

# EXPERT EDITION

## HISP deep dive: Elevating federal digital services

Insights from

- OMB
- GSA
- TSA
- USDA
- VA

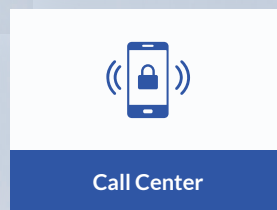
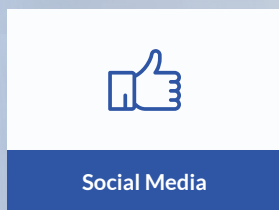
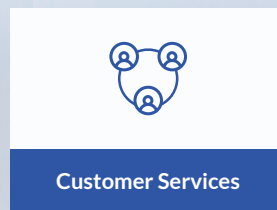
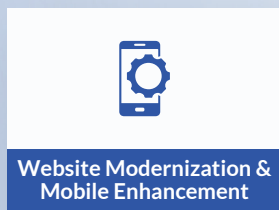


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# On a path of continuous improvement

In reality, everything the government does has some aspect of customer service. But for a few dozen departments and agencies service delivery is the chief mission — think the Federal Emergency Management Agency, for instance.

That's why there are now 39 agencies the Office of Management and Budget has designated as high-impact service providers. With that designation came direction in the President's Management Agenda that agencies must make their services simple, seamless and secure.

The result? The HISPs have been reimagining mission delivery and customer experience — and often their employees' experience as well. At Federal News Network, we've spent all of 2024 delving into this work, talking to CX leaders across the government to share the details of their initiatives, reveal their stories and tease out insights.

In this ebook, we've gathered much of our coverage from that series, [Excellent, Equitable and Secure Customer Experience: A Closer Look at High-Impact Service Providers](#).

We've paired these articles — featuring leaders from the Agriculture Department, General Services Administration, Office of Management and Budget, Transportation Security Administration and the Veterans Affairs Department — with advice and tips from CX industry leaders.

Whether your agency has a high-impact designation or not, you will discover information helpful to your own efforts to create better experiences for your users, both public-facing and internal. And ultimately, that helps with an overarching goal of the HISP efforts: Improve the experience within individual departments or agencies but also across government — making every interaction a seamless experience no matter the individual need.

One obvious takeaway is that this work doesn't standstill. It will continue to evolve as technology and the way that people want to interact with government also changes over time. We look forward to sharing more about this journey as the transformation continues.

**Vanessa Roberts**  
**Editor, Custom Content**  
**Federal News Network**

# Government sets high standard for improving customer experience at enterprise level

BY JORY HECKMAN

More than two years after President Joe Biden signed an [executive order](#) to improve federal customer experience, the Office of Management and Budget is bringing agencies together to take their customer experience improvements to the next level.

“The expectations are higher than ever for digital-first experiences,” said Andy Lewandowski, chief experience officer at the Interior Department and former digital experience adviser to the federal chief information officer.

Agencies are focused on providing better public-facing services to keep pace with the level of service that private-sector businesses are already giving their customers.

Lewandowski said the government needs to meet its customers and make public-facing services more user-friendly and accessible online and on mobile devices.

“That’s the public experience in the consumer space on a daily basis. And then the public comes to government, and there’s a gap,” he told Federal News Network before moving to his new role at Interior. “So fundamentally what we are doing in OMB — across the federal customer experience in digital delivery — is we’re trying to close that gap.”

## Building on work done so far

Agencies made substantial customer experience improvements in 2023.

The Internal Revenue Service, for example, reduced the average call wait time from 28 minutes to 3 minutes.

The Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services and the Department of Housing and Urban Development are also taking steps to reduce the number of forms individuals must provide when applying for benefits.

We’ve really proved that this isn’t a flavor of the month. ... I think we’re really starting to see this take hold and be business as usual.



**Amira Boland**, Former Federal Customer Experience Lead, OMB

More than 10 agencies have created teams focused on improving customer experience, said Amira Boland, chief of staff of the New Practice Lab at New America and the former federal customer experience lead at OMB.

"We've really proved that this isn't a flavor of the month. ... I think we're really starting to see this take hold and be business as usual," Boland said.

OMB in September 2023 issued guidance on [delivering a "digital-first public experience,"](#) outlining more than 100 agency actions and requirements.

To accelerate this work governmentwide, the Federal Chief Information Officers Council in February 2024 launched the [Digital Experience Council](#) to coordinate how agencies are implementing OMB's memo.

"This is not a one-time memo. This is like a visionary document that says the public needs a digital-first government experience," Lewandowski said.

He said OMB is also rolling out "digital experience indicators" to keep track of where agencies are making progress in implementing the elements of the memo.

"These are going to be indicators that tell us, are agencies beginning to implement the requirements in the memo? So it's some oversight. And then, once we get these indicators out there, then we're going to move toward optimization," he said.

As an example, site-scanning tools from the General Services can automatically determine whether sites have search capabilities on par with specifications in the 21st Century Integrated Digital Experience Act.

We're not digitizing forms in bespoke ways and small program offices, but we're taking a holistic enterprise view.



**Andrew Lewandowski**, Chief Experience Officer, Interior

"That's step one. In the future, we want to then ask ourselves, 'How can we optimize the experience? Is the user who uses that on-site search actually getting to the right information and the right tools and services,'" Lewandowski said. "We think that this digital experience indicators work, which is a data-first implementation approach, is going to really change the game with agencies and how they implement this guidance long term."

## Insights from high-impact service providers

Agencies designated as high-impact service providers (HISPs) are leading the customer experience transformation.

The Transportation Security Agency is focused on improving its CX at a time when it's seeing a record volume of interactions with the public.

In 2019, TSA launched a customer feedback survey, which found travelers didn't understand what was going on when their bag was selected for secondary screening.

“They saw in their customer feedback data that that was a big pain point,” Boland said.

TSA, as part of its CX action plan, developed training for transportation security officers on how to communicate to passengers selected for secondary screening.

“They had so many people show up because they realized that that was a thing, that officers weren’t sure what to do or how to handle it,” Boland said.

TSA made this training optional at first, but it is now part of every TSO’s initial training.

These improvements bumped up satisfaction scores. Survey results in early 2024 show that 94% of people are confident in TSA officers to keep air travel safe, and 93% are satisfied with their security screening experience.

“That is such a great story — they started collecting customer feedback, they responded to it, they designed, they scaled that solution. And now they’re seeing the impact of that in their data,” Boland said. *(Read more about TSA’s efforts on Page 17.)*

## Tapping into TMF

Agencies across the government are tapping into the Technology Modernization Fund to financially support their service transformation projects.

OMB announced in June 2023 that TMF would award \$100 million to agency projects that cut wait times for public-facing services, as well as excessive paperwork and other barriers.

“It’s really helped turbocharge digital service delivery across our federal agencies,” Lewandowski said, and offered three examples:

- The National Transportation Safety Board received a TMF investment to centralize data around accidents and help local municipalities better respond to the needs of their local communities.
- The Interior Department’s Bureau of Land Management is getting help from OMB to make the best use of TMF funds meant to digitize paper land records dating back more than a century.
- The Department of Veterans Affairs, a lead agency on CX improvements, received a TMF investment to help digitize forms faster.

“We’re not digitizing forms in bespoke ways and small program offices, but we’re taking a holistic enterprise view. So [there’s] a ton of terrific work across federal agencies,” Lewandowski said. 🚀

**Watch the full discussion with *Andrew Lewandowski and Amira Boland on creating ever-evolving customer experience for the U.S. public***



# Government CX means anticipating, not just reacting, to customer expectations

BY JORY HECKMAN

The federal government is holding agencies accountable to a higher standard for customer service.

High-impact service providers (HISPs) across government are improving their customer experience through Voice of the Customer programs, in which agencies incorporate user feedback into improved processes and CX updates.

LaRel Rogers, senior product marketing manager for federal at [Okta](#), says next-level CX improvements will require agencies to adopt predictive technology solutions that will allow them to anticipate their customers' needs.

"What I've discovered across any of the high-impact service providers, or any government customer experience initiatives, is that they're actually focused on feedback. But the feedback tends to be really on post-transaction feedback or at the completion of their service journey," Rogers said.

As agencies roll out more automation and artificial intelligence tools, Rogers said CX experts will have more data to make informed decisions about what their customers need and identify pain points.

"If you're thinking of rolling out automated chat systems, when people are interacting with your

agency benefit or service, there are things that you can predict that should happen as part of that interaction," Rogers said.

Performance.gov outlines [11 common features](#) of "what the American people should expect of their government" when it comes to service delivery. Among those features, agencies are expected to provide digital-first experiences through online forms, offer more self-service options, and enable secure identity verification.

If you're thinking of rolling out automated chat systems, when people are interacting with your agency benefit or service, there are things that you can predict that should happen as part of that interaction.



**LaRel Rogers**, Senior Product Marketing Manager for Federal, Okta

## 'Good enough for government' is no longer good enough for customers

Rogers said it's important for government to have "built-in requirements" for CX delivery.

"You shouldn't have to go through a transaction or have a survey completed to know that you have to deliver on those service expectations," she said.

Jason Miller, the Office of Management and Budget's deputy director for management, looking back at the second anniversary of the Biden administration's CX executive order, [said in December 2023](#) that agencies should not be satisfied with the current delivery of government services and never again say, "It's good enough for government work."

"There's so much happening around customer experience that you cannot deny the work that government is doing," Rogers said. "The work doesn't stop. And that's why feedback is just one of many ways government is working to ensure they're doing more than just good enough," Rogers said.

Customers expect a personalized customer experience and are often frustrated submitting the same information on multiple forms. By connecting backend systems, Rogers said agencies will have a 360-degree view of a customer's journey and can reduce duplicative processes.

"You might connect the automated chat system with your ticketing system. And now the ticketing system has the appropriate information and can respond based on those attributes. So based on where this person lives and what they're requesting, they can get an automatic notification sent to their phone."

Agencies must also provide public-facing services that are secure by default and set clear boundaries on acceptable uses of personally identifiable information (PII).

Naturally, human-centered design is a big area of focus for CX specialists. But having them become a human-centered design specialist and a change management agent, at the same time that they're becoming a security specialist, probably doesn't benefit them or the strategy that they're trying to put in place.

— *Okta's LaRel Rogers*

"Handing over my personal information to get an agreed-upon benefit or service is the end goal. But I shouldn't have my data compromised in any way by doing that. That's where access management comes into play," Rogers said.

## Making your CX toolkit 'work for you'

Agencies have more options than ever regarding CX tools, services, and solutions. Rogers, however, said effective CX delivery means "spreading your CX toolkit thin, but not spreading your employees thin."

Rogers cautioned agencies against "rolling out things for the sake of keeping up with the latest trends like AI" but taking a more intentional approach "that has a connection point between

what the customer is giving you and the tools that you have available in your toolkit.”

“[It’s] spreading your toolkit in a manner that you might not have the budget to buy all of these different things, but you’re making it work for you,” she said.

Investing in the right CX tools will also empower frontline employees and their teams to provide customers with the service they expect.

“Obviously, there’s still work to be done to build out customer experience strategist officers or officers within different agencies, and that continues to be a priority. [But] it’s not like they’re getting tons of people coming in. It might be just one or two if they’re lucky. So, you want to be mindful of the resources that you have ... making sure that they have actionable research that they’re able to put in place, making sure the technology put in place is utilized beyond what you would think.”

CX experts in government serve multiple roles in their agencies — technology, project management, and design experts. But Rogers said meaningful CX delivery requires a team approach.

“To empower this workforce to create change, you can’t have them bogged down with things that are outside their expertise. Naturally, human-centered design is a big area of focus for CX specialists. But having them become a human-centered design specialist and a change management agent, at the same time that they’re becoming a security specialist, probably doesn’t benefit them or the strategy that they’re trying to put in place. So, identifying the service requirements they can put in place helps with that, and helps them weed through all of the available CX toolkit technologies available to empower them and sustain focus on reducing a burden for their customers.” 🚀

*Find more advice **Okta's LaRel Rogers** shared during a **Federal News Network** interview on **how agencies can collaborate to develop secure, seamless services***



okta

# Modernize Identity for better, simpler online experiences

Learn more

# USA.gov: The trusted digital front door to federal services

BY JORY HECKMAN

Federal websites receive about [2 billion visits every month](#), which represent about 80 billion hours of interactions with the public. More than half of those visits happen on mobile devices.

To deal with that massive volume of traffic, the General Services Administration offers USA.gov as a platform that helps individuals find the government benefits and services they're looking for quickly.

Because USA.gov serves as an important first step in most customer journeys, the federal government considers the platform and GSA's Public Experience Portfolio a high-impact service provider.

Jessica Milcetic, director of customer experience for USA.gov, said the HISP designation "helps shine some extra light on some of the great customer experience work that we've been doing historically at USA.gov."

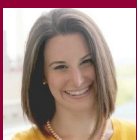
"As part of the HISP program, there's an extra focus and emphasis on understanding what your users need, and what they want, and building products with those needs in mind and talking to your customer regularly," Milcetic said.

## CX 'baked into everything that we do'

GSA launched USA.gov nearly 24 years ago, and continuously updates the site with new features to meet the evolving needs of the American public.

"Customer experience is really baked into everything that we do. Any new feature or functionality that we're rolling out on the site is because we've seen a need in our data, or we've heard something from some of our user testing, that something could be improved or made better. And so we work really hard to make sure we have that iterative development process where we're listening to our users, collecting

As part of the HISP program, there's an extra focus and emphasis on understanding what your users need, and what they want, and building products with those needs in mind and talking to your customer regularly.



**Jessica Milcetic**, Director of Customer Experience, USA.gov

that data, figuring out how can we use that to make something better — whether it's on our website, or through some of our other services. I think just being part of the HISP program really helps highlight how important that is across the government," Milcetic said.

The Biden administration, in a December 2021 executive order, directed GSA to [make USA.gov a "digital front door"](#) for individuals seeking federal services.

USA.gov is not only a one-stop-shop for federal services online, but a trusted source of information. Milcetic said that's especially valuable, since fraudsters often create lookalike websites, with the goal of capturing personally identifiable information.

"We do think of ourselves as that front door, that place you can start, if you don't know where to start. I often think of us often as a wayfinding tool," she said. "Somebody knows what they want to do or what they need to get done. They can put it into a search engine, and sometimes, they'll see all sorts of things. As we all know, there are lots of bad actors on the internet. There's confusion, there's misinformation, there's scammers — and having a trustworthy, authoritative place where you can say, 'Oh, I see that .gov URL. I know what I'm going to get here is real information. It's going to get me to the place that I need to go to do what I need to,' is such a big part of what we do at USA.gov."

## Testing and delivering tools to let users find help quickly

USA.gov went through a major redesign last year. Among the changes, GSA incorporated more components from its U.S. Web Design System, with the goal of giving all .gov websites a consistent look and feel.

"If somebody lands on the USA.gov website, and they see that we format things in a similar way as other government websites, it just helps build that trust," Milcetic said.

GSA is also piloting a tool on USA.gov that helps users to look up their elected representatives and their contact information.

"We had links to those places, that people could go find who their representative was. But one of the things we wanted to experiment with is, what if we had a way that people could enter their address, and then based on what they enter, they get the list of their federal, state, local officials, and any contact information that those folks have available to them," Milcetic said.

USA.gov is also piloting a new benefits finder tool that helps direct users to the benefits they're looking for by answering a few simple questions.

"The goal here is really to save people time and effort and to not overwhelm them — especially people who might be going through a stressful time and trying to figure out, 'Well gosh, how do I just make ends meet right now?' We've had that tool available in English and Spanish. We are learning a little bit about different pieces of functionality with that tool, and we want it to interact within our whole ecosystem of benefits information. It's been a really exciting time to kind of see how users are interacting now that it's kind of live on the site as opposed to maybe what we saw in some initial user testing or prototype," Milcetic said.

GSA, she added, will continue to collect feedback from people and will continue working on the benefits finder tool for the rest of fiscal 2024.


USA.gov is part of the federal government's recent push to deliver digital-first customer experiences, but GSA's Public Experience

Portfolio also operates a call center for individuals who either don't have reliable internet access or prefer to speak to a call center representative.

"Our emphasis has always been digital first. Let people get the answer and get on their way," Milcetich said. "A big part of our work at USA.gov is to make that as smooth as possible for people."

GSA also runs a Spanish-language version of the site, but USA.gov en Español is more than a translation of the English USA.gov.

"We've done a lot of research with the Spanish-speaking community. And our goal has always been to curate and create a product in Spanish that meets those needs. And that uniquely meets those needs, that isn't just a one-to-one translation," Milcetich said. "We want to get to the point that it's not just a straight translation. You're not popping it into a tool or having somebody sit and type word-for-word, a direct, perhaps literal translation. We have this concept that we 'trans-create' the message, so that the essence of the message is similar, if you were to look at what was available in English versus what was available in Spanish. But maybe there's additional context that's necessary. Or maybe there is a little bit more information or some more description about where we might be linking somebody to, to help build that trust for somebody who English might not be their first language."



Our emphasis has always been digital first. Let people get the answer and get on their way.

— GSA's Jessica Milcetich

To make the platform more accessible to users with disabilities, GSA recently wrapped up a user research study in partnership with a nationally known vision rehabilitation center.

Through this partnership, GSA conducted a study where it worked with people who were either blind or had some sort of visual impairment and use assistive technologies to access a variety of things on the internet.

"We had very fruitful interviews and conversations to understand how government services online work for them with the variety of assistive technology that they use. We learned about their preferred methods of communication, how they wayfind on the internet," Milcetich said. "We learned about some specific highlights they found on the USA.gov site, as well as some pain points. And it was so valuable to be able to watch and learn how somebody that uses assistive technology navigates a website, compared to somebody who is reading the text on the screen." 🗣️

**Watch the full discussion with GSA's Jessica Milcetich on creating a single point of digital entry to federal services**

# Transforming customer experience in government through empowered employees

BY JORY HECKMAN

Federal agencies are rethinking how they deliver services to the public.

The Office of Management and Budget has designated 38 agencies and program offices as high-impact service providers (HISPs).

Matt Mandrgoc, head of U.S. public sector at [Zoom](#), said optimizing the employee experience is key to improving their level of customer experience.

“When the employees are happy, they’re productive, they’re able to do their job. That can flow right over into the customer experience. We’ve seen with some of the HISPs, the biggest thing they have is that if those employees are working and they’re doing well, that experience flows right over into the customer experience,” Mandrgoc said.

Agencies setting a higher standard for customer experience focus are optimizing the time they spend with their customers — and making sure employees are addressing customer needs effectively.

“You want to have the opportunity to get the most out of the time that you’re spending

You want to have the opportunity to get the most out of the time that you’re spending with someone. You have someone’s attention for a short period of time.



**Matt Mandrgoc**, Head of U.S. Public Sector, Zoom

with someone,” Mandrgoc said. “You have someone’s attention for a short period of time — how did you get that information? How did you disseminate the information, and did the customer receive it in the easiest and most simplistic way that they can?”

Improving the employee experience often comes down to giving the workforce the tools they need to do their jobs most effectively.

“When you look at employee experience, it’s about productivity, it’s about having the right tools in place that allow them to get their job done,” Mandrgoc said.

## Refreshing CX tools

Agencies are refreshing the tools and technology behind their customer experience, but Mandrgoc said they should also think about the resources employees need to deliver those public-facing services.

“An agency will say, ‘We need to use this solution for our customers because it provides the best experience. But you have to use this other solution internally for internal use only.’ And it sends a message to employees





that for the customer experience, we’re going to use these technologies or these solutions to give the greatest optimized customer experience, but not allowing that to happen on the employee side.

Both federal employees and customers have higher expectations for the types of technologies agencies are using and are less likely to engage with agencies if they aren’t making IT modernization part of their CX portfolios.

“The biggest challenge that agencies are running into right now are legacy systems and forced technologies that don’t allow that growth to happen and be able to get it to the next level. And this is where it’s incumbent on



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industry to really share those best practices,” Mandrgoc said.

Federal employees, he added, are more likely to feel engaged in their work if they have the tools to effectively do their jobs and provide services to the public.

“If you don’t have the tools out there from the employee side, it doesn’t allow them to do the job and be productive. So they’re going to be more likely to look outside,” Mandrgoc said.

## Gathering feedback through focus groups

To improve both the customer experience and the employee experience, Mandrgoc said agencies should think beyond survey data, and

gather feedback directly from individuals in focus groups.

“While people are serving and doing things, you have to poll a segment of people who are doing the job out there, and the customers and their experience and asking them specifically, what did you like? What did you not like?” Mandrgoc said. “We all look at metrics as a way to do things. But metrics can also be changed. You can set a high bar, or you can set a low bar. It’s understanding what the feedback is from those experiences. What are they? What are they measuring, how are they measuring it.”

Mandrgoc said meaningful improvements in the customer and employee experience require agency leaders to keep making sustained investments in what’s working.

“Impactful changes sometimes can take time. You have to realize that you sometimes can be fighting against internal challenges or battles on what culturally is going on in that space. You could also be fighting around legacy or forced technology that is being pushed on groups to do things in a certain way,” he said.

## Creating better experiences in a hybrid world

Agencies scrambled to develop a largely remote work culture at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic.

But agencies are still figuring out how to effectively hold virtual meetings — with some employees in the office, working at home, or hundreds of miles away in another office.

While people are serving and doing things, you have to poll a segment of people who are doing the job out there, and the customers and their experience and asking them specifically, what did you like? What did you not like?

— Zoom’s Matt Mandrgoc

“Too many times you go into meetings, in a virtual or hybrid environment, and people don’t have cameras on. So you can’t see their reactions, you can’t get the human connection with those individuals who know what’s going on.”

Hybrid meetings between employees in the office and others working from home can also create challenges.

Mandrgoc said agencies can do more to provide employees with an engaging experience, regardless of how they join meetings.

“You’re in a conference room, and it looks like you’re way far away at the end of the table. How do you arrange these rooms a little differently, to create a more immersive experience?” he said.

Mandrgoc said an agency client, using Zoom solutions, recently hosted a virtual job fair that put recruiters directly in touch with top candidates.

“Instead of just taking somebody’s name and a number and calling them back, they will take them directly from the virtual hybrid environment that they were in, and into a breakout room, to provide more details about this recruitment,” he said.

By taking on this engaging approach to hiring and outreach, the agency was able to identify more than 30 strong candidates.

Mandrgoc added that a HISP agency is also using Zoom solutions to reach out to customers who live in regions without high-speed internet.

“They were showing farmers all of the different things they’re doing for funding that they need to go forward in their business. A lot of them work and live in low-bandwidth environments, you go across there, it allows them to engage in that space,” he said. 🗣️

***Find more advice Zoom’s Matt Mandrgoc shared during a Federal News Network interview on 5 things that agencies can do to improve both customer and employee experience***

# TSA sees boost in passenger satisfaction scores as ‘huge testament’ to frontline workforce

BY JORY HECKMAN

The Transportation Security Administration is focused on improving its customer experience, at a time when it's seeing a record volume of interactions with the public.

TSA screens over 2 million passengers every single day at airports across the country. Agency officials recognize people can grow frustrated with the airport security process but are seeing higher satisfaction scores.

Niki French, TSA's customer service branch manager, said the agency faces a balancing act between customer experience and security.

"A lot of times TSA can, unfortunately, be seen as standing between you and your vacation. It's something that you have to go through. It's a security process, so it's not necessarily a good time," French said.

The Homeland Security Department [interacts with more Americans](#) every day than any other federal agency.

"Not all high-impact services are the same ... particularly those in the realm of security; not everybody's thrilled with that experience," said Rachel Schwind, customer service branch support at TSA and director at ASI Government. "I think the Department of Homeland Security, in general, has that challenge, but it is something that TSA is really passionate about."

TSA, as a high-impact service provider, is taking steps to improve the security screening process, as part of a DHS-wide effort to reduce administrative burden.

While the work of HISPs varies considerably across the federal government, Schwind said they often follow a similar approach to CX improvements.

"What's nice about being designated as a HISP is that it creates that structure that allows

It's really important to keep in mind that you have to think of it from the passenger's perspective. Maybe they don't travel a lot, they don't spend a lot of time on TSA.gov, they don't read our standard operating procedures.



**Niki French**, Customer Service Branch Manager, TSA

them to do the work that they were already passionate about doing in the first place," she said. "But there's an avenue to communicate that to the public, in a way that doesn't create a burden for them. And there's a way to organize how the agency collects that information and shares that across."

## Passenger satisfaction scores on the rise

TSA conducted a passenger stakeholder survey in 2023, following up on a survey conducted in 2019, to track how individuals traveling through airports rated the experience of going through security.

The survey, conducted at 16 airports across the country, sought passenger feedback on confidence and trust in the security screen, their satisfaction with the process and their rating of the professionalism of transportation security officers.

The survey found that 94% of people are confident in TSA officers to keep air travel safe, and 93% are satisfied with their security screening experience.

"That's amazing. That's why every person at TSA comes to work. Every day, we're here to keep air travel safe. And so, to have that feedback from the public, to hear that 94% of them were confident in our ability to meet our mission is really, really exciting," French said.

About 95% of survey respondents said the transportation security officers they interacted with were professional, and treated passengers with respect.

French said that the results are "just a huge testament to the frontline workforce."

"They don't get enough credit for what they do day in and day out. It's a very, very difficult job. People don't come through the checkpoint and thank you every day — that is not a best practice, I wish it was — but the survey really just captured the great work that they're doing out there," she said.

Schwind said TSA leadership has been using the results of the survey as a "workplace morale tool."

TSA Administrator David Pekoske, she said, has mentioned it at several town halls with employees, and Deputy Administrator Holly Canevari recently recorded a video message to employees breaking down the survey's findings.

## CX training for TSA workforce

In 2019, TSA's customer feedback survey found travelers didn't understand what was going on when their bag was selected for secondary screening. Between the 2019 and 2023 surveys, TSA saw an 18% increase in respondents who positively rated the explanation of secondary screening.

TSA in 2022 released its "CX Demystified" training for transportation security officers, on how to communicate to passengers selected for secondary screening.

"It's a little tricky in security, knowing what you can share with the public [and] what's security sensitive information," Schwind said. "What does customer experience look like, as a transportation security officer whose prime responsibility is to ensure that you're safe?"

Since its introduction, 16,000 employees have taken the CX Demystified training. It's now a part of the new hire orientation.

What does customer experience look like, as a transportation security officer whose prime responsibility is to ensure that you're safe?



**Rachel Schwind**, Customer Service Branch Support, TSA, and Director, ASI Government

“There’s a lot of focus in that training on communication — what to say, and when. And then, also just understanding that a lot of what frustrates passengers also frustrates TSOs — unprepared travelers, flights changing at the last minute. That’s not great for the agency, either,” Schwind said.

French said the new training helps TSOs understand that the “root of almost every single complaint is a lack of communication, or miscommunication.”

“One of the main themes of that training is, it’s really important to keep in mind that you have to think of it from the passenger’s perspective,” French said. “Maybe they don’t travel a lot, they don’t spend a lot of time on TSA.gov, they don’t read our standard operating procedures. That’s not their job, and so you can’t go wrong by simply communicating.”

Schwind said passengers who took the survey also gained an appreciation for what

the agency has control over at airports, and what it doesn’t.

“You’ve got this issue where there’s so many touch points in the airport that impact your experience, and there’s a teeny tiny part of it the TSA has influence and control over — less than what people think, even like how the checkpoint is designed, is not something that TSA gets to decide,” Schwind said. “It was an educational tool for passengers about what TSA had control over.”

## A better TSA experience online

TSA is also taking steps to improve the customer experience before passengers ever set foot in the airport.

The agency recently released a virtual assistant on TSA.gov, with the goal of answering frequently asked questions about airport security, and what passengers can or can’t bring through security.

French said that according to the 2023 survey, 75% of people didn’t use any TSA resources in preparing for travel.

“We’re thinking it should cut down on the number of calls and emails and direct messages, things like that, because people should be able to just get their answer right there,” she said.

TSA has also recently launched a [TSA Cares page](#) on its website, which contains travel information for passengers with disabilities.

“Previously, it was kind of spread out throughout the website. And now we’ve consolidated,” French said. 🔄

**Watch the full discussion with TSA’s Niki French and Rachel Schwind on efforts to continuously improve customer service**

# Make-or-break moments to build trust in government CX

BY JORY HECKMAN

Hundreds of agencies provide services to the public, but [only about 10% count](#) as high-impact service providers that deliver the most essential benefits across the country.

The White House is calling on HISPs to [set a higher standard for customer experience](#) across the federal government.

Better CX in government depends on many factors: shorter wait times, faster responses and more ways to seek help (in person, over the phone, online).

Kurt Sauer, group vice president and chief information security officer at [DocuSign](#), said a successful CX strategy also needs to prioritize building trust with customers.

“There’s this whole breakdown, from the actual service being provided, all the way down to every component, down to the end users: All of these comprise trust. We have to think about this from a real bottoms-up point of view,” Sauer said.

A comprehensive cybersecurity strategy is a foundational part of building trust with customers.

“At DocuSign, it is important that we understand our environment. We have to have detections and controls in place that make sure that, at the top line, we are a trusted name. But it is also making sure that we’re making rational choices for how we deliver that service,” Sauer said. “It’s way more than just, do you pass FedRAMP? Or did you achieve Cybersecurity Maturity Model

Certification? It’s actually all the way down to making sure you have good operational control and discipline.”

Customers seeking government services generally trust that the agencies in charge will do a good job. That’s according to the Biden administration’s [latest survey](#) of more than a quarter-million individuals.

The survey measured 33 services, and a significant majority of respondents said they trusted the relevant agency responsible for 23 out of the 33 services.

It’s just like any social circle. Do you trust the people you’re with? Part of the answer to that question is, what’s their past record of behavior? And is it actually showing that they can be trusted partners in the future?



**Kurt Sauer**, Group Vice President and Chief Information Security Officer, DocuSign

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Those services include applying for a replacement Social Security card, accessing education benefits from the Veterans Affairs Department and finding government information quickly online.

“The U.S. government’s done a really good job trying to prioritize improvement and measuring with their trust in government service providers dashboard. That really allows those high-impact service providers in the government to be able to develop a trust relationship with their constituents on a longer-term basis,” Sauer said.

“It’s really about a history. It’s just like any social circle,” he added. “Do you trust the people you’re with? Part of the answer to that question is, what’s their past record of behavior? And is it actually showing that they can be trusted partners in the future?”

## Standardized logins for seamless online services

Agencies rely on customer data to provide seamless and personalized services. But customers are also wary of turning over personalized data, unless agencies are transparent in communicating how their data will be used — and how it won’t.

“They’re also dealing with a very skeptical public, in many cases,” Sauer said. “Why should I provide the government my data over a web portal? It breaks down into this chain of trust, in that agencies themselves have to be trusted. They’re also dealing with things like, can the internet itself be trusted?”

To ensure secure and seamless access to services, agencies are rolling out standardized online accounts.

"If you have a really poorly designed platform, it's not going to provide you with the degree of trust that you need. It has to be monitored, and if you have that together, I think you'll set your agency up for success," Sauer said.

VA, for example, is weaning veterans off a traditional username and password to access their health and benefits records online.

The department will transition all veterans to the government's own identity verification service, Login.gov, or a commercial provider, ID.me, over the next year.

VA says the transition will improve security and will impact about 3 million veterans and their beneficiaries.


These standardized platforms also ensure government websites have a consistent look and feel and reduce the risk of customers falling for spoofed websites created by fraudsters.

"The important point here is making sure that people who are visiting a portal can easily identify that they are visiting a legitimate government site and that the information is not being diverted for some other purpose, that it's being stored or processed in the way it was intended," Sauer said.

## Adapting to emerging technologies

Building and keeping customer trust also depends on how agencies stay on top of emerging technologies.

Sauer said artificial intelligence tools, for example, will increasingly become part of CX delivery over the next five years.



It's a chain of trust, and service providers have to be thinking about that all the time.

— DocuSign's Kurt Sauer

"It is important to have people who understand the changing landscape of the technology and the customers' needs and security standards," he said.

"There are thousands of technologies that seem very obscure and irrelevant, but all play a part altogether. It's this holistic, full field-of-play exercise to be able to make sure that all the customers get a secure experience from their browser and desktop all the way back to whatever back-office systems are being used and whatever systems those systems use. It's a chain of trust, and service providers have to be thinking about that all the time."

Regardless of what new technologies and processes agencies put in place, Sauer said each interaction with a customer is a make-or-break moment to gain — or lose — trust.

"An important point here is that there isn't a cookie cutter solution to any of this trust business. If you build trust, you can lose that trust. Service providers need to be open to this multidisciplinary approach to earning and keeping their customers' trust. It's not just a security problem." 🚀

**Find advice on creating digital-first CX shared by Erica Fensom, vice president of corporate affairs at DocuSign, during a Federal News Network interview**



# ‘The people’s agency’: USDA manages more high-impact services than any other agency

BY JORY HECKMAN

The Agriculture Department traces the start of its customer service journey back to its launch in 1862.

President Abraham Lincoln at the time dubbed USDA “the people’s department” since nearly half of all Americans at the time lived on farms.

USDA’s mission still revolves around delivering services to the public — although its customer base extends well beyond just farmers. The sprawling department also provides benefits to children and families, as well as the general public.

“We are called the people’s agency, and I think rightly so,” said USDA Chief Customer Experience Officer Simchah Suveyke-Bogin. “It has numerous amounts of services, but all really participating in that larger ecosystem of our agriculture, and a lot of what we’re having to use day-to-day as a member of the public.”

USDA counts six of its component agencies as high-impact service providers — the most of any department across the federal government.

Those HISP agencies are the Farm Service Agency, the National Resource Conservation Agency, the Rural Development Agency, Recreation.gov, the Forest Service and the Food and Nutrition Service.

When President Joe Biden signed an executive order in December 2021 calling on the entire federal government to step up its customer service to the public, USDA stood out as an agency already achieving these goals.

“We’re so proud to have a department-level focus on customer experience. This allows us to really think across the board, not just one agency at a time, but be able to really collaborate across agencies on what is it that we want to do. Because we have so many different parts of USDA ... it is very difficult sometimes to wrap your arms around all the different customers and all the different needs and improving all the services at once. There’s not one entity that can really do it all,” Suveyke-Bogin said.

## Understanding the ‘voice of the customer’

USDA components are also leading their own CX initiatives. Rural Development has its own office dedicated to customer experience, and the Farm Service Agency is spearheading its own initiatives around incorporating customer feedback into service delivery improvements.

“By introducing practices like this, we’re seeing that some of the agencies at USDA have their

own focus areas now on customer experience,” Suveyke-Bogin said.

USDA continues to find new ways to deliver a higher level of service to its customers. Earlier this year, the department launched a departmentwide policy on its [Voice of the Customer](#) program.

“This particular policy really reflected how important it is to be engaging and listening and measuring what our customers are saying, whether it’s about our brand hospitality, whether it’s about a particular service, just so we can introduce a little more mechanism of bringing that voice back into the department and then allowing us to use it as additional data to make decisions,” Suveyke-Bogin said.

USDA incorporates customer feedback, as well as feedback from its employees, to identify pain points and bottlenecks in the services it provides.

“A lot of [employees] are really trying to deliver great service, and they deliver great customer service to our customers. But there are times where it gets very difficult and understanding it, observing where those hurdles are can really help us — whether it’s from a policy perspective, whether it’s operationally we need to make some changes, where to prioritize some of those adjustments. So, the employees are really a key to understanding all those opportunities.”

The Office of Management and Budget, in its recent guidance on [delivering a “digital-first public experience,”](#) said a majority of the public accesses government services online and that a growing segment of that traffic comes from mobile devices.

To deliver on these goals, USDA recently [launched its own digital service](#) to provide a higher level of service to the public online.

“It’s really important that our customers felt that their government is working for them and really trying to make things easier. I think the normal sentiment around using government services is that it’s hard, it’s difficult, it’s time-consuming. And we really want to change that and build trust in. The memo elevates that quite a lot, not just with the HISPs and the high-impact service elements of those projects, but really emphasizing that we do it for all of the digital service delivery aspects of government.”

We’re so proud to have a department-level focus on customer experience. This allows us to really think across the board, not just one agency at a time, but be able to really collaborate across agencies on what is it that we want to do.



**Simchah Suveyke-Bogin,**  
Chief Customer Experience  
Officer, USDA

## Building trust through customer experience

USDA is also taking a targeted approach to ensure its CX improvements are equitable and reach historically underserved populations. To meet these goals, the department often partners with academic institutions and community groups that have a more granular understanding of a local population's needs.

"A lot of different entities already have that trust level, and already have that access to some of the communities that maybe are harder for us to reach. And by partnering them, it's not only getting the word out, but it's also us understanding some of that culture, some of the environment that we need to be considering when we deliver some of these services, And for us, that's really terrific input to figure out, do we need to redesign this next time we put a service out similarly in the next year?" Suveyke-Bogin said.

USDA sees customer service delivery as a unique opportunity to build public trust in government institutions and that individuals who receive excellent customer service from the department will become repeat customers.

"We're very keen on making sure that we are elevating the trust level with the public that are using our services, at the end of the day. In order to do that, we have to understand what their experience is today and baseline

We're very keen on making sure that we are elevating the trust level with the public that are using our services, at the end of the day. In order to do that, we have to understand what their experience is today and baseline that.

— USDA's *Simchah Suveyke-Bogin*

that. A big part of our Voices program is really to baseline that, especially for the programs who have never really measured that in a very methodical way, and introducing this type of metrics collection," Suveyke-Bogin said.

"We always talk to different services at USDA, and we tell them that this is just one element of understanding the performance of your service. This is not the end-all-be-all, but it's something to layer in with some of the operational key performance indicators that they're already measuring to see if they're meeting their performance levels." 🔄

**Watch the full discussion with USDA's *Simchah Suveyke-Bogin* on building trust by improving digital services**

# 'Digital first' in CX doesn't mean digital only — why agencies need an omnichannel strategy

BY JORY HECKMAN

Federal agencies got a wake-up call at the height of the COVID-19 pandemic when it drove up demand for online services.

That spike in traffic underscored the need for agencies to step up the quality of their digital offerings. The Office of Management and Budget, in September 2023, issued new guidance calling for a digital-first customer experience across government.

But a digital-first delivery model doesn't mean digital-only.

Brian Chidester, head of industry strategy for public sector at [Adobe](#), said agencies are now "right-sizing around experiences" and focused on delivering an omnichannel experience.

"Everything did go digital-first or digital-only for a period of time, and now they're shifting back, because the government has a responsibility. It's not just something they want to do, but they have a responsibility to serve all, not just some, and all means complete, holistic omnichannel," Chidester said.

Satisfaction goes down if my information doesn't always go with me. If I engage with the IRS, because I have to do something, and then I go to the State Department to execute on something, most of the time, my information isn't carried over, because those agencies aren't integrated.



**Brian Chidester**, Head of Industry Strategy for Public Sector, Adobe

“Seamless is really making it as easy as possible, however I want to engage. That’s ultimately where the government’s North Star is,” he added.

Nancy Newell, head of strategic alliances and marketing experiences for public sector at Adobe, said an omnichannel customer experience strategy focused on meeting customers where they are — and allowing them to contact agencies the way they prefer — in person, over the phone, online and beyond is critical to building trust.

“We’ve all had discussions around digital transformation. But now it’s not just digital — people don’t want just digital-only,” Newell said. “We need to meet people where they are. Government agencies need to understand

how people want to connect and engage with government services. Whether it’s at a kiosk, physical office or online, people expect to have the same experience as in the commercial sector. And so the question is, how does government achieve this?”

Customers expect agencies to provide the same omnichannel experience they’re used to with private-sector companies. But providing that level of CX introduces more complexity.

“As you get more complex around experiences, the level of citizen satisfaction generally goes down,” Chidester said. “Part of that is because interagency collaboration suffers in a lot of those things. What I’m excited about is Adobe’s ability to build that connective tissue around those experiences. You have IRL, you have

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digital, you have holistic omnichannel, which is what government not just wants to deliver, they must deliver.”

## Meeting customers where they are

Providing an omnichannel experience gives customers an opportunity to seek help in the method that best suits their needs and reduces the hurdles of successfully obtaining government services.

“We all have different preferences, and so you need to meet people where they are,” Newell said. “For instance, my mom absolutely wants to walk in somewhere and talk to somebody in person. She will not fill online forms or respond to emails. Whereas I want it all on my phone, at my fingertips. And then you’ve got my kid, a digital native, where if it’s not online or through an app that is easily accessible and coming at him quickly, he isn’t even looking at it. You’ve got all these different personas with unique needs and varying digital literacy — so that’s why an omnichannel experience is important. They want it delivered to them in a way that they’re used to receiving information.”

Meeting people where they are is difficult for government agencies she added.

“Because without the right data behind all this, it’s harder to personalize the experience effectively and efficiently and seamlessly. Government agencies need to have access to the right behavioral data for this level of personalization to work.”

You’ve got all these different personas with unique needs and varying digital literacy — so that’s why an omnichannel experience is important. They want it delivered to them in a way that they’re used to receiving information.



**Nancy Newell**, Head of Strategic Alliances and Marketing Experiences for Public Sector, Adobe

Chidester said agencies having a seamless, 360-degree of customer interactions depends on good, quality data and reducing the burden of customers signing up for services. Data management also reduces the burden of customers repeatedly filling out the forms and providing the same information to agencies over and over again.

“Satisfaction goes down if my information doesn’t always go with me. If I engage with the IRS, because I have to do something, and then I go to the State Department to execute on something, most of the time, my information isn’t carried over, because those agencies aren’t integrated. They’re not connecting in a way that’s meaningful,” he said.

“Optimizing each of those across that spectrum is what we’re looking to help government with. You need to be able to connect the dots, regardless of whether I give you my information on a clipboard, on a piece of paper. I expect all of that to go into some type of digital repository and stay with me, so that the next interaction I have, even if it is a digital form, I don’t want to have to fill it out because I’ve already done it,” he added.

## Agencies delivering an omnichannel experience

Delivering an omnichannel experience isn’t easy, but agencies — particularly high-impact service providers — are stepping up and delivering.

The Education Department’s Federal Student Aid, for example, is working with the IRS on student loan repayment.

“They went from two different organizations where you’re paying on two different sites, and now they’re connected into one,” Newell said. “So when those loans are being repaid, it’s a joint effort.

Newell said the Federal Emergency Management Agency is working with state and local governments to provide a seamless response to helping households recover from disasters.

“I live in a hurricane zone and have personally been impacted by natural disasters. I now have a FEMA team, and I have a local team that interfaces with my insurance company. Because of this, I feel like the service I am receiving is personalized and that makes me appreciate and trust the government experience.

Regardless of the mission, Newell said agencies delivering a better customer experience are also providing a better employee experience — giving their frontline employees the tools and technology they need to meet the needs of their customers.

“When you empower somebody with the tools they need, they’re going to be more satisfied in what they’re able to deliver for that government agency,” she said. “They’re empowered to deliver it from their fingertips with the right digital tools. They’re going to want to work for the government and be a part of that team because they feel good about what they’re doing for the citizens of this country. That’s so important.” 🚀

*Find more advice **Adobe’s Nancy Newell** shared during a **Federal News Network** interview on **developing seamless experience based on customer journey***

# VA sees higher veteran trust scores as ‘north star’ for customer service improvements

BY JORY HECKMAN

As the Biden administration raises the bar for customer experience across government, it's tapping the Department of Veteran Affairs to help oversee those improvements.

VA sees governmentwide customer service improvements, both as a lead agency for this priority area under the President's Management Agenda and as one of several dozen agencies designated high-impact service providers.

VA's health care and benefits operations count as two of 38 HISPs across the federal government.

Barbara C. Morton, VA's deputy chief experience officer, said the department's designation as a HISP by the Office of Management and Budget "has been a really important driver for us."

"The direction is coming from the highest levels of the executive branch," Morton said.

"It's really been just an incredible moment for us to elevate what a high-impact service is, really serving as many folks as possible and putting us front and center collectively who are HISPs to say, 'We're going to put ourselves on the hook for great customer experience' — whether it's veteran experience or other experience and services that other agencies are providing," she added.

## A governmentwide mission

The Biden administration also prioritized customer experience improvements in a December 2021 executive order and OMB Circular A-11 Section 280.

"We have all these drivers around us that are pointing us, collectively, in the direction of focusing on customer experience and really looking at it as a co-equal measure of

Our goal is to make the bureaucracy really invisible to those that we serve. They shouldn't have to understand and navigate all these different agencies and who owns what.



**Barbara C. Morton**, Deputy Chief Experience Officer, VA



agency performance, along with traditional operational measures like wait time and number of claims processed [and] the number of appointments scheduled.”

VA is also leading a team of agencies to help military service members transition into civilian life.

That activity is one of five cross-agency “life experiences” that the Biden administration highlighted in its [December 2021 CX executive order](#).

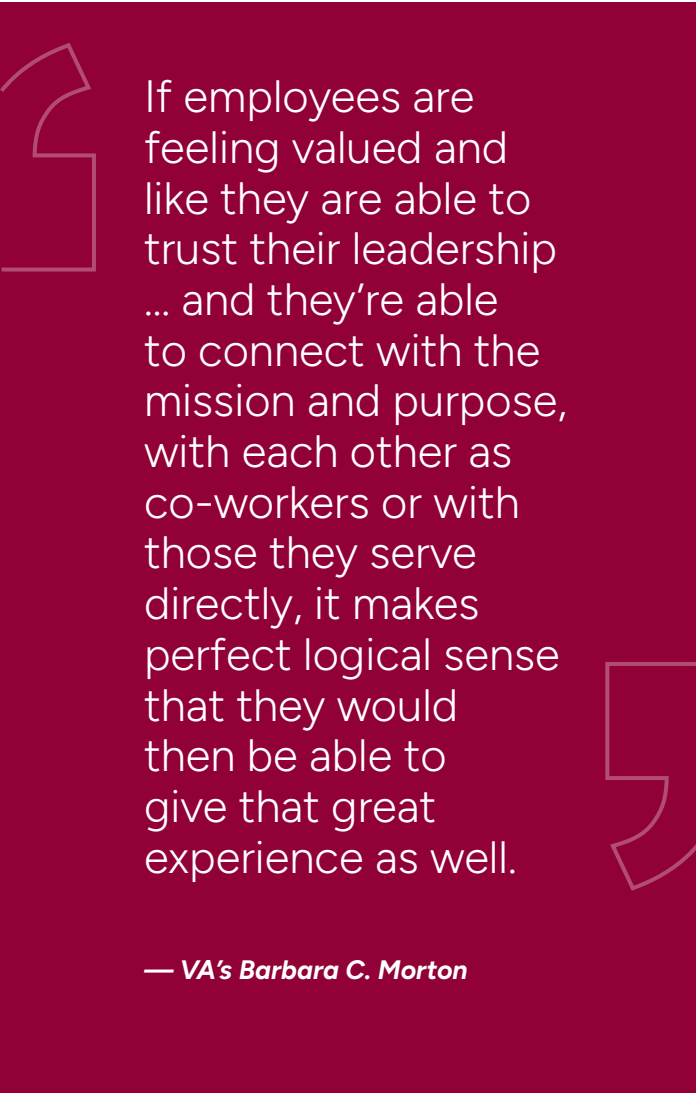
Government services that fall under each of the life experiences fall under the domain of multiple agencies and require work from each agency to make improvements.

VA is prototyping a digital tool to help veterans and transitioning service members sort through VA and other federal government resources online.

“They can enter their separation date, maybe the type of information they’re interested in, and this tool will cull out all the different aspects, all the noise, to really focus in on that customized, personalized solution.”

Morton said VA plans to develop the prototype into a minimum viable product before the end of 2024.

“Our goal is to make the bureaucracy really invisible to those that we serve. They shouldn’t have to understand and navigate all these different agencies and who owns what. They should really be able to have the resources they need at their fingertips to search and sort in a very personalized manner,” Morton said.



If employees are feeling valued and like they are able to trust their leadership ... and they’re able to connect with the mission and purpose, with each other as co-workers or with those they serve directly, it makes perfect logical sense that they would then be able to give that great experience as well.

— VA’s *Barbara C. Morton*

VA’s Veterans Experience Office tracks veteran trust scores as one of its most important CX metrics. “Trust is our north star. We want to build lifelong, trusted relationships with those we serve,” she said.

In VA’s [latest scorecard](#), 79.3% of veterans using VA services said they trust the department. That’s a major improvement from the 55% trust score VA saw when it first started measuring trust in 2016.

“The fact that we’re at 79%, now is really a great testament to our frontline employees, valuing the veteran experience and wanting to deliver those great experiences at every turn,” Morton said.

Building trust in the department, she added, comes down to three things: ease, effectiveness and emotion.

VA, Morton said, is focused on making its services easy for veterans, their families, caregivers and survivors to find.

The department is also making sure that its services are responsive to veteran needs and that VA employees treat veterans in a way that honors their service.

## A better overall experience, publicly and internally

VA is also making sure it’s meeting the needs of its employees.

Recent department research from shows a positive relationship between [employee engagement at VA health care facilities and patient experience](#).

VA data shows that a 10% increase in its Employee Engagement Index scores resulted in a 4% average increase in overall hospital ratings.

That same increase in employee satisfaction led to a 3% average increase in patient trust score.

“If employees are feeling valued and like they are able to trust their leadership ... and they’re able

to connect with the mission and purpose, with each other as co-workers or with those they serve directly, it makes perfect logical sense that they would then be able to give that great experience as well,” Morton said.

VA is also taking steps to meet veterans where they are and delivering services through more convenient platforms.

[VA’s health and benefits mobile app](#) has more than 2 million downloads, and more than 900,000 veterans are using the app at least once a month.

Among its features, the app lets veterans message their doctors, check on the status of health care appointments and track the status of benefits claims.

## Extending more services to mobile

VA this year is looking to add new features to the mobile app. Those include access to more medical records, such as lab results, and making it easier for veterans to check into medical appointments using their smartphones.

“We use that human-centered design approach, where veterans are telling us specifically, ‘I’d really like to be able to download my decision letters on benefits and a mobile app. I want to be able to refill a prescription. I want to be able to kind of see different types of information.’ That’s how the app has been actually developed — co-designing with those that we serve,” Morton said. 🗣️

**Watch the full discussion with VA’s Barbara C. Morton on reaching veterans where they most want to engage**

# How to refine CX outreach through data-driven insights

BY JORY HECKMAN

Federal agencies send an enormous volume of information to their customers — but without the right data, it's not clear if that messaging translates into actual engagement.

Angy Peterson, vice president of experience services at [Granicus](#), said more agencies are turning to data analytics to deliver a seamless, digital-first customer experience.

"Digital communications is nothing if not a data-gathering tool — the clicks, the open rates, the segmentation, the understanding of which types of people are interested in which types of information," Peterson said. "You can bring all of that together to get a really clear picture of who's actually receiving your benefits and, even better, who maybe isn't, and then build a plan for how to find them too."

Granicus sends 22 billion email and text messages each year on behalf of its government customers. Those agencies also see 50 billion digital interactions across Granicus solutions each year.

Through effective data management, Peterson said agencies can make evidence-based decisions on customer outreach and engagement.

Closing the gap there between what you think your total population is and how many of them you can actually reach directly via communications channels is a key first metric to track.



**Angy Peterson**, Vice President,  
Experience Group and  
Strategic Accounts, Granicus

"There's opportunity in the broader government community to leverage the technology that's in place, the data that's there and the investments we're making. Having a consistent data architecture in place will help to create those customer insights and understanding, and then accelerate the personalization of how these services are delivered."

## Gathering feedback for seamless digital services

Agencies often gather customer feedback through surveys.

But customer experience teams can also collect valuable information by monitoring click-through rates on email campaigns and tracking how users interact with digital platforms.


“People are willing to write an answer in response to a question or filling out a survey, but then there’s their actual behavior, and what they actually do when they’re engaging on digital channels,” Peterson said.

“You really can go deeper in terms of link-tracking analysis, topic analysis, where people are spending time. Those kinds of things help inform what people might need or want more of from an agency,” she added.

## Refining digital experiences through data

To refine digital experiences, agencies often rely on journey maps to understand how customers interact with websites or forms — and where they run into problems.

“What are the questions people are asking in each of these different phases? What about when they first start an application process? Often, they’re wondering, ‘Am I eligible for this? What other documents do I need? How long is this going to take?’” Peterson said. “And by anticipating those questions and proactively communicating answers, agencies can build trust and guide people through processes. Ultimately, those questions can shape a multichannel communications campaign.”



Some of the largest federal agencies are focused on getting their own shop clean, while they’re also building a path to how they integrate it with other data if necessary.

— *Granicus’ Angy Peterson*

## ‘Closing the gap’ on trust and engagement

Agencies rely on different datasets to measure customer satisfaction, but Peterson said all CX teams see trust as a key metric.

“That’s the Holy Grail,” Peterson said. “But there are ways to build and show and demonstrate trust along the way.”

Steps to building trust include tracking how long it takes for a user to move through an application and tracking the completion rate for forms.

To further measure successful engagement, Peterson said agencies should track the number of individuals opting into their messaging about benefits versus the total population of people eligible to receive those benefits.

“Closing the gap there between what you think your total population is and how many of them

you can actually reach directly via communications channels is a key first metric to track," she said.

## Breaking down data silos

To make better use of the customer data agencies already have and identify the gaps in the data that could enable more insight, CX teams like to work within their agencies to break down data silos.

"Some of our customers have really done a tremendous job of doing a lot of that internal work to build collaboration and build internal governance around communications data. But that's rare, and most of them are still trying to figure that out," Peterson said.

"Some of that comes down to just even understanding where you have data. There's certainly a lot of understanding around data that might sit in systems of record, like beneficiary data," she added. "Starting to collect and understand what you currently have and then building a path forward from that is where we often start with our customers."

Once agencies understand where data resides, the next step is to ensure consistency across the datasets.



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“Even within a single agency, some of them might be capturing information around income, and they might have it categorized in each different office in a different way,” Peterson said. “One office might have it as categorized by low, medium and high income. Another office might have it categorized by actual dollar amounts.”

Having that consistent data architecture is critical to having the right customer experience analytics and opens the door for greater interagency data sharing and collaboration.

“Some of the largest federal agencies are focused on getting their own shop clean, while they’re also building a path to how they integrate it with other data if necessary,” she said.

## Data-driven CX decisions

Peterson said these data-driven insights give agency CX teams a better understanding of how best to communicate with existing customers and how to effectively engage with prospective customers.

“If the data is there to show you, ‘Look, this is what people are doing,’ it’s not just based on years of experience or gut instinct, but really what are the data showing that people are preferring and doing, that’s the compelling level of insight that drives change that’s needed internally, and which presents a new picture of how they might operate differently.”

Through investments in data analytics, artificial intelligence and machine learning tools, agencies are using increasingly sophisticated dashboards to track their CX performance.

“Building toward this big, single-pane-of-glass dashboard view of everything that’s happening, that’s a large portion of the investments we’ve made at Granicus,” Peterson said.

“There can be that complete view, a full picture where someone is moving through the process of accessing her small business claims after a natural disaster, for example, ... all of that comes down to, ‘Are these systems connected, and then are you able to monitor that and measure it?’ ” she added. 🚀

*Find advice on meeting customers where they are shared by Granicus’ Charlotte Lee, strategic lead for CX and innovation, during a Federal News Network interview*



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