AI in CX

How artificial intelligence transforms the constituent experience in government

AI simplifies and accelerates the constituent experience, helping state and local agencies improve a broad swath of services. Conversational AI and large language models (LLMs) give agencies inventive ways to foster trust and engagement that were impossible before now.

A modern contact center built on conversational AI shows the power of these tools. An automated note-taker summarizes calls and provides helpful context. Advanced chatbots handle basic questions, lightening the load on contact center staff. Customer experience data tells leaders what's working and where they need to improve.

Modernizing your constituent experience requires an understanding of the technology's nuances — why it drives value for agencies and people, and what it looks like in action. You'll also need to know how to establish essential data governance and implement this technology properly to make the most of it.

The Benefits of AI-Enhanced CX

What is "the constituent experience"? It's not just a set of processes and outcomes. CX encompasses all the impressions and emotions that build up in residents' minds when they deal with a government agency. Standing in line, waiting on hold, answering the same question seven times — constituents have endured these experiences for decades.

It's not that agencies wanted to put people through that. But until recently, they haven't had a lot of choices.

They do now. Conversational AI can eliminate CX friction because it deduces what people want by analyzing what they say. LLMs allow intuitive experiences that dramatically outperform rules-based automations that were state of the art a few years ago. This gives AI-powered CX far-reaching implications for agencies and the public.

AI IN CX SNAPSHOT
The Veteran Requesting Housing Support

A Marine Corps veteran is unemployed and at risk of becoming unhoused. He calls a county agency that cooperates with the Veterans Administration to get help. The county agency's AI system is trained to detect the urgency in his voice, which flags the call for priority routing. The agency staffer taking the call receives real-time prompts to ensure empathy while gathering accurate information about the veteran's housing eligibility. The call ends with the veteran getting clear guidance on next steps and setting up a follow-up call.

"It's going to help agencies that are overwhelmed with repetitive calls, like 'Where's my permit?' or 'When is my trash being picked up?'" says Michael Fiocca, public sector vice president with RingCentral, a leading provider of cloud-based enterprise communications systems.

A contact center handling voice, text, email and video can become significantly more productive with AI technologies in place. Conversational AI lets agencies:

AI IN CX SNAPSHOT
The Working Parent Seeking Childcare Assistance

A divorced mother plans to remarry and calls the local child welfare agency to see how it will affect her childcare assistance payments. She has called before, so the AI system recognizes her and accesses her records immediately. An AI agent automatically routes her to the correct program and answers common questions. A live agent picks up the call when the bot can't answer a question. The live agent has ready access to the mom's case history and finishes the call in three minutes instead of 30.

Expand self-service options. Residents can reach out at their convenience and get their questions answered. Note-taking tools convert recordings into searchable digital text. The software can see from previous interactions that a caller, for example, receives Medicaid benefits or housing vouchers. This avoids redundant questions and connects residents more quickly to the services they're looking for.

Analyze call content. AI creates an after-call summary that includes insights on the caller's intent, satisfaction and sentiment. The AI can be trained, for example, to flag angry or dissatisfied callers and elevate the interactions to a supervisor. Data analytics drives smarter decision-making because leaders can see what motivates people to call.

Optimizing call volume. An AI platform can automatically route calls to the people who can resolve them the fastest. Conversational AI apps combined with process automation drive efficiencies and reduce costs while streamlining interactions.

Elevating workforce engagement. Because the software is always quantifying call effectiveness, supervisors can use it as a motivation tool. "You can make your staff more productive and, quite honestly, happier," Fiocca says. Consider the burnout risk for people answering the same questions 17 times a day. AI can reduce that risk, improving

AI IN CX SNAPSHOT

The Contact Center Manager

A manager wears many hats, keeping agents moving in the right direction while digging deep on strategy, quality and productivity. AI apps and dashboards deliver real-time intel on call volumes, staff performance and caller sentiment. The contact center manager no longer has to depend on anecdotes; she acts on hard data pinpointing roadblocks and overcomplicated processes. She can reduce wait times, match agents to the right jobs and limit escalations that stretch out constituent calls.

The Contact Center High Performer

The best person on your team is knowledgeable, fast and dependable — and burned out. Repetitive work and rote documentation take up a lot of her time, and she spends much of her day answering the same basic questions for constituents. But with AI-enhanced CX tools, she can use predictive analytics to proactively address callers' concerns before they mention them. A bot handles repetitive, easy-to-answer caller questions. And other AI tools automatically summarize calls and provide instant document records. Your high performer can devote more time to solving important caller challenges and providing real help to constituents who need it most. Her workload is lighter, she's happier in her job and she stays with your agency even when recruiters try to hire her away.

retention. AI trained on an agency knowledge base also gets new hires up to speed faster and reduces the training load on supervisors and team leads.

Enabling omnichannel conversations. The technology works across text, voice and video, ensuring people can communicate on their favorite devices in their preferred formats.

Choosing and Implementing AI Solutions

Layering AI into CX creates tantalizing possibilities for government leaders. Getting too caught up in the tools, however, can send you in costly and counterproductive directions. "You have to lead with the mission, not the technology," Fiocca says.

As you plan, purchase, implement and iterate on AI in CX, keep the following points in mind:

Assess your needs. Identify what you hope to achieve with AI. Identify pain points and use cases that can deliver valuable ROI. Maybe you want to lower wait times or reduce the number of dropped calls.

Put yourself in your customer's place. Chart the path of the customer experience journey for your constituents. Which roadblocks or bottlenecks create persistent aggravation? What barriers lead to angry calls to elected officials? Where could streamlined, AI-enabled conversations drive useful improvements?

Analyze your tech stack. If you're still using a legacy PBX system, you'll have substantially different needs than an agency that has a cloud-based unified-communications platform. Modern communications systems typically integrate multiple application programming interfaces (APIs) to share data with platforms for customer relationship management (CRM), enterprise resource planning (ERP) and other mission-critical software.

The Non-English Speaker Applying for Benefits

A recently widowed grandmother calls a local agency to apply for help paying her utility bills. She'd rather speak her native Spanish, which is no problem because the system recognizes her spoken language and switches to a bilingual virtual agent. The AI's voice analysis tool can tell if she's confused or confounded. If that happens, the call goes to a Spanish-speaking agent who walks her through the application.

Getting AI Governance Right

Data governance sets up guardrails that help agencies manage AI risks. Sound governance policies ensure that proper data protections, legal considerations and regulatory compliance measures are in place.

Foundations

☐ **Create formal AI governance teams.** Agencies typically assign an AI oversight committee staffed with representatives from all departments that handle sensitive data in finance, health and other personally identifiable information (PII). Governance teams should also include subject matter experts in law, security, fraud, privacy and IT.

☐ **Keep up with evolving regulations.** The AI landscape shifts rapidly. Governance teams need a strategy for flagging new regulations and staying abreast of new ones in the pipeline.

☐ **Monitor impacts.** An AI model could unintentionally create outcomes or content that discriminate against certain users. Governance teams should implement real-time monitoring for demographic groups, identifying any problems and fixing them ASAP.

Core Principles

☐ **Transparency.** Governance must address the "black box" challenges that have historically plagued AI systems. AI processes and decision-making must be open and explainable. Users and stakeholders must be informed about AI processes in the services they use.

☐ **Fairness.** Agencies need governance policies that aim to remove bias and discrimination from AI outputs. Fairness ensures that agencies serve residents no matter what background they come from or group they belong to.

☐ **Accountability.** Someone must answer for the results of AI systems. Proper governance ensures that specific people are accountable for AI outcomes and that they oversee mechanisms to fix errors and prevent them from recurring.

☐ **Privacy.** Sensitive private data must have robust protections against deliberate breaches and accidental inputs into AI interfaces. Governance provides guidelines to prevent disclosure of residents' data without their consent.

☐ **Safety.** AI systems must not harm agency staff, disrupt operations, nor endanger constituents or staff. AI must operate reliably and predictably within established ethical and legal principles. Governance acknowledges the risks of AI and creates procedures to reduce or eliminate them.

Vendor Requirements

☐ **Privacy by Design.** Agencies should partner with vendors that follow privacy by design (PbD) principles, a framework that ensures privacy considerations are baked into the design and operation of systems, products and services from the outset.

☐ **Human oversight.** Vendor AI solutions should have defined human-in-the-loop processes, especially in areas like unemployment and social welfare benefits, to make sure constituents receive the services they need.

☐ **Explainability.** Vendors must be able to document how their AI models work and to provide audit trails that can help diagnose problems and drive fast resolutions. Vendors should be able to show how AI reaches conclusions, generates content and steers users toward outcomes.

☐ **Risk assessments.** Vendors must offer straightforward analyses of the risks your agency incurs when adding AI services — and the steps they have taken to mitigate those risks.

☐ **Government experience.** Work with a partner that has extensive experience helping agencies in the public sector. It's important for a vendor to understand the intricacies, processes and unique needs of the government space.

AI Impacts

Business leaders are optimistic about using AI to analyze phone calls, customer conversations or voice recordings. In one recent survey[1], private sector leaders said they expect AI will result in:

67%
Faster resolution times

60%
General improvements in customer satisfaction

53%
Fewer customer complaints

48%
Reduced agent burnout

Engage stakeholders. Involve everyone from the outset. Let residents know these tools are coming and ask them to weigh in on them. Engage executives, elected officials, office employees and field staff to find out what they need in improved, automated communication.

Make sure everyone understands what they stand to gain from AI. Use training and transparency to encourage people to experiment and familiarize themselves with the new tools. "Technology lives or dies on adoption," Fiocca says. Getting people excited about new capabilities prevents you from installing something nobody uses.

Seek vendor alignment. Look for vendors that understand your distinct needs and have a strong track record in the public sector. Vendors should have comprehensive governance and transparency policies that put privacy first and limit the likelihood of exposing constituent data to AI models.

Start small. Pilot low-risk use cases that drive high impact. Many agencies feel comfortable with a basic chatbot that answers common questions in plain language, freeing staff from doing that themselves. A pilot program or proof-of-concept project can uncover technology gaps you might have overlooked during your initial assessment.

Scale up. Once you've piloted a few use cases, you can iterate based on the lessons learned. User feedback is crucial to determining what people want and where a solution has gone astray. Conversational AI can be an excellent feedback generator because it can analyze words, expressions and vocal tone, revealing emotions that a user survey would most likely miss.

Measuring Success

Metrics are fundamental to an AI-assisted CX. Here are some of the most important ways to know how you're doing.

Customer satisfaction. The best way to know what customers think of your user experience is to ask them. In the past, that was easier said than done: Collecting customer satisfaction data meant sending out surveys or getting people to rate their experiences. With AI, tools can detect vocal cues that reveal people's emotions in real time, creating richer insights into user satisfaction.

First-contact resolution. Ideally, you solve problems on the first try. AI can analyze calls, texts and emails to create a holistic assessment of your ability to

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AI IN CX SNAPSHOT

The Contact Center New Hire

A newcomer in a city contact center needs to get up to speed on handling constituent calls. AI-augmented CX tools make it far easier for her to handle calls on her own. When a call comes in, the system shows the caller's history, predicts the likely reason for calling and suggests next steps. The AI agent suggests policy language and simplifies workflows, boosting the new staffer's confidence with complex cases. A voice-tone-recognition tool alerts a supervisor before problems arise. Post-call summaries are produced automatically.

The City Council Member

When constituents reach out to a contact center with a need or complaint, elected officials can use that information to improve services in the future. The same AI-powered sentiment detectors that optimize call centers also help city councilmembers and other officials document problems, laying a foundation for addressing them. As data on wait times, satisfaction and equitable service performance trend upward, elected officials have a data-backed rationale for modernizing more government processes and functions

resolve an issue the first time a constituent raises it. And the technology can show you where to target improvements.

Average handle time. What are the issues most likely to drag out interactions and delay solutions? With AI, you can track interaction times from beginning to end — including after the call is over. This data gives managers critical understanding of where to improve training and remove obstacles while elevating the entire experience.

Average wait time and abandonment rate. Callers get fed up with waiting on hold. They also hang up in the middle of automated interactions. AI can help you analyze the flow of inbound calls and the number of humans on hand to address them. With intelligent routing, calls go to the people best suited to responding to and resolving a caller's issue. AI can also learn to detect when someone is getting frustrated and likely to hang up soon — and it can set processes in motion to keep them on the line.

Agent attrition and engagement. AI can quantify how long staffers stay on the job and track how well they're engaging with constituents and co-workers. Well-designed AI automations ease the stress on agents, reducing burnout.

AI IN CX SNAPSHOT
The Agency Executive

City managers and county administrators depend on trustworthy, timely data in areas like demographics and overall public service quality. In the past, quarterly reports might have been the best data available. But with an AI-powered CX platform, analytics give executives live data that uncovers chokepoints and reveals success stories. Predictive insights help executives anticipate CX problems and address them while they're still fixable. If they want to reallocate resources or expand digital self-services, AI will guide them in the right direction.

Better CX Means Better Government

When you combine conversational AI tools with robust governance, you get much more than automated public services. Your staff, leadership and the general public gain experiences that are smarter and faster —building trust at time when governments need it.

Ultimately the impact of conversational AI on CX is simple: The sooner you solve people's problems, the happier they'll be.

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The Contact Center Team Leader

Team leads in a contact center provide support, motivation and guidance. AI in a CX-centered contact platform helps team leads work with agents to improve their performance and job satisfaction. Dashboards show shifts in customer sentiment while tracking critical service metrics. AI-generated transcripts help identify trends and customize feedback, so new hires and high performers get more targeted guidance.

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