

5 Best Practices from the Joint Tactical Networking Center (JTNC).



The JTNC provides wireless communications and technical support solutions for IT initiatives sponsored by the Under Secretary, giving teams secure, interoperable, and resilient tactical capabilities at home or in theater—work that's often real-time in terms of demand, and thus requiring real-time perspective from subject matter experts.

The team launched the Joint Communications Marketplace (JCM) using Salesforce. It is a series of online community portals that together build the kind of cloud based platform that government agencies need in order to effectively collaborate and engage with industry and other government organizations.

Fitzgerald McNair, JTNC Directorate Lead, shares 5 best practices from that work. best practices from that work.

1. HIT THE ROAD, GET INPUT.

"We came up with an initial idea, put together a rough demo, and brought that with us to two industry days. We were planning to socialize more when COVID-19 hit and impacted the volume of feedback we wanted to collect, so we were especially grateful to have gotten the input we did."

"Ask for input; the more, the better." Getting input from users at every stage of the project not only helps you refine based on real-time feedback, but also helps people see their voice and their role in making an impact. This helps drive adoption faster, build advocates, and support a more successful launch.

2. KEEP IT SIMPLE.

"One thing we heard loud and clear from user feedback: try to make things as simple as possible. A lot of the folks that we run into are not super-technically savvy. So we tried to make sure that everything is easy to understand, easy to navigate. That helped the output do exactly what they need to do, with no question about what needs to be done next," said Kathy Klinar.

Taking a human-centered approach to design helps ensure that the outcome is a customer-first experience, increasing the project's likelihood to make a real and relevant impact.

3. CONFIGURE, DON'T CUSTOMIZE.

"Originally when we started implementing the cloud, we were doing a lot of custom development using visual pages and items like that. We found out relatively quickly that that was very difficult to manage, so we pivoted to using out-of-the-box capabilities first. And now we're not seeing workflows or capabilities break down like we used to," said Joe Grochowski.

Leveraging out-of-the-box capabilities enables teams to take advantage of data models and designs architected by subject matter experts, updates (like product enhancements and security upgrades) that are pushed out to users automatically, and more. The result: more time and energy focused on the mission-critical work, less time and energy focused on the clerical work that often comes with it.

"We start with configuration, and if we can't do it with configuration, we do it with flows. If we can't do it with flows, then we may do custom Lightning Web Components (LWCs) to be able to use within the flows. We do APEX where we need to apex utilities. But we calibrate it at the highest level possible because a) it takes less time to do it. And b) it takes less expertise to hone it and test it."

4. MEET PEOPLE WHERE THEY ARE AT.

"We have found that it doesn't matter what you do, how easy you try and make it, what kind of documentation you put out to be read; some end-users will lead and some end-users will not. Some end-users will go directly to the 'learn more' button and some end-users won't even see it. We started publishing briefs, making videos on how to navigate the community, and hosting hands-on office hours."

Offer visual, auidial, and experiential learning opportunities – the same Omni-channel approach that has come to be the norm for any customer (or in this case, end-user) experience.



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5. OVERALL JCM VALUE PROPOSITION TO THE DEFENSE DEPARTMENT.

"JCM is a state-of-the-art digital ecosystem that provides the DoD a broad array of market information on tactical communications products (e.g. hardware, software, firmware and accessories) designed to assist Program Managers in designing/building fieldable radio systems and make better-informed and more agile acquisition decisions. JCM enables unencumbered pre-contract activities via a robust source or real-time market research at the click of a button that the DoD can leverage in lieu of conducting trade shows and formal market research announcements/collection efforts thereby saving the government time and money."

