

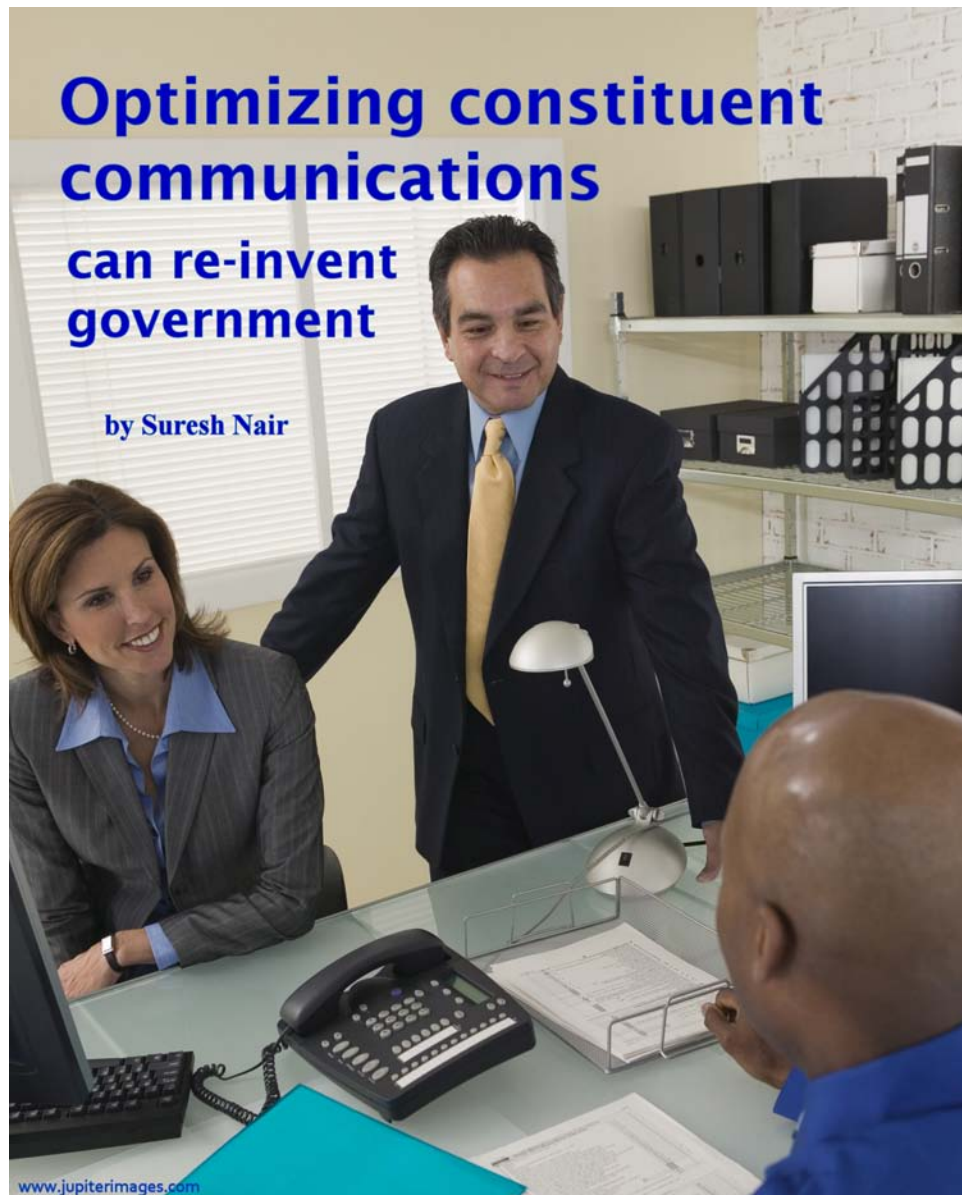
With the initial Internet boom of the 1990s now firmly behind us, we can begin to take for granted some of the considerable benefits that emerged in its wake. We are more interconnected than ever before, and we have access to more information than ever.

But for every technology-derived triumph, another challenge arises. The number of channels for communication multiplies and delivering the right message to the right audience only becomes more troublesome. Mountains of data grow larger and richer yet more difficult to manage, particularly in an age when resources are often stretched.

New technologies present a special set of concerns for government organizations.

How can agencies meet rising citizen expectations in while controlling costs? For executives, the answer lies finding new ways of leveraging existing data and resources without having to scrap existing IT infrastructure.

Today's public sector agencies must face up to two imperatives if they are to truly thrive. They must re-invent the ways their internal bureaucracy functions while also re-weighing the way they interact with the citizens they serve.



Challenges impacting federal government agencies

On a broad level, it is critical for public sector agencies to come to terms with their staggering reservoirs of information. It is necessary for their communication processes to keep pace with their IT infrastructure. And it is crucial for them to move toward an ethos of integrated information and services, recasting themselves as a single enterprise rather than a conglomeration of disparate agencies.

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As funding demands balloon, agencies are forced to focus on only the essential IT projects. Any underlying technology must support a revolution in business processes, work flows, security, data integration and management, online account management and customer communication management.

By utilizing the latest customer intelligence software, agencies can create a single, high-definition view of their customers. Consequently, they can communicate more effectively internally, make more informed decisions, and increase citizen satisfaction.

Ultimately, e-government initiatives must address issues on four areas:

- *e-Services*, or finding a better way to electronically deliver government information, programs and services.
- *e-Management*, or streamlining the way the government operates by using IT to enable new business processes, integrate data and improve communication flow.
- *e-Democracy*, or using IT and communications to increase citizen participation in policy decision making.
- *e-Exchange*, or empowering people to make transactions – from paying taxes to buying government surplus equipment – through electronic channels.

Customer intelligence software has much to offer on all these fronts. For now, let's explore three particularly challenging areas for government agencies and consider how software solutions can help overcome them.

Data quality

Federal government agencies have access to massive amounts of data about the citizens they serve. The question is, what are they doing to leverage this data? Also, in what form does it exist and who can easily access it? In many cases, important information exists in silos where key personnel are unable to tap into it. No matter its potential, inaccessible data is of dubious value.

Consider a situation in which three different law enforcement agencies are working on the same case – or three different cases that might lead to the same suspect. If key information – previous criminal records, incident locations, etc. – is isolated in silos enforcement efforts may stall. But with one federated view of data infrastructure accessible to all authorized parties, the chances of apprehending a suspect suddenly rise.

Customer data can be an organization's most important asset, so the quality of that data is of highest consequence. Data quality software can help agencies manage all their information, capturing it accurately and completely in a timely manner and in a consistent format. Such software can also free it from silos, making it accessible to all authorized users.

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With data quality software, government agencies can create an accurate view of

their customers and then integrate that intelligence into business operations. They can pinpoint opportunities in order to improve targeting, streamline operations and generate more effective communications.

Document creation

Organizations in the public and private sector spend billions of dollars every year on document creation. But where does all that money – and all that paper – go? Sometimes, they themselves may be hard-pressed to answer the question.

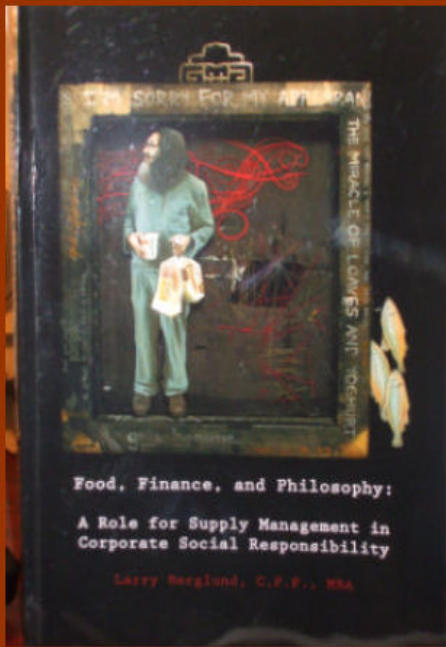
Whether your agency is dealing with simple letters, full-color mailers, statements or messages within a statement, you need the capability to develop documents quickly, collaborate with other users, reuse content and

maintain consistency throughout your organization. Document creation software makes it easy to create in print or electronic formats and deliver across multiple channels.

The impact of producing more organized, personalized, effective content can be felt far down the line. While streamlined operations help an agency function better internally and save significant amounts of money, citizens will appreciate better quality of service – fewer follow-up calls – inevitably leading to higher constituent satisfaction.

Location intelligence

Some estimates contend that approximately 80 percent of all business data has a geographical element to it.



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Agencies that know how to leverage that location component can unlock the potential of their existing information and reap enormous benefits.

By using the right analytic capabilities, organizations can access sophisticated spatial analysis tools, transforming business intelligence into location intelligence. This means public sector agencies can geographically analyze, measure and compare data from operations in conjunction with external data such as service locations, citizen characteristics, revenue trending, and demographics.

Some examples of what location intelligence empowers key government decision-makers to do:


- Centralize tax jurisdiction processes while ensuring compliance.
- Successfully invest in areas where the services are most needed.
- Improve public safety and law enforcement, as well as disaster preparedness.
- Share data with citizens via simple, cost-effective solutions (e.g., self-service web portals).

Government leaders, planners and analysts around the world use location intelligence to plan sustainable growth, improve public services and share information with citizens. Running the

range from desktop and enterprise software, developer tools and data, geographic analysis solutions help governments enhance service offerings, gain operational efficiencies and maximize their operating budget.

Summary

Take a moment to imagine a single public sector agency that makes full use of the software we have highlighted in this article. Now imagine the impact: a workplace where data accuracy and organizational efficiency are commonplace. Documents are created swiftly, and satisfied citizens have a sense of confidence in their government. There is one last image to conjure up: smiles on the faces of your fellow executives when your agency swiftly recoups its initial software investment.

The solutions we have discussed here are merely one part of a larger snapshot, an end-to-end process often called customer communication management. Software solutions in today's marketplace can help drive organizational improvements in everything from database to delivery. Most importantly, they can help public sector agencies realize their promise and potential, running more efficiently and better serving the very people they were designed to help. 

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