

Reimagining the digital
self-service experience
for state governments

maximus



The challenge

Today, consumers of government services expect to engage in the same effortless, connected, always-on way they do with the world's leading consumer brands.

So, many state agencies are reimagining how they can transform their technology and operations to deliver effortless and satisfying citizen experiences.

The consumer experience for government services in the U.S. is, by all indications, well below citizen and business expectations. Last December, Forrester found the customer experience of federal agencies to be more than a letter grade lower on average (D- vs. C) than for the average U.S. private sector company.¹ And the American Customer Satisfaction Index rated the government/public administration industry by far the lowest in customer satisfaction of 11 industries measured, with each customer satisfaction factor in decline.²

Federal government customer satisfaction, January 2022³

Ease and efficiency of government process	↓ (-5 pts)
Ease of accessing and clarity of information	↓ (-3 pts)
Courtesy and professionalism of customer service	↓ (-1 pt)
Government website quality	↓ (-1 pt)

¹ Forrester, New Forrester Data Shows Wide Disparities in US Federal Customer Experience (CX) Quality Despite Overall Gains, December 2021

² American Customer Satisfaction Index, May 2021

³ American Customer Service Index, January 2022

The vision

To address these shortcomings, the Biden administration issued an executive order in December to rebuild trust in government by improving the customer experience. According to the order: “Government must be held accountable for designing and delivering services with a focus on the actual experience of the people whom it is meant to serve. Government must also work to deliver services more equitably and effectively, especially for those who have been historically underserved.”⁴

The quality of the experience that governments provide constituents is not a red issue or a blue issue, a federal or a state issue, but a good governance issue. In 2016, under Republican Governor Larry Hogan, the state of Maryland introduced a Customer Service Promise, followed by annual reports on the state of customer experience in the state.⁵ (Perhaps not coincidentally, Hogan is consistently ranked as one of the most popular governors in the country.)

And more recently, Pennsylvania identified six goals for its Customer Service Transformation.⁶



⁴White House, “Executive Order on Transforming Federal Customer Experience and Service Delivery to Rebuild Trust in Government,” December 2021

⁵State of Maryland, “Our Customer Service Promise”

⁶Commonwealth of Pennsylvania, “Customer Service Transformation”

⁷Government Technology, Michigan’s Website Overhaul Aims to Improve User Experience, January 2022

Maryland Customer Service Promise

“The State of Maryland pledges to provide constituents, businesses, customers, and stakeholders with friendly and courteous, timely and responsive, accurate and consistent, accessible and convenient, and truthful and transparent services.”

The need for transformation

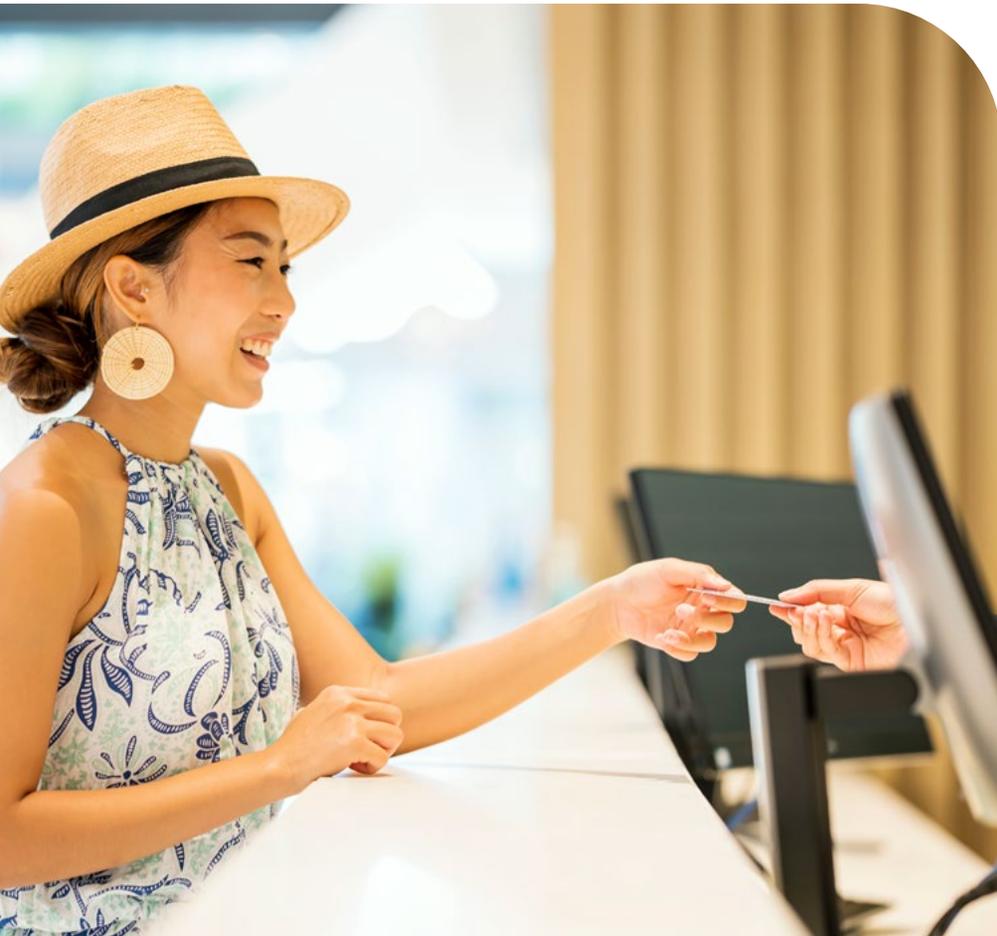
For governors, secretaries of state, and agency administrators looking to elevate the government experience, the obvious place to start is the state portal and the array of services the portal supports — where consumers and businesses can renew their driver’s or professional license, register to vote, establish a new business, apply for or post a job, seek out emergency assistance, pay taxes, and utilize a host of other services.

These transformation initiatives can be extensive. To improve interactions between Michigan residents and Michigan.gov, the state is updating its 20-year-old website content management system. The project entails the overhaul, to date, of almost 20 websites, 170,000 web pages, and over 100 GB of digital assets.⁷

Before embarking on these transformation initiatives, it’s important for state leaders to gain a deep understanding of what customers are looking for and how the best customer experience organizations meet their needs.

How the private sector creates outstanding experiences

Fundamentally, governments exist to serve the people — not, as it sometimes feels, the inverse. In the private sector, The Ritz-Carlton has long been known for setting the gold standard in customer experience. To achieve this, the company lives by a set of 12 service values, many of which governors and state executives can fully embrace — e.g., qualities like always being responsive to expressed and unexpressed wishes and needs, owning and immediately resolving problems, continuously seeking to innovate and improve, and protecting privacy and security.⁸



In the digital world, Amazon's six tenets of customer experience offer a good model for government.

- Relentlessly advocate for customers.
- Trust our customers and rely on associates to use good judgement.
- Anticipate customer needs and treat their time and attention as sacred.
- Deliver personalized, peculiar services that customers love.
- Make it simple to detect and systematically escalate problems.
- Eliminate customer effort through this sequential and systematic approach: defect elimination, self-service, automation, and support from an expert associate.⁹

“Only 14% of government and public sector respondents believe their digital experience is ahead of the public’s expectations.”

Adobe 2022 Digital Trends – Public Sector in Focus

⁸ The Ritz-Carlton, Gold Standards

⁹ Forbes, 6 Customer Service Tenets Used by Amazon to Create Effortless Experiences, October 2019

How government experiences can come up short

Today, as states aim to deliver excellent experiences to their constituents, a battery of hurdles stand in the way:

1. Lack of consumer centricity

For governments to meet the rising expectations of the people they serve, they need to start by understanding the customer journey.

- How are people's expectations changing?
- How are they engaging online?
- What will they pay for and what do they expect as part of government service?
- What are their challenges and what will motivate them to remain engaged?

These and dozens of other factors should be explored and uncovered using design thinking and other change management techniques.

Think about government portals, for instance. The origin of many involved taking an existing offline process and digitizing parts of it to enable states to collect revenue online. Typically, consumers must pay a fee to the state's portal provider for each transaction. States justify these transaction fees under the premise that consumers are willing to pay extra for the convenience and efficiency. But many residents, who are already paying taxes and fees for a government service, may find it a bit unfair to be asked to pay extra to use self-service tools that should reduce the state's workload.

2. Outdated, inflexible technology

More often than not, portals are cobbled-together, custom-coded systems, sometimes cluttered with hundreds of underlying applications. Updating these systems is very time-intensive compared to modern approaches, which build off existing CX platform technology like Adobe Experience Manager and allow for modular configurations to a state's requirements.

3. Limited digital self-service tools

Many portals offer only the most basic digital self-service options to consumers. Navigating the desktop version of many portals can be quite a challenge to the large number of consumers who can only connect through a mobile device. And submitting paperwork — a key requirement for many government services — can be a non-starter online.

4. Siloed operations

When consumers reach out to a state, they do not think of the specific agencies and sub-agencies that are serving them — this is not something they know or care to know. Instead, they care about the service being provided by their government. One could even argue that, in the future, the consumer won't even care which government (federal, state, local) is providing their service.

To provide a secure consumer-centric experience, states must break down agency silos, rather than just mirror them in digital form. They need to create a one-stop shop where the consumer's diverse needs can be addressed holistically — regardless of where in state government those services happen to reside.

More than a technology project

The consumers of government services are extraordinarily diverse and have widely varying technical and communication capabilities and preferences. Unlike a luxury retailer, government customer experience must serve everyone, including those who can only go online via a smartphone, those who have no web device at all, and those who simply prefer to speak with a real person vs. searching for information online.

The service must also be empathetic to the government customer's situation. People need the services of government agencies at trying times — getting health coverage when losing a job, seeking social services, dealing with the financial pressure of opening a business, and other urgent needs. Commercial, “digital-only” solutions don't apply well in these cases, and it's imperative to engage in the manner that works for the consumer.

5. Limited transparency

Governments around the world are facing a crisis of trust. How bad is it? Consider the following:

- 48% of citizens view government as a dividing force in society vs. only 36% who see it as a unifying force.
- In the U.S., trust in government has slipped 10 points in five years.

The number one way to rebuild trust is information quality.¹⁰ For state governments, this means that the information they provide residents should not only be accurate, but also clear, easy to locate, and transparent. Seeing information doled out piecemeal across multiple agency websites, residents may come to believe that states are purposely deflecting them from services they need and qualify for — and have paid for with their taxes. Nothing could be more detrimental to the trust residents place in their governments.

6. Untapped insights from data

With data trapped in agency silos, it is very difficult for states to get an All-of-Government view of the people they serve, or to personalize experiences in the way consumers are used to when purchasing products, scheduling services, or streaming content online. This contributes to a consumer view of government agencies as impersonal, unresponsive, and out of touch.

But it doesn't have to remain this way. With a modern approach, government experience (GX) can close the gap to the type of experience offered by the leading private sector companies.



¹⁰ 2022 Edelman Trust Barometer

Making the government experience personal

Now let's think about how government experience could be in the future for someone like Michael Smith, a licensed plumber, and his wife Alexa, the business manager for their small plumbing construction and repair business. Michael and Alexa have five employees of varying skill levels and own three commercial vans. In his downtime, Michael likes to fish and hunt. Alexa enjoys searching the state archive for information about her ancestors. And they both enjoy camping and hiking in the state parks.

How the Smiths engage with their state government

- Register their business and file annual reports with the secretary of state
- Apply for Michael's professional license and ensure his employees do the same
- File state business and income taxes
- Collect sales tax on equipment he installs
- Register his commercial vehicles with the DMV and address any anomalies in the title of those vehicles
- Acquire a commercial vehicle license
- Get their employees SHOP health insurance plans through the state healthcare exchange
- Stay up to date on state building codes, environmental regulations, and workplace requirements, including workplace safety, workers' comp and unemployment insurance, and wage laws
- Get annual hunting and business permits
- Reserve a pad and hook-ups for their camper in a nearby state park as well as the park pavilion for the annual company picnic
- Register their personal vehicles and get driver's licenses
- Learn about the state's 529 college plan for their 5-year-old



Navigating different departments can be frustrating

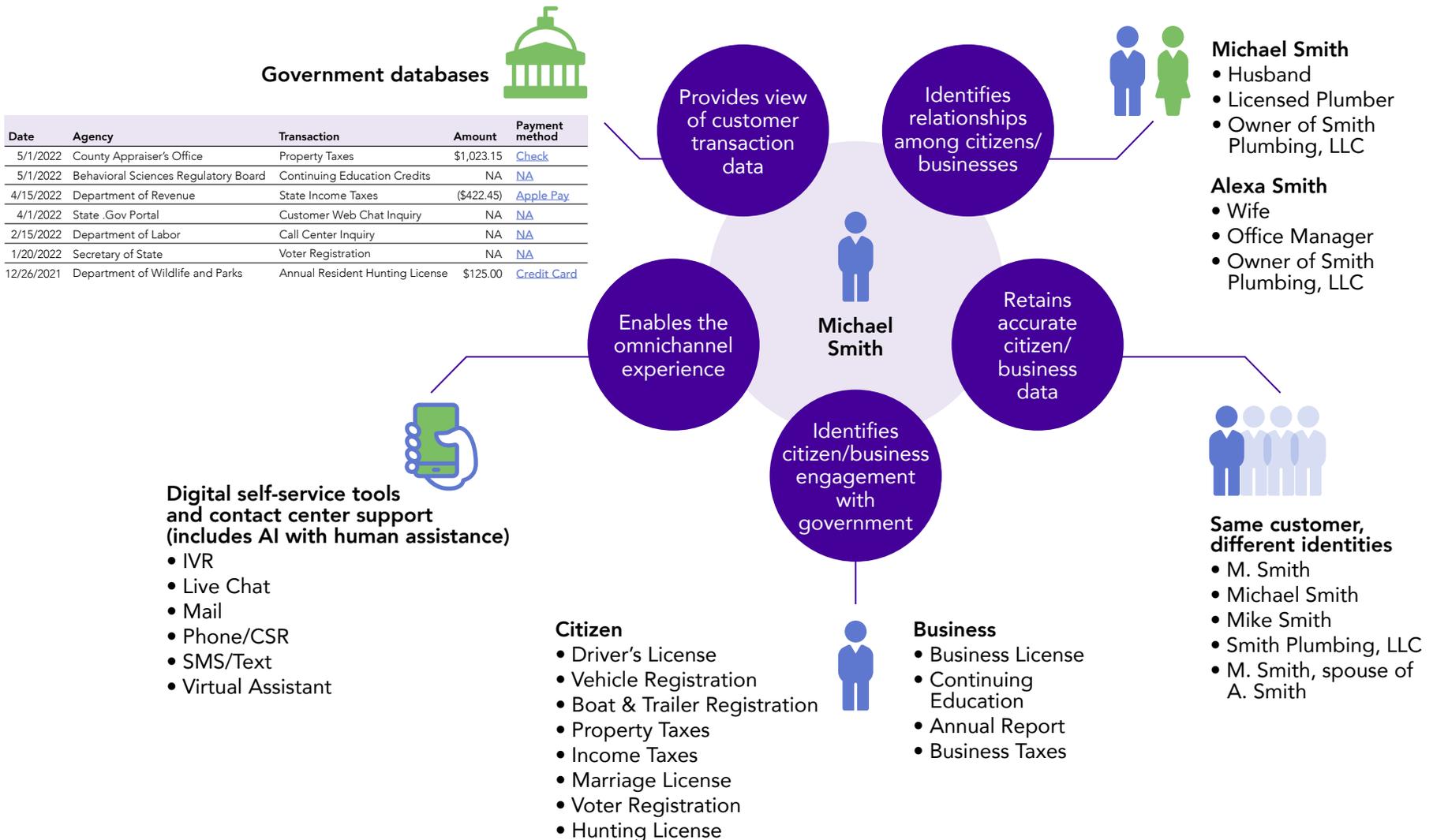
Michael knows his way around a blueprint and an elbow joint, and Alexa knows her way around estimating and payroll, but neither would claim to be an expert on their state's government bureaucracy. The Smiths would prefer to engage with the state from start to finish online. But they often find it's not intuitive figuring out where to go within the state's web portal to complete a task.

With the data the state has on the Smiths' business, vehicles, and recreational habits (and the Smiths' consent for the state to use that data proactively), it should be able to tell them. Unfortunately, most of this data is siloed across a wide number of departments. The secretary of state, the DMV, the Board of Plumbing Examiners, the Workforce Commission, the Departments of Health and Education, and the Parks and Wildlife Authority each know something about the Smiths' interactions with the state government in the past.

360° All-of-Government view

Collectively, the state and the Smiths should be able to view all their points of engagement and predict when and why they might need to engage in the future. But there is no unified view of a state business or resident, and no dashboard or system of notifications to alert them to important information. So, while the state government is theoretically of the people and for the people, it's taking few steps to serve people like Michael and Alexa the way they want.

The Maximus approach



A transformative, secure solution

It's time for a new type of government experience. Powered by a transformative portal solution.

GX by Maximus provides truly unified customer engagement across all channels and touch points, personalizes information to individuals and businesses, streamlines submission of information and documents, offers notifications and assistance (with the resident's consent), and reduces the time to get people the outcomes they seek. It does this by delivering on the following needs:

1. Human-centered design

The foundation of the GX by Maximus solution is our belief that people come first. It's incumbent on state government to ensure consumers can easily navigate their portal to find information, resolve issues, request services, and complete tasks. The GX by Maximus solution organizes services and content in a way that is intuitive and contextually relevant, regardless of the agency responsible for the service.

2. Unified, omnichannel customer engagement

GX by Maximus aggregates data across agency silos to present a single, unified view of residents and businesses, allowing government agencies to personalize responses to specific needs. This solution allows people to engage with states on their own terms, based on their preferences — from in-person visits, to live on the phone, to text messages, mobile apps, intelligent chat agents, and digital self-service tools.

Our omnichannel consumer support

Customer service agents

In person

IVR

Mail

Member portal

Fax

Web chat

Social media

Mobile app

Text interactions

Email

Intelligent chat agents

3. Equitable access

At-risk communities served by agencies often have fewer technical resources and less comfort in using them. Many individuals have only a smartphone and a limited data plan. GX by Maximus ensures equitable access through mobile-enabled platforms that allow residents to easily find the information and services they need — including securely uploading documents to obtain benefits — using just their smartphone.

Of course, some consumers still prefer to interact with state agencies in person or over the phone. Our human-centered approach takes these preferences into account. Through 98 citizen engagement centers, Maximus has a long heritage of supporting citizens through live interactions, fielding 44 million calls annually for one agency alone.

4. Modern, modular technology

Portals should be a very flexible resource for communicating with government constituents. But they can be frustratingly inflexible and slow to adapt to practices routine in the private sector, such as online identity verification, personalization, and electronic notaries — even during a pandemic. The technology foundation of many portals is old and fragile, unable to easily incorporate new requirements or fully benefit from technological advancements.

In a consumer-centered experience, there is no wrong door.

By contrast, GX by Maximus uses a modern and modular technology approach. Our solutions:

- Leverage standardized platforms from best-of-breed technology partners
- Enable you to efficiently customize the consumer experience to state requirements
- Provide an extensive array of digital self-service tools
- Integrate with back-end systems and data sources — in a secure and scalable environment — to provide an efficient and manageable technology foundation

All of this gives state agencies more control, flexibility, and choice in how they integrate innovative technologies, now and in the future.

5. AI and advanced analytics

With an All-of-Government view of each resident and business, and the ability to learn from each interaction through advanced analytics, GX by Maximus enables states to proactively serve consumers.

Our solution incorporates artificial intelligence, robotic process automation, and machine learning, each of which drives significant improvement in the consumer experience. This allows states to connect the dots for their constituents (based on their level of consent) by recommending useful links, shortcuts, and new services to residents, and advising businesses of relevant changes in law. It also enables states to personalize push communications, from offering drivers a one-click license renewal to notifying those impacted by a wildfire about how to access emergency services.

Many states already rely heavily on Maximus for consumer engagement in state health and human services, such as Medicaid, TANF, and SNAP. Leveraging data and insights from consumer touches in these programs, as well as their interactions with other

state agencies, Maximus is in position to deliver even greater insight into the needs of each resident and family.

6. Process efficiencies

Beyond the front-end customer experience, a holistic view of the customer and integration of systems across state agencies allow for significant efficiencies on the back-end. GX by Maximus makes it easier for employees to accomplish their tasks and for supervisors to properly balance responsibilities. And with advanced analytics, agency leaders can better prepare for spikes in activity and detect where in the consumer journey to improve access to service and adoption of digital self-service tools.

7. Data security and privacy

Maximus has decades of experience securing sensitive data for governments. This requires a comprehensive approach, protecting data where it is initially entered, stored, and processed, and when it is in transit. Cybersecurity spans systems, networks, applications, risk management, and threat monitoring. Maximus provides comprehensive capabilities across the cybersecurity ecosystem.

Elevating your government experience

In our digital world, the best experience anywhere is the experience expected everywhere.

With GX by Maximus, governments are able to offer their residents and businesses not only a good consumer experience, but the best experience.



About Maximus

For more than four decades, Maximus has been reinventing the way government agencies engage with the people they serve. Now, through a unique combination of digital technologies, human insight, domain expertise and agility, we are helping agencies advance their mission at the speed of human need.

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