

A novel CX concept: we are government's customers

 By [Craig Hannabus](#)

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Last week I had the pleasure of attending the CEM Africa 2022 summit, the must-go event for anyone who puts customer experience (CX) at the centre of their business. The talks were at best inspirational, at worst informational, and I believe that anyone who attended will have found it beneficial in some way.



Source © Denis Rutilov [123rf](#) Craig Hannabus is inspired by a talk on CX at the recent CEM Africa 2022 summit

A talk that stood out for me the most happened on the main stage on day two of the event. Rashid Toefy, deputy director-general of the Western Cape Government Department of Economic Development and Tourism, gave a talk on CX in government. He explained how he did not see us as the faceless constituents of the Western Cape, but rather, as his customers.

A novel concept

What an incredibly novel concept - that we are the customers of our government, and as a result of voting for them, we should have a good customer experience. In fact, it's so novel that there are only two places in the world that have employed a customer-centric approach to their citizens, Estonia, and the Western Cape.

Toefy and his team began their journey by mapping out the milestones of their citizens. Birth, marriage, new business, death - the experiences that require some kind of governmental participation. They then asked: how do we make each one of these engagements a positive one?



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Less red tape, more red carpet

With the mandate of creating jobs first and foremost, Toefy and his team realised that one of the more important milestones to tackle was starting a new business. Government cannot create jobs, but they can enable its citizens to create jobs.

That statement drove the creation of the Red Tape Reduction unit, their maxim, “Less red tape, more red carpet”.

In a nutshell, if you are starting a business and you need permits or licences, the Red Tape Reduction unit will assist you with getting those documents in a far more timeous fashion.

I don't want to specify any time frames here (I cannot speak for government), but Toefy did have a few case studies on hand which demonstrated a greatly reduced turnaround time.

Finally, Toefy spoke about an app in the works that will allow you to connect with government in matters of documentation and information with ease, and from your couch. No queues required.



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CX taken seriously

I found the talk inspirational on two levels. Firstly (and I think many would agree here), to see a charismatic and passionate government employee pushing through initiatives to make our lives easier is very heartening.

Toefy is exactly what a politician should be: a servant of the people. When the person I was with couldn't get his question answered because of time constraints, Toefy bounded off the stage, handed him a card and said he would answer the question offline.

Secondly, to see customer experience being taken seriously by government institutions (notorious for outdated methods and processes), shows that every one of us should be taking customer experience seriously.

In this hyper-connected world, a poor (and good) customer experience will spread like wildfire. While it is slightly more difficult to change your government, it's a lot easier to change the people you're buying your goods and services from.

In closing, do yourself a favour and download the latest [CX Report](#) (it's free). Secondly, the next time you see a CX event, attend it. They're well worth your time.

ABOUT CRAIG HANNABUS

Craig is the strategy director at Rogerwilco. His most recent career history, which spans more than 15 years, is dominated by digital - before that he worked in logistics.

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