

Citizen Services:

It's Canada's Time to Lead a New Way

How to catalyze citizen-centred, outcome-driven, more efficient transformation of government service delivery

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Citizen Services: It's Canada's Time to Lead a New Way

Build Efficiency, Trust, and Innovation in Government

How to catalyze citizen-centred, outcome-driven, more efficient transformation of government service delivery

Executive Summary - The Old Way Isn't Working

Canada stands at a defining moment of renewal. Under the government of Prime Minister Mark Carney, a clear direction has been set to build a stronger, more affordable, and more modern Canada—one that spends less, delivers more, and restores confidence in its public institutions. The opportunity is to make government interactions faster, fairer, and more human.

Yet Canadians' patience with the old way of doing things is wearing thin. In October 2025, the Auditor General of Canada laid bare one of the most commonly felt failures in government service: "The CRA's contact centres are not providing taxpayers with timely and accurate information."

More than half of all calls to the agency never reached an agent, and of those that did, almost one-third yielded incorrect advice. For citizens trying to obtain answers about taxes or benefits, these failures translate into confusion, financial stress, and an eroded sense of fairness.

The CRA's troubles are not unique. They reveal a deeper systemic challenge that cuts across the portfolio of government services—from Employment Insurance processing delays and Veterans Affairs case backlogs to Indigenous health-benefit claims and immigration case management. Each is bound by legacy systems and rigid administrative structures that reward form over function, hours over outcome.

"The CRA's contact centres are not providing taxpayers with timely and accurate information."

— The Auditor General of Canada

When services fail to deliver, costs rise—not only in budgets, but in trust, productivity, and national confidence. Canadians deserve a government that delivers on their expectations of service and respect for the taxpayer, not one that is trapped by legacy systems and approaches. To deliver that transformation, government must pair political resolve with operational imagination. Canada’s private-sector service operators have the experience, technology, and workforce capacity to help public institutions modernize safely and quickly.

Proven partnerships in areas such as provincial health and identity programs have shown that outcome-based collaboration can raise citizen satisfaction, reduce costs, and create skilled public-sector jobs. The same approach can now be applied across the federal landscape, where outcome-driven contracts, modern data and AI systems focused on operations and client need, underpinned by clear performance metrics, would allow innovation to occur continuously rather than episodically.

Change is not about handing away control; it is about enabling expertise and accountability where they belong, and measuring progress by results that citizens and employees can feel. Modernization must also reflect the diversity of Canada itself—serving citizens in both official languages, ensuring accessibility for persons with disabilities, and extending equitable, culturally informed service to Indigenous communities.

Real reform will also depend on how government organizes itself around this early but resolute new direction in Canada to sustain improvement. The shift toward citizen-centred, outcome-driven service delivery must be embedded in procurement rules, performance incentives, and workforce planning. That means investing in tools and training that empower employees, using technology responsibly to augment human judgment, and cultivating a culture of learning and adaptation instead of process compliance.

The choice before Canada is clear: continue patching an aging system or catalyze a renewal of government itself—one that restores public trust, unlocks efficiency, and re-establishes the country as a leader in how government serves its people.

“If the public can’t reach the government for accurate answers on taxes, benefits, or entitlements, trust isn’t just damaged—it’s defaulted on.”

– Office of the Auditor General of Canada, 2025 Report on the Canada Revenue Agency

Context - The Mandate and the Moment

The Carney government has come to office with an explicit mandate to rebuild trust through measurable outcomes and fiscal discipline. Mandate letters to senior ministers emphasize efficiency, innovation, and performance over process, and departmental spending reviews have emphasized the need to take bold action to change course on operational costs and action linked to results. The political calculus is clear: Canadians' faith in institutions will not recover through policy announcements alone; it will depend on how government actually performs.

For decades, Canada's public administration has equated modernization with new technology adoption and managing integration within the four walls of government. Yet, despite billions invested in new systems, the service experience for citizens has not kept pace. In 2002, Canada ranked sixth in the United Nations E-Government Development Index; by 2025, it had fallen to 47th.

The reality is that the old way of doing things no longer works. Program structures and reporting hierarchies designed for an analogue and early digital era cannot deliver the responsiveness or accountability citizens expect. The symptoms are visible across government. Employment Insurance applicants often wait weeks for eligibility confirmation. Veterans Affairs clients face inconsistent information from case officers. Indigenous communities still navigate paper-based health-benefit systems. Immigration applicants remain unable to obtain real-time case updates. Each example represents not only an operational breakdown, but a political vulnerability.

The new government appears willing to expend the political capital, unleash technology and do the hard work inside government required to catalyze real change—to reform public-service operations, procurement, and accountability frameworks so that outcomes become the central measure of success.

This is the hinge moment: fiscal constraints align with public demand for better, and a reform-minded administration has grasped the mandate to act.

"Government itself must become much more productive by deploying AI at scale, by focusing on results over spending, and by using scarce tax dollars to catalyse multiples of private investment."

— Prime Minister Mark Carney, Mandate Letter to Cabinet, 2025

Two Decades of Missed Modernization



Private-Sector Capacity and Innovation - Ready to Catalyze Change

Government does not need to modernize alone. Canada's private sector has built deep expertise in managing complex, citizen-facing operations under public oversight. Companies such as Maximus Canada, already working collaboratively and creatively with provincial, federal and international governments, have demonstrated that modernization can be achieved responsibly—without offshoring, loss of control, or erosion of public accountability.

Across the country, Maximus supports service delivery in areas ranging from provincial citizen contact centres, claims management for provincial drug benefit programs, and Elections Canada surge capacity. These examples demonstrate that programs with measurable improvement—higher satisfaction, lower cost per transaction, rapid response to changing conditions and resilient operations during crises—can be achieved within Canadian jurisdiction.

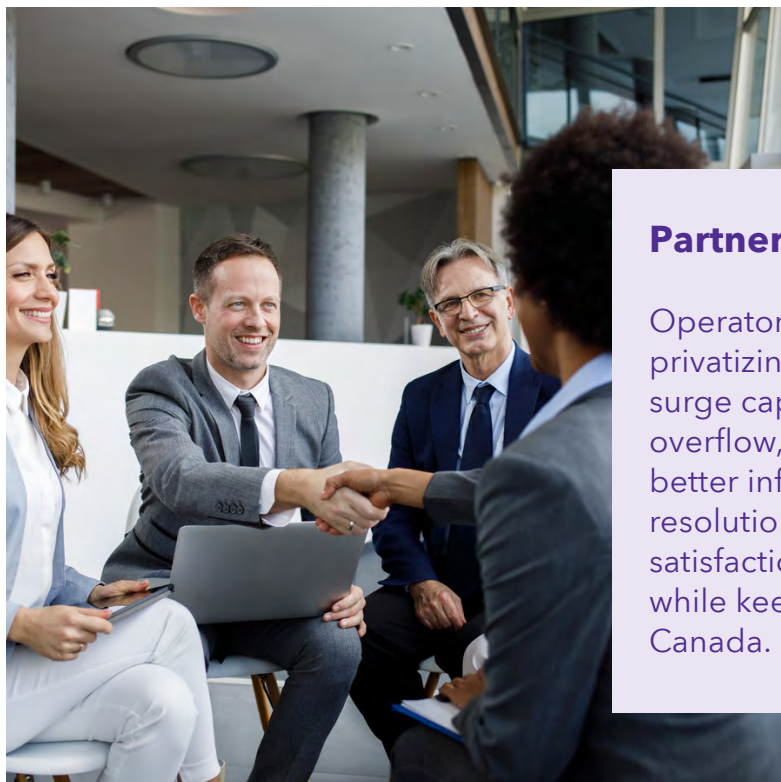
"A modern, high-performing civil service will be lean, agile and responsive to the needs of Canadians and businesses. This means lower costs, faster service delivery, and a public sector that actively contributes to Canada's economic competitiveness on the global stage."

– Government of Canada, A Public Service That Works for Better Government Services, 2025

Outcome-based partnerships between government and experienced operators align incentives around tangible results such as resolution rates, processing times, and satisfaction. When outcomes improve, both sides benefit. These partnerships also embed innovation as a constant, not a one-time upgrade. Artificial Intelligence, automation, and workflow redesign emerge naturally: when contracts reward efficiency and quality rather than compliance with static specifications. Third, they strengthen the workforce by streamlining repetitive tasks and equipping staff with intelligent tools, modernization raises morale and productivity instead of reducing headcount.

Yet success depends on a corresponding shift inside government. Public institutions must show nimbleness—the ability to pilot, learn, and scale new approaches rather than defaulting to decades-old procurement norms. Rigid contracting processes that define every deliverable in advance leaves no room for adaptation and disincentivizes continuous improvement.

The government that truly intends to catalyze transformation will need to experiment with performance-based frameworks that treat private expertise as an extension of public purpose.



Partnership That Delivers

Operators can modernize without privatizing—providing governments with surge capacity for emergencies or overflow, knowledge management for better information flow, faster issue resolution and more client and employee satisfaction – these are measurable results while keeping accountability and jobs in Canada.

The Cost of Poor Design - Evidence and Proof Points

The cost of poor service design is visible across Canada's federal system. At the CRA, more than 29 million calls were blocked before reaching an agent, while nearly one-third of answered calls gave inaccurate information, according to the Auditor General. Each failed interaction represents multiplied cost: citizens call again, submit duplicate forms, seek assistance through MPs' constituency offices, or fail to receive entitlements or meet obligations with real world repercussions for families. Internal rework and complaint management consume resources.

Industry experience shows unresolved inquiries generate between three and five follow-up contacts, meaning that inefficiency compounds exponentially. These are structural design problems, not funding problems. By contrast, outcome-driven service models have demonstrated that measurable improvement is achievable when accountability is clear.

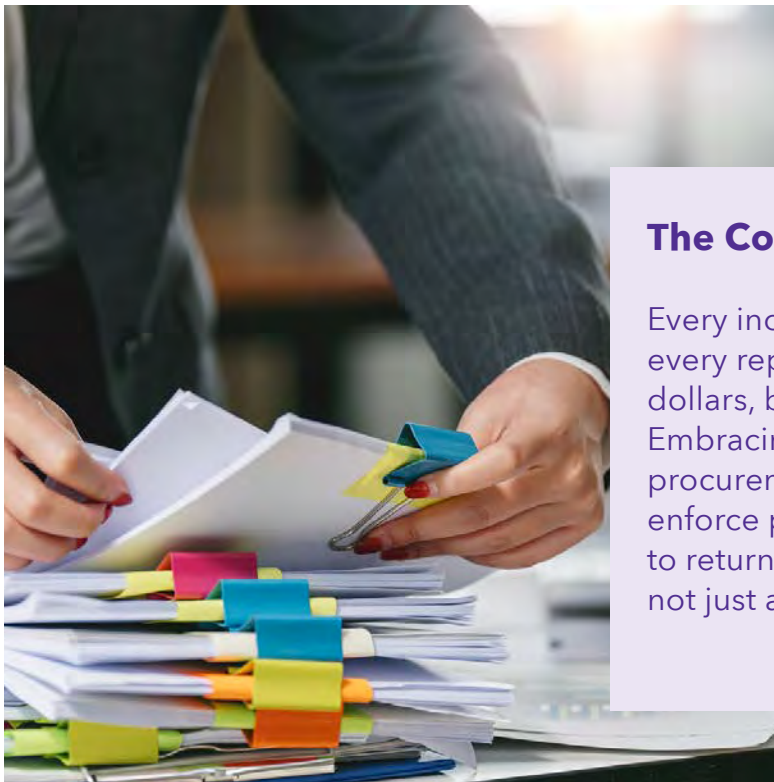
Declining service quality also erodes public trust. The Institute for Citizen-Centred Service reports that although 77 per cent of Canadians interacted with government online in 2023, satisfaction continued to fall. When citizens cannot reach accurate information, they delay tax filings, misreport benefits, or turn to unreliable third-party sources. The resulting administrative friction increases compliance costs for everyone. In contrast, provinces that apply citizen-centred models consistently achieve satisfaction levels above 85 per cent—evidence that design, not funding, determines outcomes. The human toll extends to employees. Front-line agents working within rigid scripts and legacy systems face intense pressure and limited discretion. Error rates and burnout rise together.

Government also tends to take overly risk- and change-averse approaches to large technology-backed service or IT projects. Procurements can limit eligible technologies to established but dated technologies or systems, in the interest of lowering risk, but often directly stifling better more current solutions and the option to innovate over the term of a contract.

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The same challenges and opportunities extend across portfolios central to Canadians' daily lives. Programs such as Employment Insurance, the Canada Pension Plan, and Old Age Security depend on timely, accurate decisions. At Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada, large caseloads and long processing times continue to test public confidence. Veterans Affairs requires both compassion and precision in benefits adjudication. Indigenous Services Canada must deliver culturally informed health and social benefits while building local capacity. Shared Services Canada underpins these efforts with enterprise technology and secure, scalable infrastructure. During peak demand, the Canada Revenue Agency depends on surge capacity to maintain service continuity.

In each case, outcome-driven modernization—often enabled by experienced operators using responsible AI—can reduce backlogs, improve fairness, and enhance citizen satisfaction while ensuring accountability and inclusion.



The Cost of Inefficiency

Every incorrect answer, every missed call, every repeat contact adds cost—not just in dollars, but in public confidence. Embracing new solutions and shifting to procurement structures that hinge on and enforce performance outcomes is the key to returning to levels of service that are not just adequate, but excellent.

New Horizons - Technology & Operators Can Solve Big Challenges

Canada can lead the world in responsible AI—anchored in human oversight, accountability, and fairness. To get there, experienced operators are essential. They train and govern AI with real-world expertise, ensuring technology learns from people who understand programs, citizens, and outcomes. When guided by experts and strong governance, AI becomes a productivity engine—reducing cost, improving accuracy, and strengthening public trust. This is how Canada modernizes responsibly: by pairing innovation with experience to spend less and serve better.

For example, the Maximus Customer Experience (CX) design process combines deep operational insight with the power of the TXM Platform—a modular, data-driven approach that unites secure technologies, analytics, and human-centred design into a single, flexible solution. TXM enables fast, low-risk transitions for government programs by modernizing existing operations rather than rebuilding them from scratch. Together, CX and TXM accelerate implementation, simplify technology setup, and improve efficiency and accountability, ensuring every modernization is grounded in the realities of day-to-day service delivery for Canadians. And because of partnerships with experienced operators, responsible AI is already delivering results within government in the United States and United Kingdom.

“When guided by experts and strong governance, AI becomes a productivity engine—reducing cost, improving accuracy, and strengthening public trust.”

— Maximus Canada

Maximus' Results in Canada and Around the World

Provincial Contact Centre Knowledge Services

A provincial contact centre needed consistent, quality service across numerous programs. In May 2023, Maximus introduced a knowledge-management solution combining AI support, a structured content strategy, and library-science expertise. Agents now locate information faster, resolve calls sooner, and train across programs for flexibility.

Results:

- Citizen Satisfaction +10 per cent
- Average Handle Time stable despite ~30 per cent higher volumes
- Quality Assurance Scores ↑ from 97.5 to 98.2 per cent
- Utilization ↑ from 50-60 per cent to 85-92 per cent

Provincial Rapid-deployed Wildfire Support

During the 2023 wildfires, Maximus launched a specialized omni-channel contact centre at the provincial level within 12 hours. The team contacted evacuees to arrange hotel accommodation, supported by real-time knowledge-base updates and SMS alerts.

Results:

- Prioritized queues achieved 100% service level within 60 seconds
- Had an average speed-to-answer of 2 seconds.

Pennsylvania Medicaid

In Pennsylvania, Maximus streamlined the 13-step Medicaid waiver process through user-focused technology, comprehensive employee training, and transparent tracking metrics. Processing time fell from 90 days to 26, helping older adults and people with disabilities access appropriate care more quickly. **See:** [Home and community-based care in Pennsylvania](#)

Maximus' Results in Canada and Around the World

Michigan QA

In Michigan, Maximus improved quality assurance at a major contact centre serving public health insurance programs. The AI-enabled platform analyzes and scores 90% of calls in real time, automatically generating and transcribing recordings for review. The continuous feedback loop raised average quality scores 12.5 per cent within three months. This continuous feedback loop resulted in a 12.5 per cent increase in average quality scores in just three months. **See:** [Better CX through AI in Michigan](#)

Veterans Affairs

With the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs, Maximus deployed an AI-powered Medical Records Processing System that automates benefit applications and data extraction. The solution reduced manual review times nine-fold and scaled to 15 million pages processed per day during peak demand. **See:** [AI powered disability benefits processing for Veterans](#)

Calderdale AI Chat

In West Yorkshire, UK, Calderdale Council implemented Maximus' Digital Assistant, an AI voice and text chatbot that automates common enquiries. It resolved 88 per cent of web chats independently, escalating the rest to advisors. Through the Intelligent Advisor tool and an interactive map, the council improved efficiency in managing street-lighting and service-request volumes. **See:** [Transforming customer experience through AI assisted innovation - Maximus UK](#)

UK Maximus General

Across the UK, Maximus leverages AI to manage more than 97,000 emails and 200,000 online communications annually. Bespoke summarization tools capture and distil key information from digital interactions, ensuring continuity and reducing the need for customers to repeat details. **See:** [Gen Z and AI: Revolutionising contact centres for a digital-first generation - Maximus UK](#)

How to Implement - Catalyzing a Modern Service Delivery Model

Reform will not occur through incremental improvement. It requires deliberate, leadership-backed action to replace the old way of doing things with a model that values outcomes, accountability, and human-centred innovation.

The Carney government's commitment to modernization provides the opening to catalyze this shift. Leadership must frame service performance as a national imperative equal to fiscal discipline, economic growth or environmental responsibility. When government commits to results and transparency, citizens respond with renewed confidence. The first step is to make political and departmental leadership explicit. Ministers and their Deputies should treat service delivery as a cornerstone of good governance. Aligning departmental mandates around citizen outcomes would ensure that program design, technology, and human resources move in concert.

Next, procurement must evolve. Traditional contracts define deliverables; outcome-driven procurement defines success. By rewarding measurable improvements in resolution times, satisfaction, and cost efficiency, government can unlock continuous innovation. In such frameworks, partners are incentivized to adapt, automate, and refine—not merely comply.

Equally important is recognizing that technology alone will not deliver transformation. Real progress depends on engaging operators, not just vendors. Experienced delivery partners bring integrated expertise in people, process, and systems. They know how to manage high-volume citizen contact environments, scale workforce models, and maintain data integrity.

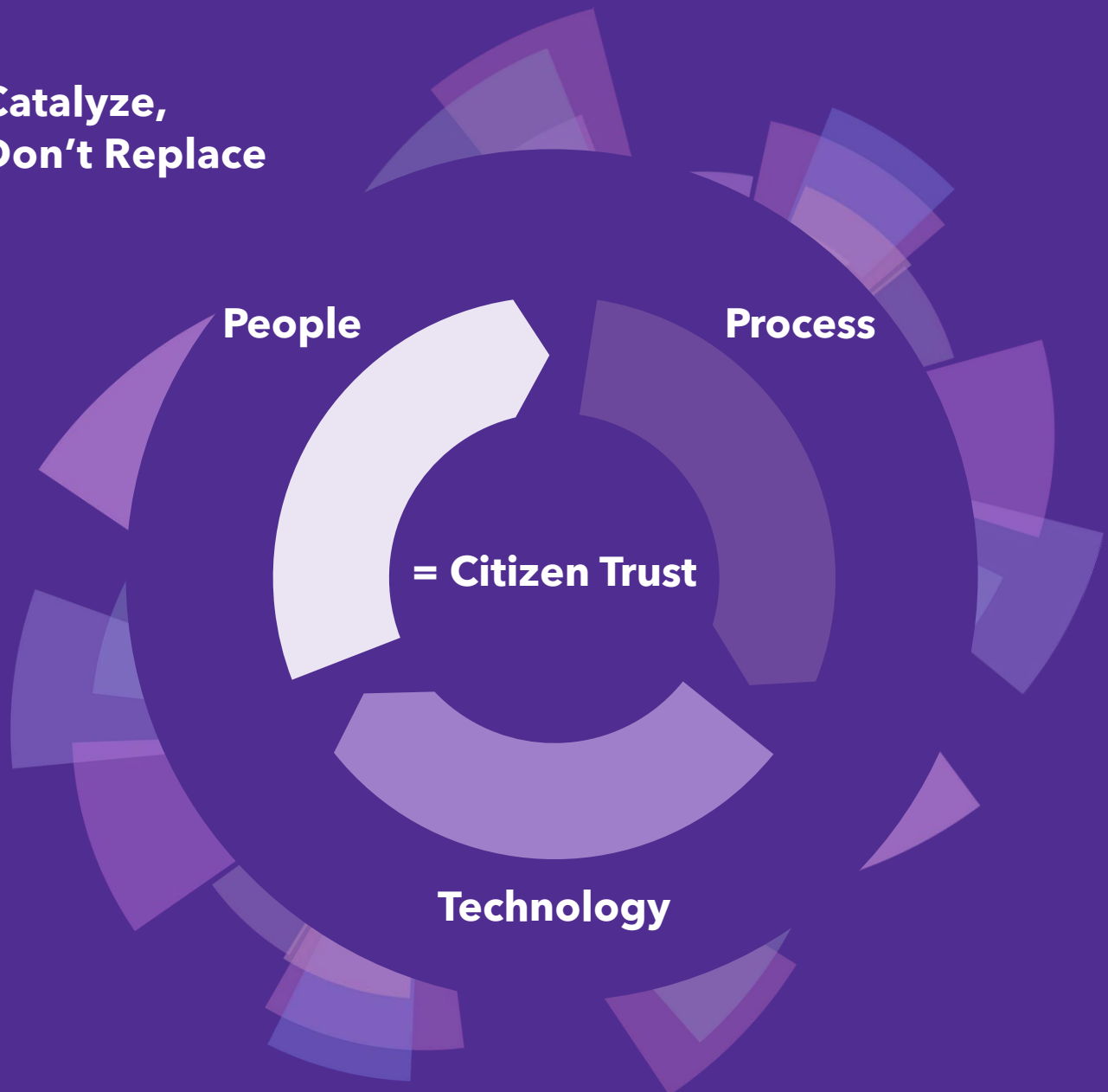
A modernized public service also depends on culture. Departments must embrace continuous improvement as a default mindset—testing, measuring, and iterating rather than launching multi-year mega-projects that lock-in approaches and cannot adapt once begun. Pilot programs that demonstrate tangible progress should be scaled rapidly, with transparent reporting on performance outcomes.

Modernization must also lift the workforce. Empowering employees through better tools, analytics, and AI-assisted systems enhances human capability rather than replacing it. When employees can focus on complex, value-added interactions, the citizen experience improves, and productivity rises.

If executed with discipline and transparency, this transformation will restore both efficiency and dignity to public service—showing Canadians that government can deliver excellence worthy of their expectations.

Modernization isn't about replacing people with systems—it's about giving people better systems to serve other people.

Catalyze, Don't Replace



Conclusion

The Auditor General's latest report should be read not as an indictment of one agency, but as a warning to an entire system. The old way of doing things—layered processes, fragmented accountability, and technology disconnected from human need—cannot deliver the efficiency or trust Canadians require.

The political and operational conditions now align for change. The will exists, the expertise exists, and the private sector stands ready to assist. What remains is the hard work of translating intention into practice, ideas to new procurement strategies and execution to catalyze modernization.

This is not about altering who delivers public services; it is about transforming how they are delivered—for citizens, for employees, for the bottom line, and for the credibility of government itself.

Getting services to Canadians right the first time is not a luxury. It is a fundamental imperative for government to be trusted by Canadians to do big things alongside the daily functions.

About Maximus Canada

Maximus Canada is a trusted partner to governments across the country, specializing exclusively in public-sector service delivery to move Canadians, technology, and government forward.

For more than two decades, the company has helped governments modernize through customer experience services, technology & consulting services, and health services. The Canadian organization brings deep understanding of local operations, and insights into transformative global technologies, to guide the future of government. With user-focused delivery, continuous innovation, and public sector expertise, Maximus brings a uniquely Canadian approach to service excellence.

Operating in provinces and territories across the country, Maximus Canada employs an entirely Canadian workforce of more than six hundred employees and maintains all data, infrastructure, and client operations within Canada's borders, ensuring compliance with the Privacy Act, PIPEDA, and relevant provincial legislation. Its secure data-hosting environment, fully housed in Canada, provides governments with the assurance that sensitive citizen information never leaves domestic jurisdiction. This "by Canadians, for Canadians" model allows governments to modernize with confidence, knowing that sovereignty, security, and accountability remain intact.

Maximus's expertise lies in translating complex public-policy mandates into efficient, measurable citizen outcomes. The company's services integrate multilingual, omni-channel contact-centre operations; eligibility and benefit administration; health-claims management; and technology consulting and modernization. At the core of these operations is the Total Experience Management (TXM) Platform, a modular, data-driven approach that unites secure technologies, analytics, and human-centred design into a single, flexible framework. TXM supports fast, low-risk transitions by modernizing existing government operations rather than rebuilding them from scratch. Together with its Customer Experience (CX) design process, which merges operational insight with human-centred design, Maximus delivers solutions that are practical, scalable, and aligned with the realities of day-to-day public service.

Through this combination of CX and TXM, Maximus supports some of the largest and most complex service systems in the country. Its teams manage millions of citizen interactions each year, provide multilingual assistance in over one hundred languages, and deliver surge capacity during periods of peak demand. In health services, Maximus administers claims, benefits, and enrolment programs that reach millions of Canadians across nine provinces and territories. In each instance, the focus remains on quality, accessibility, and citizen satisfaction, measured through transparent performance metrics and continuous improvement cycles.

Maximus's operational culture emphasizes responsible innovation. Its approach to automation and AI is grounded in human oversight and public-sector governance. Machine-learning tools are designed and trained under the supervision of experienced operators who understand the programs, policies, and people being served. This ensures that modernization enhances rather than replaces human capability, strengthening both efficiency and trust.

Delivered by Canadians. Powered by Experience.

Michael Wilson, Vice President, Growth, leads Maximus Canada's strategic efforts to enhance the value delivered to governments and communities across the country.



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