

A Look at Citizen Engagement

Executive Summary

Citizen engagement continues to evolve year after year, but isn't where the agency or citizen want it to be.

Through this survey we explored how engagement is defined and our perception of what citizens expect.

As public agencies and partners in the industry we will inspecting our current practices and our vision for the future.



This “Look at Citizen Engagement” report by Government Business Results, LLC provides insight into today's citizen engagement landscape, considerations for technology driving change and strategies for successful citizen engagement in the future.

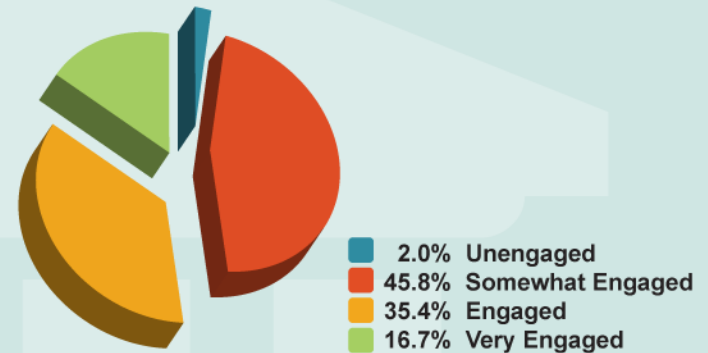
Despite Nearly 2 Decades Of Effort, Agencies Still Struggle With Engagement Levels

Citizen-centric service delivery is evolving but citizen engagement levels are not yet meeting agency expectations.

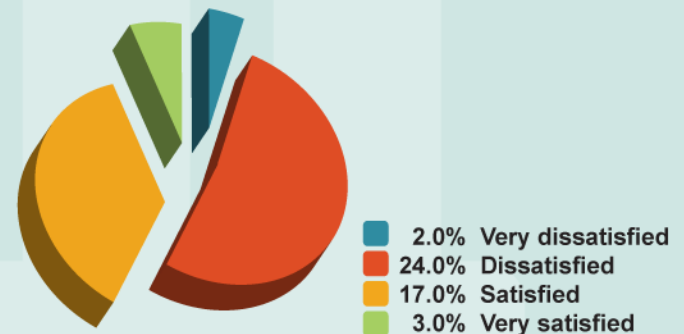
A low percentage (16.7%) of agency responders perceived *very engaged* citizens.

Less than one quarter (20%) of responders were *satisfied/very satisfied* with the engagement between the agencies who responded and their citizens.

How would you categorize the current level of engagement with the citizens you support/represent?



How satisfied are you with the current level of engagement between your agency and citizens?



Citizen Engagement is a Two-Way Street

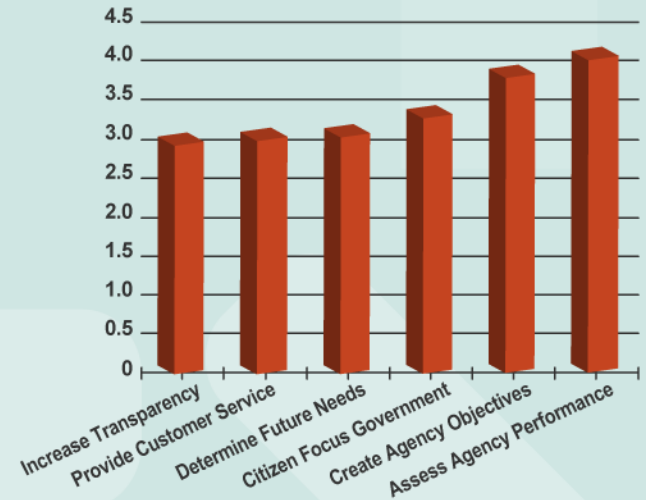
Open dialog and regular communication will increase two-way exchanges, and ultimately agency performance.

But right now the vision of a two-way engagement is not yet realized.

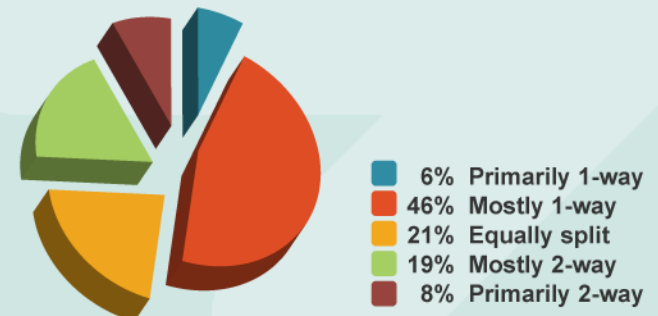
Survey responses showed *agency performance* as a top goal of a successful citizen engagement plan.

At least half of survey responses think citizen engagement today is *primarily or mostly one-way*.

Rank the following as goals of a successful citizen engagement plan:



Does your communication with citizens lean more towards one-way engagement or two-way engagement?



Citizens Desire Access to Information Before They Engage

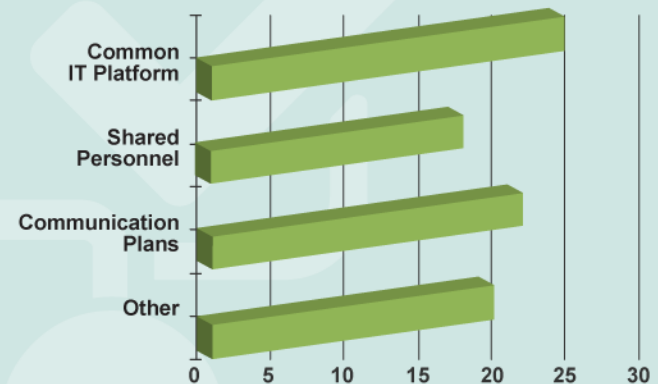
When citizens are able to get familiar with and expect consistent information across agencies, it builds citizen confidence.

Make information available from many touch points to maximize citizen reach. Do not discount 'traditional' channels.

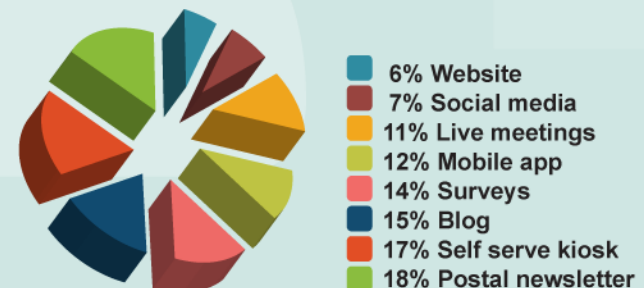
Cross agency coordination in survey responses included: *(using) common IT platforms and (coordinated) communication plans.*

There was a *fairly even distribution* in strategic value placed on tools to drive citizen engagement. Not exclusively virtual, *self-serve kiosk* and *postal newsletter* were top valued tools.

In what ways have you coordinated with other agencies as part of your citizen engagement efforts?



Strategic value of tools in driving citizen engagement:



Modern Communication Platforms Are Changing Citizen Expectations

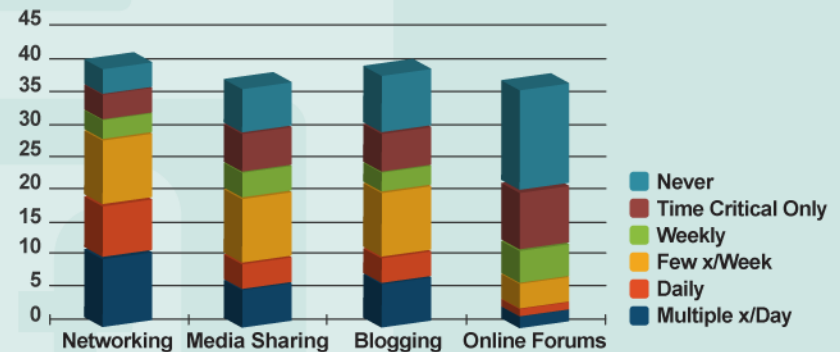
Adoption of always-on social media channels has increased citizen expectation for access and information.

Frequent updates and consistent presence are key to maintaining engagement.

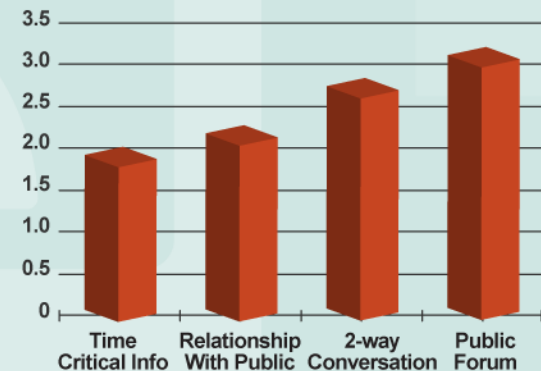
A majority of responders are posting on agency social media channels *a few times a week (or less)*.

Survey responses on the value of social media included: *(as a) public forum and two-way engagement*.

How often does your agency typically post via the following types of social media?
Networking, Media Sharing, Blogging and Online Forums



Social media: In order of importance, how do the following impact your social media campaign efforts for driving citizen engagement.



Proven Citizen Engagement Strategies



Map the citizen journey

Walk a mile in the citizens shoes to personalize and deliver citizen-centric services



Test first, prove or abort!

Run a pilot: validate your approach and gain support or advance your insight to adjust and re-test.



Insight from the outside.

Use expertise outside your organization
- cultivate champions and 'agents' to engage citizens

In Conclusion

Agencies are asking the hard questions and applying new approaches to find the answers for stronger citizen engagement.

Technology is not the simple answer. A new tool applied to the same process will modify the path, but it doesn't change the outcome.

A shift in expectations and results will guide critical adjustments to pave a new path forward.

Citizen Engagement: Agency-direct to the public.

Social media and modern communication vehicles have provided forums for bi-directional agency and citizen engagement *without filter or translation*. This is just an example of the significance of a shift in the process that is greatly impacting the outcome.

Survey

*Goal is to gain
and share insights for
government agencies
to improve
engagement with the
citizens they serve.*

The questions in the survey were developed based on an evaluation of trending citizen engagement topics. The survey consisted of 13 questions of mixed type.

The survey was sent out to several thousand public sector employees. The population of survey recipients included both state, local and Federal employees. Government Business Results, LLC conducted the survey on behalf of Carahsoft, from May to June 2016.

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