

2007 North American Frost & Sullivan Award for Customer Value Enhancement Award Recipient: Voice Print International (VPI)



Award Description

The Customer Value Enhancement Award is presented each year to the company that has best demonstrated the ability to expand the customer base, while maintaining its existing install base, with more innovative value creation and enhancement strategies than competing vendors.

The key differentiators of a Customer Value Enhancement recipient from a traditional Customer Service award is that

1. it is a proactive function rather than a reactive function
2. it focuses on value creation and enhancement rather than simply ensuring client satisfaction
3. it focuses on maximizing the ROI of the investment customers make in a company's products or services rather simply providing after sales support and service.

This Award recognizes the degree to which the company's strategies have met customers' stated needs and requirements. Such innovation is expected to significantly improve customer interaction and contribute to customer value.

Research Methodology

In order to select the Award recipient, analysts quantify several market factors for each market participant according to predetermined criteria.

Through primary and secondary research methods, all companies' market position and market growth are tracked, and those exhibiting increased customer penetration are noted. Company installed base and revenues are compared year to year to monitor customer response and market expansion. When a company demonstrates proactive strategies to create increased value for customers, which in turn leads to increased penetration and installed base, it is a candidate for the Customer Value Enhancement Award.

Measurement Criteria

In analyzing companies for CVE recognition, we use specific criteria to determine the final Award rankings. The recipient of this Award has excelled based on one or more of the following criteria:

- Leading proactive initiatives to improve value to customers
- Inclusion of new features and benefits for an existing service or product that enhances value for the client
- Implementation of a new or unique pricing strategy
- Implementation of a new or unique product bundling strategy
- Launch of a new product(s) to offer a "one-stop shop" in response to customer demands
- Launch of a new service protocol to improve overall customer ownership experience
- Launch of a new program to help improve the utilization rates for products or services procured by clients
- Creating new venues, such as online services, for an established product
- Strategic mergers, acquisitions, or joint ventures to provide additional benefits to the customer

VPI has been steadily increasing its presence in the call recording and analysis sector by incrementally improving the suite nature of its agent-facing tools. The company is expanding the ability of the tools to work in a wider variety of environments and to provide a stronger measure of proactive analysis to help contact centers improve.

The company has taken two key steps toward a higher profile in the marketplace in recent years. One was the 2006 acquisition of Syntora, a specialist in electronic coaching tools and performance analytics. Syntora's tool had already been integrated into VPI's suite before the acquisition, giving the company a head start in presenting it to the market as a unified offering.

The second step was to emphasize the importance of IP recording as a way of leapfrogging over the current wave of hybrid recording and agent-optimization tools. VPI has forged close relationships with Cisco and Avaya that will bear even more fruit over the next two years. While many centers are moving to IP incrementally through hybrids, the change in the switching platform is opening the door to reevaluation of the core call recording platform, including consideration of VPI's total IP recording solution.

As the contact center industry moves toward a model that relies more heavily on a dispersed workforce, IP recording becomes a critical component. VPI has cleverly articulated to the marketplace some of the advantages that IP recording has in terms of centralized recording, administration and cost control.

VPI has also taken steps to reassure the current and prospect customer base that the transition in recording technology will include a stable and protected migration path from TDM to IP. The company has introduced technology that minimized the recording system's resource footprint in the network. This can be tremendously important in getting IT and executive buy-in to the switch to IP recording. And with IP recording as the fulcrum on which so much advanced optimization activity takes place, VPI has targeted its message (and its tools) at the right constituency.

Another innovation that improves value for VPI's customers is a licensing mode for companies that do not require full (100%) recording of all calls. VPI's Dynamic or "Concurrent Connection" recording allows for more efficient use of recording channels by making a trade-off between the number of calls that can be recorded *simultaneously* and the number of phones that can be monitored overall. It's a clever value for customers that are in transitional periods where cost is an issue, and where pilot programs are being considered as a way of testing IP applications. This mode requires no configuration for the channels, extensions or IP settings to work properly; it's effectively turnkey for the user.

On top of this, VPI has extended the functional range of the suite to include the powerful analytical performance management software. To encourage adoption of that tool in a tumultuous market, VPI offers a "QM dashboard" to customers that purchase its call quality monitoring (QM) software. The Activ! IQ QM dashboard is one of the most elegant and user-friendly dashboards on the market. It lets supervisors directly

track the status, progress, and outcomes of agent performance evaluations. It delivers informational clarity, not overwhelming the user with extraneous information, but rather, zeroing in on the precise actionable components that a supervisor can make use of.

The QM dashboards are customized to meet customer's needs and displayed as a band of real time information docked at the top of agent and supervisor workstations. While many dashboards are available in a crowded market, VPI has used the simplicity and elegance of their dashboard to leverage adoption of the more complex performance management tools. The majority of customers that have used VPI's QM dashboard ultimately decide to purchase the full performance management solution which can also deliver important metrics – in real or near real time - from their business and telephony systems that require constant monitoring and timely, actionable feedback.

Activ! Performance Suite 4.0 has been developed to run as a Windows service around an SOA-based framework. This allows contact centers to fully leverage the entire spectrum of VPI's tightly integrated solutions. The open SOA-based architecture provides for sharing of information and business processes, while allowing the solutions to evolve independently – protecting existing technology investments.

With a simple shift in thinking and the appropriate enabling technology – such as VPI's Activ! Performance Suite, organizations can seize the initiative and become highly proactive in their communications and problem solving. Proactive customer care delivers serious competitive advantage by out-servicing more reactive rivals. With the right mindset, processes and technologies in place, problems can be eliminated before customers and customer-facing employees are even aware of them. Companies operating in a proactive mode are also in a better position to support more customers and more products within existing staffing levels, while substantially exceeding customer expectations, earning the longevity and profitability of customer relationships.

VPI is currently growing faster than the rest of the APO market, indicating that the company is both taking advantage of the vendor consolidation happening among its larger competitors to make a convincing case for the value of its integrated, holistic approach. Some companies have tried to make the case for analytics in the enterprise as an avenue for growth of the market as a whole. We believe that VPI's steady emphasis on stability in its core recording tool, combined with a solid approach to analytics *within the call center* gives it an immediate leg up and a chance to capture significant share of the contact center market. The company has strong customers, like 1-800-Flowers.com and Bank of America that vouch for the solidity of the core system and the consistent return on investment that VPI's toolset provides.

In recognition of these achievements, Frost & Sullivan is pleased to present VPI with the Customer Value Enhancement Award for the North American Agent Performance Optimization (APO) Market.

About Best Practices

Frost & Sullivan Best Practices Awards recognize companies in a variety of regional and global markets for demonstrating outstanding achievement and superior performance in areas such as leadership, technological innovation, customer service, and strategic product development. Industry analysts compare market participants and measure performance through in-depth interviews, analysis, and extensive secondary research in order to identify best practices in the industry.

About Frost & Sullivan

Frost & Sullivan, a global growth consulting company, has been partnering with clients to support the development of innovative strategies for more than 40 years. The company's industry expertise integrates growth consulting, growth partnership services, and corporate management training to identify and develop opportunities. Frost & Sullivan serves an extensive clientele that includes Global 1000 companies, emerging companies, and the investment community by providing comprehensive industry coverage that reflects a unique global perspective and combines ongoing analysis of markets, technologies, econometrics, and demographics. For more information, visit www.frost.com.