



FROM INSIGHT TO ACTION:

How User Research Drives Efficient Government Services

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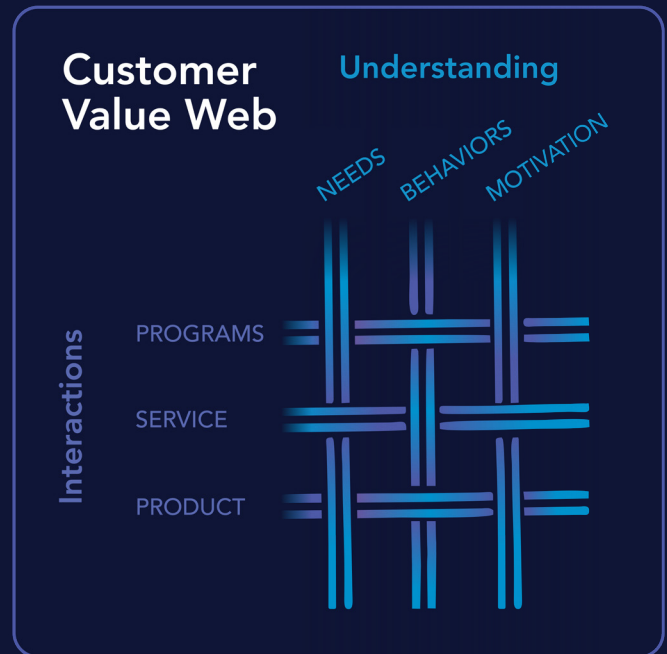
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If your federal agency is **just venturing into the world of customer experience (CX)**, human-centered design, and customer-centric solutions, you're probably still honing your ability to identify sound CX strategies. Some knowledge of user research fundamentals can help.

One indicator of a sound CX approach is that it is based on thorough user research tailored to your agency's goals. Here are some user research basics that'll help you identify this hallmark of sound CX strategy — whether you're developing that strategy within your agency or with an outside provider.

"User research helps you understand your customers' behaviors, needs, and motivations and the experience they have while interacting with your agency's program, service, or product."



WHAT'S USER RESEARCH AND WHY DO IT?

User research is the systematic investigation of your customers' interactions with one of your agency's programs, services, or products. You might conduct user research, for example, to better understand your customer's experience of using your website.

User research is a subset of customer research, which examines all interactions a customer has with your organization — for example, interactions with a website, on-site physical interactions, person-to-person interactions, etc.

FAST AND EFFICIENT DELIVERY. EFFECTIVE PRODUCTS AND SERVICES.

By conducting user research, your agency can deliver products and services faster and more efficiently, make customers happier, and drive mission success.

User research helps you understand your customers' behaviors, needs, and motivations, and fosters a sense of empathy. It helps you identify customer pain points and determine how well you're serving customers. It's also an opportunity to examine, and verify or disprove, the assumptions you've made about users.

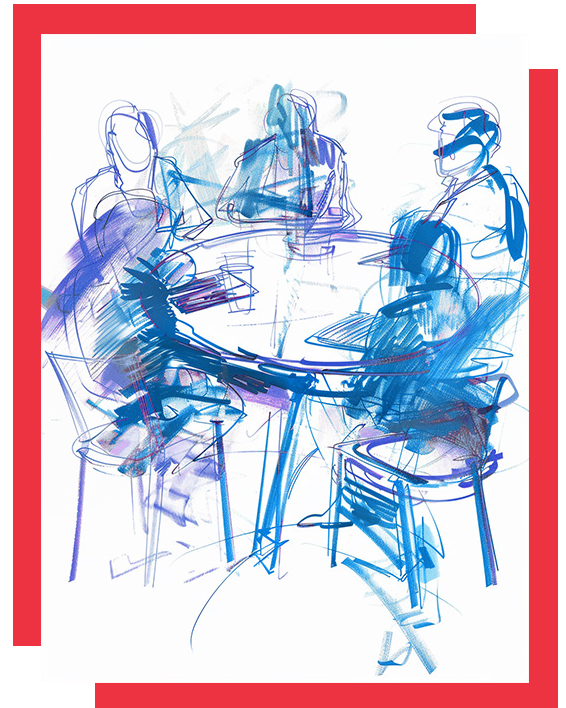
With a better understanding of those you serve, you can design and develop improved programs, services, and products that meet customer needs. You can know that you're solving the right problems and not wasting resources on efforts destined to fail.

MORE THAN JUST SURVEYS

Without conducting user research, you're likely to encounter service or product delivery delays, inefficiency, and a compromised customer experience. And if your user research only consists of surveys, your results may not be much better.

It's not that surveys are bad. They have their use, particularly at the beginning of research efforts, when they can help you plan the research to come. Surveys alone, however, are unlikely to provide the in-depth understanding you need to fuel CX improvements.

Here's a list of some user research methods that — when strategically combined and tailored to your CX goals — can provide you with a deep understanding of your customers and the experience you're providing for them.



5 TYPES OF USER RESEARCH



Surveys — Quick and easy to create, surveys can provide you with a fundamental, high-level view of many users' thoughts and opinions.



Focus Groups — By allowing researchers to ask follow-up questions and have actual discussions, focus group research can provide you with a deep understanding of your customers' experiences.



Workshops — Similar to focus groups in that they involve a small number of users, workshops allow you to brainstorm with users to solve problems.



Observation — By observing users while they interact with your program, service, or product, you can gather reliable data, get real-time feedback, and identify user preferences.



Interviews — One-on-one interviews enable researchers to hold in-depth conversations, ask clarifying questions, and gather detailed, complex user feedback.

BUILD YOUR CX SUCCESS ON USER RESEARCH

CX strategies can enable effective, efficient, equitable government services that build public trust and drive mission success. But your CX solution won't yield benefits if it's built on insubstantial research and inadequate customer data.

Whether your CX strategy is being developed within your agency or with an outside provider, make sure you invest adequate time and resources in user research.

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