McKinsey on Government:
The customer-experience puzzle

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Introduction

Governments face higher expectations than ever before when it comes to serving their citizens and broader customer base. In the private sector, customer-experience leaders put as much emphasis on how they deliver products and services as on what they deliver. In doing so, they win an increasing share of wallet, attention, and market. These companies steadily raise the bar with innovations, such as omnichannel customer experience, same-day shipping, intuitive self-service, and predictive customer support. The public sector has lagged behind this trend, ranking last in overall satisfaction out of 11 industries we studied in our recent cross-industry survey (see "Build a case, build a following: Laying the groundwork to transform customer experience in government," on page 2).

However, a growing movement is under way among government leaders who have begun to champion customer experience as a powerful tool for achieving mission outcomes, increasing employee engagement, improving government revenue collections, and building overall trust in government. From coast to coast, governors and mayors see improved customer experience in service delivery as a way to boost living standards and competitiveness. In Washington, recent administrations have encouraged agencies to focus on customer experience as a priority. Government leaders are driving numerous innovations, including new digital tools enabled by artificial intelligence and single "front doors" through which citizens can access multiple programs. This groundswell of energy around customer experience has set off an explosion of ideas adapted from both private- and public-sector leaders.

In some cases, real success has followed. But in many others, government's traditional handicaps— budget limitations, leadership turnover, outdated IT systems, and human-capital constraints—compound efforts to climb aboard the customer-experience bandwagon. True customer-experience transformation requires skill in areas that might not come naturally to government agencies, such as working across functional silos (and agencies) rather than within them, engaging in conversations with citizens, and mapping and measuring customer journeys with an eye to improving them. Too often, agencies and leaders have faltered in improving customer experience by failing to acknowledge the combination of science, expertise, innovation, resourcing, and grit required.

In this series of articles, we aim to provide leaders a proven approach for imagining, launching, and sustaining a customer experience–improvement program in government. "Build a case, build a following: Laying the groundwork to transform customer experience in government" answers common questions about starting a customer-experience transformation that begins with defining what a compelling case for change looks like and how to rally an organization behind it. In "Understanding the customer experience with government," the authors address common challenges that government agencies face in understanding what matters most to their customers as well as a practical framework for overcoming them. Finally, "Solving the customer-experience puzzle: A guidebook for government leaders" draws on government leaders' encounters with customer experience to provide a guidebook for navigating the major challenges that a customer-experience transformation poses.

Transforming customer experience in government presents unique challenges, but it is an imperative for public-sector leaders at all levels seeking to improve the satisfaction and well-being of their customers— while reducing costs and improving morale for their employees. We hope this volume enriches your under- standing of the benefits of improving customer experience and spurs creative thinking about ways to overcome challenges. We invite you to share your thoughts and feedback and look forward to continuing the conversation. ■

Tony D'Emidio
Partner, Washington DC
Tony_Demidio@McKinsey.com

Tom Dohrmann
Senior partner, Washington DC
Tom_Dohrmann@McKinsey.com

Kevin Neher
Partner, Denver
Kevin_Neher@McKinsey.com

Build a case, build a following: Laying the groundwork to transform customer experience in government

Transforming government agencies to serve people better relies on making a compelling business case and inspiring supporters willing to champion the change. Here's how.

Tony D'Emidio and David Malfara

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Organizations of all types have amped up their focus on understanding and improving the experiences of the customers they serve. Private-sector innovators like Amazon and Apple continually set the bar on what constitutes superior customer experience, and choosy consumers push it ever higher. Government agencies are by no means inured to these rising expectations, but evidence suggests that they have a long way to go to satisfy their customers' demands.[1] In a recent survey, we found that government agencies ranked last for satisfaction among 11 researched industries (Exhibit 1). A recent study by the Pew Research Center found that only 18 percent of Americans trust the government to do the right thing.[2]

But making the case for reforming an agency's approach to customer experience is not as simple as pointing out shortcomings. Improving customer experience is a complex task, since it requires employees to change mind-sets and behaviors and requires organizations to rewire operations with the customer in mind, rather than adhering to traditional functional silos. Delivering transformational change is also difficult. According to our research, only 30 percent of organizational transformations are successful, and of the 70 percent that fail, nearly three-quarters do so due to unsupportive management behavior or employee resistance to change (Exhibit 2).[3] In government, these obstacles

Exhibit 1   **Public-sector services have ground to make up relative to private-sector industry leaders.**

Customer satisfaction with industries by industry sector, average score out of 10

Grocery store	E-shopping site	Bank	Credit card	Car insurance	Mobile phone	Airline	Electric utility	Cable or satellite TV	State gov	Federal gov
8.3	8.2	8.1	7.7	7.6	7.6	7.5	7.4	6.9	6.2	5.6
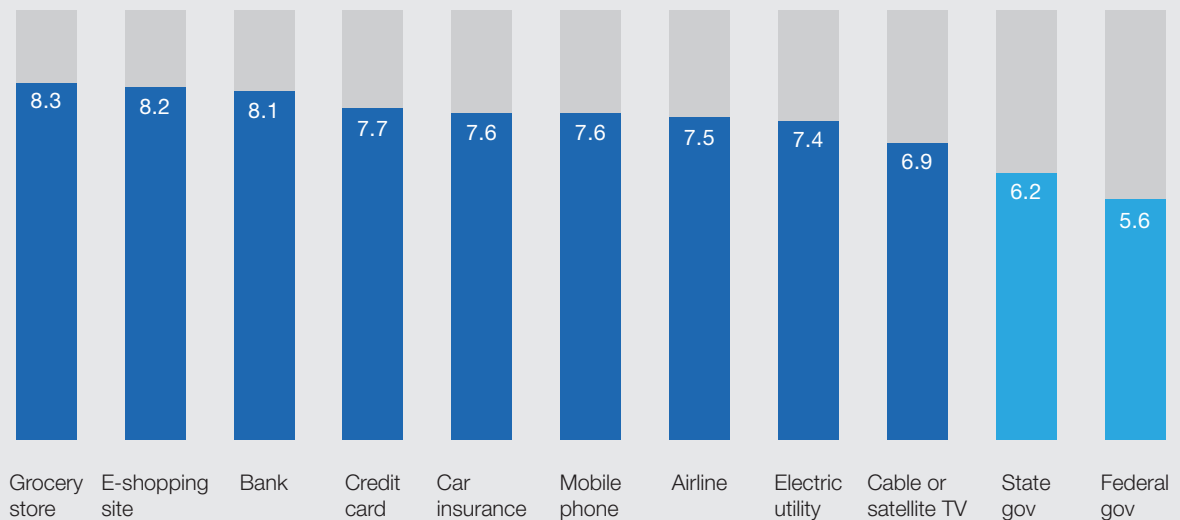
Source: McKinsey Public Sector Customer Experience Survey, December 2016; McKinsey Cross-Industry Customer Experience Survey, 2015–16

Exhibit 2   **Around 70 percent of transformation programs don't succeed, mostly due to employee resistance to change, and management behavior.**

Transformation success rates, %

~30 succeed	
~70 fail	**Reasons for transformation failures, according to senior executives,** %

39	Employee resistance to change
33	Management behavior does not support change
14	Inadequate resources or budget
14	Other obstacles

Source: Scott Keller and Colin Price, *Beyond Performance: How Great Organizations Build Ultimate Competitive Advantage,* first edition, Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2011; McKinsey analysis

can be compounded by the constraints of public-sector service, as well as by the predictable cycle of leadership changes that inevitably shift priorities and organizational focus.

So, given the task of shifting an agency toward a more customer-centric focus, how can leaders succeed in making the case for change and building the momentum necessary to spark a customer-experience transformation at any scale? From our research and work, we have distilled what we believe are the fundamental elements in laying the groundwork for a successful customer experience–improvement effort in government agencies. We find that successful transformations start off with a compelling business case that builds a value-based argument for improvement and secures the operational outcomes to create momentum. Leaders then finish the groundwork for success by building the organizational following essential to inspire colleagues to support change and win the organization's emotional support to advance it. This article will explore these two interlocking efforts critical to launching a government agency's efforts to build a superior experience for those it serves.

Building a business case

Changing the way a government agency works means facing challenges that may not exist within the typical firm. While private-sector organizations

may be willing to place a bet on improving customer experience based on the promise of increased revenue, government-agency leaders must consider a broader set of factors. In the case of a customer experience–improvement effort, the task would be to show how a focus on customer experience would create real value in order to secure budget dollars for a new program, or to defend against the critical eye of a congressional inquiry.

A strong business case can help agencies stay on track and avoid false trade-offs between customer experience and mission outcomes. At the US Transportation Security Administration, for example, the progress of a transformation effort was threatened by long security lines and failed security tests. It would have been easy to shift priorities away from the transformation work during that time. Instead, the transformation team maintained strategic focus and kept momentum going by recognizing the closely linked value created by succeeding in their core mission (that is, security effectiveness) while simultaneously driving operational efficiency and delivering an improved customer experience at checkpoints.

In our experience, three elements are critical for building a compelling business case that demonstrates the value for investment in government-agency customer experience: achieving an agency's stated mission, meeting or exceeding financial goals, and deepening employee engagement.

Achieving stated missions

US government agencies have vital missions to execute, and our research has shown that a positive customer experience can have a direct impact on mission outcomes. In 2016, we found satisfied customers of the US Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) were 44 percent more likely to feel secure in their healthcare coverage, and customers who were satisfied with the US Citizenship and Immigration Service were 14 percent more likely to apply for citizenship (Exhibit 3).

Some agencies have put this connection into practice to gain momentum and advance their customer-experience programs. For instance, in the early days of the US Social Security Administration's (SSA's) customer experience–improvement program, then–acting commissioner Carolyn Colvin focused the organization with a strategic plan. As part of the plan, the team outlined the ways the SSA's customer needs were changing in the marketplace and the impact of those changes on the SSA's work and mission execution. The plan produced an aspiration for the SSA's future built around three pillars: superior customer experience, exceptional employees, and an innovative organization. Establishing such a link between customer experience and positive mission outcomes can serve as a cornerstone for any
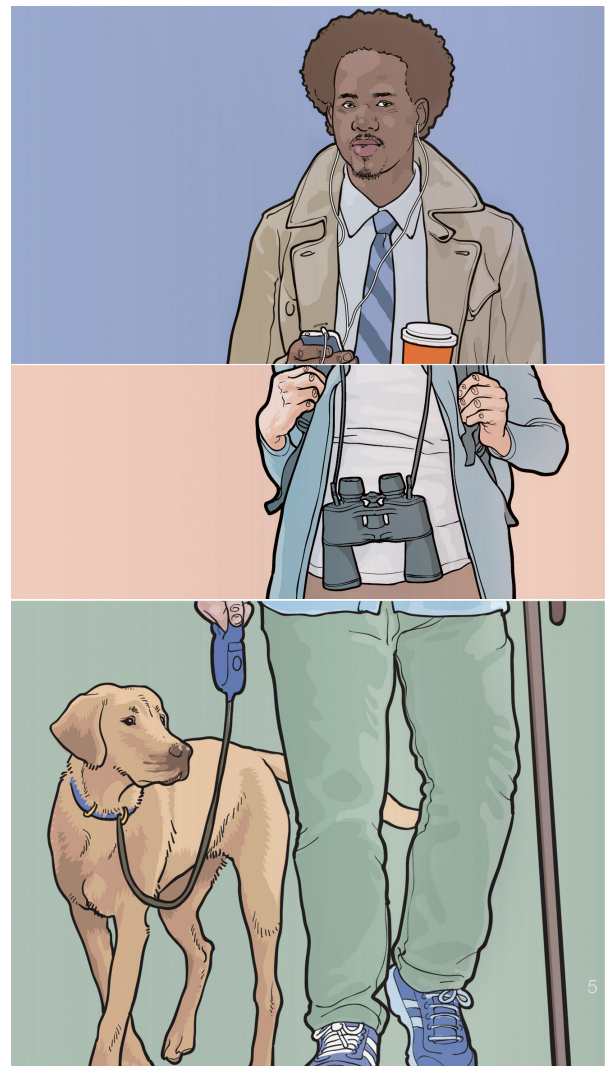
Exhibit 3

Not surprisingly, satisfied customers are more likely to continue with a process.

Customers feeling secure with Veterans Administration healthcare,[1] **%**

91

77

63

Customers' likelihood of applying for naturalization,[2] **%**

87

79

76

Respondent share, %

49	32	19

Satisfied   Neutral Dissatisfied

Respondent share, %

42	38	19

Satisfied   Neutral Dissatisfied
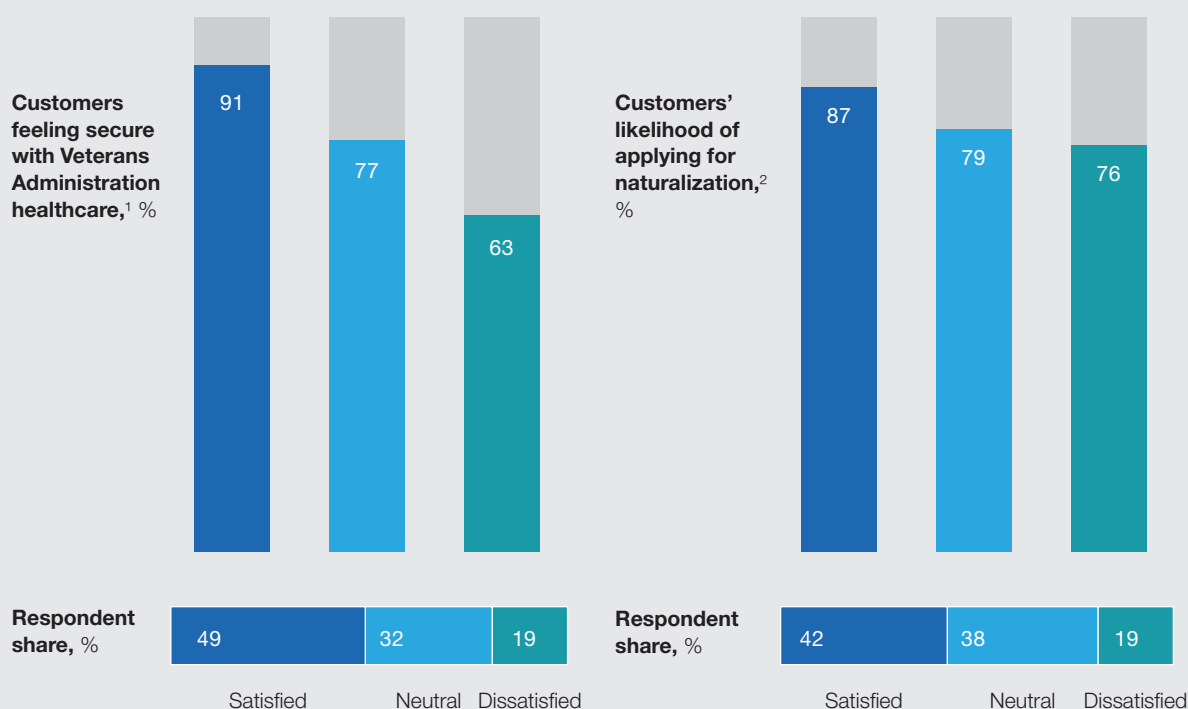
[1] Based on average response to "I feel secure in my healthcare coverage": dissatisfied is customer-satisfaction score (CSAT) 1–6, neutral is CSAT 7–8, satisfied is CSAT 9–10; n = 462.

[2] Based on average response to "I am commited to becoming a naturalized US citizen"; n = 396.

Note: Figures may not sum to 100%, because of rounding.

Source: McKinsey Public Sector Journey Pulse Survey, Nov–Dec 2016

business case to start a transformation within a government agency.

Meeting or exceeding financial goals

Customer-centric programs can also have a concrete impact on budget goals, providing a tangible outcome against which appropriators can build proposals. For agencies with revenue responsibilities, such as the US National Park Service or the Export–Import Bank of the United States, a focus on improving the customer experience can create opportunities to sell additional services or reduce churn, thus improving revenue-generating opportunities. Survey respondents who were satisfied with the service of the United States Postal Service, for example, engaged it for their shipping needs 67 percent more often than those who were not satisfied. Across private industry, successful projects for optimizing the customer experience typically increase revenues by 5 to 10 percent.[4]

Efforts to improve experience need not come at a heavy cost to operating expenditures, nor do they necessarily involve large capital investments. When experience-improvement programs are executed

systematically, they reduce costs or, at worst, are cost neutral. (Across private industry, successful projects to optimize the customer experience typically reduce costs by 15 to 25 percent within just two or three years.)[5] An effective program can identify the experiences that matter most and focus investment on improving them while demoting, automating, or eliminating operations that customers don't value. For example, one federal agency was able to realize a cost reduction of about 20 percent over a three-year period due to efficiencies identified by its customer-experience program, while also boosting customer-satisfaction scores. Another federal insurance agency achieved around a 30 percent reduction in claims-processing costs through its customer-experience initiatives.

Deepening employee engagement

The US Office of Personnel Management's 2017 Federal Employee Viewpoint Survey found that for government employees, levels of engagement have hovered around 65 percent since 2012.[6] Like most private-sector companies, many government agencies struggle to make significant strides in promoting an engaged workforce. A focus on the customer experience can help to reverse slumping employee-engagement numbers because superior employee engagement and a superior customer experience reinforce each other. Through our work in the private sector, we've found that programs to improve the engagement of frontline workers can have a significant positive impact on the customer experience.

We've also found the reverse to be true: a focus on the customer experience has an equally important impact on employee engagement and satisfaction. A well-run customer-experience program can give the staff a common, unifying, and customer-centered purpose while reducing complexity and unnecessary work in frontline processes. One federal agency held a cross-functional journey-mapping workshop to launch a transformation effort and focus on customer needs. After the session was complete, one of the more vocal participants, a 25-year veteran of the organization who had recently tendered his resignation, requested to revoke his resignation and continue with the team. When asked why, he replied that the new focus was a complete change in the way the agency was approaching its work and that he was excited to follow it through. Stories like these are common, and the increased employee engagement from customer-experience efforts can drive real improvements in employee satisfaction, morale, and turnover rates. One federal insurance agency, for example, saw a more than 50 percent increase in its organizational health over a two-year period as a result of its customer-experience program.[7]

Building a following

Our research has shown that successful change programs do not focus only on financial performance and operational outcomes. To be truly successful from the start, transformations must manage the organizational dynamics of supporting positive change at scale once a compelling business case is made. In other words, a strong business case

A focus on the customer experience has an equally important impact on employee engagement and satisfaction.

efforts, someone at or near the top of the organization champions the change, models supportive behaviors, and inspires the organization as the face of the transformation effort. For example, at the Federal Emergency Management Agency's insurance and mitigation unit, the chief executive of the national flood-insurance program championed the "survivor experience" as his number-one priority, sponsoring new customer research, creating a new customer-experience office, and dedicating a significant amount of his energy and time (across internal and external audiences) to driving a step-change improvement in the experience of five million flood-insurance policyholders covered by the program. Another example of this top-level support can be seen within the VA, where the former secretary, Robert McDonald, focused on driving a better experience for veterans. Such firm top-leader support sends a clear signal that customer-experience efforts are a top priority, establishing the credibility and inspiration needed to ensure that transformation programs get off to a strong start.

Securing an inspirational top-executive champion is necessary but not sufficient to establishing the right leadership mix for a successful transformation. Customer-experience programs are by nature multidisciplinary and require cross-functional collaboration to drive improvement across customer journeys. To effectively advance change, a day-to-day leader is needed who can create the connective tissue across functions and produce results. Without establishing this kind of tactical day-to-day leadership, change programs can feel like a "flavor of the month" and lose the emotional support of the organization due to lack of follow-through. At the VA, McDonald was the face of change for the veterans-experience program, but he quickly established a chief veterans-experience officer, Tom Allin, who built the VA's customer-experience office from the ground up. Allin defined functions to harvest insights, propose new designs, measure problems and responses, build community, and establish

supporting change is not enough if you don't create the groundwork within your organization that inspires colleagues to support the change. In fact, change efforts that balance these two factors are on average 1.5 times more likely to succeed, compared with those that focus on one of the two.[8] There are many practical steps that can build momentum and support throughout a customer-experience transformation. Here we'll explore two change-management topics that we believe are critical to get customer-experience programs off the ground within government agencies: establishing the right leadership and creating "evangelists," or vocal advocates for the program within the employee base.

Establishing the right leadership

If a third of failed transformations are due to unsupportive leadership behaviors, it's clearly important to establish strong leadership from the outset to ensure success down the road. In most successful customer experience–improvement

enterprise operations. He also worked across the other major departments at the VA to establish the customer-experience office as an internal consultant and adviser, helping his colleagues understand what underlies satisfaction across customer journeys and acting as a catalyst for improvement. Establishing an effective tactical leader in this way is critical to ensure focused momentum on the things that will drive early progress and keep the organization engaged on the vision set by the executive champion.

Calling all evangelists

Some 40 percent of failed transformations stumble because employees resist the proposed changes from the start.[9] So, hand in hand with establishing strong leadership within the organization goes the need to create a network of influencers within the employee

base to serve as advocates for the daily series of changes that transformation brings. Within public-sector customer-experience programs, we've seen a few simple strategies excel at creating a groundswell of support. First, invest in developing individual leaders at the front line. For example, find influencers in the organization and give them leadership roles in the program. At one airport, transformation-team leaders intentionally sought out frontline managers who expressed support for customer experience and displayed influence within the organization to lead change teams that drove enhancements to the passenger experience. Nearly four years into a transformation effort in one of the toughest customer-satisfaction settings, those leaders continue to recruit other passionate individuals from among the airport's more than 18,000 employees to design and take part in new and ongoing customer-experience initiatives. In 2017, the airport was rewarded for its efforts when it achieved the number-one ranking for customer satisfaction among its peer set from J.D. Power.[10]

Second, make sure to celebrate successes publicly, especially in the early days. During recent interviews, leaders from the VA and the SSA emphasized the importance of town-hall meetings to energize their efforts. These events are vital for sharing stories of success and creating a sense of excitement and ownership while also providing a forum to hear real feedback from frontline staff who are taking on the challenges of the transformation program.

Finally, try to communicate changes and progress to the full organization, and don't forget to demonstrate how input from frontline employees is being recognized and applied. In a recent interview, leaders at the SSA talked about the importance of focused methods for gathering ideas from employees. The Commissioner's Challenge, a unique employee-feedback program created at the SSA, gives the entire base of employees the chance to provide input on what they would change if they were the commissioner. Again, this helps to create a sense of
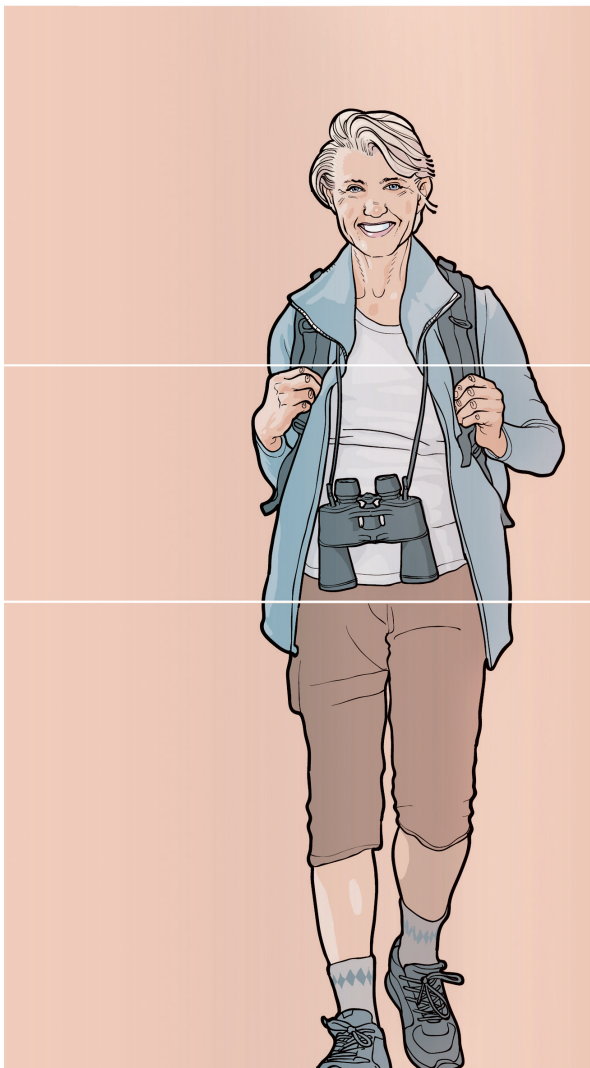
excitement and ownership among the full base of employees. But gathering input is only the first step. In addition to celebrating progress and input from the front line, don't forget to revisit ideas that may have been earmarked as less of a priority at the start of an effort. Through these closed and updated feedback loops, leaders can help ensure that frontline workers feel they have been heard and that they have an emotional investment in the success of the customer experience–improvement effort.

■ ■ ■

Building a compelling change story for taking on a customer-experience transformation is not always easy. Leaders build both a fact-based and an emotional commitment to positive change throughout their organization when they establish compelling business cases across mission, financial outcomes, and employee experience while at the same time engaging employees to advocate for the program and recruiting influential supporters. ■

1 Governments serve their citizens as well as an array of other constituents and stakeholders. In this article, the term "customer" refers to all those who make use of government services.

2 "Public trust in government: 1958–2017," Pew Research Center, May 2017, people-press.org.

3 Scott Keller and Colin Price, *Beyond Performance: How Great Organizations Build Ultimate Competitive Advantage,* first edition, Hoboken, NJ: John Wiley & Sons, 2011.

4 See Ewan Duncan, Harald Fanderl, Nicolas Maechler, and Kevin Neher, "Customer experience: Creating value through transforming customer journeys," July 2016, McKinsey.com.

5 Ibid.

6 In the study, engagement has been relatively flat, hovering around 65 percent, ranging from a low of 63 percent to a high of 67 percent, since 2012.

7 Measured by McKinsey's Organizational Health Index, "health" refers to how an organization aligns itself, executes with excellence, and renews itself to sustainably achieve performance aspirations.

8 Keller and Price, *Beyond Performance*.

9 Ibid.

10 "North American airports effectively navigating construction, capacity challenges, J.D. Power finds," J.D. Power, September 21, 2017, jdpower.com.

Tony D'Emidio is a partner in McKinsey's Washington, DC, office, and **David Malfara** is a specialist in the Miami office.

Understanding the customer experience with government

Government agencies that are unclear on what matters most to their customers risk wasting time and resources on the things that don't. Finding out is the first step.

Tony D'Emidio and Jonah Wagner

Following a public-relations crisis, a federal provider of insurance resolved to change. An independent task force assembled to investigate the issue declared that the agency had lost sight of its end customer, the policyholder. To make amends, the agency decided to invest in accelerating its claims process, where the controversy originated.

But then new research revealed that for most of the agency's customers, speedy claims resolution wasn't the biggest issue; what policyholders cared most about was getting an initial infusion of cash fast and having greater transparency into and understanding of what was happening with their claim so they could better plan for when it was paid. So, the agency decided instead to significantly expand its advanced-payment program while increasing communications with policyholders throughout the process to set and manage their expectations.

Therein lies an important lesson for the leaders of government agencies of all types: understanding precisely what matters to the customers you serve is essential to improving their experience.[1]

Yet most agencies don't. In a recent research effort, we set out to help close the gap between what agency leaders *believe* people want and what is *actually important* to them as customers.[2] The research highlighted many examples within and across services of how government assumptions diverged from what customers really cared about—for instance, speed of service matters less to them than transparency, and they care more about understanding their tax-filing options than the actual experience of filing their taxes. This article draws on that research to help agencies begin to understand what matters most to their customers and to establish a framework for agency leaders to better plan for and enhance customer satisfaction with government as a whole.

Government's challenge

Understanding what drives the customer experience is particularly challenging in the federal government.

Resources are one reason. Says Aileen Smith, former head of operations for the US State Department's Passport Services Directorate: "We, as government agencies, have to be resourceful. We don't have the same level of insight, research, or analytics that you'll find [in the private sector], but we have to do what we can with the information we have available to us."

The data that agencies rely upon are typically incomplete. Agencies are forced to wrestle with how to link overarching customer-satisfaction scores such as the American Customer Satisfaction Index to online surveys and wait times. Feedback from surveys conducted by call centers or online offers just a narrow window into the way respondents think and feel at a given moment. Operational data and performance measures may be tracked but typically sit in silos across numerous legacy systems and are rarely linked directly to customer feedback to create a full picture of the customer's overall experience. Many government agencies deliver services through third parties, further blurring visibility into customer interactions. And current legislative restrictions make it hard to undertake direct-to-consumer research; even amid a wave of deregulation, it remains difficult for agencies to get a real sense of customers' needs and desires.

In our experience, government agencies that seek to overcome these challenges and build a holistic view of the customer experience are most effective when they follow three basic steps: putting themselves in the shoes of their customers, understanding their end-to-end customer journeys with the service, and isolating the moments that disproportionately shape their experience along the way.

Step 1: Start with 'who'

It is not uncommon for a government agency embarking on a customer-experience transformation to realize early on that it lacks a clear understanding of who it actually serves. Unlike private-sector organizations, government agencies must aim to serve everyone within their mandated mission;

whose needs and behaviors reveal those of all the rest; a one-size-fits-all service often ends up fitting no one very well. Rather, creating a rich picture of a customer base requires macrolevel analysis of the core segments served, as well as analysis at the microlevel—of the traits, behaviors, needs, and beliefs of representative individuals within each broader group.

Across government, there is a common belief that agencies cannot (or perhaps should not) segment their market to provide differentiated services. This is a false conviction that stems from conflating two concepts: discrimination and segmentation. Discrimination implies some form of unjust treatment based on difference, while segmentation is a critical tool in understanding how different customers engage with and experience a service. Agencies should consider a broad set of demographic attributes, as well as behavioral factors, to help them deliver better services to more people. For example, when the Transportation Security Administration was looking to expand its popular precheck program for airline passengers, the agency identified segments of law enforcement, military, and other low-risk groups for whom the streamlined security-check process would be particularly well suited. By focusing on those segments and shifting them into the program, the agency quickly expanded access to its program without increasing risk, even as it simultaneously decreased wait time for travelers.

Beyond segmentation, agencies should seek to better understand the individual customers themselves.

they can't just ignore "undesirable" customers. In addition, agencies are held to a high bar for fairness, which often solidifies over time into a principle of providing one-size-fits-all service. But a blind commitment to treating everyone exactly the same, however well meaning, can end up reducing the pressure on senior officials and frontline employees to truly understand the nature and individual preferences of those they serve.

Understanding what matters most to a diverse set of customers begins with understanding who these customers are. There is no "average" customer

Understanding what matters most to a diverse set of customers begins with understanding who these customers are. There is no "average" customer whose needs and behaviors reveal those of all the rest.

As Laura Furgione, former deputy director of the National Weather Service, describes it: "We worked hard to really embed with our users, understand their lingo, 'speak their speak,' so we could help them understand weather threats in their own terms." Developing customer profiles, or "personas," is one tool agencies can use to do this—effectively stepping into the shoes of individual customers to understand their mind-sets and beliefs. These personas oblige agencies to take the customer perspective in designing and delivering services—stimulating new and creative insights beyond the standard rules and procedures within which government employees are used to operating.

Combining both customer segmentation and personas can yield powerful results. A few years ago, one major airport recognized that its signage was confusing. So it identified four large segments of customers—families with children, business travelers, international visitors, and elderly couples—and created specific personas for each. Airport staff then attempted to navigate the airport from the perspective of a given customer profile—for example, an international visitor not fluent in English. This exercise helped generate more intuitive signage and led to the airport employing "ambassadors"—specialized customer-service staff who speak multiple languages and can answer questions. These changes helped the airport achieve a number-one ranking for customer satisfaction among its peer airports in 2017.[3]

Step 2: Understand the customer journey

A taxpayer with a question about her federal income-tax return might consult with a friend or a tax preparer, call the Internal Revenue Service (IRS), explore IRS.gov, visit a taxpayer-assistance facility, or undertake some combination of the above. We call this the "I have a question" journey, encompassing any number and sequence of "touchpoints"—the individual points of contact between the agency and a customer looking for answers. Customer journeys are the set of end-to-end experiences, defined from the perspective of the customer, that constitute the life cycle of a customer relationship with a given agency or service. Mapping these journeys and understanding their importance is essential to any effort designed to improve customer experience.

Journey measurement is the biggest gap most government agencies face in understanding what matters to their customers. Across industries, journey satisfaction is a far better predictor of overall customer experience and business outcomes than touchpoint satisfaction. For example, a taxpayer calling the IRS call center with a question could have a positive experience on the phone (*the agent was helpful*), but her journey as a whole could be quite painful (*but I can't believe I had to call about something like this!*). Too many agencies only track touchpoint data, which leads
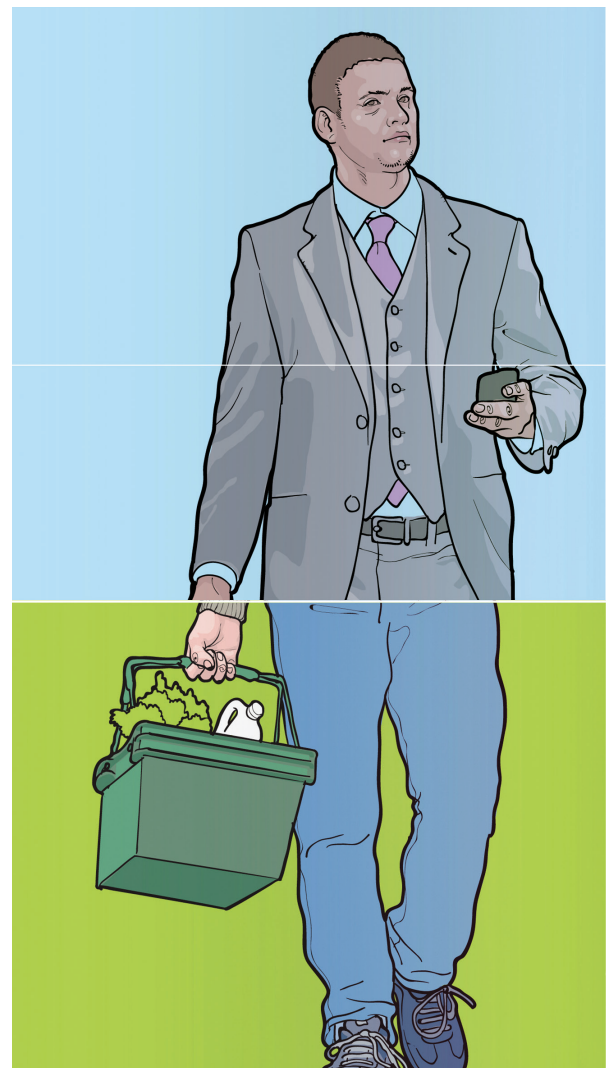
them to invest in fixing problems in functional silos rather than monitoring the journey from beginning to end.

Our recent study provides a window for agencies into how people experience the journeys associated with their services. Certain patterns emerged across agencies—for example, in our analysis, the "I apply" journey emerged as one of the top two most important customer journeys. However, there was considerable variation in customer experience across services. Customers of the US Patent and Trademark Office tend to care most about their experience applying for trademarks. Disaster survivors, by contrast, care most about the Federal Emergency Management Agency's ability to resolve questions or problems with its applications for disaster benefits—providing
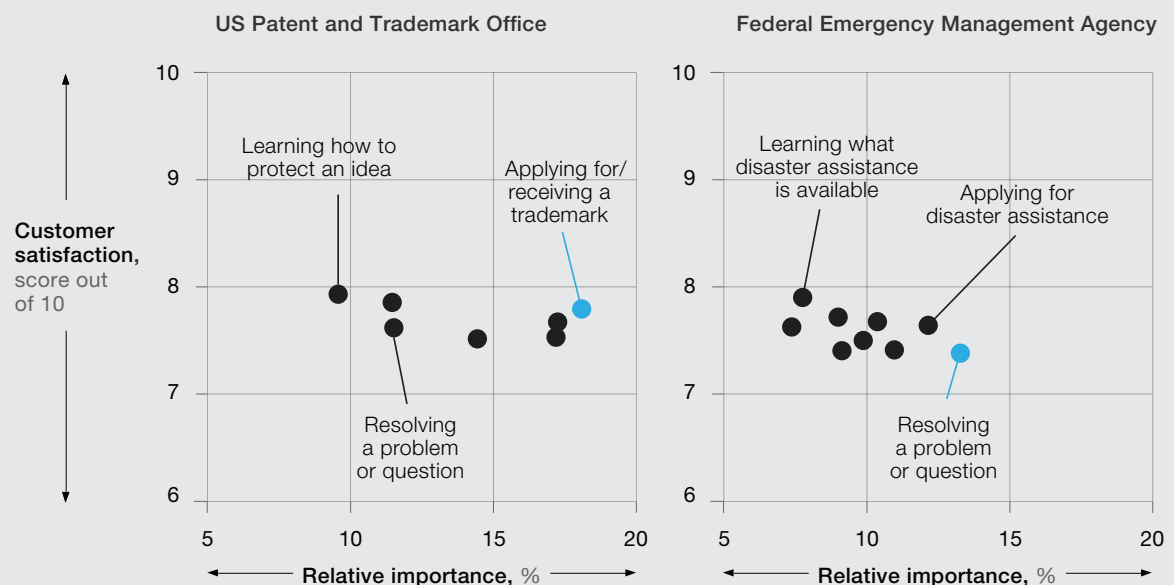
reassurance during a difficult time. Although the process of applying for disaster assistance still matters to these individuals, other journeys matter more (Exhibit 1).

A journey-centric approach can help agencies prioritize where to focus their efforts. For example, customers filing their federal tax returns with the IRS care most about exploring their options and preparing and filing their taxes (Exhibit 2). However, after digging deeper, it turns out the most important part of the journey for customers is learning about their tax-filing options. Furthermore, our research shows that this is the part of the process that is the most difficult and the least satisfying for customers. The challenge the IRS faces is that this leg of the customer-experience journey is out of its control, as it is usually provided by third parties through nongovernmental

Exhibit 1

Not all journeys are equal in citizens' eyes.

Prioritization of customer journeys by customer satisfaction vs relative importance

● Most important journey

US Patent and Trademark Office

Federal Emergency Management Agency

Customer satisfaction, score out of 10

Learning how to protect an idea

Applying for/ receiving a trademark

Resolving a problem or question

Relative importance, %

Learning what disaster assistance is available

Applying for disaster assistance
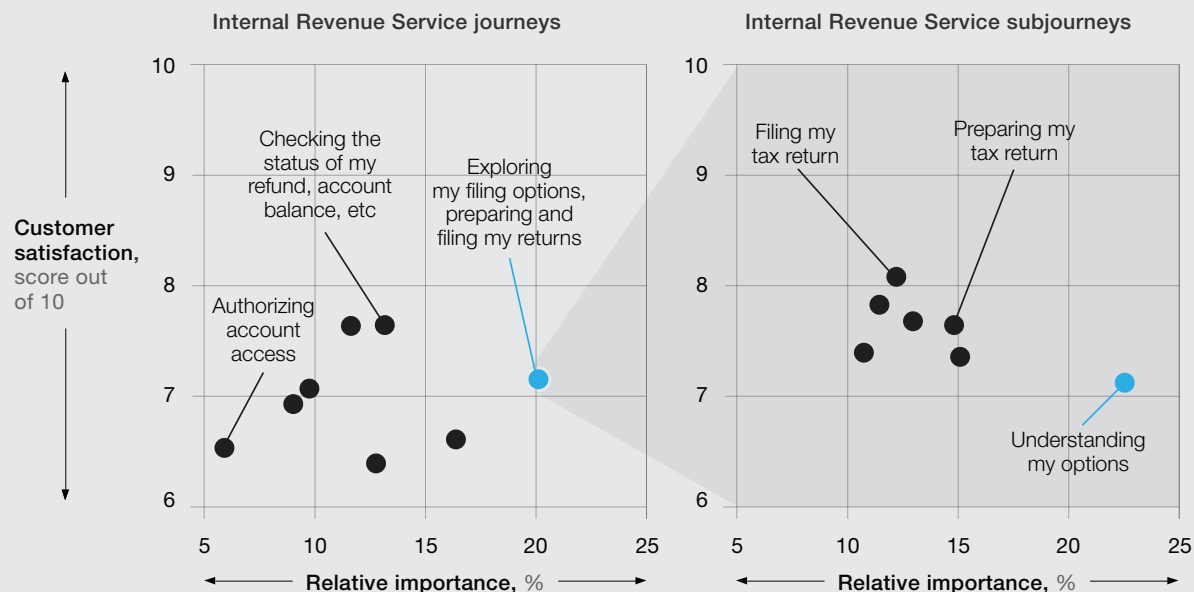
Resolving a problem or question

Relative importance, %

Source: McKinsey Public Sector Journey Pulse Survey, Nov–Dec 2016

Exhibit 2

The subjourneys within each journey illuminate what drives customer satisfaction.

Prioritization of customer journeys by customer satisfaction vs relative importance

● Most important journey

Internal Revenue Service journeys

Internal Revenue Service subjourneys

Customer satisfaction, score out of 10

Checking the status of my refund, account balance, etc

Exploring my filing options, preparing and filing my returns

Authorizing account access

Filing my tax return

Preparing my tax return

Understanding my options

Relative importance, %

Source: McKinsey Public Sector Journey Pulse Survey, Nov–Dec 2016

channels. However, the agency's customers do not draw the same distinction—the journey is the journey, no matter who plays the primary role in shaping it. By zeroing in on the areas that matter most and by bringing in touchpoint-survey data and operational-performance metrics, the IRS and other agencies can better focus their attention and resources to improve the customer experience, whether done directly or indirectly within the broader stakeholder ecosystem.

Step 3: Pinpoint 'defining moments'

Within and across customer journeys, citizens have specific preferences about how they like to be served. Is the service reliable? Is it transparent? Easy to access? High quality? Is it worth the citizen's time and money? These "experience drivers," depending on the specific context, can have a significant impact on overall

satisfaction—or no impact at all. Understanding and articulating the relative importance of these drivers can help clarify and focus efforts internally and externally to improve the citizen experience. At the end of the day, what we experience is a function of what we remember. And we are particularly good at remembering lousy experiences.

One bad incident—a rude customs agent, an unexpected notification for renewing a green card, an especially long airport-security line—can deeply color a customer's overall impression of an agency. Identifying where and when such negative defining moments occur can help enable targeted interventions that have a big impact on outcomes. Agencies that succeed in making bad incidents as rare as possible have more satisfied customers than those that don't.

However, the inverse isn't true for positive defining moments. Our findings fit with a growing body of behavioral-psychology research that shows that bad events have more power than good ones to shape experiences. Moreover, people remember peak experiences more easily than ordinary ones. Our research shows that negative defining moments on average affect overall customer-satisfaction scores four times more than positive defining moments (Exhibit 3). Ask yourself: How many on-time package deliveries would you have to receive from US Postal

Service to overcome your disappointment if an irreplaceable family heirloom was lost in the mail?

Although it's important for any organization serious about customer experience to mitigate painful experiences, the task takes on a different kind of importance in government, where customers have nowhere else to go. Unhappy customers tend to generate a disproportionate amount of the cost to serve that agencies bear, for example, through problem phone calls, as well as risks, through lawsuits.

Exhibit 3

Bad 'defining moments' have a disproportionate impact on experience.

Impact of defining moments on overall customer experience by government service,[1] net change in average customer satisfaction (CSAT)
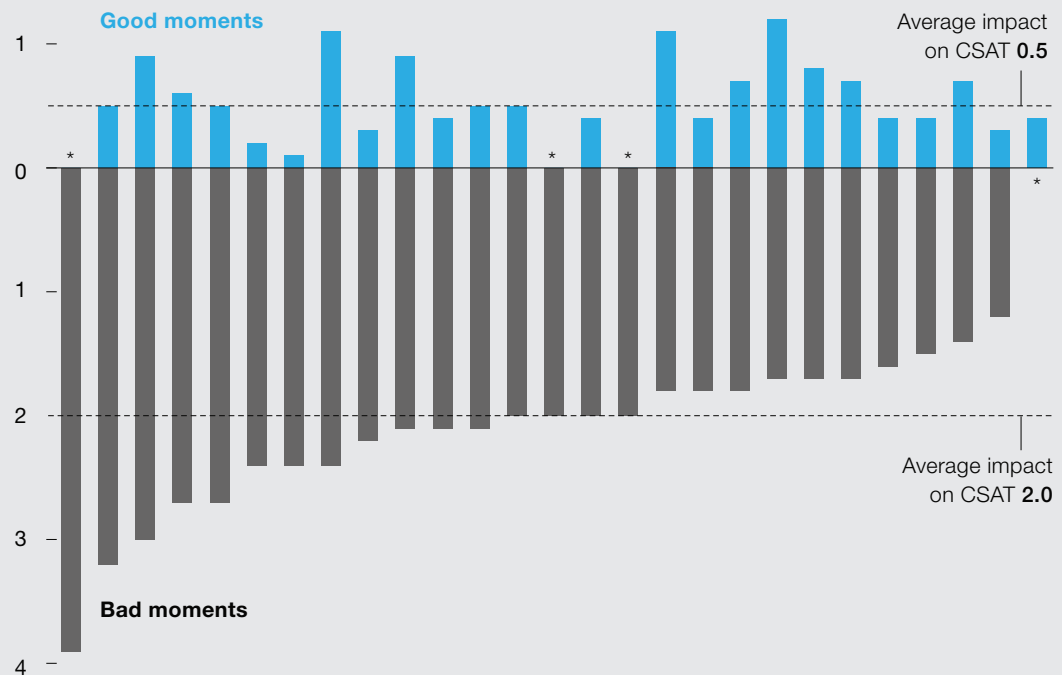
[1] Sample focuses on 27 services provided by the following US federal departments and agencies: Departments of Agriculture, Commerce, Energy, Health and Human Services, Homeland Security, Housing and Urban Development, Interior, Labor, State, Treasury, and Veterans Affairs; Consumer Financial Protection Bureau; Federal Recreation Council; General Services Administration; National Weather Service; Office of Personnel Management; Social Security Administration; and US Postal Service.

Note: Services that appear with no "good" or "bad" moment impact had insufficient sample size to include.

Source: McKinsey Public Sector Journey Pulse Survey, Nov–Dec 2016

Identifying and addressing these issues—even with temporary fixes—can build momentum toward deeper, longer-term improvement. Furthermore, our research suggests that customers who receive "excellent" resolution of their issues often experience even higher satisfaction than those who never had any issues at all.

Government's advantage

Building a true understanding of the customer experience is a daunting task in government. Even so, federal agencies have a number of unique advantages to draw upon.

Federal government agencies collect operational data that are extensive and detailed but tend to end up substantially underused as a source of insight into the customer experience. These data span the full spectrum of interactions between individuals across channels. They include customer-touchpoint surveys as well as measurements such as processing time and the number of times a customer is handed off during a journey—metrics that represent the underlying measures of performance that shape the customer

experience. Frontline employees can provide a wealth of insight into the experience of the customers they engage on a daily basis—through both qualitative and quantitative feedback. Linking these latent data sources to priority customer journeys offers a clear opportunity to generate actionable insights to improve the overall experience. This unique data advantage can also be used to create a comprehensive portrait of individuals across the milestones that shape their lives—receiving an education, buying a home, raising a child, retiring comfortably—in order to improve delivery of services overall.

■   ■   ■

Every agency looking to improve the experience of its customers does so with finite resources and limited time. Understanding what matters most to people is crucial for setting priorities and making effective decisions about the steps to take to truly capture the benefits from listening to your customers and better engaging your frontline employees. ■

[1] Governments serve their citizens as well as an array of other constituents and stakeholders. In this article, the term "customer" refers to all those who make use of government services.

[2] Our research is based on a survey of more than 15,000 recipients on their experiences with 31 US federal services during late 2016. The survey was designed around the core set of customer journeys respondents experienced with a service. Results were analyzed using multivariate statistics to mathematically derive the elements of each journey that mattered most in shaping the overall customer experience.

[3] "North American airports effectively navigating construction, capacity challenges, J.D. Power finds," J.D. Power, September 21, 2017, jdpower.com.

Tony D'Emidio is a partner in McKinsey's Washington, DC, office, where **Jonah Wagner** is an associate partner.

Solving the customer-experience puzzle: A guidebook for government leaders

It takes focus to transform public-sector agencies to serve a diverse set of customers better. A ready reference—based on lessons from government leaders—can help.

Serena Advani, Tony D'Emidio, Sarah Esty, and Kari Hernandez

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The spectrum of customers served by any government agency[1] presents a puzzle of personal profiles, each with needs that evolve during life journeys that span years, career changes, and shifting economic, social, and family circumstances. Across the public sector, leaders increasingly recognize the rationale for improving customer experience—enhanced ability to achieve agency missions, outperformance in meeting budget goals, and more engaged employees. Yet we find many government leaders stumbling as they address how to unearth poor customer experiences, improve them, and piece together a complete picture of their customers and the elements of a culture to sustain improvement over time.

Based on success stories both big and small, we have distilled a set of prescriptive steps to help agencies put people first and encourage the mind-sets, processes, and culture to support that goal. Taken together, these steps can guide agency leaders in addressing the following four essential activities in leading a customer-experience transformation amid the reality of public-sector structures, motivations, and constraints:

- determining what matters

- resetting citizen expectations, and innovating to realize them

- cultivating a customer-centric culture

- building and sustaining momentum

Determining what matters

Agencies that lack a clear understanding of what matters most to widely diverse customer populations risk wasting scarce time and resources on things that don't. The challenges in collecting and analyzing data range from information gaps to information overload to legal restrictions on data gathering. But certain approaches can help in launching a customer-experience transformation and tracking its progress.

Identify your customers and their journeys

Begin by clarifying who your customers are and what they are trying to do. Identify the different segments of

your customer base and their journeys to understand what matters to them, and thus sharpen your focus. Send frontline, middle-management, and senior leaders into the field to make sure they see, hear, and feel the customers' reality. For example, in the wake of the public outcry over Hurricane Sandy claims processing, the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) undertook a series of "ride-alongs" with claim adjustors to observe firsthand how the damage-assessment process worked.

Analyze existing data in new ways

As you identify problems and set priorities to tackle them, start with the data you have. Consider what you already know about your customers that might not have been formally analyzed. Chances are you already have a wealth of information that just needs a creative application.

When the US Department of State reviewed data on cases requiring supplemental information for passport applications, one category stood out: children's passports, which require in-person or documented consent from both parents. Cross-referencing applicant addresses with census data revealed that a large share of applicants came from Spanish-speaking areas, suggesting that language barriers were perhaps the culprit. The passport team was then able to revise the application instructions with simpler language and now works on translating the forms into Spanish.

Draw new data from unexpected places

Look beyond surveys and individual customer interactions to understand the full range of factors affecting people's experiences. Tap employees who interact directly with customers and other service providers. For example, as part of a broad customer-experience effort, managers at one commercial airport talked to food-service personnel and other employees to learn more about what customers were experiencing. Similarly, the Transportation Security Administration (TSA) talked not only with air travelers but also with representatives from airlines and trade associations when it was

kicking off its own customer-experience effort. Rather than simply conducting a survey later, TSA representatives approached passengers passing through its checkpoints to inquire in person about their experiences.

Consider whether commercial data sets, social-media information, or other publicly available data can fill the gaps and provide useful insights (when permitted by applicable laws and regulations). These data can be especially useful when combined with an agency's existing internal data. The US Department of State, for example, uses Yelp reviews of third-party passport agencies to identify customer-experience issues and set priorities. One large airport has used social-media scraping[2] to track and respond to customer sentiment in real time. Its approach has included geofencing[3] a single gate to scan comments and perhaps identify opportunities to address unhappy customers immediately. Governments, fearful of being perceived as overly invasive, have historically shied away from personal-data gathering. Yet such techniques are commonplace in the private sector and generate important value for all parties by allowing companies to identify and meet customer needs more effectively. The public sector has a similar opportunity to tap customer feedback via publicly available data sources.

Measure what matters, and make it visible

Tracking customer-experience performance over time allows organizations to celebrate changes that are improving satisfaction and outcomes while taking a fresh look at those that are not. Monitor both operational-performance metrics and customer-reported satisfaction. One agency installed a TV screen in its call center that displays in real time a set of key metrics, such as the number of requests coming in, response time, and customer-satisfaction rates. The team also regularly checks in with customers via surveys embedded in customer-transaction touchpoints and conducts annual interviews that focus on the elements that drive customer satisfaction. The organization can thus continually take the pulse of its customer-experience effort by tracking outcomes, satisfaction, and overall success at meeting customers' needs.

Integrate the metrics you have in hand into your operating model to drive real-time awareness and improved performance. The US Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS), for example, collects
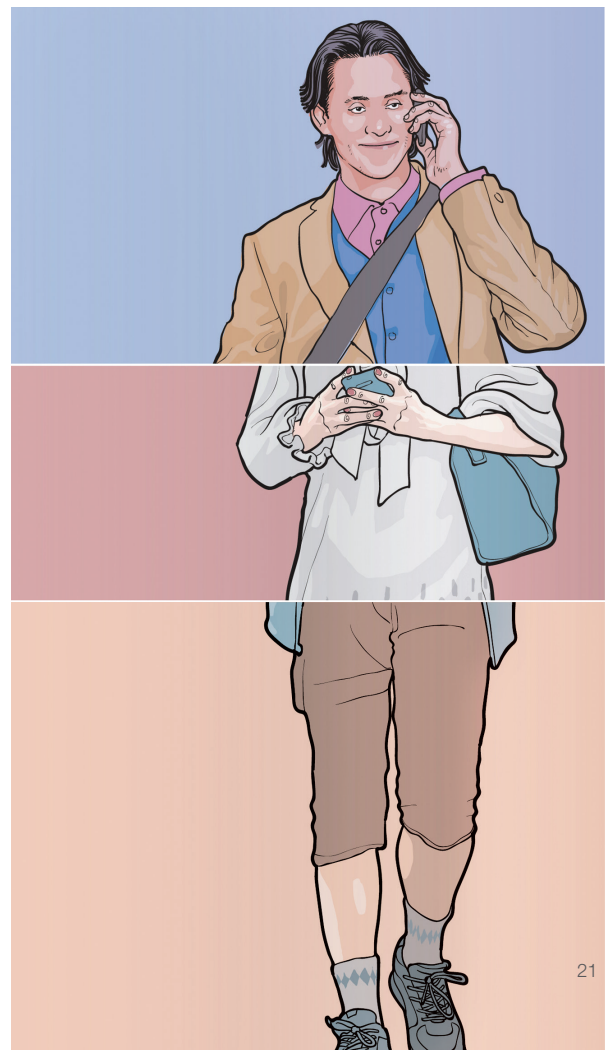
customer feedback and embeds it into daily huddles, employee coaching, and regular problem solving. Conveying progress to all layers of the organization helps employees improve their understanding of what matters to citizens and encourages them to take action where it matters.

Resetting citizen expectations, and innovating to realize them

Ultimately, customer satisfaction depends on two things: reality and expectations. Maximizing satisfaction requires both resetting the expectations and improving the reality. To redesign customer journeys, it is necessary to understand what your customers need and what your organization is capable of. Then you can communicate realistic expectations of what you can do for customers and continue to improve what you can deliver.

Know your breakpoints

Determine what "moves the needle" for customers. We all know that waiting in line is an unpleasant experience, but how long is too long before customer satisfaction begins to dip? We call such thresholds "breakpoints." Understanding where they exist is important to increasing satisfaction. Equally important, however, is understanding the points where delivered services reach diminishing returns. In other words, how much would satisfaction improve if each customer waited five minutes less, and how much would it cost to do so? Understanding your breakpoints and their relationship to value will guide how much time, human capital, and financial resources to invest in improvements.

For example, one airport used a breakpoint analysis to identify that traveler satisfaction declines rapidly when security wait times exceed about 20 minutes. But the analysis also showed that to increase customer satisfaction, wait times would have to average less than ten minutes. The customer experience–improvement team, facing this strategic issue, decided to focus elsewhere—in particular, on how customers interacted

with security officers. The reasoning? About 90 percent of customers were clearing the queue under the 20-minute satisfaction breakpoint, and reducing the times below ten minutes would be a massive, expensive undertaking. But without understanding satisfaction breakpoints, it would have been easy to invest misguidedly in a reconfiguration of the security checkpoint or an increase of staffing levels with little or no benefit to actual satisfaction. Instead, focusing on officer interaction boosted satisfaction with no effect on wait times.

Understand capabilities, and set expectations

Next, line up expectations for service levels with a realistic ability to deliver. Proactively managing customer expectations is one of the simplest, most powerful, and sometimes most cost-effective strategies agencies can deploy to improve customer experience.
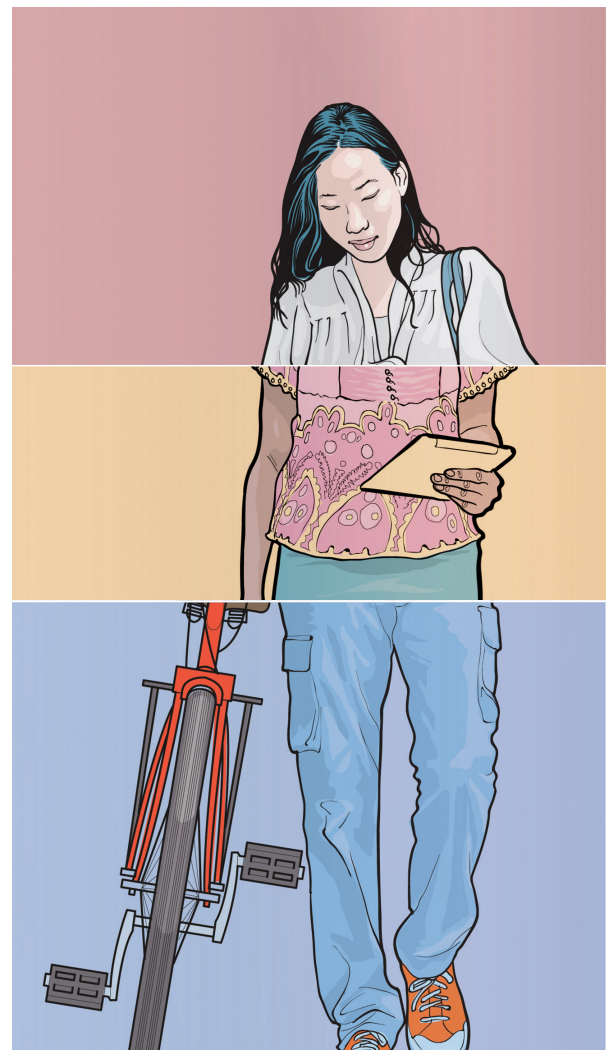
When many Internal Revenue Service (IRS) customers, for example, complained about what they perceived were delays in processing refunds, the agency simply changed its guidance. Instead of promising refunds based on the mean processing time, the IRS adjusted its communications to reflect the processing time required for most refunds: 21 days. It also created an online tool for customers to track progress. The number of complaints and inquiries fell almost immediately without changes to supporting business processes. This solution required a realistic view of what the agency could consistently deliver as well as an understanding of whether that would be reasonable to customers.

The greater the consequences of underperforming, the more conservatively you should set expectations. The same is true for greater variability or uncertainty in your ability to deliver consistently. Pleasantly surprising your customers by outperforming your own estimates—if they are reasonable in the first place—is also an opportunity to build goodwill.

Improve full journeys

As much as managing expectations can help, improving an organization's actual performance is the key to meeting and exceeding those expectations. To do so, agencies should think about journey redesign rather than process improvement—solving for what your customer is trying to accomplish rather than

I think we've been successful to some extent because we maintain a continuous effort to update and improve the site and our capabilities, but at the moment we are operating with some serious constraints. Soon, I anticipate a whole new way of operating that will help us deliver a new level of improved experience.

Rick DeLappe
National Park Service

focusing on the individual steps along the way. For example, suppose customers are frustrated that a multistep application's processing time takes too long. One impulse might be to think about reducing the time required for each step in the process. However, thinking of ways to reduce the number of approvals required to eliminate steps altogether might deliver greater impact. Perhaps you can segment customers up front and use a standard set of criteria applied in an automated process.

As part of its transformation effort, the online federal portal USA.gov created a journey-mapping tool to transform citizens' end-to-end experiences. The tool was based on an understanding of what customers were trying to accomplish, like applying for a job or finding hurricane-recovery resources. The agency redesigned journeys with these goals in mind, intentionally shaping the defining moments of each journey while paying attention to customer needs and emotive states throughout.
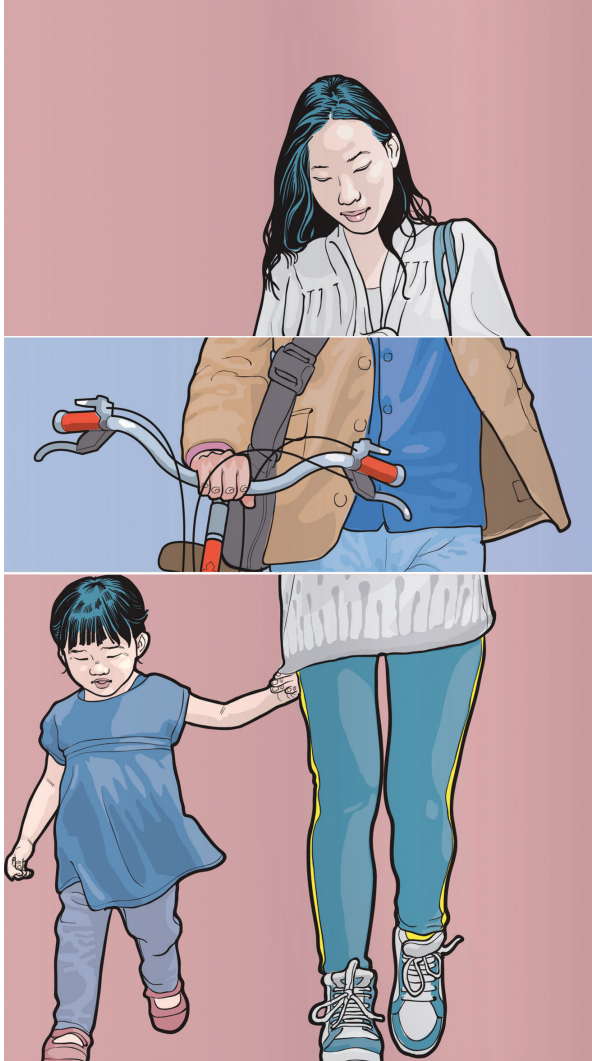
Top organizations take responsibility for their customers' entire journey, not just the portion under their agencies' direct control. People often don't or can't distinguish between interactions with government agents and those with external partners, making it critical to include the pieces delivered by other stakeholders when redesigning a journey. For example, the US Department of State found that the top reason passport applications were suspended was a problem with the applicant's photograph. These photographs were typically taken by independent vendors or one of 8,000 passport application–acceptance facilities, such as post offices and libraries. To address the problem, the department worked with photograph vendors to improve photograph quality. Then it started offering in-house photograph services at overseas government-run passport offices, thus eliminating the need for outside vendors entirely. Finally, it equipped applicants with information about how to take better pictures through a #PicturePerfectPassport social-media campaign,

integration on the back end. With digital approaches, if you feel like you are guessing, you might well be.

As an example, the National Park Service created a single portal, Recreation.gov, that combines relevant information from multiple similar agencies. Its flexible request-for-proposals process sought comment from users, hosted a "hackathon" to collect insights from its wealth of data quickly and inexpensively, and used customer feedback to test changes early and often. "We want to be actively engaging with the end user, collecting feedback, and then working in close proximity to execute and iterate on designs quickly," says Rick DeLappe, the portal's project manager. The agency expects the portal to support the evolving needs of customers seeking recreation and adventure through such programs as the Great Outdoors chatbot, which makes parks and recreation recommendations within an instant-messaging interface.

Cultivating a customer-centric culture

Learning to see through the eyes of frontline employees and aligning their behaviors, actions, and attitudes with customer needs can often be the most critical link in creating an enduring customer-experience program, especially in an environment of frequent administrative transitions. Nurturing a customer-centric culture can be a challenge, especially when employees are being asked to adopt a new perspective to their work. It is important to be deliberate in establishing organizational purpose, creating opportunities for employee engagement, adapting HR processes, and reinforcing desired behaviors. The result can make superior customer experience part of an institution's culture and secure its promise of sustained improvement.

Create a common purpose

Leaders looking to inspire a customer-centric culture are explicit and unrelenting in communicating and demonstrating the link between employee behavior

enabling the customers to demand better service from nongovernmental photograph takers.

Thoughtfully experiment with digital and design

As you shift your perspective from process improvement to journey redesign, you will likely wonder about the role that technology and creativity should play. Effective organizations realize that digital technology and design thinking are part and parcel of consumers' lives and must be integral to solutions. At the same time, there are myriad discouraging stories of huge investments that don't pay off. Our guidance: approach digital improvements in bite-size chunks. Make sure the decision is linked to an important element of customer satisfaction that is underperforming. Apply digital remedies where you are confident in your understanding of the root causes of dissatisfaction. Make sure a plan exists to migrate citizens onto the digital platform and that it includes

and customer experience. Building that conviction often starts with a simple, crisp statement of intent based on a shared vision and aspiration. At the US Department of State's Bureau of Consular Affairs, for example, this shared purpose is reflected in the rallying cry, "No missed trips!" Even a three-word statement can convey a genuine, easily understood goal that can help focus leadership and empower the front line around an objective important to customers. The slogan converts the task of fulfilling passport requests into a shared purpose of helping people arrive safely and quickly at their destinations.

Such a vision from the top is essential but insufficient by itself. To mount an effective customer experience–improvement program, all employees (from management to the front line) must understand and support the vision. Every interaction between employees and senior leaders is a chance to showcase goals and priorities as well as celebrate employees who have gone the extra mile to help customers. Be clear and consistent in establishing this common purpose from the beginning. Repeatedly demonstrating alignment with existing organizational goals or, even better, usefulness in achieving the goals will help elucidate the common purpose to the front line.

Hire for attitude; train for customer experience

Here is an approach we have admired in the private sector and would love to see more in the public sector: employee mind-set as a formal hiring criterion. Some of the world's leading customer-experience organizations, such as Disney, make a job candidate's attitude and personality something to recognize and celebrate. If the goal is to have happy, smiling people working with your customers, then hire happy, smiling people and train them for the necessary technical skills. It is often easier than the reverse. An energetic person excited about the agency's mission and opportunity to improve will likely be easier to coach and develop into a customer-experience leader than will someone lacking those traits.

Give employees a vehicle—and permission to take the wheel

Once the vision is established, share it through real employee engagement; go beyond simply asking for input and changing performance metrics. One approach is to identify a specific problem—one that matters to customers and that leaders are committed to addressing—and ask employees to share ideas to help solve it. This way, employees don't assume their suggestions are getting lost in a box somewhere, but they are helping advance a strategic agenda. As part of a transformation effort, one airport identified a new and specific problem for employee input each week, created an online platform to submit ideas, and used that same platform to report updates on how the problems were being solved and the effect on customers. For frontline workers, the outreach, channeling of ideas, and follow-up feedback loop sent a message that their ideas mattered, which motivated them to engage even more deeply.

Leading agencies in customer experience go further by embracing organic, personalized, and sometimes unplanned activities that support a customer-centric culture. In the beginning of its own customer-experience transformation, one federal agency saw small, self-organized working groups pop up to work on problems that employees considered critical. At first, leaders were unsure if this would dilute the central effort or confound priorities, but they soon embraced the groups as the lifeblood of the transformation effort. When USCIS invited frontline employees to build out and test their own ideas, employees immediately felt more invested in the effort. Giving employees a platform and encouraging them to lead, whatever their job title, allows an organization to make the most of available resources while generating the energy, excitement, and passion needed for a truly transformative program.

Reinforce behaviors, not just outcomes

Recognition from senior leaders matters—as does acknowledgment from peers, which is

often overlooked. Some agencies have found this acknowledgment even more effective than top-down encouragement at producing results. Why? Because peers have visibility into the daily behaviors of employees, and reinforcing the behaviors required to deliver excellent customer experience is what builds capabilities and consistency over time. This approach results in greater collective improvement than does applauding outcomes alone, which is generally what senior leaders observe.

One airport created a system whereby employees could anonymously recognize peers who took actions aligned with customer-experience goals. The program boomed. Leaders noted that this system produced energy among employees as well as deepened and sustained their customer-centric culture to a degree that wouldn't have otherwise been possible. Some agencies, like the TSA, have chosen to integrate customer experience into performance plans. It is even better, if possible, to link both behaviors and outcomes to all sources of feedback, including that from peers, leaders, and customers.

Building and sustaining momentum

Starting on day one of an improvement effort, create an institutional structure to make focusing on customer experience a habit. Demonstrating actions

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The agency needs to re-create itself as an entity that is agile and capable of change…. We made a lot of those little changes that built up our partners' trust and allowed us to develop the kinds of relationships we needed to … really help our partners make decisions.

Laura Furgione
National Weather Service

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and successes—however small—to customers and employees is essential for building momentum.

Put up quick wins

To build energy in your organization, dive right into fixing the obvious problems. When customer complaints, media reports, and legal challenges make the problems clear, there is no need to waste time collecting data to confirm what is already well known. Also, consider tackling smaller problems first to get tangible wins early. For example, users of the National Weather Service (NWS) felt the agency's all-caps messages seemed "like we were yelling at people," said former deputy director Laura Furgione in an interview last year. "We changed that, and we made the NWS consistent with other sources of information and how the public and our partners want to receive information. It seemed like a little thing, but it's showed that the NWS could actually make a change and come out of the dark ages."

As you kick off, clearly signal to employees the need for new ways of thinking and operating. In its customer experience–improvement effort, FEMA officials used "design sprints"—a highly concentrated, rapid design and testing approach occurring within a few days to a week—to get quick answers and input from customers. They also used "gallery walks" to show what customers were experiencing and what needed to be solved. This approach highlighted pain points and opportunities, created conversation among employees, and indicated an intention to do business differently. These sessions were held in the main conference room on the main floor, where everyone could walk in and see and feel what needed changing and why.
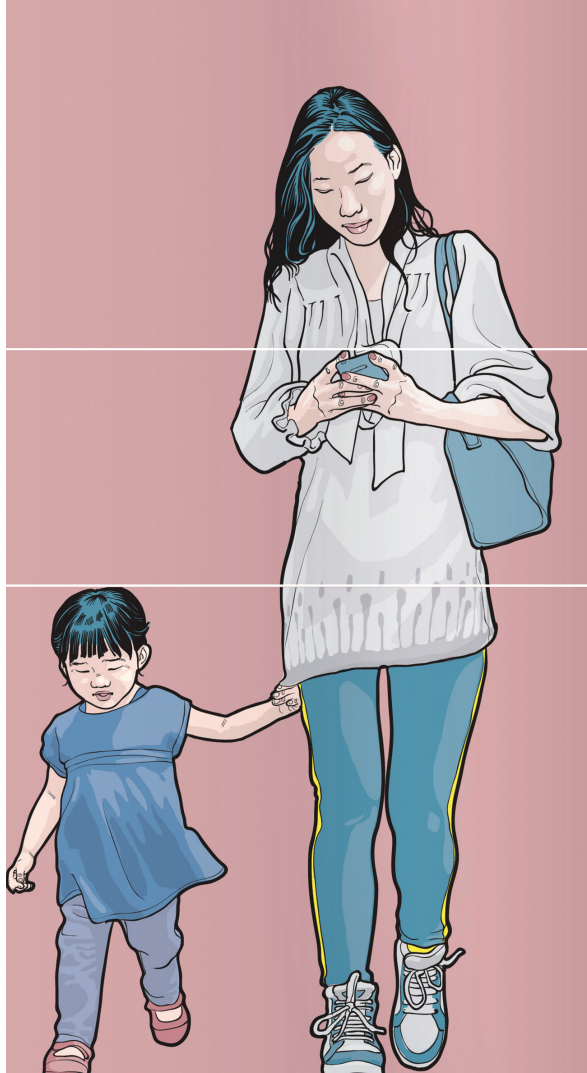
Use the team and resources you have and build from there. The fact is, starting small is often the only option within the public sector's reality of constrained budgets, HR limitations, and barriers to establishing a new team or department. We have observed organizations begin transformations with only one

or two dedicated people leading the charge, add staff through rotations or details, and use the success of those early customer-experience teams to justify adding resources for growth.

Provide access to senior leaders

Embedding a customer orientation in an agency cannot be a side project or siloed activity. It must be a shared aspiration within the organization. While small, dedicated customer-experience teams can help lead a transformation, they will need the leadership and decision-making authority of senior leaders to achieve the cross-functional collaboration necessary for success. In one federal agency, the chief operating officer decided to make customer experience a strategic priority. He established a Customer Experience Office headed by a senior executive as its chief officer. The executive was accountable for front-end processes, like applications and central processing, and held a senior-leadership role through the agency's operating committee that included strategic and

budget-setting power. The chief customer-experience officer's formal authority and backing by senior leaders were critical in encouraging and empowering changes at the front line.

Meet on a standard rhythm

The internal and external infrastructures to sustain and track the progress of a customer experience–improvement program need not be complex, but they must be consistent. As with all transformations, establishing a regular cadence of internal processes is critical. These structures provide an opportunity to refresh the program's vision, set project priorities, reinforce behaviors, identify problems, build employee engagement, and drive project-team action between meetings. USCIS implemented twice-weekly problem-solving sessions with project teams and senior leaders, a weekly all-hands meeting to share success stories, and daily huddles led by senior leaders. Such a system encourages decision making, prevents delays, and ensures consistency while holding project teams accountable for making real progress. The meeting structure is simple and won't do the job itself; the relentless focus on what matters, on actions and behaviors, and on a commitment to trying new approaches is what makes the difference.

Keep a record to celebrate and cement progress

The rhythm of administration transitions poses a unique challenge to governments in maintaining program momentum. Leaders come and go, and new priorities cloud the institutional memory. You might need to revisit efforts to embed a common purpose, behaviors, and risk taking deeply within the organization, but your customers and their needs likely aren't changing on the same schedule.

Established processes are one way to cement changes; written documents are another. Formal documents that lay out the agency's customer-experience vision—anchored in what matters to its customers and its progress to date—can guide and sustain

customer-experience programs through times of change. Chronicle and share key decisions, major successes and their impact, and critical steps in order to move in the direction of the shared goal of improved customer experience. Provide teams with a record of their successes that they can be proud of. Give them something to highlight when administrators inevitably change in order to preserve their platform, empower themselves, and preserve the customer's voice through a transition.

In the space of five years, the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) underwent a transition to a new secretary, a new commissioner of its Federal Housing Administration, and two new leaders of the business unit at the center of its customer-experience transformation. In the face of so much turnover, HUD maintained positive momentum in advancing customer-experience goals, largely due to a detailed strategic plan and an extensive report it produced for the US Congress. The report detailed its progress on metrics, the "story" of its transformation, the decisions made on and rationale for budget requests, successes achieved relative to the strategy, and key takeaways. Detailed records of both what HUD had achieved and why helped avoid "organizational amnesia." Despite these major transitions, HUD succeeded in improving customer outcomes and customer-satisfaction scores as well as boosting employee engagement, morale, and efficiency.

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Transformation of any kind isn't easy. As both the necessity and benefits of customer-experience improvements become increasingly evident in the public sector, we hope the lessons of government leaders can help decode the puzzle of serving customers better. ■

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[1] Governments serve their citizens as well as an array of other constituents and stakeholders. In this article, the term "customer" refers to all those who make use of government services.

[2] Social-media scraping refers to collecting and analyzing large volumes of public posts on websites like Twitter.

[3] Geofencing refers to using location data through platforms such as GPS or Wi-Fi to create a virtual perimeter within an actual physical space. In this case, it allowed the airport to identify and review the social-media posts made by users located at a specific gate.

Serena Advani, Sarah Esty, and **Kari Hernandez** are consultants in McKinsey's Stamford office; **Tony D'Emidio** is a partner in the Washington, DC, office.