

Government Executive Series

# Leadership in Customer Service: Delivering on the Promise



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The work ahead is not easy. Nor will it have the immediate and visceral appeal of the high-profile work governments have done on their front-end service structures in the recent past. Nevertheless, it is work that can no longer be pushed to the bottom of the customer service agenda. Citizens impatiently await the results.

# Contents

Foreword	02
Introduction	04
Rankings	10
Key finding 01	20
Key finding 02	28
Key finding 03	38
Key finding 04	50
The way forward: Accenture's recommendations	58
A showcase of government entrepreneurship	70
Country reports	79

# Foreword

Governments are in a new phase of their journeys toward leadership in customer service. They have already made a bold promise to citizens—that they would fundamentally change the nature of their interactions with government by structuring services in an entirely new, citizen-centric way. Governments' intention when they made this promise was to use customer service as a lever for delivering greater public service value.

By delivering services in a citizen-centric rather than government-centric way, governments hoped to establish a greater connection with their citizens and build trust with them. As citizens came to experience service that was clearly driven by a deep understanding of their needs and intentions, they would become more connected to government and more engaged in shaping both policy and the mechanics of service delivery. From the governments' perspective, this new model would help lead to greater efficiencies, as citizens felt more able and confident to self-serve and required fewer interactions with government to accomplish their

objectives. Over time, through their leadership in customer service, governments would be able to deliver better outcomes for citizens at a better cost and ultimately achieve high performance.

For nearly a decade, Accenture has tracked the progress governments have made in this regard. In *Leadership in Customer Service: Delivering on the Promise*, our eighth and most far-reaching report to date, we find governments at an important crossroads.

Governments have unintentionally widened the gap between service provision and citizen value. Technology advances in recent years have led governments to focus primarily on the front end of service, fostering expectations of an entirely new customer experience. Governments succeeded in representing existing services across multiple channels. However, their success was just the first step of true citizen-centricity. What governments still have not done is make the infrastructural and cultural changes necessary to fully realize their vision. Citizens used these newly available channels expecting

consistent levels of service quality. Instead, the back-end infrastructure was inadequate, resulting in a poor customer experience and lower satisfaction.

In fact, we find some compelling evidence of the disconnection between customer expectation and experience in our rankings of customer service maturity this year. While we have conducted citizen surveys as part of our research for several years, this year—for the first time ever—we have included results from the citizen survey as a component of our overall rankings. Accounting for citizen experience changes the picture of who leads in customer service in some very interesting ways.

In addition to our rankings, we have once again talked extensively with top government executives about their current challenges and priorities. A common theme was struck across the more than 50 people we interviewed—these executives realize they have arrived at a point where they must close the loop between what they have promised and what they deliver. The work ahead is not easy—nor will it have

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the immediate and visceral appeal of the high-profile work they have done on their front-end service structures in the recent past. Nevertheless, it is work that can no longer be pushed to the bottom of the customer service agenda. Citizens impatiently await the results.

Our goal in *Leadership in Customer Service: Delivering on the Promise* is to help governments map out the important next steps toward high performance. We pull together many elements—a point-in-time picture of governments' current performance, hard-earned wisdom from government executives, feedback from citizens and our own insights and recommendations built on extensive research and client experience—to point governments toward the customer service competencies they must now develop to bridge the gap between promise and practice, and to truly deliver the public service value citizens expect and rightfully demand.

**David Roberts**

Global Executive Director  
Government Customer Service/CRM

**High performance in government**

Accenture research suggests that high performers in the public sector base the value they create on two criteria: the outcomes they deliver and the cost-effectiveness they achieve. They look at value from the perspective of the citizen—the primary stakeholder and most important beneficiary of government activities. By focusing also on cost-effectiveness, high-performance governments strive not only to do the right things, but also to do them in the right way.

High-performance governments share some common characteristics. They generate maximum public value. They are citizen-centered and outcome-focused. Their capabilities and operational activities support the delivery of outcomes defined by their mission, and they measure their performance based on those outcomes—not just inputs and outputs. At the same time, high-performance governments are committed to cost-effectiveness. They hold themselves

accountable and they make their operations and results transparent. They are innovative and flexible, continually striving to improve value delivery, and are able to respond creatively to new challenges and opportunities. They work in open and collaborative ways, understanding that their organization is part of a larger system, and cultivating working relationships with other agencies, organizations and stakeholders. Finally, high-performance governments reflect their enthusiasm for delivering public value. This evident passion engages both internal staff and external stakeholders in active support of their organizations' missions.

# Introduction

The hallmark of high performance in government is public service value creation, providing better social outcomes in a cost-effective manner. Accenture's point of view is that delivering greater public service value is a direct result of leadership in customer service. High-performing governments develop service models that are founded on a citizen-centric point of view, and this focus permeates the organization. What that means in practice is that their services are constructed and delivered in a way that makes the most sense for the citizen—irrespective of agency boundaries, in the manner of citizens' own choosing and with the backing of considerable communication and readily available support—so that citizens feel well equipped to conduct their business with the government.

Since 2000, Accenture has been plotting the evolution of leadership in customer service. We viewed the rise of eGovernment in the public consciousness eight years ago as the genesis of governments' efforts to get closer to their citizens. Service success was measured at that time

by the number of services online, and our early days of rankings focused exclusively on the breadth and depth of eGovernment services.

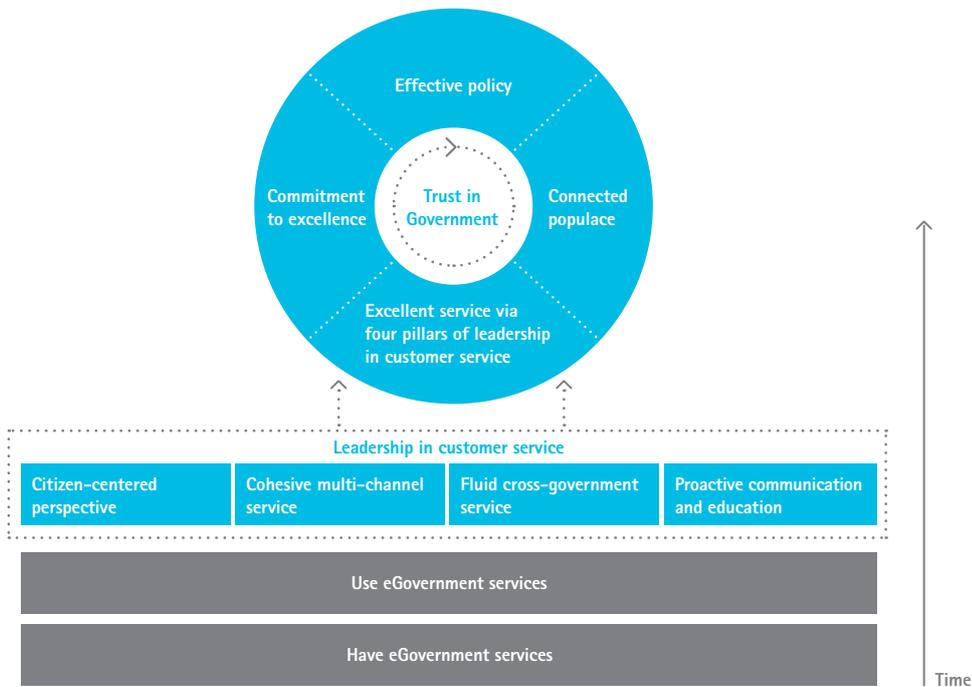
Over time, governments realized that eGovernment was just one component of the broader concept of value-led customer service. Anticipating a shift in customer service policy and practice, we refined our methodology for this report in 2005, assessing governments not only on the breadth and depth of their service, but on their maturity with regard to the four pillars of leadership in customer service (see sidebar, *The pillars of leadership in customer service*).

In our 2006 report, *Leadership in Customer Service: Building the Trust*, we laid out in detail the ultimate aim of leadership in customer service. When citizens perceive governments providing public service value, we said, it builds an implicit trust with government. Trust in government builds a more connected populace, whose true needs inform government policy, which is then implemented via excellent service, which in turn strengthens trust

again (see Figure 1). In fact, our 2007 citizen survey results provide solid support for this hypothesis: We found a significant correlation between improved customer service and an improved relationship between citizens and their governments.

In recognition that customer service initiatives with broader-than-eGovernment objectives would also take longer to gain traction, we forwent rankings last year—choosing instead to delve into the high-performance aspects of countries that we had already identified as leaders, seeking insights into what sets them apart.

Our evolution leads us to 2007 and *Leadership in Customer Service: Delivering on the Promise*—undoubtedly Accenture's most ambitious look at government customer service to date. As Accenture sees governments working to achieve high performance, it motivates us to try to enhance the value we provide to governments through this research effort every year (see sidebar, *Our methodology in brief*).



**Figure 1.** Building trust through leadership in customer service starts a virtuous circle.

## The pillars of leadership in customer service

Our vision for leadership in customer service puts citizens at the center. The vision has four important elements:

### 1. A citizen-centered perspective

A "citizens-first" point of view, in which the necessary information is organized around the citizen. Government frontline agents providing the service have access to this information, and use it to tailor interactions to each citizen's needs and circumstances.

### 2. Cohesive multi-channel service

Service that is fast, efficient and convenient, regardless of the chosen channel. Interactions that involve more than one channel (for example, mail and telephone) are seamlessly coordinated.

### 3. Fluid cross-government service

Government agencies working together at the local, regional and national levels to provide integrated services to the citizen.

### 4. Proactive communication and education

Active outreach and communication, which ensures citizens are well informed about government services. Governments provide citizens with information and education designed to increase adoption of government services through appropriate channels, improve ease of use and strengthen citizens' ability to comply with what is expected of them.

Governments that embrace these four facets of leadership in customer service will be well on their way to delivering the outcomes their stakeholders desire and to achieving high performance through greater public service value.

What leadership in customer service means in practice is that governments' services are constructed and delivered in a way that makes the most sense for the citizen—irrespective of agency boundaries, in the manner of citizens' own choosing and with the backing of considerable communication and readily available support—so that citizens feel well equipped to conduct their business with the government.

What did we learn? Governments everywhere are struggling to balance an expansion from the front end to the back end of their customer service operations. After years of focusing primarily on the front end (the highly visible, citizen-facing aspects of service delivery), governments are now trying to take a more holistic approach. While they are still trying to bring things together for citizens at the front office, they have come to the point where they also need concrete plans for making a superior front-end customer experience operational on the back end. In short, that means a renewed emphasis on the infrastructures and workforce that will be able to take the promise of citizen-centered service through to practice.

Governments have learned that there is a big difference between having a vision of customer service and defining in explicit terms what the actual customer service experience is going to be for citizens and what outcomes represent value. People may be able to agree on the general

principle of measuring public services by the public value they create, but they will have different and sometimes conflicting ways of relating to these services. As a result, any one public service organization will have multiple dimensions to the outcomes it produces. In fact, the Accenture Institute for Public Service Value has identified four discrete dimensions to public service outcomes: the needs of the individual being served, the collective needs of society, the concerns of taxpayers, and the authorizing directives of political leaders.<sup>1</sup>

Then there is the problem of how to join up government to make it happen. Governments face a long and hard road ahead. While the work that lies before them may lack the glamour and public appeal of the splashier front-end innovations of years past, it is absolutely essential for fulfilling the service promise that citizens have already been led to expect—and impatiently await. Governments know the imperative

for value-led service; disappointing those expectations can lead to citizen apathy, or worse, distrust.

In the first section of *Leadership in Customer Service: Delivering on the Promise*, we return to our assessment of 22 global governments' customer service programs—but with an enhancement. Our new rankings approach more closely reflects how governments are faring because for the first time ever it quantifies and incorporates the perceptions of the citizen. And the citizen is the final arbiter of customer service excellence. Including this element in the rankings caused some interesting shifts from past years and pointed to new areas for individual governments to consider in their future plans.

In addition to our return to the rankings, we have once again included the voices of senior government executives around the world. We spent dozens of hours engaged in frank conversation with 52 senior executives in 17 countries and came

<sup>1</sup>See the Accenture Institute for Public Service Value point of view paper, *Delivering Public Value: The Importance of Outcomes for Public Services and the Citizens They Serve*, by Greg Parston, at [www.accenture.com](http://www.accenture.com).

away with a deep understanding of their visions for the future, their current priorities and their lessons learned from past experiences. Their insights were valuable to us, and we share their stories with you—their peers—throughout the report, so that you can profit from their experience and find guidance to navigate around common pitfalls.

It is this balance of three research strands—our own quantitative assessment of governments' progress, the citizens' perspective and the real-life lessons from government visionaries and practitioners—against the backdrop of extensive qualitative research and Accenture's own vast government experience—that takes this report to an entirely new level.

More specifically, four key findings emerged, and we present them in detail in the second section of the report.

First, as the majority of governments continue to struggle with the fundamental principle of truly "knowing their customers," innovative governments are moving beyond basic demographic categories to

thinking of customers as groups based on more meaningful factors that include their values, needs and intentions. They are taking a far more holistic approach to service that starts with building a smartly balanced (outcomes versus cost) service model based on a clear understanding of who their citizens actually are and what their underlying intentions are in their dealings with government. Leading governments recognize they cannot derive this picture from broad-based customer segmentation techniques or citizen satisfaction surveys. Instead, they are taking a page from effective private-sector marketing techniques—moving beyond basic demographic categories and thinking of customers in more nuanced groups.

Second, after years of setting expectations of citizen-centric service through a focus on the service front end, governments are expanding their view to the hard and time-consuming (and often thankless) task of creating the flexible infrastructure—including technological, funding and governance components—that will allow

them to fulfill the service promises they have made. While governments understand that their visions of customer service will evolve over time, they are devoting more of their attention now to making their existing visions operational—driving their current front-office customer service strategies into the back end. The time has come to create the infrastructure that closes the loop between expectation and experience.

Third, governments continue to underestimate the impact of the workforce—and what restructuring must take place to align people with new technology-enabled ways of working. The impending shortage of skilled labor is just one part of government's challenge. More likely to be missed is the imperative for an entirely new type of public-sector employee—one who serves the customer over the process. In the end, frontline employees will have the biggest impact on the customer experience, and many governments are unsure of how to foster the enterprisewide behavioral changes needed for positive

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service outcomes. Yet, despite the fact that many governments are wasting their efforts without robust workforce strategies, we find that innovative governments have met the challenge head-on, and have developed strategies along one of two lines: ramping up their workforces through extensive recruiting and training or opting for smaller numbers of highly engaged people.

Fourth, as governments look to the future, they realize they cannot deliver on the full promise of leadership in customer service on their own. Their linear, process-oriented business models are evolving into complex ecosystems of citizens, communities, business partners, nongovernmental organizations and other stakeholders, all of which take on a share of responsibility for developing and providing value-led services. In this new ecosystem model, leading governments also delegate service accountability to the relevant community for a new ability to drive outcomes. Local and municipal governments in turn take the chance to tailor what they do for

the particular citizens that live there, leading to new thinking about delivering services not just to individuals, but also to families and communities.

In the third section of our report, we provide Accenture's recommendations for governments seeking greater value from their customer service programs. These recommendations stem not only from the thousands of hours our research team has devoted to studying government customer service during the eight-year (and counting) history of this report, but also from the insights Accenture brings from its experience working with hundreds of government clients around the globe.

One of the best ways governments can further their pursuit of high performance is by learning from the stellar examples of their peers. Today, the pressure for better service is forcing governments to become increasingly entrepreneurial, and we have seen some truly inspiring examples of government innovations in customer service. In the fourth section of our report, we provide a sampling of the remarkable

government entrepreneurship we saw in our research this year. While some of these examples are on the leading edge of technology, others are notable precisely for the creative ways governments have used readily available technology to create dramatically better outcomes for citizens. The examples come from countries with fledgling customer service programs as well as from established world leaders, and they are all standouts of value-led customer service.

Finally, we conclude the report with individual overviews of the state of customer service in each of the 22 countries we surveyed, drawing together our results and conclusions within the context of each country.

### Our methodology in brief

This year we made some important changes to how we assessed governments' customer service programs in a quantitative way. To begin, we reduced the number of services we evaluated, removing all services that were not offered at the national level in at least 20 out of the 22 countries. In this way, we hoped to level the playing field even more by having as many services as possible directly comparable across countries.

More important, we introduced a new element to our rankings—the voice of the citizen—and adjusted the relative importance we assigned to all the components of our calculations. Our updated scoring for 2007 consists of three weighted components: service maturity, customer service maturity and citizen voice.

Service maturity (SM) measures the level to which a government has developed an online presence, as an

indicator of how pervasive its thinking is about multichannel offerings. This element of our rankings has decreased in importance over the years as eGovernment has become increasingly ubiquitous and less of a differentiator among countries. However, given eGovernment's continued importance as the primary vehicle for self-service (and thus, its impact on value through service efficiencies), we have once again included it as a minor component (10 percent weighting) of our rankings.

The second component is customer service maturity (CSM), which measures the extent to which government agencies manage interactions with their customers (citizens and businesses) and deliver service in an integrated way. Our customer service score considers how well governments have addressed the four dimensions of leadership in customer service—citizen-centered, multi-channel, cross-government service delivery, and proactive communication and education. CSM is assigned a 50 percent weighting.

Our third component is citizen voice (CV). One citizen voice score is calculated for each country. Raw data from our citizen survey is used to calculate scores for each of the four pillars for each country, which are then simply averaged to calculate the final CV score (much like the CSM score). Citizen voice is weighted at 40 percent.

In the end, we normalized the scores for each of the three factors (SM, CSM and CV). That is, we converted them into a normal distribution based on the mean and the standard deviation of the raw scores. This step ensured that the range of scores for each factor was taken into consideration in the final calculation. We then calculated an overall maturity score for each country from the three factors using the weightings described above, from which we were able to assign a ranking to each of the 22 countries sampled.

# 2007 Leadership in Customer Service Rankings

## Overview

Among the changes we introduced to our rankings methodology this year, the most significant was introducing our citizen survey responses as a quantitative element. This year's rankings, shown in Figure 2, certainly reflect the impact of including the citizen's voice. The picture of which country leads in customer service has changed in some notable ways from years past, and we ourselves noted with surprise some of the more significant movers. Clearly, the citizens have strong opinions about the jobs their governments are doing at providing service. And those opinions carry weight.

This is a call to action for governments. We found that the four pillars of customer service are related to citizens' overall satisfaction with a correlation of .57. In other words, a significant aspect of governments' relationships with citizens is directly under their own control: how they provide services.

While the significant changes in our methodology from 2005 preclude direct year-on-year comparisons<sup>2</sup> of individual scores, the rankings themselves nevertheless provide an interesting touchstone for individual countries to gauge their engagement with citizens (see sidebar, Why we include rankings).

<sup>2</sup> For copies of our 2005 (*Leadership in Customer Service: New Expectations, New Experiences*) and 2006 (*Leadership in Customer Service: Building the Trust*) reports, visit [www.accenture.com](http://www.accenture.com).

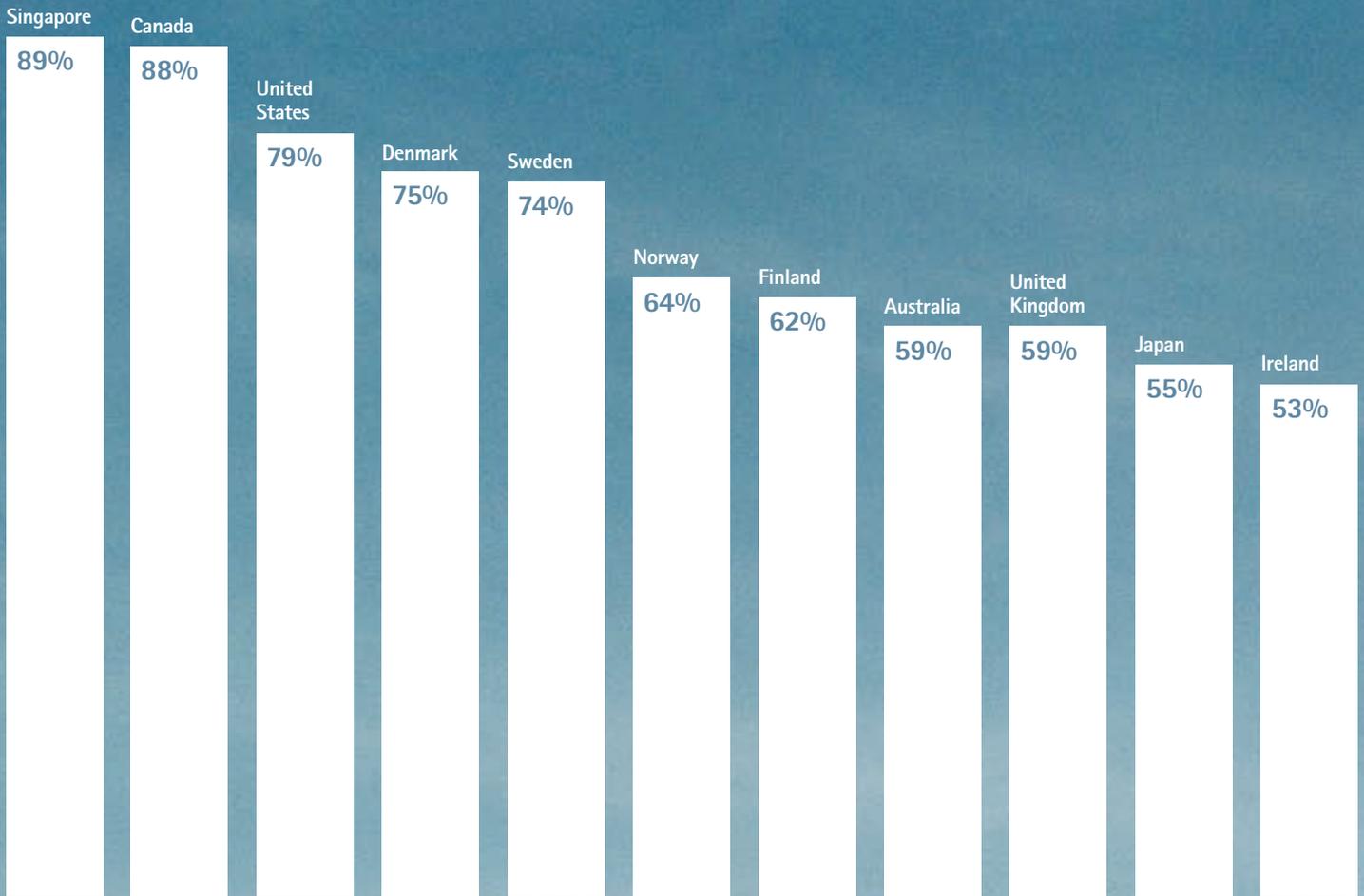
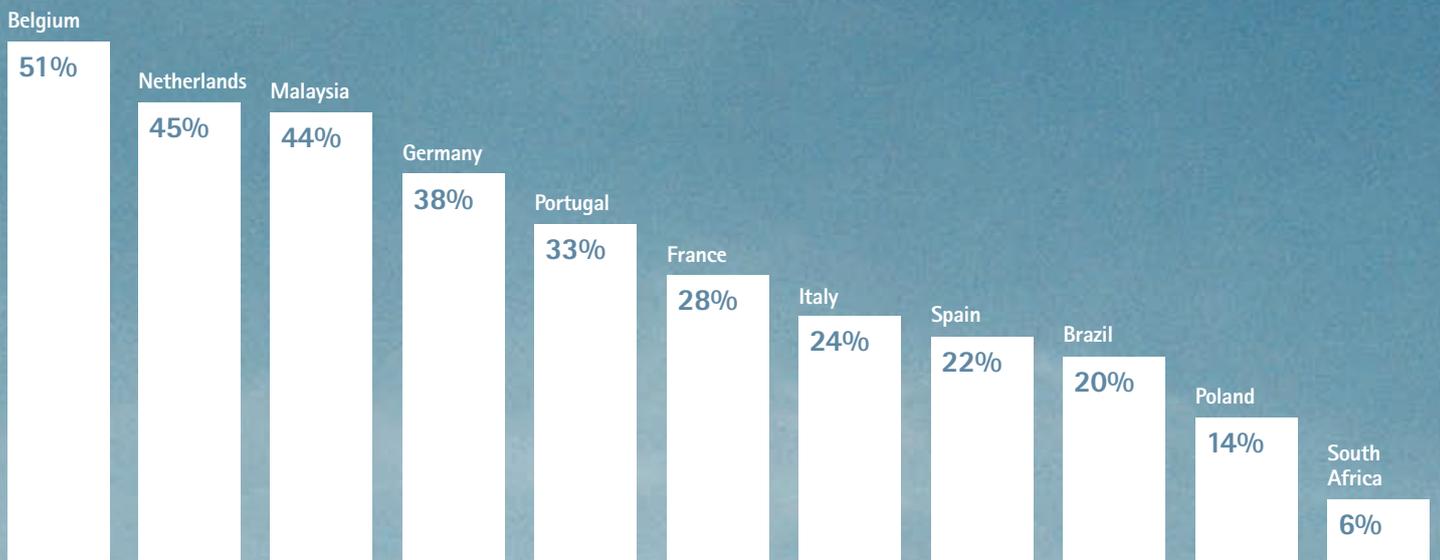
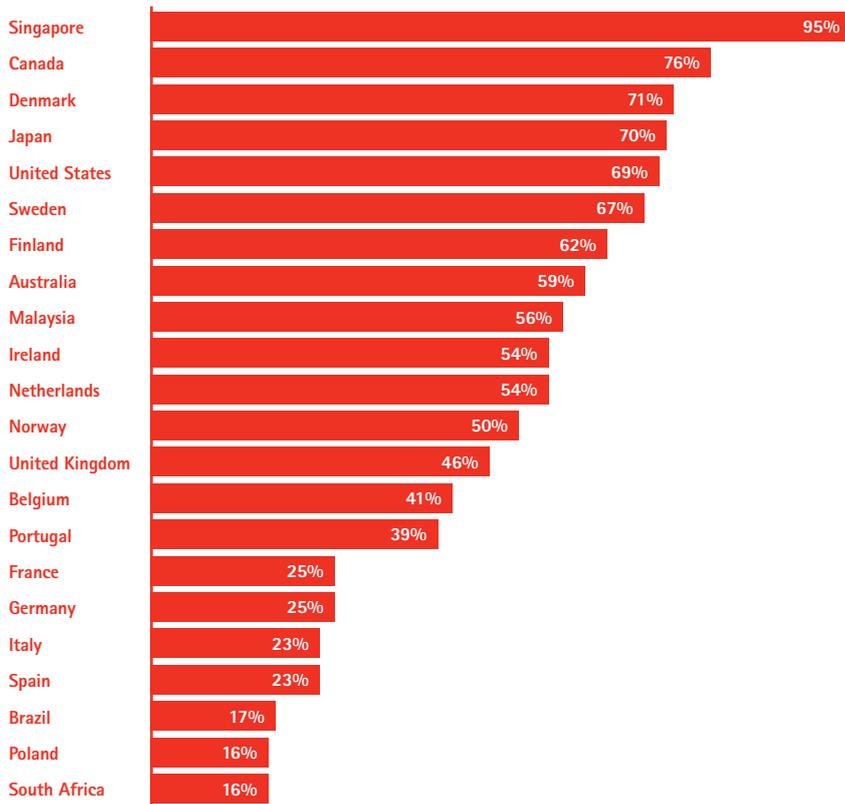


Figure 2.

Singapore is the world leader in our 2007 rankings of customer service maturity, followed closely by Canada. One tier below come the United States, Denmark, and Sweden.





**Figure 3.**  
World leader Singapore ranks highly in the proactive communications and education pillar.

In our new methodology incorporating citizen feedback, Singapore nudges Canada out of the number one position, although both countries remain top-tier performers. As in years past, the United States, Denmark and Sweden also fare very well, ranking third, fourth and fifth respectively, with just a 5-percentage-point spread across the three of them.

Likewise, the differences between the top two countries are not vast, and clearly both have much to be admired. Both countries, for example, continue to have strong and compelling visions of value-led, citizen-centric service. Singapore, however, seems to have the edge in terms of engaging its citizens.

In fact, as Figure 3 shows, Singapore is substantially ahead of all other countries in terms of proactive communication and education. For several years we have noted many of the innovative approaches Singapore has taken to proactively engage with its customers and this year was no different. (We highlight some of these examples in the Singapore country profile near the end of this report.)

The effort the government has put into this element of customer service appears to be paying some rich dividends in terms of positive citizen perceptions. Perhaps most telling is that 79 percent of Singaporeans feel that government service has gotten better over the past three years, compared with only 43 percent and 41 percent of Canadians and Americans, respectively. From a different perspective, only 2 percent of Singaporeans think service has gotten worse, versus 18 percent of Canadians and 29 percent of Americans. Obviously, these numbers have implications for these three countries' long-term outlook for building the trust with citizens.

More interesting than the top three positions, however, is the relative rise we saw in the Nordic countries under our new methodology. We were surprised to find that Finland, Sweden, Denmark and Norway took four out of the top six scores when the citizen voice scores (the scores tabulated from the citizen survey alone) were looked at in isolation. The Netherlands ranked third in citizen voice scores; rounding out the top six was Japan, which

scored fourth highest in terms of citizen voice scores and subsequently retained its 2005 position as a top-10 country in terms of overall customer service maturity.

Sweden, Finland and Norway, in particular, performed strongly in our citizen-centricity pillar, with Finland the world leader in this regard. The Nordic countries are known for their generous social programs and they enjoy generally content populations. While there may be some halo effect for citizens from governmental policy, our citizen survey questions focused solely on the customer service aspects, and the citizens in these countries responded positively, finding that government services are both easy to use and constructed in a way that demonstrates their governments have an understanding of who they are across multiple transactions. Overall, Sweden seems to have benefited most strongly from its second-place ranking among citizens, jumping into the top five from an 11th-place position two years ago.

It is important to note that as some countries rise in the rankings, others must adjust accordingly. A country's position in

the ranking is relative, and has as much to do with the performance of other countries as it does with anything that it is itself doing or not doing. This seems to be the case with several countries whose rankings changed from 2005, including Australia, France, the Netherlands and Spain. Certainly, the strength of Finland, Norway and Sweden's citizen survey scores helped to boost them past Australia this year. Likewise, Spain lost some ground in the rankings this year to strong movers Malaysia and Portugal.

France, however, remains something of a puzzle. While in most cases, Accenture's assessment of an individual country's overall customer service performance tracked closely to citizens' perceptions, in France's case, the disparity was great. From the Accenture look, for example, France's score was nearly identical to Finland in terms of overall maturity. From purely the citizens' perspective, however, France ranked significantly lower. Determining the roots of this service disconnect will be

critical for the French government as it looks to move its service agenda forward in the near future.

Even more interesting than the rankings themselves is a look at individual countries' service performance over the past three years, based on their citizens' perceptions (see Figure 4).

We asked citizens to rate both their governments' customer service performance in comparison to three years ago and their own current satisfaction with government customer service. From this look, we see a number of interesting trends. Those countries where service seems to have improved and citizens are currently satisfied are headed in a positive service direction. We consider these countries effective in their customer service performance. Once again, these countries include the Nordics (Denmark, Finland, Norway and Sweden), as well as Ireland, Japan and the Netherlands. Singapore is also in this category, and nearly off the chart in terms of citizens' perception that service has improved.

Countries on the move but still with considerable room to improve from the citizens' perspective include Belgium, Malaysia and Poland. Malaysia's momentum was borne out in our rankings this year. The country jumped noticeably with the boost from the citizen survey. Poland is a new entrant in our survey this year, but clearly, we will watch its developments in the future with interest. Likewise, Belgium is on the cusp of moving into the top-right quadrant, and its moves in the near future will be telling.

Countries that citizens scored most poorly in comparison with their own performance three years ago include Brazil, Germany, Italy, Portugal, South Africa and Spain. Their service performance from the citizens' point of view seems to be headed in a downward direction. For them, the trend should be a cause for concern. These countries are in the greatest need of a dramatic intervention to turn the tide of current opinion.

The last category includes those countries where citizens are still generally satisfied, but where service, in the opinion of those citizens, has not improved in comparison to three years ago. We noted the results in this category with extreme interest, as it contained some of the strongest performers from our past reports, including Australia, Canada, France, the United Kingdom and the United States. We have praised all of these countries in the past for their strong visions of value-led, citizen-centric service—yet somehow they have let service flag in the eyes of the citizens. We caution these countries against becoming stymied by their own success—taking too long to transition from successful approaches of the past—because by doing so they risk the danger of losing momentum. What will

it take to move citizens beyond complacency in these countries? What will it take to reverse citizen disenchantment, or to maintain the positive momentum in others? In short, what will it take for governments to continue to build the trust with their citizens?

It will take putting a robust vision of customer service into action. Governments have promised the world to citizens. They have talked about removing organizational boundaries and providing highly tailored service based on a deep understanding of who their citizens are—as individuals and as members of communities. In the end, however, citizens will judge their governments by their actions rather than their promises. And governments still have much work to do to be able to keep their word.

In the sections that follow, we discuss governments' progress in turning their customer service promises into meaningful outcomes for their citizens. We look at how governments are currently developing their understanding of citizens' wants and needs and then how they are or are not managing the infrastructural, workforce and service network changes needed to create a positive customer experience.



**Figure 4.** Citizens' perceptions of their countries' customer service performance.

### Why we include rankings

Accenture's decision to include rankings in our report causes decidedly mixed reactions among the government executives we interview. Some individuals feel strongly that the rankings encourage a competition, which moves governments to be less open about their challenges and approaches.

On the other hand, many more executives look to the rankings as a useful snapshot of their service performance. Accenture's intent, in fact is to help point to potential areas where governments could improve their own performance or learn from the approaches of others.

Our aim is not to set governments at odds. Our rankings are meant neither as a merit badge for the top-scoring countries nor as a censure of those that score lower. We also recognize there are many inputs into measuring governments' performance. However, the robust methodology we have developed and refined over eight

years provides an invaluable point of reference for governments. We believe governments will be able to take what they learn from us and apply it with a recognition of the nuances of their own particular environment—political, infrastructural and cultural.

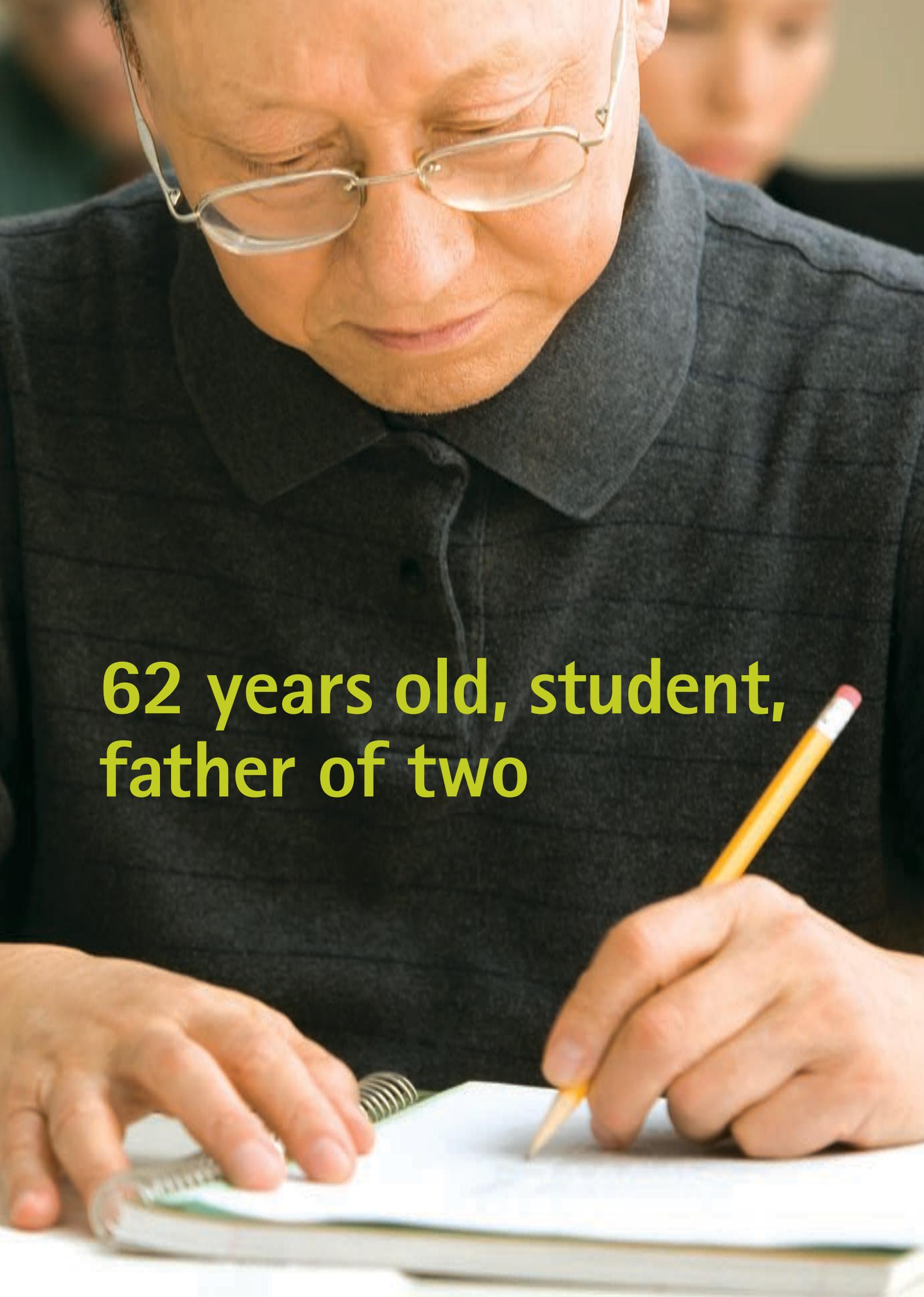
The rankings are just the start of this report. The trends we uncover, the leading practices from executives that governments can adapt, the feedback from citizens and our own recommendations—all of these are windows into improving customer service, moving from the starting point of the rankings. It is by taking this combination of elements as a whole that governments will derive the greatest benefit. Our *Leadership in Customer Service* series of reports is an extensive and rich source of information as governments work to deliver greater public service value through customer service.

And in the end, that is what will matter. Governments do not have to prove their performance to us, but they do have to prove it to their citizens.

Key finding 01

**62 years old**

A black and white profile photograph of a man, likely a professional, looking towards the right. He is wearing glasses and a dark suit jacket over a light-colored shirt and a patterned tie. The background is a plain, light color.



**62 years old, student,  
father of two**



# 01

Citizen-centricity, arguably the most important pillar of leadership in customer service, is predicated on governments' having a clear understanding of who their citizens are and what their intentions are in their interactions with government. For governments to deliver greater public service value (the right balance of service and cost-efficiency), they must first define what their customer-centric service model will be based on this understanding. For example, will a front-facing organization such as a call center simply provide information brokering or will it be the single point of transaction for citizens? Will it evolve over time from a simple to a more complex capability? The most expensive, high-touch service is not always necessary to meet the underlying needs and in fact, will quickly erode public service value if it knocks service costs out of balance.

To develop the right model, governments must pinpoint the many potential service needs of any individual citizen at any given time. Only then can

government properly tailor interactions to each citizen's circumstances within the framework of fiscal responsibility. "Knowing the customer's needs" is a fundamental, yet deceptively simple principle. We find that many governments still struggle with putting it into practice. As governments seek the still-elusive single view of the customer, some lose sight of the fact that even a single customer has different needs at different times, depending on his or her current situation. There is much scope for conflict here. As consumers of healthcare, for example, people usually wish to see no expense spared on the treatment they or their families receive. But as taxpayers, on the other hand, they are frequently reluctant to pay the price of the quality they demand.

For some governments the challenge is even broader. Countries with dramatic rises in immigration, including Canada, Ireland, Sweden and the United States, face a moving target when it comes to identifying their customer's needs and

wants, because they are serving people who do not even share a common language, let alone a national identity. They have different cultures, different backgrounds and different languages. Here again, "immigrant" is too broad a category. These different needs mean that a great deal of detail must be taken into account when organizations define their intended outcomes, to ensure that they properly respond to the needs of their stakeholders.

## **Basic segmentation schemes and satisfaction surveys do not go far enough**

Most governments rely heavily on rudimentary customer segmentation techniques and simple customer satisfaction surveys to inform their service policies. Neither of these is up to the challenge of making government service truly citizen-centric.

The basic customer segmentation techniques that most governments favor place citizens into overly broad categories—such as "seniors," "youth"

# 01

or “the unemployed.” The problem with this approach is that individuals cannot be pigeonholed. The 42-year-old, recently laid-off, sole money earner for a family of four is a very different unemployed person than a 21-year-old recent college graduate just entering the labor market. Even on an individual basis, aspects of how a citizen relates to the government and the services he or she needs can change from year to year, or even over the course of several months.

Gross segmentation schemes provide just a shade of the insight needed for true citizen-centricity, and the simplistic, after-the-fact satisfaction surveys that most governments use to get feedback about services add little more to the picture. “We will start to ask questions to the citizens—maybe one time a year, or at least on a regular basis—about how satisfied they are with the different services that we give to them,” says one executive. Says another, “We are looking at customer satisfaction levels—so every group has to conduct annual customer satisfaction surveys in relation to the services they roll out that year.” In fact, the vast majority of executives we interviewed cited this as the main way they were building a picture of their citizens.

While well-constructed surveys can be useful tools, the reality is that over time it becomes easier, and increasingly attractive, to “game the system”—to construct satisfaction surveys in a way that will yield the desired answers. This issue rises to the surface particularly when customer satisfaction metrics figure heavily into overall performance measures for agencies or individuals. In the words of one executive: “Service delivery organizations have learned to play this game. They know how to maximize their customer satisfaction scores without studying what lies behind the scores or without using that information in process elements to optimize their customer experience and, indeed, optimize their costs in doing so.”

Complicating the issue of developing customer insight for governments is this question: How much “customer-centricity” do citizens even want? Interestingly, for some, the answer is not much at all. For example, our citizen survey revealed that in general, remembering a citizen’s details from a previous contact is significantly correlated with service satisfaction. In Japan, however, there was no significant correlation between these two factors, implying that intimate knowledge of a citizen’s details is not necessarily considered part of good service (see Figure 5).

Any government service approach that aims to build trust will have to address citizens’ privacy concerns. “In the implementation of customer-centered architectures, we have to be very careful on the use of tools such as CRM. We have to gain the trust and understanding from the citizens of what will be the added value with the creation of a ‘citizen profile,’” says Anabela Pedrosa, President of Portugal’s Agency for Public Services Reform (AMA). “It’s not completely clear that the citizen will react the same way if, as happens today, I buy a book on Amazon.com, and after that I’m welcomed in a very personalized way with suggestions based on my last buy. I’m convinced that the biggest challenge that we [in public administration] face in the near future is to gain the trust of our citizens that we use their money in the best way, when we speak about eGovernment... The measure of our success in CRM will be when as a citizen I will accept as a natural thing that any public administration site will welcome me with ‘Good morning, Anabela. The last time you were here you did this and that: Would you like to proceed?’” Her point highlights the basic challenge in building the trust that many governments face.

In contrast, Christophe Alviset, Under-Director of Information and New Technologies at France’s Ministry of Economy, Finance and Industry, describes the prevailing attitude in his country

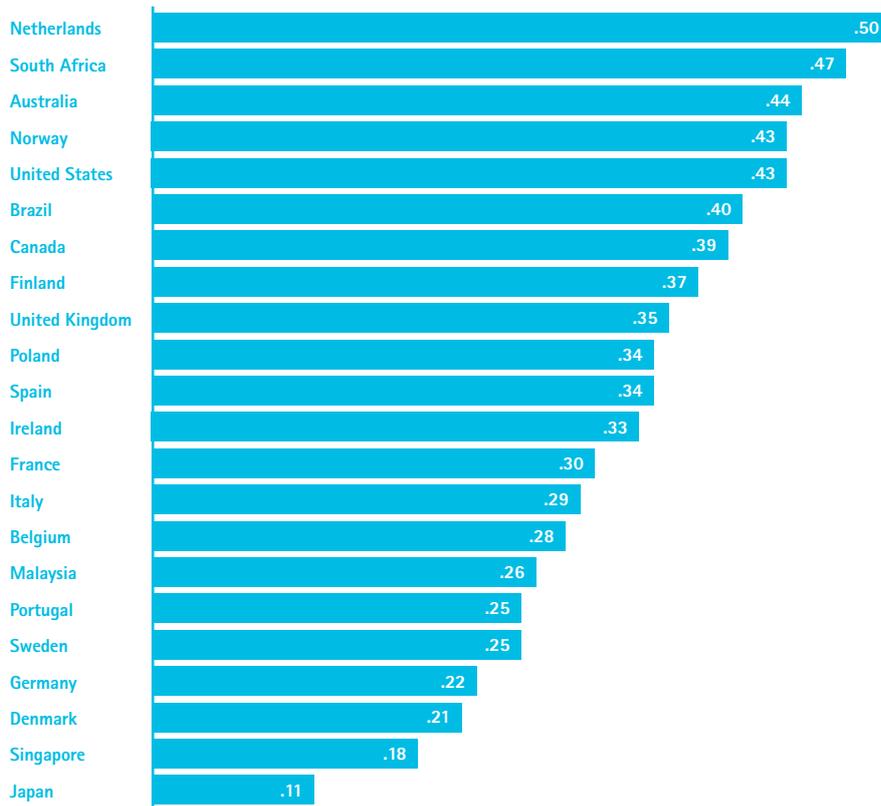
this way: “We’re not that inclined to think in a customer service way. And I’m not sure that clients expect it that much either. They’re used to how the administration behaves. They’re not surprised. What they want is a more streamlined administration, but they’re not demanding to have a single access.”

## Breaking the citizen-centricity code

The fundamental questions of customer-centricity then—what it is and how much of it do citizens want—are wrapped up in issues of both culture and personal preference, as well as in the nature of the interaction. The answers are rich and dynamic; gross demographics and satisfaction scores alone will not reveal them.

The next evolution for governments is to take a page from effective private-sector marketing techniques—moving beyond basic demographic categories and thinking of customers in more nuanced groups based on factors that include a citizens’ needs and intentions. For example, Rosina Howe-Teo, Group Director (Innovation and Infocomm Technology Group) & Chief Innovation Officer of Singapore’s Land Transport Authority (LTA) says, “We do not look at land transport so much as bringing people from point A to point B. From LTA’s perspective, transport is also about lifestyle. It promotes lifestyle. It affects lifestyle. It shapes lifestyle. The way we look at customer feedback is also about enhancing lifestyle.” In other words, the government officials in Singapore who are working to improve transportation services begin their analysis by understanding citizen lifestyle preferences, rather than looking at service metrics in isolation.

In another example from Singapore, the Central Provident Fund Board (CPF Board) has identified that it wants to reach out to educate Singaporean youth about the benefits of saving, long before they become pension-fund members. CPF Board executives take what they know of their targets’ attitudes and behaviors and combine it with some of the more effective



**Figure 5.** Correlations between governments remembering relevant details and citizen satisfaction.

marketing techniques from private-industry giants to communicate and educate in truly novel ways. For example, they use computer games: “How do we entice a younger generation to learn from us? Generally, the young people will not go to the government website unless we have some games. The concept of our game is to ‘learn at play.’ It aims to impart the habit of good investment, the habit of good savings, and the habit of buying good insurance at various life stages. It’s for young adults, especially students in the higher education institutions, but I think they like the game because they play games all the time,” explains Ng Hock Keong, Director, Customer Relations Division, Singapore’s Central Provident Fund Board.

“When we launched our games,” he continues, “we also threw in attractive prizes to entice them. And it worked, as we received a very good response. During the first three months’ of launch, we received an average hit rate of more than 17,000 per month. And for greater reach and impact, we organized

interschool competitions using this game. For example, our first foray into the polytechnics last year was most encouraging. We saw 16,500 students, or about a third of the polytechnic student population participating in the online contest.”

For some governments, citizen forums and panels have proven useful starting points for a more in-depth look. Canada has developed standing panels of citizens that the government can tap at any point to get direct and detailed feedback about service plans and performance. The government uses this capability as a near-instant focus group. More important, policy-advisors distribute transcripts of the actual dialogue with citizens to decision makers along with summaries and conclusions. In this way, government leaders “hear” the true voice of the citizen for themselves and factor it into their decisions.

Others use existing tools in new ways. For example, as the U.S. Postal Service Vice President and Consumer Advocate Delores Killete explains, she uses her role in a way that goes far beyond that of a traditional

ombudsman: “The role is not unique to government. But how we look at the role and what we do with the role may be unique. If you look at some agencies, they may think of it as a complaint department. We don’t look at it that way. We see it as an opportunity to find out what’s in the minds of our customers,” she says. Killete regularly synthesizes her discussions with consumers to provide guidance to the rest of the organization about service issues that deserve their attention.

In Malaysia, the government has had its Meet the Customer program in place for five years. On designated days, the heads of departments and other officers are available for the customer to come and personally address them concerning any issues they might have with each agency.

### Translating citizen understanding into service policy

What governments learn about customer-centricity in more specific contexts has clear implications for channel strategies. In Belgium’s service philosophy, for example, citizens choose the channel

# 01

depending upon the service they need: online for services where speed, independence of time and space and easy access are important, and offline when personal support and clarity of information is required. Of course, there will always be citizens who will never go online at all, no matter what the incentive.

Sean Cosgrove, Ireland's Revenue On-Line strategy manager, says: "I think we need to understand our customer far better. We know that there are large businesses that for some reason are not filing [taxes] online. But we also have a lot of small businesses. We have a famous area in Dublin where we have a fruit market, where we have people who have a stall and they sell apples and oranges and so on. I'm not sure those people would ever file online as a one-person business. We also have very remote areas of Ireland where we have a farmer with 10 sheep. And I'm not sure we'd ever get those people to turn on a PC, never mind go online." As a result, the Irish Revenue must develop a set of channels that work for these types of business filers.

Lars Frelle-Petersen, head of Denmark's Digital Taskforce, echoes the sentiment. "It is a cultural change that we are going through for the citizens because they ask for most services online, but when we bring them online, they don't necessarily use them. They are used to filling out a form and putting it in the mail. They don't think about if it's much harder for the public sector to receive the form on paper or digitally. That is why we are now talking about enforcing the cultural change by shutting down some of the analog channels and thereby ensuring the use of the digital channels."

The US Internal Revenue Service (IRS) has turned to sophisticated market research techniques such as conjoint analysis to refine its perspective on taxpayer preferences for receiving services. Bert DuMars, Director of Electronic Tax Administration for the IRS, explains the service's 360-degree perspective and iterative process for

developing channel strategies: "We just completed a comprehensive study for a report called 'Taxpayer Assistance Blueprint.' It looked at our entire services portfolio from end to end. And we did a conjoint analysis of: 'If you have the option of using the Web or having a walk-in center where you can go and talk with someone directly, what would you choose?' Then we start changing the parameters around each one of those, saying, 'Which would you choose now under this situation? Which would you choose if you had to drive more than 10 miles to see somebody?' And so on. The obvious trend is that people would prefer to go to the Web because they can access it 7/24/365 conveniently." However, even an intimate understanding of taxpayer needs such as this is only the beginning. DuMars continues, "Do we have all the services necessary to meet their needs? The answer is no. We have a lot of services that need to be developed. We also must continue our focus on increasing the quality and usability of our electronic channels."

## Heading for the next plateau

In tandem with deepening their understanding of citizens' needs and beginning the work of tailoring service channels accordingly, leading governments are digging into the question of the real drivers of citizen satisfaction. These go well beyond responsive call centers and friendly service personnel to include complex factors such as citizens' trust in the quality and effectiveness of the service they receive and their confidence in the people they're dealing with. Of course, every handoff from one government agency to another threatens this trust and confidence.

Fundamentally, no matter the channel, every contact that does not add value to the service experience is an inconvenience for citizens and businesses and represents excess costs for public service delivery organizations. In response, some governments are constructing services starting with the 20 or 30 major life events that account for 80 percent of total citizen interactions with government and then working backward. It is somewhat an

inversion of the "start small and scale" approach favored by many. Then, when someone contacts the public service concerning a major life event, they take a "no wrong door" philosophy. No matter where the citizen touches the public services first, that contact point takes ownership of that information or collects all the information they need for all the relevant public agencies. They then have a responsibility to the customers to manage that process through.

The problem with this approach is keeping service at an acceptable cost. Governments have to figure out a way to get customers to self-serve in some areas and also how to get customers to come through the best door. At least part of the answer lies in providing consistency, so that citizens do not have widely varying customer experiences depending on the agency they approach or the channels they decide to use. In the words of another executive: "Typically there will be more than one interaction with each agency. Not only are they not joining up, some of them are not ensuring a single-touch resolution of the issue. And sometimes they are genuinely not set up to provide that one-touch customer service because the customer is not confident that they will fulfill the need or they have not understood what has happened until the agency comes back with further information."

Clearly, in some cases excellence in service delivery will lie not so much in knowing everything about the customer, but rather in knowing everything about how government services intersect, so that governments can provide a "one and done" experience for the citizen. "The job in the long run is not to answer all the phone calls. It is to stop the phone calls from coming in," explains Dr. Jim Zingale, Executive Director of the Florida Department of Revenue.

In the next section, we describe the important infrastructural considerations in getting services to intersect and in ensuring a consistently good customer experience, government-wide.



Key finding 02

# Interface





Interconnected

## **Make the connections.**

After years of setting expectations of citizen-centric service, governments are expanding their focus to the hard and time-consuming (and often thankless) task of creating the integrated business and systems infrastructure that will fulfill the service promises they have made.

# 02

In 2006, we described that as governments have created increasingly rich eGovernment programs, they have also created a new vantage point—from which they can see that high performance in customer service will require new mindsets, processes and structures. Certainly, the vision of customer service that governments create will evolve over time; the very meaning of leadership in customer service will evolve as technologies, policies and citizens' expectations change. However, what we see now is governments taking a holistic approach. They are focusing on developing not only an aspirational vision, but an operational one—driving their current front-office customer service strategies into the service delivery organization.

“One of the critical context pieces for us is our government's focus on the restoration of trust and confidence in government through improved management, improved accountability. It's a cornerstone of the

agenda,” says Ken Cochrane, Chief Information Officer of the Government of Canada. “And so by defining approaches to act more as a single enterprise, the view is that we will be more efficient, more effective and obviously spend our taxpayer dollars better, and ultimately improve services to Canadians. Improving and modernizing internal services is essential to delivering improved citizen services.”

From a citizen's perspective, the mandate for tangible improvement seems clear. In our citizen survey, we saw little improvement from last year in scores across all countries when we asked about ease of use of government services through different channels. In nearly half the cases, citizens' perceptions of the ease of use have gotten worse (see Figure 6). Governments may have spent significant resources on up-to-the-minute technologies, but fundamentally, they have not made it much easier for citizens to interact with them.

## **Governments face an unglamorous challenge**

Governments have entered a period of tremendous challenge. After the splash of creating exciting visions and promises of truly citizen-centric government services, many governments now realize that their infrastructures are not up to the task. They find themselves in the odd position of playing catch-up on a promise that citizens expect to be fulfilled. The time has come to create the infrastructure that closes the loop between expectation and experience.

Understandably, as they come to grips with the undertaking in front of them, the government executives we interviewed expressed more tempered enthusiasm than even a year ago. The essential infrastructural work that comes next is unlikely to capture the imagination of citizens and the media. It is hard work—plain and simple.

# 02

Apart from being unglamorous work, it will take considerable time. "We have a program here called the personal Internet page," says Cor van Tilborg, Interim Director of the Government ICT Unit in the Netherlands. "We think that it can enhance the efficiency of government, the efficiency of policies and also reduce the anxiety of businesses when they see that government is really trying to keep them informed. It is not visionary; the only question is whether it will be done within three years or five years or eight years. But I think that is the range in time we are talking about before we have most of those things in place."

According to Lars Frelle-Petersen, the Danish government faces a similar long road ahead in enabling the cross-government interactions that characterize excellence in customer service. "We are building an information platform that should help us do it. We set up goals for a full-scale citizen portal to be finished not in 2008, but probably in 2012," he says. "It is a huge challenge in respect of building up the right architecture, doing it in the right way and simultaneously setting up the standards that we are going to use."

That long road may be a bumpy one as well. To begin with, not all central agencies and local governments (or even private-sector partners) start from the same place technologically. "There's quite a big difference between municipalities, and also between state agencies. There are some that are very digitally advanced and have many good services, and there are also some that have barely started," explains Natascha Dexters, the Head of the Citizens Communication Division in the National IT and Telecom Agency of Denmark.

In Japan, the issue tends to be one of widely varying attitudes toward control. "When it comes to the local government level, some want to develop their unique systems; others simply want to use an already-developed system," says Takuya Hirai, Japan's Liberal Democratic Party

Politician, u-Japan Initiative Leader.

"I would say that the government is trying to introduce the so-called common infrastructure throughout the nation and at the same time trying to reduce the overlapped investment in the local governments. However, when it comes to local governments, they are sometimes very protective in trying to develop vendors that each local government uses. Because of this hindrance, the common infrastructure is not progressing quickly. But if we stand on the user side, what we need to focus on is to increase the level of the convenience. Therefore we will keep trying to see how we are able to make those infrastructures common."

Coordinated service infrastructures may also reach into the back offices of nongovernmental organizations, including those of service delivery partners, unions and businesses. This adds to the complexity. One executive describes the burden for her customers: "Our technology is very rapidly evolving and we constantly want our customers to integrate with us. Our customer base is so huge; it's just a challenge getting them to climb on board." Sean Cosgrove, Ireland's Revenue On-Line strategy manager, echoes the sentiment: "Sometimes it is very difficult to match our IT developments with actual events in the outside world. For instance, if every trade union said to us, 'Our half a million members pay X amount in annual fees, we could very easily give [tax] relief at source for those members.' We also have situations where maybe other IT developments are not on a par with ours—this too can complicate the situation."

The challenge intensifies as governments try to integrate across national borders. European Union countries in particular will have to walk the line between European standards and their own implementations.

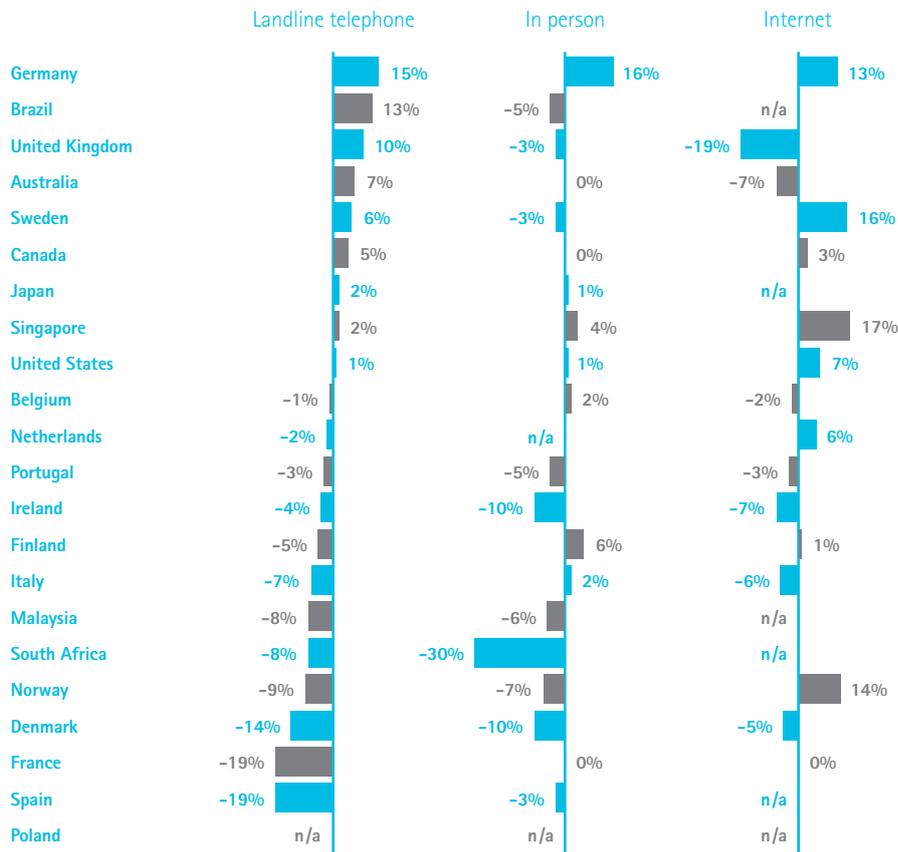
## Taking stock

As governments come face to face with the reality of what they must do, not surprisingly, they are taking stock of where they have been and making carefully

considered decisions about how to move forward. Some executives say they are learning from their initiatives of years past: While some of their service initiatives had breakthrough impact regarding *what* to change, the benefit of others came mainly from teaching their governments *how* to change. For example, Barb Kieley, Senior Assistant Secretary, Transformation Alignment Office within Canada's Treasury Board Secretariat, describes the process as "a period of inflection and reflection regarding [their] future service strategies."

The focus now is on the needs and wants of citizens and businesses, as well as on how they interact and lead their lives these days. Governments are using that focus to drive through transformation—both in individual delivery agencies and also across government. Many government executives mentioned that they do not use the term "eGovernment" anymore if they can help it. They stress that it is not just about providing services on the Web; it is about the underlying agency systems and business processes and how they work together. It is increasingly about the endgame of the customer service agenda.

They are taking on the hard work of building an integrated, enabling back office that institutionalizes their service policies. "If you look at what we're trying to do in our new plan for 2015, a lot of it is about enabling development and growth, from looking at infrastructure to manpower to processes," says Yeng Kit Chan, CEO of the Infocomm Development Authority in Singapore. "For eGovernment, we've reached a certain level of maturity. We have called our new plan iGov2010. We were debating what 'i' should stand for. We wanted 'i' to stand for 'innovation' and 'integration' among other things. But in the end we settled for integration. We believe that both integration and innovation are important. Nevertheless, integration is the next logical step in Singapore's eGovernment journey. And integration will be one area where we can make big strides in."



**Figure 6.** Comparison of changes in citizens' perceptions of ease of use of particular channels.\*  
 \*Change in percentage of citizens rating each channel "very/fairly easy to use" from 2006 to 2007.

### The way forward: Flexibility and interoperability

As governments consider how best to deal with their large-scale technical challenges, flexible architectures and interoperability pervade their discussions. Accenture believes that governments will increasingly develop interoperable architectures rather than insisting on rigid integration, favoring common data stores, reusable components, open source systems and service-oriented architectures (SOAs) to make their variegated operations work as one (see sidebar, SOA defined).

For example, Spain is becoming a model for other European countries in this regard, with its national SARA network. "We have created an infrastructure of communication that links all the administrations with regional governments, so that the state administration and all the regional governments are currently associated. That is what we called SARA, and this year, this network is going to be extended to the local administrations,

the town councils," explains Juan Miguel Márquez, Director General of Government Modernization in Spain. "The coordination with Europe is carried out through the central government. But because we are using this shared platform of mutual recognition, it is immediately transferred to all the regional governments. For example, everyone who is a part of SARA is automatically incorporated into TESTA [the European network for administration]. This is why Spain is one of the countries selected to participate in the new program of TESTA—we are one of the few countries that has a full network already configured linking all the administrations. So we have a link between European contacts, European commitments, regional governments and local administrations."

Anabela Pedroso explains the emergence of the Portuguese government's approach to interoperability: "This approach allows us to interconnect—to integrate the delivery of services but not necessarily the back-offices. That is one of my dearest

### SOA defined

SOA stands for service-oriented architecture, which is a framework for fluidly combining legacy and recent IT assets to deliver new applications, business processes and business models inside and outside the enterprise. SOAs support high performance by delivering services that can be reused across the organization and assembled on the fly. This allows for nimble business- and technology-driven responses to changes in customer service needs.

SOAs can only grow in importance, and governments, particularly as they push for more service collaboration, will look for more nimble solutions for dealing with their existing legacy systems and inequalities of technological sophistication. Leaders already recognize the value of SOAs. According to recent Accenture research<sup>3</sup>, fully half of high-performing IT organizations (businesses and governments alike) are committing SOA technology to their business, compared with only 23 percent of all respondents overall.

<sup>3</sup> For more information on Accenture's research into high-performing IT organizations, see Accenture's report *IT Investing for High Performance: A Global Survey of CIOs*, at [www.accenture.com](http://www.accenture.com)

# 02

projects in public administration because with this offer of a central gateway for translation and orchestration of processes, it's possible to interact directly with local databases with security and convenience to everyone. Our first process was the support to the Citizen Card (Portuguese electronic eID). With this architecture we gained, too, a new level of trust and partnership inside public administration. The Framework for Common Services (FSC), as we call this platform, is a 'neutral' IT platform, using and accepting dot.net and Java Web services. It offers integrated services of authentication, orchestration and electronic payment and is especially useful for transversal projects, such as creating an enterprise online (which is already available), that interconnects four different information systems and provides information to two others. With this project we are achieving another aim: The use of common semantic, technical and organizational standards that can be replicated from central to local government."

Yeng Kit Chan, CEO of the Singapore Infocomm Development Authority (IDA) describes a similar approach. For example, the government has put in place a Web service exchange that agencies can ride on to exchange information and share common Web services. There is no need for them to develop their own systems to integrate with one another. "It is not that government agencies do not believe in integration, but rather, the pain in integration is high because each of them has their own systems and processes already in place. So what we at IDA try to do is put in place some central infrastructure, central architecture and central standards and policies so that the pain involved in integrating is lower," explains Yeng Kit Chan.

Accenture believes that open standards, open source software and reusable components will play key roles in enabling interoperability. In the United Kingdom, the government's annual report on its

Service Transformation program describes its intention to develop a consistent approach to standards and architecture across government. Key to this approach is that legacy systems will be progressively refreshed by taking advantage of open standards, commercial off-the-shelf products and asset reuse. The Italian government is promoting open source software in public administration by tying it to funding—projects adopting and developing open source software applications will be given financing priority.

"In Australia our aim is to produce a portfolio of information and communication technology (ICT) assets that can be reused in new combinations across government agencies," explains Ann Steward, Australian Government Chief Information Officer and head of the Australian Government Information Management Office (AGIMO). "The purpose is to improve customer service, to better respond to government change, to improve government efficiency and to provide capabilities that will support future policy needs. To do this we are developing an Australian government service-oriented architecture to define the components, standards, patterns and principles that will guide government investment decision-making and government project development. We are also developing a series of frameworks, tools and governance structures that will support increased standardization, reduced duplication and improved collaboration between agencies."

Norway takes a similar approach. "With the current government what we have more in focus is this component thinking," says Katarina de Brisis, Senior Advisor for the Department of IT Policy in the Norwegian Ministry of Government Administration and Reform. "If you look at our government's ICT-strategy, it says we shall make it simpler for the citizens and businesses by continuing the line of concentrating access to services in portals. A new, important

aspect, which I think is the right approach, is the infrastructure components. That means that the public sector needs to build an infrastructure decomposed into specific components—like security, or form handling, or message switching, or other parts of the whole apparatus you need to deliver services online. The components should be reusable, so that we don't have the situation where every public agency builds this apparatus themselves from scratch every time they want to deliver some kind of electronic service that demands a high degree of interactivity."

Other government executives agree, saying they only recently have been able to start thinking of how they can build a more integrated service layout for citizen self-service in a way that delivers the value of joined-up government without requiring major restructuring and the danger of creating another set of silos.

Open standard and open source code remains a viable option for enabling this interoperability in many countries. "Malaysia has set up an Open Source Competency Center as a single point of reference for open source software. We provide services such as consultancy; technical advice; awareness and training programs; and research and development to all government agencies. We also collaborate with organizations such as UNDP," says Dr. Nor Aliah Bt. Mohd Zahri, Deputy Director General (ICT) of the Malaysian Administrative Modernization and Management Planning Unit (MAMPU), Prime Minister Department. Says Steven Poole, CEO of Information Technology Services Branch, Public Works and Government Services Canada, "I am prepared to consider more open source software. I've asked my chief technology officer where it fits in our technology direction. I would describe it as being in the mix."

**“We have called our new plan iGov2010. We were debating what ‘i’ should stand for. We wanted ‘i’ to stand for ‘innovation’ and ‘integration’ among other things. But in the end we settled for integration. We believe that both integration and innovation are important. Nevertheless, integration is the next logical step in Singapore’s eGovernment journey. And integration will be one area where we can make big strides in.”**

Yeng Kit Chan  
CEO, Infocomm Development Authority  
Singapore

### **Laying the foundations: New funding structures**

Discussions of technology platforms aside, issues of funding these new or improved infrastructures figure heavily into governments’ plans. Many governments have set up offices to coordinate technological development across their countries and have increased their emphasis on proving a business case for investment.

Over the past year the Danish government has undertaken a budgeting reform that now allows individual agencies to borrow money from the government to make infrastructural investments and then capitalize those investments over multiple years, depending on the size of the project. “Before when investing in an IT system, they couldn’t capitalize the investment over multiple years,” says Demark’s Lars Frelle-Petersen. “They had to do it when they bought it. But now, because the budgeting reform is making it possible to make a loan, and do the capitalizing process over a few years, they can save money from being more efficient to

pay down the loan. We think it will change how the institutions think about IT investments and combine IT investments with the thinking of being more efficient.”

In Portugal, where the government is highly centralized, the Agency for Public Services Reform (AMA), is housed in the Presidency of Ministers Council, which gives an excellent view across agencies resources. “In the Agency we put ourselves in two levels of interaction with public administration,” explains Anabela Pedroso. “One, on the implementation of policies that will influence all public sector, based on a common strategy for Public Administration Modernization [called the Simplex Program] and influencing the choice of sectorial projects to be financed with EU structured funds as a panel review team. The second area of interaction includes our own portfolio of services to help agencies achieve their own goals of organizational modernization, process reengineering, change management and so on. It’s our way of saying, ‘let’s work together,’ ‘the change is possible’ and

‘we, as public servants, should be proud of what we can do when we commit ourselves! The initials of the Agency, AMA, also means in Portuguese, ‘to care.’ That too is our goal, to be available to everyone who needs our help in this long journey towards simplification and better delivery of services to the citizen and enterprises.”

Not all coordinating agencies have the financial muscle to make things happen quickly. Those that do not have direct control of the funds must be more creative. In South Africa, for example, the Center for Public Service Innovation (CPSI) has no actual authority to enforce cooperation among government agencies; it must rely on influence to effect change. CPSI took the smart step of getting behind the Government Communication and Information System (GCIS)—an agency with real political influence—when first starting out. As members of CPSI identified critical government departments it needed to influence, it worked through GCIS to build those important relationships.

# 02

In Japan, the Government Project Management Office (launched in the spring of 2006) includes five private-sector people who act as advisors or assistants for technology investments. "For the fiscal year 2007, we were able to cut down 30 percent of the cost because of this group of people viewing the overall process in excruciating detail. So as a result, this group of people is giving a very strict eye whenever requests for budget are made," says Japan's Takuya Hirai.

The United States is taking a new business-oriented and more flexible approach to funding its national infrastructure through its infrastructure optimization Line of Business. "As infrastructure becomes more commoditized, we have to work out ways to use that and basically drive down costs in that arena," says Karen Evans, Administrator of E-Government and Information Technology at the US Office of Management and Budget. "So rather than in the traditional fashion of outsourcing it, we've proposed to set up identified metrics as a standard that the agency has to achieve. In some cases it might be consolidation is the answer. In other cases it might be doing a better job in-house. Or it could be outsourcing it to someone else. Whatever it may be, we really don't care quite frankly, because these are becoming much more commodity items. What we're concerned about is that they get good-quality, high-level service at a reduced cost because that's what we've seen in the

private sector, and that's what we can demonstrate by the information that we're collecting from other large organizations... That is substantially different from what we've done with some of the other lines of business. But I think it shows the flexibility that we have in dealing with these cross-agency initiatives."

Australia has taken one of the more interesting approaches to funding we have seen. "Each year, the government takes 1 or 1.25 percent off funding to agencies as an efficiency dividend. It has been doing that for 20 years, which requires all sorts of smart ways of working. This has produced direct productivity improvements within government," says Lynelle Briggs, Public Service Commissioner. While such a radical approach runs the risk of getting in the way of investing, it certainly is a strong efficiency incentive.

As governments pursue high performance, more important than the specifics of how they create the infrastructure for exceptional customer service is ensuring that they do it right. However, our research shows that in their intense focus on the infrastructural aspects, governments can easily lose sight of the more important factor in their success—the attitudes and capabilities of their workforce. In the next section, we discuss why for governments, getting their people to deliver on the promise is arguably the more challenging part of making the vision operational and creating public service value.

"By defining approaches to act more as a single enterprise, the view is that we will be more efficient, more effective and obviously spend our taxpayer dollars better, and ultimately improve services to Canadians. Improving and modernizing internal services is essential to delivering improved citizen services."

Ken Cochrane  
CIO  
Government of Canada

Key finding 03

# Paper

A black and white photograph showing a woman in profile on the right side, looking towards a large, messy stack of papers that fills the foreground and middle ground. The papers are piled high, with many edges visible, creating a sense of a large volume of documents. The background is slightly blurred, showing what appears to be an office or library setting with shelves.



People

## **Align your people.**

While many governments amplify risk because they lack robust workforce strategies, innovative governments have met the challenge head-on, and have developed strategies along one of two lines: ramping up their workforces through extensive training and recruitment, or opting for smaller numbers of highly engaged people.

# 03

High-performance governments realize that just implementing the technology will not guarantee leadership in customer service. As many governments finally turn their attention to long-overdue technology overhauls, we find they continue to overlook, or at least underestimate, the impact of the workforce. What restructuring must take place to align employees with the new technology-enabled ways of working? How must governments prepare employees to coordinate service delivery across agencies and levels of government? The workforce challenges start with the need to retool employees to work in the information age, with self-service functionality solving easy problems and actual customer interactions becoming more complex. Their efforts are complicated by the well-publicized impending shortage of skilled labor as baby boomers approach retirement. Workforce transformation is unavoidable: what is needed now is an entirely new focus for public-sector

employees—one that recognizes that serving the citizen—not serving the process—is what matters.

Governments that do not adequately plan for sweeping workforce changes now are setting themselves up for a costly awakening. Large-scale technology implementations falter far more often because of people-related factors than technology ones. Even the most promising technology can fail to realize its business objectives when its intended users are poorly trained, resist change or even subconsciously sabotage the initiative.

## Recognizing the challenges

Government executives may not be fully aware of the magnitude of the workforce challenge. In our interviews, we saw a number of governments on a course to be blindsided by the looming workforce issues. One executive describes the type of overly cautious and vaguely defined approach we found to be pervasive: "We don't want

to presuppose what our operational folks are going to do as a result of having new tools and capabilities available to them. They may decide it's a risk and will always continue to have cases handled by people instead of ever providing a means to do that electronically. But that being said, I could see us slowly but surely reducing that." The inability to articulate a robust strategy signals a disconnection with the scale of transformative changes occurring on the back end.

For other governments, it is not so much that they do not appreciate the challenge ahead, it is that they find themselves ill prepared for how to deal with it. It is one thing to be able to implement technologies rapidly and well; it's quite another to get people to embrace new systems, learn how to work well with them and be held accountable for using them.

Further, governments that think they will be able to sidestep the issue as citizens

become more used to self-service options should think twice. Walk-in centers and telephone service are here to stay. In fact, the nearly 9,000 citizens we surveyed indicate they favor these two channels over all others for their government affairs (see Figure 7).

Moving operations closer to the customer through these high-touch channels means more interaction with the customer. Government executives must make sure their people can handle the complex, multi-agency, person-to-person service delivery that citizens want—and that implies some fundamental behavior changes. Future public service employees need to be customer service experts rather than paper processors or even subject-matter experts. Otherwise, governments risk alienating the citizens who have to come through the high-touch channels because their needs are more intense.

Governments need employees who understand the complexity of customer

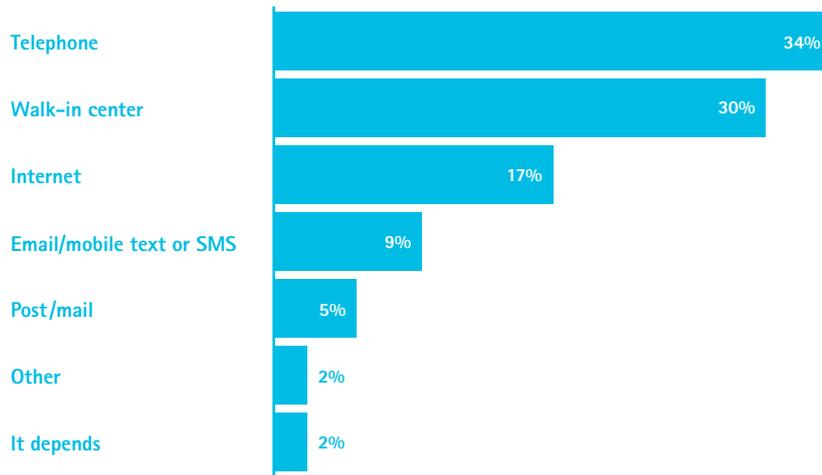
relationship management as much as they do the machinery of government. That means employees must develop the analytical skills to diagnose citizen situations in order to tailor the best package of services to that individual or family. In addition, they must learn how to manage contractual relationships with service delivery partners, which may be private-sector or nongovernmental organizations. Finally, as the service standard inevitably moves from giving citizens a prepackaged benefit to helping them achieve an outcome, frontline employees will have to develop the creative and entrepreneurial skills to craft effective, customized interventions that solve citizens' problems.

"We can't use the old way of thinking when it comes to dealing with the taxpayers and the public," says Svein Kristensen, Director General, Directorate of Taxes in Norway. "It has been quite common in the civil service to have not-

so-qualified people in the front toward the citizen and taxpayers. And that's not enough anymore. When people are going to a public office, to the tax office, they are expecting that people know their regulations and can give proper answers without calling us on the phone ... And I tell you that's what they get." Developing such confidence implies an organization adept at knowledge management—so that employees deliver consistent answers across the board.

### Two alternative strategies

Innovative governments have met the challenge head-on, and have developed strategies that tend to take one of two courses: ramping up their workforces through extensive training and recruitment, or opting for smaller numbers of highly engaged people. The key to either of the two approaches is to understand that the workforce of the future will be a fundamentally different workforce from the workforce of today. The move toward



**Figure 7.** Citizens' preferred methods of interacting or transacting with the government.\*

\* Percentage of citizens indicating a preference for using each method to interact or transact with the government.

self-service has increasingly automated the easy interactions. What that means is that the service challenges left for front-line employees to solve are more multifaceted and complex than ever before.

Canada's strategy is a standout with regard to the first approach. The government has a robust strategy for workforce transformation called PS Renewal.

"Service transformation and our public service renewal initiatives must be tightly coupled. As our transformation initiatives change the nature of work and create a new work environment, we need to be sure that efforts to renew our public service are aligned," explains Barbara Kieley. Central to Canada's PS Renewal policy is an emphasis on training talent. Accordingly, the Canada School of Public Service was established in 2004 to consolidate the training functions of several organizations into a central national-level public service training provider that not only provides role-

specific instruction, but also starts from the ground level with new employees—providing training on their role as public servants and stewards of the public trust.

In another example, in Denmark, the government is tackling the issue of rising expectations of the quality of public service against the anticipation that 1 in 4 public-sector employees will retire over the next 10 years. In support of a broader "Quality Reform" strategy, the Welfare Reform in Denmark aims to increase the workforce by 110,000 people in 2025 and 125,000 in 2040. The means being used include motivating students to accelerate their studies to enter the workforce sooner and pushing the definition of "early retirement" to signify a later age.

From the other perspective, Finland's Productivity Program encompasses a plan to respond to the challenges of an aging public service workforce by downsizing half of the current public service

workforce over the next six years, largely through non-replacement of retirees. Taking an approach similar to Finland's, Svein Kristensen, Director General, Directorate of Taxes in Norway, describes a conscious and gradual reduction in Norway's civil service: "We are decreasing the number of employees and we are paying those who are left more to compete with the private enterprises and private sector. That's one thing. We are also working very hard to develop our workforce through specialization. We have agreements with the university and school systems to get our employees an education on top of what they have from before. We have programs that we are offering our employees and we are specializing and doing lots in education."

In Japan, in September 2006, Prime Minister Shinzo Abe committed to reducing the number of personnel at national administrative agencies by more than 19,000 over the next five years

# 03

in a bid to cut personnel costs. Likewise, in Italy, where currently 43 percent of the workforce is involved in back-office activities, plans for meeting the service demands of the future include optimizing the size of the workforce over the next two years while redirecting others to more targeted front-office activities, according to Luigi Fiorentino of the Antitrust Authority.

"We have particularly targeted using college students in call center jobs because they have the knowledge and background to quickly learn the tax administration," says Barbara Slater, Assistant Commissioner of the Canada Revenue Agency. "We have seen that shift in our temporary workforce. In the permanent workforce, we continue to see a shift to more knowledge workers. We have done this over time, so we have been able to adjust as we go. It's a gradual transformation."

The Swedish National Tax Agency's approach to changing the employee mindset starts with a unique philosophy:

treating citizens as owners, rather than customers. This approach changes the nature of the dialogue with employees, right from the outset (see sidebar, *Much more than customers*).

The agency has also taken traditional citizen surveys and turned them on their head to get a view of their own employees' basic attitudes. "Normally we ask people about their attitudes towards different things. But now we asked the taxpayer what kind of attitudes we had in the tax agency," says Lennart Wittberg, Compliance Strategist for the agency. "So we learned a lot about ourselves and also we could present this as fact. That was very effective when we talked to the staff and presented, 'This is actually what the taxpayers are saying'. We cannot judge for ourselves what kind of attitude we have. It must be the citizens who decide what kind of attitude we have. And if they say that we have this kind of attitude, then it is their true perception. We can't argue with them—that's a fact."

A key challenge with the workforce, as always, is competition with the private sector, particularly when an economy is strong. Here, government needs to push its advantage, which is that government as a career choice gives people the chance to truly make a difference, while also offering tremendous opportunity to pursue different careers in a broad range of areas. "Every public servant is an Australian and they want the system to be the best one it can be," says Lynelle Briggs, Australia's Public Service Commissioner. "It's interesting how that plays out. We've actually tested this question in discussions with people who are entering the public service. We asked them why they joined the public service. And the main reason was because they wanted to work in the public interest. And so that primary motivator is a very powerful, if you like, heart chord that agency leadership builds on in terms of reform direction."

## Workforce transformation is unavoidable: What is needed now is an entirely new focus for public-sector employees—one that understands that serving the citizen—not serving the process—is what matters.

On top of capitalizing on goodwill, governments also need to develop real opportunities for people to enhance their skills and then differentiate themselves through learning opportunities. For example, one of the core principles at Service Canada is that service matters. Accordingly, the organization has moved very quickly to professionalize the role of service and service provider, creating a comprehensive career development program for service delivery agents, including ensuring that all client-facing people are classified in a professional category. As part of its career development program, Service Canada opened the Service Canada College in conjunction with the Canada School of Public Service and offers certification in service delivery. Australia launched a pilot information and communication technology (ICT) apprenticeship program in early 2007 to attract young people who would not otherwise have chosen an ICT career in the Australian Public Service. The pilot

### Much more than customers

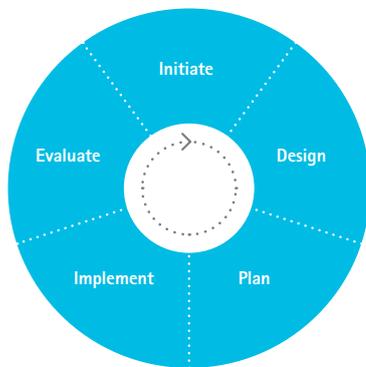
Mats Sjöstrand, Director General of the Swedish National Tax Agency, describes his organization's philosophy about service to citizens: "In the middle of the 1980s we started to talk seriously about service. And in the 1990s, I think we began to understand why it was so important, and we started to think in a new way—very, very clearly in a new way.

"We concluded that our citizens are much more than customers. They are not buying something, buying new glasses, buying a watch or something from us. In fact, they are our owners. And I think that's very important to stress. They have no one else, nobody else to turn to when they have an issue with the tax administration. And that means to an agency like ours, it's much more important to be a citizen than a customer. We have to treat them even better than we would customers."

This emphasis helps the agency make the connection for its employees between a customer service mindset and the ability to achieve better outcomes. Adds Lennart Wittberg, Compliance Strategist for the Swedish Tax Agency, "This has a close connection to our performance in general. What we try to explain to our taxpayers is, we don't only want them to like us and think of us as a popular brand or something. They must have great trust in us, confidence that the tax authority will perform its best. And we know that if people trust the tax agency, they will also comply more. So what we try to convey to the staff is this connection between how we treat the taxpayer, our service levels and how taxpayers trust us and how we can achieve our level of voluntary compliance. It's a direct relationship."

The Accenture Institute for Public Service Value has conducted extensive research into what makes for successful workforce transformations.<sup>4</sup> This research has shown that successful transformations occur through a cycle consisting of five critical steps:

## The fundamentals of workforce transformation



**Figure 8.**  
A holistic view of workforce transformation.

### 1. Initiate the change.

Establish that change is needed and, furthermore, that changing aspects of the workforce is the best means by which the organization can meet the needs of its users and communities. This step requires developing a clear vision of the intended social outcomes, which will not only guide all the subsequent stages of the transformation process, but will also serve as a critical lever for obtaining the necessary political sponsorship and buy-in from other important stakeholders.

- Establish the need for change
- Assess workforce transformation as a solution
- Develop a vision of outcomes
- Develop the management and leadership team
- Obtain political sponsorship
- Secure buy-in from stakeholders

### 2. Design the new workforce.

The actual development of the new model for the workforce starts with a scoping exercise and specifically defining the new roles and/or ways of working. At this stage, the transformation should clarify the new or amended tasks, assess the skills required to fulfill the new tasks, develop a structure for the new roles and perform a detailed job impact analysis. The team should also engage staff, unions and a wider set of stakeholders to obtain the necessary support. They should focus on helping people appreciate the changes in ways of working within the organization and understand the expected public service improvements.

- Perform a scoping exercise
- Develop the new roles
- Validate approach with key staff and unions
- Perform resilience testing
- Engage with public service leaders and top managers
- Obtain support from a broader group of stakeholders

<sup>4</sup> For more information, see *Transforming Public Services: Workforce Reconfiguration for Social Outcomes*, a report of the Accenture Institute for Public Service Value at [www.accenture.com](http://www.accenture.com).

### 3. Plan the transformation.

Ensuring that the right infrastructure is in place to support the planned transformation and designing the appropriate work strands of the change process typically includes human resources planning; planning for consultation with staff and unions; developing public relation strategies; designing a program of broad, ongoing communication with external stakeholders; formulating implementation strategies; and planning for evaluation and review activities.

- Establish the design team
- Develop the infrastructure
- Develop plans for work strands:
  - HR planning, consultation and training
  - Communications
  - Implementation
  - Evaluation
  - Review

### 4. Implement the transformation.

Putting in place all the activities planned in steps two and three needs careful orchestration by a skilled and appropriately resourced team. It requires an ongoing dialogue with staff and a program of training and development, so that everyone affected understands the changes being made and how these will affect the way they work. This is particularly important in situations where the workforce transformation is highly complex or where implementing changes is likely to cause people anxiety and disrupt services.

- Establish the project team
- Recruit employee champions
- Engage in ongoing communication and engagement with:
  - Staff
  - Unions
  - Professional bodies
  - Politicians
  - Customers
  - Community

### 5. Evaluate the impact and review the effectiveness of the transformed workforce.

Tracking progress over time and developing an evidence base to show exactly what differences the new ways of working are making will yield insight into what future improvements to the workforce structure will deliver even greater public service value. Reviews also ensure that the workforce transformation is not seen as an end in itself. Publishing the findings help legitimize the initiative and plays a critical part in ensuring that changes are sustained.

- Track progress over time
- Use all available data
- Review effectiveness of the transformed workforce against outcomes
- Reassess change in the environment
- Identify opportunities for improvements

# 03

apprenticeship program runs for two years, and has placed around eighty apprentices in ten government departments. "It's to give them practical day-on-the-job work, at the same time as they are also receiving formal tertiary training in an accredited institution," explains Ann Steward, Australian Government Chief Information Officer and head of the Australian Government Information Management Office. "And so this is just one particular way that we're trying to ensure that we're attracting and securing young people, who may not have considered ICT as a career in the past, to come in and work with us."

## **Focus on people and process**

Just as we discussed in our second finding about service delivery infrastructure, workforce transformation is a long-term process. It may involve a series of initiatives such as the ones we have described above. Accenture believes that it is critical to manage these activities as a holistic program of transformation with disciplined, consistent leadership from senior government executives.

As governments look to what lies ahead, they realize that even when they get their own internal houses in complete order, they cannot deliver on the full promise of leadership in customer service single-handedly. In the next section, we describe the complex interplay of governments, citizens and numerous third parties that will shape and characterize the future of government service.



Key finding 04

One





Many



# 04

In the future, high performance in government services will be characterized by a give-and-take between citizens and governments, shared responsibility and collaboration with other groups. As we described last year, this is a key tenet of the virtuous circle of “building the trust” through leadership in customer service: Trust in government builds a more connected populace, whose true needs form the development of more effective policy, implemented via excellent service, resulting in a strengthening of trust.

Innovative governments take advantage of the fact that their citizens and businesses are becoming increasingly engaged. They are starting to pull input from the citizens and to pool resources with one another. This equates to a growing service role for local governments, nongovernmental organizations, private-sector partners and individual citizens themselves, who now take a share of accountability for the results. This emerging model is a direct contrast to national governments’

traditional approach of pushing one-size-fits-all programs out from the center. (See sidebar, A model of collaboration for citizen-centric service.)

Governments that have begun to take the idea of citizen-centricity seriously have come face to face with a new challenge: a vast diversity of wants and needs. The people in one region may place a priority on higher education, for example, while those in another would rather focus resources on health care. Governments are struggling with the fairest way to meet the needs of each region.

## Citizens are more than just votes

When politicians attend to their constituents, they are rewarded with votes. Civil servants have no such mechanism for citizen engagement, and so are establishing their own avenues for involving citizens in government. For example, this year we saw initiatives in a number of countries—including the United States—to ask citizens to drive ideas on how to improve. The US Office of Management

and Budget (OMB) has new responsibility for implementing the Federal Funding Accountability and Transparency Act. Information on all federal spending, including procurements, grants, loans and insurance must be made freely available to citizens and searchable by geography, congressional district, recipient and so on. As part of the design, OMB is taking requirements online from the citizens. “We’re using all those requirements to feed into how we develop the capability of what the site should do. It’s a pretty simple site. But the way that we’re doing this implementation is very different from what we’ve done for anything else in the past,” says Karen Evans, Administrator of E-Government and Information Technology at the US Office of Management and Budget.

Malaysia offers something similar on a broader scale. “We have this ‘improve at MAMPU [Malaysian Administrative Modernization and Management Planning Unit] initiative, where you can electroni-

cally send to MAMPU whatever improvement you want in terms of improving public service delivery or in terms of customer services," says Dr. Nor Aliah BT. Mohd Zahri. Although the initiative has only been in place since the beginning of the year, the response has been overwhelmingly positive. MAMPU is already going through thousands of suggestions from individuals and corporations.

But it is not just governments reaching out to individual citizens. Technology-enabled citizen groups are advocating for government action in unconventional ways. In particular, online communities and Web logs (blogs) make it easier than ever for engaged citizens to coalesce for change.

The impact can be striking. For example, citizens of Washington, D.C., lobbying for congressional voting representation, recently found a novel way to make their point after a congressional representative from the state of Texas commented in the media that the city's residents did not need their own full-fledged voting representation. The Texas representative said every member of Congress from the

50 states already had a vested interest in making sure that the water, sewers and other infrastructure of the capital city worked properly. A local DC blog urged city residents to call the Texas politician's congressional office with all their local concerns. In short order, the office was deluged with calls about neighborhood garbage pickup, potholes and problems with the DC schools.

#### Encouraging the social network

Forward-thinking governments do not fear this new power of citizens; they embrace it. Anabela Pedroso of Portugal describes the new citizen-government dynamics in an interesting way: As a positive service spiral that helps government respond. "If the citizen is much more aware, he becomes more demanding. And in that way it provides from the outside the push that we need to go forward. Continuous quality of service—that is something that we want to implement. In this way, it is a never-ending story, but it is a good one, because the danger is to think that we have achieved the best way, forgetting to ask citizens

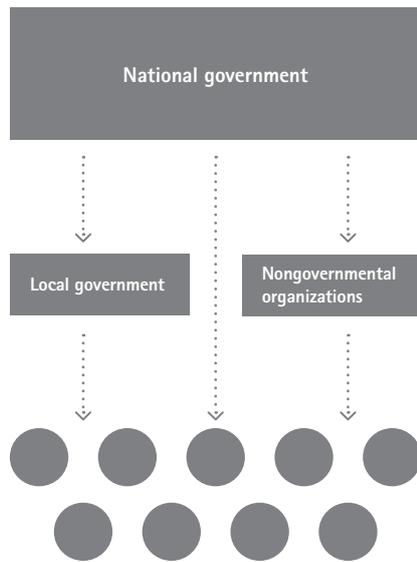
if they are pleased or if the service fulfills their needs. The concept of an inclusive eGovernment will die if we, in public administrations, forget to be humble enough to listen our citizens. So the idea here in Portugal is always to push from both sides: offering and demanding. We give, and at the same time, we hope that the citizen after receiving will tell us, 'We need more.' That is the spiral of service that we want to create."

The best government customer service happens when groups work together toward a shared goal; governments that recognize that fact are beginning to create webs of public service value rather than linear value chains (see Figure 9).

In this web, the burden for entrepreneurial service does not rest solely with government (although as illustrated in the section "A showcase of government entrepreneurship," we certainly saw some striking examples of government innovation this year), but rather, becomes a shared responsibility with citizens and other entities.

### Traditional model

The national government pushes out services for individual citizens.



### Social ecosystem model

An accountable community pulls the help they need from the national government.

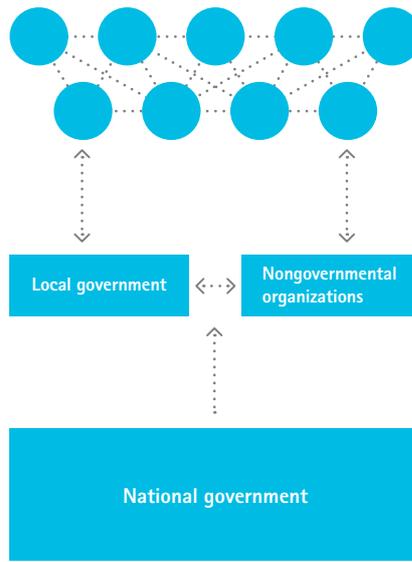


Figure 9.

The traditional "push" model of public service versus the collaborative web of public service value.

### A model of collaboration for citizen-centric service

Canada emerges as a good example of the type of service ecosystems we believe will become increasingly pervasive in the future of government service delivery. Our look at the country's provincial citizen-facing service organizations (namely, Service Ontario and Service BC) illustrate the principle of operating autonomously, with an intense focus on local concerns, while assuming an ever-greater role as the go-to source for a broad range of services that span governmental levels. These smaller provincial organizations have the flexibility to be perhaps even more aggressive in pulling from the private industry and nongovernmental organizations to augment their delivery capabilities for citizens' benefit.

Because of the provincial organizations' agility and their high-profile role driving such a large portion

of the service agenda for Canadians as a whole, at the national level, the Government of Canada is keen to integrate with these provincial organizations even more tightly. Collaboration happens both informally and formally. For example, inter-jurisdictional groups recently have worked to frame and develop a common measurements tool for employee surveying, with the hope of developing a common database of results that will allow government entities to leverage a national body of knowledge. Provinces will be able to draw on common data from the federal government and from each other to leapfrog advances in understanding of what drives employee engagement, which in turn will inform future workforce plans to improve the customer experience overall. The initiative demonstrates how levels of government can pool practices and ideas with each other to benefit citizens nationwide.

The roots that firmly anchor these provincial organizations as relevant community presences intertwine with those of Service Canada (federal level), as well as with municipal level entities. Increasingly, these governments are manifesting their interconnection by physically co-locating service delivery. The city of Ottawa, for example, contains a flagship service center—offering one downtown location for citizens to have any of their governmental needs from Service Ontario, Service Canada and the city met in a single location.

For example, as one part of South Africa's larger effort to reduce poverty, representatives from the central government's social service agency are working one-by-one with remote rural villages. The government officials collaborate with local community leaders and citizens to identify the value-adding capabilities that already exist in a village. These could include a particular craft or art, such as stonecutting, or a local product. Using seed money from the government, the joint task team works to start up and nurture micro-enterprises. As these gain traction in the market and grow, they provide jobs and income for the villagers. This local prosperity, in turn, attracts supporting service businesses such as retail stores that bring even more employment opportunities. By striving for a beneficial spiral, the collaboration not only customizes the intervention to the community it is trying to help, but it produces a more sustainable outcome.

Japan has moved to a dramatically different public administration model as part of its administrative reform. "The idea is to have more empowerment

in the citizen arena and to let them exercise their power to the utmost, while government takes on a smaller role," says Kazuho Seki, Customer Contact Division Director of Japan's Legal Support Center. The changes are intended to increase a sense of social fairness, with the hope that as citizens become more engaged, they themselves will play their part in abiding by the law. One hoped-for outcome is a reduction in fraudulent activity and more vigorous citizen participation in revitalizing the economy. The changes are already playing out in very tangible ways. For example, in the judiciary system, the government is introducing a juror system. In the past, the Japanese judiciary system was very much removed from citizens, with judges having sole responsibility for court judgments. Now, for the first time ever, Japanese citizens will play a role equal to that of the judge.

In Sweden, the new Min Pension service allows citizens to calculate their estimated pension, including money both from the public and from all major private pension insurance companies, and to get sugges-

tions on different fund combinations. The Swedish government co-finances the service with the insurance companies that participate.

In the new ecosystem, governments also delegate service accountability to the relevant community to further enable social outcomes. "In Australia, for example, because government is so open and transparent these days and so much in the press, we have quite strong systems of accountability," says Lynelle Briggs. "And those systems of accountability and shock/horror stories in the press can make a public service increasingly risk-averse. It can lead to public service agencies putting increased controls on nongovernment deliverers of services. So, it makes sense for us to look at ways that we might recognize nongovernmental organizations as good providers and give them increased autonomy to continue to innovate, and then spread those innovations elsewhere."

The model makes a lot of sense, as citizens also relate most closely to the issues surrounding their immediate environment.

**"The idea here in Portugal is always to push from both sides: offering and demanding. We give, and at the same time, we hope that the citizen after receiving will tell us, 'We need more.' That is the spiral of service that we want to create."**

Anabela Pedroso  
President, Agency for Public Services Reform  
Portugal

"We have eDemocracy issues on the agenda and there are systems already in place for citizens to be able to contribute to this kind of debate. But I think such debates will mostly be conducted at a local level, because the citizens, as far as I can observe—and in Norway maybe particularly—are mostly concerned about local issues in the municipalities, and the issues concerning their nearest environment," explains Katarina de Brisis, Senior Advisor for the Department of IT Policy in the Norwegian Ministry of Government Administration and Reform.

The model also gives local and municipal governments the chance to tailor what they do for the particular citizens who happen to live there, and it leads to thinking about delivering services not just to individuals, but also to families and communities. Local tailoring ties into the notion described previously of delivering services based on a more sophisticated picture of who citizens are. Ultimately, the new service delivery ecosystem incorporates citizens, communities, partners, nongovernmental organizations (NGOs)

### Contingent service delivery

Lynelle Briggs, Public Service Commissioner of Australia, vividly illustrates the potential power of the new ecosystems of government service delivery for driving outcomes that matter: "A strong wave coming at government is differentiating services and targeting them to individuals needs or individual community needs," she says. "And that matters in a country like this, which is very big, because the needs of someone in our north, or in our remote parts of the country may be quite different from somebody in the city where I live, and we need to ensure that our services reflect that.

"But I also think there's a strand of what I would call contingent service delivery. In other words, 'We'll give you stuff if you change your behavior.' We see that quite directly in a number of areas in health and safety, and also in indigenous support. As an example, we have a process now in our service provision for indigenous people, which

is to work with the community about what might be the best way to achieve certain outcomes. The indigenous people said, 'We want a swimming pool because the kids are on the streets.' And we said, 'And we want your kids to go to school. So how about if we give you the swimming pool, you sign up for sending your kids to school? It was very much a negotiated agreement between local communities and the government.'

That agreement led not only to the hoped-for outcomes, which was nearly 100 percent school attendance, but also to some unanticipated positive downstream effects. Because the pool required the children to rinse off before swimming, it improved their health. The level of eye infection in these remote dusty places was reduced. "And as well, they aren't on the streets with nothing to do," says Briggs. "Instead they're at the pool having a good time. So the level of social disruption has reduced."

# 04

and other stakeholders in campaigns that create positive spirals of service design for public service value (see sidebar, Contingent service delivery).

We see this broader view of service in Canada. One example is Service Canada's ability to establish temporary points of presence to provide services to a community on an as-needed basis, such as when an employer closes down and the town experiences mass layoffs. A more specific example is a Toronto youth center that Service Canada established in partnership with the province of Ontario, the city of Toronto and volunteer organizations. The group collaborated to establish the center to stem a tide of youth unemployment and violence in the city.

In South Africa, the government has established multipurpose community centers (MPCCs, now called Thusong Service Centers) to improve service delivery in an integrated approach. Multiple departments are housed in one building, particularly for under-served areas.

"If you go to any rural community in South Africa, particularly where there are these MPCCs, they will tell you that they know what an MPCC is because they have been allowed to use them for community activities over and above the delivery of government related services. People are aware of what service you can get in that office," says Lindani Mthethwa, Head of Research and Solutions Support at the Center for Public Service Innovation in South Africa. "In essence, the MPCC isn't just a government office. Every community could do their own community 'whatever' in the MPCC. So in some MPCCs, government services delivery has been linked up to the local economic development."

In Singapore, SPRING Singapore, the government's enterprise development agency, established four physical enterprise development centers (EDC) in partnership with the various local chambers of commerce and business associations. In the EDCs, businesses and aspiring entrepreneurs can get advice on establishing a business, applying for government licenses and permits, and getting loans from financial institutions, with basic services free and more complex services costing a fee. "If they are looking at more consulting services, such as helping to do a business plan, or advising on a marketing plan, or exporting their products overseas, these require more extensive support and they will be charged an affordable fee. But other than that, in terms of which banks to go to for loans, how to apply for licenses, what are the incentive schemes that the government has, things like that which are purely information tend to be free. We want it that way because we want the services to be affordable and easily accessible to small businesses and aspiring entrepreneurs," says Cheong Boon Png, the deputy chief executive of SPRING Singapore. While SPRING co-funded the initial setup and operating costs of the development centers, it does not set the costs of the services provided. Instead, fees are set by the various chambers of commerce or business associations that provide the services. These groups are also allowed to give preferential rates to their members versus non-members.

In another interesting ecosystem example from Singapore, the Singapore Land Transport Authority (LTA) has partnered with telecommunications companies to provide traffic feeds to their subscribers.

"At a nominal fee, telcos can link up with LTA to download real-time traffic information and repackage this information," says Rosina Howe-Teo, Group Director (Innovation and Infocomm Technology Group) & Chief Innovation Officer for Singapore's Land Transport Authority.

"For us, it is in our interest that the public using the roads are aware of traffic conditions at all times. Our role is to ensure smooth-flowing roads. We need to make sure that there are no massive traffic congestions. But in order to do that we must also make sure that information on the road is made available to everybody in all possible manners. We are pushing for greater convenience and accessibility, but we realized we couldn't make all the information accessible only through our own infrastructure. We need to leverage the infrastructure of other people, either through other government agencies or with the private sector."

Taken together, our four key findings paint a dramatic new picture and lay out a new direction for customer service in government. National governments will be using sophisticated tools and analysis to develop a deep and nuanced understanding of the wants and needs of their citizens—as individuals, in families and in communities. They will be putting solid infrastructures in place to implement excellent service delivery and transforming their workforces into smaller organizations of highly skilled service entrepreneurs. Then they will contribute their resources and their effort, along with those of other members of the social ecosystem, to drive the outcomes their citizens demand.



# The way forward: Accenture's recommendations



In this section, we provide Accenture's recommendations for the next steps in moving toward high performance through leadership in customer service. These recommendations stem not only from eight years' worth of in-depth research into government customer service for this annual report, but also from the insights Accenture brings from its experience working with hundreds of government clients around the globe.

Our recommendations are based on what we consider to be the distinctive capabilities, or main building blocks, of an effective government customer service program: a citizen-centric vision, an enabling business and technology infrastructure, and a high-performing workforce (see Figure 10). These building blocks should link together in an iterative process; as governments progress, the cycle will repeat multiple times.

As governments consider their next moves, we stress that it is far better to pilot approaches, learn from the results and then scale the processes and solution, than it is to wait too long to start the process at all. Certainly governments should put a reasonable amount of effort into developing a vision, but they should also set parameters around the time it takes to do it. Rather than spending endless cycles striving for perfection, governments should not be uncomfortable starting with a "good enough" vision and refining as they go. A tentative "wait and see" attitude will manifest itself very quickly in citizens' disappointment: their expectations are accelerating, and no progress is akin to falling behind.

Over time, Accenture believes the right balance and alignment of these building blocks will lead to superior results for governments seeking to use customer service as a lever for delivering greater public service value and, ultimately, high performance.



**Figure 10.**  
The building blocks of an effective customer service program.

## 9 steps to building valuable customer service

**Build an actionable citizen-centric service vision.**

**Step 1**

Refine your customer segment groups.

**Step 2**

Develop an operating model that balances the customer experience with the cost to serve.

**Step 3**

Use a more refined view of the customer to develop the channel strategies (including self-service offerings) that make the most sense for citizens and governments.

**Build the enabling business and technology infrastructure to make the citizen-centric vision operational.**

**Step 4**

Define the processes and workflows needed to reach the vision...

**Step 5**

...And don't wait to get started putting them in place.

**Step 6**

Take advantage of service-oriented architectures (SOAs) and shared services as flexible solutions to disparities in government infrastructures.

**Build the high-performing workforce that can drive the vision through to fulfillment.**

**Step 7**

Diagnose your existing workforce situation and identify and build critical skills to fill the gaps.

**Step 8**

Enable on-the-job support to improve performance and build a culture of collaboration.

**Step 9**

Retain top performers and motivate employees to maintain service levels and organizational performance.



Building a citizen-centric vision implies first understanding citizens deeply, and then ensuring services are customized to each citizen segment based on service needs, intentions and access preferences.

### Refine your customer segment groups.

Building a citizen-centric vision begins with developing true customer insight. In developing customer insight, governments face a tremendous challenge, as they start with a customer base of not only every citizen and business in the country, but also in some instances, a large number of entities outside their borders. Rudimentary customer segmentation techniques will not be up to the task of developing the level of customer insight needed to deliver true service value. Rather, a more nuanced view is needed, built on more accurate segmentation that uses both demographic factors and a real understanding of citizens' needs and intentions (expressed or unexpressed) and preferences.

Accenture's experience with clients has shown that the results of this more refined customer segmentation will help governments develop truly citizen-centric service strategies. It will help governments find meaningful answers to the questions of who their customers are; which segments are underserved and which are most costly to serve; what their customers unfulfilled needs are; and how they can optimize communications to different segments.

Certainly, individuals may fall into more than one customer segment. In fact, as described earlier in the report, aspects of who citizens are in relation to the government (their service needs and intentions) may change quite rapidly based on their current life situation. However, while individual citizens may fall into more than one customer segment, the segments themselves that result from sophisticated customer segmentation should be:

- Mutually exclusive. In other words, no overlap should exist between the segmented groups.

- Exhaustive. The segmentation model is not complete and robust until all relevant data has fed into the model, the members of the groups are easily identifiable and the segmentation model demonstrates stability.
- Actionable. It is not enough to have defined customer segment groups. The characteristics of the segments need to lend themselves to taking action and be large enough to realistically target.

Customer segmentation of this more advanced type both minimizes the differences within groups and maximizes the differences between groups, thus lending itself to developing far more targeted action.

Clearly, developing this capability implies sophisticated customer data management: Timely, accurate information is key for governments' understanding of their customers (both businesses and citizens) and for predicting customer behavior. Effective data management gives governments the ability to perform the refined segmentation that will allow them to

create holistic and integrated views of their customers for accurate insight, decision-making and ultimately, high performance. Then, by refining their customer segment groups, governments will gain a far more detailed picture of citizens' service needs, behaviors and preferences. With this picture in mind, they will be able to make smarter investment decisions based on their customer service priorities and actually reduce the overall total cost to serve, as the level (intensity) of service provided will vary based on customer segment.

**Develop an operating model that balances the customer experience with the cost to serve.**

Accenture has spent years examining the performance of public service organizations. We established the Institute for Public Service Value<sup>5</sup> to undertake research on the connections between public management, service delivery and improved social outcomes. Our view is that the notion of social outcomes—the achievements, changes or benefits that are delivered by public services for consumers, citizens and taxpayers—is central to the idea of delivering public value over time.

Traditionally, performance of public service organizations has focused on outputs and inputs—granular metrics rather than big-picture goals. In the early days of eGovernment, the result was an emphasis on getting existing services online (a quantifiable output), rather than fundamentally changing service delivery (and the underlying governance, processes, technology infrastructure and workforce skills) to better meet citizens' service needs.

Now, governments have a far better understanding of how superior customer service acts as a lever for making an actual difference in the lives of the people they serve. They recognize the linkage between leadership in customer service and the broader outcome of greater citizen trust in and active engagement with government.

Sometimes, the actions taken to improve service actually reduce the cost to serve. That is an ideal scenario, but it is not a guaranteed one. Therefore, as governments get caught up in the push for a better

customer service experience, they must not lose sight of the cost to improve. As customers, citizens want the best service experience possible: with ease, convenience and the comfortable feeling someone is taking care of them. As taxpayers, citizens have a vested interest in the efficient operation of their services. Money spent improving customer service is money that could be spent elsewhere, potentially delivering other valuable outcomes.

Accenture's view is that this "opportunity cost" is an important driver of value. Thus, governments need to factor in their cost effectiveness in providing better service. At some tipping point, the incremental benefit of additional resources expended to try and provide every possible channel to every single citizen at every moment is offset negatively by the cost of such an approach and actually begins to erode value, even if the service experience itself actually improves.

It is a tricky dilemma. What constitutes value can be different, and at times competing, for different stakeholders. Public value measurement is not at all straightforward. The point is to maximize the direct benefit created for service recipients, the wider community and the taxpayers who pay the bill.

Governments need to figure out what the cost-benefit tipping point is in their own context and develop the operating models that reflect their reality. This operating model takes into account developing efficiencies on both the front and back end. (We touch on more specifics in this regard in the recommendations that follow.) Ultimately, however, truly citizen centric, multichannel, cross-government service remains a worthy goal, but it must be balanced against the pragmatic realities (limitations) of what is possible.

**Use a more refined view of the customer to develop the channel strategies (including self-service offerings) that make the most sense for citizens and governments.**

Balancing the customer service experience with the cost to serve includes optimizing channel strategies. Again, "no wrong door" is a good aspiration, but it must be pursued

within the bounds of an acceptable cost. The goal in developing more effective channel strategies is, as always, greater public service value. In this case, greater public service value translates into maximizing service coverage while minimizing the cost to serve.

An optimum channel strategy should seek to maximize the return on investment governments make in all channels, including high-touch and low-touch channels, without sacrificing the customer experience; the customer must be consistently engaged across all touch points. Inevitably, there will be circumstances where governments consciously do invest in high-touch, costly service because it meets the needs of a particular group—the government determines that the outcomes achieved justify the costs to achieve them.

At the same time, maximizing return on investment implies a push for customer self-service wherever possible through channels such as IVR, Internet, kiosks and mobile devices. An effective push for greater customer self-service begins with focusing on the customer experience across all touch points to develop a true understanding of channel performance and potential failure points. Governments need to understand how experiences within one channel can have significant downstream impacts on other channels. This leads to improvement opportunities that are based on a holistic rather than a fragmented understanding of the customer experience, and a higher rate of benefit realization.

Next, governments must undertake a detailed analysis of specific customer segments and their related characteristics and preferences. With this understanding, governments can develop not only appropriate channel strategies, but also define smart user adoption strategies that promote a strong user response to new or improved capabilities in each channel.

Finally, governments can begin the technical work, building the service delivery infrastructure that will deliver the desired outcomes of the strategy.

<sup>5</sup> [www.accenture.com/publicservicevalue](http://www.accenture.com/publicservicevalue)

**Build the enabling business and technology infrastructure to make the citizen-centric vision operational.**

The last decade has seen governments rushing to take advantage of new technologies to better serve their citizens. Beginning with eGovernment and later, across multiple new channels, governments looked to the introduction of innovative service delivery vehicles as a proxy for true citizen-centered service. The services themselves, however, were not radically changed. The result was that governments unintentionally widened the gap between service provision and value. They made the promise of leadership in customer service on the front end and were then unable to deliver through their back-end infrastructures.

For governments to make their infrastructures capable of delivering on the promise of customer service that delivers true public service value, they will need to start the hard work of develop the enabling business and technology infrastructures. Once they have defined their vision, they need to identify and construct the processes and workflows that will have to be in place to make it happen. As they construct their infrastructures, they will need to build in the organizational agility that will allow them to take advantage of existing investments and flex to meet future changes in their environment or their priorities.

### **Define the processes and workflows needed to reach the vision...**

Delivering on the promise of value-led, citizen-centric service requires governments to first lay out the start-to-finish business processes and workflows that will allow governments to take citizens requests and fulfill them, while eliminating as many manual and paper-based processes as possible.

Many of the essential elements in the newly designed workflows—electronic creation and routing of cases, call routing and assignment, tracking requests and following up after resolution—will call for an optimized but less complex infrastructure than most governments can lay claim to having. By establishing and following a smart long-range transformation plan, however, governments will be

able to develop the necessary infrastructure while controlling costs, enhancing their system security and improving their ability to support agency missions. Over time, through the efficiencies gained, they will also be able to self-fund later improvements that will drive additional value and high performance.

### **...And don't wait to get started putting them in place.**

Although infrastructure transformation is a long-term program, it can be accomplished in multiple streams of activity that occur simultaneously. This fact should put governments at ease about making a start—perhaps the most critical point in building enabling infrastructures. Just as bad as taking on too much transformation at once and never finishing is being put off by the scale of transformation and never getting started. Governments need to pick a place to start the transformation and simply begin. Ideally, governments will pick a starting point that is small, design the vision, processes and workflows for that isolated piece and move to implement. Once they have a model that seems to be working, they can expand and roll the concept out to bigger areas.

### **Take advantage of service-oriented architectures (SOAs) and shared services as flexible solutions to disparities in government infrastructures.**

Government organizations under pressure to achieve high performance through improved productivity, faster service that crosses organizational boundaries and a more effective workforce must make more effective use of IT. What they need is simpler, more flexible systems at a lower cost of ownership—despite the fact that government IT systems are a notorious mixed bag, with multiple products across multiple platforms, old and new. SOAs and shared services are two infrastructural elements that fit the bill in both regards (flexibility and lower cost).

For many governments, service-oriented architectures (SOAs) will be the key to designing services that are not only citizen-centric, but also realistic.

SOAs allow for loose couplings of existing business process components. For internal IT organizations, SOAs enable simpler systems that are cheaper to run, can be modified easily and integrate well with other platforms.

Likewise, when used correctly, shared services can be an engine of high performance, by delivering cost reductions and significant service improvements, both of which result in improved public service value. The advent of Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems means many governments already have a key enabler of shared services. By taking advantage of existing ERPs, shared services can provide a range of organizational solutions that preserve responsive customer service without requiring physical proximity to the customer. The shared services model allows organizations to rethink how and where work is accomplished.

Accenture has seen leading governments such as the United Kingdom and the United States embrace shared services models—sometimes through in-house (governmental) capabilities, other times through external providers. Regardless of where the services are provided, shared services frees up scarce resources to allow departments and agencies to focus on their core business and on their customer needs, while providing organizational flexibility to have the administrative back-office structures independent of front-line activities and structures.

The key for governments is not to seize upon either SOAs or shared services as a panacea. In and of themselves, they are enabling commodities: the means to an end of greater public service value, rather than the end themselves. Their utility is limited by how well governments integrate them into their customer service vision and strategy. Approached in an ad hoc way, without a view to how implementing them is expected to contribute to delivering greater public service value (both in terms of outcomes and cost), they will rarely yield all of their potential benefit.

**Build the high-performing workforce  
that can drive the vision through to  
fulfillment.**

Because ultimately it is governments' employees that make excellent customer service happen, governments need to develop, recruit and retain the right workforce with the right skills in the right roles. Self-service websites have increasingly automated the easy interactions with citizens, leaving nothing but the hard problems for the remaining people to solve. What that means is that for public servants to be able to deliver real public service value in the future, they will need deep customer relationship management skills that, to date, have not been the focus of governments.

As governments develop their future workforce strategies, their challenge is further complicated by a fundamental shift in labor demographics. Impending retirements, shrinking labor pools and the potential loss of institutional knowledge all underscore the need to invest in initiatives related to talent management and knowledge management immediately.

Governments could view the current situation as a crisis or an opportunity. The leaders understand that a hallmark of a high performing government is a highly skilled and efficient workforce, and will devote as much attention (or more) to their workforce transformation as they do their infrastructure transformation. Where service improvements will be most successful—where they will deliver the greatest public service value—is where governments focus on their people: who and where they are, what they know and can do, and how different groups can be brought together, and synchronized and enabled with the proper tools for the greatest overall benefit.

Workforce transformation will not only lead to compelling short-term results; it will also lay the groundwork for longer-term success by creating motivated workforces that are inherently agile. The necessary culture change will come as the result of numerous factors: strong and effective leadership; tangible goals; new processes, tools and structures; sourcing strategies that assign the right skills to the right work; new behaviors; and the competencies, rewards and enablement programs to sustain a transformation.

Smart governments will seize the chance they have now to create this new workforce by retraining existing workers and attracting new ones. They will start by identifying strengths and gaps in their current workforce's ability to operate in a new customer service environment. Then, they will bridge the gaps—recruiting and training employees in critical customer relationship management skills, providing on-the-job support tools for consistent service, and retaining their valuable people assets through reward structures that give employees a stake in high performance.

### **Diagnose your existing workforce situation and identify and build critical skills to fill the gaps.**

What do governments need from their people now, and how is that different from what they needed before? What behavioral characteristics, knowledge and skills are required? The answers to these questions should very quickly point out to governments that yesterday's skills and competencies, as well as process frameworks, will in no way be up to the task of delivering stellar customer experiences.

To understand future needs, from the perspectives of both the citizen and the individual government organization, a comprehensive diagnostic of current skills is vital. Effective diagnostics might include face-to-face interviews with employees and executives, skills assessments, broader surveys of the workforce, a core values measurement tool, process performance diagnostics and assessments of IT leadership. The resulting analysis then feeds into a more detailed blueprint for the transformed organization.

The skills diagnostic will summarize desired competencies, behaviors and values, by role and responsibility; compare the desired state to the existing situation; and define a program of activity for areas where improvement can have the highest impact. Most importantly, it will identify gaps where government needs to recruit talent.

Recruiting, however, is only the initial step. Sustainable workforce change requires access to the right expertise, which should be linked to clear business goals. In the case of government, the right expertise will mean a combination of not only

government subject matter expertise, but also a real customer service mindset. These customer skills are not inherent—they require training and even some level of apprenticeship.

Many governments have turned to the private sector—examining its best practices, observing customer service representatives in action, even sending their own employees to train side-by-side with private-sector workers in a corporate setting. Other governments favor a "Public Service Academy" approach that bundles learning content from internal and external sources, and provides a more comprehensive curriculum at all levels through blended e-learning and instructor-led training. The blended learning approach allows individual employees more flexibility in creating appropriately tailored curricula to address specific knowledge, skills and competence needs.

No matter the instructional model chosen, however, the success of learning initiatives depends on clearly linking learning to the right business outcomes. In other words, employees must understand the connection between the new skills they are attaining, their ability to perform in the new government service environment and the desired broader outcomes.

### **Enable on-the-job support to improve performance and build a culture of collaboration.**

Successful workforce transformation will require the government to have an orientation toward workforce enablement that goes well beyond "training." Training will be effective only as part of a more comprehensive program that addresses people, structure and tools, as well as broader cultural and behavioral issues.

In addition to training, governments must implement knowledge management solutions that provide just-in-time support to ensure employees on the job provide consistent answers and customer experiences rather than guessing at the answers to complex problems. The key here is developing a collaborative, knowledge-sharing environment, enabled by new tools and technologies (such as portal technologies, expert searches, e-

**Governments could view the current situation as a crisis or an opportunity. The leaders understand that a hallmark of a high performing government is a highly skilled and efficient workforce, and will devote as much attention (or more) to their workforce transformation as they do their infrastructure transformation.**

learning and online collaboration tools) that pull the many elements employees need to do their jobs right to their desktops. Particularly as governments combine workforce skill sets for greater efficiency and for joined up services, effective tools for collaboration will play a larger role.

**Retain top performers and motivate employees to maintain service levels and organizational performance.**

Once performance and behavioral goals are set, the new processes are in place and the competencies are defined, governments will drive target behaviors by applying the right metrics and performance feedback. Effective performance management clearly defines goals and provides feedback on how well those goals are being achieved, at an individual level as well as at a team level. If the organization is truly to be transformed, team-based performance measures and reward structures must be part of the mix. Ideally, staff at all levels will have a tangible stake in delivering the best possible service to the business.

Governments engaged in workforce transformation must focus on incentive and reward structures, as well as the learning programs needed to reinforce and sustain the desired new behaviors. Motivation tools can include incentives, compensation and non-monetary reward systems, or a combination of multiple approaches.

In the end, workforce transformation is part of a complex system where all parts must work together as a cohesive whole. By aligning this component with a citizen-centric vision and an enabling business and technology infrastructure, governments will be able to bridge the gap between promise and practice—constructing customer service programs that actually deliver on the service expectations they have set. As these programs gain traction, citizens will gain trust in their government's ability to meet their needs in an effective and efficient way. They will become more engaged in shaping both policy and the mechanics of service delivery. Ultimately, the deeper connections forged with citizens will enhance governments' ability to provide public service value on the road to high performance.

# A showcase of government entrepreneurship



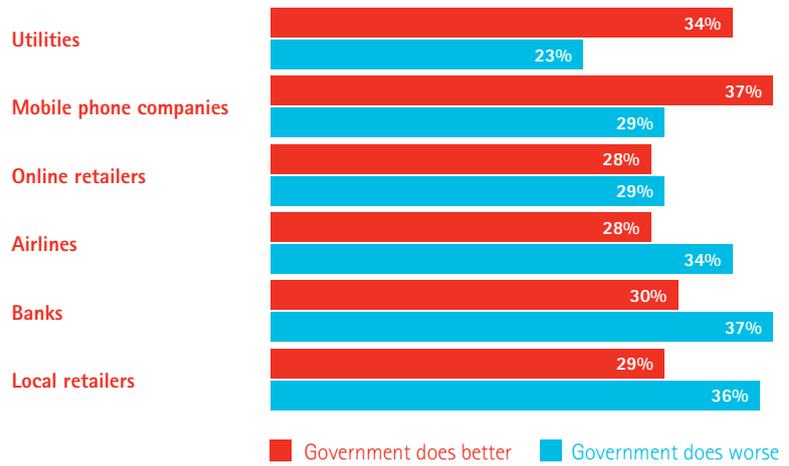
## Overview

In last year's report, we described a common perception that the public sector trails the private sector in terms of innovation in service delivery. We also provided numerous examples to highlight that this perception is not always accurate.

In fact, the pressure for better service is forcing governments to become ever more entrepreneurial. And by the very fact that they are government organizations (with a mandate to serve and influence on legislation and funding models, for example) they have the ability to innovate in some ways the private sector cannot. This year, in our citizen survey, we found more evidence that the public sector, at least when compared with certain major private-sector industries, can hold its own in terms of providing customer service (see Figure 11).

Perhaps more interesting than the statistics, however, are the individual examples—the standouts of value-led customer service. While some of these examples are on the leading edge of technology, others are notable precisely for the highly innovative ways governments have used readily available technology to create better outcomes for citizens.

The examples here are intended to show that the best in government creativity can come from countries with fledgling customer service programs as well as from established world leaders. They should by no means be considered an exhaustive inventory; our intent, rather, is to give a flavor of the types of remarkable innovation in government service delivery we uncovered in our research. We group the examples according to the three key building blocks described in the Recommendations section: building a citizen-centric vision, building the enabling infrastructure and building the workforce that can drive the vision through to realization.



**Figure 11.**  
 Comparison of citizens' ratings of customer service performance of governments against private-sector industries.\*  
 \*Percent of citizens saying government performed better versus percent saying government performed worse.

### Building a citizen-centric vision

Governments seeking high performance start by first creating a vision of citizen-centric service that permeates from the front line through the back office. In this vision, they determine the outcomes that will result in the greatest public service value and translate those outcomes into a tangible course of action. In this section, we highlight just a few examples of governments creating greater public service value through customer service innovations that have citizen-centricity at their core.

Right from the start, Denmark put a public-sector spin on the private-sector concept of "visioning sessions" when developing its vision of citizen-centric customer service. Government officials conducted what they called "Future Seminars," in which members of the public sector and others brainstormed big ideas about the citizens of 2012 and about how to translate their likely expectations into an implementable plan. They then took their forward look at what the citizen outcomes

needed to be in 2012 and determined what service development steps could be undertaken with the capabilities of 2008.

In Singapore, the Subordinate Courts' iCourtLab is a truly compelling concept—a proof-of-concept court laboratory that acts as an incubator of innovative ideas and that is already beginning to produce real-life benefits. "One of [those ideas] is the Justice Online Version 2, using 3G mobile phones," says Judge Han Li Toh, Registrar of the Subordinate Courts. "What it is is a really high-end conferencing system that we use with the law firms so that they don't need to come down for the hearing. Previously, when we first started out, it was on a PC platform. And recently we have launched the 3G platform, which allows lawyers to use their mobile phones to teleconference on the move."

Not all of the examples we saw of creating citizen-centric service approaches involve leading-edge technologies. Some combine established technologies with creativity and plain perseverance to elevate the

meaning of public service to a new level, by bringing government access and benefits to previously underserved citizens.

In South Africa, the government is capitalizing on the country's high mobile phone penetration and partnering with cellular phone companies to pilot the delivery of public services. "We discovered that people may have one cellular phone box, but six SIM cards belonging to a number of people in a family or area, increasing access to mobile technologies. Furthermore the cost of a cellular phone box has also decreased considerably over the years due to a high take-up by citizens. They have access to mobile technologies because the coverage is huge in terms of networks," says Lindani Mthethwa, Head of Research and Solutions Support of the Center for Public Service Innovation. "This offers huge potential for government to deliver public services through mobile technologies."

In Brazil, the National Institute of Social Security is using Internet access technology via global positioning system (GPS) to offer services in remote locations, such as in the Amazon region, where access is difficult (see sidebar, Geospatial technologies on the near horizon).

In another example from Singapore, the Inland Revenue Authority of Singapore (IRAS) stationed tax officers at decentralized centers in the heartlands to help taxpayers e-file. IRAS officers at three community clubs and 32 citizen connect centers served in these centers during the filing period, helping to contribute to an increase of more than 9 percent from last year (to 80 percent) in electronic tax filings overall. In addition, IRAS has also responded to their taxpayers feedback in previous years to provide a mobile service via SMS, allowing taxpayers to check on whether they need to file their taxes.

Likewise, Singapore's Central Provident Fund Board launched what it calls its Mobile Ambassadors program in December 2006. In the program, the CPF Board works with local grassroots organizations to determine who is eligible to be enrolled in the fund but are not enrolled, and why. In many cases, they are people who live in heartland areas who do not have service access or are elderly, housebound people. Mobile ambassadors (or "m-ambassadors") go out to help reach out to customers—visiting them from door to door, bringing mobile devices with them to enroll them for major national exercises. "We are pushing the service to them. With the m-ambassador, we can better help the grassroots leaders bridge the divide and better serve citizens online," says Swee Hua Tan, CIO of the Central Provident Fund Board.

Other countries have similar mobile ambassador concepts. In Belgium, for example, the Vlaamse Infolijn (Contact Point) service of the Flemish government includes an "Infomobiel"—a bus used for outreach to the underprivileged. Civil servants in the bus have access to all the information of the call center in Brussels via satellite connection.

### Geospatial technologies on the near horizon

When asked about coming innovations in the two- to three-year timeframe, government executives we interviewed highlighted the use of geospatial technologies over and over again.

According to the Geospatial Information & Technology Association, "The term geographic information system, or GIS, is an acronym for a technology that offers a radically different way in which we produce and use the maps required to manage our communities and industries. Using computer programs, the technology links items displayed on a map with records in a database with the answers displayed on a map. The resulting combination, and the ability to manipulate the data in response to any number of 'what if' scenarios, provides government agencies, utilities and a long list of private industries with a powerful and dynamic new tool that has opened doors in management effectiveness and organizational efficiency. A GIS creates intelligent super maps through which sophisticated planning and analysis can be performed at the touch of a button."<sup>6</sup>

Governments around the world are eagerly embracing the technology to provide greater public service value. Luís Pinto, Director General of Portugal's Directorate General for Informatics and Assistance to Taxation and Customs says, "We are enhancing the user experience. We are giving the possibility of property tax simulation in an interactive way by simply locating the property on a digital map and providing a limited set of additional information."

In the Netherlands, the government plans to create an organization dedicated to spatial technologies, which will be used for environmental planning. "Every city, every province has to make detailed maps describing the use of the land, what you can do on that plot or what is forbidden. And all those maps are now digitalized, and there is now an

exchange format, nationally accepted, for the interchange of those maps with the provinces and the municipalities," says Cor van Tilborg, Interim Director of the Government ICT Unit (ICTU) in the Netherlands.

Businesses and individual citizens can look into those digital maps and see what is possible in terms of land use. In another example, the Dutch government's "Space for Geographic Information" program plans to give elementary school pupils access to all kinds of geographic information systems, digital maps and so on to give them information about the Netherlands and Europe.

Similarly, the United States is creating a Line of Business around geospatial technologies. By being able to put geographic and environmental information together in non-traditional ways, the US government hopes to be able to discover new trends that can positively shape how it makes policy decisions. Australia plans to use geospatial technologies in multiple ways—to allow citizens to find government services and other resources in their local area, for example, and to help better manage water across all levels of government.

While many of these initiatives are in their infancy, the potential impact is huge: "We think that we will see services fundamentally changing more and more as these technologies move forward and mature. You will get a change in the kinds of service, because you will see things that you didn't see beforehand," says Karen Evans, Administrator of E-Government and Information Technology at the US Office of Management and Budget.

<sup>6</sup> <http://www.gita.org/about-gita/geospatial.asp>

"We are pushing the service to them. With the mobile ambassador, we can better help the grassroots leaders bridge the divide and better serve citizens online."

**Swee Hua Tan**  
**CIO, Central Provident Fund Board**  
**Singapore**

### Building the enabling infrastructure

Governments seeking high performance construct the enabling infrastructures that will allow them to fulfill the promises that are inherent in their citizen-centric visions. These infrastructures include both new technologies and new levels of cooperation across government boundaries (see sidebar, The rise of integrated business sites and the European Services Directive). The examples that follow highlight some of the more interesting examples of infrastructures we saw this year that are allowing governments to optimize service design and delivery.

For example, the Pocket Interpreter is a mobile interpretation service that enables deaf people to communicate with hearing people through sign language and without physical access to an interpreter. Sweden's National Post and Telecom Agency developed the service in cooperation with the Interpretation Center at the County Council of Örebro.

Thanks to the Pocket Interpreter, deaf people in Sweden can communicate using a 3G telephone, IP-based video telephone or web client as well as with a traditional ISDN video telephone. Once the citizen's device connects with the Interpreter Center, the center links the call to one of 200 sign language interpreters who work part time on the project. The deaf citizen can see the interpreter, who is also connected by voice to the recipient of the call. Not only does the service allow deaf people to communicate via telephone with other citizens, it also simplifies their connection with the public administration. The project has been available to all deaf people in Sweden since August 2006, and similar services are now being developed in a number of countries, including Denmark, Finland and Germany.

In Germany, cross-government cooperation on a large scale has created a new government auction service that yields mutual benefits for citizens

and public agencies alike. The BundOnline customs auction ([www.zoll-auktion.de](http://www.zoll-auktion.de)) is used by 36 customs administration offices; 646 federal, state and local agencies; and more than 60,000 registered users to participate in auctions of about 2,500 confiscated items per month. In the past, government auctions had lukewarm success; the pool of bidders was small and limited in regional scope, and items often failed to reach even the official minimum bid. Now, sales from the Internet customs auction over the past year have amounted to roughly €27 million over the past year. Citizens looking for bargains get more choice and government is able to reach a larger audience and gain a significant source of revenue.

In Singapore, the government is experimenting with 2D barcode technologies—embedding barcodes into poster images that are readable via a mobile phone camera. The camera captures the image, and brings the user to a website of

information. Instead of having to memorize the URL, users can simply aim their camera phones at the posters and have website information sent straight to their screens. In Finland, the city of Helsinki is bringing government infrastructure to citizens in a unique way. In January 2007, the city government started to install mobile broadband in city buses and trams. For passengers the biggest benefit is faster travel—the broadband network is meant to speed up the public transport by providing traffic signal priority to the vehicles connected to the system. However, in addition, passengers on the buses and trams also get free access to the Internet during the trip. Real-time public transport information is available on the start page when the passenger opens an Internet browser on the bus or tram. Future potential uses include a traffic information system for the drivers and a camera surveillance system for the safety of both the drivers and the passengers.

### **Building the workforce**

In the end, the responsibility for delivering greater public service value comes down to the public-sector workforce. Forward-looking governments are promoting a new mindset for dealing with citizens and putting in place programs that enable the front-line workforce to deliver service in new customer-centric operating models. In many cases, the examples are adapted private-sector concepts.

For example, as part of its broader strategy to encourage citizen self-service, Irish Revenue offers what it internally calls a "Gold Card" service. "We found that trying to encourage people to self serve by pulling them through online wouldn't always work on its own. So we set up a separate low-cost call number that people can use if they're self-serving and they want assistance," explains Paul Dempsey, District Manager for Dublin's City Center Revenue District. Now citizens that use self-service

can contact the "Gold Card Center" if they run into problems and get immediate attention—without having to wait in the queues of the main systems.

In Norway, the Tax Administration offers what is in effect a satisfaction guarantee. Citizens can ask the tax organization for a binding answer on tax issues. In practice it means that if a citizen has given the right information on the topic and the administration gives back an answer on how it will be evaluated and taxed, then the tax administration stands by what its employees said when it comes to assessment and taxation. "We are not able to say, 'Oh we have changed our mind!' If you have done an action based on the binding answer from the Tax Administration, then we stick to it," says Svein Kristensen. Denmark and Sweden offer similar programs. Likewise, on a provincial level in Canada, Service Ontario has introduced money-back service guarantees for certain programs.

**In Norway, the Tax Administration offers what is in effect a satisfaction guarantee. Citizens can ask the tax organization for a binding answer on tax issues. "We are not able to say, 'Oh we have changed our mind!' If you have done an action based on the binding answer from the Tax Administration, then we stick to it."**

Svein Kristensen  
Director General, Directorate of Taxes  
Norway

#### **The rise of integrated business sites and the European Services Directive**

This year we saw a notable increase in countries focusing on creating integrated sites to help businesses—both start-ups and established companies—transact with government from a single location. Singapore's Enterprise One, Australia's Business Gateway and others exemplify the growing desire to provide simple and convenient access to government business information, transactions and services.

The trend is particularly prevalent in Europe, where it is driven largely by the European Services Directive. This directive, adopted in late 2006, requires that European Union member states provide a "one-stop shop" for foreign companies, instead of obliging them to deal with different authorities at national, regional and local levels.

The goal is to create a robust internal market in services by removing legal and administrative barriers to cross-border service activities, increasing cross-border competition in service markets, bringing down prices and improving quality and choice for consumers.

Already the directive is spurring action, even in countries that do not yet have robust eGovernment capabilities. Poland, for example, has prioritized the creation of a one-stop service for setting up a new business and has set a preliminary implementation date of October 2007.



## Country reports

Australia	80	Malaysia	102
Belgium	82	Netherlands	104
Brazil	84	Norway	106
Canada	86	Poland	108
Denmark	88	Portugal	110
Finland	90	Singapore	112
France	92	South Africa	114
Germany	94	Spain	116
Ireland	96	Sweden	118
Italy	98	United Kingdom	120
Japan	100	United States	122



# Australia

**Ranking** 8th (tie) | **Latitude/Longitude** 27°S 133°E | **Capital** Canberra  
**Population** 20.43 million people | **Land area** 7,617,930 sq km

Over the past year Australia appears to have made solid, if undramatic, progress implementing the eGovernment Strategy we described in last year's report. The strategy—"Responsive Government: A New Service Agenda," which launched in April 2006—essentially focuses on service transformation and better value for citizens and government. Given the federal structure of Australia's government, the principles-based strategy reflects a democratic approach to implementation of guidance more than mandate. Each level of government will create and implement its own eGovernment strategies, taking into account one another's directions.

As noted in the rankings section of the report, Australia is one of a number of world leaders that faces the prospect of losing momentum if it moves too slowly in implementing its vision for leadership in customer service. Specifically, although citizens are currently satisfied, many feel service has not improved over the past three years. In this regard, then, the next

four years will be critical in Australia's drive to meet the priorities set out in its latest strategy: All activities are planned around phased approach, with an initial phase from 2006-2008 and a final phase from 2008-2010.

This year, Australia's strongest showing came in multichannel service, despite the fact that until last year, multichannel service delivery did not appear to have been a formal focus. In April 2006, however, the Australian Government Information Management Office (AGIMO) published a guide to managing multiple channels called "Delivering Australian Government Services, Managing Multiple Channels." By establishing these guidelines the AGIMO hopes to influence a common and standard approach to designing a multichannel strategy.

Another of AGIMO's key roles is to identify and promote better practices to optimize customers' and stakeholders' level of awareness, acceptance and usage of eGovernment products and services.

In fact, it has produced a checklist for implementing and marketing eGovernment initiatives, and established an e-Award in 2006 to inspire government agencies to put ICT to use in innovative ways in government.

The ultimate goal is to coordinate all online services into a single platform and to have electronic delivery underpin all other delivery means. One notable example is [www.australia.gov.au](http://www.australia.gov.au), the citizen portal for Australians that connects more than 700 government websites as well as selected state and territory resources. The Australian government's efforts in developing online services and driving up usage seems to be paying off; in 2006, the citizen portal was reporting a 7 percent increase in visitor numbers each month. In addition, from our own citizen survey we saw a decreasing reliance on the telephone channel. While the number of citizens who claimed to use a landline telephone decreased from 75 percent to 70 percent from 2006 to 2007, the number using email or mobile text increased from 16 percent to 23 percent.

Currently, just less than half of the Australians we surveyed think their government is well connected in delivering services. Although there is no formal strategy around cross-government collaboration in Australia, again there is a framework for facilitating it (the "Information Interoperability Framework"). As agencies adopt this framework, the government believes it will see dramatic improvements in information exchange and re-use. In fact, we saw some evidence of the framework being put to practical use. For example, Geoscience Australia and the Western Australia and South Australia Geological Surveys collaborated on a geochemistry database that demonstrates interoperability at both the technical and information levels. The database uses the Open Geospatial Consortium Web Feature Service standard and all three agencies agreed to a common schema and semantics to deal with the Information Interoperability issues. In light of their success, the participants in the project have developed a road show to highlight their outcomes and encourage similar collaborative efforts at agencies elsewhere.

Another notable example is the [business.gov.au](http://business.gov.au) website (formerly known as the Business Entry Point). [Business.gov.au](http://business.gov.au), which was developed by the Department of Industry, Tourism and Resources, is Australia's first truly whole-of-government service delivery initiative. Users enjoy facilitated business transactions with federal, state and local government; the site helps businesses find, manage and complete government forms online without having to understand the structure of government or individual agencies. Thus, the compliance burden on business is eased, because dealing with all levels of government becomes cheaper and easier. Since the service was relaunched in June 2005, it has received significant praise. In fact, it won a UN Public Service eGovernment Award in 2006.

For citizens, the Australian Tax Office (ATO) is working to provide taxpayers or their agents with access to information from government and nongovernment agencies to help them prepare their electronic returns. The goals are to minimize cost for the taxpayer, optimize taxpayer compliance and minimize audit costs within the ATO. For example, some taxpayers will be able to electronically access their Medicare expenses information from Medicare Australia when preparing their return. In addition, people receiving a payment summary from Centrelink for an allowance, benefit or pension will also be able to access that information online.

Australia's progress toward leadership in customer service continues forward, slowly but surely. The government slipped slightly in our rankings this year but nevertheless remains an admired leader. Australia's work on encouraging the enabling infrastructural elements of value-led customer service stands it in good stead for delivering on its service promise. However, the government's historically collaborative approach will always put it at risk of overly slow implementation. Looking to the future, the government will need to find more aggressive ways to combine services, if it wants to improve its citizens' outlook on its service performance.



# Belgium

**Ranking** 12th | **Latitude/Longitude** 50°N 4°E | **Capital** Brussels  
**Population** 10.39 million people | **Land area** 30,278 sq km

While Belgium did not experience any major changes in the government during the past year, forthcoming federal elections set for June 2007 may have an impact on the overall administrative reform agenda in the country.

In addition to the country's eGovernment strategy, the Kafka administrative decomplexity initiative has made steady progress according to its timelines. As of this writing, 9 of the plan's 12 mandated tasks have been accomplished, and approximately 185 additional simplifications have been made. One of the Kafka plan's notable accomplishments was the introduction of single entry point for start-ups and the unique Start-up Form. As a result of this initiative, administrative costs for corporations have decreased by an impressive €1.7 billion from 2003, a 25 percent drop.

Belgium improved slightly in our rankings. One of its biggest strengths was in the multichannel pillar of leadership in customer service, where it ranked 6th

out of the 22 countries we surveyed. Not surprisingly, we found some highly innovative examples at both the federal and regional levels of using smart multichannel strategies to create greater public service value. For example, throughout 2007 the federal government intends to introduce a number of measures for improving citizen access. These include ensuring greater consistency of operating hours, including requiring every government walk-in service to be open at least one evening a week. At a regional level, in Flanders, the Flemish government is developing a multichannel strategy to communicate in an interactive way with their citizens and a vision built on the potential of broadband technology. From a call-center perspective, the federal Eranova contact center, which supports 10 agencies, now handles more than 190,000 requests for help a year, with only 10 percent of calls needing to be passed on to specialist advisors.

In the Flemish region, the Vlaamse Infolijn continues to grow more useful. It is to become the single point of contact for all queries from citizens and enterprises in Flanders (not only for regional government questions, but also, where possible, for matters dealt with by the federal government and municipalities). A number of new delivery channels were introduced over the past year, including SMS, interactive digital television and online chat; a voice portal and infomobile to serve the underprivileged are currently under consideration. In addition, these channels are being integrated. Currently, a citizen can make a request through one channel and ask for response via a different channel.

While Belgium scored lower in cross-government collaboration in our rankings, the Belgian government has a very clear strategy for improvement. Specifically, in November 2006, the federal government signed its second collaboration agreement with regions and communities, specifying key ways in which government agencies should collaborate to achieve integrated eGovernment, including for example, ensuring interoperability. As described in past reports, the real cornerstones of collaboration continue to be the "Crossroads Banks" of Social Security Legislation and of Enterprise, which allow data from citizens and businesses to be shared on a permissions basis.

In the areas of proactive communications and education, where Belgium scored 14th out of 22 countries, the government has made a real priority of closing the digital divide, and ensuring that everyone can access government services electronically. The strategy includes not only an increase in physical access points, but also an emphasis on training people to use PCs and the Internet, and on communications that foster a feeling of confidence in the security of these channels. For example, in 2006, the government introduced a website, [www.peecefobie.be](http://www.peecefobie.be), that gives helpful information about staying secure on the Internet, including advice on the use of passwords, antivirus software, spyware and so on. The government is also striving to protect children's security, providing eID-secured chat rooms for minors and free eID readers for children under 12 years of age.

Some of these initiatives may already be producing results for the country. The use of both the Internet and mobile (SMS) channels increased significantly over the past year (by 14 percentage points and 10 percentage points, respectively), while the use of both telephone and walk-in services decreased by 5 percentage points.

Certainly, the Belgian government also takes citizens' rights to anonymity and privacy very seriously. An interesting concept it wants to explore is development of what it calls the "Orwell-test," which would be a tool administrations could use to develop applications that respect privacy. In developing the Orwell-test, the Belgian government plans to include the academic world, enterprises and associations to stimulate research and innovation in these domains. From this perspective, the Orwell-test seems to be a developing example of the public service value ecosystem concept in action.

As Belgium continues to develop service innovations, it is also making efforts to ensure its initiatives align with its citizens' wants and needs. For example, the government recently conducted its largest-ever survey of Internet users and non-Internet users, to understand their needs and concerns about online public services. The survey showed a real demand for more and better electronic public services, but also highlighted that a citizen chooses the channel depending upon the service needed. Among the more interesting findings from the government's survey was that only approximately 17 percent of non-Internet users want a connection at home. The main reason cited for not using the Internet was that in their eyes the medium doesn't seem to provide value. Money, in fact, is often not the determining factor in the digital divide.

Belgium seems to be facing a bright future in terms of government customer service. Its new focus on building a better picture of its customers should produce significant dividends for the country, not only by allowing it to develop a more targeted vision to begin with, but also, by prioritizing the actions that will allow the government to better deliver on the promise of true value-led, citizen-centered service.



# Brazil

**Ranking** 20th | **Latitude/Longitude** 10°S 55°W | **Capital** Brasilia  
**Population** 190.01 million people | **Land area** 8,456,510 sq km

Brazil's customer service agenda was largely sidetracked last year when the country and government were distracted by the presidential elections. Minister Dilma Vana Rousseff, the new Chief of Staff of the Brazilian Presidency, continues as the head of the eGovernment Executive Committee and was given the challenge to boost government programs, among them increasing public access to the Internet.

Brazil's existing eGovernment strategy remains unchanged since last year: The government's approach to customer service is, for now, still largely fragmented. There is no government-wide strategy for the provision of services via the telephone, for in-person services or for consolidating walk-in centers. Instead, responsibility for organizing service delivery rests at the individual agency (or in some cases, the state) level.

Some Brazilian states have in fact implemented Citizen Service Centers, where citizens can access a range of services that are offered by multiple agencies. These include the state of Bahia with its SAC citizen service center

(first described in last year's report); Minas Gerais, with PSIU; and the state of São Paulo, with Poupa Tempo.

While the Portal Brasil was launched in late 2005, much work still needs to be done to make it anything like a fully functioning, integrated, transactional government portal that links online services from across the government. At the moment, Portal Brasil is largely information-only or at best, provides links to other departments' websites. The portal's problems with structure and navigation indicate a lack of integration among eGovernment services, and the Brazilian government has now put on its agenda plans to investigate how to make Portal Brasil more user friendly and useful. At a broader multichannel level, the Brazilian government does not seem to be driving integration between various channels to ensure integrated and consistent services, regardless of how the citizen accesses it.

Relatively speaking, cross-government collaboration seems to be Brazil's strongest area, in terms of the four pillars of leadership in customer service, although

even this area is still largely undeveloped. There are, however, pockets of innovation. The federal government's e-PING architecture, which defines a minimum set of policies and specifications to regulate the use of information and communication technologies in connection with eGovernment services, is being continually improved. Version 2 of the architecture was published in November 2006. E-PING has led to some interesting examples of vertical cross-government collaboration. For example, the National System for Court and Police Information (INFOSEG) aims to integrate all police information systems at national and state levels. INFOSEG allows police agents to access citizens' and vehicles' information records in real time, which enables the quick identification of wanted criminals or stolen vehicles. In another example, a new project in development called the Anoreg Project will allow nearly 18,000 civil notaries systems in Brazil to be integrated.

We also saw some experimentation with flexible architectures. One example is the TISS framework, developed by the Supplementary Health Care National Agency (ANS) as a standard specification to exchange information between supplementary health insurance operators and health services providers, such as hospitals and clinics. This framework was based on analysis of ANS's own information/service support systems as well other Health Ministry information/service support systems. It is intended to improve communication about health stakeholders; reduce paper documents; make access to the service faster; allow information exchange about diseases and the application of health politics; support cost/benefit analyses for investments; reduce administrative costs; and, ultimately, improve health assistance quality. Rollout is expected to last through 2008.

In another interesting example from the health arena, the Health Ministry has made an agreement with RNP, Learning and Research National Net, to use its structure to provide health services. RNP currently reaches 100 percent of Brazil's states, and consequently, with this agreement, the Health Ministry hopes to be able to provide faster diagnoses, by being able to contact health specialists more quickly in different locations within the country. This example shows the positive potential for developing service ecosystems within Brazil.

While proactive communications and education was a relatively weak area for Brazil, we did find some evidence of growing citizen usage of particular services. For example, 87 percent of Brazilians who filed tax returns last year used Brazil's online tax filing service, ReceitaNet.

The ComprasNet portal for government procurement has also been a particularly well-received innovation. When fully operational, the ComprasNet portal will allow the receipt of notices and information of public RFPs, via cell phone or hand-held device. Since its introduction, ComprasNet has grown in popularity, and last year was used for 57 percent of all governmental purchases. The estimated cost savings is more than US \$841 million.

Overall, Brazil's service program has shown very little movement. Our survey shows that citizens feel customer service has gotten slightly worse than it was three years ago and that citizens are dissatisfied. To make any real progress now, the Brazilian government actually needs to step back to devise an outcome-focused strategy for delivering real value to citizens through customer service, and then develop a sharp, implementable action plan of realistic targets for moving forward.



# Canada

**Ranking** 2nd | **Latitude/Longitude** 60°N 95°W | **Capital** Ottawa  
**Population** 33.39 million people | **Land area** 9,093,507 sq km

Canada is in what a number of its executives describe as a period of "inflection and reflection." In January 2006, a new minority Conservative government came to power. Since then, service transformation programs (including Service Canada)—which were key programs of the previous government—are still on the agenda, but they seem to have taken a lower profile in the past year.

While Service Canada is expected to continue to lead delivery of national-level programs to citizens, it is unclear to what extent the organization will deliver programs on behalf of other government departments. This uncertainty may affect the organization's ability to maintain and grow its position as the main contact point for the Canadian government. Most likely, for Service Canada to achieve its full potential as the service delivery arm of the Government of Canada, the government will ultimately have to tackle the organizational and governance mechanisms necessary for it to deliver on its ambitions. In this regard, Australia's Centrelink offers a fine model to emulate—in its position as a standalone statutory agency

with clear responsibility for delivering services and certain payments and clear accountability for managing its people, finances and risk, it has flourished.

2006 also saw the natural conclusion of two high-profile initiatives: Government On-Line and the Service Improvement Initiative. While the government has announced no new major initiatives, the government has begun speaking in terms of a Public Sector Service Value Chain as underpinning Canada's plans to reconstruct the way it delivers programs and services, streamline and standardize business processes, and rationalize the infrastructure that supports government operations.

Going forward, transformation initiatives in the Government of Canada are expected to retain the same citizen/client centric approach that has worked so well for Canada in the past, but expanded to a whole-of-government view. The operating premise is that internal services must be understood and managed in the same client-centered manner as external services, because without strong internal services (by employees to employees) external

service delivery will, inevitably, falter. Therefore, improving service to the client (whether internal or external) will be of paramount importance to the Government of Canada's service agenda. In fact, a governmental Transformation Alignment Office was established in February of 2006 to provide oversight on the progress and impact of service transformation initiatives across the government.

Certainly, Canada has one of the most far-reaching and inspirational visions of truly citizen-centric customer service in the world. We have noted the government's smart approaches to building a complete picture of its wants and needs through the activities and assets of its Institute for Citizen-Centred Service. And in fact, for years the government has led our rankings (followed closely by Singapore and the United States) thanks largely to its focus on the citizen.

Interestingly, however, this year Singapore nudged Canada out of the top position in our rankings, albeit by a very small margin, and the difference came down mainly to how the two countries scored in terms of citizen perceptions of their performance in the four pillars of customer service. While we believe we have rightfully praised Canada for its aspirational thinking about customer service, citizens clearly are perceiving a gap between the government's promise and its practice. In fact, in terms of the citizen survey component of our rankings ("citizen voice") alone, Canada ranked 9th out of 22 countries, behind the Nordics, the Netherlands, and Australia, Japan and Singapore. In addition, according to our citizen survey, less than half of the respondents believe service has improved compared to three years ago. A greater number of respondents think service has stayed the same or in fact, gotten worse. (In contrast, 79 percent of Singaporeans feel government service has improved in their country over the past three years, with only two percent thinking it has declined.)

Vision is not the issue. Rather, the pace of implementation may not be keeping up with the vision. For Canada to improve now, it needs to reignite its efforts in closing that gap. We did see the government making some smart plans in this

regard with its emphasis on internal service transformation. These initiatives include an emphasis on improved management and accountability, expenditure management, "web of rules" simplification and public service renewal (PS Renewal). It is this last area, PS Renewal, that most attracted our attention in our research, as it demonstrated one of the more focused approaches to preparing for the workforce challenges of the future that we saw across all 22 countries.

From an infrastructural perspective, the Government of Canada continues to make steady progress. As described last year, Secure Channel was designed to eliminate the need for federal departments and agencies to build their own security and network infrastructure, and to ensure an integrated approach to online authentication. It's a smart principle of reuse that we have seen in many countries this year; however, to date take-up of Secure Channel has been slow. Secure Channel was made mandatory in the beginning of the year, which should lead to greater return on the significant investment made in this enabler.

Canada has also recently launched an ambitious effort to create shared services for information technology through the Publics Works and Government Services Canada Information Technology Shared Service Organization (IT-SSO). The goal of the IT-SSO is to consolidate and standardize IT infrastructure across the government in order to create efficiencies and economies of scale. So far the IT-SSO has had some good early success in attracting seven departments to use their common services through an initial pilot phase, and is now working to expand take-up to other departments.

Corporate Administrative Shared Services is taking a notably scaled-back approach from last year. The initiative is operating under a strategy that focuses on high-impact services area, predominantly in the human resources space, pay and benefits, and a few areas in finance, which will likely be tested by volunteer agencies in a multi-year proof of concept to determine the best long-term strategy for shared services for the government

of Canada. It is obvious the government is pursuing a much more modest shared services agenda, and in fact, we found no mention of shared services in the current budget.

Over the years, we have seen Canada make significant progress improving service delivery through a strong focus on the customer. Still, the government's progress has been limited in terms of its ability to truly transform services across departments within the federal government and across other jurisdictions. The federal government has also been challenged in its ability to implement and adopt shared service models. Its future success will be impacted by its ability to encourage and motivate stakeholders to make decisions and act with a whole of government view in order to continue pushing the envelope on service transformation.

As the Government of Canada looks to its future of leadership in customer service, it faces a somewhat unique challenge. The government runs the risk of being stymied by its own past success, as the work that lies ahead will not have the same easy-to-perceive impact that Government On-line did. The Canadian government has a tough act to follow—its own. The government is undeniably still an admirable world leader; its holistic approach to service transformation is smart, its vision continues to be outstanding and it has had a number of noteworthy successes.

However, what tangible actions the government will be taking—what its immediate and very concrete priorities for the immediate future are, and under what specific timeframes—is less clear. Now the government needs to build the bridge between having a vision and even a deep understanding of its citizens to figuring out, in specific terms, what the customer experience will be for individual citizens and how to join up government to make it happen.



# Denmark

**Ranking** 4th | **Latitude/Longitude** 56°N 10°E | **Capital** Copenhagen  
**Population** 5.46 million people | **Land area** 42,394 sq km

The past year was one of tremendous activity for the Danish government, which undertook a number of important public-sector reforms. Among these, it published its Globalization Strategy in April 2006, called Progress, Innovation and Cohesion. The aim is to enable Denmark to maintain its position, not only as one of the wealthiest countries in the world but also as a country with strong social cohesion. The strategy contains 350 specific initiatives, covering extensive reforms in education and training programs as well as provisions for research and entrepreneurship.

The Structural Reform that we described last year went into effect on January 1, 2007. This fundamental change reduced the number of municipal governments in the country from 271 to 98, and merged 14 counties into 5 regions, with more than 100,000 employees being transferred to a different government level in the process.

The key aim of the Structural Reform is to create a simpler and more efficient public sector with increased cohesion

in public service. As part of this process, in conjunction with the consolidation of municipalities, many services have been devolved from a national level to the municipalities, which will become the main contact point for citizens and businesses. Citizen Service Centers are an important part of the reform; eventually, 75 percent of municipalities will establish such centers. The Service Centre Act establishes the rules for handling delivery on behalf of other public authorities, including rules for the exchange of personal data. Preparation of the structural reform has to some extent put the development of new services on hold during 2006, with government focusing instead on merging organizations and IT systems in the new municipalities.

Obviously, the need to collaborate between agencies and between layers of government is a key consideration, and Denmark has made considerable efforts to put in place the common ICT infrastructures and frameworks in support of better collaboration. For example, the steering committee for joint-government

cooperation consists of the permanent secretaries from four ministries, the Managing Director of Local Government in Denmark, and the Managing Director of the Danish Regions. However, as yet we see little evidence that Danish authorities have actually implemented collaborative services or are offering services in a coordinated, joined-up way (beyond making services from different agencies available via one-stop portals). It will be interesting to watch Denmark's progress as the effects of the Structural Reform are felt throughout the country.

In addition to the Structural Reform, the Danish government is currently discussing a Quality Reform, which would tackle rising expectations about the quality of public service against the backdrop of a shrinking public-sector workforce. The Quality Reform, expected to be drafted by June 2007, will focus on five main areas:

- more cohesive services;
- one contact person for health and social services;
- better prevention services for health;
- citizen-friendly services, provided with respect and understanding; and
- easy and efficient access to public services (for example, a common call center that will be open evenings and weekends, an improved digital signature and the introduction of SMS-services).

Denmark's previous eGovernment strategy came to its natural conclusion in December 2006. In March 2007, the government released a new strategy, covering the national, regional and municipal levels, called Strategy for Digitalization of the Public Sector 2007-2010. Included within this strategy is a government-wide channel strategy with three overall goals: easier access to public authorities, greater single contact resolution of issues and the coordination of the three main channels (phone, in person and Internet) to support one another and to encourage citizens to use the least expensive channel.

In tandem with this effort, the Danish government launched a new single citizen portal, [www.Borger.dk](http://www.Borger.dk), in January 2007. The portal already offers more than 600

self-access services. The government considers [Borger.dk](http://Borger.dk) a great success already: During the first two weeks, the portal had almost 250,000 unique visitors, and almost 1.5 million sites were opened. In comparison, neither of the two portals [Netborger.dk](http://Netborger.dk) and [Danmark.dk](http://Danmark.dk) ever reached 75,000 unique visitors, even in a week. To further promote take-up, the Danish government reached an agreement with the Danish National Library Authority in which the libraries will help introduce and promote [Borger.dk](http://Borger.dk) to the public.

The government has set its sights on an overhaul of the single portal for businesses, [www.Virk.dk](http://www.Virk.dk), which, though it has existed since 2002, has not been very successful in attracting users.

While telephone and walk-in are still citizens' preferred methods for interacting with the government, Denmark does not shy away from mandating the use of electronic services (the "stick" technique describe in last year's report) when it feels it makes most sense to do so. For example, in 2006 the NEMKonto (EASY Account) became obligatory for all citizens. Public authorities no longer make payments via means other than electronic. Citizens are obliged to have an EASY Account bank account; if they do not have one, the government will assign them one. The Danish government estimates EASY Accounts for citizens will generate savings of more than DKK 280 million a year: 3.6 million checks no longer have to be issued, and cash desks have been closed in all but a few municipalities.

In 2008, payments between public authorities and businesses and associations will also be carried out through EASY Accounts. The solution will serve 500,000 businesses in Denmark and will handle approximately DKK 765 billion in payments per year. Savings are estimated at DKK 100 million a year. EASY Accounts here are a natural evolution of the government's mandatory eInvoicing program for businesses (eFaktura), which has been in place since 2005. Some estimates put government's annual savings from EASY Account (NEMKonto) and eInvoicing (eFaktura) together at DKK

800 million a year. Furthermore, businesses may save as much as DKK 300 million to 400 million a year.

The approach Denmark has taken to EASY Account and eInvoicing is innovative, even radical, and it has clearly brought significant benefits. It will likely be replicated for similar services in Denmark, with a number of other EU countries considering the approach.

Denmark continues to provide innovative services that generate value for citizens and the administration alike. As it looks to the future, it must ensure that in its efforts to streamline and generate cost-saving efficiencies, the needs of citizens do not become secondary. This possibility seems unlikely, as plans for the Quality Reform appear to have placed citizen-centricity squarely in the center of the Danish service agenda. As the results from both the Structural Reform and the Quality Reform begin to coalesce, the rest of the world should watch Denmark's progress with interest.



# Finland

**Ranking** 7th | **Latitude/Longitude** 64°N 26°E | **Capital** Helsinki  
**Population** 5.23 million people | **Land area** 304,473 sq km

2007 should be an exciting year for Finland with regards to the progress of its service agenda. In 2006, the country's president Tarja Halonen was reelected, contributing to governmental stability. However, parliamentary elections in March 2007 meant a slowdown in some development initiatives last fall, as the government shifted focus to political campaigning.

The Finnish government's Information Society Program also ended with the March elections. However, a new National Knowledge Society Strategy for Finland was released in September 2006, to give provisions for the newly elected government. The main objective of this new strategy is to turn Finland into an internationally attractive, humane and competitive society, and at the most fundamental level, it addresses all four pillars of leadership in customer in customer service. In fact, one of the projects the Strategy suggested for the near future (2007-2011) is initiation of a policy program for reforming

public-sector service structures, and this recommendation, in fact, has been included in the new government's program.

Also of interest, in 2007 the Finnish Productivity Program (first described in our report last year) should begin to realize benefits from efficiency actions that have already been taken in certain areas (including human resources and finance). Implementation of the Productivity Program should have huge implications for customer service, as ministries will be required to include provisions for improving both the back office and front office efficiency (moving services online and reducing personnel).

Last year we described much of Finland's customer service progress as being related to putting in place enablers of future progress. In 2006, Finland continued along those lines. To raise the productivity of government, totally new operating models and solutions will have to be developed, so in June 2006, the government issued a Policy Decision on the Development of

IT Management in State Administration. This policy decision supports common structures, common IT services and enhanced interoperability of IT systems that will enable agencies to focus resources on their core processes. The goal of common structures and services is to create the conditions that will enable Finland to provide truly customer-centric and flexible services.

Likewise, VETUMA, the online identification and payment solution for citizens, which we mentioned in last year's report, continues to grow in use. In an innovative example from the Finnish Board of Education, VETUMA is being used for vocational teacher applications. Applicants can track their applications online and also confirm acceptance of an offer of a position online. VETUMA is poised to become more ubiquitous; in 2007 the Ministry of Finance signed a contract with providers to add mobile identification to the program.

Common IT management will cascade down to local and regional levels of government as well; the central State IT Management Unit works in close cooperation with the Ministry of the Interior coordinating municipal information management with the Municipal IT Unit (KuntaIT). The Information Society Programme has also proposed that a joint entity for public administration, JulkIT (which would be a merger of the State IT and Municipal IT Units), start operating at the beginning of 2009.

Finland's effort to lay the infrastructural groundwork for cross-government collaboration through policies and programs such as these should figure strongly into its ability to retain a world-leadership position in customer service in the future.

Coordination on the back end will translate into channel coordination and consolidation on the front end. The citizen-centric Local & Regional Services Strategy, which was launched in 2005, remains in force today, and the Ministry of the Interior remains committed to enhancing Citizen's Offices, by increasing

the number of authorities in and services provided by the Citizen's Offices according to customer needs. The Ministry of the Interior has responsibility for preparing the common, customer-centric service criteria to Citizen's Offices jointly with the key service providers. These criteria enable defining the common accessibility and quality of services regionally and by service entity.

Interestingly, we found evidence that the efforts to enhance Citizen's Offices are already bearing fruit. In our citizen survey, the percentage of Finnish citizens who said walk-in centers were fairly or very easy to use increased by 6 percentage points (from 78 to 84 percent). Of course, we have also noted that Finland ranked highest of all countries surveyed in just the citizen survey component of our rankings, as well as the highest overall in our combined score for citizen-centricity.

For Finland, one of the larger remaining challenges is raising awareness of, and providing education for, use of online services. From our citizen survey, we have learned that while citizen use of the more resource-intensive walk-in and landline channels increased marginally over the past year (2 percent and 5 percent, respectively) and use of mobile phones increased significantly (17 percent), use of the efficient Internet channels in fact dropped 10 percentage points over the past year (from 35 percent to 25 percent).

Driving usage of online services (specifically, driving citizens to self-serve wherever possible) undoubtedly will be an integral component of how the government's channel strategy fits into its larger agenda to promote greater public service efficiency. The government, however, has limited promotion budgets, and often needs to rely on the media to publish its messages. In January 2007, the Ministry of the Interior published results from its Public Online Service Survey. This survey likewise reinforced the need for the government to raise awareness of available online services and provide training. Interestingly, the results of the Finnish survey showed that increased Internet usage most often correlated with a decrease in phone rather

than in-person channel usage, once again emphasizing that the preferred channel depends on what the citizen wants to accomplish.

As Finland looks to the future of its customer service agenda, it does so from a position of strength. The country already enjoys the confidence and high opinion of its citizens. While the country's shifting demographics may add a layer of complexity to how the government will build and bring to life a faithful representation of value-led service for its citizens, the number of significant new strategies (and laws and action plans supporting them) put into place and beginning to be implemented in 2007 point to Finland's positive progress toward high performance.



# France

**Ranking** 17th | **Latitude/Longitude** 46°N 2°E | **Capital** Paris  
**Population** 63.71 million people | **Land area** 640,053 sq km

France elected Nicolas Sarkozy as its new president on May 6, 2007. This election leads to a possible change of administrative policies related to the French service agenda.

As of this writing, the government continues carrying on the work of its ADministration ELEctronique (ADELE) program, which is winding to an expected close in 2007. As described last year, the Direction Générale de la Modernisation de l'Etat (DGME), under the stewardship of Frank Mordacq, became the central agency driving state modernization, including the goals of the ADELE program, in January 2006.

One of the key remaining focus areas of ADELE during the past year has been to promote the convergence of the information systems of all departments toward common frames of reference. To further this objective, the DGME launched the "Blueprint for eGovernment," which is expected to be fully operational by 2010. This Blueprint for eGovernment includes an interoperability and security framework, as well as a framework for the exchange

of administrative data between agencies. The ultimate goals are to ensure better management of public finances as well as to simplify the French administration and make it more efficient.

Other recent initiatives have focused on improving customer-centricity, such as the implementation of "mon service-public" portal, a secure and personalized website launched in September 2006, where users can access all their administrative forms and procedures. Other service innovations include unique approaches to filing for benefits. Usage is growing for the unique declaration of address change (currently at 25 percent).

The DGME has also launched several walk-in service centers in rural areas with limited access to the Internet. These Relais Services Publics (RSP) centers, created in partnership with the Délégation à l'Aménagement et à la Compétitivité des Territoires, will allow users to have access to administrative procedures and services from different administrations and departments while using the same facilities. This initiative stems from the

"charte sur les services publics en milieu rural"—the French government's commitment to provide rural and remote areas with greater access to administrative services. In a fine example of service ecosystems at work, these RSPs will either occupy dedicated facilities or operate from existing local government and non-government facilities (such as a mayor's office, community center or an association). Furthermore, mobile RSP centers will provide access to remote areas on a weekly basis. The first RSP facilities have already been created in the Nièvre with more planned for the Alpes Maritimes, Indre and Gironde departments.

Many of ADELE's targeted projects (with an emphasis on making all government services available online or through the telephone) went live during 2006. The government hopes to realize significant benefits from its electronic administration program—as much as €5 to 7 billion per year, according to some estimates.

The French administration still faces obstacles to improving customer service. Making services paperless from end to end remains a target. Further, the development of cross-government services demands ongoing efforts to develop common security and interoperability references, implement user-friendly procedures and to ensure citizens' trust in the security of the services.

Major objectives in the coming years are ambitious: further integrating multi-channel and multi-service delivery through innovative front offices for citizens and businesses, developing the technical means to manage the security of citizens' personal data, and setting up an effective cross-government governance model to advance e-government beyond agency-specific initiatives. In fact, some integrated, multi-channel services have already been implemented for example, in the social sector (CAF, UNEDIC, etc.). However, many agencies have developed Internet services as a new channel beside existing channels.

From the citizen perspective, multichannel access and proactive communications and education seem to be the two areas where government services have the most room to improve. In fact, looking solely at citizen survey scores, the government scored

lowest in proactive communications of all 22 countries we surveyed this year. On the other hand, according to this survey, 42 percent of the citizens believe that government service provision is getting better, and citizens' satisfaction with at least their last government contact is high (75 percent indicating "very satisfied" or "satisfied"). However, most citizens (57 percent) noticed no change in their relationship with the government during the last 3 years. In addition, most citizens (57 percent) would appreciate more information about government services and many (45 percent) wanted easier access to this information.

It may be that in its efforts to drive an agenda of administrative efficiency (as opposed to improving customer service per se), the government has turned too much attention to improving and promoting eGovernment alone, leaving citizens feeling underserved in other areas.

France's change in ranking was not a result of any specific decline in the French service, but rather attributable primarily to the average showing in the citizen survey component of our rankings and the impact of significant improvements other countries have made in their citizen-centric approaches to service over the past 2 years. In contrast, over the same period France was more focused on internal efficiency.

Perhaps part of the answer for improvement lies in France's approach to cross-government collaboration, a critical component of value-led service delivery. Last year, we described INES, the French government's plan for a secure, national electronic identity card, which had been intended for deployment in 2008. If INES came to fruition, we said, it would become a critical foundation of cross-government collaboration. However, the program is currently under redesign to take into account the "National Commission of Private Information" view, which said that in its initial approach, INES would violate the citizens' rights to privacy. Hence, the government has discarded the idea of having a single unique identifier per user, although it continues with separate identifiers for separate sectors.

The delay of INES complicates France's ability to provide cross-government service. However, the DGME continues to focus on setting up the protocols, frameworks and technologies to enable information exchange between agencies and levels of government. As some of these projects begin to bear fruit, we have already seen an improvement in citizens' customer service experience. In fact, France ranked 3rd out of 22 countries in terms of citizens' perception of cross-government capabilities.

2007 could be a crossroads year for France. The new political climate, the relative newness of DGME and the general air of citizens' potential satisfaction all combine to create an exciting uphill climb for the French government as it seeks to deliver service outcomes that not only contribute to administration efficiency, but a positive customer experience as well.



# Germany

**Ranking** 15th | **Latitude/Longitude** 51°N 9°E | **Capital** Berlin  
**Population** 82.4 million people | **Land area** 349,223 sq km

Almost two years into power, the coalition government (headed by Chancellor Angela Merkel) has been a catalyst for public administration reform in Germany. Operational efficiency was the key focus of government reforms for the first half of 2006 (until the successful hosting of the World Cup Finals in July 2006 heralded a change in atmosphere and a slight improvement in economic fortunes for Germany.)

In April 2006, Germany introduced a plan to reduce the cost of administration, and in September 2006, the coalition government launched a program aimed at modernizing public administration called Future-oriented Public Administration Through Innovation. This program is really the newest incarnation of the existing *Moderner Staat-Moderne Verwaltung* strategy. What is new about the program is that it integrates administrative reform, a reduction of bureaucracy and eGovernment under one umbrella. As part of this modernization, in September the government also introduced a new eGovernment strategy, called eGovernment 2.0.

The European Services Directive, with its aggressive timeframe of three years, appears to be one key driver of the German government's approach to developing a consistent and seamless multi-channel strategy, and in fact, this is one of the stated objectives of the eGovernment 2.0 strategy. However, a detailed plan has yet to be developed.

With regard to the telephone channel specifically, the government seems keen to adopt the concept of a common telephone access to government services (with a proposed short phone number of 115). The idea has become a new priority and 115 has already received considerable media attention. (Again, most of the relevant services and information to be provided by such a call center will be owned by local or state government, so the 115 service will not be a common national one.) The key challenge will be to leverage the current momentum of political support and media attention and find a quick and easy approach to make some services available via 115 soon. While strong federalism will make it challenging to coordinate common

standards and service levels across Germany, 115 has kicked off a valuable discussion on service delivery and service quality in German government.

Deutschland Online (Germany Online), with its objectives of integrating services that have been developed in a fragmented fashion under Germany's federated structure, should also be accelerated by the European Services Directive. From an infrastructural perspective, one of the five priorities of the Deutschland Online strategy is to develop common infrastructures to facilitate data exchange and to avoid parallel developments.

Deutschland Online seeks to capitalize on the strength of federalism, allowing some partners to take the lead while all benefit from the advances. Political coordination of the implementation of Deutschland Online is carried out by a Conference of State Secretaries for eGovernment in both the federal and *länder* governments. Deutschland Online was re-launched in 2006 with a greater focus on key opportunities to improve government service. The program will still need to prove that it now can meet the challenge to agree upon and roll out common solutions across *länder* and local governments.

Examples of this cross-government collaboration in action include the development of online car registrations (handled by municipalities) through one portal. The City State of Hamburg currently develops the concepts, bringing in experience of linking services across governments in the greater Hamburg metropolitan area. Going forward, this service aims to integrate nongovernmental organizations as well, such as insurance companies and inspection authorities.

Internally, we saw evidence of increasing interest in shared services. The Federal Administration Office processes payroll accounting for more than 36 administrations and overall, headcount for this activity was reduced from 400 to 250 employees. In another example, the federal travel management system provides travel services and online booking to all federal employees.

Germany's customer service program continues to suffer from a poor citizen perception, caused at least in part by an immature communications and education capability. The government's drop in the rankings was not dramatic; however, out of the 22 countries we surveyed, German citizens felt least informed about government services. In fact, only 29 percent of Germans felt well informed in this regard, (which contrasts strikingly with Finland, where 71 percent of citizens felt well informed).

Most concerning from our quantitative evaluation was Germany's position on our customer service performance grid. From our citizen survey, we found that Germans perceive government service as having gotten worse over the past three years and that their current satisfaction with government service is low. In fact, Germany was one of only four countries where citizens rated government customer service worse than all six private-sector industries we used as comparison.

Last year, we noted poor use of Internet/mobile technologies by Germans. This year, we noted a dramatic drop in the number of German citizens using walk-in service to conduct their business with the government (from 61 percent in 2006 to 48 percent in 2007). Interestingly, the decrease in walk-in use corresponded with a fair increase in the number of Germans using mobile technologies (13 percent to 19 percent) but no increase at all in use of the Internet. The government recognizes communications as an area for improvement; in its final report on the previous eGovernment strategy, BundOnline 2005, the government acknowledged that lack of awareness of online services was hampering uptake. Therefore, proactive marketing is certainly on the federal government's agenda. As of this writing, however, we have found no evidence of finalized plans in this regard.

The federal government is also attempting to reduce the digital divide and encourage more people to use eGovernment services in other ways. In March 2006, it launched the Information Society Germany 2010 (iD2010) program, which aims to generate

enthusiasm for eGovernment by promoting greater broadband penetration; promoting digital TV/radio; improving IT infrastructure security; and targeting specific initiatives towards women, the elderly, youth and people with disabilities. These are promising steps; yet for now, it is unclear how government organizations will provide training and help people use their online services.

Germany still has considerable work to do to begin to bring forth a customer service program that is grounded in public service value. Its federated structure adds an extra challenge to linking up services in a truly citizen-centric way (broadly, through Deutschland Online, and in particular, in developing the 115 contact center and responding to the European Services Directive). While its focus on driving up eGovernment makes sense from a cost-savings perspective, the government cannot afford to focus too much on this channel alone. Instead, it needs to develop a more detailed and sophisticated understanding of its citizens' service wants and needs and of what drives them to use the channels they do. Then, even as it develops its capabilities in marketing, it must build smart channel strategies (which, in turn, will inform its marketing activities) that will optimize return on investment in all channels.



## Ireland

**Ranking** 11th | **Latitude/Longitude** 53°N 6°W | **Capital** Dublin  
**Population** 4.13 million people | **Land area** 68,890 sq km

Ireland's service strategy is embedded in the government's ongoing general modernization process. The Irish government's most recent social partnership agreement, Towards 2016: Ten-year Framework Social Partnership Agreement 2006-2016, provides for the continuation of the modernization program across the public service. Previous social partnership agreements have each had a particular focus and contained significant innovations. Towards 2016's focus is to develop a new framework to address the key social challenges that individuals face at each stage of their lives. Thus, in this respect, Towards 2016 demonstrates the government's commitment to the drive towards citizen-centricity.

The Department of the Taoiseach commissioned two surveys (one each for citizens and businesses) in 2006 to gauge levels of customer satisfaction with the government. Topline results in both instances were fairly positive.

For example, 76 percent of citizens stated they would recommend the civil service department or office on the basis of the service received and 53 percent believed that the civil service had become more customer-focused in the last three years. These results are consistent with what we found in our own citizen survey, in which 62 percent of Irish citizens polled believed customer service had improved over the past three years and 78 percent stated they were satisfied with the service they had most recently received from the government. More recently, in November 2006 the Irish government commissioned an independent external review of the customer charter process in the civil service. The evaluation covered all elements of the charter process, including identifying mechanisms for strengthening commitments to improved service provision and delivery across the public service. The results will inform the next phase of development of quality customer service.

For several years in our report Accenture has been following the progress of the Reach Agency (founded in 1999), which has been charged with developing a strategy for integrating services and for defining the architecture and principles of the Public Service Broker (Ireland's framework for access through a single point of contact, delivered through multiple channels and providing protection for personal and business data). Over the past year, we have begun to see signs of Reach gaining traction.

With the Public Service Broker finally completed, Reach signed up its first internal customer in 2006—the Irish Revenue Commissioners. Under their agreement, Reach Services handles authentication processing supporting elements of Revenue's self-service system for PAYE taxpayers. The new service provides different levels of service based on the channel and the level of authentication chosen by the customer. The authentication levels vary: from the telephone- and SMS-based channels, which do not require authentication and therefore offer a limited range of services, to a full online service offered to users who are authenticated online by the public service broker. Reachservices.ie, a portal of access to a number of interdepartmental agencies and services now has about 100,000 registered users, most of them signing up over the summer in response to PAYE.

Reach Services' other major area of focus currently is the Inter-Agency Messaging System (IAMS), a messaging hub that allows important information to be sent over secure channels in XML format between various government departments and agencies, such as Social and Family Affairs, Revenue, the General Register Office and the Central Statistics Office. IAMS launched in 2005 and is being used by Revenue to send meat exporters' declarations to the Department of Agriculture. More recently, a number of local authorities and departments adopted IAMS as the backbone for the Death Event Publication Service (DEPS). About 20 agencies have signed up for DEPS so far, and the service won a Public Service Excellence Award in March 2006.

In the near future, IAMS will act as the basis for the Court Outcomes notification service. This service should speed up and automate the process of distributing notice of court case results to the Garda Síochána, probation services and other relevant entities.

Other notable examples of cross-government collaboration include Comhairle and Mobhaile. Comhairle, which we mentioned last year, provides single walk-in offices for a specific set of services. Comhairle's name will soon be changed to the Citizens Information Board to reflect the link between the national body and citizens information services nationwide. On a local level, the Local Government Computer Services Board, with support from the Information Society Fund, developed Mobhaile (Gaelic for "my home" or "my town")—a website based around a citizen's community, interests and life. On Mobhaile.ie citizens can search for businesses, services, things to do and visit, locate places on the map, and send SMS texts and eCards, among other services. The site helps build ICT capacity by helping community groups set themselves up online. Mobhaile significantly expanded in 2006 and is set to expand further in 2007.

From an internal efficiency perspective, the possibility of using the shared services model to integrate back-office functions across departments is now under active discussion among various government departments and in fact, is already coming to fruition in certain areas. For example, the Department of Justice, Equality and Law Reform has established a shared services center that provides financial services to the Department, the Courts Service, the Prisons Service, the Chief State Solicitor's Office and An Garda Síochána, as well as the Department of Arts, Sports and Tourism. This shared services center currently services a customer base of more than 20,000 employees.

Looking to the future, Ireland continues to make steady progress. While its citizens seem satisfied, if the government is to develop a truly thriving program of customer service, it needs to develop future action plans that are not only rich in vision, but also realistic to achieve. A key component will be Ireland's New

Government Action Plan, which will focus on how to effectively exploit technology across all sectors of society. As of this writing, this plan had not yet been published. However, it will need to account for factors at both the national and European Union level for Ireland to truly develop as a world leader in using customer service as a lever for societal prosperity. Perhaps even more important, Ireland's future of leadership in customer service will depend on the government taking a more aggressive approach to implementation than it has over the past several years.



# Italy

**Ranking** 18th | **Latitude/Longitude** 42 °N 12 50°E | **Capital** Rome  
**Population** 58.14 million people | **Land area** 294,020 sq km

While Italy scored in the lower range of our rankings in 2007, recent political developments may suffice to drive customer service to a more prominent position in the government's agenda over the next year.

In the April 2006 election, Romano Prodi became Prime Minister by a narrow margin. Following the election, there were some structural changes within the ministries—most notably the creation of the Ministry for Reform and Innovation in Public Administration, which replaces the former Ministry for Innovation and Technologies. This ministry heads two departments that form part of the Presidency of the Council of Ministers (Prime Minister's Office): the Department for Innovation and Technologies and the Department for Public Administration.

The new ministry launched a new reform and modernization phase for the public administration, aimed at developing an integrated, and multilevel, strategic program. The latter is oriented to define and promote integrated changes in laws, organization, procedures and technologies.

The ministry is supported at the highest political level by a Committee of Ministers for the Information Society, and by a Permanent Conference for Innovation Technology, which is responsible for developing guidelines and endorsing strategic action.

In addition, the 2007 budget focuses on expense reduction and better revenue collection, as ways to substantially reduce the current fiscal deficit, to meet European Union targets. The Financial Act 2007 calls for a reduction in public spending through the use of new information technologies to foster electronic data exchange and provide online services to citizens and businesses. Several sectors are involved, such as eHealth programs, online tax and revenues services, labor systems and eProcurement platforms. Such an emphasis naturally provides impetus for a value-led service agenda that focuses on delivering better outcomes more cost effectively.

The government already is taking some small steps forward in this regard, although the customer service agenda, for now at least, appears largely focused on eGovernment. For example, the initial two phases of the 2005 Guidelines for eGovernment, which had been delayed before the change of government, are now being continued by the new government. Of the two phases, the first concerns online service provision—as of this writing, more than 70 percent of the targeted citizen services and 80 percent of the targeted business services were available online. The second phase, which is underway, concerns electronic communications within and between government agencies: a new cooperation model at the municipal level is being promoted through Local Alliances for Innovation, as well as several initiatives to bridge the digital divide.

Moreover, in early 2007 the Italian government introduced a new strategic reference model for eGovernment to work on existing initiatives: Strategic Guidelines for the eGovernment National System. This model consists of seven key elements, including improving services efficiency and quality through unified access points, developing new techniques for user identification, creating standards and infrastructures for interoperability and cooperation and defining a new approach for citizen relationship management and customer satisfaction.

Despite the heavy emphasis on eGovernment, Italy is making some moves to encourage multi-channel provision of services. Call centers are also on the agenda, and many central government agencies have now established or have begun to establish integrated contact centers. Among these, the citizen portal now has a call-center-based front end as a first response for those seeking information.

Even more so than contact centers, the Italian government seems particularly interested in developing the mobile channel, thanks to the proliferation of mobile telephones in the country and the lower cost of this technology. This will likely be an important strategy for the

government as it seeks to reduce the costs of public administration. From our citizen survey, Italians still rely heavily on face-to-face interactions, with 82 percent of citizens who had contact with the government in the past year using walk-in centers.

The National Center for IT in Government (CNIPA) has just launched a project to create a Mobile Service Center for the administrations, which would act as a single and common platform to deliver m-Government services to citizens. The platform will be accessible via a unique number through SMS, MMS, voice and wireless access protocols. CNIPA also continues to explore the suitability and use of new technologies, such as biometrics, RFID, Voice-over-IP and digital TV services.

In fact, the Italian Digital Administration Code encourages public administrations to adopt a wide range of technologies (including Web, digital TV and mobile technologies) as a prerequisite for a multi-channel approach, while emphasizing that selecting the most appropriate channels for a specific service depends on both the service's features and the users' needs.

Another key initiative has recently been undertaken by the Italian government to foster digitalization of the local and central government: the Public Connectivity System, or PCS. This digital infrastructure continues to make progress, and will form the common ground for electronic communication among public offices all over the country, on the basis of shared technology, organizational and security standards.

As the Italian government continues to experiment with new channels of access, integration across channels will rise in prominence. For now, Italy ranked low in our multichannel pillar—20th out of 22 countries. However, a greater focus on multichannel integration is one of the priorities laid out in the new eGovernment strategy.

Improving the existing business and citizen portals is also a priority. It is intended they should provide a one-stop shop, and that the citizens or businesses should be

able to access government services without having to understand the structure of government to find that service. From the business perspective in particular, the Italian government already seems to be making some remarkable strides. As described earlier in the report, much of the improvement can be traced to the European Services Directive, to which Italy has responded quickly and decisively.

For example, in January 2007, the Government passed the "Impresa più facile" ("Easier Business") law, which, among other provisions, will allow new businesses to be set up using a single online self-certification. There is also a plan to turn the existing Business Portal (launched in 2005) into a single point of access for all online business services within two years, allowing new businesses to register through the portal, and to provide all services to businesses using this register as a central database of company information.

While from the citizens' perspective the Italian customer service trajectory seems to have been on a downward slope since 2005, 2007 may be the year that marks a government turnaround. The new governance structures and a renewed commitment to customer service, albeit with a heavy focus on the eGovernment channel, may provide much-needed impetus to a value-led service agenda for Italy.



# Japan

**Ranking** 10th | **Latitude/Longitude** 36°N 138°E | **Capital** Tokyo  
**Population** 127.43 million people | **Land area** 374,744 sq km

Japan experienced a change of leadership in 2006, when Shinzo Abe was elected Prime Minister, but at this point, this is not expected to have much impact on the government's service agenda. The new Prime Minister is expected to follow a basic policy similar to his predecessor's—namely, to focus on fiscal consolidation and administrative reform.

In fact, the Japanese government's service approach emphasizes greater efficiency and cost reduction—perhaps even more so than better service—as a way to grapple with a persistent fiscal deficit. Therefore, the government's Legacy System Restructuring and Optimization Plan should continue to remain in a position of prominence for the foreseeable future.

While the government still has no comprehensive citizen service strategy, both the u-Japan initiative (which we described last year) and the new eGovernment Promotion Plan stress great benefits for citizens. The u-Japan initiative

continues to move forward with its plans to use IT to make a better society, develop high-value and efficient eGovernment, and create a world-leading ubiquitous society.

The eGovernment Promotion Plan, which was adopted in August 2006, seeks (among other goals) to increase the utilization rate of online applications to more than 50 percent of the population by 2010. Encouraging take-up of the efficient online channel has been a historical struggle for the Japanese government. According to our citizen survey, the use of Internet channels to contact the government increased only 2 percentage points (from 3 percent to 5 percent) from 2006 to 2007. Meanwhile, the walk-in channel remained the overwhelming choice of Japanese citizens. In fact, over the past year, use of this channel among Japanese citizens who reported making contact with the government grew from 85 percent to 96 percent.

While the Japanese government clearly intends to continue to promote online service delivery, it currently does not have an explicit plan for multi-channel service. In fact, multi-channel service delivery is the weakest of the four pillars of leadership in customer service for Japan. This should be an area of determined focus for the government: Japan should not only push for eGovernment but also develop smart channel strategies based on a deep understanding of citizens' needs and preferences. While the eGovernment channel will provide great efficiency, it will never replace other channels in other specific situations. Plans for its use must be driven by an understanding of why citizens currently use other channels and what types of services are best suited for online delivery. Only then can the Japanese government maximize its return on investment in all channels.

Interestingly, despite the fact that the government has no explicit citizen service strategy, the government of Japan enjoys among the highest citizen satisfaction of all the countries we surveyed. Japan ranked 4th in the citizen survey component of our overall rankings and is clearly on a positive service trajectory. Its citizens report that both government service and their satisfaction with government service have improved noticeably over the past three years.

What is driving this positive perception? We hypothesize that the very fact that citizens use walk-in centers so intensively has fostered a close and personal service relationship with the Japanese government. People who use walk-in centers will undoubtedly receive more tailored service through a face-to-face human connection.

In addition, the government fared very well in the proactive communications and education component of our overall rankings (4th out of 22 countries in this pillar). While we found a number of typical examples of marketing and education (media, brochures and so on), we also found some more unique examples of proactive marketing through the National Tax Agency. The NTA sponsors a weeklong, nationwide "Know-Your-Tax Week" in November every year to promote

knowledge of taxes" across a wide spectrum of the public. For example, events held during this week include round-table discussions with taxpayers—and essay competitions for high school students on the theme of tax. This type of smart approach helps build trust relationships early by developing an awareness of the social responsibility for tax compliance in citizens—even before they become taxpayers.

Japan has an interesting road ahead. The current environment of fiscal constraint could have a dampening effect on the infrastructural investments needed to move the country forward. One development to watch will be how Japan manages its workforce transformations. The Prime Minister's plan to reduce the civil service workforce by more than 19,000 over five years could have a significant impact on how citizen service is delivered and on citizens' experiences.

To effect such a change, particularly in a country where the populace currently depends heavily on walk-in centers, implies a major shift in the service model: namely, a radical increase in self-service. It is unclear how Japan will make that happen. Despite its clear desire to drive take-up of the online channel and its high scores in proactive communications, the country continues to struggle with driving people to eGovernment. With tightly controlled funds and a smaller workforce, Japan now needs to take careful stock of the outcomes it hopes to achieve to prioritize its efforts—and its resources—wisely. The Japanese government's ability to achieve its vision of "A Beautiful Country, Japan" hangs in the balance.



# Malaysia

**Ranking** 14th | **Latitude/Longitude** 2°N 112°E | **Capital** Kuala Lumpur  
**Population** 24.82 million people | **Land area** 328,550 sq km

Malaysia has embarked upon a new phase of development as it moves toward realizing its aspiration of becoming a developed nation by 2020. This next phase, which will last 15 years, will be guided by the “National Mission”—a policy and implementation framework. Within the National Mission, the Ninth Malaysia Plan represents a blueprint for the first five years of the 15-year period. As expected when we wrote last year, the Malaysian government launched this Ninth Malaysia Plan in March 2006.

The Ninth Malaysia Plan identifies five key thrusts for the country, roughly: moving the economy up the value chain, raising the capacity for knowledge and innovation, addressing persistent socioeconomic inequalities; improving the quality of life; and strengthening institutional and implementation capacity. This last objective includes enhancing the public service delivery system. Under the Ninth Malaysia Plan, ICT will be leveraged to enhance access to and delivery of government services, and by 2010, a key performance indicators (KPI) system will be implemented to monitor

and measure performance of public service delivery mechanisms in most agencies. Service performance of agencies and ministries also will be monitored through a number of systems, including the Biro Pengaduan Awam (Public Complaints Bureau), an agency which has been given a more proactive role in managing feedback and complaints from the public on public service delivery performance.

Clearly, the citizen's voice is playing a more prominent role in shaping service delivery in Malaysia. In early 2007, the Malaysian Administrative Modernization and Management Planning Unit (MAMPU) invited all Malaysians to submit proposals or suggest improvements that could be implemented in the short, medium and long term in order to improve the public service delivery system. Initially, this public input effort will be confined to the Klang Valley, before it is expanded to cover the whole country.

The government made a noticeable jump in our overall customer service rankings from 2005, moving from 19th to 14th out of 22 countries. Its strongest showing

came in the area of cross-government collaboration, where the country ranked 7th overall. The Malaysian government's performance in terms of cross-government collaboration is a reflection at least in part of the growing popularity of the public service portal MyGovernment, which was launched in February 2005. MyGovernment continues to grow and now connects more than 900 websites across federal, state and local authorities. The portal received more than a million visitors in 2006. The government actively promotes MyGovernment through various means, including a national radio and print advertising campaign throughout January 2007.

Apart from MyGovernment, we found a number of innovative developments in other channels. For example, the government's Halal Portal is now also offered through SMS. Now, when consumers question the halal status of a particular product, they can confirm the status for a small fee through SMS.

Last year we highlighted the advantage the Malaysian government had in introducing citizen-centric services thanks to MyKad, the country's national ID card. In fact, we continue to see innovative services introduced on the back of MyKad. For example, by mid-2007, passport kiosks at the Immigration Department should enable citizens to apply for their passport by entering their MyKad details at the kiosk and then go the next day to collect their passports. The aim of this service is not only to erase the need to produce documents such as a birth certificate when applying or renewing passports, but in fact, the need to go through long waits for in-person applications. Addition of this service to passports adds additional convenience to an already strong area of service—Malaysia was one of the first countries in Asia to introduce passports with embedded smart chips that allow travelers to clear customs in as little as 10 seconds.

Proactive communications and education also seems a relative strength for Malaysia; 60 percent of Malaysians said they feel well informed about the range of services their government offers and how to access them. In this area, too, we found

some very interesting examples, including "Meet-the-Customer Days," an ongoing initiative by public agencies. On Meet-the-Customer Days, government agencies throughout Malaysia hold public events that build awareness by sharing the latest information about the government's nation-building programs as well as explaining the government's policies to the people. Members of the public who come to the event are given the chance to air their grievances to the relevant agencies so that a solution can be worked out.

Meet-the-Customer Days provide an excellent example of government building trust through customer service, and the spirit of the initiative is one the Malaysian government should try and replicate elsewhere. As the government continues to invest in leading-edge channels, it will do well to focus considerable attention on the face-to-face service interactions that citizens desire. Out of all the 22 countries we surveyed, Malaysians were second only to Italians in their preference for using the in-person channel for their government interactions. The in-person channel was also ranked as a priority for investment by a plurality of Malaysian citizens (33 percent). Clearly, even as Malaysia focuses on its vision of becoming a high-tech-empowered nation, it must not lose sight of the human element.

Malaysia is a country on the move. In fact, in our citizen survey, 69 percent of Malaysian citizens believe service has improved in their country relative to three years ago, a percentage second only to Singapore's 79 percent. To further develop as a leader in customer service, Malaysia needs to continue to work on building customer insight—developing a deeper picture of its citizens' wants and needs and the motivations behind their service behaviors. Then, as the country makes its long-term investments, it will be equipped to develop a program that strikes the right balance between high-quality, highly accessible service and cost to create optimum public service value.



# Netherlands

**Ranking** 13th | **Latitude/Longitude** 52°N 5°E | **Capital** Amsterdam  
**Population** 16.57 million people | **Land area** 33,883 sq km

The Netherlands moved back in our rankings from 2005 to 2007. Some of this movement we attribute to last year's notably slow progress: The Dutch modernization agenda has been sidelined somewhat since 2006, due to the collapse of the coalition government in June after one of the coalition partners, D66 (Democrats '66), withdrew its support from the cabinet. An early general election held in November 2006 resulted in a coalition of CDA, (Christian Democrats), PvdA (socialists) and ChristenUnie (a smaller Christian religion-based party), which was presented in February 2007.

Despite the changes in the government, we found no change of strategic direction for the Netherlands' customer service program. The two key overarching programs that address the issue of providing better services to citizens are continuing: Actieprogramma Andere Overheid (Action Program for a Different [Better] Government), which we have described in past reports, and "Acties Voor Nederland in

Verbinding, Vervolg rijksbrede ICT agenda 2006-2007" (Actions for the Connected Netherlands, Sequel to the Nationwide ICT Agenda).

The Andere Overheid program is scheduled to end in 2007, likely with its key targets reached (for example, having 65 percent of all services at all levels of government available online). The Nationwide ICT Agenda is renewed every year, and the latest iteration continues the focus on topics such as encouraging the government and the private sector to make more use of ICT, increasing broadband penetration and adopting open standards to allow greater interagency data sharing (including the goal of once-only information provision for businesses and citizens). The exact current state of these two initiatives is somewhat unclear; as of this writing, specific targets, timelines and progress reports had last been published prior to the government collapse.

Last year we described the DigiD three-tiered authentication service as a key enabler of greater cross-government collaboration and integration in service provision. In fact, the DigiD electronic authentication service has progressed. Expectations are that 4 million citizens will have a DigiD by April 2007, as the tax authority calls for their use for online tax return filing. Next up in 2007 may be an electronic identity card (eNIK), possibly with biometric characteristics, which could be used as a general means of identification, as a European travel document, and as a tool for on-line applications based on PKI.

Another key enabler of cross-government collaboration will be the unique personal identifier, called the Burger Service Nummer (Citizen Service Number), which will be implemented in 2007, one year later than was envisioned. The Dutch government hopes by 2010 to have citizens use this number at every digital and physical desk within the public sector to allow personal data to be exchanged effectively and securely between government agencies and between government and citizens. The government has also progressed building central data registries (for example, citizens' addresses and personal details, businesses details, car registrations and so on to support the information-once principle).

In an example of cross-government collaboration in action, the Netherlands launched its eForms program. The goal is to allow citizens and businesses to complete forms online using a single set of questions that suffice to serve a number of information chains. Users will be able to reuse their old data, and the organizations in the information chain will be able to pre-enter the information already known to them on the eForm.

Overall, the Dutch government has pursued a number of notable initiatives to promote greater citizen-centricity in service. For example, in January 2006, the government started the Personal Internet Page program. This personal web domain for citizens and entrepreneurs enables access to government information

and services, tailored to their needs (according to their profile), and through which they will have to provide personal information only once. The government hopes to avoid repeating the lessons of the early days of eGovernment, of rushing simply to make services available: The service will be piloted by a certain number of government agencies and users, to better understand the user experience and challenges and to build that understanding into an appealing service concept.

Last year we reported that the Dutch government did not have a coordinated multichannel strategy. Since then, however, the government has initiated a program called Contact Center Overheid (CCO). The CCO program team oversees Antwoord (Answer), the Customer Contact Center based in the municipalities, which serves as a front office for the whole of government. The CCO program should end in 2015; by then, the target is to have 80 percent of all questions answered in the first contact, with consistent service regardless of the channel.

What is interesting about the Answer approach is that rather than develop one central government-wide contact center, the Dutch government gives responsibility to the local level, providing municipalities with what they need to organize a multi-channel contact center. The Answer service is being piloted in 10 cities, with Amsterdam being the first city to implement a central phone number with the "14" prefix. The service will be implemented in a phased approach, but gradually the front offices will be integrated across channels and service areas and, eventually, across all levels of government.

Looking to the future of leadership in customer service, the Netherlands is in an interesting position. Clearly, the government enjoys the high expectations of its citizens: In our survey, Dutch citizens strongly felt service had improved relative to three years ago and they were satisfied with their service experience. However, we see some disparity between citizens' high expectations and the progress being made. In our view, the Dutch government needs to reignite its momentum or risk eroding

the positive perceptions it has built over time. Likewise, the government needs to ensure it does not lose the balance between excellent service (its laudable "no wrong door" philosophy) and cost. Otherwise, it risks undermining its ability to deliver true public service value over time.



# Norway

**Ranking** 6th | **Latitude/Longitude** 62°N 10°E | **Capital** Oslo  
**Population** 4.62 million people | **Land area** 307,442 sq km

In 2006, we anticipated that a change in Norway's leading party could affect priorities and time lines for the country's service agenda. In fact, that is what happened during 2006. The Modernization for Welfare action plan for 2005–2009 of the previous government was invalidated, and a new modernization plan is in the works, with an expected release later in 2007.

The expected targets of the new plan should support the aims of the Soria Moria Policy Declaration (which outlines the policies of the left-wing coalition government). The emphasis will be on increasing welfare and decreasing administration, to increase local freedom and decrease micromanagement and will include (among other things) a renewed focus on digitizing public services, increasing quality of services provided by municipalities and enhancing collaboration across government. As Norway moves to this model, it seems natural that a service ecosystem will evolve.

This evolution will be important for the government's service agenda because for now, cross-government collaboration is one of Norway's weaker areas. While the government ranked 6th overall, it ranked 10th in the cross-government collaboration pillar. In addition, in terms of citizen voice scores alone, Norway ranked 19th out of 22 countries for cross-government collaboration. A number of other studies, including studies from the Organization for Economic and Cooperative Development, show that Norway must develop a more committed coordination between public-sector players.

The eNorway 2009 plan addresses this issue as one of three main target areas (to improve digital coordination between public-sector agencies across levels of administration). In addition, the Minister of Government Administration and Reform stresses in her speeches that increased collaboration must happen. Currently complicating the issue is a setback on the security and electronic

ID fronts. In June 2006, the recently established security portal (which had been launched only six months earlier) had to be abandoned, as the proposed business model was unacceptable to the eID suppliers. Now, the Ministry of Government Administration and Reform, in cooperation with main departments and the Norwegian Association of Local and Regional Authorities, is working to develop a new strategy for eID and eSignature in the public sector. However, this solution is not expected until 2008.

Despite the work yet to be done, we still found several interesting examples of cross-government collaboration for value-led service. For example, the Central Coordinating Register for Legal Entities coordinates information on businesses that resides in various public registers, and which is frequently requested on questionnaires from public authorities. Instead of having each public authority send its own separate form for a company to answer, the Central Coordinating Register for Legal Entities ensures that all the information is collected in one place. Electronic forms for B2G interactions can then be pre-populated with this basic data.

Another way Norway is offering joined-up services is by merging related government agencies. For example, in July 2006, the government created NAV, a new combined Labor and Welfare Organization, by combining three separate organizations at two different levels: the National Insurance Organization (national), the National Employment Service (national), and the Social Welfare System (municipal). During fall 2006, a total of 25 local NAV offices opened, with 110 NAV offices expected in 2007. By 2010 there will be a NAV office in every municipality. Self-service via the Internet and the phone is a high priority to free up resources for citizens with more extensive or complex problems.

Perhaps not surprisingly, Norway scored quite well in the multi-channel pillar scores of our rankings, placing third overall in this area. We attribute a good measure of Norway's performance to the popular AltInn (for businesses) and MyPage

(for citizens) portals. AltInn continues to improve, with 19 Norwegian departments delivering services to businesses as of December 2006. MyPage, which experienced some delays last year, finally launched in December 2006. This multi-language online electronic public service office allows the general public to access services from six government agencies and 23 municipalities electronically, based on a personal web page with a secure logon. Already, citizens can change their public health doctor, apply for kindergarten, report a new home address, change their tax deduction card, order a health insurance card and apply for a fixed interest rate on student loans. More services will be made available over time. According to eNorway 2009, all relevant state and local services should be available on MyPage by 2009. The portal is already proving popular; only three weeks after the launch, more than 100,000 citizens had used it. The MyPage project was introduced through cooperation between several government agencies and institutions, led by the Ministry of Government Administration and Reform.

Norway is in a strong position to create a future of customer service that leads to true public service value. Already, citizens perceive service to have improved over the past three years, and are highly satisfied. Overall, the country ranks 5th in the citizen voice component of our rankings. Now Norway should build on the strengths of its considerable citizen-centricity and economic prosperity to develop a strong vision for a modern customer service experience. The government must clearly define the ideal shape service should take for it to help government to achieve its desired outcomes and the greatest return on its service investment. Greater emphasis on interoperability across government (perhaps through more explicit reliance on service-oriented architectures) and multi-channel delivery (not just from the perspective of many channels but through the deep integration of these channels) will combat the current weaknesses in citizens' customer experience.



## Poland

**Ranking** 21st | **Latitude/Longitude** 52°N 20°E | **Capital** Warsaw  
**Population** 38.51 million people | **Land area** 304,465 sq km

In this, the first year Accenture has included Poland in our *Leadership in Customer Service* research, we see the country has considerable work to do to mature its customer service program. The country seems to still be at the early stages of implementing eGovernment services, rather than having moved into a mode of developing integrated, multi-channel, cross-agency, customer-centric services. The country's uncertain political environment, marked by recent restructuring and several government crises, may hinder its ability to make quick progress.

Poland's eGovernment strategy was originally established in the document "Wrota Polski" ("Gateway to Poland"), published in December 2002. This document announced the creation of an integrated national information system to support the provision of electronic public services. The strategy states that public administrations will provide services using new telecommunication and IT technologies, with the principle objective being to enable citizens to conduct their everyday affairs using the Internet, without going to a government office.

Although responsibility for developing the Polish national eGovernment policy/strategy and for overseeing its implementation lies with the Ministry of Interior and Administration, individual departments and agencies are responsible for departmental eGovernment projects. Regional strategies for eGovernment services are designed at the regional level, in accordance with the national strategy.

The Polish government plans to complete ePUAP (Elektroniczna Platforma Usług Administracji Publicznej), its program to implement the underlying technology platform to support eGovernment, in 2008. The aim is to have a single consistent interface for electronic government services. The implementation will start with Internet access, but according to the general guidelines will allow for implementation of other channels (WAP, SMS, etc.).

In addition to implementing the underlying technology platform, the Polish government is focusing on increasing the number of government services available online. For example, it is aiming to make it possible for all Polish taxpayers to submit their tax

declarations electronically by 2012. Clearly, increasing the government's online presence is an important goal; in terms of their service maturity (SM) and customer service maturity (CSM) scores alone, Poland ranked 22nd out of the 22 countries we surveyed. However, we caution that this objective must not be viewed in isolation, but rather be treated as one component of a broader-based strategy built on delivering greater public service value through leadership in customer service in every channel.

For now, the Polish government seems to have little focus on joining up services across channels, although we did see some channel integration at the local level. For example, in Warsaw and Poznan, citizens can provide data for forms via the Internet. The local authorities then contact them by phone to arrange a visit and conclude the matters in person.

Also at the local level, we found evidence of efforts to improve and standardize service provision at walk-in centers in some of the major cities. For example, the City of Warsaw has been reorganizing its citizen service offices – opening them in convenient locations, increasing the hours they're open and so on.

While the eventual aim of ePUAP is to provide a common framework for integrating various government IT systems, currently Poland does not have a robust strategy for fostering cross-government collaboration. It does, however, have some valuable enablers already in place. For example, the PESEL number (an 11-digit number that is used to register all Polish citizens and residents) already works as a unique identifier in Poland: the PESEL number is used on all official forms, is printed on the national ID card and driving license, and is used in computer systems as an identifier.

In addition, Poland has pushed creation of a one-stop service for setting up a new business to the top of its service agenda. Meeting the imperatives of the European Services Directive has spurred this "Single Visit" initiative. While the owner of a new business currently has to visit different offices at multiple levels of government (such as municipal, tax and social security),

in the future, the entrepreneur would be able to take care of all these matters in a single office, using a single form. The program's preliminary implementation date is October 2007.

Poland has some catching up to do as it looks to the future of government customer service. However, the government should look at its current state as a real opportunity. While it never developed a fully mature eGovernment presence, it can avoid the situation of many leading countries by developing a citizen-centric customer service program that builds in an integrated multi-channel, cross-government philosophy. The government should develop its program with this philosophy right from the start. That means developing a vision from the perspective of increasing public service value and then designing the appropriate service strategies—and the policies, infrastructures and workforce to go with them—that will contribute to achieving the societal outcomes Poland hopes to achieve.



# Portugal

**Ranking** 16th | **Latitude/Longitude** 39°N 8°W | **Capital** Lisbon  
**Population** 10.64 million people | **Land area** 91,951 sq km

Portugal has faced some challenges as it has tried to develop a robust program of citizen-centric customer service. Particularly in the era of eGovernment, Portugal, with its low Internet penetration and culture that favors face-to-face contact, struggled somewhat to find its footing. In 2006, however, we found evidence of the government making some headway, with quiet background changes that could translate into significant progress over the next few years. In fact, Portugal did move up in our overall customer service rankings from 2005 to 2007.

Modernizing public administration is very much on the agenda, as the Portuguese government looks for ways to pursue economic growth, make Portugal more competitive and improve services to citizens and businesses even as it attempts to reduce a significant public budget deficit. To achieve its objectives, the government has created a new agency to act as the implementation arm of the Coordination Unit of Administration Modernization (UCMA). The creation of the

Agency for Administration Modernization (AMA) is perhaps the most significant change in Portugal's service program from last year. The AMA will centrally manage various customer service initiatives (such as eGovernment initiatives, citizen service delivery models and so on) that had previously been handled by diverse institutions. In this way, the agency will develop an integrated approach to public service delivery, from understanding citizen and business needs, to promoting implementation of multi-channel services and harmonizing business processes and systems interoperability across ministries.

The two key strategic plans we described last year—the Technological Plan (for Growth Towards a Knowledge Society) and the Connecting Portugal plan—are still in progress. The main focus of these plans is connectivity/accessibility: to connect Portuguese citizens, whether at home or in public spaces. Connecting Portugal in particular plans, through increased collaboration and integration, to simplify and improve public services provided to citizens and companies.

UCMA has kicked off a new initiative called Simplex that is designed to simplify the public administration (including efforts to reduce bureaucracy in existing processes) and implement new delivery mechanisms, such as one-stop citizen service centers ("Balcão Único," which we described last year) and increase the use of online channels. The Portuguese government has prioritized greater integration and simplification within physical contact centers themselves, before tackling the phone and online channels. Apart from traditional vertical specialized networks, in-person services are currently delivered via single "department store"-style centers, where agencies only share the same physical location but have separate desks, advisors and systems. Under the new Simplex plan, however, the government has set June 2007 as its target date for implementing a single desk for all document renewals. The eventual aim is to have one-stop shop access to a greater range of services via a single desk within these walk-in centers. Eventually, these one-stop shops may provide access to services at the local as well as the national level.

Overall, the Simplex 2007 plan sets out 235 individual measures for improvement; however, the responsibility for implementation lies with individual government departments.

Portugal continues to prioritize the in-person channel for citizen services, and much effort goes into innovative approaches to making this channel faster and more efficient. In fact, according to our citizen survey, Portuguese citizens' use of walk-in centers jumped dramatically from 2006 to 2007 (from 57 to 75 percent). However, the government has also committed to improving the National Citizen's Portal and to developing transactional services that offer a consistent level of service across different channels. The Citizen's Portal now offers more than 800 citizen-oriented services, some of which are also supported by SMS, and access through WAP protocol by mobile phones and PDAs. Growth has been slow, but is improving: Currently, more than half a million users access the portal on a regular basis, with 3 million page

views per month (up from 2 million last year). Two ongoing initiatives, however, should soon enable a faster growth of transactional and more complex online services. The first one is the new national citizen card, with integrated digital certificates, that is already being deployed in a pilot region (Azores) and should be spread countrywide until the end of 2008. The second one is the interoperability framework, already piloted for the citizen card system, which should be a central component of all cross-agency eGovernment services.

To continue to drive take-up of the Internet (a true challenge for the government in the past), the Portuguese government continues to develop Public Internet Spaces (providing free access to multimedia computers and the Internet to all citizens nationwide). Since our last report, the number of these Public Internet spaces has grown from 260 to more than 600, and the government expects to have more than 1,000 operating by the end of 2007. In all of these centers, trained staff is available to help inexperienced users access services. Developments such as these will be important for Portugal as it develops the smart channel strategies that will deliver the greatest public service value; in fact, despite their current preference for face-to-face interaction, our citizen survey indicates that Portuguese citizens consider the Internet to be at least as big a priority for investment as the walk-in channel.

The Portuguese government has been paying significant attention to improving business services as well. In last year's report, we mentioned the "Empresa na Hora" initiative (launched in July 2005), which is a one-stop shop service for setting up a business. As of this writing, more than 17,400 firms have been set up using the service, with an average creation time of only 74 minutes. Until recently, this service had been provided via the in-person channel, due to the need for identity and authentication. However, in July 2006, the Portuguese government launched the Enterprise Portal with a pilot online service that allows new firms to be set up online. Between July 2006 and January 2007, 165 new firms were set

up online. Once all citizens have their citizen cards with integrated digital certificates, it is envisaged that any kind of business will be able to be set up using the online service. The service will also be available for the third sector: nonprofit associations, cooperatives and nongovernmental organizations. Other important one-stop shops have recently gone live, such as trademarks applications and single documentation for automobiles.

Portugal's path toward value-led customer service seems to be more self-assured than in the past. While the changes the government is making now are quiet and perhaps have not become apparent yet to its citizens, the government seems to have gotten some important fundamentals right. Importantly, Portugal has identified a direction for service that should work well within its particular cultural context, and we will watch its progress toward leadership in customer service with interest.



# Singapore

**Ranking** 1st | **Latitude/Longitude** 1°N 103°E | **Capital** Singapore  
**Population** 4.49 million people | **Land area** 683 sq km

Singapore leads our customer service rankings this year thanks to a strong combination of an innovative customer-centric vision and entrepreneurial attitude backed by an aggressive approach to implementation. Over the past year, Singapore's eGovernment Action Plan II (eGap II) came to its natural conclusion, and Singapore launched new strategies and plans that should only strengthen the government's leadership in customer service.

For example, the Infocomm Development Authority of Singapore launched Intelligent Nation 2015 (iN2015, or "in twenty fifteen") a national infocomm masterplan for Singapore. A key component in iN2015 is the Next Generation Infocomm Infrastructure (NII). NII focuses on delivering both wired and wireless broadband across the country with the ultimate goal of a pervasive, nationwide wireless broadband network. This infrastructure will "enable a floodgate

of exciting new broadband-enabled services and applications" across seven key economic sectors in Singapore, including government.

An integral component of iN2015 is iGov2010, which launched in May 2006. This \$2 billion, five-year master plan aims to achieve a higher level of public service by harnessing IT to further simplify, standardize and gain synergies across government processes to accomplish an integrated government. iGov2010 represents an evolutionary step in the country's eGovernment strategy by shifting the focus from integrating services to integrating government—transcending organizational structures to create value for citizens and businesses.

Heavy engagement with the 3P (Public, Private and People) sectors fed into the development of these iN2015 and iGov2010 strategies, to create greater ownership of the initiatives and ensure that the needs of all three sectors have

been taken into consideration. Interestingly, ideas from students were also sought, as they represent the future workforce. Singapore ranked in the top five of all four pillars of leadership in customer service that we measured and we found many noteworthy examples of these pillars in action. For example, from a cross-government perspective, we found extensive collaboration weighted in both the front and back ends of customer service. On the front end, EnterpriseOne offers information and services from 30 government agencies, as well as industry knowledge and expertise from its partnerships with key business associations and chambers of commerce. On the citizen side, the MyeCitizen portal was upgraded in 2006 to offer both private- and public-sector services and content along different "lifestyle" channels that subscribers can personalize, such as family, recreation, travel and finance. In another example, the EventsHub, launched in June 2006, provides members of the public with a single portal where they can search and register for events and activities offered by the Public, the Private and People sectors (3PI project). All agencies of the Singaporean government are expected to participate by December 2007. Overall, the government has implemented a number of initiatives to standardize government websites to reinforce the concept of "many agencies, one government."

On the back end, the Singaporean government has made an enterprise architecture called SGEA a strategic thrust of iGov2010. SGEA offers a blueprint for identifying potential business areas for interagency collaboration as well as technology, data and application standards to facilitate the sharing of information and systems across agencies. The government also continues work on a National Authentication Framework to provide a common, consistent and secure online access experience. From an internal efficiency through collaboration perspective, the government launched Vital.org in April 2006. This shared services center delivers selected human resource and

finance processing activities to government agencies. The Singaporean government also continues to look for opportunities for back-end inter-agency collaboration in knowledge sharing.

While Singapore exhibits strength in multichannel integration, its clear intent is to continue to push its tech-savvy citizens toward efficient online channels, particularly mobile channels. Singapore has one of the world's highest mobile penetration rates; currently citizens and businesses have mobile access to approximately 150 government services, with mGovernment becoming an increasingly important delivery channel. The government aims to have at least 300 mGovernment services available by 2008. In addition, in July of 2006, the government also introduced a common SMS number 74688 (SGOVT) and format for new SMS-based government mobile services, to simplify use for customers. Future service channel options may include voice recognition and interactive TV—both of which the government has recently piloted.

Singapore continues to impress with its innovative approach to proactive communications and education. The government scored notably higher than all other countries in this pillar of our rankings. Not surprisingly, we found some extremely interesting examples of the government taking marketing to entirely new levels. One such example is iWhiz, a reality game show launched by the IDA (in cooperation with the Institutes of Higher Learning and industry players). The show airs in prime-time and features contestants competing on teams to solve 10 infocomm-related challenges. The winner of the challenge wins an all-expenses one-week paid trip to Microsoft's headquarters in Redmond, Washington. The iWhiz show promotes knowledge of technology as fun and exciting and boosts the government's efforts to attract talent to the infocomm industry. Ultimately, the goal is to ensure the country has the talent pool to reach its vision of iN2015.

Singapore continues to be a world leader in developing customer service to effect larger societal goals. The government succeeds because it takes a frank look at what it needs to do to accomplish its visionary objectives and then sets to work implementing targeted projects without fear of change. Singapore is on a positive path to high performance through leadership in customer service. Our citizen survey shows that its citizens overwhelmingly believe its service has improved even relative to three years ago. As the government looks to its future of customer service, it should continue the holistic approach that is already yielding great dividends: developing a truly customer-centric vision, aligning the enabling elements of that vision and then continuing to renew its approach to continue to provide public service value, even as overarching needs and priorities change.



## South Africa

**Ranking** 22nd | **Latitude/Longitude** 29°S 24°E | **Capital** Pretoria  
**Population** 43.99 million people | **Land area** 1,219,912 sq km

We saw little change in South Africa's customer service agenda over the past year. In general, the government continues to approach customer service in an ad hoc rather than a holistic fashion. Internally focused organizational structures (including governance structures, policies and procedures) render service delivery inconvenient for customers and the impact is reflected in its citizens' perceptions of an unsatisfactory service experience.

The Batho Pele ("People First") strategy we reported on last year continues (driven by the Department of Public Service and Administration). Its goal is to eventually cascade elements of the strategy to the local government level. Some of the more important initiatives of Batho Pele during the past year include development of the Access Strategy 2014, the framework for a smart channel strategy that maps how to deliver the right services through the right channels and also prioritizes areas of investment. Access Strategy 2014 was expected to be released in November 2006, but we were not able to find many publicly available details. Also on the table from Batho Pele are plans to implement

the second-generation strategy of multipurpose community centers (MPCCs).

As of December 2006, 88 MPCCs were in operation. The plan is that by the end of 2014, 284 more MPCCs will be open, so that each municipality will have its own one-stop government hub. Besides hosting different government services (through the General Service Counter, or GSC), MPCCs also provide a space for the community to engage in various other activities, and so at their best, they represent social ecosystems in action.

Because of some fundamental infrastructural challenges, multichannel access to government services continues to be a weakness for the South African government, which ranked 22nd in this pillar. While the Batho Pele Gateway Portal gives access to a wide range of government information and services, most services are still at the published information level only; ultimately, users must click through to the relevant department's website, rather than completing a service on the portal itself. The next phase of the Batho Pele Gateway is to move from published

information to transactional services; however, how the government intends to make this move is unclear, since the strategy for Phase II implementation is still in draft form.

Given its population's relatively low Internet connectivity, however, traditional eGovernment will likely never be the cornerstone of a successful service delivery strategy. The South African government needs to understand the significant importance of introducing government services via alternate channels, particularly mobile technologies. Its cell phone penetration is remarkably high, and this continues to be a promising avenue for the country (as highlighted in the section, "A showcase of government entrepreneurship").

For now, the government has expended some effort in installing kiosks in strategic locations for improved access. In addition to the GSC counters at MPCC's, citizens can also access online government information and services via Post Internet Terminals at post offices. The South African Revenue Service offices also provide kiosks through which citizens/businesses can file tax returns and make payments electronically.

In terms of the telephone channel, the Batho Pele Gateway Call Center was set up to provide a single entry point to government through a toll-free number. So far, however, only a limited number of departments are linked to the number. What seems to be happening is that other call centers with varying degrees of integration are becoming more widespread. For example, on an agency level, the South African Revenue Service has a national call center. At more local levels of government, the City of Johannesburg has a call center that can route requests to the appropriate agency, and the Cape Gateway provides citizens with access to government information through both walk-in centers and a call center.

Cross-government collaboration also appears to be working more on an ad hoc basis in South Africa rather than through a coordinated strategy. Officially, the national government delivers services in clusters. The "Reducing Red Tape Initiative" also encourages cross-agency and cross-government collaboration, but it has not

produced many tangible results to date. However, we found some interesting individual examples of the type of cross-government collaboration that could characterize true leadership in customer service for the country in the future.

For instance, the Centre for Public Service Innovation is currently establishing an eGovernment Knowledge Exchange (eGov KnowEx). The need for the eGov KnowEx arose from a growing realization among government officials involved in eGovernment that current learning and knowledge-sharing activities (such as conferences, and so on) do not adequately meet their capacity-building and knowledge requirements. The intention of the eGov KnowEx is to provide an integrated multi-channel knowledge sharing and learning system that will build capacity and enhance eGovernment strategy.

One potentially high-impact development with regard to creating a true service ecosystem in South Africa is the Protection of Personal Information Bill, which deals with data privacy and information protection in the public and private sectors, and is expected to become law this year. This bill is intended to become comprehensive legislation that, for the first time, will take the right of privacy in South Africa beyond the realm of common law and into the constitution.

South Africa continues to wrangle with the many elements of developing a citizen-centered customer service program that delivers true public service value. While we find laudable objectives, these have been in place for some time, and we also find little evidence of progress from year to year. Citizens feel the effects; our citizen survey shows that South Africans do not perceive service to have improved in the past three years and that they are highly dissatisfied with the service they currently receive. In this regard, South Africa seems a more extreme example of a country struggling with the challenges we have seen many governments face—developing a holistic, cross-government vision of service that will truly meet citizens' needs and intentions and then closing the gap between vision and implementation so that the government delivers on the promise of leadership in customer service.



## Spain

**Ranking** 19th | **Latitude/Longitude** 40°N 4°W | **Capital** Madrid  
**Population** 40.44 million people | **Land area** 499,542 sq km

In 2006, we commented on the many innovative infrastructural changes Spain had in development to push the government toward a future of value-led customer service. This year, we continue to see progress being made, despite the fact that the government slipped somewhat in our overall rankings.

Spain's two-year Plan Moderniza (described last year), which consists of 16 public administration modernization measures aimed at modernizing regional government (including restructuring and streamlining regional administrations); modernizing the IT and simplifying the administration of the central government; and increasing transparency and participation (including creating intra-agency networks), is now approximately half-way toward completion.

Among the concrete steps already undertaken through the Plan Moderniza, the "Network 060" continues to be a flagship program and is a fine example of cross-government/multi-channel coordination with citizen-centricity at its core. For example, a citizen in Seville may

access public services offered by the City of Seville, the Region of Andalusia or the national government via a single 060 walk-in office, the 060 phone number or the [www.060.es](http://www.060.es) portal, which launched in June 2006. To date, the integrated network of offices across 17 cities provides more than 2,800 information points to citizens, and the unified 060 phone number has consolidated the services of more than 1,000 public service phone numbers into one number. In addition, mobile phone services and digital TV services are due to be implemented in 2007.

Uptake of Network 060 has been very encouraging: In the first month, the 060 website received 55,000 unique visitors in 110,000 visits and the 060 phone number received 102,840 calls (36 percent more than expected). In September 2006, the number of calls totaled 220,000.

SARA, the IT infrastructure that enables Network 060 and underpins the whole eAdministration is a standard platform via which all administrations will be connected, allowing them to share data and collaborate. Regional governments have embraced

SARA quickly. The Spanish government launched SARA in February 2006, and as of November, 13 of Spain's 17 autonomous communities had connected to the network, with the remaining four piloting the system. In May 2006, Computerworld España estimated that when SARA is working at 100 percent, it will produce savings of €150 million, about 100 tons of paper and an immeasurable amount of time and transactions. The Spanish government plans for SARA to enable greater collaboration and interoperability, not only down from the national to lower levels of government within Spain, but also up – to the European Union TESTA network.

In January 2007, Spain established a central electronic registry database to hold citizens' identification data, which other central government agencies can consult (with the citizen's permission) to verify their identity, rather than needing to request copies of identity documents (national ID cards and census certificates) from the citizen for each new registration. This important service is expected to save citizens more than 7 million hours of transaction with the central administration per year and, ultimately, eliminate the need to present more than 4 million national ID photocopies and 3.5 million census certificates to the central government yearly.

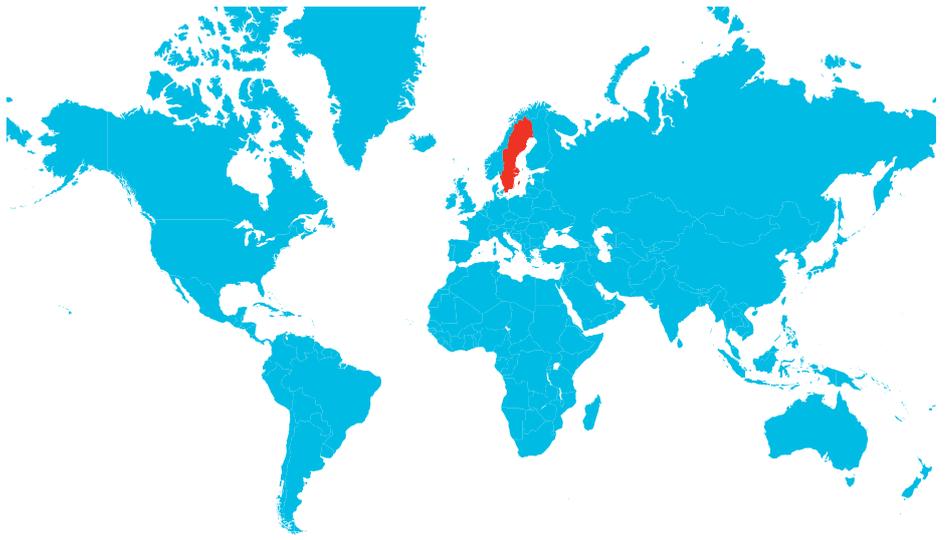
Plan Avanza continues as another key component of the Spanish government's strategy to foster an information society and catch up with the rest of Europe. Its initiatives focus on driving ICT sector development and ICT adoption by small and medium enterprises to promote their competitiveness in the increasingly global marketplace.

For citizens, the Spanish government has drafted a new Electronic Administration Law, which is currently being debated in parliament (having been approved by the Council of Ministers in December 2006). The law will provide citizens extensive rights to conduct business with the government electronically. A €6 billion investment is being proposed for the program, which is being driven by the Ministry of Public Administration and should be completed by 2013. The financial benefits are expected to be tremendous.

Once the new Electronic Administration Law becomes official, the government estimates it will save between €54.4–€82.3 million within the first five years of implementation (2008-2013), or an average of between €9 million to €13.7 million per year.

Spaniards continue to feel underinformed about the services their government provides. In fact, from the citizens' perspective, Spain's efforts at proactive communication and education, one of the four pillars of leadership in customer service, continues to be weak. In the citizen voice component of our ranking for this pillar, Spain scored third lowest overall. Hopefully, these perceptions will change soon: The Spanish government is investing heavily in advertising and promoting its soon-to-be-launched national eID card, as well as the new Network 060 contact centers. The public information campaign for the eID card has a budget of €50 million until 2008, while the advertising contract for the Network 060 initiative is worth €3 million. In addition, the government, through the Red.es portal, is providing hands-on training to citizens, showing them how to use their eID card to access online services. In addition, the government has made a priority of general IT education and training as part of the Avanza Plan, to promote the adoption and use of Internet technologies.

Spain's back-end improvements, many of which are still in early stages, have yet to translate into positive improvements in citizen perceptions. However, we fully expect that as these smart fundamental improvements take root over the next few years, they will begin to yield both positive changes in Spain's relationship with its citizens and in its position as a European Union innovator that the Spanish government hopes to achieve.



## Sweden

**Ranking** 5th | **Latitude/Longitude** 62°N 15°E | **Capital** Stockholm  
**Population** 9.03 million people | **Land area** 410,934 sq km

Sweden was one of the countries whose position in our rankings benefited strongly from a positive citizen perception. Overall, Sweden scored second in the citizen voice component of our scoring, performing particularly well in the citizen-centricity pillar.

The government itself underwent a notable change in 2006. In the September elections, a four-party coalition government (headed by the Moderate party) replaced 12 years of Social Democratic rule. This turnover is not expected to signal a radical change in politics, but it may impact the government's service agenda. While the new government agrees with the current strategy (introduced by the former government in June 2006), called the Strategy for the Continuous Development of an Electronic Public Administration, it nevertheless has decided to create more explicit, measurable targets and to more clearly define who is responsible for what.

In addition, the Swedish government plans to implement processes for measuring progress in all areas of the development of the public administration, and has also

pushed to accelerate some of the explicit targets from the original strategy, such as having all central government agencies use electronic invoicing by July 2008, instead of 2009. To reach these targets, the government has created a forum of State Secretaries from the six most relevant ministries. This group, led by Dan Ericsson, State Secretary at the Ministry of Finance, will create the new action plan. As of this writing, the new targets were expected to be unveiled in the spring of 2007.

The new government is also looking at introducing new types of financial incentives for agencies that develop electronic services, allowing the agencies themselves to retain the savings they realize from more efficient service delivery. This should motivate modernization at the individual agency level.

Because the Swedish government is highly decentralized and individual agencies are very independent, guidelines will likely remain the approach for the country's future service development. Last year, we described Verva (the Swedish Administrative Development Agency),

which came into being in January 2006 and whose main task is to work for a connected and more efficient public administration. To date, Verva has issued a number of guidelines (such as on multichannel coordination, for example) and although the agencies are under no obligation to follow them, many national, regional and local administrations do in fact use them.

The current Swedish service strategy does not include any detailed plans for a government-wide call-center; however, the issue has been discussed in relation to a more coordinated public administration. In addition, while the Swedish government does not seem to have an explicit strategy for developing its local walk-in services, in its first budget, the new government indicated that the issue is on the agenda—mainly as a way to better serve people in sparsely populated areas. An interesting footnote is that in the 1980s, Swedish municipalities experimented with government walk-in offices without much success, mainly due to issues of ceding decision-making power to the local agencies. Whether the lessons of that era will inform future attempts remains to be seen.

Certainly, one of the central themes of the current strategy is that cross-government collaboration must increase. For example, "one case-one contact" is one of three guiding principles in the current service strategy, and the government emphasizes that this type of service requires the public administration to collaborate and exchange information in a safe way that respects the integrity of the citizen. Likely steps to encourage collaboration include the review of, and potential changes to, existing legislation and new types of financial incentives.

In fact, we saw several examples of successful cross-government collaboration in Sweden this year. Sjukvårdsrådgivningen (The Healthcare Information Service) is a network of healthcare information services of six Swedish regions. The service is a collaboration between the Swedish retail pharmacy Apoteket, the Region of Skåne, and the County Councils of Kronoberg, Uppsala, Jämtland, Gävleborg and Östergötland. Through the service, citizens in the regions can get free medical advice

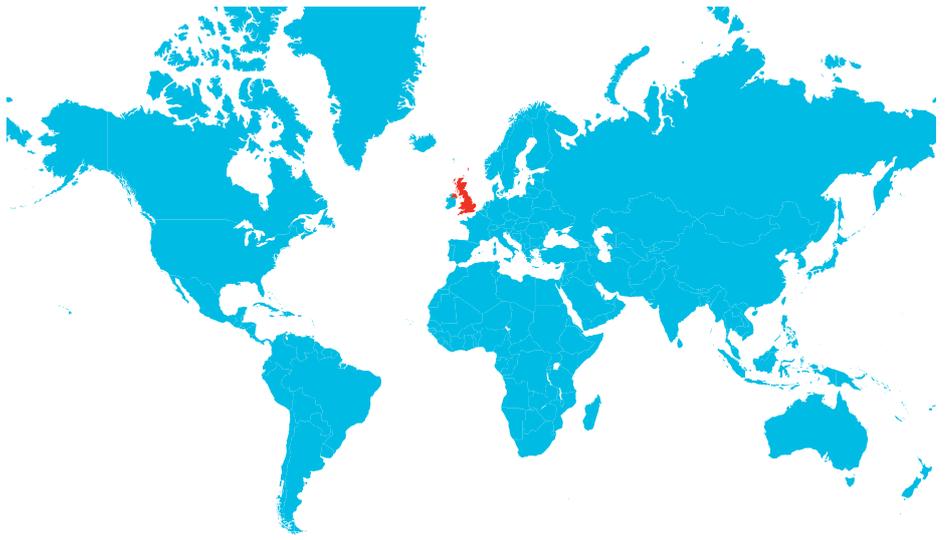
through a common phone number (1177) and a common website ([www.sjukvard-sradgivningen.se](http://www.sjukvard-sradgivningen.se)). Though the call centers are still located at a regional level, all calls go to where there is capacity at the time.

In another example, applications for commercial traffic authorizations are handled (and issued) by the regional County Administrative Boards but involve documents and decisions from a number of government agencies (the National Tax Board, the National Road Administration, the Swedish Enforcement Administration and others). The citizen applies directly to the County Administrative Board, which contacts all relevant agencies. The new solution has reduced the time to get an authorization from about 3 months to a couple of days.

In 2007 we saw a dramatic drop in both the number of Swedes who preferred to use and who actually used walk-in centers in Sweden. At the same time, Swedish citizens perceived significant improvements in the ease of use of more cost-effective Internet and landline channels (16 percent and 6 percent increases, respectively). Additionally, we saw a dramatic drop in the number of citizens who expected the best service from the walk-in channel (29 percent to 12 percent) and a corresponding increase in citizens who expected the best service from the telephone (42 percent to 56 percent) in the past year.

While these trends are positive for Sweden in that they point to a decreasing reliance on the most resource-intensive channels, cross-channel coordination still appears to be some way off in Sweden, and it is not yet clear whether this is a priority objective. Of the four pillars of leadership in customer service, multi-channel access was the weakest area for the government. In fact, the only truly multi-channel service we found within the Swedish public administration is the tax self-assessment service, which allows citizens to file their national income tax forms online, via telephone, via SMS, by regular mail or in person. Additionally, to date, very few Swedish government agencies have automated their case management processes to the degree that a consistent service level is delivered no matter which channel is used by the citizen or business. In fact, very few agencies have completely

automated the case management processes. Two notable exceptions include Bolagsverket (The Swedish Companies Registration Office) and CSN (The National Board of Student Aid) Sweden made a dramatic jump in our overall customer service rankings this year—a testament to the positive citizen perceptions the country already enjoys. To improve further, the government should focus on greater integration of channels, to give its citizens more choice and a more consistent experience and to ensure that its "one case-one contact" principle is not hampered by the way service is actually delivered.



# United Kingdom

**Ranking** 8th (tie) | **Latitude/Longitude** 54°N 2°W | **Capital** London  
**Population** 60.77 million people | **Land area** 241,590 sq km

The United Kingdom is going through a period of change in terms of political leadership and this has caused an undercurrent of uncertainty within government, which will only abate when the new team is fully installed and up to speed on their briefs. At the same time, widespread and ongoing dissent about the country's participation in Iraq and broad media coverage of investigations into potential Labour Party funding improprieties have shaken the public trust.

In the past year the United Kingdom's Transformational Government strategy has progressed from a vision statement to a working strategy with an implementation plan and timeline. The recent political events, however, may have some impact on the UK government's ability to implement some of the key elements of this aggressive strategy, including plans for the rollout of national ID cards in 2009 and further development of the government's shared services strategy.

The new ID cards are intended to be used as a unique identifier to access many government services, across multiple channels. The government's vision for Shared Corporate Services is one of the major underpinnings of Transformational Government and is expected to significantly reduce the cost of corporate services while simultaneously improving service quality. The current plan is that by 2016, the majority of transactional elements of Corporate Services in the public sector will be provided through a handful of professional shared services organizations—some within large departments and others more commercial.

Both of these programs will be key for the United Kingdom if it is to make its vision of citizen-centric service, delivered via modern, coordinated channels, operational. However, neither of these programs are without controversy (the national ID for citizen privacy concerns and shared services for workforce concerns), and they will require serious political leverage to come to fruition.

Less contentious work in other areas looks promising for future improvements in customer service. The government clearly appreciates the importance of understanding the customer. In its latest annual report on Transformational Government, the government describes "understanding the customer" as a key role of the Delivery Council. This council has established a forum as a network to help government gather, analyze and use information about the needs and preferences of citizens and businesses more effectively.

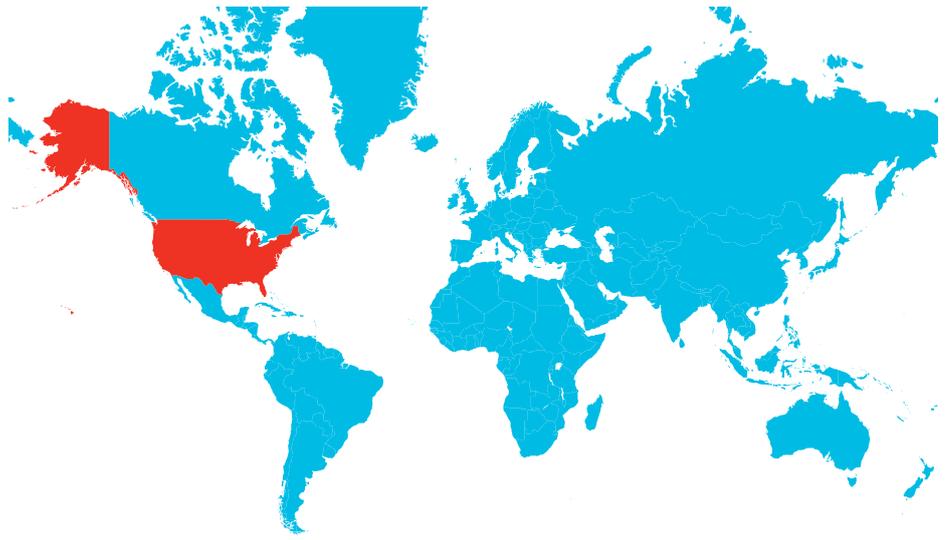
At a more granular level, the UK government is moving to develop a more nuanced picture of the citizens and businesses it serves by introducing a series of frameworks for collecting and using customer insight research. We found some interesting examples of government already using customer insight to effect different service outcomes. The UK revenue and customs agency (HMRC), for example, conducted research into how mail is sorted in the home. Its research revealed that citizens developed their own sorting systems. Mail related to child tax credits tended to be accorded a high-profile position in this sorting scheme, whereas mail related to self-assessment tax returns was pushed to the bottom of the pile. The government discovered that this action was the result, in part, of citizens realizing that the deadlines were not imminent and "delaying the pain of filling it in." As a result of this insight, HMRC came to understand that long lead times resulted in undesirable procrastination, and the agency has moved to shorten the timeframe between sending the self-assessment forms and requiring their return.

In addition, the government intends to launch a new framework for marketing and communications that draws on best practices from the private sector and means to ensure that individual department communication efforts will be more effective. We will watch its progress in this regard with interest. In our research this year, the United Kingdom scored in the middle of the pack in terms of proactive communications and education. In fact, the government's score in this area was weakest among all of its scores in the four

pillars of leadership in customer service. In addition, from a citizen survey perspective alone, the UK government scored well below the average of all 22 countries we surveyed in proactive communications.

As the United Kingdom moves its service transformation agenda forward, it clearly understands the growing importance of social ecosystems (described in our fourth key finding in this report). In December 2006, the government commissioned a report by Sir David Varney, entitled *Service Transformation: A Better Service for Citizens and Businesses, a Better Deal for the Taxpayer*, which outlines crucial steps to improve service performance. The government has also commissioned a delivery plan to implement the report's findings, to be published in 2007. The Varney report highlights that service transformation has major implications for local government, and that the government can best foster innovation and improve the quality and efficiencies of services by working jointly with regional and local authorities and other public bodies.

Last year, we described the United Kingdom as verging on dramatic change. The government had just introduced a dramatic new vision of value-led citizen service and we looked forward to the action plan that would lay out the government's next steps. This year, through the action plan, we see evidence that the government has smart plans for translating its promise into practice. The challenge the government faces now stems from its starting point in citizen perceptions. While we saw the United Kingdom move into the top 10 of our rankings this year, our research also shows that right now, citizens do not perceive service as having improved relative to three years ago. In addition, factors external to the service transformation agenda have eroded citizen confidence and may affect the speed at which government is able to push critical initiatives forward in the near future.



# United States

**Ranking** 3rd | **Latitude/Longitude** 38°N 97°W | **Capital** Washington D.C.  
**Population** 301.13 million people | **Land area** 9,161,923 sq km

In the United States, legislative elections in November 2006 shifted control of Congress to the Democrats. The actual ramifications of this shift on the US service agenda remain to be seen. However, sweeping changes are unlikely over the course of 2007 and into 2008, when the focus will likely shift to the presidential elections. The practical implications are more likely to be felt as greater oversight over existing initiatives, rather than the introduction of grand new service programs. For now, the US federal customer service program continues to run its course through its eGovernment and USA Services programs, two priority initiatives (out of 24) in the President's Management Agenda.

The eGovernment program aims to use improved Internet-based technology to make it easy for citizens and businesses to interact with the government, save taxpayer dollars, and streamline citizen-to-government communications. Progress on eGovernment in the United States continues to be measured through quarterly milestones, agreed upon

by agencies, and results are made publicly available. This has proven to be a powerful motivator for agencies. For example, of the 811 agency milestones due in the first quarter of FY 2006, only 12 milestones (2 percent) were missed due to the fault of those agencies.

Work continues on the US Lines of Business Initiatives (LoBs), essentially a group of shared services programs. This is a rapidly growing initiative; last year we reported that the government had established six LoBs; this year, three more have been added to the initial set: Budget Formulation and Evaluation (BFE), Geospatial LoB and IT Infrastructure.

We watch with interest the development of the IT Infrastructure LoB, as it could have important implications for continuing to develop the common platforms for cross-government service delivery, already a strength in the country. The current eGovernment implementation plans in individual agencies stress adopting and using government-wide solutions and decommissioning redundant systems.

USA Services deals with multi-channel contact and is managed by the General Services Administration. Its goal is to provide citizens information about and from all levels of government through an array of integrated information channels including a portal, USA.gov (formerly firstgov.gov), telephone and email inquiry response from the GSA. A notable initiative on the near horizon for USA Services is to conduct a government-wide assessment of citizen service activities in the Federal government, such as call centers, contact centers, and field offices.

The aim is to provide a more complete picture of all the channels the government uses to serve citizens, as well as information about which channels citizens may prefer and what opportunities may exist for helping agencies improve these channels. While it is a fledgling form of the type of citizen-centered research already being done in other countries (such as Canada and Australia, for example), it represents a very important step toward making a concerted effort to develop an accurate picture of customers' wants and needs. This is a picture that, from at least a broad federal level in the United States, has been fairly rudimentary to date.

In the main, federal government agencies continue to operate their own contact centers. However, service at different agencies varies, and a Congressional audit completed in February 2006 found that "accuracy" was not an established performance metric at all customer contact centers. Auditors also found that the federal government, which operates the largest customer contact center, does not provide consistent service. In the fall of 2006, the Citizen Service Levels Interagency Committee part of USA Services, did offer some proposed standards for customer service; however, these standards, though encouraged, are not mandated because some agencies lack the funds to adhere to them.

This service inconsistency may be playing out in citizens' perceptions. Our citizen survey found that while citizens are generally satisfied with existing service

levels, they do not perceive that service has improved relative to three years ago. While the United States came in third overall in our rankings, it lost some ground to both Canada and Singapore, which both ranked several places higher than the United States in the citizen voice component of our rankings.

One area where the United States shines, however, is cross-government collaboration. The government scored very highly in this area, both in citizens' perceptions and in our combined scoring, where it was first overall in rankings for this pillar. From an internal perspective, certainly the LoBs will continue to have a positive impact on back end efficiencies that will improve the overall customer experience. Thanks to the E-Payroll initiative, US federal agencies migrating to one of the four E-Payroll providers saw a nearly 30 percent reduction in average cost per W-2 in 2006 (from US\$176 to US\$126). The accrued benefits should only increase as all remaining agencies not currently using an E-Payroll provider complete their expected migration in 2007.<sup>7</sup>

For now within the United States, multi-channel service seems much less of a focus than eliminating redundant systems and ensuring systems' security. In fact, the government has set forth a number of goals to continue to drive use of the Federal Enterprise Architecture to reduce redundancy and to ensure that investments in IT infrastructure are made wisely.

An interesting example of the type of collaboration the United States hopes to foster comes from the increasing interest and use of "wikis." For example, the National Institutes of Health (NIH) is exploring the use of wikis in its information technology systems. NIH is looking into a concept similar to Wikipedia, where a relevant community can collaborate in forming content for a Web site. The difference from the well-known public site is NIH wants authentication and authorization controls for security and privacy. At the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA), employees rely on a wiki to modify open-source code in NASA's World Wind, which is software for viewing satellite imagery.

Anyone who downloads the World Wind program can use the wiki, which is run by a private organization, to suggest code modifications. Examples such as these are excellent illustrations of the web of public service value described earlier in the report.

Last year, we commented that although the US eGovernment program had been very successful, the government needed to evaluate whether its current service agenda would be adequate for building the trust with citizens in the future. We believe that advice still stands today. The United States has a very implementation-focused agenda, and this is undeniably one of its strengths. The government makes things happen. The piece that still needs further development, however, is incorporating the citizens' voice. As it looks to its future, the US government needs to develop a compelling picture of what the outcomes of superior service will be for citizens and then continue to build explicit connections between the metrics it currently pursues so vigorously and how they translate into public service value.

<sup>7</sup> [http://www.gcn.com/print/26\\_01/42885-1.html](http://www.gcn.com/print/26_01/42885-1.html)

Accenture gratefully acknowledges the contributions of all those who participated in our *Leadership in Customer Service* research this year.

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