

ITEL

2022
CUSTOMER
VALUE
LEADER

*NEARSHORE (AMERICAS) CUSTOMER
EXPERIENCE OUTSOURCING
SERVICES INDUSTRY*

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. itel excels in many of the criteria in the Nearshore (Americas) Customer Experience Outsourcing Services space.

AWARD CRITERIA	
<i>Business Impact</i>	<i>Customer Impact</i>
Financial Performance	Price/Performance Value
Customer Acquisition	Customer Purchase Experience
Operational Efficiency	Customer Ownership Experience
Growth Potential	Customer Service Experience
Human Capital	Brand Equity

Financial Performance

Headquartered in Vieux Fort, Saint Lucia, itel is one of the fastest-growing customer experience service providers in Latin America and the Caribbean (LACA). The company has registered a tenfold in revenue from 2015 to 2020 and plans to double its size by 2024. During 2020, itel grew its annual revenues by over 60%, compared to 2019, outgrowing the vast majority of competitors. The company gained significant market share in the nearshore arena. itel is laser-focused on providing services to U.S. companies leveraging its 6,000 employees located in Jamaica, St. Lucia, Colombia, Honduras, Bahamas,

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Industry Principal**

Mexico, Canada, and the continental United States. The company’s financial growth resulted from increasing wallet share with existing accounts and gaining new clients (counting 30 as of December 2021 and planning to add more in 2022). itel’s growth was also due to geographic expansion and new delivery sites. While many of those were greenfield operations, the company also grew by acquiring competitors. In July 2021, itel acquired Emerge BPO, a nearshore CX service provider based in Guyana. The acquisition allowed itel to offer one more choice and geography to its

customers and reinforce its price competitiveness by entering one of the most cost-competitive locations in the nearshore landscape.

Growth Potential

Frost & Sullivan independent research of the CX outsourcing services market in LACA forecasts the United States to rise from a 3.5 billion revenue business in 2020 to 6.6 Billion in 2027, growing at a Compound Annual Growth Rate (CAGR) of 9.7%. This growth is driven by a strong cultural alignment and similar time zones between the two geographies. LACA is also forecast to be the fastest-growing fulfillment region of the North American market in the same period. Many U.S. companies are actively diversifying their operations out of India and The Philippines, growing their presence in LACA to sustain CX operations. This trend represents a marvelous growth opportunity for nearshore providers such as itel and will likely fill their growth pipeline for the forthcoming years.

Nevertheless, providers who are looking to benefit from the nearshore opportunity must prepare to sustain a rapid growth trajectory. itel embarked itself in this path. The company recently strengthened its capabilities by bringing in new equity shareholders, which provided it with the level of corporate governance and financial support needed to properly scale and grow. Additionally, itel re-designed its sales team led by a new chief revenue officer and a number of seasoned professionals that are expected to bring in a constant flow of business opportunities. As a result, the company plans to reach the 11,000 engaged employees milestone by 2024.

Human Capital

One of the key factors prohibiting rapid growth is the inability to find and sustain the right talent. itel successfully recruits employees from several geographies, always staying ahead of future demand. The company builds capacity before it is actually required by a client, leveraging a predictive algorithm to determine the exact number of agents that will be needed in the short term. itel never falls short of the required capacity of new or existing clients. Moreover, when increasing the flow of incoming new employees, a company needs to turn its recruitment process more efficient. That is why itel leverages a third-party AI-based solution to scan most applications sent to the company and to determine if each of those fits the required profile. By saving a substantial amount of time and human effort, itel is able to recruit all the needed employees and decrease its overall costs and, therefore, its price-points.

Furthermore, as CX is increasingly recognized as a competitive weapon and more important than product or price differentiators, companies throughout the globe are starting to link the agent experience with the CX. Agents are often the most visible point of contact that a brand has with its customers; thus, their performance is paramount for delivering seamless and pleasant interactions. In other words, it is not possible to deliver a superior CX without providing excellent work conditions to support employee well-being. itel understands this often-overlooked best practice and applies it throughout its operations. Hence, the company offers attractive packages for its employees, such as competitive salaries and benefits, flexible schedules, a clean and safe working environment, and significantly enhanced training processes. itel has integrated its training platform with its sentiment analysis and speech analytics tool, thus delivering continuous feedback, coaching, and personalized training according to each employee's performance. Through the intelligent use of technology, itel is substantially improving the agent experience.

Price/Performance Value

Compared to larger CX services providers, some far away, itel has a much closer perspective and ability

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to manage operations on the ground. With modern locations and advanced infrastructure, the company has a streamlined focus at the country and facility level, enabling it to focus on solutions and performance and dynamically expanding an implementation alongside client needs. The company can meet the needs of startups that just need a few customer care or back-office seats and larger customers that need to scale hundreds of seats across customer engagement, sales and marketing, collections, and back-office processing.

These capabilities are coupled with lower price

points compared to larger providers, making itel a viable option for U.S. companies looking to nearshore their CX operations.

Finding the right balance between automation and human intervention

Organizations across the board are trying to maximize the use of automation, self-service, and AI-based tools to deflect traffic from the contact center. They are looking to save costs and win efficiencies while avoiding jeopardizing their CX. While this trend might seem detrimental to any CX service provider’s business at first glance, itel deliberately supports its clients in this quest. Discovering new efficiencies through the intensive use of technology and continuous process optimization is part of the day-to-day life of itel’s team. However, unlike many providers, itel understands that many customers want an interaction rather than just resolving an issue, and therefore would prefer to have a telephone conversation. Hence, not all customer interactions should be automated, and determining which ones should and which ones should not is key to providing a superior customer experience. itel is well aware of this trend, which is why its upper management periodically visits delivery sites to make sure that the right decisions are made while meeting all key performance indicators (KPI).

Brand Equity

As a mid-size vendor, itel has considerably grown its brand awareness in the marketplace. With a strong business development team that reaches out to decision-makers, procurement offices and gaining exposure to the public relations world, the company’s name is becoming more familiar. Furthermore, as direct client engagement is essential for continued growth, the company hosts events for prospective and current clients. These events allow enterprises to get an up-close view of itel’s offerings and hear client success stories. The provider is also widely recognized by competitors and industry stakeholders as a rapidly growing and relevant employer in the countries where it has a presence.

Conclusion

As one of the rising stars in the nearshore space, this company demonstrates that sustained rapid growth is possible. By continuously expanding into new geographies to extend its reach while preserving the agility and C-Level involvement of smaller firms, itel has become a formidable provider for U.S. customers. With its strong overall performance, itel earns Frost & Sullivan's 2022 Nearshore (Americas) Customer Value Leadership Award in the customer experience outsourcing services market.

What You Need to Know about the Customer Value Leadership Recognition

Frost & Sullivan's Customer Value Leadership Award recognizes the company that offers products or services customers find superior for the overall price, performance, and quality.

Best Practices Award Analysis

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

Business Impact

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

Customer Acquisition: Customer-facing processes support efficient and consistent new customer acquisition while enhancing customer retention

Operational Efficiency: Company staff performs assigned tasks productively, quickly, and to a high-quality standard

Growth Potential: Growth is fostered by a strong customer focus that strengthens the brand and reinforces customer loyalty

Human Capital: Commitment to quality and to customers characterize the company culture, which in turn enhances employee morale and retention

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

