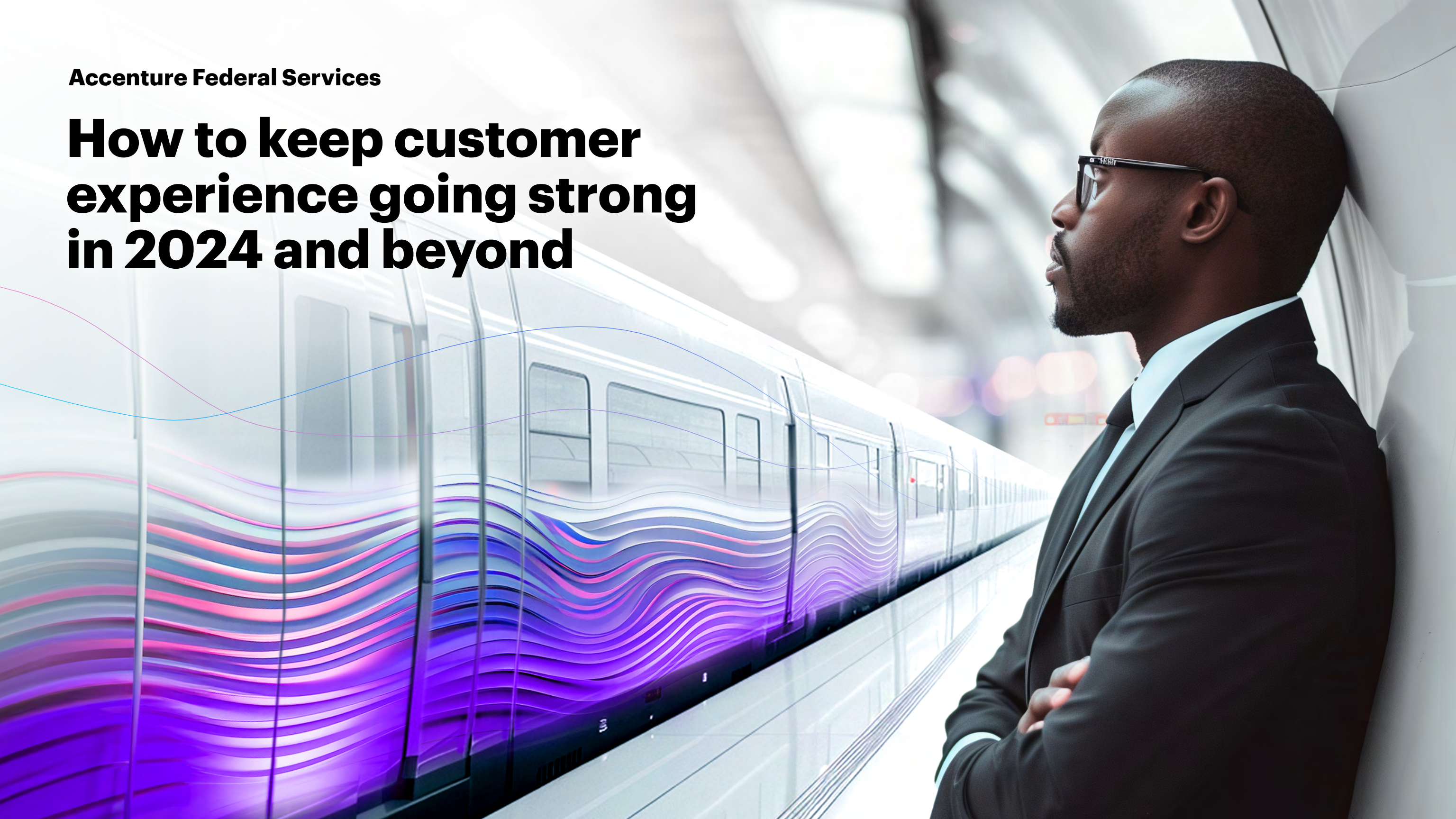


Accenture Federal Services

How to keep customer experience going strong in 2024 and beyond



As global trends like generative AI, shifts in customer values, and accelerating innovation continue to transform society, it's more important than ever for federal agencies to keep their focus on putting people first.

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Customer obsession is falling in the private sector, according to the Accenture Life Trends 2024 report.

One reason: Economic considerations have forced many companies to reduce their workforces, increase their prices, and provide less robust customer service. The result? Customers feel disappointed and less valued. They trust the brands they once relied on less. At the same time, public trust in the government continues to be at historic lows. Yet across the federal government, the government's maturity in applying human-centered design and enhancing customer experience continues to accelerate. The momentum behind it and the latest data shows real results.

Since the executive order on transforming customer experience more than two years ago, the federal government has made big strides in improving the design and delivery of

its services. Federal leaders have embraced the opportunity to prioritize customer experience, from providing essential health services at the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs to helping students with financial aid at the Office of Federal Student Aid to improving taxpayer services at the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and beyond. When the government provides people with a good experience, one that's equitable, accessible, and efficient, it can make a huge difference, particularly for those who have been historically underserved. Numerous federal agencies among the High Impact Service Providers have created a chief customer experience officer or chief digital experience officer position. Many have built new technological infrastructures, engaged in human-centered design projects, prioritized digital-first experiences, and tracked their department-wide impact with measurable outcomes, and accountability and transparency. While there's still work to do to build trust, there is similar opportunity to advance a "whole

of government" approach and inter-government collaboration essential to serving life experiences. And now's the time to address it.

Of course, we know that rapid changes (like the combination of rising generative AI, shifting values, and accelerating innovation) will increase the importance of human-centered design and customer experience. So, looking ahead, it will be critical to build out a future workforce that believes in its mission and is enabled with modern, streamlined, experience-oriented tools to build and grow trust. Here, we highlight how some federal agencies have already become employers of choice, leveraging experience strategies to successfully meet people's needs, and how any organization—wherever they are on their digital journey—can apply similar approaches to prepare for the future.



Taking a closer look:

Three examples of inclusive, human-centric customer experience

At its core, successful customer experience is rooted in the concept of designing for, by, and with the people who use the products and services, including the most vulnerable populations who rely on those services working successfully. As more organizations work to improve equity, accessibility, and efficiency in their service design and delivery, [we can learn lessons from agencies that are already leading the way.](#)

The Department of Homeland Security: Online Filing Experience

Historically, navigating the immigration process has been a long, complicated, and highly consequential journey for millions of applicants every year. Between taking pains to provide the most accurate information on immigration forms, to responding to correspondence in a timely manner, to successfully completing the immigration interview, the whole process can feel weighty and burdensome. Since 2016, however, the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Service (USCIS) has invested heavily in improving the experience of applicants to build a more seamless online filing and digital adjudications process. Now, in 2024 with the backing of recent executive orders, policy guidance, and the newly established DHS CX Directorate, USCIS is doubling down on providing effective customer experience to the broad swath of USCIS's customers. As a part of that journey, Accenture Federal

Services works with USCIS to design and develop a suite of digital self-service tools such as secure messaging to address complex case questions, change of address for previously filed immigration applications, and personalized processing times for pending cases. These tools, alongside expansion of online filing and other CX advancements, meaningfully improve the critical moments that matter along the immigration journey and enabled over 3 million online filings for new forms in FY23, all while reducing the burden and complexity of applying for and tracking immigration benefits cases.

3M+
applications of newly available forms were filed in FY23 through the streamlined online process.





The Internal Revenue Service: Multilingual Improvement Strategy

Over the past few years, the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) has worked proactively with taxpayers, particularly in underserved communities, by providing more customer-centric education, outreach, and digital tools. In one example of this work, Accenture Federal Services partnered with the agency on a large-scale engagement to support the multilingual community. Using a human-centered, impact-focused design approach, we went beyond typical demographic factors to understand behavioral insights so that we could design a system that truly serves all customers. For instance, we worked to understand who multilingual taxpayers are, what languages they speak, where they live, and how they access tax information, whether in person through tax centers, online, or over the phone.

We worked with the IRS to ensure taxpayer materials were available in Spanish across every mode (in-person, online, and over the phone). We then identified the most commonly used forms and most commonly searched information on IRS.gov and helped the agency develop a plan to translate this content into six languages, which enabled the agency to reach 81% of multilingual taxpayers. Finally, we helped the IRS to stand up a multilingual, interagency working group of federal employees that could share resources and ensure commonly translated phrases were the same across agencies, helping to build trust through consistency. With a vision of providing multilingual taxpayers more meaningful access to the tools, knowledge, and resources necessary to fulfill their tax obligations, IRS's ultimate goal is an improved experience for all.

Defense Agency: Recruitment Marketing

Attracting and retaining the most qualified talent isn't easy for any organization in today's increasingly competitive job market. But the task becomes especially challenging when you need to recruit people for roles essential to national security or mission-readiness.

To help federal agencies become employers of choice, Accenture Federal Services develops recruitment marketing strategies that communicate clear employee value propositions to the right people. After conducting thorough audience research and gaining relevant insights, we work with clients to co-create a brand identity that speaks to the employee value proposition, mission, and direct career opportunity.

Smart media targeting allows us to bring the right messages and visuals, to the right audience, on the right channels to attract highly qualified, likely interested candidates. By repositioning messaging to amplify motivators, address barriers, and drive action, we can drive application volume and increase application quality. A strong recruitment marketing strategy continues throughout the hiring process and even after someone accepts a role, because the employee value proposition is developed not only to attract talent but to continue building a great employee experience—motivating people to stay and build their career in a branch of the military.



What to do next:

Stay obsessed with improving the customer and employee experience

Looking ahead, several trends will play a role in how federal agencies approach the next phase of progress in customer and employee experience. But one thing is certain: **Putting people first is essential for the government.** So, how can your agency best do that in the coming years?





1.

Embrace the interface shift while focusing on tailored experience design.

As technology continues accelerating and evolving, with GenAI no doubt becoming more prevalent in the private and public sectors, rooting your mission in experience design is a smart way forward. The federal government has to be even more thoughtful than the private sector about how it uses GenAI when it comes to providing essential services and information. As you experiment with GenAI, early and often, keep in mind that **technology is only powerful when it's designed by, for, and with the people who will use it.** Understanding the different ways that people interact with GenAI-enabled products, services, and embedded communications is critical for the federal government to maintain accountability, transparency, trust, and inclusivity. Keep in mind that customer experience designers can be an invaluable resource to help stand up pilots and test scenarios, enabling customers and employees to try new technologies while measuring what works and what doesn't. Questions to consider in experience design pilots might include: What are the second order impacts of this scenario? Was this fair to everyone? Did we have an inclusionary lens? Who trained this data? Designers and data scientists can work together to bring questions like these into play, thinking about desirability, viability, and feasibility, while also incorporating risk mitigation along the way.

Reimagine what's possible with digital-first experiences, but not digital only.

Because the government serves everyone, including the most vulnerable populations, it has to offer services that ensure accessibility, inclusivity, responsibility, and accountability. So, while embracing the latest technologies like GenAI, federal agencies must also continue to offer innovative and inclusive experiences, in person and by phone. That reality is what will help the government uncover new potential for reinventing experiences. With that in mind, consider how to do things differently, particularly with long-term scenario planning. We believe that investing in the right talent, namely people who can hone creative skills to craft something excellent, will be increasingly **valuable in the future**.

“

Where there's a void of novelty, there's opportunity—in a sea of familiarity, originality truly stands out.”

2.





3.

Play a meaningful role at life milestones.

As fundamental societal shifts happen, it's an optimal time for the government to better understand evolving customer mindsets and what motivates their interactions with federal agencies. With a deeper, data-led understanding of what works and what doesn't, the federal government can better prepare to help the current and next generations navigate what's ahead at pivotal life moments—healthcare, education, housing, and more. By building trust in each touchpoint, agencies can mature and amplify the positive customer experiences, at scale across departments and ecosystems. The next phase of the federal customer experience journey will focus on the customer's full journey across products, experiences, and channels, and across organizations. Frictionless experiences, with clear communication, will be essential to inspiring participation and **meeting people's needs**.

About Accenture Federal Services

Accenture Federal Services is a leading US federal services company and subsidiary of Accenture LLP. Our 14,000 people are united in a shared purpose to advance our clients' mission-critical priorities that make the nation stronger and safer, and life better for people. We draw out the best of Accenture's global network in nearly every industry, bringing proven commercial innovation to solutions built with advanced R&D, emerging technologies, and human-centered design at speed and scale. Together, we help clients create lasting value for their workforce, customers, and partners and make a difference for the country and our communities. See how we make change that matters at www.accenturefederal.com.

About Accenture

Accenture is a leading global professional services company that helps the world's leading businesses, governments and other organizations build their digital core, optimize their operations, accelerate revenue growth and enhance citizen services—creating tangible value at speed and scale. We are a talent and innovation led company with 743,000 people serving clients in more than 120 countries. Technology is at the core of change today, and we are one of the world's leaders in helping drive that change, with strong ecosystem relationships. We combine our strength in technology with unmatched industry experience, functional expertise and global delivery capability. We are uniquely able to deliver tangible outcomes because of our broad range of services, solutions and assets across Strategy & Consulting, Technology, Operations, Industry X and Accenture Song. These capabilities, together with our culture of shared success and commitment to creating 360° value, enable us to help our clients succeed and build trusted, lasting relationships. We measure our success by the 360° value we create for our clients, each other, our shareholders, partners and communities. Visit us at www.accenture.com.

Learn more about the five trends that will give commercial and government organizations alike new ways to navigate change in the next 12 months and beyond. Read [Accenture Life Trends 2024](#).



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