



Humanizing Mission Delivery to Build Trust

MARKET TRENDS REPORT



Medallia

Introduction

Consider the relationships in your life. Trust is often built and nurtured by deliberate actions and intentions. However long or short, easy or difficult, there is a journey for a stranger to become an acquaintance and an acquaintance to become a friend. This journey is similar between government and constituents as well.

In public service, trust is the representation of the confidence that constituents have in government to “do what is right and perceived fair,” according to scholar David Easton. It is an unspoken agreement of integrity between two parties, which depends on both parties. And in government — as in other areas of your life — without trust, the involved parties cannot accomplish much. Government depends on the trust of those it serves.

Public trust in government has been at historic lows in recent decades. That’s why today, more than ever, rebuilding trust is vital as communities recover from the pandemic, take the COVID-19 vaccine, accept election results or have confidence in the government’s future strategy amid growing inequities.

Despite the challenges that federal, state and local governments face, they can preserve and build their constituents’ trust with the right tools and a willingness to center the human experience.

To better understand the relationship between trust and experience, GovLoop partnered with Medallia on this report. Medallia solutions capture feedback, analyze data and help organizations take action to increase trust. In this report, we highlight a core discipline to operationalizing trust – customer experience (CX) – and how your agency can use experience-based data to drive trust upward.

By the Numbers

20%

of U.S. adults say they trust the government in Washington, D.C. to “do the right thing” just about always or most of the time.

More respondents in an American Enterprise Institute survey said they trust state and local governments to “do what is right” — 25% and 37%, respectively — than the federal government (17%).

64%

of U.S. adults believe low trust in the federal government makes it harder to solve problems.

70%

of U.S. adults believe low trust in one another makes it harder to solve problems.

90%

is the overall trust in outpatient services at the Veterans Affairs Department (VA) in April 2020, up from 55% in 2016.

The analysis of over 2.2 million surveys of federal customers in fiscal year 2020 found that ease and efficiency of completing a service online strongly correlate to satisfaction and trust in websites and services completed online.

Trust is highest among those who mainly think about agencies and programs, according to the Center for American Progress:

Mean trust in government among those thinking mainly of the following:

Government Agencies and Programs

43%

Members of Congress

38%

President and their Administration

34%

A Core Discipline to Build Trust: CX

The Challenge: Understanding the Experience

An underlying challenge that agencies face in this increasingly digital world, accelerated by COVID-19, is the ability to understand the human experience of accessing government services and benefits.

“Government cannot treat us like humans if they don’t understand our experiences,” said Lee Becker, Vice President, Solutions Principal at Medallia, who formerly worked at the VA.

Customer experience (CX) helps organizations better understand the human experience of their customers across multiple channels and transactions. However, it can be difficult to achieve for the following reasons.

1. People

Challenge: Agencies are not consistently tapping into firsthand, frontline talent.

Building trust within the organization is foundational to how agencies build trust with constituents. Employees are the touchpoints between the agency and the customer. They deliver the experience and have firsthand knowledge of how customers respond.

“Arguably, the employees are our most important customers,” Becker said. “If the agency takes care of the employees, the employees will take care of the mission.”

The frustration many employees face is that they want to help improve things but feel like they’re not listened to by leadership or are hindered by the nature of bureaucracy and red tape. Agencies have to start building trust by first listening to their employees and harnessing the talent and innovation they have to offer.

2. Laws and Regulations

Challenge: Laws sometimes inhibit agencies from providing a 21st-century experience.

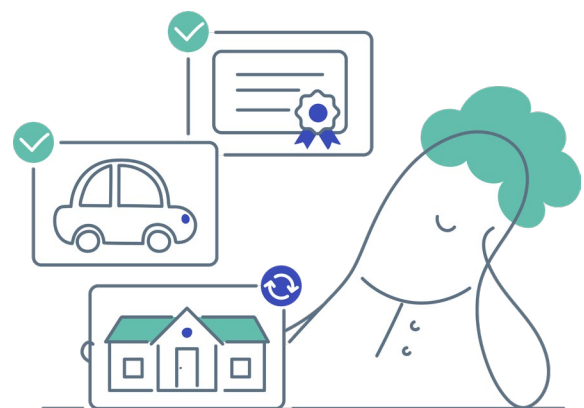
Laws, regulations and policies are meant to help government be trustworthy and fair. But sometimes, they can get in the way of providing an easy and efficient interaction, which can negatively impact trust. One regulation in the health care system, for example, requires a survey of patients’ perspectives around care to be paper-based. This results in a slow, clunky process to understanding patients’ experiences.

3. Technology

Challenge: Agencies don’t always have real-time technical capabilities to understand CX.

Understanding the experience is more than administering a survey. It’s a “fundamental approach in committing to listen to and take action for the needs of citizens and residents in live time,” Becker said.

Traditional surveys are not able to listen in live time because they often take months to put together, administer, gather results and share, at which point they are too dated to offer robust insights into the experience today. For instance, before the VA hardwired CX into the department in 2015, it was unable to meaningfully account for veterans’ experiences despite having over 140 different survey capabilities. The data was simply too dated and without actionable insights.



The Solution: 4 Tools for CX Success

1. Tools to Empower Employees

Agencies should provide tools that help answer the question, “How do we give our employees permission to be amazing?” Becker said. What are the skill sets and authorizations employees need to solve problems and nip customers’ troubles in the bud? In other words, tools should empower employees. And these include technical tools, as well as workforce training and professional development.

2. Data Centered on Experience

Agencies are often better equipped to answer operational questions, such as how long claim processing took, than experience-based questions, such as whether the processing was easy, effective or emotionally resonant.

Through gathering data centered on the human experience — tone of voice, expression, feedback, etc. — agencies can have the insights they need to start actionably improving CX.

3. Customer-Centric Technology

Technology should ultimately be customer-centered to aid agencies in both understanding constituents and delivering services to them.

Having near real-time capabilities can help agencies move from being reactive to proactive. Creating a customer-centric experience requires organizations to go beyond damage control and putting out fires, to surveying and tending the environment before fires erupt.

4. Engagement

You can’t build trust using data, tools and technology without engagement. How can you know what issues are top priorities for your customers? The only way is to ask.

Reach out to communities using the resources available to you, and don’t stay in a government bubble. Oftentimes, those resources can be through partnerships with other agencies and organizations that are already engaging with communities.

Best Practices: How to Start Measuring Experience

Leveraging data to build trust can be transformational. It can also sound overwhelming, but it doesn’t have to be. Use these four best practices to begin measuring CX at your agency.

1. Start with questions.

First, ask questions to gauge your agency’s customer experience capabilities. It could be as simple as picking one transaction your agency would like to understand more, whether it’s processing grant applications or granting permits. Using the Office of Management and Budget’s guidelines for federal agencies — Section 280 of Circular A-11 — could be a good start. It specifies drivers such as ease, efficiency and equity when measuring CX.

2. Show that you’re listening.

With whatever data you’re able to gather, no matter how small, demonstrate to customers that you are listening by wielding insights into action. Trust develops when constituents can hear from their city manager or council

member the actions being taken based on residents’ feedback, such as digitizing a form, updating a website or prioritizing an issue based on constituent feedback.

3. Use data to prioritize.

One of the ways your agency can drive data into action is to use insights for prioritization. It can help agencies address the most urgent issues based on what constituents care about most. The priorities are now not only backed by financial numbers or internal capacity, but also by constituent voices.

4. Use data to celebrate.

Agencies shouldn’t miss out on the opportunities to use data to boost morale. Data that records an employee going above and beyond in their excellent care highlights points of celebration to broadcast to the community and workforce. In a world where government is prone to bad publicity, using customer experience data to feature accomplishments can spotlight what should be celebrated.

Case Study: How the VA Gained Veterans' Trust

When the Veteran's Experience Office (VEO) was established in 2015, the ultimate goal was to listen to veterans' voices. The office strategically deployed core CX capabilities to listen through [data, tools, technology and engagement](#).

For instance, the office captured real-time, experience-based data of veteran outpatient services through the [Veterans Signals Survey](#). It also equipped over 100,000 staff members with [CX training](#) to deliver responsive care, and redesigned [VA.gov](#) for an easier, user-centered web experience. It even established a newsletter and virtual events to engage with the veteran community nationwide.

With these capabilities, [trust steadily rose](#). And despite the pandemic, veteran trust [exceeded 90%](#) for the first time in April 2020, according to survey data that tracks overall trust in outpatient services at the VA.

One of the challenges in providing positive CX, however, is when employees have to deliver bad news to customers.

What the VA learned was that providing good customer experience was not defined by pleasing customers. It was about making them feel heard, cared for and supported.

One veteran, for example, was frustrated by the VA appeals process. The employee he contacted researched his case and called him weekly to provide updates. Even though the circumstances were frustrating, because the employee continued respectful contact with him throughout the process, the veteran articulated that he felt cared for and supported.

It is not always good news or desirable outcomes that characterize a good customer experience — it is also good interactions and the feeling that customers can trust the service provider.

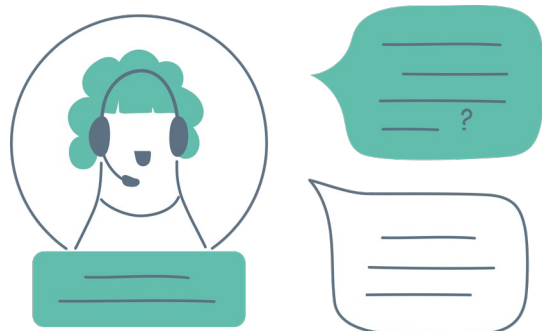
HOW MEDALLIA HELPS

Medallia helps agencies take action to meet their customers' needs. Medallia captures feedback in live time, analyzes data and empowers teams to provide an excellent customer experience that increases trust in government. Its learning-based artificial intelligence (AI) platform delivers in-the-moment visibility to customer interactions, so you can understand what's important to customers and drive demonstrable impacts in fixing issues, reducing risk, operating efficiently and more.

Learn more: [Medallia.com](https://www.Medallia.com)

"Digital modernization efforts improve both trust and satisfaction."

— [Performance.gov](https://www.performance.gov)
[Lessons From FY2020](https://www.performance.gov)



Conclusion

The purpose of government is inseparable from the trust of those it serves. And even though it can be difficult to build, it isn't impossible. Incorporating customer experience into federal, state and local agencies' mission delivery can be a robust strategy to preserve and maintain constituent trust. With the right tools and a willingness to center the human experience, government organizations can regain the trust of the people they serve.

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ABOUT MEDALLIA

Medallia (NYSE: MDLA) is the pioneer and market leader in Experience Management. Medallia's FedRAMP authorized and award-winning SaaS platform, the Medallia Experience Cloud, leads the market in the understanding and management of experience for customers, employees, and residents. Medallia captures experience signals created on daily journeys in person, digital and IoT interactions and applies proprietary AI technology to reveal personalized and predictive insights that can drive action with tremendous business results. Using Medallia Experience Cloud, government organizations can optimize agency-to-public interactions, at the highest level of security required.

www.medallia.com/government



ABOUT GOVLOOP

GovLoop's mission is to "connect government to improve government." We aim to inspire public-sector professionals by serving as the knowledge network for government. GovLoop connects more than 300,000 members, fostering cross-government collaboration, solving common problems and advancing government careers. GovLoop is headquartered in Washington, D.C., with a team of dedicated professionals who share a commitment to connect and improve government.

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