

F R O S T & S U L L I V A N

2024 COMPANY OF THE YEAR

*IN THE EUROPEAN
CUSTOMER EXPERIENCE
MANAGEMENT
INDUSTRY*

F R O S T & S U L L I V A N

BEST
2024 PRACTICES
AWARD



Best Practices Criteria for World-Class Performance

Frost & Sullivan applies a rigorous analytical process to evaluate multiple nominees for each award category before determining the final award recipient. The process involves a detailed evaluation of best practices criteria across two dimensions for each nominated company. Foundever® excels in many of the criteria in the customer experience management space.

AWARD CRITERIA	
<i>Visionary Innovation & Performance</i>	<i>Customer Impact</i>
Addressing Unmet Needs	Price/Performance Value
Visionary Scenarios Through Mega Trends	Customer Purchase Experience
Implementation of Best Practices	Customer Ownership Experience
Leadership Focus	Customer Service Experience
Financial Performance	Brand Equity

A Market Snapshot

The European customer experience management (CXM) industry navigates a complex landscape shaped by economic challenges, technological advancements, and evolving work environments. Several current macroeconomic factors, including rising interest rates, high energy costs, and fluctuating exchange rates, have created a challenging business environment, particularly in major markets like the United Kingdom (UK) and Germany. These economic headwinds influence cost-cutting measures, with companies increasingly turning to nearshore and offshore outsourcing to reduce CXM costs. Technological advancements, particularly the emergence of generative artificial intelligence (Gen-AI), are revolutionizing digital experiences. Gen-AI drives innovation and automation in customer interactions, providing CXM firms with tools to enhance efficiency and customer satisfaction.

Frost & Sullivan finds GenAI’s momentum is poised to evolve agents’ roles, and CXM providers must address and leverage technology and AI to automate low-value transactional interactions while simultaneously building agents’ skills and capabilities to effectively manage complex, high-value interactions.

Best Practices Excellence: Foundever®

Founded in 1994 and headquartered in Luxembourg City, Luxembourg, Foundever® is a leading CXM provider that leverages AI for superior results. With a robust research and development team of over 900 engineers, data scientists, and technologists, the company drives scalable innovation across more than 45 countries to enhance CX efficiency and maintain a competitive edge. Previously operating under the Sitel Group®, the company rebranded to Foundever® in 2023 to reflect its global strength and agile culture. The company integrates advanced proprietary software with strategic partners' solutions to deliver comprehensive CX services focused on transformative projects. By incorporating disruptive technologies and the latest AI trends, such as Gen-AI, Foundever® ensures a forward-thinking approach to CX, addressing immediate customer needs while anticipating future demands and solidifying its position as an industry leader.

Demonstrated Leadership through Continuous Product Innovation

Foundever®'s mission centers on delivering the best experiences for the world's leading brands via customized digital CX solutions, business process outsourcing (BPO), analytics, and consulting. As a

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**- Bernie Arnason
Industry Principal, ICT**

recognized global leader in the CXM space, the company distinguishes itself in the competitive market landscape by focusing on understanding complex customer challenges and implementing AI solutions tailored for diverse needs. Beyond industry buzzwords, the company's AI strategy focuses on practical applications that enhance employee recruitment with personalized assessments, which is crucial for sectors like fast-moving consumer goods. Foundever®'s training innovation is achieved through AI-driven simulations in chat and voice formats. These simulations deliver realistic customer interactions, enhancing agent confidence and proficiency and improving retention and service quality by thoroughly preparing them

for real-world challenges.

Additionally, Foundever® enhances connectivity and collaboration among associates with its comprehensive communication platform, EverConnect. Breaking down silos and fostering cross-department collaboration is crucial for high performance employee experience and CX. The company's solution provides personalized, localized, and globalized internal communication and essential corporate documents and information. EverConnect ensures associates stay informed about international, regional, and local news and events while offering a repository of process and knowledge resources and help guides for effective tool and application usage. This platform maintains a well-informed and cohesive workforce, enabling seamless communication across regions and departments.

Foundever® also offers a suite of best-in-class AI solutions to boost productivity and efficiency. These products include EverGPT, an internal tool for automated translation, reasoning, and summarization within a secure server environment; AI Coaching generates automated coaching plans based on trend analysis and key performance indicators performance. Additionally, copilot tools like AI Summarizer and OneSource integrate with knowledge bases and streamline call review processes. Furthermore, AI Translation and large-language models (LLM) Voicebots facilitate multilingual support and human-like voice interactions via LLM, enhancing real-time customer communication. Legacy systems can hinder CX initiatives due to outdated capabilities, such as real-time data processes and advanced analytics. Foundever®'s investments in these innovative tools deliver internal processes improvement and significantly enhances customer service capabilities, positioning the company at the forefront of AI.

Visionary Advances in Technology Leads to Robust Value

Foundever® distinguishes itself in the competitive CXM services landscapes through a robust framework and operational excellence. The company maintains balanced revenue distribution across many sectors, with significant contributions from the banking, financial services, and insurance (BFSI), technology and manufacturing, and communications segments, among others. Foundever® mitigates risk by avoiding over-reliance on any single client; its top ten customers collectively account for only 25% of total revenue.

“ Foundever® has evolved its service model from traditional BPO to “BPA”, emphasizing continuous improvement and customer success. Unlike conventional BPOs focused solely on service delivery, Foundever®'s New BPA model incorporates dedicated customer success managers alongside account managers.”

- Samantha Fisher
Best Practices Research Analyst

This diversified customer base allows the company to provide tailored solutions across industries, safeguarding against sector-specific downturns and ensuring stability.

Moreover, Foundever® is expanding its AI Copilot deployment across its global workforce, utilizing a hybrid global delivery model to uphold its leadership in CXM. This strategic initiative aims to foster ongoing innovation and deliver tailored, high-value solutions for clients. Anticipating advancements in AI technology and increased adoption rates, Foundever® foresees further improvements

in operational efficiency and CX, solidifying its position as an industry leader. The OneSource AI Copilot, integrated into the company's operational framework, enables real-time access to knowledge bases, enhancing information retrieval and, thereby, automating and improving customer interactions. Additionally, Foundever® harnesses machine translation for digital channels and develops proprietary voice solutions to facilitate multilingual interactions and optimize service delivery.

Foundever® leads innovation in CXM services by integrating advanced technologies such as AI and data analytics. The company's hybrid global delivery model leverages these innovations to offer solutions that meet evolving customer needs. Initiatives like EverGPT and AI Copilot significantly enhance operational efficiency and customer service quality, reducing average handling times by 10% to 15% and improving customer satisfaction scores.

The rebranding from Sitel Group to Foundever® symbolizes the company's transformation and strategic vision for the future. This change represents a complete overhaul of the company's products, services, and market approach to better meet customer needs. The focus is on simplification, innovation, and delivering real value on a large scale. By positioning itself as a solutions integrator capable of creating a hybrid model between human and machine, Foundever® effectively bridges the gap between advanced AI capabilities and human expertise, delivering exceptional CX based on AI-driven insights.

Roadmap to Success: Customer-centric, Continuous, Proactive

Foundever®'s approach to customer support exemplifies a deep integration of customer insights, analytics, and continuous improvement strategies to enhance client outcomes. In its longstanding partnership with a UK retail department store, the company has leveraged robust customer analytics for over 15 years to assess CX operations and provide critical insights into product quality and customer satisfaction trends. By identifying products that drive dissatisfaction or technical queries, Foundever® influences procurement strategies, ensuring the availability of high-quality products that meet customer expectations. This proactive, data-driven approach optimizes the entire supply chain, demonstrating the company's ability to align CX analytics with broader business strategies and improve the overall customer experience.

A central element of Foundever®'s customer engagement strategy is the early assignment of dedicated account leaders specializing in customers' markets. These account managers act as primary contact points, ensuring seamless communication and effective, complex issue resolution. Many competitors with one-size-fits-all methodologies often struggle to address individual customer needs. However, Foundever®'s personalized approach fosters strong customer relationships and positions it as a trusted partner capable of delivering sustained value. By understanding each client's unique needs and challenges, the company enhances its ability to provide high-impact, customized solutions.

Foundever® has evolved its service model from traditional BPO to "New Business Process Automation" (BPA), emphasizing continuous improvement and customer success. Unlike conventional BPOs focused solely on service delivery, Foundever®'s New BPA model incorporates dedicated customer success managers alongside account managers. These roles collaborate closely to drive ongoing value for clients, continuously evaluating service performance and implementing technological innovations or operational optimizations to enhance efficiency and effectiveness. The introduction of Continuous Improvement teams further emphasizes the company's commitment to operational excellence, regularly evaluating service delivery metrics and implementing solutions to improve service quality and cost-effectiveness.

By integrating these comprehensive strategies, Foundever® ensures that customer insights directly influence business strategies, enhancing the entire customer service experience from initial purchase to long-term ownership. It is imperative that CX strategies align with the customer's overall business objectives. Thus, Foundever®'s holistic perspective strengthens the client's market position by incorporating customer feedback with strategic decision-making, fostering long-term partnerships based on mutual growth and success.

A Foot in the Present and an Eye on the Future

Foundever® enhances operational efficiency and maintains service excellence in localized languages through strategically positioned hubs. In multilingual markets, the company leverages locations on the periphery of Europe, including Lisbon, Cairo, and Athens, to provide nearshore multilingual support tailored to the diverse linguistic needs of European clients. This strategic consolidation into key sites enhances scalability and operational efficiency, essential for managing the complexities of servicing multiple languages and markets.

The merger and integration of Sitel Group® and SYKES significantly broadened Foundever®'s geographic footprint, enhancing its support for clients' onshore, nearshore, and offshore requirements while advancing technological capabilities in robotic process automation and digital CX solutions. This merger combines strengths and resources, creating a more robust service offering. The company's growth strategy, characterized by a substantial number of agents across numerous countries supporting over 800 brands globally, drives its solid growth momentum in Europe. This success spans BFSI, retail, healthcare, and travel sectors, underpinned by Foundever®'s technological expertise in automation, back-office integration, advanced data analytics, and AI-powered solutions.

As a top-three provider of CXM services in Europe, Foundever® is well-positioned in individual markets, ranking second in the UK, third in France, and among the top five in Germany. The company achieved a 6% revenue growth 2023 across its European operations, reflecting its strong market presence and operational effectiveness.¹ To meet growing demand, Foundever® is exploring outcome-based CX business models, including agreements to reduce call volumes through self-service and total cost of ownership models. Additionally, the company's industry-leading certified security and privacy risk practice provides a competitive edge and fosters growth. The rebranding to a single Foundever® brand, integrating Sitel and SYKES with several other subsidiaries, was a significant 2023 initiative designed to reduce complexity and streamline operations.

Since its inception, Foundever®'s sterling reputation and customer-centric framework has led to its coveted preferred partner status. Frost & Sullivan believes the company is well-positioned to accelerate its growth and leverage its innovation to capture additional market share and sustain its market leadership in the coming years.

¹ *Frost Radar™: Customer Experience Management in Europe, 2024.* (Frost & Sullivan March 2024)

Conclusion

The European customer experience management (CXM) industry contends with economic pressures, such as rising interest rates and high energy costs. Meanwhile, hybrid work models and a tight labor market demand innovative recruitment and infrastructure investments, while generative artificial intelligence and integrated CX strategies are essential for efficiency and growth. Overall, the company addresses these critical factors with a strong leadership focus that incorporates customer-centric strategies and exemplified best practice implementation.

Foundever®'s EverConnect platform enhances connectivity and collaboration with personalized communication and a comprehensive resource repository. Its generative artificial intelligence (AI) solutions suite, including EverGPT and AI Coaching, streamlines processes and improves customer support with multilingual support and real-time communication. The company excels in business process outsourcing and CX services with operational excellence and balanced revenue. When combined with its best practices and ongoing high-quality performance, Foundever® enhances operational efficiency and maintains service excellence in localized languages through strategically positioned hubs. The company remains a trusted partner, earning a reputation for offering the overall best in the market.

With its strong overall performance, Foundever® earns Frost & Sullivan's 2024 European Company of the Year Award in the CXM industry.

What You Need to Know about the Company of the Year Recognition

Frost & Sullivan's Company of the Year Award is its top honor and recognizes the market participant that exemplifies visionary innovation, market-leading performance, and unmatched customer care.

Best Practices Award Analysis

For the Company of the Year Award, Frost & Sullivan analysts independently evaluated the criteria listed below.

Visionary Innovation & Performance

Addressing Unmet Needs: Customers' unmet or under-served needs are unearthed and addressed by a robust solution development process

Visionary Scenarios Through Mega Trends:

Long-range, macro-level scenarios are incorporated into the innovation strategy through the use of Mega Trends, thereby enabling first-to-market solutions and new growth opportunities

Leadership Focus: Company focuses on building a leadership position in core markets and on creating stiff barriers to entry for new competitors

Best Practices Implementation: Best-in-class implementation is characterized by processes, tools, or activities that generate a consistent and repeatable level of success

Financial Performance: Strong overall business performance is achieved in terms of revenue, revenue growth, operating margin, and other key financial metrics

Customer Impact

Price/Performance Value: Products or services provide the best value for the price compared to similar market offerings

Customer Purchase Experience: Quality of the purchase experience assures customers that they are buying the optimal solution for addressing their unique needs and constraints

Customer Ownership Experience: Customers proudly own the company's product or service and have a positive experience throughout the life of the product or service

Customer Service Experience: Customer service is accessible, fast, stress-free, and high quality

Brand Equity: Customers perceive the brand positively and exhibit high brand loyalty

