

6 Often-Overlooked Tactics for Improving CX

Ever since the Biden administration issued an [executive order](#) on transforming federal customer experience (CX), agencies have been exploring ways both to measure and improve CX. There are a wide range of CX-focused solutions on the market that can help agencies make headway. But there are also some less obvious tactics or mindsets that can make a difference as well.

Here are some of the ideas discussed during a recent GovLoop virtual event titled [“Where to Focus Your CX Efforts.”](#)

1. Take Surveys Seriously

The customer survey is a standard tool in the CX toolbox, but it's often used in a “maybe they'll take it, maybe they won't” kind of way. Not so at the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA).

The VA has a program called Veteran Signals, or VSignals, that provides very detailed measures of the customer experience of veterans and their family members or caregivers, said Evan Albert, the VA's Director of Measurement and Data Analytics.

The program covers the full gamut of VA services, from healthcare and benefits to memorial services. The department distributes surveys to all individuals who have had appointments or other interactions with VA services over a two-week span. A week later, a reminder is sent to anyone who didn't respond.

All results are available immediately to VA leadership via dashboards. The dashboards make it possible to “slice and dice the data to find out what dimensions of customer experience in those specific programs and services are working for veterans,” Albert said.

The program, which began in 2017, has generated 10 million survey responses.

2. Identify Your Customers' Friction Points

We've all had that experience with digital services: Everything is going along fine, then suddenly we hit a snag. Perhaps one particular task, e.g., setting up an account or getting an email confirmation, is glitchy, making the whole interaction take longer than it should — or worse yet, leading us to give up.

Those snags are known as friction points, and those drop-offs are referred to as churn.

To improve the customer experience, agencies need to identify and address those friction points, said Matt Carter, Senior Customer Identity and Access Management Specialist at Okta, which provides identity solutions. Okta makes this a priority when working with agencies on digital services.

“We help customers create that frictionless flow and know whether they're getting stuck along the way in either providing credentials or passwords or in any other places that might cause dissatisfaction from the customer,” he said.

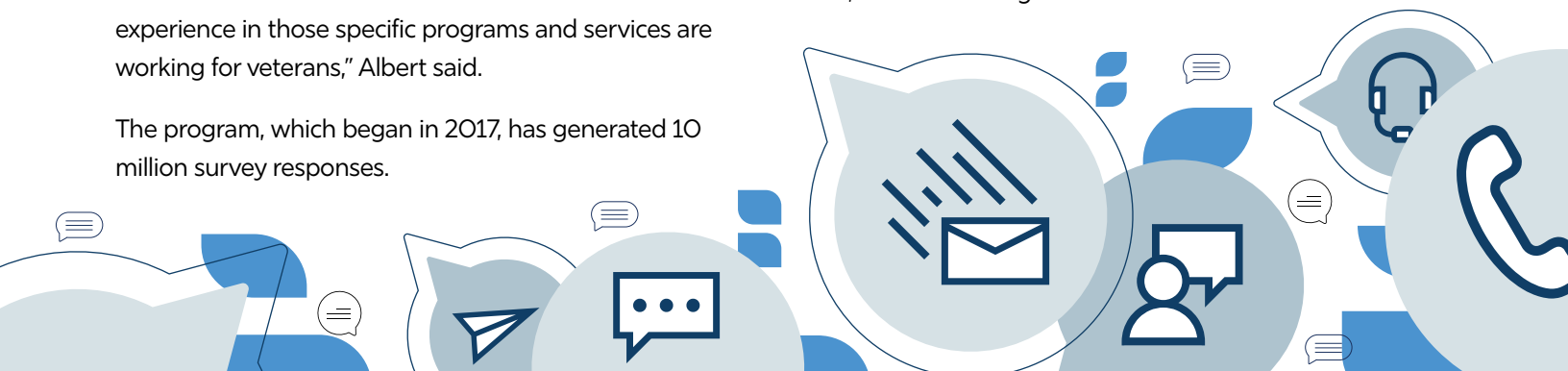
3. Don't Settle for Success

One of the irrefutable truths in digital services is that today's leading-edge solution is tomorrow's legacy system.

The key is to see a given digital service as a perpetual work in progress, beginning with that first release, said Ben Straub, Head of Public Sector for Atlassian, which provides collaborative tools for developers and other teams.

In launching a new service, you need to understand what you are trying to accomplish. But how you accomplish it will evolve over time, as you learn from your experience (and your customer's experience).

“Being agile and iterative is really key to creating that overall experience, because you're definitely not going to get it right the first time,” Straub said. “If we don't have agile mindset, it can lead us to say, Hey, we checked that box, we're done at ‘go live.’”



4. Know What Moments Matter

You can collect a lot of data points on the customer experience, but do you know which points matter most to your customers?

Like many large organizations, the VA has created customer journey maps that show the different points of engagement that veterans are likely to have with the department. Those journey maps highlight “moments that matter,” that is, interactions that factor heavily into how veterans perceive their overall experience, said Albert.

The VA identifies those moments that matter through a lot of old-fashioned legwork, conducting extensive focus groups and interviews with program managers who oversee CX or who supervise programs and services in the VA, as well as program participants.

The department uses those qualitative insights to shape how it conducts and responds to survey results, Albert said.

5. Keep Privacy Front and Center

Most people appreciate digital services that are tailored to their particular interests, but there’s a catch: Such personalization typically is based on insights gained from tracking user activity, and not everyone is comfortable with that tradeoff.

The key, said Okta’s Carter, is giving users more control over how their data is being managed.

For example, Okta’s customer identity and access management solution makes it possible to centrally manage user data across various applications and systems in the enterprise. Such a capability enables an agency to provide users with a seamless experience as they move from application to application — and it makes it easy to remove that data when users request it, Carter said.

6. Set up Your Employees for Success

In the search for solutions to improve CX, people often forget about the connection between CX and EX, that is, the employee experience.

Good CX “starts with making sure that the employees have what they need to quickly and efficiently serve the customer,” said Straub.

From a technology perspective, that means looking for a solution that is, first, easy to implement, and second, easy to configure so that it can evolve as requirements evolve, he said. From a change management perspective, it means working closely with the employees as the solution is implemented, then training them to use it effectively.

Taking that time to work with employees will go a long way to instilling a customer-first mindset, Straub said.

To hear more ideas, check out [the full event](#), which is available now on-demand.

