



Putting people first: 2022 Government Marketing Trends

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and strategies to deliver customer-centric services





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The COVID-19 pandemic underscored the importance of digital marketing as consumers were forced to pivot from in-person activities to online. As the government urged people to stay at home and businesses closed their doors, the demand for goods and services available online, like medical appointments, vastly increased. As of April 2021, 84 percent of physicians offered telehealth visits and 57 percent preferred to continue offering virtual care.¹ Across a range of industries, both providers and consumers have grown accustomed to the convenience of e-services. Now, people look to the government to offer the same personalized experience, ease of use, and value they find online from their favorite companies.

Federal and state governments offer a wide array of services to citizens - from health insurance (e.g., Medicare) to government assistance programs (e.g., Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program). Multiple touchpoints with citizens place a premium on providing user-friendly websites that offer outstanding customer service. However, government entities generally have smaller budgets for marketing, compared to the private sector which on average allots 11 percent of total company budgets for marketing efforts, according to this Wall Street Journal article. Limited resources aside, the government has an opportunity to forge stronger, more trustworthy relationships with their citizens by leveraging the latest marketing trends to inform customer-centric services.

Here we explore seven trends in government marketing to help public sector agencies rethink how they relate to people, use data, and improve the customer experience to forge stronger relationships with citizens.



Trend 1: Connecting with constituents in a cookie-less world

Data privacy has become a top-of-mind concern, and as a result, the private sector is disabling third-party cookies and pivoting to collect first-party data. Government already collects first-party data from residents when they sign up for services. When this data is used thoughtfully, they can provide a personalized customer service experience offered through government programs. The U.S. Census Bureau, for example, has been forced to think outside of the box to find ways to reach and establish trust with traditionally undercounted communities. To do this, Census built an integrated communications plan and established partnerships with over 400,000 local and national organizations to help residents understand how Census data is safely stored and used.

Getting started

Secure the data.

Government organizations should take ongoing measures to ensure that first-party data is stored and used securely. This is essential for building trust among constituents who freely share their data with government.

Generate useful insights.

Government organizations have an opportunity to apply sophisticated measurement and analytics to information, to make data-driven decisions and anticipate customer needs.

Trends in action

Deloitte supported the Defense Health Agency (DHA) Communications Division by using data to inform TRICARE communications strategies and tactics. TRICARE is the health benefit for more than 9.6 million service members, retirees, and their family members (i.e., beneficiaries) worldwide. In helping the DHA manage the TRICARE marketing and branding program, Deloitte analyzed beneficiary demographic data including location, age, health plan, category (e.g., active duty, retiree family member), and military service. The result was audience segments and profiles, as well as choropleth maps showing beneficiary population density in media markets across the United States. Deloitte used these analyses to inform the TRICARE “Take Command” campaign which was recognized with five industry awards, to include the Public Relations Society of America Silver Anvil. Implementing this campaign, Deloitte helped the DHA develop and disseminate over 900 targeted communications products, which helped millions of beneficiaries make an informed decision about which health plan to enroll in during a time of historic change to their health benefit.



Trend 2: Identifying advocates for marketing strategies

When government leadership invests in the power of marketing and incorporates marketing into its culture, they can garner better data, deploy smarter solutions, and create closer connections between government and constituents.

Getting started

Embrace marketing strategies.

Organizations require a cultural shift to embrace the power of marketing. Public sector marketing leaders should focus on building teams that champion marketing strategy rather than resist it. Leaders can partner with external marketing strategists to build a comprehensive strategy that includes revamping internal processes to include marketing at the forefront of customer activities and communicating the impact of marketing and communications efforts in achieving goals.

Lean into new ways of working.

New strategies that promote collaboration and agile development, like strategic partnerships and working with advocates and influencers, can foster innovative and successful marketing results. For example, in 2020, The Ad Council, White House, U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) collaborated with leading advertising, media and marketing trade associations, and Google and YouTube, to launch the nationwide “#StayHome. Save Lives” movement to spread awareness and reach specific audiences.

Trends in action

Preparing for and responding to emergencies requires a unique blend of skills – thoughtful analytics and creative solutions working together to encourage actions and behaviors within communities to help minimize the effects of natural disasters. The marketing efforts for FEMA's National Flood Insurance Program are no different. Deloitte and Yes& are helping FEMA re-think their marketing approach, providing experience in data science, behavioral science, UI/UX, creative design and digital marketing to help FEMA better understand their most potential customers and build new campaigns to reach them with the right message at the right time. Pairing data solutions such as Deloitte's HealthPrism™ with FEMA's own data, we have helped identify those who are—or should be—in the market, and helped FEMA communicate the value of flood insurance at multiple touchpoints using a calibrated mix of paid, earned (public relations), shared (social), and owned media (websites, tools, events, videos, and physical and digital public awareness resources) to communicate at the most effective times and through the right channels.

In 2021, the team conducted 22 consumer and 15 agent ethnographic interviews that informed development of six unique consumer and four unique agent personas, while identifying over 2,000 geographic focus areas to help better target NFIP's campaigns. Together, discovery research, data-driven market segmentation, applied behavioral insights and personas have opened new windows into the customer experience, helped the NFIP plan for and optimize its campaign marketing efforts, and laid the groundwork for measuring effectiveness.



Trend 3: Safeguarding data and transparency on data usage

Government organizations hold a considerable amount of first-party, personal data. As they use this data to improve existing processes, they must carefully protect it and communicate to citizens how it will be used. These steps are essential for building and maintaining public trust.

Getting started

Build trust.

In August 2020, the Pew Research Center found that public trust in the U.S. federal government stood at only 20%.² Situations like data breaches can increase this mistrust. When constituents feel that public agencies are protecting their data, this can help build public trust in government and make constituents more inclined to engage in government services.

Use data accurately to achieve mission outcomes.

The amount of data available to public sector organizations can seem daunting. But governments can use this wealth of details to build accurate pictures of people or families who require services, helping agencies better fulfill their missions. For instance, on the state level, integrated eligibility teams can use systems that share data. When an individual applies for services from one program, the system could then suggest other programs for which the applicant might be eligible.

Be vigilant and straightforward.

Constituents must be able to trust that the information they provide is safely stored and used, as well as protected from bad actors. Agencies should build and maintain a comprehensive cybersecurity strategy to ensure data is kept safe and communicate these security measures with citizens to enhance trust.

Trends in action

The U.S. Department of Education (ED) established the Migrant Student Information Exchange Initiative with the primary mission to ensure that migrant children are appropriately enrolled and placed in school, and that they accrue credits throughout school transfers. In March 2017, ED's Office of Migrant Education (OME) awarded Deloitte a five-year contract to implement and maintain the Migrant Student Information Exchange (MSIX). MSIX technology lets states share the educational and health data they hold in their information systems for students who frequently travel across state borders. Deloitte worked with ED to produce a series of security-related documents, including a System Security Plan and a Plan of Actions and Milestones, all in compliance with applicable OMB and National Institute of Standards and Technology standards. By protecting this data and communicating how it will be used, Deloitte with OME was able to support the swift transfer of student information between states and school districts.



Trend 4: Communicating with purpose

By following marketing best practices, and taking advantage of digital platforms, governments can reach their audiences more effectively—for example, through informative websites and engaging social media communications. Governments can use digital tools to focus constituents on the appropriate services at the right times, saving the government money and improving outcomes for the public. Well-focused communication efforts can help increase public trust in government, helping agencies to meet their objectives, and increase understanding and public engagement.

Getting started

Determine the audience.

Governments should take measures to drill down on its target audience for different programs and to provide critical public services and goods to people who qualify. The more government knows about its various stakeholders, the more likely it is to deliver the services that people genuinely need.

Meet people where they are.

According to one recent survey, the average person in the U.S. spends 23 hours a week engaged in various online activities.³ By determining which digital media its constituents prefer, and then increasing activity on those media, a government agency can reach its target audience, keep the public informed, and interact with constituents in a more meaningful way.

Connect the purpose and customer experience.

As they develop and refine their digital marketing tactics, government agencies should develop metrics to measure performance and help shape the customer experience. Drawing data from customer surveys and employee feedback, and analyzing factors such as processing times, agencies can determine how well they are reaching the people they aim to serve and use that information to improve service delivery.

Trends in action

The United States Census Bureau was faced with a whirlwind of challenges during the 2020 census. As a result, the Bureau had to rethink their entire outreach strategy and develop new, innovative ways to reach communities and mitigate threats. Deloitte helped the Bureau establish a Trust & Safety team, focused on protecting the integrity of the Census against misinformation, scams, cybersecurity threats, and more. The Trust & Safety team was comprised of a cross-functional network of partners and experts that worked proactively to counter threats. Deloitte equipped Census with the tools to detect and investigate, in near-real time, content of concern – from violent threats to Census employees to misinformation about how Census data is leveraged.

Deloitte also worked with the Census to stand up a Fusion Center, streamlining information sharing and protecting the agency from cybersecurity threats. The Trust & Safety team successfully identified thousands of instances of mis- and disinformation on various platforms. Strategic partnerships with an array of public and private organizations and the deployment of state-of-the-art social media listening tools were key to addressing threats to the integrity of the Census as well as amplifying Census messaging and core purpose overall – especially to traditionally undercounted communities. These partnerships through clear communications efforts drove activations across digital and social platforms like Facebook, Google, Reddit, Snapchat, and more. They even collaborated with the neighborhood social network Nextdoor to remove inaccurate posts. These targeted digital communications efforts were key to influencing communities and individuals to participate in the Census count. Deloitte and the Bureau's efforts were ultimately successful, as 99.98% of addresses throughout the country were accounted for.



Trend 5: Reimagining artificial intelligence (AI) strategy

Powered with human-centered design, artificial intelligence can help government employees make data-driven decisions and better serve the public. For example, state and local agencies can analyze the large volumes of data their eligibility systems collect from the people who use them, and then use the insights gained to better target their communications, free up government employees' time, and build public trust. In a world that moves at an ever-increasing speed, AI can allow for faster, higher-quality service at a lower cost.

Getting started

Understand the experience strategy.

Agencies should identify communications opportunities and avenues along the consumer journey, recognizing where pain points exist and opportunities for AI to alleviate service delays.

Make sure communications are in real-time.

Communication programs can leverage AI to create an optimized, consistent, and faster experience for consumers. Using AI, organizations can manage and respond to needs quicker and more efficiently.

Trends in action

The Montana Department of Public Health and Human Services (DPHHS) helps Montanans obtain critical services, including access to food, health care, and cash assistance. When the COVID-19 crisis triggered a significant increase in online applications and service requests, DPHHS needed a solution to support its overburdened workers while maintaining high-quality customer service. Deloitte designed and quickly implemented tools that use robotic process automation (RPA), intelligent optical character recognition (IOCR), and conversational AI technology to ease workloads and improve customer service. These were delivered through Deloitte's AI platform solution, Intelligent Digital Automation Platform (IDAP), as a managed service with an annual M&O subscription cost. By leveraging this innovative AI strategy, the Montana DPHHS helped 150,000 customers per year, 90,000 with same-day service. DPHHS estimates that more 30,800 hours will be reallocated per year, yielding reduced workload and improved consumer convenience.

Trend 6: Elevating the hybrid experience



At the start of the COVID-19 crisis, government organizations very quickly switched from physical to digital interactions with the public.

Now and in the future, public sector organizations need to consider how to integrate physical and virtual interactions into hybrid experiences for constituents. For example, USPS offices are important community centers where constituents can have in-person experiences to address and manage needs. Then, with email receipts and other tools they can access their transaction digitally as a follow-up. This coupled experience benefits communication and streamlines overall customer experience.

As government agencies continue to manage these ever-changing transitions, they must not forget what matters most: serving their people. Keeping constituents at the forefront while implementing integrated approaches will help government provide the best possible experience.

Government must also keep in mind that hybrid experiences may not be feasible for all constituents, with various factors such as lack of government offices in rural areas, office hours that don't meet constituent working hours, or simply personal preferences. For these reasons and more, a robust digital experience is imperative to deliver personalized service.

Getting started

Offer options through personalization.

Government should leverage data to better understand constituents, and then offer diverse channels that meet their individualized preferences. Strategically implementing traditional channels (like in-person interaction) and emerging channels (like various virtual platforms) can provide a personalized hybrid experience for all.

Improve through real-time feedback.

Government organizations should implement feedback tools, such as digital experience surveys accessible from an easy-to-scan QR code, to receive real-time responses from citizens. This data can then be used to improve hybrid experiences and keep up with customers' ever-evolving preferences.

Provide a cohesive experience.

Agencies should communicate in a consistent way when using traditional and emerging channels. Uniform messaging can help reassure constituents that they are receiving a high-quality, personalized experience throughout all interactions.

Become adaptable.

Government should assess current digital experiences from a constituent perspective, and test if it can stand alone when used without traditional channels. Continuously improving emerging channels not only allows agencies to offer better hybrid experiences but also help adapt in unexpected situations like the COVID-19 crisis.

Trends in action

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), more than 88 million American adults—that's 1 in 3—have prediabetes⁴. Various factors can prevent people from taking steps to improve their health, but a prediabetes diagnosis can spur them to act. CDC and the National Diabetes Prevention Program (National DPP) recognized an opportunity to reach people with this important message by using messengers whom people already trust—pharmacists. CDC implemented a multi-channel marketing strategy, asking the pharmacy workforce to deliver a program that encouraged people with prediabetes to make lifestyle changes. With pharmacists as their allies, CDC was able to reach its audience both off- and on-line to generate additional patient screening, testing, and referrals.

Trend 7: Winning your future constituents with Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI)

Public sector organizations can and should use their influence to combat social inequities and prioritize reaching traditionally underserved communities through a variety of strategies, including integrated communications, workforce, and program- and mission-based plans.



Getting started

Showcase the diversity of your teams.

Simply marketing inclusiveness or diversity may not be enough to build trust. Governments must allow team members from a variety of disciplines, experience levels, and backgrounds to communicate on behalf of the organization.

Commit to actions that address social inequities.

Agencies should establish measurable goals related to diversity, equity, and inclusion—and demonstrate progress in achieving those goals. Customers should understand what an organization is doing to address issues they deeply care about.

Trends in action

The Wisconsin Department of Health Services (DHS) needed to hire additional staff and build necessary infrastructure to implement its Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI) initiatives. These changes enabled the organization to better reflect Wisconsin's diverse communities and help address ongoing systemic racism challenges and inequities. Deloitte worked with the Wisconsin DHS to create an Office of Health Equity and develop an advisory body to oversee ongoing DEI efforts. Through comprehensive change management support and project management, Deloitte helped the organization create an innovative, DEI-focused talent acquisition strategy, increasing engagement with Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) to enhance sourcing and recruitment.

¹ [Telehealth: A post-COVID-19 reality? | McKinsey](#)

² Pew Research Center, "[Americans' views of government: Low trust, but some positive performance ratings](#)," September 14, 2020.

³ <https://www.businessnewsdaily.com/4718-weekly-online-social-media-time.html>

⁴ <https://www.cdc.gov/diabetes/basics/prediabetes.html>



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