

# Executive Summary: Improve Service and Reduce Costs with a Citizen and Business Interaction Network

## What You Will Learn

By making it easier for citizens and businesses to obtain information and submit service requests, governments improve citizen satisfaction and can increase contact center efficiency to save taxpayer dollars. This white paper, intended for senior government executives, summarizes the business advantages of an approach to government contact centers called the Citizen and Business Interaction Network (CBIN). The white paper discusses:

- Challenges of interacting with citizens and businesses
- Benefits of a one-stop, multichannel interaction network
- Four essential building blocks for government contact centers

## Challenges of Citizen and Business Interactions with Government

In the 21st century, governments worldwide are transforming the way they deliver services to constituents, to increase citizen satisfaction, empower the workforce to be more productive, and extract the maximum value from budgets. Effective solutions require attention to people, processes, and technology.

Today, citizens and businesses that need to obtain information, request services, or check on request status must overcome the following hurdles:

- **Multiple government telephone numbers:** Callers often do not know which department to contact for a particular service. Government service suffers when callers must hang up and call back. In addition, the need to answer misdirected calls increases staffing requirements.
- **Inconvenient hours:** Citizens overwhelmingly prefer to contact government using the telephone, according to surveys in different countries, but call centers are typically only open from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., when many citizens are at work.
- **Lack of collaboration tools:** If a caller has a question or issue that the agency employee cannot answer, the employee cannot easily reach out to experts in other departments or agencies. Instead, the employee must initiate a series of calls and emails and get back to the caller later. The delays can frustrate citizens and add to employee workload.
- **Websites with limited value:** Most government websites only provide access to information and services for one department or agency, and do not provide a click-to-chat option for visitors who cannot find information or need help with form filling.

## Benefits of a One-Stop, Multichannel Interaction Network

Now governments around the world are empowering citizens and businesses to resolve any non-emergency issue by calling a single number or visiting a single web portal. Examples of issues that citizens can resolve in this way include:

- Requesting garbage collection, graffiti removal, noise abatement, and so on
- Taking all actions related to a move to a new city: registering for local taxes, finding a school, obtaining a parking permit, and so on
- Reporting a family member's death to all relevant agencies at once
- Taking care of issues related to a new child by applying for child allowances, obtaining information about nurseries, and so on
- Obtaining health and human services, such as requesting social benefits, health services, and other social services

Governments improve citizen service and reduce costs when they develop a citizen and business interaction network with the following characteristics:

- Provides a single phone number and single website for all government non-emergency services
- Gives citizens a choice of interaction channels: telephone, email, web, or fax
- Offers self-service options so that citizens find information, request non-emergency services, and monitor service progress 24 hours a day
- Enables employees to immediately find available experts in other agencies and departments and collaborate with them to resolve citizen issues

Table 1 lists the benefits of citizen and business interaction networks.

**Table 1 Citizens, Businesses, and Government All Benefit from Simpler Interactions**

Benefits for Citizens and Businesses	Benefits to Government
<p>Anytime, anywhere access to services, from home, work, or local government offices</p> <p>Convenience of requesting any non-emergency service through a single phone number or website, plus self-service options</p> <p>Choice of contact channel: voice, web, email, or fax</p> <p>Ability to track request progress through self-service channels</p> <p>Increased ease of setting up business offices in other countries</p>	<p>Increased employee productivity through automating routine tasks—for example, by eliminating the need to re-enter data that the caller has already provided</p> <p>Reduced staffing requirements because of self-service options</p> <p>Increased first-call resolution from enabling employees to reach out across departmental barriers to collaborate</p> <p>Enhanced public safety from decreasing the number of non-emergency calls that emergency operators answer</p> <p>Additional channel for communicating with the public—for example, announcing a weather-related emergency on website or as a recording in call center queues</p> <p>Compliance with regulatory requirements such as the EU Services Directive</p> <p>Better insight into nature of caller requests through comprehensive reporting, enabling continual process improvements</p> <p>Ability to distribute calls, emails, faxes, and chat requests to agents anywhere on the network, including teleworkers</p>

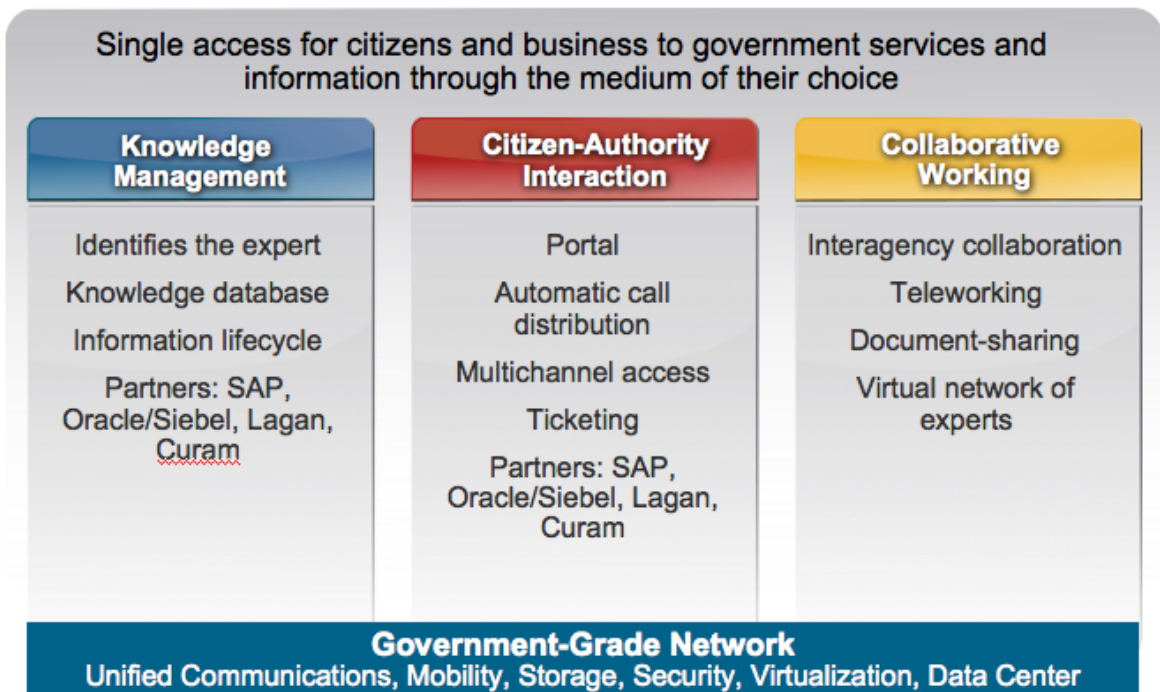
### Four Essential Building Blocks

The CBIN architecture framework consists of four building blocks, as shown in Figure 2:

- **Knowledge and Process Management:** Agents use a search engine to look for answers to citizen inquiries that appear in any database. When agents enter keywords, the list of matching results includes a brief description, helping the agent to quickly identify the best source before taking the time to open the link. Agents can also easily contact experts if they need additional information to resolve a citizen query.

- Citizen-Authority Interaction:** Citizens and businesses have become accustomed to 24-hour access to information and services from the private sector, and now expect the same from government. With a Citizen and Business Interaction Network, citizens have a choice of convenient methods for contacting government: telephone, web portals, email, or fax. From any channel, the request is intelligently routed to a skilled resource, either a person or self-service application. Routing decisions are based on information about the caller, number dialed, and real-time contact center conditions such as queue length and agent availability.
- Collaborative Work:** Today, agents who need additional information to answer a citizen inquiry typically must hang up and make multiple phone calls or send multiple emails. Government loses an opportunity to provide outstanding service with first-call resolution, and agent productivity decreases. With a Citizen and Business Interaction Network, agency employees are empowered to collaborate with experts throughout government, in virtual teams. If an employee receives an inquiry that requires support from another department, the employee can consult presence information to find an expert who is currently available and see how that person prefers to be reached—for example, office phone, mobile phone, or instant messaging. The employee can just click to send an instant message or immediately join the expert into a collaborative session combining voice, video, and web sharing.
- Government-Grade Network:** The Government-Grade Network forms the foundation for the other three building blocks by enabling employees and citizens to securely collaborate across time and distance barriers. The network includes routers and switches, security, mobility, storage, and data center solutions.

**Figure 2 Government Interaction Networks Need Four Sets of Capabilities**



## Conclusion

Government provides better service when constituents can obtain all non-emergency information services by dialing a single number or visiting a single website. More convenient interaction channels not only improves citizen satisfaction, they also free up employees' time so that they can focus on non-routine inquiries. The four cornerstones of the CBIN architecture—Knowledge Base, Citizen-Authority Interaction, Collaboration, and Government-Grade Network—create a solid foundation for effective and efficient interactions.

## For More Information

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- To discuss the business value of the CBIN framework for your government, contact your Cisco account manager.



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