A new definition for citizen service

In recent years, the private sector has revolutionized the meaning of customer service. For example, retail and banking customers can access customer support services when and how they choose, through a range of channels that include access to online information, around-the-clock contact centers, fully transactional Web sites, and interactive Web chat sessions. Customers now expect organizations to know who they are when they call and to respond to enquiries quickly, track orders precisely, and resolve complaints efficiently.

These high standards of customer service in the private sector have in turn raised the expectations of citizens, businesses, and contractors when they deal with government organizations. Citizens and businesses now expect more seamless, personalized, and convenient self-service options for interacting with government organizations, across multiple channels, regardless of time and location.
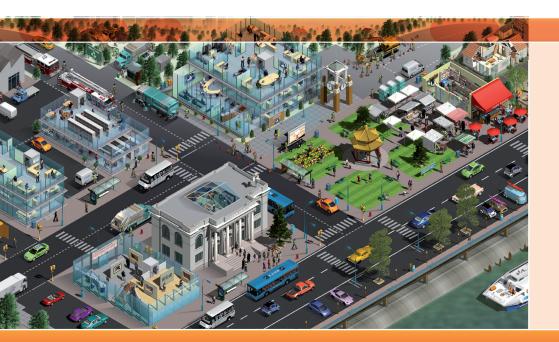
Technology can play a pivotal role in enabling this cultural shift within local government—away from organizations that are focused on managing and maintaining a complex internal structure to ones that put the citizen at the heart of the process and providing support services designed to deliver that objective.

Equipped with integrated portals and contact centers, employees can quickly locate and share information, which lets them build and sustain citizen relationships with the same tools private sector organizations use to manage their customer relationships. Managers and front-line workers can resolve enquiries, learn from feedback, and fix the root causes that create service problems.

Correctly applied technology can enhance the citizen connection in a number of ways, ensuring that:

- Information provided to citizens and businesses is accurate and up to date

- Information and services are available through all access channels

- Transactions with citizens are seamless and automated

- Processes are modeled and delivered around citizen needs

- Investment in people and technology is maximized by consolidating repeatable services

- Costs are manageable and predictable

- Employees have the tools to deliver their roles effectively

- Significant reductions in fraud and error are possible by closing the processing gap between front line services and back office processing.

Delivering a rich, varied and consistent citizen connection is not just about improving levels of customer service. Fundamentally it is about transforming how the citizen interactions are dealt with, and not just the quality of the engagement itself. Delivering services that are centered around the citizens' needs, rather than the business of government, is the primary objective for embracing a Citizen Interaction strategy.

"We wanted a system that would integrate tightly within our existing architecture, would be very easy to use and introduce into the organization, and would scale well with our regional partners."

Toni Cramer, Chief Information Officer for the City of Bellevue, Washington

Are your **people** **ready**?

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The citizen at the center of an information-based society

Like many cities today, Bellevue, Washington, is committed to delivering the convenience, efficiency, and economy of online government services to its constituents. But, unlike most cities, Bellevue has taken a much broader view of the way it provides services to the businesses and citizens that use those services. Rather than providing online services on its own, Bellevue partnered with eight neighboring cities to create the eCityGov Alliance. The Alliance, a separate government agency, provides seven Internet service portals to member cities and agencies. Use of the Alliance portals has expanded to some 40 member agencies in Washington State.

By working together, Alliance members can not only improve customer service dramatically through cross-boundary service portals, but they can also make these services more affordable for small communities—while saving larger communities significant time and money. Because Bellevue serves as the IT and fiscal host for the Alliance, it is uniquely positioned to explore and identify new regional service opportunities for the Alliance and its members.

This innovative approach is in keeping with Bellevue's acclaimed "Service First" commitment to customer care, which extends from its City Hall service desk to the desktops and cell phones of its residents.

But even the most comprehensive e-government portal is not enough to guarantee good service. Bellevue needed a customer relationship management (CRM) system to ensure that each service request it received was correctly routed, appropriately assigned, and efficiently completed. The system should also be able to monitor and report results. After careful research and assessment, Bellevue chose Microsoft

Dynamics CRM to generate service orders, track requests, and manage its knowledge base.

Microsoft Dynamics CRM meets the requirements

"We wanted a system that would integrate tightly within our existing architecture, would be very easy to use and introduce into the organization, and would scale well with our regional partners," says Toni Cramer, Chief Information Officer for the City of Bellevue. The City needed a true enterprise solution that could expand effectively, along with its range of services and its growing list of participating partner cities.

Microsoft and its partner Ascentium worked with Bellevue to present Microsoft Dynamics

> "Our CRM portal will take the knowledge base and services available from City staff and make them available to our customers twenty-four by seven."
>
> *Toni Cramer, Chief Information Officer for the City of Bellevue, Washington*

CRM as a potential solution to the City's complex needs. The robust set of tools in Microsoft Dynamics CRM can help local governments provide constituent-centric service by supporting the contact center, managing tasks and service requests, and distributing accurate, current information—in real time—to front-line service staff.

Ascentium spent several days with key City staff in Bellevue creating a demonstration that was geared to Bellevue's specific requirements. The results looked promising, so Ascentium designed a custom solution for the City by using Microsoft Dynamics CRM software. Ascentium is also working with City staff to design a service portal linked to the Microsoft Dynamics platform.

Comprehensive, integrated, and usable

One of the major advantages cited by Bellevue in its selection of Microsoft Dynamics CRM is the tight integration with other Microsoft products, especially Outlook. For example, service tickets can appear as e-mail messages in a Help Desk technician's Outlook Inbox—users don't have to learn entirely new software

Overview: Bellevue is the fifth largest city in Washington, with a population of about 120,000. It is a high-tech and retail center with more than 130,000 jobs and a skyline of gleaming high-rises. The population is growing and becoming more diverse. City planners anticipate 7,000 additional residents by 2010.[1]

Business Situation
Bellevue needed a customer relationship management (CRM) system to ensure that each service request it received was correctly routed, appropriately assigned, and efficiently completed.

Solution
After careful research and assessment, Bellevue chose Microsoft Dynamics® CRM to generate service orders, track requests, and manage its knowledge base.

Benefits
- Simplifies interactions with constituents
- Makes city knowledge base and service available 24x7
- Provides insight into wants and needs of citizens
- Improves productivity with integration with familiar tools, such as Microsoft Office Outlook.

[1]http://www.ci.bellevue.wa.us/profile-intro.htm

to be part of the customer service team.

Microsoft Dynamics CRM will not only provide Bellevue with a system for dispatching and managing service requests, but it will also serve as a platform to help gain a better understanding of what city constituents want and need. "We have to address customer service in a comprehensive way, not just react. We need to be able to spot trends when they emerge so we can head off problems," says David Kelly, Applications Manager for the City of Bellevue. Microsoft Dynamics CRM will provide Bellevue with data for service analysis, planning, and performance management.

Steps to success

Bellevue expected that Phase 1 of the software would be deployed by late November 2008. This phase includes tracking and routing of all service requests. The project team expects to start with a limited set of service requests and then expand.

Phase 2 will include the Citizen Portal, knowledge base, and interfaces to back-end systems, such as Maximo, for work management.

Phase 3 will integrate with a 3-1-1 telephony system, creating a virtual call center and supporting around-the-clock customer service. "Our CRM portal will take the knowledge base and services available from City staff and make them available to our customers twenty-four by seven," says Toni Cramer.

In selecting Microsoft Dynamics CRM, Bellevue not only addresses its own requirements, but also makes it possible to meet the needs of multiple cities. The application will initially serve the City of Bellevue, but other Alliance cities will be able to leverage the CRM application as a hosted service.

Because the system will potentially support a variety of services and jurisdictions, the knowledge base and portal scripting must be robust enough to handle a range of circumstances. For example, tying a regional geographic information system (GIS) to the knowledge base could make it possible to tailor a query response to the specific location of the caller or portal visitor.

The ultimate goal is to develop a regional CRM system that delivers information and tracks service requests—not only across city departments, but also across participating local government jurisdictions. Citizens often do not know which jurisdictions provide a specific service or have the answer to their questions—and they shouldn't have to figure it out. The Microsoft Dynamics CRM strategy for the City of Bellevue will be both efficient and economical for the participating cities and will support better service for job seekers, contractors, and the general public. "Citizens just want a convenient way to access information and services," Cramer concludes. "When the day is done, it's all about convenience for those folks out there." In other words, Service First.

Read the full case study at www.microsoft.com/uscsp

Software & Services:
- Microsoft Dynamics CRM
- Microsoft Office Outlook
- Microsoft SQL Server®

Partner: Ascentium

Microsoft®

Featured Microsoft solution

Delivering services centered on citizens' needs

In government, as in business, making a good first impression, and then delivering superior service, is the essential equation for creating customer value and driving your organization's success. In many situations, the experience a citizen has with your call center can be a critical factor in their assessment of your competence and responsiveness.

Many government organizations introduce a CRM solution as a means of handling and logging information enquiries, usually in conjunction with an information call center for handling telephone enquiries, or a contact center that can handle e-mail, hard-copy applications, faxes, and interactive Web communications.

A Microsoft Dynamics CRM Contact Center combines Microsoft's best-in-class customer relationship applications, including Microsoft Dynamics CRM, Microsoft Office SharePoint Server, Microsoft SQL Server®, Reporting Services, and Microsoft Virtual Earth™, with best-in-class call center management, routing, and CRM integration software developed by our partners.

The Microsoft Dynamics CRM Contact Center solution offers the tools you need to respond effectively to different types of contact center requests, including:

Phone inquiry – Using an interactive voice response (IVR) system, callers are guided through a series of voice prompts and voice recognition to resolve their issue over the phone or be routed to a contact center representative who will be able to view the citizen's data screen in a pop-up window and promptly pick up on the response from where the IVR left off.

Incoming e-mail request – Enables knowledge workers who receive e-mail inquiries to update the record with new information within Outlook and easily link back to prior contact records that provide relevant review case history—all through a single user interface.

Web request – Offers citizens a self-service logon Web portal with the ability to view the status of open cases and search from a vast knowledge base of government information, thereby enabling citizens to find answers to questions on their own without the need of agent assistance. Virtual Earth™ mapping capabilities help pinpoint location issues and service areas.

Reporting dashboard – Displays an online statistics summary of incidents by contact type (Web, phone, or e-mail), case type, case severity, and other related customer account information. The online summary provides information to contact center management so that they can ensure that the most cost effective and timely service is provided to citizens.

A Web space for the community

Following the rise in social networking in the consumer marketplace, a number of local government agencies are also providing spaces for local social interaction. These spaces rely on technologies from the consumer Internet including blogs, wikis, podcasts, and video casts.

Relevant Microsoft technologies

- Microsoft Dynamics CRM
- Windows Server®
- Microsoft Internet Information Server
- Microsoft Office SharePoint® Server
- Microsoft Office system
- Microsoft .NET Framework

Microsoft and our solutions partners can help you provide the level of service that your Citizens expect

Microsoft Certified Partners are independent companies that can provide you with the highest levels of technical expertise, strategic planning, and hands-on skills. In terms of citizen interaction for example, they can help your government organization to:

- **Handle citizen requests in the manner they prefer** including personal phone contact, Web enabled and/or IVR self-service
- **Add consistency** to citizen interactions across all departments and agencies
- **Capture feedback and useful insight,** to help improve future interactions through reporting metrics
- **Streamline case management** at every phase of the life-cycle—from opening and logging a case to tracking and closing
- **Ensure compliance with regulations** through built-in tracking and reporting tools
- **Leverage existing telephony and IT infrastructure investments** to reduce total cost of ownership and agent training costs

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