Four Considerations in Building a Citizen-Centric Government

The radical changes brought about by the Internet and mobile computing have dramatically changed the demands of both today's consumer and today's citizen. Experts suggest that there are four communication demands by citizens that are key to building a citizen-centric government. Citizens are asking governments to:

1. Enable 24/7 access

2. Know citizens whenever and wherever they interact with the government

3. Provide equal access

4. Proactively care for the citizenry

1. Enable 24/7 access

As consumers of products and services offered by the private sector, citizens have been exposed to a new, more transparent, mobile and social experience. Citizens bring these consumer-based expectations to the interactions they have with government agencies and so the 'always-on,' self-serve access that has radically changed many industries in the private sector is now also transforming the communication techniques of today's government. To meet these expectations of 24/7 access government agencies need to provide a combination of self-service and assisted-service options across touchpoints and channels.

For example, the United Kingdom has launched a One Government site -- uk.gov -- where residents can obtain services and information provided by a wide variety of departments at various levels of government. And India has committed itself to transforming 100 cities into "smart cities" in which "a very important feature…is good citizen access to information. Whether it be regarding city specific data or the measures being taken by municipal bodies or information relating to various service providers such as transport and similar information relevant for potential investors, [it] has to be conveniently available. This could be through multiple channels - internet, mobile apps, radio, TV, print media, etc.," according to India's Urban Development Minister Venkaiah Naidu.[i]

New York City has gone one step further with a highly successful 311 phone number that provides a 'virtual' agency for one-stop shopping, initially implemented through a 24/7 single number call center and then additionally online through nyc.gov. Today, residents can call 3-1-1 at any time and speak in any of 180 languages to a customer service agent who can assist them in a wide range of services. To enable quick responses, customer service agents

have access to a comprehensive repository of information on more than 6,000 aspects of the NY government. Averaging 30,000 calls a day, New York anticipates 10m calls a year to this line.[ii]

Most governments are well under way with programs to put government information and documents into self-serve portals and websites but few have implemented a combination of web and live assistance, via click-to-chat, callback, and co-browsing functionality. This hybrid approach to services can dramatically increase the success rate of a citizen completing the self-service forms while governments move to a cost-effective web platform.

2. Know citizens whenever and wherever they interact with the government

More importantly, however, and much more difficult to achieve, is an omni-channel view of the citizen: clear visibility into the citizen, his complaint regardless of the channel (web, mobile, in-person visit) where it was lodged, and the requests he has in to the government. Government agencies have historically viewed their organizations by discrete departments but in doing so, the citizen's view, needs and desires are often lost or minimized. Ovum research finds that "today's citizens get frustrated by government agencies with limited accountability mechanisms and fragmented systems.[iii]"

A Price Waterhouse Coopers study in Australia, 2012, found that the siloed structure of public sector departments or agencies means citizens are often left responsible for connecting the dots between agency silos rather than the citizen seeing a single organization that is working for them. A significant challenge facing public sector organizations in becoming truly citizen-centric is successfully breaking down the silos to create a 'connected government'.[iv]

Government initiatives to address siloed information are given names such as One Government, eGovernment, or Smart Government (though Smart Government and Smart City initiatives are broader and address technological innovations to drive sustainability and usability e.g. traffic, pollution, and energy consumption.) IDC "Government Insights" defines the One Government initiatives as "the implementation of a set of business processes and underlying information technology capabilities that enable information to flow seamlessly across government agencies and programs to become intuitive in providing high quality citizen services across all government programs and activity domains.[v]"

In one of the broadest and most ambitious government programs, the city-state of Singapore has embarked on a total transformation of its underlying Information and Communications foundation to enable "intelligence" in all aspects of society with the goal of An Intelligent Nation. In May 2005, the Singapore government developed a 10-year master plan to grow the infocomm (ICT) sector and to use infocomm technologies to enhance the competitiveness of key economic sectors and build a well-connected society. The master plan, known as iN2015, is a living blueprint to navigate Singapore's transition into 'An Intelligent Nation, A Global City, Powered By Infocomm'. It involves:

- **Mobile Government:** More than 100 unique mobile services from government agencies, non-government entities such as restructured hospitals and universities, as well as apps co-created with the private sectors that utilize government data are available on mGov@SG.

- **eGov:** This eCitizen portal provides first-stop access to cross-agency content and more than 400 government e-services.

- **Healthcare:** Telehealth enables medical caregivers to remotely monitor chronic disease patients at NUHS.

3. Provide equal access

Global mobility, with its shifting demographics, immigration, and refugee populations, is a challenge facing all governments. Almost without exception, governments are working with a multilingual nation, and providing access to information and services in all the languages of the population – or even just the main languages used by the population – is a daunting task. To fail to do so, however, leaves a citizen segment uninformed, underserved, and vulnerable. Multilingual websites provide one-way static communication but don't go far enough: essential services require immediate and personal interaction. Think of a citizen being arrested with no understanding of the charges or ability to explain their situation because of the language barrier. At the same time, however, personally delivered, face-to-face translators are impossible to cost-effectively provide to a large and diverse population.

Thankfully, a growing market segment – the translation-focused call center – is rising to the challenge. The Federal Bureau of Labor Statistics estimates the growth of the interpretation and translation market to grow faster than the average of all occupations through 2016.[vi] Statistics from Common Sense Advisory show the global market for outsourced language services was worth £21 billion in 2012, as a result of a compound annual growth rate of 12.17%.[vii] The translation industry globally is projected to grow to $39 billion by 2018[viii] and the industry made the 2014 Inc. list of the best industries for starting a business.[ix]

Whether it's the ability to virtually connect far-flung native speakers who may be called upon on an ad hoc basis, or a dedicated call center staffed with multilingual experts, these firms can provide real-time translation on a moment's notice, in some cases in any of 200 languages, and frequently have expertise in judicial, legal, healthcare, financial services or insurance issues. Some translation companies combine video interaction as well. Imagine a city where every courtroom and every hospital could provide immediate translation to all involved, in any language. Imagine a police car or the counter in the social services office equipped in the same way.

Geographic location is no longer an issue in providing equal access to quality citizen-centric services either. While many governments are consolidating offices in densely populated areas, leaving rural areas underserved and dependent on websites alone, smarter call routing can offload overflow calls and interactions from the cities to the outlying areas which can keep government workers employed and rural service sites open while still reaping the economic efficiencies of consolidation. Video kiosks are increasingly being used to provide face-to-face interaction between a rural citizen and an urban-based worker.

4. Proactively care for the citizenry

Today's citizen is looking to the government to proactively communicate with them not just for tax and fine collection but for their safety and security. Terrorism and extreme weather are just two of the factors driving demand for fast, proactive notifications. The Philippines recently passed a law that requires mobile phone companies to send warnings to millions of people in the path of deadly typhoons, volcanic eruptions and earthquakes, in an effort to reduce the high number of fatalities that occur almost every year.[x]

Emergency notification systems (ENS) have become essential security features in higher education since the 2007 Virginia Tech (U.S.) shooting. In that incident, some believe the two-hour gap between the dorm killing and the classroom massacre provided a missed opportunity to warn the entire campus.[xi] The Clery Act, though focused on the reporting of sexual assault on campus, also "requires institutions to give timely warnings of crimes that represent a threat to the safety of students or employees.[xii]

Michigan Office of Child Support decreased the number of cases escalated to a manager by an estimated 90%.

More sophisticated and multi-modal communication tactics are required for mass notifications because of the limitations of the traditional sirens or bells. Sirens may alert a town to a problem but can't specify what type of problem; sirens heard in town may not be heard outside of town where the danger may be imminent (in the instance of a tsunami, for example.) Vocal instructions provided by loudspeakers are frequently unintelligible. According to the National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities, "bells or alarms don't spell out the nature of the threat or fine tune the response. Does everyone know what the second blast of the siren means? Take cover, remain in place, evacuate, or the crisis has passed? Some systems can integrate pre-recorded messages into the existing system, making the instructions clearer. But even with a speaker system, garbled communication can be a problem, rendering messages indecipherable.[xiii]"

Technology for communication now provides more avenues for effective mass communications, but it has also increased the challenges for those involved. On the one hand, communicators can now use digital signage, email, mass voice mail, text message, website and siren alerts. On the other hand, utilizing all of those communication vehicles quickly, seamlessly, with identical, current information, deployed during the middle of an emergency of unknown specifications, can be difficult. As Security Info Watch says, "With so many technologies to choose from on the market, implementing a system that fits the needs of the application has become a huge challenge.[xiv]" And the challenge is not just in its complexity: reliance on the wrong set of technologies can have serious consequences.   "Although technologies such as text messages and even outbound robo-calling are very popular […] if there is a cell tower near the scene of the emergency that gets overloaded then you could run the risk of your warnings not getting out if you don't use another notification method.[xv]"

In the near future, governments will have the ability to anticipate events through the collection and analysis of Internet of Things data. The data can provide early insight into potential issues or hazards: for example, a gas leak detection scenario. Monitors on the gas line can alert the utility to a potentially developing leak. Crowd-sourced information from Twitter or posted reports of a gas smell in the area on other social media can add insight, and the municipality can dispatch police, fire, and utility crews. Simultaneously, the information can help officials control traffic signals to restrict vehicle access to the area, expedite emergency response and proactively notify potentially affected residents all of which can minimize risk.

Genesys CX Platform – The ideal foundation for any citizen–centric initiative

The Genesys Customer Experience Platform is designed to deliver individualized citizen experiences based on context across all channels including voice, web, mobile, social media, physical government offices and branches, and citizen engagements with field workers. Genesys can enable governments to intelligently manage communications with their constituents.

Similarly, Genesys can help you in any One Government or shared services initiative to effectively and efficiently manage interactions, and the citizen engagement process across a multitude of channels both inbound and outbound, and across a multitude of departments.
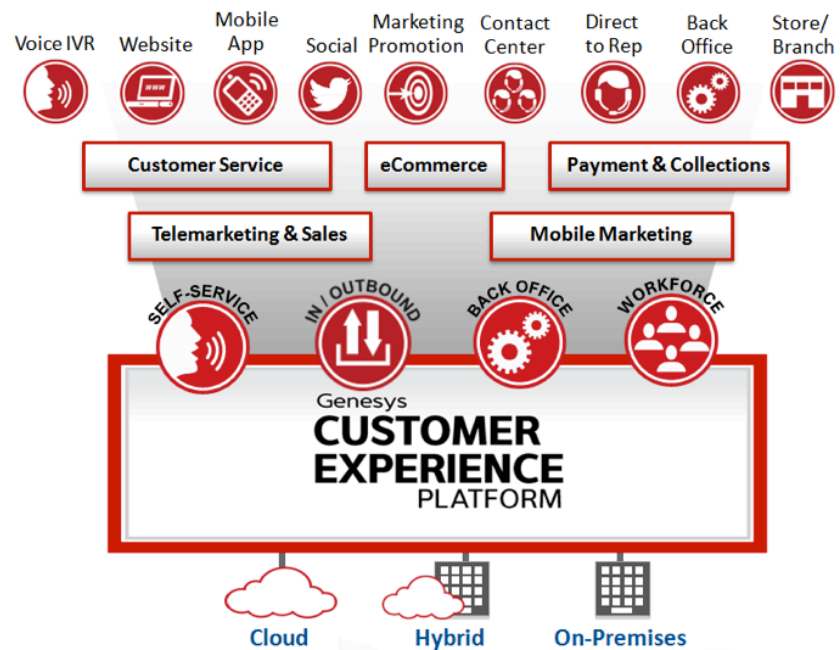
The Genesys Customer Experience Platform delivers integrated, best–in–class contact center solutions with front and back office integration for organizations of any size. The platform enables your organization to design, implement and manage journey–specific citizen experiences that are consistent, seamless and personalized. Journey-specific experiences match the expectations of your citizens within the different stages of each journey, across the various channels they use to communicate, and the manner in which the experience is delivered – via self-service or human interaction.

For example, the Michigan Office of Child Support was "woefully behind in serving our customers. Customers and specialists often played 'phone tag,' leaving one another messages. It could take days or weeks to connect with the customer and move the case to the next step; many customers were denied assistance benefits through no fault of their own.[xvi]" After working with Genesys on process changes, an Interactive Voice Response (IVR) system and more efficient call routing, the Office of Child Support maintains that "our call wait-times now average 5 minutes compared to the previous 2-week response time. And because we serve our clients on their first call, our call volume has decreased by 36.5 percent. By quickly handling high–volume call days, we increased the number of case referrals to the prosecutor's office by 44 percent and decreased the number of cases escalated to a manager by an estimated 90 percent. We are also mailing fewer noncompliance letters: 53 percent less in February 2014 than in February 2013. In addition, we have fewer requests for administrative hearings due to noncompliance with child support requirements. In January, OCS held 151 administrative hearings on child support non–compliance compared to 51 hearings held in March.[xvii]"

Furthermore, the lack of data sharing across services, agencies and citizen channels due to various structural, cultural and technology challenges results in duplicated processes and higher cost structures. Read how the Netherlands Ministry of the Interior and Kingdom Relations saved EU 51 million annually by consolidating 12 ministries, introducing a self-service portal, and launching a centralized call center serving 123,000 employees.

Intelligent Interaction Routing and Workforce Optimization

The Genesys Continuous Workforce Optimization solution offers a complete suite of workforce optimization capabilities. Built on the Customer Experience Platform, it offers a high level of automation through the use of shared application services such as a single user and skills database and schedule–based routing for front and back office tasks. You can continuously improve the citizen experience and employee quality through highly accurate speech and text analytics that automatically trigger workflows to schedule training or update an agent's skill.

The Genesys Continuous Workforce Optimization solution includes a variety of products and capabilities that make up a complete and comprehensive offer for companies of all sizes.

- **Workforce Management:** Provides multi-channel forecasting and scheduling capabilities and real–time schedule adherence.

- **Interaction Recording:** Records the citizen conversation for quality control and regulatory compliance.

- **Quality Management:** Improves citizen satisfaction and employee performance by analyzing and scoring employees on predefined quality metrics and goals.

- **Coaching:** Provides a record of employee evaluations and coaching moments.

- **Speech and Text Analytics:** Analyze the citizen conversation (spoken words and text interactions.)

- **Skills Management:** Assess employee knowledge through web-based assessments and administer and automate the process of training employees.

- **Real-Time and Historical Reporting:** Collect Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and report on them in real time or analyze past performance and trends.

- **Agent and Manager Dashboards:** Provides supervisors and business managers with KPIs to for real-time and intraday management purposes.

For example, Election Protection is a dynamic coalition of non-partisan American organizations dedicated to providing a comprehensive program to ensure that all eligible Americans have an equal opportunity to cast a meaningful ballot. Their 1-866-OUR-VOTE is the only national voter protection line that provides live agents with state and local information to callers. Calls come into a call center and are routed to volunteers and attorneys all over the country. Between 2001 and 2003, the hotline received anywhere from 1,000 to 1,500 calls on Election Day. In 2004, however, call volume spiked exponentially, resulting in 200,000 calls, with more than 100,000 on Election Day alone. The cloud-based Genesys Premier Edition Virtual Call Center allowed the organization to create a call center in very little time that would rapidly scale to meet demand. The system also allowed the organization to analyze data, such as caller location and percentage of requests for Spanish translation – an added feature that Election Protection was happy to have. You can read the full story here.

Intelligent Work Management

Governmental agencies also need to be able to effectively and efficiently manage the processes supporting the citizen–facing interactions. Processing of applications, requests, appeals and other long running, multi-step processes are critical to the citizen's experience and to the efficient operations of the government.

Government processes can be very complex. They are often managed through a mixture of systems and across multiple teams, leading to inefficiency, increased costs, and decreased citizen satisfaction. The solution to ensuring that all tasks are completed efficiently, accurately, and on time is twofold. First, the administrator of tasks needs to gain complete visibility into the volume, velocity, and variety of all tasks. Second, the administrator needs to use this information to intelligently manage and track task assignments. The Genesys Customer Experience Platform and the Genesys Enterprise Workload Management solutions in particular are critical components of any strategy to reach these goals.

Proactive Citizen Communications and Notifications

The Genesys Proactive Customer Communication solution supports mass notification by enabling governmental agencies, colleges and businesses to reach constituents via a wide range of communication vehicles, can be fully integrated across systems and departments, and has the ability to scale when inbound and outbound contacts peak during an emergency. The Genesys solution provides coverage with a wide range of communication vehicles:

- Effectively utilize multiple channels including mobile, chat, SMS text, email, voice and social
- Create announcements to citizens across multiple touch points (Interactive Voice Response, Web, SMS, email, etc.) to inform citizens
- Localize and customize announcements or messages to target those citizens that are impacted
- Upon resolution of the crisis, send personalized messages to citizens with next–step information
- Survey citizens whether online, mobile, or via an IVR system
- Self-service options provide and collect information without staff interaction
- Foster two-way communication that improves emergency response
- Fully integrate across systems and departments
- Seamless integration of all data and information across multiple channels
- Monitor all touchpoints for volume spikes in contacts or comments that may indicate a problem in advance of alerts
- Provide both broad-based notifications and tailored localized communication
- Self-service and call-center based communication
- Utilization of both inbound and outbound communication

Conclusion

Building a citizen–centric communication model is challenging and tremendously important. Genesys enables you to deliver a better citizen experience that is more complete, equal, proactive, and efficient, by providing:

- Omni–channel routing with full context, voice, web, mobile, social and white mail

- World–class voice self–service, click to chat and co–browse

- Full mobile application integration to provide context–aware access to assisted service through voice, text messages, email or callback

- Proactive, coordinated and scalable communications through voice, voice messages, emails and text messages

- Unified data repository for citizen data

- Text and speech analytics and citizen surveys to drive citizen experience optimization

- Optimized contact center workload and resource management

- Improved back office and offline workload and resource management

Some Genesys Government Customers

i   http://indiatoday.intoday.in/story/narendra-modi-imprint-on-smart-city-project/1/382571.html

ii   Transforming the Citizen Experience, One Stop Shop for Public Services, PWC Australia, Feb 2012

iii   Defining Citizen Experience in the US Government, Ovum, Oct 2012

iv   Transforming the Citizen Experience, One Stop Shop for Public Services, op.cit.

v   IDC "Government Insights"

vi   http://sbinformation.about.com/od/startingabusiness/a/translationbiz.htm

vii http://www.capitatranslationinterpreting.com/the-translation-industry-5-years-later/

viii http://www.inc.com/jill-krasny/why-translation-services-is-a-top-industry-to-start-a-business.html#ixzz3EMzRhbla

ix   http://www.inc.com/jill-krasny/why-translation-services-is-a-top-industry-to-start-a-business.html

x   http://www.theaustralian.com.au/news/latest-news/filipinos-to-be-texted-disaster-alerts/
      story-fn3dxix6-1226972154298?nk=a389e35676052ce07f2d8f175d02838c

xi   http://www.ncef.org/pubs/notification.pdf

xii http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Clery_Act

xiii "Mass Notification for Higher Education," National Clearinghouse for Educational Facilities at the National Institute
      of Building Sciences , 2010

xiv http://www.securityinfowatch.com/article/10481502/the-evolution-of-mass-notification-systems-part-1

xv   http://www.securityinfowatch.com/article/10481502/the-evolution-of-mass-notification-systems-part-1

xvi Child Support Report at http://www.acf.hha.gov/programs/css, June, 2014

xvii Child Support Report at http://www.acf.hha.gov/programs/css, June, 2014

About Genesys

Genesys is the market leader in multi-channel customer experience (CX) and contact center solutions in the cloud and on-premises. We help brands of all sizes make great CX great business. The Genesys Customer Experience Platform powers optimal customer journeys consistently across all touchpoints, channels and interactions to turn customers into brand advocates. Genesys is trusted by over 4,500 customers in 80 countries to orchestrate more than 100 million digital and voice interactions each day.

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