CITIZEN PARTICIPATION

P R O C E S S E S

How to Engage Citizens through Multi-Channel Contact Centers

The focus of citizen-centric eGovernment services through multi-channel contact centers is the delivery of cost effective, responsive and relevant services to citizens, with service processes and communication channels expanding access and developing better dialogue between citizens and their government. Investment in infrastructure is fundamental for eGovernment service development, but a major component of success is citizen participation throughout that development.

Local residents should be involved in the planning and implementation of a multi-channel contact center. Designing a contact center to address the priorities and needs of the community will provide citizens with an easy way to connect with their local government and offers local governments a means to improve the effectiveness and efficiency of programs and services. Ongoing citizen feedback will improve the system and will increase usage.

Client Expectations

Expectation	Definition
Competent Service	Citizens expect to receive clear and accurate information. They also expect government to have the capacity to deliver the services for which government is responsible. For automated services, competence also means that tasks are easy and understandable to the citizen.
Timely Response	Citizens expect that their service requests will be addressed within acceptable amounts of time.
Convenience	Citizens expect the government to provide services during the hours and at the locations convenient to citizens.
Courteous Service	Citizens expect to be treated with common courtesy.
Easy-to-Locate Contact Information	Citizens expect that government contact information (e.g., addresses and phone numbers) will be located where they are most likely to find it (e.g., in phone books, on Web sites, and in government publications).
Reliable Service	Citizens expect that the government will follow through on the commitments it makes to provide the requested services.
Privacy and Security	Citizens expect that the government will protect their personal information and not share it unlawfully.
Successful Outcome	Citizens expect that the government will complete the services as expected by the citizens.
Consistent Response	Citizens expect that they will receive the same response from the government regardless of the channels they use for contact.
Availability	Citizens expect that they will successfully make contact using the contact information they have.
Social and Ethical Responsibility	Citizens expect that the government will act in the interests of the citizens, and that the government will provide mechanisms (e.g., guarantees of freedom of the press) to ensure that citizens can monitor the government's exercise of that responsibility.
Fair Treatment	Citizens expect to receive the same level of service (e.g., courtesy and responsiveness) as all other citizens.

Citizen Engaged Communities

Ways Citizen-Engaged Communities Achieve Citizen Participation

All nine 2010-2012 Citizen-Engaged Communities collected citizen input prior to launching their 311/contact centers, using the data to guide planning for their structures, service areas and processes.

To collect ongoing citizen feedback, eight of the nine communities incorporate contact center questions into their organizational surveys. Seven solicit input through online surveys and six use phone surveys following a customer call and formal phone surveys. Four of the contact centers conduct outbound agent calls to get direct assessments of customer experiences. Four also use citizen focus groups for direction. Three of the communities have secret shopper programs, two have implemented online chat functions and two utilize IVR surveys. Other citizen input tools used include capturing comments during a call, quarterly meetings with community boards and a neighborhood liaison program.

Ways Citizen-Engaged Communities Utilize Citizen Input

▶ Internal quality assurance and formal accountability programs
▶ Staff education, training and recognition/incentives
▶ Identification of service problems and locations to improve service processes
▶ Customer complaint analysis—with GIS mapping
▶ Identification of priority information to offload calls, provide additional self-service applications and enhance websites
▶ Trend reporting and identification of emerging issues and program evaluations
▶ Forecasting to identify staffing and other resource needs, to predict high call volumes, and for scheduling and planning
▶ Assessment of marketing program effectiveness
▶ Reports (weekly, monthly, annually) to citizens, City Council, management and departments
▶ Online performance reports, including location searches (e.g. by zip code)
▶ Performance based budgeting

Ways Citizen-Engaged Communities Address Privacy and Multiple Language Needs

All nine designated communities have formal, and communicated, privacy policies regarding the use of any personal information provided by citizens.

All nine communities provide multiple language support. Five utilize Language Line as a third party interpreter, providing over 170 language options. Most of the designated communities provide bilingual call agents and some bilingual supervisors and managers, with six of the nine providing support in Spanish. Other language services used are IVR language options, website translations services, and multiple language options for important documents, such as emergency and election information. One community certified their bilingual agents through their Human Resources department and another used the County employee Blue Book to provide access to 76 other languages. All are responsive to the particular language needs of their residents and visitors.

Survey methods vary significantly in cost, response rates, and speed of implementation.

▶ Comment cards are short and simple questionnaires that are handed out or are simply made available at the point of service.

▶ E-mail surveys are sent to a list of respondents by e-mail with a link to a website hosting the survey. A list of e-mail addresses is required.

▶ IVR (Interactive Voice Response) or phone intercept surveys use an automated telephone system to ask questions, with respondents responding either by pressing telephone buttons or by saying responses. Surveys are generally conducted immediately after a phone call made to an agency or company to obtain service. After the call, an employee asks the customer for their participation and transfers the respondent to the automated survey.

▶ Mail surveys are sent via mail to customers. To increase response rates, a pre-note explaining the survey as well as reminder mailings and/or postcards are often sent to respondents in addition to the questionnaire. A list of mail addresses is required.

▶ Telephone interviews are conducted with live trained telephone interviewers. They can be inbound surveys, conducted after customers initiate a call to obtain service, or they can be outbound surveys conducted by calling a list of potential respondents. Outbound surveys require a list of telephone numbers.

▶ Web inbound surveys are presented to customers who visit specific websites or click on specific links. In general, a pop-up window asks for participation with a link to a Web survey.

▶ Web panel surveys rely on lists of individuals with specific demographics, interests, or experiences that can be purchased from market research firms. These individuals have expressed interest in conducting online surveys for market research purposes and have permission to contact them by e-mail for research purposes.

Method Cost

Method	Cost	Response Rate	Implementation Speed
Comment Card	Medium	Low	Low
E-mail	Low	Medium	High
IVR Phone Intercept	Low	Medium	Medium
Mail	Medium	Medium	Low
Telephone Interview (Live Intercept or Outbound Calling)	High	High	Medium
Web Inbound (No E-mail)	Low	Low	High
Web Panel	Medium	Medium	Medium

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