Adapting to New Customer Behaviors and Expectations

The pandemic has created new needs and expectations around customer experience. **Joshua Smith,** *digital transformation leader for public sector at Acquia,* discusses tools and strategies for creating great content and personalizing constituents' digital interactions.

How have constituent expectations for customer experience changed since the pandemic?

One way our society has responded to the pandemic is by moving even more of our interactions online. This was a trend before the pandemic, but in the past two years it has gone into hyperdrive. Every organization in the commercial and public sphere has been forced to evaluate how to replace or supplement in-person activities with online interactions. As a result, constituents now expect their online government interactions to match consumer experiences more commonly found with big brands in the commercial sector.

Where should organizations focus to successfully shift their constituent experience strategies?

Responding to the pandemic was an all-hands-on-deck event, where a lot of new ideas were introduced and a lot of innovation was approved for implementation. As organizations envision a post-pandemic world, they will need to review the past two years of initiatives to determine which ones really worked and which ones may have been appropriate for the moment, but are not needed long term. Tools with robust analytics and reporting can help organizations identify the important trends in their customer data. Organizations may be surprised by what their data and analysis tells them.

What is a digital experience platform and how can it improve constituent experience?

A digital experience platform is an integrated set of technologies that supports the composition, management, delivery and optimization of contextualized digital experiences. It supports modernization efforts by providing a broad set of solutions for engaging constituents online. The digital world offers many possible touchpoints for residents. Trying to independently solve for each desired touchpoint can lead to a scrambled web of conflicting technologies, but taking a tech-first monolithic approach will lead to disappointing engagement. A digital experience platform offers proven patterns for providing meaningful engagement, while also allowing flexibility to architect each touchpoint according to the organization's preferences.

How can organizations create content more efficiently?

Smart organizations understand constituents come for the content, not for the technology. However, technical tools can help maximize the reach and reuse of great content. In terms of pure efficiency, content syndication is the answer. Drupal as a content management system (CMS) is great at the publish once, use everywhere approach for a single website or application programming interface (API) endpoint. With the right tools you can expand to syndicating content across many websites, API endpoints and transactional applications. You can manage your best content in one place, and automatically distribute updates across your entire digital ecosystem.

How can organizations employ personalization to deliver more engaging experiences?

Government agencies may not have click-through targets or shopping cart goals like online retailers, but personalization is an incredible tool to reduce friction and streamline the user experience. Employing meaningful personalization requires careful thought, but getting started is easy if you adopt a "crawl, walk, run" approach. A simple example is differentiation between first-time and repeat visitors to a section of a website. Bypassing irrelevant content reduces friction on the interaction and improves the experience. When applied at scale, small optimizations like this can build trust in government services.

What advice do you have for fostering trust and encouraging digital engagement among constituents?

Improving digital experiences is the best way to encourage digital engagement. Constituents aren't generally opposed to interacting online, they just want easy-to-use experiences. Government agencies wanting to improve their experiences have many examples to draw from the private sector, and companies like Acquia are ready and able to share tools and best practices to bring those experiences to life.

Acquia

PUT SECURITY AND EXPEDIENCY FIRST WITH ACQUIA

Whether your need is to deliver a seamless web-based experience to your constituents or empower your marketing team to quickly deliver content online, Acquia is here to help.

Find out why Acquia is the FedRAMP authorized CMS trusted by government agencies.

EXPLORE ACQUIA

www.acquia.com