

# Transforming the Federal Contact Center



*EXPERIENCE  
DELIVERS SUCCESS.™*

Today, many federal agencies are in a bind: their contact center needs overhauling, but it seems like an overwhelming task which will consume too many resources. However, agencies are now required to meet service standards amid new regulations. Fortunately, this transformation can be more manageable than it first appears. The question is, can a significant improvement in customer service be realized in merely months, not years?

## What Do Customers Think of Federal Contact Centers?

Federal agencies have earned a reputation for extremely poor customer service, accounting for five of the ten worst customer service providers across 21 top U.S. industries. In customer service satisfaction surveys, federal agencies tied for last alongside internet service providers. What are customers dissatisfied about? Here are the typical complaints:

- When customers call, they often receive inconsistent answers to inquiries
- Personal details need to be repeated any time a call is transferred
- Higher call handle times due to the lack of a single view of the customer
- Limited self-service options
- Many channels of communication are not supported
- Internal agency systems fail to foster a customer-centric experience
- Technologies are outdated, relying on legacy systems and old platforms

# Customer Service Challenges

Customer expectations have changed. Based on their experience with businesses, constituents expect omni-channel communication from the government. They want to be able to access the same information on the phone, by web chat, by text, and in person. A federal agency can no longer get by with just an address and a phone number.

At the same time, government agencies have transformed their mindset, recognizing that citizens should not have a Groundhog Day experience every time they make contact with an agency. Additionally, in today's climate, the slow and steady pace of change favored in the public sector is no longer sufficient. Agencies need to find ways to enhance the customer service experience quickly in order to keep up with new regulations and mounting expectations.

Congress has recognized the shortcomings of many federal contact centers and as a result, has introduced the Federal Agency Customer Experience (FACE) Act of 2017, which is making progress towards becoming law. Not only does the FACE Act compel federal agencies to provide high-quality, courteous, effective, and efficient customer service, but it also requires them to measure, collect, report, and utilize metrics that will help improve the overall customer experience.

However, many agencies today fall far short of achieving this goal. Customer service agents simply do not have access to the information they need to provide high-quality, effective, and efficient services. Outdated business processes and legacy technology systems have bogged down the progress of federal agencies that are making an effort to meet the goals of the new FACE Act.



# Meeting Customers' Needs

How can a federal agency address these shortcomings? One of the first steps in transforming the customer experience is to lean about customers' actual experiences—not only in the present, but on an ongoing basis. "Federal agencies should solicit voluntary feedback from customers the same way hotels or airlines do," says Saurabh Verma, managing director at Acumen Solutions. "That kind of rapid, real-time feedback helps businesses identify issues before they balloon into major problems." Federal agencies should take a page from corporate playbooks and enlist customers' help in notifying them about issues that are in need of improvement.

Making federal call centers more customer-centric also means that federal agencies need a system that standardizes data collection and access. No matter where they call from or how they reach out to an agency, citizens should be recognized, and their records should be immediately accessible and up-to-date.

In addition, it is becoming increasingly important to respond to customers' needs effectively and to resolve them quickly. Calls should be directed to the right person the first time, so customers don't need to endure endless transfers. Agencies must also trade in their legacy systems in favor of modern, up-to-date solutions. This will help ensure that the customer information collected is comprehensive, accurate, and up-to-date—making it more useful to the agency and its stakeholders.

However, updating the technology alone isn't enough; federal agencies also need to make alterations to people and processes.

Federal agencies need to work with a partner who can help manage internal changes and gain buy-in from all stakeholders in the organization.

# Leveraging Data Effectively

Of course, just collecting information from customers will not automatically turn that data into meaningful insights. When agencies are choosing a solution to enhance their customer contact center, they need to select one that can transform the massive quantities of data collected into insights that improve the customer experience.

This is a rapidly evolving field, and new expectations for outcome-based data are now in place. New solutions for reporting and data analytics can be very effective in mining an agency's data for information and using it in new ways.

In fact, predictive analytics even allows agencies to anticipate issues before they arise. However, many legacy technologies do not have the capabilities required to meet these expectations.

## Implementing a Solution

Finding a solution that meets all these needs may sound like a tall order, but it is an achievable goal. Acumen Solutions' Any Channel Engagement (ACE) Centers solution enables federal agencies to implement a customer-centric experience that supports all desired channels and greatly enhance customer experiences. ACE Centers can help transform federal agencies quickly and efficiently—in months, not years.

At its core, ACE Centers facilitates web and email interactions, data intake, case capture, case auto assignment, workflow, routing, and case escalation. It also enables channels like web chat, social, text analytics, satisfaction surveys, multi-lingual support, and mobile.

In addition, ACE Center's Computer Telephony Integration (CTI) helps agencies integrate their telephony capabilities into their CRM system. "CTI integration helps contact centers gain a competitive advantage by enabling them to take a more data-driven approach while interacting with their customers," says Chris Marra, director at Acumen Solutions and ACE Centers solution owner. By coordinating the needs of different and often siloed technologies, ACE Centers can help solve many perpetual call center problems. For instance, it can help agencies correlate an incoming call to the existing case so that an agent has the necessary information to continue the conversation.

ACE Centers captures and tracks every customer interaction across all channels. Using a single system to access relevant information increases customer satisfaction, decreases agent frustration, reduces call duration, and most importantly, improves the customer experience—making life easier for both the caller and the internal user.

ACE Centers allows federal agencies to:

- Increase first touch resolution and engagement across channels
- Enable customer self-service
- Reduce call duration by 30-70%
- Meet current regulations and prepare for future requirements
- Collect metrics and use them to improve service
- Gather customer feedback

## Customer-Centric Call Centers

Even federal agencies that meet new regulation requirements can vastly benefit from customer-centric call centers. From dramatically improved efficiency to better internal collaboration, removing the hurdle of legacy systems enables agencies to provide better customer service.

### Contact Us To Learn More

Clients choose Acumen Solutions for one simple reason: our experience delivers success. Joining forces with our clients, our teams of strategists, subject matter experts, and engineers solve problems that can't be fixed by technology alone. As a Salesforce Global Strategic Consulting Partner, Fortune 500 companies and government

agencies trust us to build solutions that grow revenue and strengthen customer relationships.

Engage with us at [www.acumensolutions.com](http://www.acumensolutions.com) or follow us on Twitter @AcumenSolutions.