



# Customer Contact and Interaction



## CUSTOMER CONTACT AND INTERACTION

Customer Contact and Interaction constitutes a new development in the Netherlands. This development is strengthened through the publication of 'Klantcontact & Interactie met je gemeente' ('Customer Contact & Interaction with your Municipality') and the creative process that preceded it. Many Dutch municipalities are taking major strides in service provision, communication and participation, including increased awareness of their customer contacts and improved presence on various social media channels. The next step in customer contact and interaction is the actual collaboration with your surroundings, i.e. structuring your organization to meet the expectations of the outside world. In other words, the next step is working 'from the outside in'. This case-study paper presents the developments towards the creation of this publication as well as the main results.

### About LIKE!

Local governments, citizens, universities and SMEs come together to co-create smarter, more efficient and more innovative services through 9 transnational pilots that cover 3 core themes:



### Relations to Workpackages

By focussing on Innovation Culture, this Case Study proofs collaboration has its effect. Given the right parties, vision and approach, it is possible to turn the input of ten experts, nearly 50 municipalities and 100 civil servants into an end product with impact.

### Local partners

TopKring Dienstverlening Gemeenten

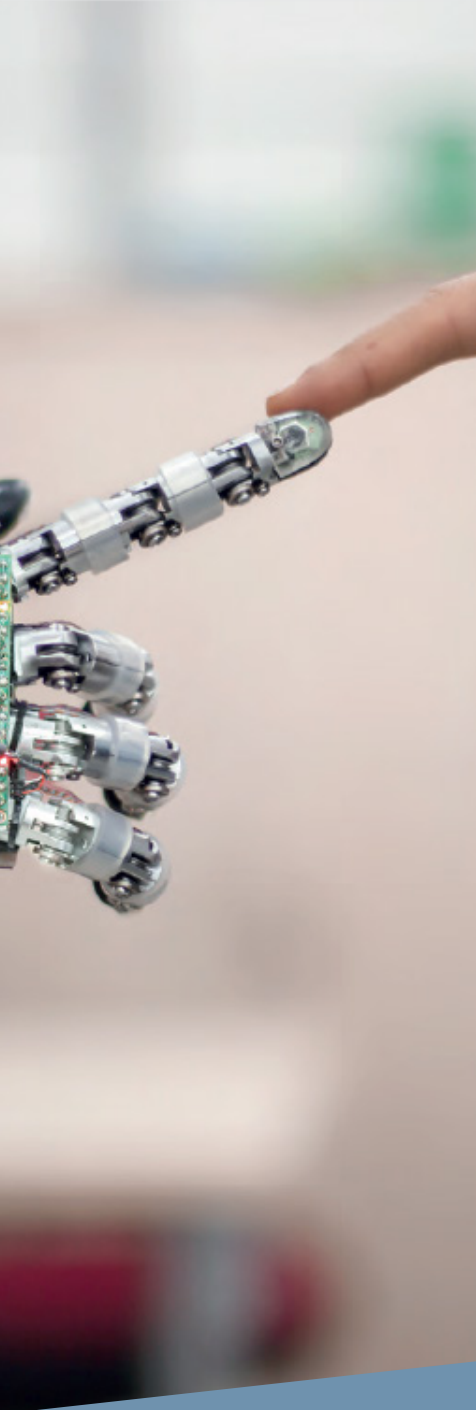
**Vereniging Directeuren Publieksdiensten**  
[www.publieksdiensten.nl/](http://www.publieksdiensten.nl/)

**Kwaliteitsinstituut Nederlandse Gemeenten**  
[www.vngrealisatie.nl/](http://www.vngrealisatie.nl/)

**HowAboutYou**  
[www.howaboutyou.nl/](http://www.howaboutyou.nl/)

**Interreg North Sea Region LIKE!**  
[northsearegion.eu/like/](http://northsearegion.eu/like/)

This Case Study Paper is produced by Evite van Winkoop



## Guidelines

The authors<sup>1</sup> of the publication 'Van buiten naar binnen, klantcontact en interactie in het publieke domein' ('From the Outside In: Customer Contact and Interaction in the Public Domain') identify the following trends in the customer contacts and interactions of Dutch local governments:

### Guidelines for Dutch local government regarding customer contact and interaction:

- 1. Personal**  
Cooperation is our starting point, trust is our basis. We keep our promises; our contacts are personal and tailored. We work as one. We work swiftly and get it right first time.
- 2. Online**  
We serve our customers online as much as possible; phone contact and physical contact will of course remain options (click, call, visit).
- 3. Where the customer needs us**  
We are around the corner and online, i.e. independent of location; we are close when it is convenient, i.e. independent of time.
- 4. From the outside in**  
We listen to the community and are in touch with our customers.
- 5. Together with neighbourhoods**  
We help initiators if necessary, we let go if no help is needed, and we take the initiative if the situation demands it.
- 6. Data-driven**  
We use big and small data to make predictions and improve our services and business

## Practical barriers

Many municipalities recognize these developments, but run into all kinds of practical barriers. The beforementioned developments lead to various individual projects, working methods and results. These practical implications are often manageable within the municipal processes, but they are executed via various teams and methods. Therefore, the initiatives remain scattered across various departments. In order to make real progress, these departments will have to cooperate, which is not always easy.

In addition, the relationship between citizens and the government is changing; citizens are increasingly taking the initiative, which is exactly what the government wants them to do. The role of municipalities is shifting from regulation to facilitation, or even letting go. As a result, municipalities are unsure of which steps to take and are feeling a strong need for concrete 'building blocks' to support them.

### Starting with three assumptions

1. The importance of customer contact and interaction is clear. This development is key and will become more and more important.
2. This development and its destination is clear to many municipalities too, although they struggle with how to get there. How can you make your services more personal. How can you work from the outside in. These practical implementations are issues that every Dutch municipality faces, large and small, innovation leader or follower.
3. This publication aims to have impact. To achieve this, its advice must align with the perceptions of the employees and the context of the organization. This means that advice for municipalities must be written together with municipalities.

<sup>1</sup> Frank de Goede (SIMgroep), David Kok (City of Almere) and Ewoud de Voogd (HowAboutYou)



***“Smarter, faster  
and better in 34  
building blocks”***



## Results

On 21 September 2017 the parties involved presented the publication. It was the first tangible result of the efforts of the preceding months. This publication contains 34 concrete ‘building blocks’ for a government that works from the outside in. Working from the outside in implies that your organization’s thinking and behaviour tie in with the desires of four important parties.

## 34 feasible and concrete building blocks for making progress

The publication must be helpful to all municipalities, large and small, ambitious innovation leaders or followers. It concentrates on the four ‘important parties’ mentioned before and identifies three challenges per party, leading to a total of 12 challenges for municipalities to make their organization work from the outside in. The publication describes all challenges and the content of the related building blocks, why they are relevant and how municipalities can implement them. This allows municipalities to choose the right challenges and building blocks. The selected building blocks constitute the municipal ‘from the outside in’ programme, which ensures the anchoring of the building blocks.

‘Find publication and the 34 building blocks [here](#)

## Four important parties

1. Citizens & Companies: the current scope of service provision and customer contact with the Customer Contact Centre, the website, e-services; the one-on-one contacts; that which today is understood by customer contact and service provision.
2. Neighbourhoods: the processes, services, interactions and collaborations in neighbourhoods and districts near a location, such as co-creation, city funding and communities. In short, the existing forms of participation in the neighbourhoods, including their modern alternatives.
3. Stakeholders: communication with, listening to, sending messages to and reaching groups of citizens with an interest in a certain issue.
4. Administration and Organization: addressing the previous three steps will place heavy demands on the administration and on the organization, its processes and systems, its culture and its employees.



## Relevance to LIKE!

This project is relevant to the Interreg project Like! for four reasons:

1. Working on a better government: not just for, but with municipalities

This case demonstrates that, given the right parties, vision and approach, it is possible to turn the input of ten experts, nearly 50 municipalities and 100 civil servants into an end product with impact.

2. Public-Private Partnership

This case also shows that public-private partnerships can work well. Although having a party with a commercial interest participating as an equal may feel a bit awkward at first, the experience was nevertheless very positive since all partners were transparent and committed to the final result.

3. Working independently of place and time: the cloud

By Dutch standards, there was great physical distance between the initiators and the municipalities that joined the project at a later stage. This may hinder collaboration. To avoid problems such as working in different versions or malfunctioning software, the parties used Google Drive, which is entirely cloud based. This allowed everyone to work and comment on the same document from their own office.

4. Creating a common interest to make the next step possible

This publication outlines the next steps in customer contact and interaction. As such, it lays bare the link between four municipal duties that have thus far been separately organized: service provision, communication, participation and data processing. The creation of an innovative digital municipal culture requires a common language. This publication connects the relevant developments on which departments are currently still working separately.

## ONZE AMBITIES MET KLANTCONTACT & INTERACTIE



## ONZE BOUWSTENEN OM DAAR TE KOMEN



Geef met de stickers in de Infographic aan wat je ambitie is, wat in uitvoering is en wat je al gerealiseerd hebt. Doe dit vooral samen met je collega's van communicatie, dienstverlening, participatie en data. En hang hem daarna op! Kijk voor een uitleg van de bouwstenen in de publicatie 'Klantcontact en interactie met je gemeente'.