

# How Better CX Can Be More Than Wishful Thinking

People often talk about the customer or constituent experience as if it were just a matter of having the right mindset. But a good CX mindset, while admirable, is little more than wishful thinking if you don't take concrete steps to understand and improve the quality of services you provide constituents.

In a recent [GovLoop virtual event](#), sponsored by Dynatrace, experts from government and industry discussed a variety of tactics that can make a difference. Here are some highlights from that conversation.

## The speakers:

**Jay DuBois**, Multichannel Experience Office (MCXO), Taxpayer Experience Office (TXO), Internal Revenue Service

**Dana Chisnell**, Executive Director (Acting), Customer Experience, Office of the Chief Information Officer, United States Department of Homeland Security

**Willie Hicks**, Public Sector Chief Technologist, Dynatrace

## Think in Terms of the Total Experience

What people often think of as CX is really UX, that is, the user experience, the speakers said. UX refers to a customer's experience with a specific service or product, said DuBois of the IRS. In contrast, CX represents the "sum total of interactions that has person has with an agency or department's services and products," he said.

Technology plays a critical role in ensuring a seamless experience across different services and platforms, said Hicks of Dynatrace. You need the ability to manage and monitor services across on-premises and cloud and multi-cloud platforms. "You've got to make sure all those pieces are working together and meeting customers' expectations," Hicks said.

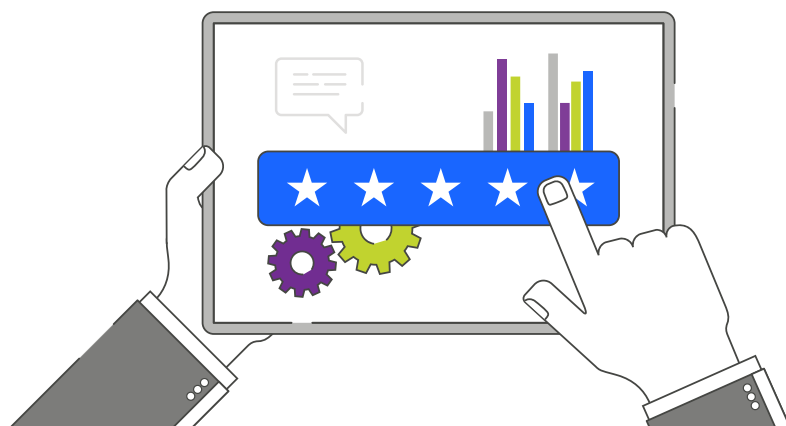
## Understand the Constituent Journey

One of the essential tools for CX is a journey map, said Chisnell of DHS. The idea is to plot the different steps that a constituent is likely to take in trying to accomplish a task, such as applying for assistance in the wake of a disaster, and then to measure their experience across that journey. "You can show what's good about that experience, and what's not good," she said.

## Don't Start From Scratch

Taking a strategic approach to CX, as opposed to more tactical UX efforts, can seem daunting, but it doesn't have to be. DuBois highlighted a number of CX-related resources that can help agencies begin their own journey. That includes:

- The [CX Playbook](#) developed by the CX Center of Excellence at the U.S. General Services Administration
- The [CX Toolkit](#) developed by the Digital.gov team
- The [CX Cookbook](#) developed by the Department of Veterans Affairs



## Tackle Visible Pain Points

One of the easiest ways to build internal support for a strategic CX initiative is to start by solving problems that people care about, said Chisnell. For example, is there a particular issue that leads to a lot of calls to the data center? Or is there a way to reduce the cost associated with a particular service? That's always a good starting point, she said.

## Measure Your Progress

To establish a CX baseline and track it over time, you need to look at both quantitative and qualitative measures, our speakers said. Here are some ways to do that:

- **Customer research**, such as interviews, surveys, focus groups and user testing. These efforts, carried out regularly, can help drive continuous improvement, DuBois said. Also look for operational data gathered from administrative systems that shed light on how services are performing.
- **Conversion rates**. Do you see a lot of people starting a given task but eventually abandoning it before it's done? That measure, adapted from the digital retail world, can help an agency identify a potential problem, Hicks said.
- **Open channels**. In addition to formal feedback initiatives, it's important to have open channels through which constituents can submit complaints and other feedback at any time, said Chisnell. It's also important to be transparent about the feedback given and, when appropriate, the actions taken in response, she said.



## Start Planning for AI, VR

Artificial intelligence (AI) soon will play a major role in CX, said Hicks. In particular, chatbots and other tools based on generative AI will make it much easier for constituents to access a wide range of services, with the ability to personalize those services in ways that can't be done through today's web- or app-based interfaces.

AI will be a boon for call centers, where employees find so much of their bandwidth taken up with repetitive work, such as updating contact information or requesting forms. As AI takes on that work, "you'll be able to take and train up those [agents] to handle more high-value tasks," Hicks said.

Also, think about how you might use virtual reality (VR) to provide richer interactions for constituents, especially for use in virtual meetings. "It sounds futuristic," Hicks said, but "we're already seeing this technology in museums and in learning spaces."

## To learn more ways to improve CX, watch the full event on demand.

