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How to achieve your agency's CX goals

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Meaningful communication creates the foundation for good CX



Angy Peterson
Vice President,
Granicus

Customer experience is one of the top priorities for federal agencies now, especially those that directly interact with the public. That's prompted conversations about bringing together silos to better facilitate collaboration and provide more streamlined experiences. But the throughline that connects all federal CX efforts

is communication.

"Having a very clear human-centered approach to strategic communications is a critical component to ensure that people are aware of the services that are available to them online, that they're adopting those digital service options," said Angy Peterson, vice president of [Granicus](#). "With this approach to digital communications, federal agencies would actually have the measurement and the data in place to see that all of those goals are being accomplished."

Agencies are familiar with traditional communications media. They engage with public relations firms and the news media to promote stories. They conduct public awareness campaigns across every available platform, from bus stop advertisements to social media, and they tend to be pretty good at driving broad awareness.

Where they fall short though, Peterson said, is more granular, personalized messaging.

Expanding beyond awareness campaigns

"There's ways to really leverage some of those more traditional channels and drive people to sign up for email or sign up for text messaging," she said. "And then once you have that subscriber, there's ways to then start to understand better where they live, what topics they might be interested in, what services are most relevant to them, and what information they are clicking on or not clicking on."

That data can then be put to use to improve targeted advertising and awareness campaigns for certain services to the people for whom they're most relevant. But even that is still a fairly traditional application of these mediums, Peterson



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said. The next step, she said, is getting more personalized.

It's not enough to send out one or two broad messages to the millions of people who *might* be eligible for a particular benefit. Digital platforms allow for a very specific, segmented and personalized follow-up that agencies largely aren't taking advantage of yet, Peterson said.

For example, if someone applies for a particular benefit, they may be interested in guidance about the next step they can take on that path. They may be interested in similar benefits that they may qualify for, based on that initial application, and how to pursue those. They may require further documents that can be sent to them, or updates about the status of their application.

And then data about those processes can be gathered and applied in a continuous feedback loop to streamline the targeting and eliminate pain points in the interactions.

Using data to revamp targeting, processes

"There's certainly some basic metrics like clicks, opens and engagement rates. All of those are kind of table stakes. How many people are opening a message? If they're opening it, great.

Are they also clicking? How much time are they spending then on the website?" Peterson said. "But then we try to tie that segmented approach to messaging: How many of those people receiving the segmented message are actually taking the desired actions online?"

For example, Granicus has found that with segmented, personalized messaging, people are 30% more likely to take a desired step, whether that's comparing health plans, completing an application or creating an account. And for people that do create an account, segmented messaging makes them 60% more likely to log into it.

Part of that is the ability to eliminate bottlenecks and pain points in the customer experience. If the data shows a significant number of people drop off the process at a certain point, that's something the agency needs to address to improve customer experience. For example, if customers are dropping off calls to the call center because it's taking too long for someone to answer, maybe the agency can proactively funnel some of them to self-service options.

Federal agencies are already using artificial intelligence–powered chatbots to recognize variations on frequently asked questions and direct customers to the solutions they need without having to interact with an agency

employee. The same method can be applied to simple status updates for applications. Tools and solutions can also be set to send prewritten updates tied to certain triggers, like notifying a customer that they'll hear from the agency about their application within 30 days.

Turning to human touch when it matters most

That's not to say human touch isn't important or could be eliminated altogether. Methods like this free up call center personnel to deal with more complicated matters that require a human touch.

"Ultimately, we're all still humans. There needs to be some amount of human touch and human

insight to inform all the automation. The goal here is to be using digital communications to create capacity," Peterson said. "If you can automate the more administrative requests and simple asks that people have, it frees up people to have more capacity for those more complex needs where you do need a conversation or some kind of in-person experience to help properly serve people. That creates space for public sector employees to engage with people in a way that's far more meaningful." 🤖



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