

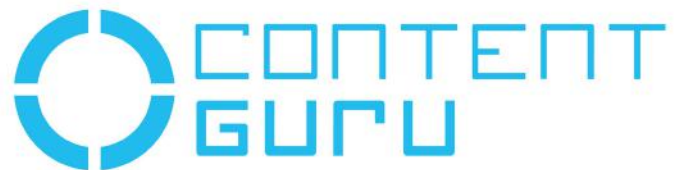
FROST & SULLIVAN

# BEST PRACTICES

AWARDS

FROST & SULLIVAN

2020 BEST PRACTICES AWARD



**2020 EUROPEAN  
CONTACT CENTER AS A SERVICE  
TECHNOLOGY INNOVATION LEADERSHIP AWARD**

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## Background and Company Performance

### *Industry Challenges*

Cloud technology has revolutionized the delivery of contact center functionality and has become a core component of the customer experience (CX) services industry. The European Contact Center as a Service (CCaaS) market is in a growth phase, with revenues increasing more than 15% YoY since 2015. Advantages offered by cloud-based software – including faster service deployment, better compliance management and greater flexibility – are propelling the widespread adoption of CCaaS solutions across the region.

Organizations need to adapt their CX services to meet the ever-changing needs of consumers in an increasingly digital business environment. CCaaS software offerings, which can be delivered via the public or private cloud, allow improved access to new contact center capabilities through rolling updates provided by vendors. Some of these innovative capabilities, such as the integration of new contact channels like social media or the provision of omnichannel service delivery, are becoming increasingly important to meet end-user expectations. Although voice is still the primary interaction channel in Europe, increasing communication volumes are being driven through chat apps (e.g, WhatsApp) and social media (e.g, Twitter). End-customers not only want to communicate with organizations through their contact channel of choice, but also demand consistent experiences across all forms of interaction.

Migration to the cloud has been accelerating for several years, and has forced CX solution providers to reshape their offerings. Most vendors have developed cloud-deployed versions of their existing on-premise or hosted systems, while others have added cloud assets through either acquisitions or original equipment manufacturer (OEM) relationships. In addition, a number of new cloud-native providers have emerged, especially in Europe, and multi-tenant cloud deployment is steadily gaining ground. Furthermore, global providers have been trying to enter the European market (or consolidate their presence in the region) through partnerships and aggressive go-to-market campaigns. These trends and processes have generated a highly competitive market, with considerable overlap between CCaaS solutions in terms of functionality and market orientation. In this context, solution differentiation has become a central challenge for providers.

The desire to differentiate and enhance product offerings, along with the evolving CX expectations of end-users, has resulted in a wave of acquisitions and joint ventures. R&D spending has also increased; vendors have developed innovative capabilities and created omnichannel solutions that are infused with new technologies which are promising to reshape customer journeys in the near future, such as process automation, analytics, and AI. However, from a technological perspective, few vendors are able to create a differentiated product in this market.

Technology innovation has become the central factor determining business growth and competitiveness in the CCaaS market. The innovation capacity of vendors is not only defined by their R&D budgets but also by the company's vision, product strategy, and execution excellence. Innovative vendors are able to identify relevant market mega trends and design and execute a compelling product portfolio roadmap that aligns with these

trends. However, in the dynamic and fast-changing CX services industry, a limited number of companies excel in terms of innovation.

To implement effective CX services, organizations need full-suite solutions that deliver innovative capabilities such as advanced big data and analytics, video chat and customer sentiment analysis. To maintain or increase market share and create a competitive edge, providers need to design a long-term product development plan and invest in technology research and acquisition.

### *Technology Leverage and Business Impact*

#### **Native product portfolio enabling seamless CX**

Content Guru is a cloud-based communications solutions vendor based in Bracknell, UK. The company is part of the Redwood Technologies Group, which provides services in over 50 countries. It was founded in 2005, and has been a pioneer in the European omnichannel CX solutions market ever since. Content Guru has offices in Asia Pac (Australia, Japan, Singapore), the USA (San Jose, Washington DC) and Europe (Germany, Ireland, Italy, Netherlands, UK). The company offers **storm**<sup>®</sup>, a CCaaS solution designed to offer efficient and effective customer engagement and cloud contact center services. Today, **storm** is used to handle tens of millions of daily interactions for organizations such as the NHS, National Rail Enquiries, EDF, Sodexo, Rakuten and Rightmove. Since its inception, Content Guru has been focused on helping companies deliver great customer experiences through best-in-class native technology. **storm** brings together intelligent automation, a wide array of third-party systems integrations, omnichannel engagement capabilities, and unique scalability capabilities to enhance customer communication functions and give organizations the power to create consistent experiences for customers. Frost & Sullivan believes that one of Content Guru's key differentiators is the fact that it offers a native, flexible product portfolio. The company provides a flexible and modular CCaaS architecture that allows organizations to 'unlock' new feature-rich capabilities when required, supporting phased migration to the cloud. Along with developing **storm** CONTACT™, its multi-channel platform for inbound and outbound interactions, Content Guru offers a wide array of natively developed modules, platforms and apps. Today, the company provides one of the most extensive product portfolios in the European CCaaS market.

Content Guru provides a series of advantages to customers by directly controlling the technical development of its full suite of cloud solutions for the contact center. Some of these advantages include its availability to execute rapid fixes in the core code of the modules and applications, the provision of a totally seamless experience to users (who can easily move from one channel to another), and the enhancement of agent experience (AX) as agents have access to all channels and modules via single interface. Being able to move easily from one module to another also helps to reduce handling times and improves CX.

**storm** Contact Center Components:

For those customers who want to use third-party solutions or specific modules together with **storm** CONTACT, Content Guru offers **storm** INTEGRATE™; this uses service-oriented architecture to link the platform with a myriad of customer relationship management (CRM) applications (e.g. Salesforce), knowledge management systems, and remote databases. Using the native custom INTEGRATE Application Programming Interfaces (API), the CCaaS platform can be integrated with any customer existing data store, allowing information to flow between **storm** and any other systems deployed by the customer.

"Thanks to **storm**'s modular, pay-as-you-go approach, we are able to deliver market-leading technologies to organizations on a timescale to suit all budgets, while the new service builder helps us to deliver projects at an unrivalled speed. With each new successful deployment, we find a new use for **storm**, and as the platform adapts to stay ahead of the market we're excited to see what the future holds both for the platform and for NPS."

Rob Iredale, Operations Manager, Northgate Public Services

**Empowering organizations through advanced omnichannel and AI capabilities**

Content Guru offers one of the most innovative and advanced platforms in the European CCaaS market. It provides true omnichannel capabilities, enabling a single, blended view across multiple channels that converges multiple data sources into one interface. **storm**® covers a broad array of channels, including web chat, email, social, SMS, WebRTC video and voice. This creates distinctiveness and a competitive advantage. For instance, the provision of video chat functionality proved to be particularly useful for Content Guru's

customers during the Covid-19 pandemic, especially for those active in the healthcare sector. Moreover, **storm** incorporates a full set of integration capabilities to hundreds of applications and modules, including advanced AI-based functionality. Frost & Sullivan notes that these high-quality capabilities are a result of Content Guru's focus on R&D to sustain its business growth. The company has one of the largest R&D budgets in the market, while 65% of their staff are engineers from top European universities. Content Guru also commercializes **brain**<sup>®</sup>, its native highly-intelligent AI application which provides a range of functionalities, all guaranteeing that organizations can improve operational efficiency and increase both CX and AX. **brain** combines the latest AI technology to provide clients with a highly intelligent AI-powered solution that is tailored to meet their specific requirements. **brain** technology can be applied to a wide range of functionality, applications and processes including intelligent chatbots, natural language processing and image recognition. Content Guru is one of the companies leading the charge in terms of practical AI application in the customer contact space.

"We wanted a way to make video consultations an easy-to-use option for our services. With UK lockdown measures in place, our over-the-phone urgent care services have been more popular than ever, and this made the project even more beneficial. Having worked with Content Guru and used **storm** for a number of years now, we were confident they would be able to provide us with a solution. The team worked quickly to roll out video consultations for our clinicians, an easy-to-use application which we hope will be widely used by our teams."

Janice Greenhill, Director of Performance and Delivery at Herts Urgent Care (HUC)

### Resilience and ambitious innovation strategy to increase market presence

Content Guru's culture is characterized by a strong commitment to harnessing technology to ensure positive customer impact. Frost & Sullivan research reveals that the company has placed strong emphasis on enhancing its technology in order to offer a competitive portfolio in every sub-sector of the market. As an example, Content Guru has improved its **storm** CKS<sup>®</sup> (Customer Knowledge System), which has evolved from being a relatively lightweight CRM to a competitive CRM itself. Today, **storm** CKS integrates cost-effective CRM, case management and ticketing capabilities into a single environment, creating consistency across all of customer data and offering organizations a 360° view of end-users. CKS has been deployed in mission-critical sectors such as healthcare and government to manage large quantities of critical data and deliver consistent information based on a variety of different data sources.

As part of the **storm** ecosystem, CKS is accessed through the same web-based portal as all other modules – this ensures a fully unified desktop experience and improved data accuracy, personalization and customer engagement. When deployed alongside omnichannel **storm** contact management features, CKS enables features such as instant screen pops and intelligent knowledgebase interaction routing.

Content Guru continues to demonstrate that it pursues an active and pragmatic innovation strategy through the launch of **storm** Lite in 2019. The product, offered mostly through resellers, is a simplified version of **storm** targeted at small contact centers (sub 100-seats

companies). This platform delivers a more basic feature set than the **storm** CONTACT solution at a reduced price point. Through the launch of **storm** Lite, Content Guru aims to increase its presence in new markets and incorporate the company's technologies and products into the solutions offered by its partners.

"As a global delivery network of florists and customers, communications are key to getting orders delivered accurately and punctually. With **storm** we're delivering better access to customers and florists and improving efficiency in our contact center. Our Florist Priority Line, for example, connects florists to agents with accurate order information, while smart routing enables us to send many customers' calls directly to the florists handling their orders."

Leon Siepman ICT Manager, Fleurop Interflora

### Advanced technology for complex customers and mission-critical services

Frost & Sullivan notes that Content Guru is distinguished by its solution resilience and scalability. The company has proven experience with customers with tens of thousands of seats and solid references with complex customers such as airlines, large governmental organizations and global insurances companies. Many of its reference clients demand high security standards and complex customization processes.

Furthermore, Content Guru enjoys particular expertise in supporting emergency and mission-critical services. Long wait times are a common concern in the customer services industry, especially in the event of an emergency. To address this issue, Content Guru provides customers with scalable capacity to accommodate thousands of additional users when required. The company offers clients access to an almost unlimited number of ports in the cloud, with the platform able to accommodate tens of thousands of simultaneous calls across time-division multiplexing (TDM) and voice over internet protocol (VoIP) – its overall voice capacity is in excess of 60 million minutes per day. In addition, **storm** services can be instantly scaled up when required without impacting other users. The company guarantees 99.999% availability, meaning the CCaaS platform is always available, even when inbound demand unexpectedly skyrockets.

Content Guru has developed further technology-based features to help it deal with emergencies. **storm** provides customers with the capacity to reduce the number of inbound interactions by sending mass communications out to affected customers. The platform enables the automation of mass information broadcasts through multiple channels. It offers self-service options to efficiently resolve and deflect simple requests, allowing agents to deal effectively with more complicated, urgent interactions.

"Initially we looked to Content Guru to address a point requirement; protecting our contact centers from the overwhelming volumes of traffic during periods of service disruption. In this, **storm** exceeded our expectations. The platform not only keeps our frontline live, even when we hit our peaks, but it also allows us to make substantial operational savings."

Technical Architect UK Power Networks

## *Conclusion*

The ongoing digital transformation of the CX industry, alongside diverse end-user expectations and device use, is driving demand for more advanced CCaaS solutions. Since its inception, Content Guru has understood prevailing market trends and focused on developing its technical capabilities – as a result, the company has become the industry’s innovation leader. Content Guru has designed and executed a well-established product strategy by integrating the latest technologies to enhance its multiple product offerings and provide effective solutions to complex customers. The company has developed a world-class innovation process that has helped it gain a large client base in Europe, North America and Asia. This strategic commitment to creativity and innovation provides Content Guru with a strong foundation for continued growth.

For its strong overall performance, Content Guru is recognized with Frost & Sullivan’s 2020 Technology Innovation Leadership Award.



## Significance of Technology Innovation Leadership

Technology-rich companies with strong commercialization strategies benefit from the demand for high-quality, technologically innovative products that help shape the brand, resulting in a strong, differentiated market position.



## Understanding Technology Innovation Leadership

Technology innovation leadership recognizes companies that lead the development and successful introduction of high-tech solutions to customers' most pressing needs, altering the industry or business landscape in the process. These companies shape the future of technology and its uses. Ultimately, success is measured by the degree to which a technology is leveraged and the impact it has on growing the business.

## *Key Benchmarking Criteria*

For the Technology Innovation Leadership Award, Frost & Sullivan analysts independently evaluated 2 key factors—Technology Leverage and Business Impact—according to the criteria identified below.

### *Technology Leverage*

#### **Criterion 1: Commitment to Innovation**

Requirement: Conscious, ongoing development of an organization's culture that supports the pursuit of groundbreaking ideas through the leverage of technology.

#### **Criterion 2: Commitment to Creativity**

Requirement: Employees rewarded for pushing the limits of form and function by integrating the latest technologies to enhance products.

#### **Criterion 3: Technology Incubation**

Requirement: A structured process with adequate investment to incubate new technologies developed internally or through strategic partnerships.

#### **Criterion 4: Commercialization Success**

Requirement: A proven track record of commercializing new technologies by enabling new products and/or through licensing strategies.

#### **Criterion 5: Application Diversity**

Requirement: The development of technologies that serve multiple products, multiple applications, and multiple user environments.

### *Business Impact*

#### **Criterion 1: Financial Performance**

Requirement: Overall financial performance is strong in terms of revenue, revenue growth, operating margin, and other key financial metrics.

#### **Criterion 2: Customer Acquisition**

Requirement: Overall technology strength enables acquisition of new customers, even as it enhances retention of current customers.

#### **Criterion 3: Operational Efficiency**

Requirement: Staff is able to perform assigned tasks productively, quickly, and to a high quality standard.

#### **Criterion 4: Growth Potential**

Requirements: Technology focus strengthens brand, reinforces customer loyalty, and enhances growth potential.

#### **Criterion 5: Human Capital**

Requirement: Company culture is characterized by a strong commitment to customer impact through technology leverage, which enhances employee morale and retention.

## Best Practices Recognition: 10 Steps to Researching, Identifying, and Recognizing Best Practices

Frost & Sullivan analysts follow a 10-step process to evaluate award candidates and assess their fit with select best practices criteria. The reputation and integrity of the awards are based on close adherence to this process.

STEP	OBJECTIVE	KEY ACTIVITIES	OUTPUT
1 <b>Monitor, target, and screen</b>	Identify award recipient candidates from around the world	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conduct in-depth industry research</li> <li>• Identify emerging industries</li> <li>• Scan multiple regions</li> </ul>	Pipeline of candidates that potentially meet all best practices criteria
2 <b>Perform 360-degree research</b>	Perform comprehensive, 360-degree research on all candidates in the pipeline	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Interview thought leaders and industry practitioners</li> <li>• Assess candidates' fit with best practices criteria</li> <li>• Rank all candidates</li> </ul>	Matrix positioning of all candidates' performance relative to one another
3 <b>Invite thought leadership in best practices</b>	Perform in-depth examination of all candidates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Confirm best practices criteria</li> <li>• Examine eligibility of all candidates</li> <li>• Identify any information gaps</li> </ul>	Detailed profiles of all ranked candidates
4 <b>Initiate research director review</b>	Conduct an unbiased evaluation of all candidate profiles	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Brainstorm ranking options</li> <li>• Invite multiple perspectives on candidates' performance</li> <li>• Update candidate profiles</li> </ul>	Final prioritization of all eligible candidates and companion best practices positioning paper
5 <b>Assemble panel of industry experts</b>	Present findings to an expert panel of industry thought leaders	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Share findings</li> <li>• Strengthen cases for candidate eligibility</li> <li>• Prioritize candidates</li> </ul>	Refined list of prioritized award candidates
6 <b>Conduct global industry review</b>	Build consensus on award candidates' eligibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hold global team meeting to review all candidates</li> <li>• Pressure-test fit with criteria</li> <li>• Confirm inclusion of all eligible candidates</li> </ul>	Final list of eligible award candidates, representing success stories worldwide
7 <b>Perform quality check</b>	Develop official award consideration materials	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Perform final performance benchmarking activities</li> <li>• Write nominations</li> <li>• Perform quality review</li> </ul>	High-quality, accurate, and creative presentation of nominees' successes
8 <b>Reconnect with panel of industry experts</b>	Finalize the selection of the best practices award recipient	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Review analysis with panel</li> <li>• Build consensus</li> <li>• Select recipient</li> </ul>	Decision on which company performs best against all best practices criteria
9 <b>Communicate recognition</b>	Inform award recipient of recognition	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Announce award to the CEO</li> <li>• Inspire the organization for continued success</li> <li>• Celebrate the recipient's performance</li> </ul>	Announcement of award and plan for how recipient can use the award to enhance the brand
10 <b>Take strategic action</b>	Upon licensing, company is able to share award news with stakeholders and customers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Coordinate media outreach</li> <li>• Design a marketing plan</li> <li>• Assess award's role in strategic planning</li> </ul>	Widespread awareness of recipient's award status among investors, media personnel, and employees

## The Intersection between 360-Degree Research and Best Practices Awards

### Research Methodology

Frost & Sullivan's 360-degree research methodology represents the analytical rigor of the research process. It offers a 360-degree view of industry challenges, trends, and issues by integrating all 7 of Frost & Sullivan's research methodologies. Too often companies make important growth decisions based on a narrow understanding of their environment, resulting in errors of both omission and commission. Successful growth strategies are founded on a thorough understanding of market, technical, economic, financial, customer, best practices, and demographic analyses. The integration of these research disciplines into the 360-degree research methodology provides an evaluation platform for benchmarking industry players and for identifying those performing at best-in-class levels.

### 360-DEGREE RESEARCH: SEEING ORDER IN THE CHAOS



## About Frost & Sullivan

Frost & Sullivan, the Growth Partnership Company, helps clients accelerate growth and achieve best-in-class positions in growth, innovation, and leadership. The company's Growth Partnership Service provides the CEO and the CEO's growth team with disciplined research and best practice models to drive the generation, evaluation and implementation of powerful growth strategies. Frost & Sullivan leverages nearly 60 years of experience in partnering with Global 1000 companies, emerging businesses, and the investment community from 45 offices on 6 continents. To join Frost & Sullivan's Growth Partnership, visit <http://www.frost.com>.