

## Talk of the Town

### E-Government is the talk of the towns...and the states...and the federal government.

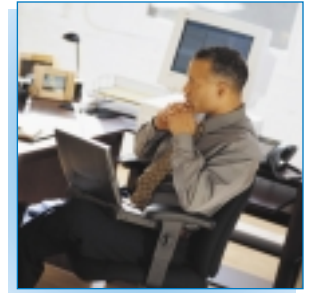
High priorities for most public sector organizations include such subjects as customer relationship management, enterprise architecture, security and e-authentication, paperwork reduction and elimination, and citizen-centric services. Employees across all levels of government are faced with the enormous challenge of delivering services in a Web environment to citizens who have become very Web-savvy and who have developed high expectations.

It is safe to say that the impacts of a Web-enabled government are already significant and are compounding at an exciting rate. E-Government is part of the fabric of the business of government. It will continue to provide easier access to services, improve the efficiency and effectiveness of government operations, reduce transaction costs, and improve the ability to respond to citizens in a timely and meaningful manner.

For more than a decade, ICF Consulting has provided information management and business solutions to customers in the United States at the state, local, and national levels, as well as internationally. Our consultants, software architects and developers, and change management professionals have learned several key lessons that will help managers as they visualize, plan, and execute their next e-Government initiative or project.

**Listen to the customer.** Make sure you fully understand the stakeholder environment, the audience, and their needs. Let them influence your application or Web site navigation and content. Build time and resources into the project schedule to focus on this early and at check points along the way. Make judicious use of focus groups and structured usability testing to guide you.

**Be accessible.** Make it easy for customers to get to you by any means. Your Web site might be great—but it does not satisfy every customer, every time. The Web is only one channel for customers to access your services; ensure you are accessible by more traditional means, such as face-to-face meetings, or by phone, fax, or letter. Plenty of integrated/unified messaging products are available to make innovative use of these more traditional channels.



**Start small...and grow. But start now.** Don't wait for the next innovation in technology. If you have a good business case and can line up funding, get started now. If you only have "seed" funding, then focus on your requirements documentation and perhaps a rapid prototype while exploring funding opportunities. Spend time surveying the landscape in the organization or across government boundaries to leverage someone else's good work. The sooner you start learning from on-the-ground experience, the sooner the project will morph into a meaningful and rational endeavor.

#### Keys to E-Government Success:

- Listen to the customer.
- Be accessible.
- Start small . . . and grow. But start now.
- Realize that perfection is not an option.
- Start with the end in mind.

# Perspectives

**Perfection is not an option.** Do not allow the prospect of imperfection to paralyze you. Focusing on the 80 percent solution may help influence key resource decisions in a direction that will ensure a robust product.

**Start with the end in mind.** A successful application that improves workforce productivity or customer satisfaction with online services will consider deployment and change management issues long before the first line of code was written. Successful e-Government project managers spend more than half of the total effort preparing for and providing assistance in adopting the technology into the culture of the organization. Ignoring this aspect of any information technology project spells disaster. Rarely do projects fail because the technology was not available or adequate.

ICF Consulting takes a balanced approach to e-Government projects by focusing on four key areas: understanding the **mission** of the organization, the **business processes** that support that mission, the technology and capital **investments** required to support those business processes, and the **culture** of the organization and its people. Keeping these four dimensions on the radar helps deliver high-quality projects that thrill customers and end-users.

For more information about ICF Consulting's information technology capabilities, visit [www.icfconsulting.com/it](http://www.icfconsulting.com/it).

