A Digital First Engagement Management Framework

For Government and Public Sector
Introduction

Government and public sector organizations continue to face unprecedented challenges as a result of the converging demands of the digital customer and the long-running global economic uncertainty.

In the past decade, government and public sector organizations took the first steps to exploiting the web as a way of "channel shifting" some of their popular services. Today, while organizations see digital channels as an important part of their digital first engagement management strategy, many are not fully realizing their expected benefits.

One reason for that is that too much of a focus is placed on the self-service aspect of digital first engagement management. In fact, sometimes, it’s the sole focus.

So-called "digital only" engagement management strategies simply do not work. Their success depends on the support of the contact center, the other side of the coin so to speak, staffed with digital employees who can guide and support digital customers as they seek to use increasingly sophisticated services online.
Introducing Verint’s Digital First Engagement Management Framework

It is for this reason that Verint has developed the Digital First Engagement Management Framework. It is designed to help enable digital first engagement management strategy benefits to be fully realized by providing simple guidelines that help ensure both sides of the digital first engagement management coin are being addressed—self-service and assisted service, as well as the full range of government services.
And here it is... On the left is the self-service side of the digital first engagement management coin, which enumerates the main self-service channels available to the government and public sector today, including Mobile Web, which has now overtaken Desktop Web in terms of access usage. It also can include virtual assistant and community, traditional commercial sector capabilities that are now starting to be adopted in government; and open data and open services, which continue to stimulate innovation across government.

On the right is the assisted service side of the digital first engagement management coin, which enumerates the main assisted-service channels available to the government and public sector today that crucially perform an even greater role in successful digital first engagement management strategies, including traditional phone, social media and live chat with co-browse.
Digital First Engagement Management Framework (cont’d)

Across the top of each graphic are the government service types (discussed next).

Taking both channels and service types into account prompts consideration of which services should be supported across which channels, a key part of any comprehensive digital first engagement management strategy. For example, the Open Data channel can support transportation timetable queries (“Find Out About It”) extremely well but cannot support transactional interactions, such as applications for permits (“Apply For It”) or citation payments (“Pay For It”). This is where Open Services plays an important role through its support of such transactional interactions. Further, some social services (“Find Out About It”, “Apply For It”) are best delivered face to face via the store (or counter) channel, rather than online via the Web.

It also prompts consideration of service consistency across all channels, which if achieved, helps further promote customer satisfaction and helps reduce the cost to serve.
Self-Service Channels

Self-service channels support interactions and transactions that do not require a human intermediary. Instead of calling on the phone for services during working hours, customers can access current, accurate information anytime, anywhere with any type of Internet-connect device, such as tablets, smartphones, computers and even smart TVs and gaming consoles.
Customer engagement via web browsers on devices ranging from desktops to smartphones remains very important because not every service is appropriate for delivery over every channel. For example, complex processes, such as applying for a benefit, are more suitable for devices with large form factors, such as desktop computers and less suited for devices with small form factors, such as smartphones.

It goes without saying that the web channel should be the cornerstone of any Digital First strategy, but not to the exclusion of other digital channels.

Of course, the explosion of web device types with a widening range of form factors mandates that services should be designed “responsively” for all form factors, including smartphone and tablet form factors.

There also is a place for mobile apps, which continue to be proven as being uniquely adept at certain types of services, such as reporting issues concerning public spaces given their built-in GPS and camera capabilities.
Automated Voice

Often viewed as a pariah in government, Automated Voice is generating significant benefits in government through the use of Interactive Voice Response (IVR) and speech recognition technologies to proactively answer some common questions on the phone while waiting to speak to an agent, take citation payments or proactively notifying customers when there are updates on a service request, for example, all without human intervention.

Virtual Assistant

Virtual Assistants have been available on commercial sector websites for several years now, and have had the opportunity to mature from a gimmick to something that plays an important role in making customer journeys on the organization’s website successful. While take up in government and public sector is minimal to date, there are some examples that have delivered significant benefits that warrant wider consideration.

Community

Communities are already proven in commercial industries, such as Technology where customers are able (and want) to help themselves without having to communicate with the organization. The idea of customers being able to help themselves is of interest to government due to the kind of benefits that it could drive. For example, communities can support government consultation initiatives as well disaster relief management initiatives.

Open Data and Open Services

Largely unique to government, open data initiatives have already proven successful at driving substantial benefits by, for example, providing access to transportation timetables to innovations, such as mobile apps. Open services take the idea of openness further by allowing government services to be consumed through third-party websites, mobile apps and social networking sites. It also supports Internet of Things (IoT) initiatives allowing, for example, street lights to communicate problems back to the city.
Assisted-Service Channels

Assisted-service channels support interactions and transactions that require a human intermediary whether because of customer channel preference or because the customer needs support to complete a service online. When overlooked in digital first engagement management strategies, the targeted benefits will simply not be realized and customer satisfaction will be impacted.
While digital channel uptake is stemming further increase in phone usage, it is not declining either, and so the humble phone remains a critical part of any digital first engagement management strategy. In addition to those who will always prefer to use the phone, some services, such as social services, are best delivered via the phone or counter channel.

While most government organizations are using social media in some capacity, few are using it for social listening and engagement as the commercial sector has been doing for years. Benefits include the ability to really understand what citizens think as well as preempting problems before they become major issues.

While inbound email is an expensive channel, with many government organizations choosing to “turn it off”, it provides benefits for customer inbound and organization outbound communication, including demand management and contact avoidance.

Taken together, chat and co-browse play a crucial role in enabling digital customers to successfully complete their digital journeys. Chat is not enough on its own. With co-browse, the digital employee can “speak” and “see” what the digital customer is doing and therefore provide the best possible support. Co-browse should also be available in conjunction with the phone channel.

While the use of whitemail has declined substantially, particularly due to the rise of email and social networking, it is still important to some customers and some government organizations and services. That said, several technologies, such as text analysis, should be considered to maximize handling efficiencies.

Counter (or Face to Face) services continue to perform a vital role for some government services, such as vehicle licensing, and technologies, such as queue management, and kiosks should be considered to optimize the customer experience.
Government Services

One of the challenges government and public sector organizations face is the delivery of what can be a vast number of very diverse services. Working out how they fit into a digital first engagement management strategy can be equally challenging, and it can be helpful to categorize them into the following government service types:

- **Tell us about it.** This relates to services where the customer (e.g. citizen or business) is informing the government organization of something, such as reporting an incident or a change of address.

- **Find out about it.** This relates to services where the customer needs information, such as council meeting minutes or a statement of their property tax.

- **Apply for it.** This relates to services where the customer is applying for a service, such as a business license or a benefit.

- **Pay for it.** This relates to services where a customer needs to pay for something, such as a parking citation or utility bill.

- **Book it.** This relates to services where a customer wants to book a facility, such as a meeting room, a waste collection or an appointment with an elected representative.
Do You Have a Fully Optimized Digital Engagement Management Strategy?

While the majority of government and public sector organizations now incorporate digital as a fundamental part of their engagement management strategy, many have yet to realize their expected benefits. Review your engagement management strategy against the Verint digital first engagement management framework to identify opportunities to deliver additional benefits.

Find out more about the importance of the digital employee, how to overcome barriers to channel shift and how to optimize your digital first engagement management strategies with these additional resources:

- Blog Post: Four Steps to Digital Nirvana
- Blog Post: The Role of Government Employees in a Digital (and Smarter) World
- Blog Post: Don’t Let Fear Drive Your Digital-First Customer Engagement Strategy
- Guide: Overcoming the Barriers to Channel Shift
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