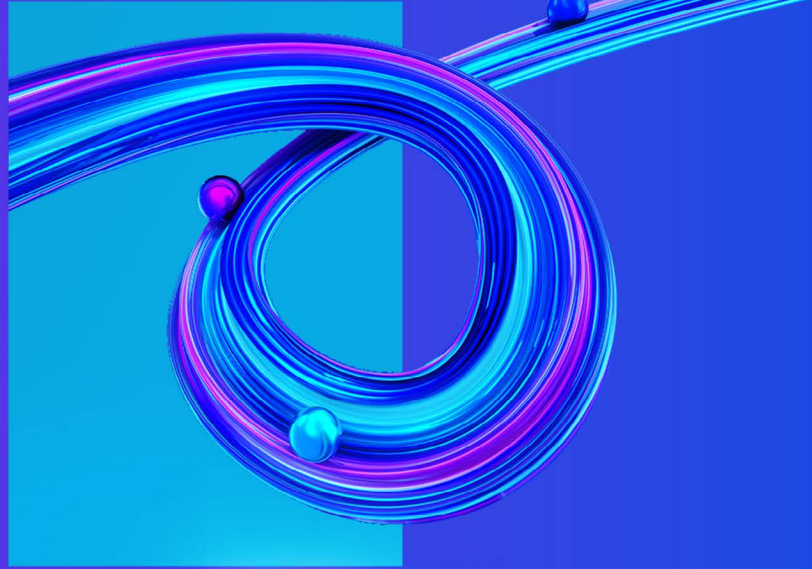# Re-design
employee experiences

KPMG Smart Government

Catalyse digital progress

Insight Briefing

Create workplaces that are a destination for top talent

Sharon and Lamar are interviewing for a wide variety of public and private sector positions in a job seeker's market. Both have sought-after digital and analytical skills. Lamar has worked in the private sector more than 20 years. Sharon has only worked part-time jobs while she was in school. Lamar has Wi-Fi and a computer at home for job searching while Sharon only has her phone. They each value different benefits, from work flexibility and time off to career development and retirement. Both believe a smooth recruitment process can foreshadow how the onboarding and overall employee experience might go. In an environment where employers compete for the best talent, Sharon and Lamar can choose the job offer that best meets their day-to-day and long-term expectations. These expectations start the day their job search begins.

Employee experience is especially critical to government organisations in a competitive job market because it drives recruitment and retention. A Trades Union Congress survey revealed that, in the UK public sector, one in five key employees (21%) were "actively considering" quitting and switching careers as of October 2021. The most common reasons for this response were - feeling undervalued, low pay and an excessive workload[1]. This article explores ways to help national, regional and local governments build their workforce with recruiting and onboarding digital experiences that meet candidates' and workers' expectations.

Why smart government is important

Government organisations and departments around the world should modernise in order to keep up with changing user needs, regulations, and health and public safety requirements. Leaders involved in government modernisation are reviewing their user's experiences to plan what upgrades are needed in their business processes and service delivery models.

This article is one of a series that features how modernising can affect the government workforce and the user experience, improve security and public trust, and accelerate the digital journey. KPMG offers insights intended to help guide governments and public sector organisations in their modernisation efforts to encompass all processes, technologies, policies, and the workforce so each works together to create connected, powered, and trusted organisations.

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[1] TUC press office, "Report: One in five key workers in public sector "actively considering" quitting – new TUC poll" TUC, October 14, 2021.

Create effective digital experiences to improve first impressions

Government organisations have one opportunity to make a positive first impression on prospective employees. Making the most of each interaction during recruitment and onboarding, the first moments that matter, can help attract the right workers to build a workforce. Total public sector employment in the UK increased to 5.74 million employees in June 2022, which is 1.2% more than June 2021[2]. The government has indicated that there is a need to reduce to pre-pandemic levels of employment while protecting public services. To achieve this, the focus is increasingly on attracting, retaining and growing key skills like digital, data, and project delivery.

While recruitment and onboarding are only part of what organisations need to attract, engage, and retain talent, they are the moments that define whether qualified candidates will apply for and accept a job. Organisations also must invest in career development, be known as a digital-focused brand, offer a flexible work environment with the latest employee-facing tools and technologies, and provide interesting and challenging work.

Recruitment is the first chance to engage candidates

The unfilled vacancies in the UK's public sector is adding pressure on the existing employees. For example - NHS vacancies were 100,000 pre Covid, and as of June 2022, this figure rose to 132,139[3]. While that number may not sound alarming, when coupled with dramatic increases in the number of job openings and decreases in available talent, the gap is widening. A user-friendly digital employee experience that starts with recruitment can help attract top candidates.

Creating this experience **requires rethinking processes and technology to improve access to job opportunities and time to hire.** Finding out about permanent UK public sector jobs is particularly cumbersome, and often requires sifting through multiple websites depending on what part of public services you are interested in like UK Gov-Job help, Find a Job website and civilservicejobs.service.gov.uk, for example. This would be a deal-breaker for prospects like Sharon. The interview process length is also a major

factor to candidates in today's employee-driven job market. For UK public sector jobs, once a candidate checks eligibility to apply– qualifications, nationality and so on– they are required to fill the form and complete a number of Self-Assessment and Practice tests which can take around 28 working days to complete[5]. Some of these application forms can be very complex as well as being extremely time consuming with some forms being as long as 34 pages.

As consumers, job candidates are used to one-tap ordering and self-service everything. **A modern employee experience** allows them to access and filter open positions from their mobile device. They can easily review employee benefits, career development opportunities, and learn about the organisation's culture to help determine if the organisation offers what they value. Screening questions and application submission specifically relates to the position they seek, and all messages are personalised.

For example, one NHS trust employs a recruitment software- Tribepad for end-to-end recruitment. The software presents a clear vision over the entire process, with the ability to engage directly with candidates. Tribepad is helping NHS Professionals transform the internal and external recruitment process[6].

When deployed correctly, technology can automatically generate the next steps in the workflow throughout the process. Candidates can see available interview times, schedule interviews, interview via video conference, and review and accept offers online. Technology can also improve accessibility for people with disabilities.

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[2] Public sector employment, UK: June 2022, ONS.
[3] Denis Campbell, "NHS vacancies in England at 'staggering' new high as almost 10% of posts empty", The Guardian, 1 September 2022
[4] https://findajob.dwp.gov.uk/search?q=public+sector&w=
[5] "What is the application process for government jobs," Monster
[6] "NHS Trust transforms recruitment through software solutions," Tribebad

Technology can help **organisations further their diversity, equity, and inclusion (DE&I) goals** to identify employees who are representative of the communities they serve. For example, automated scans of job postings can search for problematic terminology. HR departments can teach artificial-intelligence-powered resume scanning tools to identify prospects with the qualities needed for the role and those of the organisation's highest performers. Chatbots can also help pre-screen candidates. Artificial-intelligence-driven technology comes with a caveat. HR professionals must be sure unconscious bias does not exclude applicants when organisations use these or any technologies in talent acquisition. Regularly explore talent processes that may have structural inequities or digital experiences that may frustrate candidates, especially those where candidates are rejected or abandon the application process.

Taking these actions will also help government departments observe their strategy and policies, such as the Civil Service Diversity and Inclusion Strategy: 2022 to 2025, that calls to welcome talent from a range of backgrounds, experiences and locations, engage the communities served and support innovation, performance and engagement[7].

Prebuilt technology solutions can facilitate more equitable experiences and equip organisations to get the full value from their technology purchases. Deployment methods should address process, people, and technology as well as data, service delivery, and specific government organisation objectives.

Also consider the experiences of current employees who are involved in recruiting and onboarding. Many government organisations have a collection of technologies and services with varying degrees of standardisation that makes it difficult to create seamless experiences. Systems and processes often do not integrate, so efforts to share candidates between departments are manual. With a digitised and optimised HR operating model, recruiting efforts can focus on strategic talent while recruiters and managers rely on transparent automated processes and workflows.

Another key area that government organisations need to improve on is around their job specifications. These can sometimes indicate that they are looking for the ideal candidate that ticks all of the boxes rather than looking for the skills that someone has – taking a skills-led approach. Roles today are moving too fast for formalised job descriptions and so focusing on skills over jobs provides the agility needed to maintain productivity, while also adapting to technology-led change. This approach can also benefit the employee with bringing variety to work but also enabling them to focus on skills that they can develop to satisfy their career goals.

Public sector organisations need to make a good first impression. Public sector employments share out of total employment reduced to 17.5% in 2022, from 22.3% in 2010[8]. Human-centric processes and technologies help ensure candidates such as Sharon and Lamar have positive recruitment experiences. When the first impressions are positive, government job opportunities will be more attractive and keeps a candidate exploring open positions longer. This moves a candidate closer to interviewing and accepting a new role as a government employee.

> **Technology can help organisations further their diversity, equity, and inclusion (DE&I) goals to identify employees who are representative of the communities they serve.**

Onboarding sets the tone for careers

Once a candidate accepts a job offer, onboarding begins. What used to be a series of administrative steps are now moments that matter and an opportunity to set the tone for a new employee's career. According to an undercover recruiter, the actual cost of hiring a new employee is ~£53,281[9]. so organisations should continue to view onboarding as a critical first step to achieve a return on that investment.

When building a modern employee experience, **look closely at onboarding from various new employees' points of view.** Identify where they experience delays and frustration or have to request assistance, then include remedies in the onboarding service design. Tribepad- used by NHS Professionals, for example, to improve candidate experience through a full end to end recruitment journey.

Instead of a manual process that the human resources department runs, **managers in some modern organisations lead digital onboarding experiences.** These experiences are easy to navigate, searchable, and include a workflow and checklist customised to each new employee's specific needs. Digital experiences create a smoother process for HR, managers, and the new employee. As new employees begin onboarding, they interact with a chatbot that guides them through each customised step. These steps may include setting up their workplace preferences, completing required forms, acquiring equipment and an office workspace, and training. While new employees learn new responsibilities, they can easily find answers using chatbots to become productive faster. When creating chatbots, it is important for all questions to be answered so new employees feel heard.

An essential part of the onboarding process is the importance of learning for new joiners. Our research tells us that the early development and learning that new joiners receive has a huge impact on their perception of their new employer. Training shouldn't be assumed to be taking place while the employee is learning 'on the job' but it needs to be a golden thread through the onboarding process and delivered in a way that can fit with the new joiners work patterns and modern ways of working.

New virtual and hybrid work models have dramatically changed onboarding. Now it is necessary to tailor the employee experience to each role and individual's preferences and situation, whether they work from the office, in the field, at home, or in a hybrid setting. Many organisations have developed a remote worker support model to address any onboarding issues so virtual employees do not feel stranded. Support should be simple, provide 24/7 self-service, and be available via chat, notifications, and automated services.

When technology integrates services across an organisation, each new employee's onboarding experience is smooth and leads to a more engaging, innovative, and productive career.

[9] "The true cost of a new hire in the UK," Andy Issott

Design with a digital-experience-first mindset

Designing a digital service experience is a valuable approach for any size organisation and can create a user-driven experience across the entire employee lifecycle, starting with recruitment and onboarding. By combining user experience design with a enterprise-wide operating model approach, the experience is personal to the employee and mapped to their journey. Three practical steps to start designing a digital service experience are:

Treat the first moments like they are significant

Organisations that design and deploy modern digital experiences for moments that matter enhance the service delivery model and make work more attractive to future employees such as Sharon and Lamar. They also can improve how work gets done across functions that support the experience so employees are more satisfied throughout their careers.

Define the moments that matter. These moments can be categorised across the employee lifecycle, such as find (recruitment, onboarding), perform (hosting an event, promotions, leave of absence), grow (coaching, career development, building a team), and move (transferring, retiring, or separating).

Create a digital interaction model showing the services required for each moment. The model is a blueprint for automating the entire experience for this moment. A variety of commonly used platforms can enable automating these experiences.

Develop a single point of entry landing page or storefront where future and current employees can easily seek services and track progress for primary moments that matter.

All organisations need to need to be doing more to ensure digital services are accessible to those who need reasonable adjustments to ensure they attract diverse talent.

About KPMG

KPMG firms have many years of experience of working with public sector from national to local level so we know how organisations work. KPMG professionals understand the issues, pressures, and challenges you encounter in the journey to modernise. Drawing on KPMG firms' government operations knowledge to offer methodologies tailored to help you overcome these challenges and work with you to deliver the results that matter.

KPMG teams start with the business issue before we help clients determine their preferred approach because we understand the ultimate mission. When the way people work changes, KPMG firms can offer client insight on leading training practices to help ensure your employees have the right knowledge and skills. With our Powered Government offering that provides a blueprint for a customer centric, digitally enabled public service organisation.

KPMG firms are committed to helping clients create value, inspire trust, and help governments deliver better experiences to workers, citizens, and communities.

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