

VERINT.

Channel Shift: A New KPI for the Public Sector

A Guide to 311 and Local Government
Channel Shift Strategy



The Future Has Started

The digitization of citizen services is not the future anymore: local governments around the world are already leveraging online, self-service platforms to enhance citizen engagement, drive efficiency, reduce costs, and realize quicker ROI.

The technology is available to help governments streamline their traditionally complex processes, reduce paperwork, allocate their resources more wisely, and deliver services more promptly. Besides the business benefits, the convenience of accessing information or completing transactions online caters to the needs of today's "always-on," tech-savvy constituents.

Furthermore, digital platforms enable organizations to gather and analyze data, make more informed decisions, and tailor their services to their community's needs.

Verint® has asked a group of Verint for Citizen Engagement™ users based in North America, the United Kingdom, and Australia to share their thoughts on channel shift: delivering and promoting the use of online self-service—where appropriate—over human-assisted channels and counter services.

For a better understanding of the progress of local government digitization, Verint has also applied the Channel Shift KPI, which

measures the percentage of online (self-service) interactions compared to the total number of interactions.

The findings in this guide are based on the responses to a digital survey conducted in 2023. The questionnaire was completed by thirty-seven local citizen-services providers spread across three continents. All participants were Verint customers. The Channel Shift KPI was defined for their top transactions by volume.

Read on to discover the key public sector channel shift trends our customers shared with us.

What Is a Channel Shift Strategy And Why Should You Care?

Budgetary pressures have forced many organizations worldwide to rethink how they manage their services. With fewer funds—and fewer employees—more has to be achieved with less resources.

A local government channel strategy refers to the plan and approach adopted by regional and city councils to interact with citizens, manage citizen requests, and deliver services through different communication channels. A well-designed channel shift strategy outlines how an organization prioritizes, integrates, and optimizes these channels to meet citizens' needs while maximizing their efficiency, and targets channel shift goals for overall and specific service request types.

The most common interaction channels based on interaction volume are¹:

- Telephone
- Web-based queries and self-service
- Face-to-face desk service
- Email
- Social messaging and chat
- Chatbot

Every organization approaches channel shift differently, based on their goals, priorities, and potential barriers. Therefore, there are different levels of channel shift maturity—the level of advancement achieved by the organization in driving citizen interactions from traditional channels (such as phone calls, in-person visits, and postal mail) to digital channels (including web-based self-service and inquiry forms, social messaging, online chat, and more).



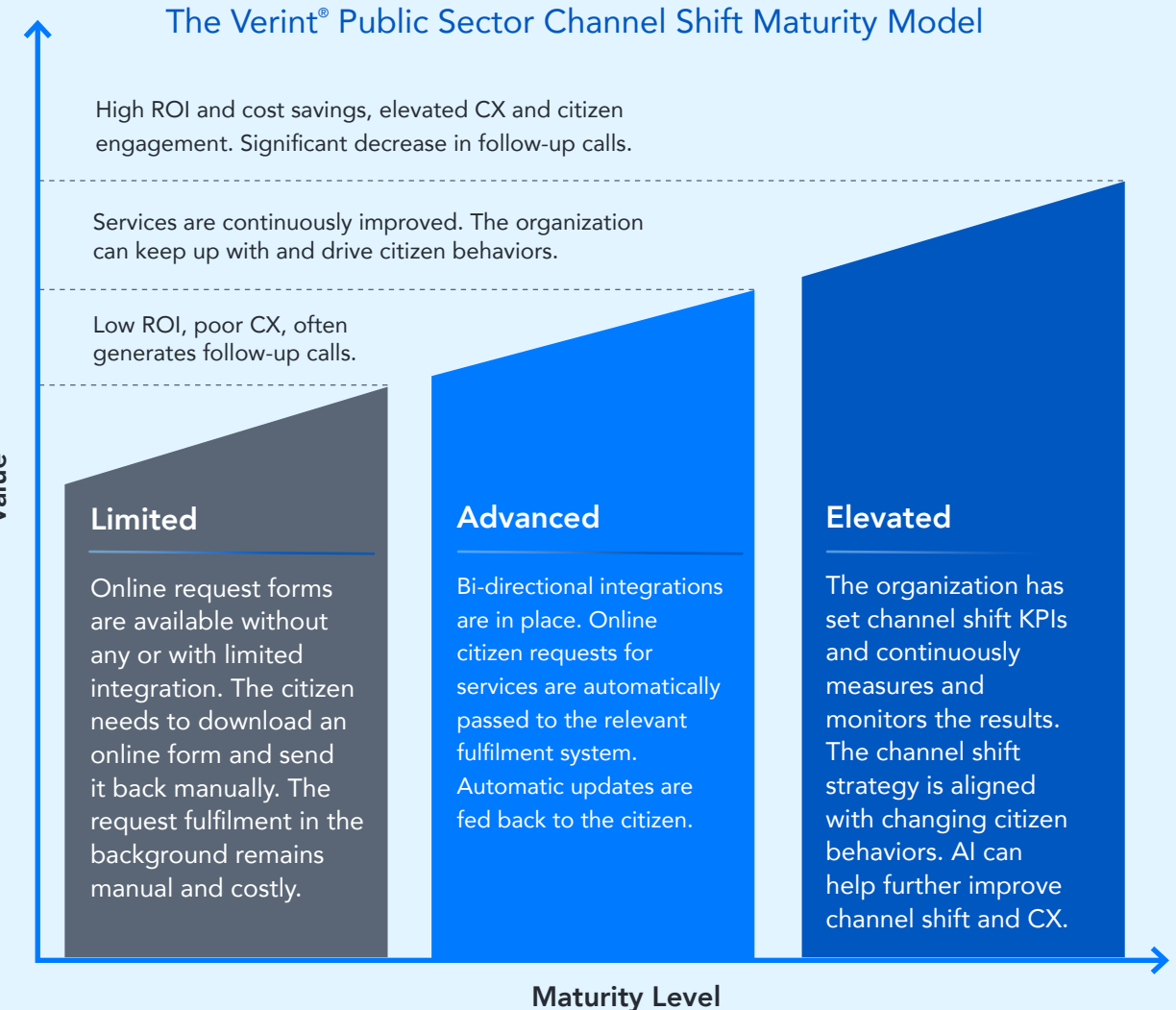
Channel Shift Maturity: From “Doing Just Enough” to “Doing What’s Needed”

Doing channel shift right can help you elevate citizen engagement by enabling you to deliver services more effectively, reallocate your resources, and keep your citizens informed about the progress of their requests, thus creating better citizen experiences.

Furthermore, when high-volume, routine requests are completed via self-service portals, scarce human expertise can be focused on more complex requests. By measuring channel performance, organizations can also get a clearer view on user behavior and adjust their strategy accordingly.

In a mature channel shift maturity, collecting user feedback digitally and automatically after every transaction can help uncover process flaws and paint a fuller picture on the usability of services—ultimately driving more channel shift and cost optimization.

The three main stages of Channel Shift Maturity are shown in the diagram to the right. Where is your organization standing right now?



How To Design A Channel Shift Strategy That Drives Real Business Outcomes?

There's no universal recipe for implementing a successful channel shift strategy, as success looks different for each organization. However, there are various best practices you can consider when planning or improving your channel shift strategy. Let's see what these are based on information shared by our customers:



1. Take a gradual approach

Start with enabling self-service for the top, most important, high-volume request types and then move to the next set of request types. *(Read some examples of service areas that typically offer a great opportunity for channel shift in the next step of this list.)*



2. Set your goals: don't aim at 100 percent

As the next step of planning your channel shift strategy, you should decide what percentage of services you would like to get completed without human intervention. This doesn't have to be 100 percent and can vary by service type. The average channel shift rate of the respondents of our survey is 63 percent, with all respondents managing at least 44

percent of their services via online self-service and some achieving a channel shift over 78 percent.

Some service areas offer a great opportunity for channel shift. These are, for example:



- **Waste management requests**—such as requesting new bins or boxes, requesting bulky waste collection, registering for garden waste service, or reporting a missed bin
- **Property management requests**—such as property searches, building permits, and building certifications
- **Managing payments**—such as council tax or council rent payment or requesting rates

The findings from our questionnaire show that the average channel shift rate for these types of requests is 82 percent.

On the other hand, some other service areas might require human assistance, or some citizens might prefer to transact with certain services on assisted channels rather than self-serve online. These are, for example:

- **Handling complaints**
- **Requesting assistance in special, and/or heavily regulated cases**—such as tree management, queries about animal permits, or reporting invasive plants
- **Requesting repairs**—such as streetlights, pavements, or roads

According to the findings from our questionnaire, the average channel shift rate for these types of requests is 39 percent.

3. Make it simple

Make finding information and requesting services as easy as possible. Design your processes from your citizens' perspective, and not from your organization's perspective. Keep in mind that self-service channels are efficient only when users are guided through straightforward, easy-to-follow steps.

(2) Source: What Are the Benefits of a Self-Service Contact Centre?, CX Today, 2021



4. Don't fall for the illusion of digitalization: integrate

When you put a form online without any integration, you create the illusion of a digital service. While your service might look more modern and be more accessible in some ways, the request fulfillment in the background remains manual, costing your organization much more than proper, integrated self-service. Analysts estimate that agent-assisted interactions cost about \$6–\$12 per interaction, while automated self-service costs only a fraction of this price: approximately 25 cents per interaction.²

Our customers typically integrate with the below types of systems:

More than 50 percent of the survey respondents have an integration with a:

- **Back-office system**—such as SAP, Cityworks, Accela, Confirm, Uniform, Northgate Housing, and many more
- **Mapping system**—such as ESRI ArcGIS, or OS Maps

More than 40 percent have an integration with a:

- **Payment system**—such as Civica, Cybersource, Barclaycard SmartPay, or XPay



5. Provide world-class CX: your citizens expect it

Top consumer brands provide customers with order updates to an incredible level of detail—such as real-time tracking of how far your delivery is from your door. Citizens today expect the same from government services. Today, two of our customers have already adopted so-called “Amazon-style” progress updates and many others are planning to do it.



6. Introduce Channel Shift as a KPI

Continuously monitor and measure the performance and success of your channels by introducing channel shift rate as a KPI. Doing so can enable you to:

- Identify opportunities for improving and maximizing channel shift.
- Proactively align your services to changing customer behaviors.
- Drive customers towards less costly, more efficient channels.



7. Elevate your services: measure, monitor, optimize, and improve

With citizen behaviors continuously changing, you have to be able to react to shifts in channel performance and optimize your channel strategy and service delivery accordingly.

Once you have the most important digital services in place, measure, monitor, and optimize your channel performance and channel shift rate.

Define regular review periods and spot changes in channel performance. A rise in a specific channel, for example, can indicate new opportunities for channel shift. When a channel is not performing well, you should investigate the reasons. Start with asking the following questions:

- Can my customers find the form?
- Is the form intuitive?
- Does the form work properly?
- When human intervention is needed, do my employees know how to handle the form?

Discover more

To learn more about how our customers are addressing their real-life challenges, read our success stories.



City of Edinburgh Council [⇒](#)



City of San Antonio [⇒](#)



City and County of San Francisco [⇒](#)



South Staffordshire District Council [⇒](#)



Southampton City Council [⇒](#)



City of Rochester [⇒](#)



Region of Waterloo [⇒](#)



Enfield Council [⇒](#)

Get started with Verint for Citizen Engagement

With more than twenty years' experience delivering key citizen engagement and service delivery tools to global customers, across all tiers of government, Verint can be your trusted partner to guide you through your CX automation and channel shift journey.

Deliver digitally transformed customer services over a variety of channels, enable self-service via web and mobile applications, and elevate channel shift to the next level. With the power of CX automation, you can create a win-win situation both for your organization and your citizens.

Discover Verint for Citizen Engagement

Your citizens can:

- Get answers online.
- Request, apply, book, and pay for services online.
- Track progress online.
- Manage their online profile and data online.
- Securely transact online.

Your organization can:

- Realize quick ROIs, increase efficiency, and save costs with automated processes such as pushing service requests to back-office systems for fulfilment or proactively providing citizens with progress updates and information.
- Get insights into what your customers need, continuously improve your services, and drive citizen behavior.
- Improve employee engagement by releasing them from high-volume, mundane tasks.
- Improve citizen experience, engagement, and trust.

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