

Chapter 6

Marketing E–Government to Citizens

María de Miguel Molina

Universitat Politècnica de València (UPV), Spain

Carlos Ripoll Soler

Universitat Politècnica de València (UPV), Spain

ABSTRACT

This chapter explores the different literature that analyses the application of marketing strategies in e-Government to help government managers promote citizen communication and participation. On occasion, the application of marketing strategies to encourage citizens to use G2C (Government to Citizen) tools is poor. Providing citizens with information is the first step whilst the final step of governments should be to reach citizen participation in decisions. To achieve this final step, governments will need to carry out a network analysis in order to find out more about their citizens and their needs. They will then need to communicate effectively how they can cover these needs through e-Government. Based on several experiences, the authors aim to study the gaps that governments at any administrative level should cover to enhance their communication with citizens and so increase the use of e-Government. In this chapter, the authors propose the use of Web 2.0 tools as a new way of communication.

INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, the majority of governments are using e-Government tools as a way to improve their relations with citizens, as well as to reduce bureaucracy and expenses. However, e-Government is sometimes implemented without having carried out a previous marketing analysis to find out what

citizens' needs are, to develop citizen segmentation of certain services and, subsequently, to prepare a promotion plan to show what the advantages of e-Government are and how to make it accessible to a wide range of citizens. Moreover, in this day and age, new communication tools are likely to be a good instrument for governments to increase citizen participation.

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Thus, the main three objectives of this chapter are:

- To provide an easy conceptual framework for public managers who would like to apply marketing techniques.
- To analyze the different steps in citizen e-Government, from information through to participation.
- To learn from different experiences which are the most suitable tools to enhance the use of e-Government by citizens.

BACKGROUND

From a managerial point of view and more specifically from a marketing background, the importance of knowing who our target audience is—to be able to cater for its needs—is well recognized. However, in Public Administration the citizen focus is not as recent and was in fact not present at the beginning of the New Public Management (NPM) paradigm, which, during the 90s, focused on the effectiveness and efficiency of governments. In fact, according to Criado (2009), e-Government was a marginal item in many NPM studies until works by significant authors such as Margetts and Hood came along in the new millennium. However, at present all government levels should take e-Government into account because “due to their multidimensionality, the management of the innovation processes entailed by e-Government requires the availability of specialized competencies in various domains, including technology, marketing, communication, policy making and project management...” (Castelnovo, 2009). Kotler and Lee (2006) remarked that ICT could be analyzed as tools for marketing purposes but that e-Government is not a specific field of Public Management *per se*. In fact, they point out that e-Government refers to using the Web as a communication or even as a distribution channel, i.e. what some call e-Governance.

However, some authors think that Governance represents a new way of governing and its *raison d'être* lies in the need to increase all stakeholders' involvement in the management of private and public organizations (Freeman, 1994; Rhodes, 1996; Freeman, 2004; Frederickson, 2005; Rhodes, 2007), mainly by greater participation in policy-making. This is a post-NPM or Network Governance phase (Osborne, 2006) in which each public administration must evolve in accordance with its own environment. In other words, political leaders should have the skills required to introduce NPM ideas while taking the various different stakeholders into consideration (Ferlie & Steane, 2002). Governance tends to go beyond top-level policy co-ordination to where the public sector co-ordinates and co-operates with non-state actors, such as firms and voluntary organizations, to deliver policy outcomes (Acevedo & Common, 2006). Therefore, Governance is an extension of NPM but not a new paradigm. It is rather a combination of paradigms depending on the country and agency under analysis (Andresani & Ferlie, 2006). Governance may be the foundations on which to build NPM as this would be a way of working towards relational government (De Miguel, 2010). It would be a case of starting from the beginning and instead of simply governing society, introducing a way of governing with society.

In this extension of the NPM concept, Osborne (2006) speaks of the transition to a model of New Public Governance (NPG). According to this author, NPM was a transitional period on the way towards NPG, which is based on the network theory and on social capital studies, and even goes as far as relational marketing. For the OECD one of the objectives of good governance involves, among other things, improving the transparency of governments with regard to their citizens (Grönlund & Horan, 2004). However, even Osborne (2010a) does not propose NPG as a new and definitive paradigm of public service delivery but as part of a triple model where Public Administration, NPM

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