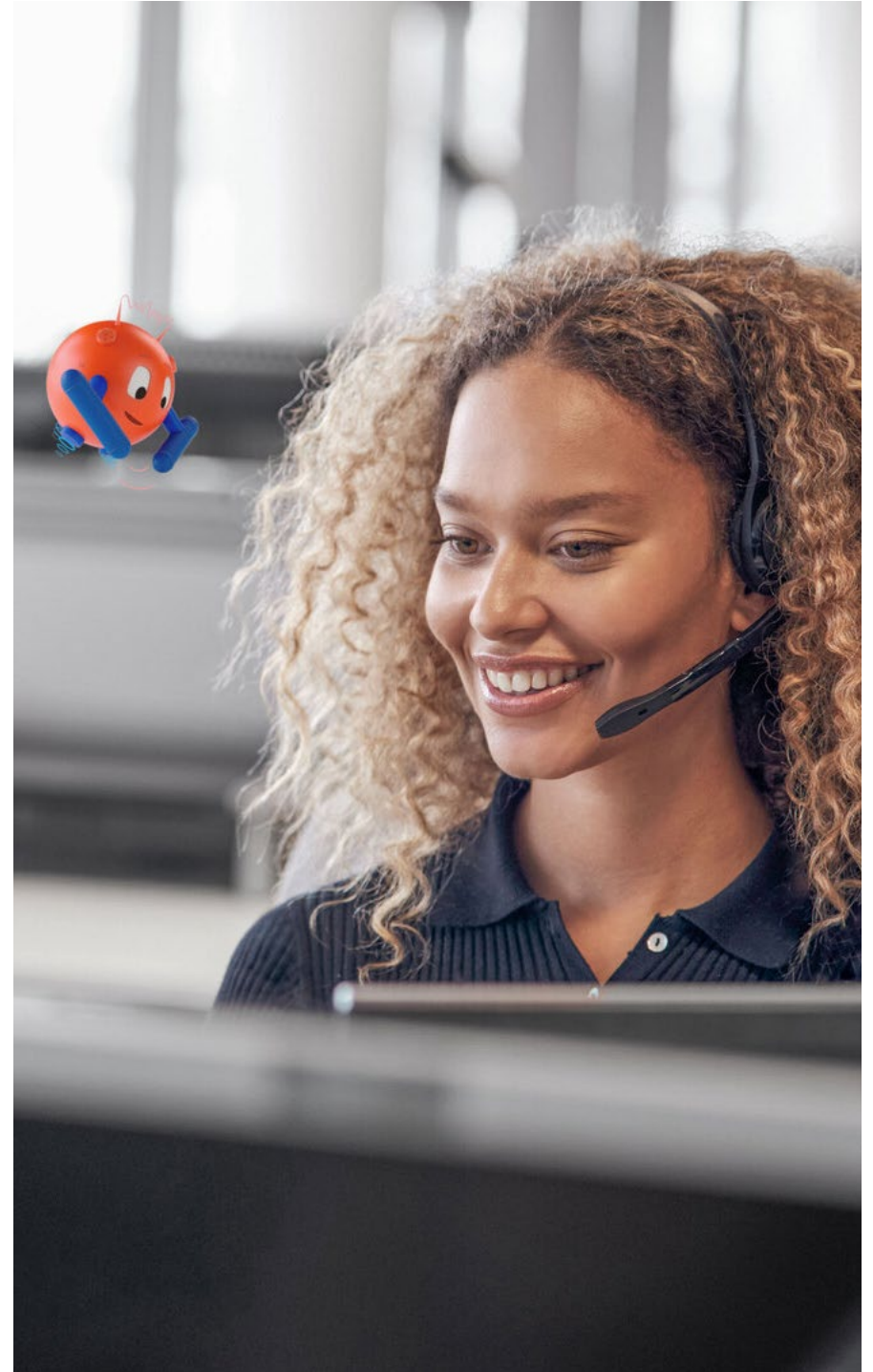
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Introduction

Paper is plentiful across the public sector. Whether an agency is looking to collect data or build new systems under an existing program, federal leaders must contend with stacks of paperwork.

Most systems rely on traditional, antiquated forms, requiring federal employees or citizens to complete physical documents. Not only does this create redundancies, but it reduces the time federal employees have to envision new, contemporary ways of meeting mission needs. As agencies look to modernize and meet the needs of today's citizens, leaders must "go paperless" in order to enhance efficiency and rebuild trust in government.

"The percentage of forms that are physical versus digital is staggering," said Todd Schroeder, Vice President, Public Sector at UiPath. "However, we have to account for the fact that we have a governance process that pushes us in a paper direction."

While governance may never change, federal leadership can take action today to expedite and modernize paper-based decision making.

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>
> Todd Schroeder, Vice President, Public Sector, UiPath

Modernization in action

Paper-based systems often lead to friction. For example, when citizens apply for a permit, they must navigate a complex maze of federal websites in order to select an application, only to be told days or weeks later that the form they filled out is incorrect. This process frustrates citizens and generates a lot of overhead and manual work for public servants.

Digital systems could address this pain point by increasing employee productivity 50–70%, thereby reducing the overall cost of delivering on the mission. Contemporary solutions can do this with the help of automation. By automating rote mundane tasks, federal agencies free employees up to work on higher-value tasks.

"The benefits of automation are quality, speed, mission, and program agility. I can get to those programs that I couldn't offer before, because now I have the capital to build those programs, and I have people's time and attention," said Schroeder.

For example, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) partnered with UiPath in 2020[1] to modernize existing finance and procurement functions. In 72 hours, a team of public and private sector employees "executed nearly 1,500 contract modifications in 72 hours, a process that manually would have taken one year."

Together, the IRS and UiPath enabled faster decision making at the mission's edge so that federal employees had the freedom to work on addressing the tax backlog[2] or building contemporary, direct file services[3] that are now accessible across all 50 states.

The UiPath Platform extracted data from different forms, verifying the information against the Code of Federal Regulations and other internal checkpoints. For those odd cases that were too challenging for the model to understand, the document was sent to a human for review, pointing out where the system had questions instead of flagging the entire document.

"Everything else went through a straight approvals process with a 98% accuracy rate," said Schroder.

> **Digital systems could address this pain point, increasing employee productivity by 50 to 70%, thereby reducing the overall cost of delivering on the mission.**

Preparing for the future

Creating future-proof systems requires a sea change in how organizations approach federal workloads. By freeing employees from mundane, repetitive tasks and arming them with the necessary tools and resources, leadership can create an environment where employees can enhance service delivery. For example, if an employee can complete their casework within an hour, that allows them to spend the remaining seven hours cultivating strategies and driving the mission forward.

In planning for the future, federal agencies should embrace an 'automation first' approach. Just as the government once prioritized the mobile experience, leaders today must shift their focus toward empowering employees by automating repetitive and time-consuming tasks. This transformation involves identifying areas where automation can be applied to improve processes and free up employees' time for more meaningful and strategic work. It also requires a shift in mindset, with leaders emphasizing the importance of automation and how it will help federal employees drive the mission forward.

"Establishing an automation platform is one of the biggest mission enablers for the government. You have to automate away from the mundane," said Schroeder.

Discover how UiPath can help you automate existing processes. →

References

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