



## Omni-Channel Service Delivery in Government

- Benefits
- Key Considerations
- Government Applications
- Strategies to Implement Omni-Channel Service Delivery



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**JOINT COUNCILS' EXECUTIVE MONTHLY REPORT**

Developed by the Research Committee

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# 1. Introduction

Service delivery across government organizations continues to be impacted by digital technology and changing client expectations. Clients increasingly expect customer service to be accessible anytime, anyplace – and by any means of communication they prefer.<sup>1</sup> Understanding the changing needs and expectations of clients creates an opportunity for government to provide services through channels that best respond to their needs. Government organizations engage with clients by using different channel approaches (i.e. multi-channel and omni-channel service delivery).

In a multi-channel approach, organizations aim to establish their presence on the channels where clients are most likely to interact. This approach extends across several different channels (i.e. social media, mobile, direct mail, a physical location).<sup>2</sup> All channels are separate and independent from each other. However, it does not focus on providing clients with a seamless experience across those channels.

**Omni-channel means “all channels”.** Omni-channel service delivery is a multi-channel approach that aims to provide a personalized and integrated experience across diverse touchpoints and devices. The guiding principle of omni-channel is that it’s client-centric. Clients can switch between channels to seamlessly continue their journey with an organization.<sup>3</sup>

This Executive Report will focus on omni-channel service delivery in government. In today’s digital world, it is simply not enough to be present across multiple channels. This report highlights that an omni-channel approach is key to meet and surpass growing client expectations.

1. [Channel Choice vs. Channel Shift in the Public Sector](#)
2. [How government agencies can provide multi-channel experience for citizens](#)
3. [An omnichannel strategy makes government agencies more responsive and efficient](#)
4. [Top Trends in Government for 2021: Multichannel Citizen Engagement](#)
5. Joint Councils (PSSDC & PSCIOC): Strategic Plan 2021-2022

## Why is this Report Important?

- During the COVID-19 pandemic (“the pandemic”), the online tools that clients use and their digital skills have increased out of necessity. Governments have risen to the challenge of enabling remote engagement with clients. According to the 2021 Gartner, “CIO Survey, 81.2% of government CIOs noted the use of digital channels to reach citizens as one of the top changes that has occurred in their organization as a result of the pandemic”.<sup>4</sup>
- Designing and delivering client-centric services across all channels is a key priority of the Joint Councils. According to the Joint Council’s Strategic Plan, “Client Centric Services is about designing services in a way that reflects the needs of citizens, not the needs of government”.<sup>5</sup>
- Interacting with clients through digital channels is not a cure-all for client experience (CX) challenges. In April 2021, the Research Committee published a report titled, “[Client Experience \(CX\) In the New Normal](#)”. This report highlighted the importance for government to find the right balance between human and digital interaction to create the best client experience.

## What is Covered in this Executive Report?

This report includes the following:

- Introduction
- Benefits of Omni-Channel Service Delivery
- Key Considerations
- Omni-Channel Strategies in Government
- Strategies to Implement Omni-Channel Service Delivery in Government

## 2. Benefits of Omni-Channel Service Delivery

An omni-channel service delivery approach allows government organizations (at all levels) to offer clients a fully integrated experience across all channels and devices (i.e. online, phone, in-person). The main goal of this approach is to make the client experience as easy as possible from start to finish, regardless of where or how they interact with government. Some key benefits of an omni-channel approach includes the following:

Allows organizations to collect and unify client data from diverse channels. This data can be leveraged to provide personalized experiences and inform service delivery designs, which will ultimately improve client engagement.<sup>6</sup>

### Better Data & Integrated Analytics



Increases government's visibility by offering an integrated experience across various channels.<sup>7</sup> The emphasis on consistency means clients see the organizations in the same way across channels, resulting in better client relationships and increased trust.

### Increase in Government visibility



The smooth efficiency of an omni-channel approach immediately delivers a ROI by saving resources (i.e. time and money) associated with a less integrated approach. Data insights enables government to make data-driven decisions about the channels clients are engaging the most and where to focus investments.<sup>8</sup>

### Costs Savings



Puts everything inside a single system that's visible and trackable. This enables government to remember their users and all of their past interactions with them. This reduces the need for clients to repeat themselves when switching across channels.<sup>9</sup> Interacting with government is smoother, simpler and more intuitive for clients.

### Increase in Client Satisfaction



Enables employees to work within a system that is robust, flexible and effective. This leads to better employee experiences at work and increased feelings of empowerment. This approach increases employee retention and engagement.<sup>10</sup>

### Better Employee Experiences



### Omni-channel Strategies Enables the COVID-19 Vaccination Administration Process<sup>11</sup>

According to Gartner, the ability to proactively engage clients at the appropriate time is emerging as one of the most critical and challenging capabilities required to support COVID-19 vaccine administration. Across jurisdictions, governments are leveraging an omni-channel approach to implement vaccine administration campaigns to clients. Successful vaccine administration campaigns rely on active client engagement across channels, including:

- Raising awareness
- Providing information on vaccine safety, efficacy, importance and availability
- Assessing eligibility
- Scheduling and administering vaccinations
- Conducting post vaccination follow-up

A priority for COVID-19 vaccination programs is to ensure equitable access, particularly in relation to vulnerable and disadvantaged populations. To be effective, information must be provided in a manner that is both culturally sensitive and takes into consideration communication preferences of clients (i.e. voice, text, mobile app, social media).

6, 7, 8. [Seven advantages of an omnichannel strategy](#)

9, 10. [Omnichannel — Designing Cohesive and Seamless User Experience](#)

11. [Embed Omnichannel Consumer Engagement Capabilities Into Your Vaccine Administration Program](#)

### 3. Key Considerations

It is important for government to choose the right channel to communicate and deliver services to clients. To do this effectively, there are a number of considerations organizations should explore and analyze when developing their omni-channel strategy.

One important consideration is to ensure that channels do not create new barriers to accessibility for vulnerable and underserved populations (i.e. persons with disabilities, seniors, rural communities, and those with lower socio-economic status). According to research, a substantial portion of these populations face barriers in access to or use of important information and services due to:<sup>12</sup>

- Limited access to the internet and/or digital devices
- Lack of digital skills to use the internet and/or digital devices

To address this, it is important for government to proactively identify, remove and prevent barriers to accessibility for vulnerable and underserved populations to ensure their needs are met.<sup>12</sup> To explore this further, the Research Committee will be issuing a Joint Council’s Report on accessibility in the near future.

Some additional factors to consider when developing omni-channel strategies include the following:

12. [Supporting vulnerable groups and the continuity of critical services during the pandemic](#)  
13, 14, 15, 16.. [23 Considerations Before Implementing a New Digital Channel](#)  
17. [How to protect digital identity of your customer in omnichannel](#)



#### Has the Client Journey been Mapped Out?

Prior to implementing an omni-channel strategy, it is important to think about the client journey. The organization will need to group clients into various segments and identify the channels that are best suited to meet the needs of specific groups. When doing so, it is important to consider: what is going to give each client group the fastest journey time, with the least amount of effort and the highest degree of reliability.<sup>13</sup>



#### Does the Strategy Exclude Voice or In-Person Channels?

A digital-first and digitally enabled government does not mean “digital only”. An effective omni-channel strategy incorporates both digital channels and in-person/telephone interactions. Organizations that fail to do so, risk contact centres becoming disconnected from its digital channels.<sup>14</sup> As a result, client may struggle to find the human support when needed, employees may not have a full picture of past transactions, and management will lack the visibility needed to boost the client experience.



#### Can the Effectiveness of the Channels be Measured?

As channels are launched, it is critical to monitor and evaluate if it is adding value, whether clients are adopting the new capabilities, and/or if there are challenges emerging. It is also important to measure if the new channels result in better outcomes for the organization (i.e. reduced call volume, improved client satisfaction levels, and higher trust).<sup>15</sup>



#### Is the Omni-Channel Approach Focused on Lowest Cost Delivery?

A key benefit of effective channel strategies is the ability to reduce cost through encouraging low-cost interaction channels.<sup>16</sup> As a result, when designing the strategy, it is important to determine if new channels will lead cost efficiency (i.e. improvement in organizational productivity (staff time), better client experience, and easier/cost effective methods for government to deliver services to clients).



#### Have Digital Identity Solutions been Established?

Digital ID provides a “tell us once” service approach to improve client experience. Clients are able to create an account with a username and password on government platforms. The organization is then able to save personal information, frequent shipping addresses, payment information that have been used, etc. This streamlines experiences for returning clients who are then able to complete service transactions on any device.<sup>17</sup>



#### Have Data Privacy Safeguards been Established?

Huge security breaches in recent years has heightened concern from clients regarding the amount of personal information and data that governments hold and the security measures in place to protect their data. Organizations must assure clients that their data is securely stored and that only what is required will be used for any transaction on any device. This will require the right software, with the strongest security measures in place.

## 4. Omni-Channel Strategies in Government

Clients expect to be able to engage seamlessly with government across multiple channels. Regardless of the form of interaction (i.e. filling out a web form, messaging a virtual agent or talking to a contact centre agent), clients expect tailored experiences. Clients also want to be able to help themselves, at their convenience – and on their choice of device.

The following are some examples of omni-channel strategies leveraged in government organizations globally:

### Examples of Omni-Channel Strategies in Government

#### Abu Dhabi

By using the Microsoft platform, the [TAMM Customer Relationship Management \(CRM\)](#) system is able to provide an omnichannel experience by offering a range of government services through one access point. The government utilizes Azure and AI to increase efficiency and improve CX through fast and agile responses to information requests. These capabilities also provide stakeholders and field workers with decision-making insights through business intelligence on customer behaviour.<sup>18</sup>

#### Australia

Service New South Wales (NSW) [omni-channel reference architecture \(OCRA\)](#) delivers customer services uniformly across multiple delivery channels.<sup>19</sup> OCRA provides a personalized experience and enables clients to switch between channels seamlessly without the need to restart the service (i.e. in-person, over the phone, mobile, digital).

#### United Kingdom

The government aims to design an [omni-channel strategy](#) that enables clients to access services through their preferred method of interaction (i.e. web, mobile, app, contact centre and in-person). The omni-channel service options will be supported by cloud-based services.<sup>20</sup>

#### Denmark

Denmark's [National Digital Strategy](#) aims to improve the client experience by offering government services through an omni-channel approach. The government is able to provide a personalized client experience by leveraging [NemID](#) (a common log-in solution for Danish government websites and other private organizations).<sup>21</sup> NemID enables the government to access 'personal fragments' (i.e. age, gender, geographical location) to make it possible for the government to tailor services to specific groups of the population.

18. [Here's how Abu Dhabi is powering its smart government services](#)

19. [Service NSW omni-channel reference architecture \(OCRA\)](#)

20. [Equal Experts UK Limited: Channel Strategy](#)

21. [Denmark's digital solutions](#)

# 5. Strategies to Implement Omni-Channel Service Delivery

In order for government to effectively implement an omni-channel approach, **digital identity (digital ID) and data privacy are key factors that must be established to ensure successful implementation.**<sup>22</sup> Across Canadian jurisdictions, the pandemic has accelerated efforts towards achieving a trusted digital ID that respects client data and privacy protection requirements. However, since these prerequisites are currently underdevelopment in Canada, the benefits of an omni-channel approach have not yet been realized.

According to Forbes, the following are five additional factors organizations can leverage to implement an omni-channel strategy that creates a rich, personalized experience that results in seamless transitions for clients:

## Strategies to Implement Omni-Channel Service Delivery<sup>23</sup>

1

### Ensure design principles are based on client data and insights:

Some organizations invest in technology solutions without fully understanding client needs. It is critical to validate priorities with evidence gathered through data-driven approaches to understand what clients are looking for and their needs. By harnessing data and analytics to inform the development of the transformation roadmap, organizations are more likely to deliver on strategic outcomes.

2

### Understand your segments and the propositions they require:

It is important to categorize users into segments. Rather than having too many narrowly defined segments, governments should identify groups with similar wants and needs. It is also critical to ensure that services are provided at the same level for those with a limited digital footprint and those who choose not to share their data. Organizations must respect all clients equally.

3

### Start with the experience not the technology:

Technology is only an enabler. Every change should start with the intended outcome(s). For example, what do clients want and value; what kind of experience is the organization looking to deliver for various services; and how do clients want to engage with the organization. Answering these questions by engaging with clients is the recommended first step.

4

### Take a look at your own technology:

It is also important to take a look at the current technology the organization has in place and determine if it is capable of being integrated into an omni-channel approach or even a single application or system. Software and systems currently in use may not be compatible with each other nor benefit from being integrated into an omni-channel system.

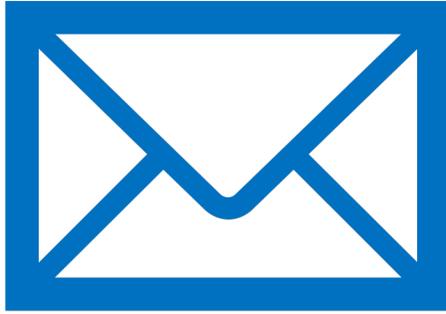
5

### Store experiences to allow continuous improvement:

It is critical that organizations leverage data and analytics to continuously measure, track and improve client engagement. Every time a client interacts with government, they offer information that can help to better personalize their experience next time.

22. [The Path to Omnichannel Excellence Begins with a Digital ID](#)

23. [Tips For Omnichannel Strategy Success](#)



## For Further Reading

- [The road ahead for public service delivery](#)
- [Defining omni-channel customer experience](#)
- [Omnichannel experience design: what, how and why](#)
- [How to capture what the customer wants](#)
- [Multi-channel vs Omni-channel Support: What's the Difference?](#)

## Other noteworthy articles:

[Internet Governance Forum promotes inclusive digital future for all](#)

[Confusing digital service increases the need for digital support](#)

[Reassessing the smart cities movement](#)

[Cloud Computing and Customer Experience in the Public Sector](#)

[Will Single Sign-on Ever Become Mainstream?](#)

## Research Repository

Access the Citizen First [Research Repository](#).

**Recent entries on the research repository:**

[Cybersecurity in Government — Joint Councils' Executive Report November 2021](#)

This report includes: The Top 10 Common Cybersecurity Threats in 2021, Lessons Learned, Cybersecurity Strategies in Government, and Insights for a Proactive Cybersecurity Strategy: During COVID- 19 and Beyond.



## Trends in the Daily Newsletter



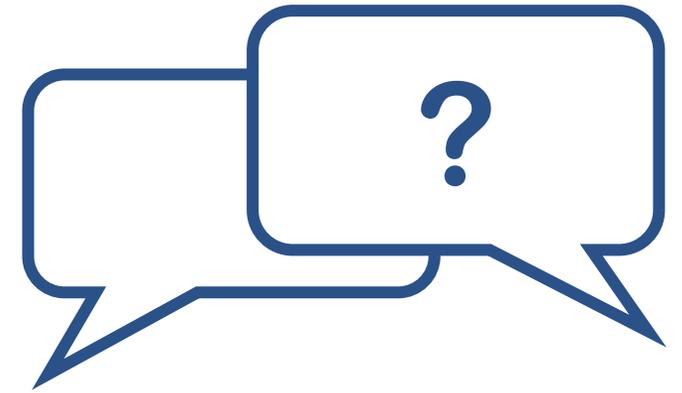
According to [Governing](#), more than ever, state and local governments are grasping the significance of community engagement and agency coordination when it comes to overcoming the problem of inadequate broadband access. Public and private organizations are putting their best minds together to figure out how money can be well spent. Fresh ideas like electric cooperative networks, multi-town partnerships and open-access fiber are starting to take off to help populations that have been overlooked.



According to [Federal News Network](#), automation (in its various forms) can help agencies provide simple, personalized services, and give clients the information they need in the way they want and expect in today's digital age. Government agency leaders can improve their digital citizen's experience by automating complex processes while focusing on the citizen's journey. Simultaneously, agencies will improve the employee's experience and support their delivery of outstanding customer service while using AI-infused automation and self-service tools, regardless of the technology already in place, including existing service desktops.



In a recent article, [GovTech](#) published an annual roundup of the top security industry forecasts, trends and cybersecurity prediction reports for the 2022 calendar year. Digital transformation efforts have accelerated the redesign of government and business processes over the past two years with remote work and more. The vast number of online trends, cyber forecasts, and security predictions are growing in breadth and depth more than ever before.



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