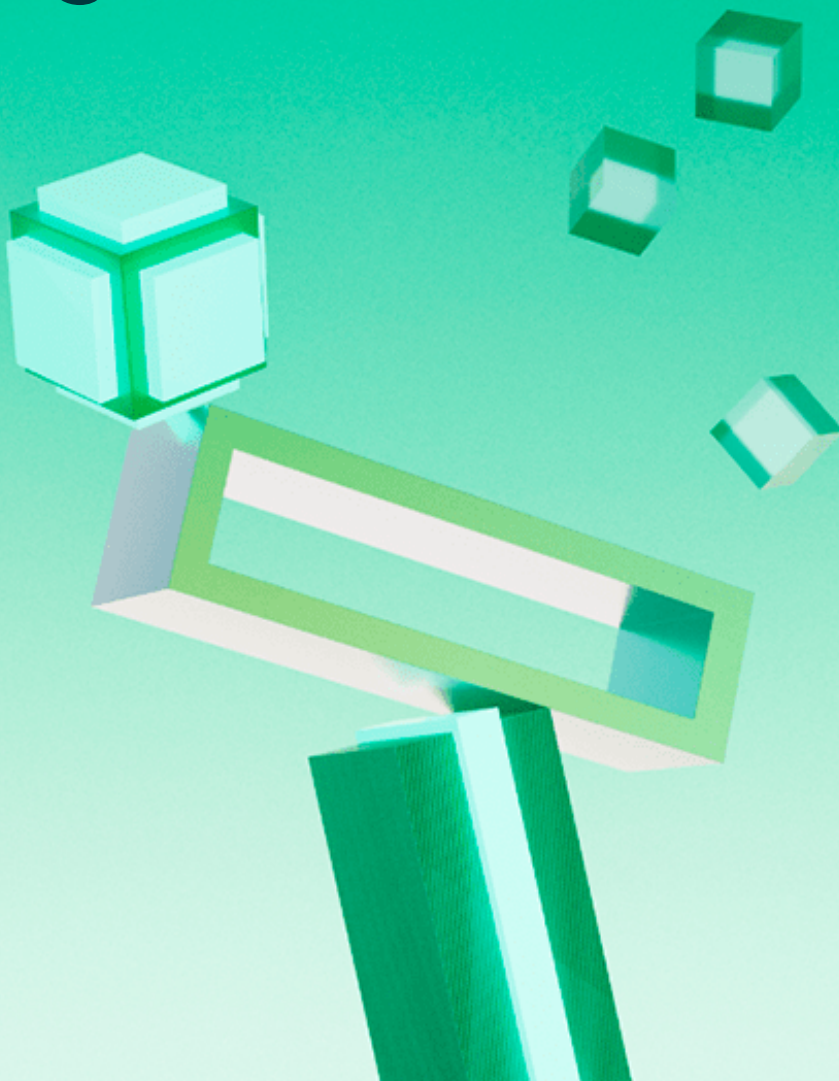


THE DIGITAL TIPPING POINT

# How government can eliminate inefficiencies for better constituent and employee engagement



# Government agencies are at a digital tipping point

In 2020, government agencies made seismic shifts in how they operate as the impacts of COVID-19 transformed customer expectations and workplace dynamics, virtually overnight. Being digital-first and, in many cases, digital-only meant agencies had to rapidly acquire new technologies to reach citizens and connect remote teams. The future of government also lies in the past—and in this case, the past year.

We've collectively reached a digital tipping point, and it's vital to implement digital best practices and IT strategies now to set up government agencies for success in the years to come.

## The government sector's digital tipping point

Technology always moves fast, but the speed at which consumers, businesses, and other organizations are adopting new technologies has accelerated, particularly for the government.

[As reported](#) by Deloitte Insights, “Incremental change often entails governments adopting technologies that were recently adopted in the private sector. In fact, tech adoption in the private sector is a reliable leading indicator for changes we can expect to see in the public sector.”

And Zendesk data supports this. According to our third annual [Customer Experience Trends Report](#), 91 percent of government agencies implemented new tools or processes, while 40 percent managed remote staff.

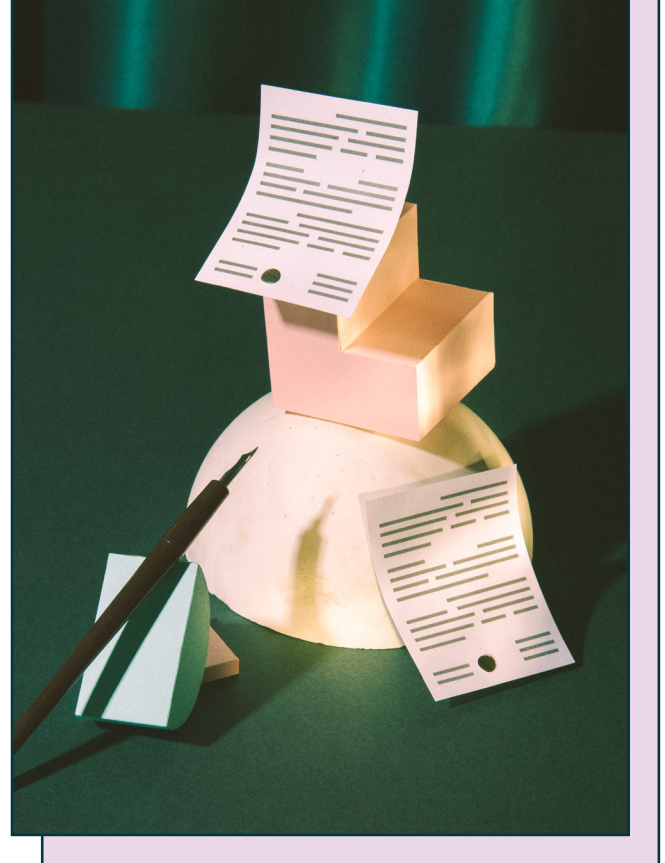
Government agencies have now come to terms with the need to improve legacy systems and antiquated infrastructure. Due to the pandemic, digital transformation is evolving from incremental improvements to disruptive technologies transforming the way agencies work and communicate with citizens.



# Physical and virtual have blended

The dramatic shift to a digital-first approach unveiled challenges in government agencies' current workflows. Government agencies were faced with managing a remote workforce and handling traditionally in-person tasks via digital platforms.

As citizens turned to the government for answers during the shutdown, agencies had to rapidly adapt and shift their strategies. We saw agencies across the country, such as the DMV and unemployment offices, quickly move many services online or modernize the digital systems they already had in place.



## Digital infrastructure is pushed to the limits

Since government agencies transitioned to a digital-first approach last year, online and legacy systems have been stressed due to the increased volume of inquiries and traffic.

Departments ranging from [unemployment offices](#) to the [courts system](#) were faced with an overwhelming amount of inquiries from citizens looking for answers or assistance during uncertain times. Not only were agencies flooded, managing both in-person and online requests became challenging if not impossible to work on legacy or antiquated systems.

Jennifer Ricker, acting Secretary at Illinois Department of Innovation and Technology [shared](#), “Some of our systems were hit heavily throughout the pandemic which were not built to scale at the level of volume that we were seeing.”


According to [Zendesk research](#), approximately 70 percent of organizations are looking for new ways to engage customers—whether these are other employees or citizens, or anyone an organization serves.

As citizens acclimate to a more seamless digital experience in the private sector, they begin to expect the same in every interaction, including with their government agencies. To meet this newfound expectation, government agencies who weren't previously prioritizing investment in the customer experience have shifted gears.



# Seven best practices for modernizing legacy government solutions

The time is now for federal, state, and local government agencies across the country to re-architect and build long-term agility into their systems. Here are seven best practices for modernizing your infrastructure for communicating with your customers.



**According to Zendesk research, approximately 70 percent of organizations are looking for new ways to engage customer.**



# 01

## Make it easy for citizens and employees

### PRIORITY #

In 2021, citizens and employees expect online experiences that are on par with, or better than, in-person experiences. Most government agencies plan to adopt new channels in 2021, and many are investing in self-service so customers can find quick answers without having to speak to an agent.



## BEST PRACTICE 01:

# Meet citizens and employees where they are

Customers, such as citizens and employees, expect government agencies to meet them where they are—customers shouldn't have to climb a ladder to reach support. And where they are is on messaging channels.

Messaging offers a faster means of communication and a more personalized approach. Government agencies can quickly provide efficient support and still have the full context of the conversation included in the support ticket.

[Read more](#) on what the growing popularity of channels like WhatsApp and Facebook Messenger say about changing customer expectations.

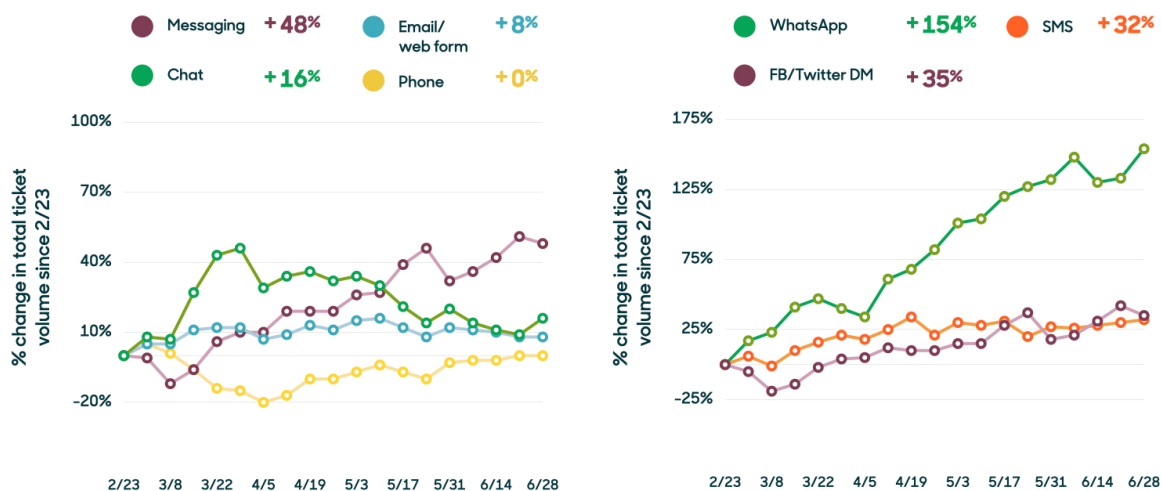
As personal connection becomes more important, particularly in the shift towards digital-first services, messaging will play a vital role for many support teams moving forward.

**Twenty-eight percent of customers (and a whopping 40% of millennials and Gen Zers) like to resolve their customer support issues using messaging.**

[The Zendesk Customer Experience Trends Report 2020](#)



## Messaging has grown faster than any other channel, with WhatsApp seeing the most use



## BEST PRACTICE 02:

# Help customers get answers faster with self-service

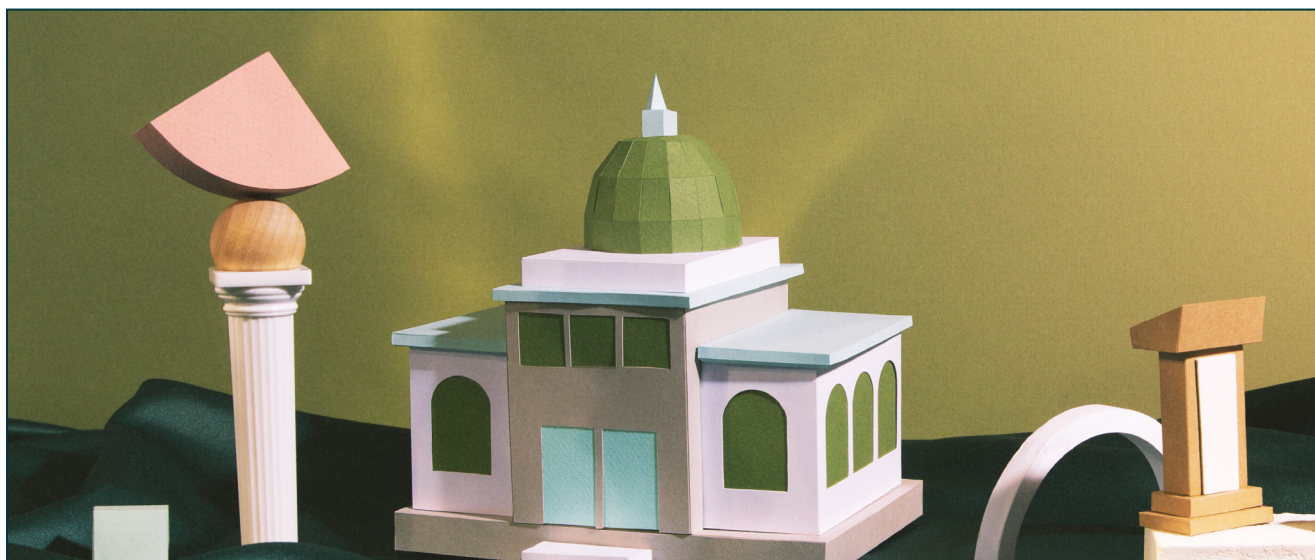
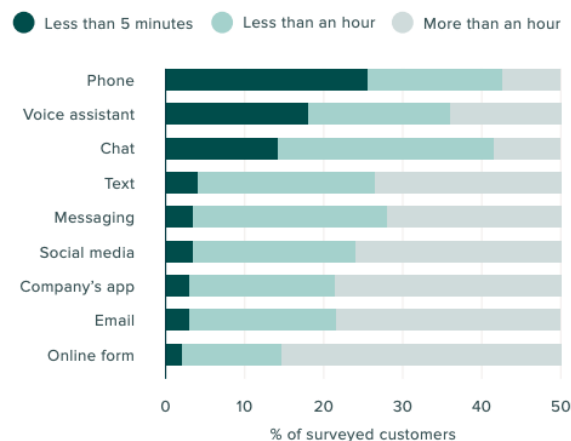
When customers want to get in touch, they want convenient options. But for simple questions, they just want quick answers. That's why citizens and employees prefer to help themselves and rely more on online resources in our digital-first world.

Government agencies now need to build the new capacity to incorporate technology both quickly and equitably. While the government's technological infrastructure has lacked for years, the pandemic has brought greater recognition to the technological gaps due to the increased volume.

Empowering customers to self-serve also saves agents time from answering repetitive questions. By automating processes and fine-tuning workflows, government agencies can offload inefficient tasks from their already overworked staff. An AI-powered bot, like Zendesk's own, can recommend help center articles to surface frequently asked questions for citizens and employees alike.



**Customer expectations for a response by channel**







## Support your support teams

### PRIORITY #

While government agencies have expanded their online channels to assist citizens and employees, they've also faced the challenge of transitioning to a remote work or a hybrid model.

Keeping government employees happy is inextricably linked with excellent customer experience and IT support. Yet many employees feel overwhelmed. Meeting customers on their preferred channels is only one way of providing effective support. Equipping teams with tools to do their jobs well—regardless of how the customer reaches out—is crucial to good customer service and IT support.

CUSTOMER SPOTLIGHT Calvert County		HEADQUARTERS Calvert, Maryland
<b>13</b> Departments using Zendesk	<b>5 days</b> Vaccine program implementation	<b>86.7%</b> Reduction in call volume
<p><b>“It took us only five business days to spin up a complete preregistration journey for vaccine recipients in Calvert County with Zendesk.”</b></p> <p><b>Ruthie Buckler</b> Project Management Specialist at Calvert County</p> <p><a href="#">Read the full story</a></p>		



## BEST PRACTICE 03:

# Bring it all together with one view for agents or IT personnel

In 2020, most government agencies experienced the highest ticket volatility to date. Their agents needed a [unified workspace](#) that connects all their channels, tools, and customer context to provide quick and personalized support at scale.

With 40 percent of customers using multiple channels for the same issue, agents need to be able to seamlessly shift between channels without losing customer context. A single platform ensures citizens and employees don't have to repeat information they already addressed or wait on hold while agents search for the details each time they change channels.



**For example, if Tara calls an unemployment office regarding her application, the support team should have enterprise-grade secure visibility into:**

- ◆ Her application details including personal identifiers.
- ◆ If she has reached out about issues with her application before, even if it was over different channels.
- ◆ Her contact information, such as her email or phone number to call her for additional information.

## BEST PRACTICE 04:

# Empower agents with workflows that promote efficiency and collaboration

Government agencies, especially smaller ones, are investing in tools that promote efficiency and collaboration across teams and departments.

Continuous change means agents must be efficient. The onus is on agencies to arm them with [tools to work smarter](#). Organizations can improve agents' workflow by:

- Equipping agents and IT staff with [prepared answers](#), so they don't have to type out standard procedures
- [Automatically routing](#) issues to agents with the right skills
- [Capturing preliminary details](#) from customers with a bot
- Enabling agents to have [conversations with each other inside tickets](#)

Rather than answering repetitive and straightforward questions, employees can focus on higher-value items, and constituents can receive the answers they need more quickly.

A robust customer experience strategy speaks to both the strengths of technology as well as employee talent. By shifting employee focus from routine tasks to more significant problems, agents can spend their time doing what humans do best and what machines cannot, such as:

- Identifying nuanced problems and opportunities
- Developing and implementing strategic plans to address these issues
- Tracking the impact for these individual initiatives
- And most importantly, support citizens in a more meaningful, personal way

By relying on technology to enhance services provided, government employees see higher job satisfaction which leads to retaining top talent, while preserving the quality of service for the citizen.

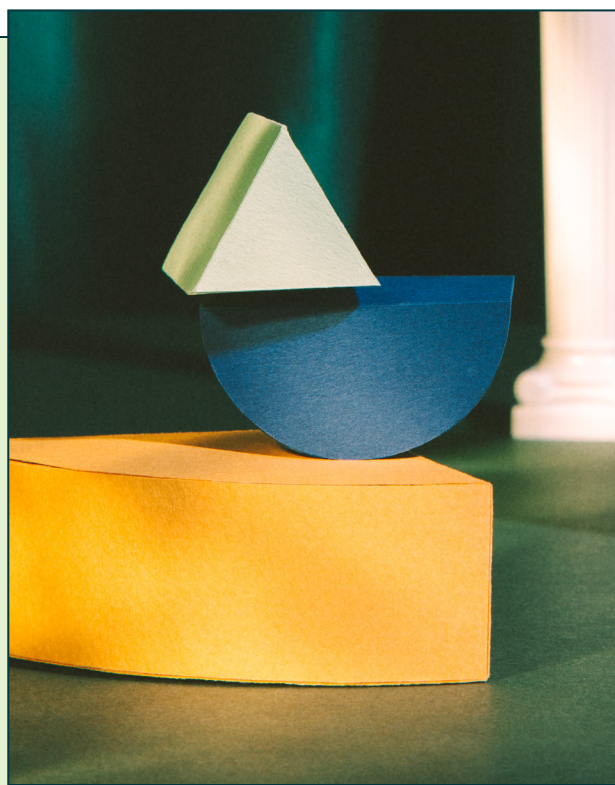


## BEST PRACTICE 05:

# Scale self-service with help from agents

A good help center, also known as a knowledge base, doesn't just empower customers to find answers faster, it also helps agents find critical information quickly. Those same agents are your best resource for growing your knowledge base and keeping content fresh to make it ever more valuable. Yet, many agents still can't contribute their knowledge.

Government agencies can build knowledge management into agents' workflows. [Knowledge management tools](#) enable agents and IT to create new articles while answering tickets, and [AI-powered suggestions](#) automate knowledge management hygiene.



**Government agencies  
can build knowledge  
management into  
agents' workflows.**

03

# Keep your government agency in sync

## PRIORITY #

With the pandemic accelerating adoption of digital tools, keeping your government agency in sync is no easy feat. Keeping your agency in sync means bringing data between people, tools, and software together, not leaving it scattered and siloed. That's why legacy systems no longer work; agencies today need a platform that's open and flexible, and can connect the data dots across different sources.

Connecting data in a single, [FedRAMP authorized](#) and secure platform allows for your agency to be agile, empowering you to go beyond capturing data and focus on understanding and reacting to it instead.

### CUSTOMER SPOTLIGHT

 **FCC + Zendesk: Saving taxpayers 85% with greater transparency and faster replies**

**“Zendesk Support is an actual alternative to legacy products, differentiated by its ability to get up and running quickly, drastically reducing implementation costs and timelines.”**

**Dustin Laun**

Contractor and Senior Advisor of Innovation and Technology at Federal Communications Commission

[Read the full story](#)



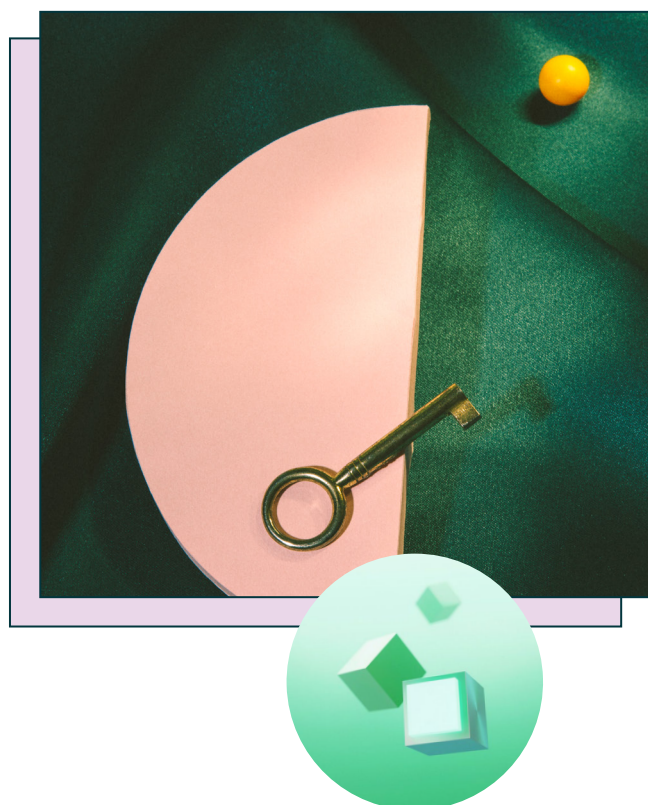
## BEST PRACTICE 06:

# Personalize CX with a unified customer view

Relationships are critical during times of crisis, especially for government agencies. Despite supporting many citizens and employees, agencies need insight into each customer. Without an agent's ability to access customer data to personalize interactions, customers can often just feel like another ticket in the queue. To deliver personalized experiences that build trust on the front-end, government agencies must manage and interpret customer data on the back-end. This means creating a unified customer view, one that connects customer data wherever it lives, whether it be first-party or third-party.

And of course, as government agencies leverage more data and remote work continues, information security is critical. Security management is a high priority for 80 percent of tech decision-makers in 2021. Agencies today need a CX platform with enterprise-class security features and comprehensive audits, and that complies with industry accepted general security and privacy frameworks.

[Zendesk is FedRAMP authorized — learn more](#)



### CUSTOMER SPOTLIGHT State of Tennessee



**35%**

Increase in CSAT  
with Talk

**\$250K**

Savings in annual  
maintenance fees

**90%**

First-Touch  
Resolution

**20,000**

Average  
Calls/Week

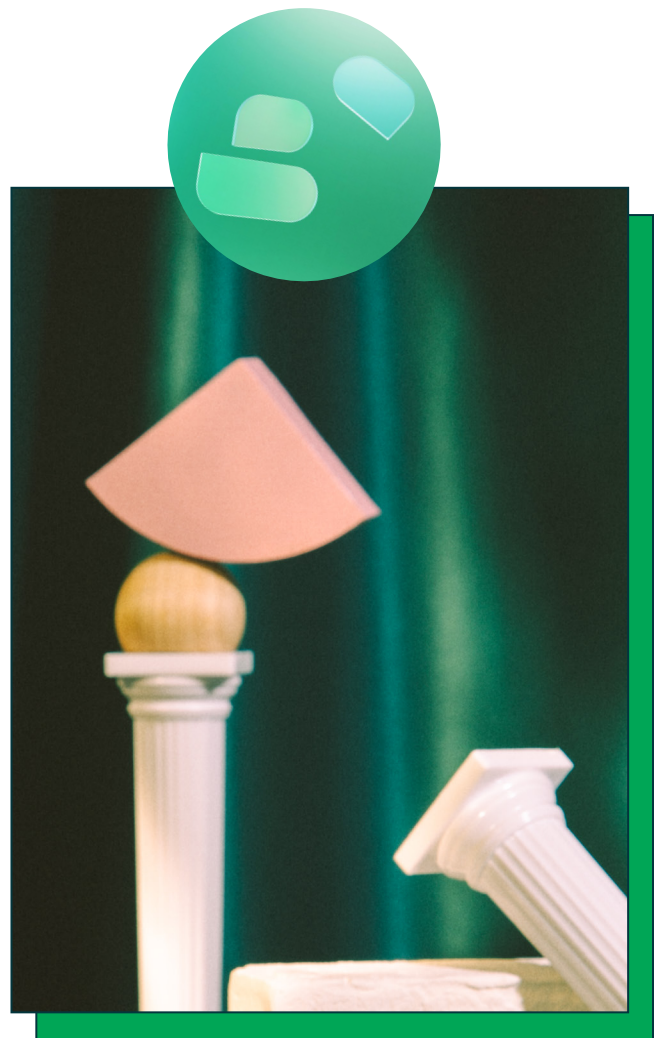
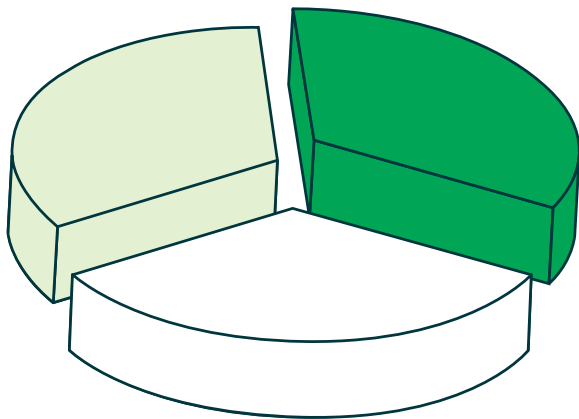
[Read the full story](#)

## BEST PRACTICE 07:

# Learn how to improve with analytics

Keeping your business in sync also means integrating analytics from every channel so you can measure and improve the entire customer experience—from identifying areas of development for your team to understanding how customers interact with you.

To keep up in a pivot-quickly world, government agencies need analytics software that gives them instant access to insights their support teams can act on. With real-time and historical [analytics built inside](#) their support solution, teams can take action on what's happening at the moment and understand past trends—no statistics degree required.

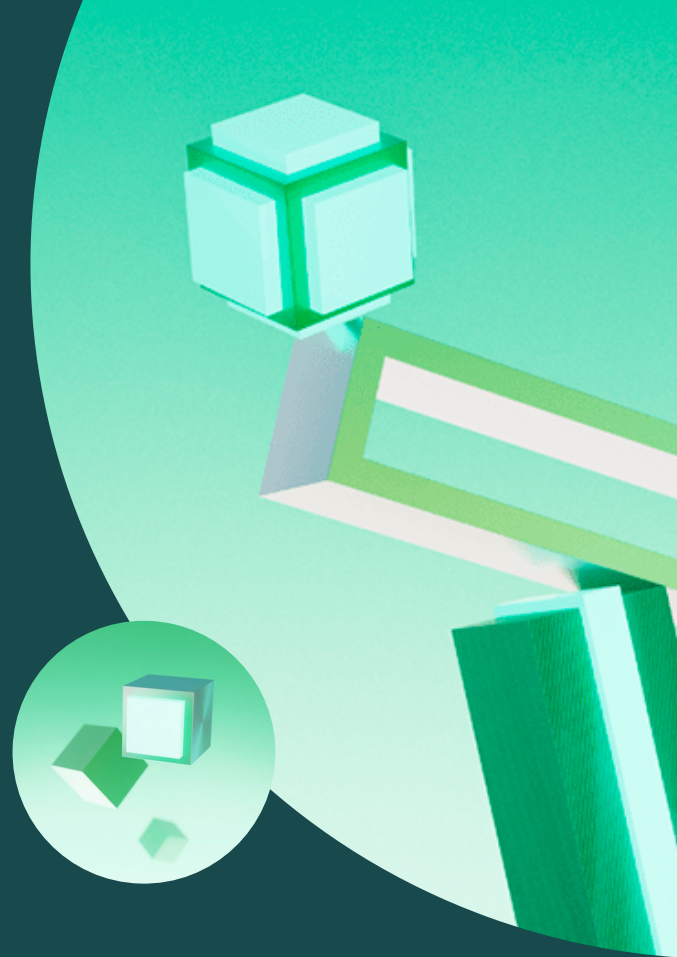


# Which side of the tipping point will your agency be on?

Making things easy for customers, supporting your support team, and keeping your government agency in sync are the three keys to delivering great CX in the next-normal. Agencies can't choose just one of the three, focusing on one area and putting the others off until later. Prioritizing all three is essential—and it's actually quite difficult to be good at one without investing in the others.

The Zendesk Suite provides a complete customer service solution that's easy to use and scales with your business. Learn more about how Zendesk can help ensure you're on the right side of the CX tipping point.

Get started here:  
[Learn more about Zendesk for Government](#)



## EXPLORE MORE RESOURCES

### Modernize antiquated systems quickly: Zendesk + SATRDÉ

eBook



[Download the eBook](#)

### Constituent engagement strategies for local governments

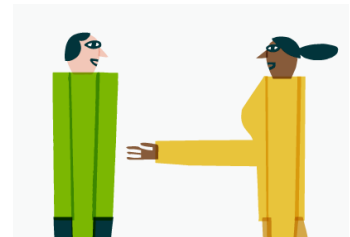
eBook



[Download the eBook](#)

### Provide seamless constituent support amid COVID-19

eBook



[Download the eBook](#)

