



FRONTLION GUIDE • PUBLIC SECTOR

Reimagining Government Office Customer Flow Management

The many benefits virtual queues bring to public sector offices and military bases.

Table of Contents

- 1 Introduction
- 2 Why Does Customer Flow (Really) Matter for Government Offices?
- 3 What Is a Customer Flow Management System?
- 4 How Does a Virtual Customer Flow Management System Improve Visitor Experience?
- 5 How Does a Virtual Customer Flow Management System Improve Employee Experience?
- 6 Outside-of-the-Box Government Office Use Cases for Customer Flow Management Systems
- 7 How Can Military Bases Use a Customer Flow Management System?
- 8 Ready to Unlock the Power of Virtual Queuing for Your Government Office?

Introduction

If you've ever walked into a post office, courthouse, or DMV, seen a long line of customers waiting for service, and groaned, you're not alone. Lengthy queues at government offices are an expected inconvenience. The public knows it—and government agencies know it, too.

Long lines and frustrating customer service experiences are challenging for both customers and employees. When an office is routinely swamped by crowds of people clamoring for immediate service, it becomes impossible for employees to provide stellar service. This also results in subpar working conditions for government employees—and a poor reputation for government offices, even though they provide essential services.

In other words, inefficient customer flow is a lose-lose for everyone involved.

This makes the opportunity clear: Rethinking your customer flow management system can help your office provide better service and improve working conditions for your staff (a true win-win!).

Even with this insight, it can be easy to overlook the many other ways virtual queues can level up the employee and customer experience.

Today, let's think beyond the in-person line to discover precisely what a low-cost, pre-vetted, government-office-compliant virtual customer flow management system can do for you, your team, and your community.

Why Does Customer Flow (Really) Matter for Government Offices?

If your office provides an essential service for your community—government-issued IDs, for example, or finance management for a military base—then why does providing excellent service or ensuring efficient customer flow really matter? Your customers will keep showing up, after all—and, even if they have to wait a little longer, they'll get what they need.

That may be true. But investing in thoughtful customer flow—the arrival and movement of people through your office as they access your services—can transform the way your office operates.

For example:

Efficient customer flow management reduces wait times and enhances customer satisfaction.

Customer satisfaction yields positive reviews, a great reputation, increased compliance with employee requests or service instructions, and repeat business.

A streamlined customer flow benefits employees by reducing stress, increasing job satisfaction, and improving overall productivity.

Customer flow management systems can help government offices comply with accessibility requirements or help expand services to serve new populations.

Implementing measures to boost ideal customer flow also reduces overcrowding risk, leading to a safer environment for visitors and employees.

Effective customer flow management systems help government offices collect valuable data about visitor behavior and preferences, enabling them to improve their services and operations over time.

Finally, investing in thoughtful customer flow can result in cost savings for government agencies by increasing team efficiency and reducing the need for additional staff or more physical space.

Now that we've convinced you that leveling up the flow of customers through your office is worth your time, let's get to the good stuff. What type of system do you need to implement so your office can start seeing these benefits?

QUITE INTERESTING QUEUE INSIGHT NO. 1:

Did you know how long a person thinks they're waiting in line can be influenced by factors other than actual wait length? Their physical environment, the amount of control they have over the queuing process, and the accuracy of the information they get all play a significant part in improving customer perceptions of wait times (even if the wait times themselves remain unchanged).

What Is a Customer Flow Management System?

At its core, a customer flow management system is what it sounds like: a system your office puts in place to direct customer flow.

Customer flow systems can be simple. The back-and-forth gates that direct theme park attendees through a neat line for a popular ride are one low-tech example of flow management. The take-a-number waiting systems you've experienced at your corner deli are another.

Those systems can resolve some issues, but today, we're talking about the power of virtual queuing systems for ultimate customer flow management.

Here's how we define virtual customer flow management systems:

Virtual customer flow management systems enable businesses to manage the flow of customers in a virtual, digital, or remote environment. These systems use technology to automate and streamline customer interactions, reduce wait times, and improve the overall customer experience.

After an office performs the minimal setup required to launch its virtual flow management system, customers can join a queue from their mobile device or a kiosk and receive updates on their wait time and place in line. This reduces or eliminates the need for customers to show up at your place of business unaware of lengthy wait times; instead, your customers can go about their errands, only showing up exactly when you're ready to greet them.

A high-quality customer flow management system can also include appointment scheduling, SMS notifications, and real-time tracking to help visitors and staff manage their time more effectively.

However, that's not all.

By using a customer flow management system, government offices can collect more data about customer flow and business practices and leverage that data to improve their operations.

THE POWER OF COLLECTING AND LEVERAGING ANONYMIZED CUSTOMER DATA

Customer data (either anonymized or collected with their permission) can be invaluable. Consider what you could accomplish if you knew the following statistics:

The number of visitors your office sees

- Their approximate arrival times
- The duration of each customer visit
- The services each customer requests
- The reasons for visit or service requests
- How long your employees spend rendering those service requests
- The peak times and low times for visitor traffic
- Visitors' demographics

This type of data can be magic. Your government office can use this data to:

- Predict peak service hours, so you can increase staff (or free up employee bandwidth) during those times accordingly.
- Identify which of your services are most requested and allocate resources to match.
- Locate any bottlenecks currently impacting customer flow or service time in your business.
- Analyze your visitors' demographics so you can tailor services to their needs.
- Monitor visitor satisfaction levels and adjust services to meet their needs.

You can even collect direct feedback on your services through your virtual customer flow management system, which can help you provide better support for your visitors.

We'll talk more about how virtual queuing can make your team's jobs more manageable in a moment, but for now, let's zero in on customer support.

How does optimal customer flow benefit the people you serve?

QUITE INTERESTING QUEUE INSIGHT NO. 2:

The math behind stellar queue management is incredibly complex. To build a model that neatly slots your customers into a reasonable queue and balances the services they seek with your team's availability, you'll need to rely on probability theory, queuing theory, and even a set of tools called "stochastic processes" (or a way to visualize real-life queue behavior, allowing you a framework to optimize your queuing systems). It can get complicated—which is why intuitive, easy-to-manage queuing software is a must.

How Does a Virtual Customer Flow Management System Improve Visitor Experience?

Before discussing the connection between ideal customer flow and a great customer experience, let's brainstorm for a minute.

When you're walking into a brick-and-mortar business to complete an errand, what are you hoping will happen?

There's a good chance you seek some (if not all!) of the following:

- Courteous customer service

- Minimal wait times or prompt support

- Clear instructions for any processes you need to complete on-site

- Intuitive ways to submit inquiries, orders, or feedback

- Accommodating and equitable treatment for all visitors

- Accurate information about services provided

- Flexible service options such as the ability to make an appointment and run if you realize you need to leave earlier than you thought

Ideally, you'd like to experience the above in a calm, uncrowded environment. (Bonus points if you can be in and out of the establishment in minutes.)

If you've worked in government services (or any customer support position) for a while, this wishlist may feel less attainable and more aspirational.

Yet virtual customer flow management systems can enable government offices to provide customers with every item on this list. Here's how a virtual queue can help:

- Offers visitors more flexibility to schedule appointments and choose their preferred mode of communication (i.e., in-person, via phone, or online).

- Provides real-time information on wait times and status updates, allowing visitors to plan their time accordingly.

- Enhances communication between the government office and visitors, reducing frustration and confusion.

- Improves overall satisfaction and positive perception of the government office, leading to higher trust and repeat business.

With a thoughtful queuing system, your government office will experience fewer line-related hiccups, enjoy a less crowded lobby, and have the bandwidth and resources to provide more accommodations for your community.

It would be easy to think this comes at the expense of employee time and peace of mind. To gain these benefits without a tech-based customer flow management system, you'd surely have to ask your staff to work overtime.

With a virtual queuing system, that's no longer the case.

QUITE INTERESTING QUEUE INSIGHT NO. 3:

Technology is vital to today's state-of-the-art customer flow management systems—but that doesn't mean virtual queuing is exclusively for your tech-savvier customers. You can analyze your customer demographics and select queue entry systems (from self-serve kiosks to strategically placed QR codes) that can be easily accessible for anyone. And, if anyone does need help using your queue system, providing that help should be as simple as directing them to a website and helping them answer a few short questions.

How Does a Virtual Customer Flow Management System Improve Employee Experience?

Implementing a virtual customer flow system can improve more than your customers' experience—it can make your employees' lives a lot easier, too.

Because virtual queues and interactive appointment scheduling systems can automate administrative tasks (or reduce necessary employee involvement), your staff will have more time in their workday to breathe, recharge, and complete value-adding activities for the office. Your employees will also experience less stress and anxiety because your queuing system will reduce the number of frustrated customers your team regularly encounters.

Here are a few more specific ways your government or military base office will provide a better employee experience with virtual customer management:

Optimal customer flow reduces employee workload. With your virtual queue in place, your employees won't have to spend extra time and energy manually managing long customer lines.

Optimal customer flow improves team productivity. Because your team doesn't have to spend as much time on customer management with a virtual queue, they can serve more customers or even complete other non-service tasks to benefit your business. (And they won't have to rush or stay late to do it.)

Optimal customer flow increases employee job satisfaction. Because your team will be able to focus more on providing outstanding customer support instead of managing crowds of tired people waiting in line, your employees will feel more accomplished at the end of their workday. This sense of accomplishment does wonders for employee morale.

Optimal customer flow grants office workers more flexibility. With a virtual queuing system in place, your employees can manage queues and appointments from their smartphones or mobile devices. This may make it possible for your office to consider remote or hybrid support roles, flex hours, or other ways for your employees to have more control over their working environment. (Simply managing routine tasks without sitting at a specific desktop computer can make a big difference.)

Optimal customer flow also reduces crowds (and loud noises, and even potential germ exposure). Typically, government office workers come face to face with hundreds of people in close proximity daily. Customer flow management systems reduce the need for crowded lobbies—which, in turn, minimizes the risk of employee exposure to illness. This benefit alone is a

game changer come flu season.

So far, we've looked at how a virtual queuing or customer flow management system can make life better for your customers and your team. We've discussed in detail why shorter lines, increased employee bandwidth, and more customer data can transform the way your government office operates.

Let's pivot slightly to talk about specific queuing use cases and off-the-beaten-path benefits.

QUITE INTERESTING QUEUE INSIGHT NO. 4:

Training your staff will be essential for maintaining optimal customer flow management, and today's virtual queuing systems make onboarding easy. You'll need to provide an overview of how virtual queuing systems work and their general benefits (the resource you're currently reading should help!), a demo on how to use your system, and some troubleshooting tips. We'd recommend selecting a queuing provider that makes this setup process as painless as possible. If your provider can help with ongoing support after onboarding, that's even better.

Outside-of-the-Box Government Office Use Cases for Customer Flow Management Systems

Implementing a customer flow management system can improve customer flow and enhance the overall experience of employees and customers alike.

But that's just where the real uses of virtual queuing begin.

Here are more specific, non-obvious ways to use your virtual queue to level up your government office.

Virtual queuing can improve service accessibility for both employees and customers. For example, with a smart customer flow system, your office will have the tools to effectively and respectfully help people with mobility challenges or disabilities. You may even be able to help offices serve customers in their preferred languages or open up hiring opportunities to expanded pools of applicants.

Virtual queuing can ensure that your office is adaptable and resilient. If an emergency, surge in relocations, or cultural paradigm shift requires your office or base to suddenly ramp up business or change how it offers services, a virtual queuing system can make your office's availability and resources crystal clear. Your virtual queue can also grow with you or pare down as needed, making it easy to scale your operations in response to changes in service demand.

Virtual queuing systems keep your customer service and appointment data in one place. Office miscommunication happens more often than you think. (One report, aptly titled *The State of Miscommunication*, stated that more than 80 percent of surveyed employees experienced workplace miscommunication at least occasionally.) Today's best virtual queue systems provide real-time universal updates—which means your office will know about queuing needs and new appointments immediately. This can help ensure that everyone involved in your office, from your internal team to your customers, suffers minimal miscommunication errors.

Virtual queuing can reduce the need for printed line-related materials. These materials, such as tickets and signage, are more effectively replaced with in-app or online instructions and notifications. This supports enhanced flexibility, eco-friendliness, scaling, and aesthetics for in-person offices.

CASE STUDY: A COUNTY CLERK'S OFFICE

Want to learn more about how one government office increased service efficiency, balanced real-time queuing with scheduled appointments, and was able to use queue data to understand customer needs better?

A central Kentucky county clerk's office that serves more than 4,000 community members per month needed a new way to manage its daily operations. The office was in a small annex, and its tiny footprint was often overloaded with lengthy lines—particularly during busy periods.

The office already operated seven days a week (barring holidays), and its services were inarguably essential: Nearby community members weren't going to stop needing voter registrations and real estate recordings anytime soon. The office chose to implement a queue management system to help customers experience reduced wait times (and allow staff time to breathe!).

The result? After the office implemented mobile queuing, 300 customers could add themselves to a service queue daily. That's 300 fewer people crowded into one lobby in one confusing line—and 300 more customers who were extremely satisfied with their efficient service experience.

If you're in charge of operations at a government office, it's clear that installing a customer flow management system can net you significant benefits.

But what about personnel flow on a military base? How can virtual queues and customer flow systems specifically streamline on-base operations?

How Can Military Bases Use a Customer Flow Management System?

Here are a few specific use cases for virtual queuing on military bases—as well as a case study we're sure military base administrators will want to check out!

Modern virtual customer or personnel management solutions can ...

Streamline base identification processes. With today's top virtual queuing systems, you can integrate common access cards (or CAC cards, or other personnel IDs) in the system itself, so your base personnel can use their IDs to check into office queues. This will feel more intuitive to everyone involved and will naturally reduce barriers otherwise present in the on-base experience.

Automatically monitor contractor badging. How much time and energy does your base's security team spend monitoring contractor access? It's a necessary security measure, but it requires a lot of mental focus. Your virtual queuing system can keep an eye on contractors for you as they come and go—and even generate automatic access logs for your later reference.

Simplify gun range reservations. Here's a very specific use idea: Use virtual queuing to make scheduling a time slot to practice gun skills a breeze. Personnel can check in to the gun range queue from anywhere on the base, learn about wait times and availability, make an appointment, and go about their day.

Expedite the scheduling of other personnel services and meetings. The same system can help base residents schedule their days for ultimate efficiency. Whether your personnel (or their families, or civilian employees) need to grab a haircut, post a package, or speak with an HR representative, they can make informed decisions about when to complete these errands based on real-time data. This saves everyone time and frustration.

CASE STUDY: AN AIR FORCE BASE FINANCE OFFICE

Curious about whether all of this prescheduling and queuing really works?

It does. We've seen virtual queuing transform operations on military bases. As a real-life example of the power of tech-based customer flow systems, we'll shine a quick spotlight on a recent queuing revamp at an Air Force base in Florida.

The base needed a more efficient way to manage customer appointments at its Finance Office, which serves thousands of personnel, employees, and civilians each day. The office's pen-and-paper system was no longer sufficient to keep up with that level of demand. As a

result, the Finance Office was experiencing long lines, appointment errors, and difficulty predicting and managing busy periods.

The base implemented a virtual queue and appointment management system that reduced the need for note-taking and empowered each individual with real-time scheduling information. With this system, the Finance Office team could better allocate employee time and resources, reducing wait times and allowing smoother personnel flow on the base.

Even better? The reporting and analytics features present in the new virtual queuing solution enabled the Finance Office to gather data on customer needs and serve them better. Since implementing the new system, the Finance Office has served more people and completed more appointments, resulting in happier customers and a better work environment for employees.

QUITE INTERESTING QUEUE INSIGHT NO. 5:

Did you know your queue can grow with you? As you receive feedback from customers, learn from the data you collect, and gain the ability to expand your offerings or grow your business, your queue can constantly adapt to meet increased demand, offerings, or improvements. (Your queue management provider will be an excellent resource for helping you seamlessly scale your customer or personnel flow system as your business or base changes over time.)

Ready to Unlock the Power of Virtual Queuing for Your Government Office?

Customer flow management systems are an innovative (and intuitive) way for government offices to invest in better customer service and streamline operations at the same time. If you're interested in reducing your office's wait times, enhancing your overall customer support, and increasing your staff's productivity, virtual queuing is an excellent place to start.

At Frontlion, we are dedicated to ensuring government offices have what they need to reimagine their customer flow management systems. We also want our services to be easy to access and affordable for your office or base—which is why Frontlion is on the GSA schedule. Procuring our virtual queuing services should be a seamless process so you can carry on with your work.

We know that every office has its own priorities and challenges. We're proud to work closely with each of our government clients to provide effective, efficient, and sustainable flow management solutions. If you want to learn more about how Frontlion can help your government office transform its queuing logistics, schedule a demo with our team.



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