

THE US DEPARTMENT OF VETERANS AFFAIRS USES A COLLABORATIVE AND CUSTOMER-CENTRIC DIGITAL APPROACH TO REACH AND ENGAGE MORE VETERANS.

## Q SITUATION

### Shifting To A Customer-Centric Focus

With nearly 1,500 hospitals, centers, community clinics and regional offices to oversee and hundreds of different services and programs to promote, the United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) faces an ongoing and incredibly important challenge: informing close to 22 million Veterans and their families about the services available to them, while connecting them to the resources they need. Recognizing that providing a unified Veteran experience is key to equipping Veterans with the right resources at the right time, VA recently launched the MyVA initiative under Secretary Robert McDonald.

This initiative is designed to drive a more customer-centric VA experience – one that improves Veteran access to benefits and services while simultaneously strengthening the delivery of those services. The result of such efforts could help decrease the backlog of claims applications, connect more veterans to housing resources, provide timely access to medical attention and more.

To support this initiative, VA began to think differently when formulating communications strategies. It recognized that leading with digital instead of traditional communications would provide the agility and flexibility necessary to deliver relevant messages to distinct audiences in impactful ways, whether that's through email, text message or social media.



## ABOUT

The United States Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) is committed to serving the needs of America's nearly 22 million Veterans, as well as their family members and other beneficiaries. VA and its more than 350,000 employees help Veterans access a number of services and benefits designed to provide ongoing care and support, while helping with the transition from active military service to civilian life. A few of these services and benefits include disability compensation, education and training, employment services, healthcare, home loans and life insurance.

VA's goal was to get its policy and content teams across the organization to not only include digital communications in their strategies, but to lead efforts with digital channels and solve Veteran needs directly. But with such a vast, complex menu of services and audiences – from Veterans to family members to local organizations that provide Veteran assistance – VA required a powerful digital platform.



**SOLUTION**

**Connecting Through Digital Channels**

As VA shifted its communications strategy to a digital-first, collaborative approach focused on customer-centric outreach, the organization turned to GovDelivery for support.

Leveraging GovDelivery’s powerful digital communications platform, VA is able to send messages with the speed, relevance and scalability necessary to keep Veterans informed of the services and programs that benefit them most. Meanwhile, the platform offers multiple channel options, including email, text message and social media, to help ensure that audiences receive messages when, where and how they want.

Such proactive and personalized digital communications lead to increased audience engagement and help Veterans, family members and local organizations alike have a more meaningful relationship with VA. These communications can introduce Veterans to programs they previously might not have known existed, direct local organizations to convenient online resources and forms, increase web traffic to targeted information, drive the completion of more online benefits applications and much more.

GovDelivery also provides campaign management and content automation capabilities to enhance VA efficiency, while offering full-service data analysis to surface valuable insights that can shape digital outreach efforts moving forward.

**Providing Direct Veteran Support**

By implementing a targeted digital communications strategy, VA has provided more Veterans with convenient access to the resources and programs they need. Additionally, the organization’s communications strategy shift to short, relevant messages and unified digital campaigns have helped spike Veteran interest in relevant topics.



**REAL-WORLD EXAMPLE**

To connect Veterans to their benefits as quickly and accurately as possible, VA launched a unified digital campaign to encourage more Veterans to file their claims online. This was the first time VA undertook a unified content push to all of its GovDelivery subscribers and the results were impressive. The campaign drove 318,000 engagement points with online claim information, drove more people to the website and generated questions and discussions that VA later addressed on its blog, prompting more than 150,000 people to sign up for blog updates. At the same time, VA leveraged GovDelivery Professional Services to manage, track and shape the campaign, testing targeted messaging to drive awareness and usage of online services.

*“The advantage of having this digital platform is that we can get information to the people who need it right away and navigate the needs of a complex and diverse audience.”*

**TIMOTHY HUDAK**

U.S. VETERANS AFFAIRS, PUBLIC AFFAIRS SPECIALIST

VA’s claims and appeals update campaign, for instance, drove 318,000 engagement points with online claim information in addition to sparking discussions with Veterans, family members and local organizations. VA continues to update its blog with content driven by digital conversations prompted by this campaign and more than 150,000 people have subscribed to the blog service as a result.



**RESULTS**



RESULTS

“It was a well-received campaign internally among our administration that also resonated with our audience,” Joshua Tuscher from the VA Office of Public and Intergovernmental Affairs said. “And it helped drive more people back to our website.”

The GovDelivery platform helps VA power awareness of its initiatives, priorities and programs, such as Facebook or Twitter chat events, with powerful results. In a single month, VA sent more than 4 million emails that led to more than 1.5 million interactions, and in 2014 VA sent 1,374 messages to more than 26 million people.

Initiatives using the GovDelivery platform have demonstrated so much success, in fact, that 16 organizations within VA

are using the platform to connect with Veterans in impactful digital ways.

And the GovDelivery Network, which cross-promotes VA content with similar public sector organizations, along with subscription overlays, have helped increase subscribers and drive digital audience growth.

Together with GovDelivery, VA has built a strong foundation for its digital strategy moving forward. The organization has made great strides in delivering a unified experience that quickly and conveniently connects Veterans to the resources they need, placing Veterans at the center of the experience to provide personal help and direct support.



METRICS

**300K** ‘FILE A CLAIM’  
PAGE VISITS

**99%** OF VISITS CAME  
FROM EMAIL

**2M+** VETERANS RECEIVING  
VA CAMPAIGN EMAILS

*“The email campaign accounted for more than **80% of ExploreVA** traffic during that timeframe and reinforced the power of email as an effective, scalable communications tool for VA.”*

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**ABOUT GOVDELIVERY**

GovDelivery empowers government to create better lives for more people. More than 1,000 organizations worldwide use the GovDelivery platform and network to inform and engage over 80 million people. GovDelivery is the only digital marketing platform built exclusively for public sector organizations in order to promote usage of services, enhance public awareness, and increase the contributions and involvement of citizen communities.

*In no way does this Success Story imply that the VA endorses GovDelivery; it is strictly providing information regarding the VA’s success using a collaborative and customer-centric digital approach to reach and engage more Veterans.*