



Startek Recognized for

2021

Market Leadership

Indian Customer Experience
Outsourcing Services Industry
Excellence in Best Practices

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. Startek excels in many of the criteria in the customer experience outsourcing services space.

AWARD CRITERIA	
Growth Strategy Excellence	Technology Leverage
Implementation Excellence	Price/Performance Value
Brand Strength	Customer Purchase Experience
Product Quality	Customer Ownership Experience
Product Differentiation	Customer Service Experience

Consumer Behavior Drives Double-digit Growth in the Indian Customer Experience Market

On the back of a 10.9% increase in India's customer experience (CX) market revenue, Frost and Sullivan estimates that it will continue to expand at a compound annual growth rate of 4.8% until 2026, driven by fundamental changes in consumer behavior and demands for better customer service experience. For example, digitally savvy consumers demand constant connection through easy access to information, ongoing interactions with brands, and personalized and engaging services at any time and

over any touchpoint. As a result, brands are forced to rethink how they do business and revisit their operating models to align with these ever-evolving customer needs to differentiate themselves in increasingly competitive markets. For this reason, brands are rapidly transitioning from offering products to providing engaging experiences as a crucial differentiator. In addition, setting up and maintaining in-house customer operations is expensive and takes a company's focus off its core mission. With CX outsourcing service providers

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- Riana Barnard, Best Practices Research Analyst

offering the capabilities and expertise, brands can easily remain agile and scale their business operations cost-efficiently with the right outsourcing partners.

Also, the COVID-19 pandemic explicitly reinforced the benefits such service providers deliver, specifically around agility, flexibility, and quick turnaround times. India has long been a preferred destination for offshore services owing to its proven expertise, abundant talents, and obvious cost benefits. However, demand from local businesses too has been on the rise in recent years. Increasingly, brands now consider contact centers as collaboration hubs for process improvement, helpdesk services, technical support, sales and marketing, and value creation. An end-to-end customer journey across multiple channels is the bedrock of great CX, further enhanced by adopting artificial intelligence (AI), machine learning, analytics, automation, and chatbot technologies to deliver personalized, predictive, and proactive interactions with consumers. These digital strategies take customer service to the next level by putting real-time insights at agents' fingertips through omnichannel support. It also brings the benefit of automating repetitive tasks and queries, allowing human agents to concentrate on higher value-added or more complex interactions. Moreover, the rise of right-shoring services enables brands to consider a mix of both onshore and offshore outsourcing models, boosting the uptake of high-quality CX services delivered from affordable Tier 2 cities in India. With CX becoming an integral factor influencing customer loyalty and, ultimately, turning into the critical differentiator that decides businesses' fate, organizations re-focus efforts away from simply cost-related variables and leverage customer-related metrics to drive sustainable growth.

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- Krishna Baidya, ICT Research Director

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Technology Advances Startek's Growth Strategy Excellence

As a business process outsourcing company, Startek has served the needs of clients and their customers for more than three decades. Today, this leading global provider of CX solutions continues to deliver excellence through a suite of CX and digital support solutions. The company also provides insights-driven customer engagement by including the science of human communication, research, and process innovation to optimize the customer's voice and leverage interactions across all channels. Headquartered in Denver, Colorado, and with a headcount of nearly 40,000 employees, Startek's experts address the needs of global and regional clients in 36 languages. Startek's India presence includes over 18,000 agents in 17 sites across the country, a real pan-India presence. Startek's end-to-end approach to business and CX management leverages advanced digitally-enabled solutions that offer flexibility and scalability to maximize customer lifetime value, improve customer retention, increase revenue, and boost cost-efficiencies.

Key Competitive Advantages Propel Product Differentiation

Startek delivers innovative digital engagement, supported by analytics, intelligent automation, and omnichannel CX platforms across channels. However, the provider differentiates itself through insights-driven customer engagement by including the science of human communication, research, and process innovation to optimize the voice of customers. Startek's ability to deliver end-to-end digitally-enabled

customer experience solutions, proven domain expertise to deliver customized solutions for clients offering flexibility and scalability has helped maximize customer lifetime value and returns for its clients for years. As such, Startek is well-positioned to thrive in a changing business landscape, equipped with cutting-edge technology focusing on customer insights and intelligence to bolster the company in developing customizable engagement solutions. In addition, strong vertical diversification allows Startek to deliver end-to-end business process services across the entire analytics value chain that help retain and acquire customers and accelerate business strategies. Notable is its holistic customer understanding capabilities, demonstrated through Startek's LISA analytics platform. LISA is a collaborative, customizable digital solution that empowers agents and managers to facilitate negative social posts proactively, investigate issues, and resolve them within a closed-loop process. Features of this modular, multi-channel engagement tool include unified queueing and reporting, the blending of agents and multi-skilling, the integration with heterogeneous systems, and real-time analytics and customer profiling.

Another key competitive advantage is Startek's human capital strategies, based on the science of dialogue that provides a training model sparking a new course for customer communication. By identifying the communication needs present in each interaction, Startek employees create a safe environment where they can uniquely meet consumer demands by establishing credibility, asking intelligent questions, and building rapport through positive engagement. Underpinning Startek's Ideal Dialogue approach are four building blocks (i.e., emotional intelligence, critical thinking skills, positive psychology, and mindfulness practice) that drive purposeful customer interactions and desired outcomes across the globe.

Pillar of Success: Excellence in Execution

Customers expect personalized engagement that is seamless and consistent across all touchpoints, and they wish to engage whenever and however they want with brands. For Startek, excellence in execution is paramount. Hence, the service provider drives the client's CX transformation journey through three stages. First, Startek establishes a strong foundation for the process through channel assessment and dialogue diagnostics to clarify the desired CX experience before creating a roadmap and moving into data and channel integration. Second, Startek focuses on driving economies of scale through digital solutions (such as a unified customer view and omnichannel engagement) to eliminate inefficiencies, leverage revenue opportunities, increase conversation rates, and introduce automation. Finally, clients reap the benefits of Startek's technology-enabled tools (e.g., the Ideal Bot, robotics process automation, or advanced analytics) and cross-functional transformation, coupled with skill-enhancement training (i.e., incorporating the essential habits of Ideal Dialogue). Such an approach has resulted in optimized service delivery and CX enhancement for a plethora of clients. To illustrate this point, Startek's advanced Ideal Bot exhibits human-like qualities: it is context-aware and responds to emotions; it is also polite, optimistic, and adjusts rapidly to language preferences. In addition, Startek also boasts subject matter experts across major markets to provide functional and vertical know-how for all customer engagement, omnichannel, and digital solutions to strengthen its advisory capabilities.

Furthermore, its in-depth insights into buyer and vertical-specific pain points enable Startek to navigate its sale strategy optimally and enhance value for its clients in a customized manner. In addition, Startek

reinforces its functional digital and automation solutions capabilities through strategic partnerships with regional original equipment manufacturers to elevate knowledge sharing and bring in new capabilities across skill and technology settings. By prioritizing innovation to deliver outstanding execution for its clients, Startek creates wealth for all stakeholders.

Resilience: The Cornerstone of Startek's Market Responsiveness

Although employee safety protocols (such as airport-like screening) were in place long before the pandemic emerged, Startek activated a global management task force during the COVID-19 crisis to enable real-time business continuity monitoring across geographies. Even though many clients were initially concerned about security compliance and efficiency implications, Startek partnered with them to get approvals and protocols. As a result, the company transitioned to work-from-home (WFH) within three weeks, ensuring business continuity and bouncing back to 95% of operations. Although the company faced severe challenges (such as last-mile bandwidth, shortages in dongles, laptops, and devices), Startek aggressively hired and trained new employees to strengthen capacity and flexibility. In addition, Startek launched a work-from-anywhere unified cloud offering, allowing brand ambassadors to work via any device (i.e., thin client, mobile, or tablet) in a highly scalable and secure environment. This enables a work-from-anywhere model that helps companies maximize performance and productivity—especially critical for BPO companies and their clients. Apart from AI-based predictive and behavioral analytics, it includes gamification and cognitive capabilities, effective collaboration, productivity monitoring, data privacy, facial, gesture, object detection, and intuition dashboards. During this time, Startek India operations added over 2,000 agents to support increased demands especially from the telecommunications, banking, financial services, and insurance, healthcare, media, and e-Commerce sectors—further strengthening its execution capability in India.

Moreover, Startek onboarded a specialist team to accelerate sales in the healthcare and e-commerce ecosystems, bolstered by a strategy based on “Rescue; Renew; Reinvent” principles. As many CX service providers quickly adopted hybrid delivery models to offer voice and non-voice services in the WFH environment, Frost & Sullivan lauds Startek for its commitment to digital innovation. Through its ongoing investment in technology, specifically intelligent automation and omnichannel capabilities, and by cultivating creativity on every level of the organization, Startek consistently delivers the best CX to consumers.

Conclusion

Disrupted by fundamental changes in customer behavior, enterprises revisited their operating models to align with ever-evolving customer needs to differentiate themselves in highly competitive markets. Rapidly transitioning from offering products to providing engaging experiences, businesses increasingly leverage customer-related metrics to drive sustainable growth. Startek delivers innovative digital engagement, supported by advanced analytics, intelligent automation, and omnichannel Customer Experience (CX) platforms across channels to maximize customer lifetime value, improve customer retention, increase revenue, and boost cost-efficiencies. Its cutting-edge technology, further enhanced by its vertical diversification, allows the company to deliver end-to-end business process services across the entire analytics value chain. Other key competitive advantages are Startek's human capital

strategies and its excellence in execution, driving the client's CX transformation journey purposefully and elegantly. Embracing resilience as a core value, Startek responded to the COVID-19 pandemic by transitioning more than 50% of its global workforce to work-from-home in only three weeks. Other initiatives include a work-from-anywhere unified cloud offering and onboarding a specialist team to accelerate sales in the healthcare and e-commerce sectors.

With its pioneering spirit, product differentiation that drives its growth excellence strategy, and sustained by its best practice execution, Startek earns Frost & Sullivan's 2021 India Market Leadership Award in the customer experience outsourcing service market.

What You Need to Know about the Market Leadership Recognition

Frost & Sullivan's Market Leadership Award recognizes the company that achieved the greatest market share resulting from outstanding performance, products, and services.

Best Practices Award Analysis

For the Market Leadership Award, Frost & Sullivan analysts independently evaluated the criteria listed below.

Growth Strategy Excellence: Company demonstrates an ability to consistently identify, prioritize, and pursue emerging growth opportunities

Implementation Excellence: Company processes support efficient and consistent implementation of tactics designed to support the strategy

Brand Strength: Company is respected, recognized, and remembered

Product Quality: Products or services receive high marks for performance, functionality, and reliability at every stage of the life cycle

Product Differentiation: Products or services carve out a market niche based on price, quality, or uniqueness (or some combination of the three) that other companies cannot easily replicate

Technology Leverage: Company is committed to incorporating leading-edge technologies into product offerings to enhance product performance and value

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 are proud to 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 of high quality

About Frost & Sullivan

Frost & Sullivan is the Growth Pipeline Company™. We power our clients to a future shaped by growth. Our Growth Pipeline as a Service™ provides the CEO and the CEO's growth team with a continuous and rigorous platform of growth opportunities, ensuring long-term success. To achieve positive outcomes, our team leverages over 60 years of experience, coaching organizations of all types and sizes across 6 continents with our proven best practices. To power your Growth Pipeline future, visit Frost & Sullivan at <http://www.frost.com>.

The Growth Pipeline Engine™

Frost & Sullivan's proprietary model to systematically create ongoing growth opportunities and strategies for our clients is fuelled by the Innovation Generator™. [Learn more.](#)

Key Impacts:

- **Growth Pipeline:** Continuous flow of Growth opportunities
 - **Growth Strategies:** Proven Best Practices
 - **Innovation Culture:** Optimized Customer Experience
 - **ROI & Margin:** Implementation Excellence
 - **Transformational Growth:** Industry Leadership



The Innovation Generator™

Our six analytical perspectives are crucial in capturing the broadest range of innovative growth opportunities, most of which occur at the points of these perspectives.

Analytical Perspectives:

- Mega Trend (MT)
 - Business Model (B)
 - Technology (TE)
 - Industries (IN)
 - Customer (CU)
 - Geographies (GE)

