



State of Utah

Operational Efficiency
***Customer Experience - Building a Listening
Infrastructure***

2022 - Ongoing

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IDEA

Problem or opportunity addressed

Utah's Customer Experience (CX) initiative standardized and improved customer experience across all agencies by focusing on feedback and consistent service delivery. It emphasizes government actively listening and responding to citizens' needs. Utah implemented new approaches for engaging customers and seeking feedback across various channels and agencies, ensuring an effective customer experience. Last year, Utah focused on two- and three-question surveys where customers interact with government. These surveys are always on and track more than 100 service quality drivers. Utah collects about 12,000 responses per month from over 500 short surveys into a shared dataset. Agencies have used these tools to improve experiences. The DMV eliminated its top call driver, fee estimations, with a self-service option. Utah's National Guard improved retention to 102.7%. The Board of Pardons and Parole eliminated complaints about case searches. Complaints about Utah's centralized login system have dropped 71.7%.

Why it matters

Utah aims to provide consistently excellent digital experiences statewide. This is challenging due to the diverse range of services and autonomous agencies. Utah is using innovative approaches focused on engaging various stakeholders and creating flexible frameworks to improve the minimum service standard.

What makes it different

Where to Survey: With this framework, the state placed hundreds of two- and three-question surveys in moments when it is most natural for customers to answer them. Rather than "We value your opinion" at checkout, customers will see, "Can you find the map you're looking for?" right on the map display. The Utah state government offers hundreds of services at thousands of touchpoints; the goal is to ask relevant questions at all of them.

What Questions to Ask: These templates trade abstractions (e.g. "Do you feel we care?") for more precision. It starts with a 1-5 star rating. If rated positively, then it follows up with "What went well?" and a checklist below of potential reasons, like short wait times and helpful service. Likewise, a checklist of service issues follows a poor rating. The third and final question asks simply, "Tell us more" for comment. The three-question framework fits any touchpoint, yet accommodates customization within the checklists of reasons for a good or bad experience.

What makes it universal

How to Manage Data: We designed the questions to be adaptable to agency questions and interoperable across a wide array of services and touchpoints. Multiple-choice options each map to one of a hundred identified parameters, like product selection. Each parameter maps to a metric feeding, for example, an empathy score. Dashboards focus on actionability, showing a list of what to improve and text comments about how to improve it.

These efforts build a listening infrastructure for Utah's executive branch. We made it scalable by relying on short, targeted surveys directly within the customer experience and managing data consistently. This infrastructure provides a constant stream of information, helping agencies identify trends, pinpoint areas for improvement, and better serve the public.

The best part is that Utahns feel heard by their government. Their feedback makes their government more responsive and accountable. Whether they're reserving a campground, filing their taxes, or applying for Medicaid, they can voice their appreciation or frustration, and a public official listens and is empowered to respond.

IMPLEMENTATION

Roadmap

When the CX initiative began, we asked agencies to post a standard survey on all state websites. The survey had five questions, each of which corresponded with a customer experience metric: task completion, effort, satisfaction, empathy, and reliability. Then, every agency placed the survey on one of their most crucial public touchpoints. As customers' feedback proved valuable, the initiative grew. The standard approach gave way to many more touchpoints and customizations to match. Surveys were in demand, but creating them each ad hoc was unscalable.

The explosive growth of surveying also meant risking survey fatigue. Questions arose in our team about how to survey customers without being disruptive. Then could agencies collect positive feedback as well as negative feedback? Could surveys be both more concise and more effective at extracting insights?

On top of that, the original CX metrics had grown redundant and less potent. There was a high correlation between each of them; for instance, a high difficulty rating translated to a low reliability rating. It was obvious customers just wanted to share their frustrations and joys, but would not meaningfully tease out the difference between our empathy and their satisfaction. For agencies, a 2.3 average empathy score doesn't point to clear problems or solutions.

Who was involved

The State of Utah Division of Technology Services has a CX team in its organization. This team works closely with the Governor's Office of Management and Budget to make the resources and tools available to all executive branch agencies in Utah. All agencies have implemented feedback surveys on their websites. All agencies have designated a CX Champion in their organization to ensure CX is top of mind.

How we did it

In 2024, the CX Team formulated “Listening Patterns,” a new templated approach to listening to customers about the quality of our services and experiences. These patterns address four areas: where to survey, what questions to ask, and how to manage the data.

IMPACT

What the project made better and How we know

Tax Commission: Fee Estimator

Delving into their call analytics from July 2023 to June 2024, the State of Utah Tax Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) Customer Experience champions pinpointed inquiries about fees as the most frequent topic. This trend mirrored feedback from customers on the fees page, who consistently requested a self-service option. As one user articulated, "I want clear visibility into all vehicle registration fees. If private sector providers are legally obligated to disclose all fees, a calculator should be available here to provide the same transparency."

Unlike a straightforward sticker price, the cost of vehicle registration is determined by several variables, such as vehicle type, age, and the registration county. Although the DMV's internal systems seamlessly automated this calculation, the public lacked a comparable tool. The DMV website directed individuals to the customer service call center for fee estimations, leading to a bottleneck and increased call volumes.

To address this, the Tax Commission developed a publicly accessible fee estimator. Customers input a handful of details about their vehicle, and the system returns an accurate estimate based on what they shared. This project was implemented and went live to the public in 2024.

For most people, buying and registering a car is a significant expense, and navigating the associated taxes and fees can be stressful. Whether individuals meticulously budget every dollar or simply worry about having enough to cover the costs, uncertainty about these fees can add unnecessary anxiety to the process.

Providing a self-service fee estimator significantly enhanced the constituent digital experience by addressing a key pain point identified through call analytics and customer feedback. This reduced the uncertainty and anxiety associated with these fees. The drop in fee-related call volume demonstrates a shift towards online self-service.

Since launching the fee estimator, inquiries about fees have dropped from the first most common call center topic in early 2024 to eighth in October 2024, and the page linking to the fee estimator receives 10,000 monthly visits.

This innovation was enabled by the Utah State Tax Commission's recent investment in call analytics software, which transcribes phone calls and analyzes their contents. This

voice-of-customer tool enabled the Motor Vehicle Division to name its more commonly occurring call topics and begin working to resolve them.

For the fee calculator, the innovation doesn't lie in applying new technology but in repurposing existing tools. The fee estimator uses the Tax Commission's existing system to resolve the long-standing issue of citizen confusion and call center burden related to vehicle registration fees. By providing a user-friendly, self-service tool, the project innovatively applies technology to improve the accessibility and transparency of a critical government function.

Corrections: Support Loved Ones of Incarcerated Individuals

Last year, Utah's Customer Experience team (CX) and Department of Corrections (Corrections) convened a workshop to learn from prisoner advocacy groups how it can better support the closest loved ones of its incarcerated population. The discussion frequently veered toward a need for more case managers, but when asked to list what the extra case managers would do, that list of tasks mainly comprised richer communication: clearer information about the rules, up-to-the-minute updates about changes their loved one's housing and health situation, and encouragement and support that their loved on is one track.

The advocates in attendance also shared stories illustrating how quickly misconceptions about standard procedures and rules erode trust. The skepticism circles into the incarcerated population and can be challenging to recover from.

Using this problem as inspiration, Utah developed an onboarding information program. Over the course of a month, the family and friends of newly-incarcerated individuals receive a series of text messages introducing them to the rules and procedures of Utah's correctional facilities. With 18 messages in total, the system introduces them to their options to communicate with their loved one, how intake works, where their loved one will be housed, how to sign up for visitation, send a letter, get a power of attorney, and access health information. Each message points to a deeper article on the corrections website.

The system was built between July and November 2024, beta tested with 60 users between December and January, and officially launched to the public in March 2025.

With this communication channel established, Corrections and Utah's Board of Pardons and Parole will keep expanding the content programs: informing family and friends when their loved one's facilities are in lockdown, disseminating information about policy updates, and introducing them to the rules and procedures of the Board's sentencing process.

The close loved ones of Utah's incarcerated population contributed directly to the design of this system. The CX and Corrections teams hosted multiple rounds of interviews and moderated user tests with them throughout the project. First to test whether the idea resonated, second to test the tone and style the messages should take, and finally, to test the content of the messages. During those in-depth conversations, the team learned key details that ensure these messages would build, not erode, trust. For example, messages should refer to incarcerated

individuals as “loved ones”, and content about training and development programs is a sticky subject, and must include details about how individuals are assigned to classes.

Feedback is part of the system design. Every message also asks whether the content was useful. Recipients can respond “yes” or “no” by text message and share their comments. Corrections’ communication team uses this to dial the content further to meet constituent needs.

During the pilot, feedback was overwhelmingly positive. Of 200 message replies, only 17 responses were “No, it is not helpful”, and every negative response included a comment with contextual information that the team used to update the content. At the end of the pilot, the team collected general feedback. We heard, “This is good. The information is useful. I think more than anything, seeing some kind of text message feels like a connection in some tiny way.” Another user remarked, “Perfect! I think it’s very comprehensive, informative, and necessary.”

This system provides a consistent experience for the friends and families of people incarcerated in Utah facilities. The Department of Corrections and the Board of Pardons and Parole regularly interact with this constituency; over time, both will reach them through this channel.

An automated two-way text messaging system sends messages and collects feedback. It attaches to a directory of subscribers, which also collects data points about subscribers’ relationships with their incarcerated loved ones and where their loved ones are housed. These data points are used to provide basic content personalization.

What now

The CX initiative received additional funding for the upcoming fiscal year to continue the program. This next year, the team is focused on [Governor Cox’s GRIT initiative](#): Government Reform, Innovation & Transparency. The goal is to build a future of health and opportunity for every Utahn. This work didn’t start today, and it won’t end tomorrow. We’re doubling down on what works, fixing what doesn’t, and making government work better for everyone.

Under Utah’s new GRIT initiative, state government will:

- Empower employees to identify and fix inefficiencies.
- Require each agency to submit at least one improvement project
- Participate in collaborative process improvement through an agency-wide network
- Launch at least one internal efficiency project per division, office, or bureau.
- Establish clear metrics to track cost savings, time savings, and improved service.
- Report results of improvement efforts

CX will play an integral role in agencies achieving this goal.