

CONVERSATION CASE STUDY

Pioneer Generation Singapore

Global rankings consistently show that Singapore has one of the most trusted governments in the world. This trust can perhaps be credited to a continued dedication to powerful citizen engagement. One example which the Government is rightly proud of is its Pioneer Generation Programme.

“In light of the 50th anniversary of independence, the Government wanted to make a gesture of recognition toward the generation of elders who contributed to the founding of the nation – the pioneers,” says Tan Kiat How, Deputy Secretary of Cyber and Technology at the Ministry of Communication and Information.

“We put together a package of policies and government services available to the elderly to improve their life conditions.” The package provided a range of new benefits including health insurance, disability assistance and pension plans. Staff across government departments were consulted to understand what more could be done for the elderly.

The package itself was not enough: the elderly needed to know about it if they were to benefit. This was the role of communication, to ensure proper awareness and engagement with the package. “We decided to explore a new method of service delivery to reach this notoriously alienated target group – personalised packages distributed “door-to-door,” explains Cheryl Lee, Head of the Strategy Directorate at the Pioneer Generation Office.

The process was conducted in four steps:

1. Existing government-owned data was used to identify all those citizens who would qualify for the programme
2. Once identified, the elderly were contacted and met with a volunteer to establish their needs, assessed through a standardised engagement form
3. Information from the first session was used to tailor a standardised service package into a personalised one. Volunteers then made a second visit, using made-to-measure messages to illustrate the recommended services
4. Finally, in the third session, volunteers delivered the services available and helped pioneers sign up through government portals.

“Despite the pervasiveness of technology, we didn’t want to lose the human touch that is so important in building a sense of community and mutual support” says Chan Wei Gan, Director of Home Affairs. In fact, the real heroes of the campaign were the volunteers. Ranging in age from 16 to 88, they were driven only by the desire to give back to their community. “It was a social movement, which reached over 75% of the 450,000 pioneers, with multiple visits to each home.”



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Cheryl Lee,
Head of the Strategy Directorate
at the Pioneer Generation Office

Pioneer Generation Singapore continued

The Pioneer Generation Programme demonstrated that government communication can drive engagement when personalised and delivered through the right channels. “Essentially, we inverted the policy delivery cycle. Instead of offering an array of services to citizens, we asked citizens what they needed to help them benefit from the services available,” says Ms Lee. While few societies are as small or as young as Singapore, the principles of this campaign seem applicable everywhere.