



PUBLIC SECTOR

IMPROVING CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE AND OPERATIONAL EFFICIENCY

A QMATIC WHITEPAPER

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Abstract

From city halls and tax offices to embassies and consulates, finding ways to optimize the customer experience with the best use of resources, centrally set targets and low costs are all significant challenges.

This white paper describes these challenges from a customer perspective and offers possible solutions.

Qmatic has been in the customer experience business for more than 30 years. Improving customer experiences and operational efficiency with Qmatic's Customer Flow Management (CFM) methodology, our solutions, systems and know-how have been applied to the Public sector all over the world

Customer Experience Management (CEM) and Customer Flow Management (CFM) help organizations worldwide to reduce costs while offering superior service.

Introduction

“Innovation leaders in the EU are more concerned about finding radical new approaches to define and deliver public services.”

Governments all over the globe face great challenges in delivering services to their citizens in an effective and efficient way. An aging population drives the need for change in services, forcing public institutions to be more innovative every day.

Meeting budget cuts is a real challenge, one that can be met through efficient service delivery or effective service design. If you add political ambition and public demand for better, quicker and cheaper service, you have a hard knot to untie.

Design and management of the complete customer journey is needed to meet these challenges. Individual touch points are not enough.

If the complete customer journey is in place, measurement of progress and results can drive continuous performance improvements, which are dramatically easier to facilitate.

This methodology fits very well with new governance models in the public sector that put the citizen at the center.

1) Innovation in Europe Thematic Report 2012 under Specific Contract for the Integration of INNO Policy TrendChart with ERAWATCH - 3 December 2012

Public Challenges

Even though customers of public services (citizens) do not often have more choices of how, when and where they receive service today, they are still demanding customers. They want the best possible service for their tax dollars.

Not surprisingly, governments are simultaneously focusing on the quality of service delivery and cost reductions.

From our involvement in the public sector, we've identified four central challenges:

- (1) Improving efficiency
- (2) Improving the customer experience
- (3) Increasing staff satisfaction
- (4) Driving business improvements through data and analytics

So, how can Customer Experience Management (CEM) and Customer Flow Management (CFM) methodologies turn these challenges into opportunities so that staff and customers alike benefit?



Fig 1. Understanding and managing the customer journey is key in delivering improved customer experience in the public sector.

Meeting the challenges

CHALLENGE 1: IMPROVING EFFICIENCY

Being able to handle more customers with limited resources and tighter budgets without compromising the quality of service is no small task. By applying CFM methodology, organizations can increase processing capacity while actually reducing costs and improving service levels.

In effect, making the best use of time results in a more positive customer experience while staff becomes motivated by a calm and orderly workplace.



Shrink the “gap” between customers

Having to wait for a customer to approach the counter only to tell him that he has been waiting in the wrong line is stressful for both customers and staff. Fortunately, there are many ways the CFM methodology helps eliminate confusion and reduces wasted time between transactions. For example, CFM solutions can direct customers to the right service point at the right time, streamlining the overall customer flow.

With the right CFM solution you can organize linear queues for short transaction services. You can also track customers throughout the entire process. Knowing where every individual is in the customer management process simplifies coordination while clear signage helps reduce reaction and walking time.

Speed up the right service

The more you know about a customer before serving them, the more likely you can provide the right service more quickly. Improving the efficiency of the transaction allows staff members to take care of more customers, or spend more time with customers who have special or complex needs.

To reduce transaction time without sacrificing quality of service, a CFM solution can inform staff about the customer’s objectives before the customer reaches the counter. This ability enables staff to prepare while waiting for the approaching customer. By making it possible to identify the customer’s service needs early on, organizations can better match customer needs with the right competence, which also saves time. In addition, a CFM solution provides staff with information about the workload ahead so that they can plan and prepare accordingly.

Using a self-service check-in solution empowers the customer and provides the means for better matchmaking.

Spend more time with customers

Every customer is different. Sometimes a customer is looking for a quick answer to a simple question. Other times, the right service means being able to spend more time with a customer. So why handle them in the same way?

A CFM solution gives organizations flexibility and increased efficiency so that the amount of time spent with a customer is proportionate to their need. For example, organizations can identify the customer's service needs upon arrival so that simple service requests can be addressed without the customer having to go to the main service desk. This process allows organizations to increase the number of simple inquiries or service transactions handled at welcome stations. For more complex customer requirements or needs, organizations have the benefit of channel migration to support the most effective service models.

A CFM solution also eliminates the time and effort needed to manually collect and compile various wait time and customer flow reports by providing automatically updated reports. This capability helps free up staff from peripheral tasks so that they can provide the best possible service to every customer.

Make best use of staff and space

The lunch crunch: you know it well. Instead, imagine being able to spread out the service workload evenly throughout the day. With a CFM solution, organizations can optimise workforce requirements by steering customers to less busy hours such as with a calendar booking system that helps eliminate over staffing or understaffing. Organizations can also look forward to real-time monitoring and resource planning of staff. Managers are notified when service-level targets are not achieved so that they can take proactive steps. In addition, it is possible to integrate the system with Work Force Management (WFM) systems.

With a CFM solution it is possible to use limited floor space in a more efficient way. Instead of having several local waiting areas, you can combine them into one larger, centralized waiting area. The CFM solution is then used to guide customers, informing them when it is their turn and where to go.

CHALLENGE 2: IMPROVING THE CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE

Chances are your customers are not coming by for the fun of it. They have an important reason for visiting. Perhaps it is an urgent, stressful situation. No matter the reason, customers are people who deserve the most positive customer experience possible. This is where our CFM methodology comes into play.



Boost service quality

At the heart of the customer experience is the quality of service provided. So why not welcome customers with a meet and greet solution? Our CFM solution can also increase service quality by appropriately matching customers and staff based on the customer's need and staff competence, or "skill-based routing." In addition, employees are in a stronger position to meet specific customer needs since they have access to the customer's service history and can prepare accordingly.

When it comes to service quality there is always room for improvement. It is a continuous effort. With our customer survey model, you can poll customers to get their first-hand opinion on the service level experienced, helping to identify improvement opportunities.

Reduce actual waiting time

Waiting to be served is usually a waste of time. It can be frustrating and stressful. Customers can feel neglected. Waiting time also says a lot about the efficiency, and perhaps even commitment of the organization. The goal is to keep wait time to a suitable length. After all, it goes hand-in-hand with an enhanced customer experience.

In addition to streamlining the customer flow and making it more efficient, our CFM solution can reduce the actual wait time for customers by steering them to less busy hours such as with an efficient calendar booking system to make appointments. Our solution also provides real-time monitoring and resource planning of staff. Managers are alerted when service-level targets are not achieved so that they can work proactively.

Reduce perceived waiting time

The longest wait is the one you cannot control. For customers, it is often the *perceived* waiting time that matters most. Our CFM solution can reduce the perceived waiting time by using media solutions in the waiting area to present information and entertainment. This solution also contributes to a more efficient process and reduces actual waiting time, since the information presented can help customers to better prepare before service. We call this active waiting, and it makes time fly.



Fig 2. Qmatic Customer Journey gives control of all the surfaces in the branch and not just the big screens on the wall as with typical Digital Signage suppliers.

A city hall reduced average service time from 50 to 17 minutes.

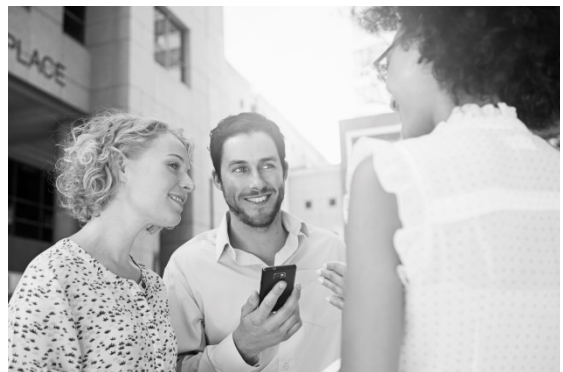
Promote a sense of calm, order and respect

Everyone wants to be treated like people, not cattle. Fortunately, a calm and orderly waiting area is also a more efficient and productive one. A CFM solution removes the mystery and stress from the wait by guiding and updating customers about where to go, where to wait and expected waiting times. Simply put, with CFM, customers know that they are in-process and are not forgotten.

By implementing virtual queuing, which removes the need for a physical waiting line, the waiting experience can be made more pleasant. The customer's place in the virtual queue is secured with an identifier, such as a number printed on a customer service receipt or sent to their phone as a text message. More frequently, mobile apps on smartphones are being implemented. This solution also helps fulfil the customer's privacy requirements. When applied correctly, virtual queuing is both fair and welcoming.

CHALLENGE 3: INCREASE STAFF SATISFACTION

Attracting and keeping qualified employees is essential for any organization. However, this is not always easy to achieve. What is more, an employee that appreciates his or her tasks and workplace is more likely to take care of customers in a proficient and positive way.



CFM methodology can increase staff satisfaction by streamlining the customer flow and making it more efficient. This process, in turn, creates a more orderly and relaxed environment for staff and customers. Satisfied customers are usually friendlier towards employees, contributing to a positive workday.

A CFM solution also contributes to a sense of professionalism since it gives employees knowledge about the customers, and better matches employee competence with customer needs. Staff can take pride in knowing that they are informed and ready to meet customer requirements and provide the best possible service. In addition, staff is supported by real-time monitoring and resource planning.

CHALLENGE 4: DRIVING BUSINESS IMPROVEMENTS THROUGH DATA AND ANALYTICS

When it comes to the operational efficiency and the customer experience, there is always room for improvement. The challenge is where and how. A CFM solution

can supply management with historical and real-time statistical data that can help drive improvement. The data is automatically captured by the system at every step in the process. This process gives organizations a well-organized and effective way to gather data, compared to manual data collection.

Enhancing performance

Using tools to determine and analyze data such as customer throughput per hour, waiting time per customer and cost per transaction, allows management to focus on areas with high improvement potential. In this manner, staff members are able to initiate the right operational improvement activities based on the data and knowledge offered by the system. This process results in benefits such as improved efficiency, shortened waiting time and reduced costs. By collecting data on service delivery outcomes, for instance, a CFM solution supports performance management of staff. With real-time data, managers can take immediate actions to use staff more efficiently and reduce waiting times. Moreover, a CFM solution opens up innovative benchmarking opportunities based on historical data to help organizations continuously improve.



Results

The wrong CFM solution can be worse than having no solution at all. Over the last 30 years we have worked with many world-leading organizations in the public and private sectors, from governments to Fortune 500 companies. Below are just a few examples of what clients have achieved with our solutions.

- A city council improved service resolution rates from 74 to 94 percent over a nine month period.
- A city hall reduced average service time from 50 to 17 minutes.
- A city council improved productivity by 16 percent, representing an annual savings of more than \$250,000.
- A city council decreased average transaction time from 14 to 10 minutes due to a five percent increase in “casual callers.”
- An embassy reduced average waiting time from six hours to one hour.

If you want to know more about what your business can achieve with our solutions, contact us. We will be happy to prepare an ROI model based on your business model and customer needs.

About Qmatic

*“There is only one boss - the customer. And he can fire everyone from the chairman down, simply by spending his money somewhere else.”
Sam Walton, 1977*

Qmatic’s goal is to realize the full potential of every meeting. We help our clients engage and interact with their customers from the very first touch point. We gather information around the customer journey and help create brand value from improved customer experiences. By creating a seamless customer journey from online channels through to face-to-face meetings, we increase customer experiences and strengthen our clients’ brands.

Qmatic holds a market leading position in the financial services, retail, and healthcare industries as well as the public sector. It is estimated that more than a quarter of the world’s population pass through a Qmatic system every year.

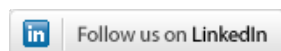
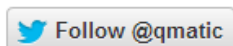
Qmatic has a truly global footprint and operates in over 120 countries through subsidiaries and partner networks. The Qmatic Group has a turnover of EUR 60 million and employs over 300 people. The company’s main owners are Altor Fund II GP Limited and ICG.

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