

Customer engagement, Digital & messaging

Inspiration for innovative citizen engagement experiences

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As citizens expect more and more from the organisations they depend on, leaders in the public sector have a huge opportunity: they can borrow proven engagement strategies from the retailers, telcos, and banks that have driven up citizen expectations in the first place. And for many, the reward won't just be increased citizen satisfaction, it'll be streamlined services and increased efficiency.

Many of today's leading consumer brands deliver intuitive customer experiences that make their services and storefronts effortless to interact with. These intuitive experiences have been a major positive for all of our consumer lives, but they've also significantly elevated the expectations we bring to our interactions with public sector organisations.

Now, as many citizens face mounting financial pressure, and demand to see real value from rising tax payments, the need to learn from the private sector is becoming ever more urgent.

While some public sector organisations have already taken great steps towards creating smarter engagement experiences, most have yet to fully explore and tap the opportunities created by new channels and technologies. Those keen to accelerate their transformation should now be drawing direct inspiration from the approaches tried and tested by leading retailers, telcos and financial services.

Self-service saves citizens—and agents—valuable time

In the private sector, fewer and fewer service interactions involve speaking to an agent. Whether it's arranging a return for an unwanted product, or requesting details on an undelivered order, many brands have made it easier for customers to serve themselves.

Many of the most seamless self-service experiences are now facilitated by intelligent virtual assistants

(VAs). One of the UK's largest retailers uses an intelligent VA to handle more than 250,000 customer interactions every year—solving 70% of customers' issues without any human involvement. The VA supports customers with common challenges, such as managing returns and refunds, and it's helped the retailer save approximately £2 million worth of online sales it might have otherwise lost.

Some public sector organisations have already recognised the potential of VAs, and pressed them into service meeting citizens' needs. One great example comes from the outbreak of the pandemic. As the UK rolled out its response, HMRC quickly implemented an intelligent VA to support the launch of its four COVID-19 support schemes, helping citizens and businesses get the grants they needed as quickly as possible.

Personalised experiences improve citizen satisfaction

As well as providing highly convenient self-service options, many consumer brands have been working hard to personalise each and every engagement.

At one end of the scale, this can mean knowing a customer's favourite products and letting them know when they're included in a flash sale. On the other, it can mean equipping agents and VAs to deliver service based on a customer's purchase history, recent brand interactions, preferences, location—or whatever else is needed to streamline and improve the engagement.

We helped one of the top three global retailers deploy an intelligent VA that solves 85% of customer cases without agent interaction. The brand plans to use APIs to integrate the VA with its CRM, and use customer information to bring the personal touch to its services—empowering the VA to greet customers by name and answer questions about their orders.

As public sector institutions transform to offer more digital and self-service engagement options, innovations like these can help to ensure citizens feel recognised and understood, whatever the channel.

Biometric authentication makes citizens' lives easier

Many citizens are also getting used to life without the hassle—and security risks—of PINs, passwords, and memorable answers.

Leading banks and telcos now use advanced biometrics technologies to authenticate customers based on inherent characteristics such as the sound of their voice. This allows agents (and conversational IVRs) to focus on meeting each customer's needs, rather than spend precious seconds or minutes playing the part of gatekeeper and interrogator.

Global telco Deutsche Telekom uses voice biometrics technology to regularly authenticate more than 700,000 enrolled customers, simply asking customers to say the phrase, "at Telekom, my voice is my password." It's a service that saves agents valuable time, and 75% of the telco's enrolled customers say the service is more convenient than using their ID number.

We're starting to see public service organisations elsewhere in the world quickly follow suit with technologies like these. The Australian Tax Office, the principal revenue collection body for the Australian Government, authenticates more than 4.2 million citizens using voice biometrics technology. And since the technology's implementation, the organisation has managed to cut an average of 48 seconds from its calls—saving both agents and citizens time.

Discover your next engagement opportunity

This really is an exciting time for any public sector organisation willing to learn from commercial brands.

Our white paper, *Six new citizen engagement opportunities—that you can seize*, offers more inspiration and motivation.

Inside, you'll find out how to upgrade your citizen interactions, make your agents' lives easier, and make fraudsters' lives harder—with strategies and technologies that have already been stress-tested by some of the world's biggest brands.

Tags: [Government](#), [Citizen experiences](#)



About Tony Lorentzen

Tony has more than 25 years of experience in the technology sector, spending the last 17 with Nuance where he is currently the SVP of Intelligent Engagement Solutions within the Enterprise Division. Before that he served as the leader of several teams at Nuance including Sales Engineering, Business Consulting, and Product Management. A proven leader in working with the cross-functional teams, Tony blends his in-depth knowledge of business management, technology and vertical domain expertise to bring Nuance's solutions to the Enterprise market, partnering with customers to ensure implementations drive true ROI. Prior to Nuance, Tony spent time at Lucent and Verizon where he led teams that applied the latest technologies to solve complex business issues for large enterprises. Tony received a B.S. from Villanova University and a MBA from Dowling College.

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