MARYLAND DS-VS

Project Highlight

"It was about transforming the organization into the kind of truly modern organization that people really expect."
–Chrissy Nizer, MVA Administrator

In 2015, the Maryland Department of Transportation Motor Vehicle Administration (MDOT MVA), had a vision for the future. In this future, MDOT MVA customers could breeze through their driver license and vehicle registration renewals and quickly return to their day-to-day lives. They could easily access all their MDOT MVA information online without ever needing to step into an office. They would also receive premier customer service at every step along the way.

Left to right: Front Row: Negash Assefa, Bruce Chaillou, Chrissy Nizer, Kelly Shubenok, Petrona Shiloh
Middle Row: Breyon Preston, Telisa Smith, Billie Beard, Felicia Raynor, Sri Vasudevan, Madison Lumpkin, Brett Courtright
Back Row: Michael Pfeiffer, Derrick Keiser, Stephanie Hamilton, Scott Roemmich, Sean Maxon, Clarence Edmond, Bart Adamus, Matthew Tarzwell

/// Making Customer Connections

Standing in the way of the Maryland Department of Transportation Motor Vehicle Administration (MDOT MVA)'s vision was their existing software, which consisted of about 40 disparate systems, including separate systems for driver license and vehicle functionality. Many of these systems were aging and difficult to update. "It wasn't state-of-the-art technology. It was unwieldy, and if we wanted to make changes, it took a lot of work," said Negash Assefa, Director of IT. Some of these systems were so difficult to adjust that they could only be updated on a quarterly basis. "If we had an error, we had to wait for a deployment, which only happened four times a year. You

We're here for one reason–to serve the residents of Maryland.
– Petrona Shiloh,
Administrative Adjudication Division Manager

jammed everything you possibly could into those deployments," said Kelly Shubenok, Business System Administrator.

Left to right: Michael Pfeiffer, Hunter Brick, Scott Roemmich, Sean Maxon, Sri Vasudevan, Brett Courtright, Alex Muller, Matthew Tarzwell

Becoming the motor vehicle agency of the future required a more flexible system. So, between June 2018 and December 2021, MDOT MVA partnered with Fast Enterprises (FAST) to replace MDOT MVA's driver license, motor vehicle, and 38 other supporting systems with a single, modern solution, named Customer Connect. The new software enabled MDOT MVA to provide premier customer service to Marylanders.
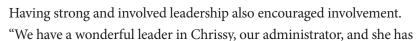
/// Imagining the Future

As the new system was being implemented, MDOT MVA had the opportunity to reimagine and streamline processes. To prepare for this transformation, MDOT MVA gathered a group of staff from across the agency to imagine what the system of the future would be capable of. "We looked at all the ways we worked and tried to convert them into modernized processes. It was interesting to have a 'sky-is-the-limit' kind of wish list," said Stephanie Hamilton, Business System Administrator. FAST Project Manager Mike Pfeiffer said that the resulting wish list reached for the stars. "They're very forward-thinking about how processes work. They want to push the envelope," Mike said.

Left to right: Front row: Bruce Chaillou, Chrissy Nizer, Clarence Edmond
Back row: Michael Pfeiffer, Negash Assefa, Madison Lumpkin, Matthew Tarzwell

The wish list became the goal list for the project. "Our dream was always a one-stop shop—and that's what we got in Customer Connect," Stephanie said. MVA Administrator Chrissy agreed, "Customer Connect gave us the platform to do all the things that we needed to respond to the public. Our goal of premier customer service is embedded in everything that we do. Customer Connect is a tool to accomplish that goal. It's the vision that we've all been driving toward."

/// All In

While Customer Connect gave MDOT MVA the tools to achieve premier customer service, they also needed to ensure that staff and business partners were on board with the changing processes and mindset. Negash Assefa, Director of IT, said MDOT MVA staff were flexible throughout the learning process, "The leap in technology from mainframe to Customer Connect is tremendous. For a lot of people, it's intimidating, but the team was very positive and open."

Having strong and involved leadership also encouraged involvement. "We have a wonderful leader in Chrissy, our administrator, and she has really guided this project and been involved," said Adrienne Diaczok, Director of Customer Experience. MVA Administrator Chrissy Nizer sat in on project meetings, participated in discussions, and helped make decisions. "She was very involved—more involved than any administrator I've been around," said Clarence Edmond, Senior Project Manager. For Chrissy, being involved was her way of showing MDOT MVA staff that the project was the highest priority. "I wanted to send the message that, if I can dedicate the time to it, everyone else can dedicate time to it," Chrissy said.

> *Our leadership has been full in on this project, and it has been unbelievable. It gave us a better relationship with them because everyone was learning the system together. They were available no matter what.*
> *– Kelly Shubenok,*
> *Business System Administrator*

MDOT MVA staff saw Chrissy's dedication and followed suit. "Seeing that buy-in from your leadership really speaks to the folks who are going to be using it," Adrienne said. Deputy Administrator Madison Lumpkin said he could see the dedication of his staff as he worked with them. "To sit in a meeting and hear the conversation between your line-level customer agents—it wasn't just the executives saying, 'We need to do this.' That's gratifying as a leader to see that level of buy-in," Madison said.

/// Benefits

MDOT MVA can keep up with rapidly changing needs because Customer Connect is easy to update and maintain.

"I feel like we've made it a lot easier to make changes and work in the system as a whole. It's also allowed developers to be more efficient because it doesn't take them months on end to make a change."
— *Billie Beard, Business System Administrator*

Customer Connect gives MDOT MVA staff a comprehensive view of customers in an easy-to-use format.

"Employee morale is up because they have a system that speaks to them, and they have visibility to do their jobs better than ever before."
— *Adrienne Diaczok, Director of Customer Experience*

"MDOT MVA staff are embracing the fact that it's something that helps them do their job. I think they've bought into the 360 view of the customer."
— *Bruce Chaillou, Assistant Director of Project Management*

Streamlined and innovative processes have improved quality of life for both customers and employees.

"Our wait time goal 10 years ago was 40 minutes. Now, the wait time goal is 10 minutes. That is literally half an hour of your life back."
— *Negash Assefa, Director of IT*

"Our employees leave on time. That's a big deal, especially in a market where employees are sought-after."
— *Chrissy Nizer, MVA Administrator*

Customer Connect's flexibility enabled MDOT MVA to reach new heights in customer service.

"You know, it's wonderful. You can do so many things in the system. I don't have to send my customer to 10 different places to get what they need. Why send them somewhere else if we can provide that service?"
— *Petrona Shiloh, Administrative Adjudication Division Manager*

"It is a massive hurdle for someone with disabilities to physically get into the MVA. So, we opened online portals for the medical community to submit documentation for any disabled individual. As soon as the physician submits the information, MVA can ship out placards, plates, etc., so that person doesn't have to come into MVA to get those products."
— *Matt Tarzwell, FAST Project Manager*

"Now, our CDL drivers can upload a CDL medical certificate online or from their phones, and we receive that in real time so we can approve it right away. I've gotten a lot of phone calls thanking MVA because it made their lives so much easier."
— *Derrick Keiser, Driver Services Division Manager*

CUSTOMER CONNECT

MDOT MARYLAND DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION
MOTOR VEHICLE ADMINISTRATION
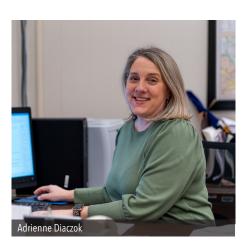
/// One Customer, One Record

A major goal of the Customer Connect project was to unify MDOT MVA's numerous legacy systems into a single, modern platform. "We had a multitude of systems that we always had to make sure were in sync. Sometimes, one system didn't talk to the other systems, and it caused problems," said Bruce Chaillou, Assistant Director of Project Management. Combining systems would enable MDOT MVA to eliminate cross-platform disconnects and unify their customers' records so that driver and vehicle data weren't separate.

Patrona Shiloh

Combining records would also resolve issues with communication across the agency. A side effect of the vast number of legacy systems was that MDOT MVA teams were siloed, making it difficult to efficiently address customer needs. In fact, since the legacy driver and vehicle systems were based on different technologies, they couldn't even be managed on the same computers—they required a separate desk setup for each system within MVA offices.

"The employees needed that 360 view of the customer—they really did—in order to do their job well and serve the customers to the best of their ability,"

Adrienne Diaczok

said Adrienne Diaczok, Director of Customer Experience. Now that each customer only has one record in Customer Connect, MDOT MVA staff can quickly access the information they need. "We have the ability to see so much about a customer no matter how they come to us, and anybody can help any customer with any issue that they have," Adrienne said.

Chrissy Nizer

Negash Assefa

Kelly Shubenok

Stephanie Hamilton

Derrick Keiser

Clarence Edmond

Madison Lumpkin

Billie Beard

Bruce Chaillou

What's Next

The Customer Connect project has helped MDOT MVA achieve their goal of Premier Customer Service. "We had a vision for where we wanted to get to, and I feel like we've made that vision happen," said Chrissy Nizer, MVA Administrator. The result has been faster, more efficient, and more convenient service for MDOT MVA customers. "We have a tangible impact on the lives of Marylanders. This project has allowed us to do our jobs better," said Madison Lumpkin, Deputy Administrator.

However, MDOT MVA understands that continual improvement is needed to keep up in our rapidly changing world. "Until we are able to see our customers do what they want, when they want, where they want, and on any channel they choose to, our work will continue," said Negash Assefa, Director of IT. MDOT MVA plans to continue to reduce paper and digitize records, streamline and automate processes, and offer even more services to their customers. Negash summarized MDOT MVA's continuing vision, saying, "We want to be an agency that provides premier customer service. Not just a government agency that does this, but one that can compete with any sector in any industry and be known for providing premier customer service."

This has brought a brand-new world to the way we do business here at MVA.
– Clarence Edmond,
Senior Project Manager