

How Technology Can Improve CX for Government Services

In order to ensure citizens get the help they need, the government needs to follow the example of business and start putting their customer experience first.

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Customer experience (CX) isn't something most people associate with government services. Instead, they're confronted by visions of long lines, unenthusiastic or overworked service reps and an almost endless trail of bureaucratic red tape. With the money expected to flow into public services in the coming years, both as a result of a newly elected presidential administration and an attempt to boost the country out of a Covid-induced recession, there's a ripe opportunity to bring CX advances to the public sector.

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Paradigm shift for the government sector

New administrations, be it Democrat or Republican, historically have different priorities in terms of where money should be spent. Services could include social welfare programs, housing assistance or increased defense spending and infrastructure expenditures, among hundreds of others. The common thread across administrations is the need to get funding to the programs and persons that it is intended to

serve.

Services aren't much good if they're inaccessible. Public sector services and administrations are notoriously difficult to navigate, made up of disparate agencies that don't have integrated systems, web pages with old links or completely contradictory information on who qualifies for what.

All this means that improving CX for the government sector is going to require a significant paradigm shift. Public sector agencies experience challenges that private sector companies do not. Specifically, public sector agencies are usually understaffed, often serving a large portion of the population, and doing so without the incentive of making a profit. These constraints don't lend themselves to the government achieving lightning-fast processing speeds or perfect efficiency. The time is ripe for a system overhaul – to include government agencies leveraging private sector technologies for the public good.

Areas for growth

All that said, there are a few specific areas that are particularly ready for vast improvements using private-sector technology. Improving these areas could make the average user's experience qualifying for and obtaining government services so much better.

In recent years, commercial providers have developed a plethora of economical and secure software and cloud-based service options. The ability for the government to outsource certain CX functions to these providers eliminates any need for the government to hold on to antiquated systems or "paper-based" application requirements. When properly implemented, these partnerships can also reduce fraud, waste and abuse in government programs.

Eligibility and identity verification

Determining eligibility has been a significant challenge to the public, who often have to deal with conflicting information and multiple agencies to submit their requests. That could be a thing of the past as companies like TransUnion and others compile more robust online profiles for almost everyone in the country. Online identity verification is becoming more secure with each passing year. This data could be leveraged to determine a person's eligibility almost without them even needing to be involved beyond basic information input – and with a lot more precision.

Application process

Another opportunity for improvement is in the general application process. With health concerns, it's understandable that customers don't want to venture out to a physical location, and agencies don't want to put their employees at risk. Instead of just shuttering their buildings, however, much of the application process can be done virtually or remotely. Not only does this keep people from exposing each other to potential viruses, but it also improves the CX because people can fill out an application from the comfort of their home.

Data accessibility

It can be difficult to navigate government websites. They're often filled with bad links and old or incorrect contact information. Users can find it extremely frustrating to try and find the information they need, and they'll often just give up instead.

This is the third area for significant improvement. New

advances in artificial intelligence can make it easier to store, organize and access data efficiently. All this means that the average user can get access to the information they need on an app or system that's optimized for mobile devices. That's a potential game-changer for agencies that have too few resources and too many customers.

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Solutions for everyone

There are plenty of other opportunities for CX to make significant improvements in government services, but these are three that are particularly problematic today. These are just some of the steps government agencies can take to help bring their services to the millions of Americans who really need them.

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