

# Here are 3 phases to begin modernizing customer experience right away

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For years, agencies have been researching, modernizing and overhauling how customers experience doing business with the federal government. Over the course of several presidential administrations, with the help of Office of Management and Budget mandates, presidential executive orders and an influx of customer experience talent, there has been a noticeable shift toward organizational CX management approaches.

Despite this, agencies are not taking full advantage of technological advances to improve customer experience management capacity at scale. Advances in cloud technology, data analytics and new communications channels have opened up new avenues to improve an agency's capability to design and deliver services for both customers and federal employees.

"Whether it's the human element or technology advancements, there are opportunities many agencies aren't thinking about," said Matthew Chong, vice president of federal business at [Qualtrics](#). "We still need structured ways of listening and asking for human feedback to improve CX, but we need deeper insight to improve CX more precisely. And this is possible — without asking more questions."

The key is to rethink the traditional CX strategy and reimagine how to capture human insights by listening, understanding and acting at scale, Chong said. He detailed what's required by agencies in each of these three phases to transform experiences and services, often with data already within reach.

## Phase 1: Listen

In many ways, agencies are already listening to customers, he pointed out. Most agencies currently gather structured CX data through methods such as surveys, research and feedback mechanism using channels like website visits, comment forms and contact center calls.

"There are other untapped data sources that agencies are leaving on the table," Chong said.

What he is seeing now and detailed in future roadmaps when it comes to CX is that leading agencies are leveraging more unstructured data to accelerate findings and make improvements that will most affect customer outcomes.

## Phase 2: Understand

"Agencies have a treasure trove of data in phone calls, emails, live chats and more. But they aren't leveraging modern technology to capitalize on it, to learn efficiently on a deeper level what people need, where people get stuck in digital self-service and why they reach out to contact centers," Chong said.

"Agencies are data rich but insight poor. To get any insight out of unstructured data, staff members spend hours, weeks and months of time analyzing it — introducing high levels of human bias and error," he said. "The days of manually listening to phone calls and reading thousands of lines of survey responses are over for agencies that have the right experience management platform."

Using modern technology tools that specialize in conversational analytics is what can dramatically improve an agency's ability to rapidly understand what customers are thinking, feeling and doing as they interact with the organization, Chong said.

Conversational analytics is the use of artificial intelligence, machine learning, natural language



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processing and algorithms to evaluate conversations. This technology can be applied to transcribe phone calls and chats, review posts and other information sources to get insights into customer behavior.

Agencies that capitalize on unstructured data can reveal hidden insights and gain an even broader yet more detailed customer picture.


“Once agency leaders tap into their unstructured data, things never look the same because of the broader perspective. They can then discern the ‘why’ behind customer behavior,” Chong said. “This viewpoint becomes even more valuable

if they are able to line these insights up next to what is happening or operational data, such as call volume, website visits, customers served, cost profiles and more.”

### Phase 3: Act

When agencies are better able to understand the experiences that customers are having with their services, they can prioritize and make improvements that will move the needle in creating more satisfying experiences.

Once agencies have a better understanding of specific pain points and what can be done to address them, it's time for final phase: act. This is where the technology really needs to be brought to bear, he advised. Automation can let agencies act in certain situations, like triggering communications in response to certain stimuli. Those communications can recommend next actions, solicit feedback or remind customers about deadlines, for instance, Chong said.

“Finding balance between the human element and the technology element requires looking at what you already have and then identifying the biggest gaps when it comes to where technology can help automate and scale — as well as provide additional layers of information that you don't already have.” 



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