Achieving Government Innovation
Moving Back Office to Centre Stage
The secret to high performing government agencies

High performance. Delivered.
Casting is Critical

Why the Back Office Matters

It’s a well-kept secret, but public service back office plays an essential role in government innovation. However, all too often the star qualities of these finance, HR and procurement functions are over-looked, with citizen-facing agencies and departments taking much of the limelight.

Attitudes, however, are shifting. Agencies seeking to deliver genuine government innovation now recognise the value of a greater strategic focus on the back office and can set the stage for public debt reduction, improved services and increased citizen satisfaction. Rather than delegating critical supporting functions, leading agencies are giving them a starring role as they opt for a proactive, partnership-led approach. At the same time, they are delivering public service for the future by developing a greater citizen focus.
The Key to Government Innovation: Countries Following Administrative Leading Practices Are Delivering Better Services For Citizens

Note: Chart based on Accenture analysis of OECD and World Bank data. For methodology used, contact Mark Howard, mark.h.howard@accenture.com

Lights On

Improved Policy Outcomes

Attitudes are one thing, but what does the data tell us? To understand the relationship between the back office and citizen value in more detail we studied the administrative practices and public policy outcomes in thirty OECD countries. The results were clear – governments that follow best practices are more likely to deliver better citizen outcomes.

A Star is Born

Back Office Transformation

This correlation resonates with real world examples from governments. Agencies are embracing the challenge by placing a greater strategic focus on enterprise services, as leaders realise that back office transformation is essential for broader government innovation. Many see it as the key to delivering public service for the future.

In the UK, for example, the Cabinet Office wants back office “shared services to become the norm... so every department can focus on... implementing policy and delivering key public services.” As it shifts its approach to corporate services, the government’s Next Generation Shared Services Strategic Plan promises to radically improve efficiency and save taxpayers between $640 to $960 million a year in administration costs.

In Singapore, the Ministry of Finance recognized that the use of individual ERP systems by different government agencies was leading to waste and inefficiency. To combat this, its Alliance for Corporate Excellence (ACE) Program seeks to consolidate the approach taken to back office operations by 19 separate agencies.

Meanwhile, in Australia, Brisbane City Council is undertaking a transformative Business and System Efficiency (BaSE) Program, integrating more than 60 outdated IT systems into one SAP Solution. The program will enable the Council to improve value for ratepayers through simpler and more efficient business processes and systems.

As a growing number of governments take action to transform their own back office capabilities, agencies should note two points fundamental to success: executive leaders must drive this transformation, and it must occur as a visible shift.

Is Your Back Office Worthy of an Oscar?

For agencies seeking to enjoy the benefits of lasting government innovation, improved back office operations have a critical role to play in delivering public service for the future.

Through a partnership approach and delivering more efficient back office operations, governments can elevate back office functions to a front of house role, transforming them from typical cost centers into high value service providers.

This renewed focus on administrative functions has never been more important. As leaders seek out new ways to transform front line services, it’s time for the back office to step into the spotlight and play its part in delivering public service for the future.
About Delivering Public Service for the Future

What does it take to deliver public service for the future? Public service leaders must embrace four structural shifts—advancing toward personalised services, insight-driven operations, a public entrepreneurship mindset and a cross-agency commitment to mission productivity. By making these shifts, leaders can support flourishing societies, safe, secure nations and economic vitality for citizens in a digital world — delivering public service for the future.

About Accenture

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