



*QStory Recognized for*

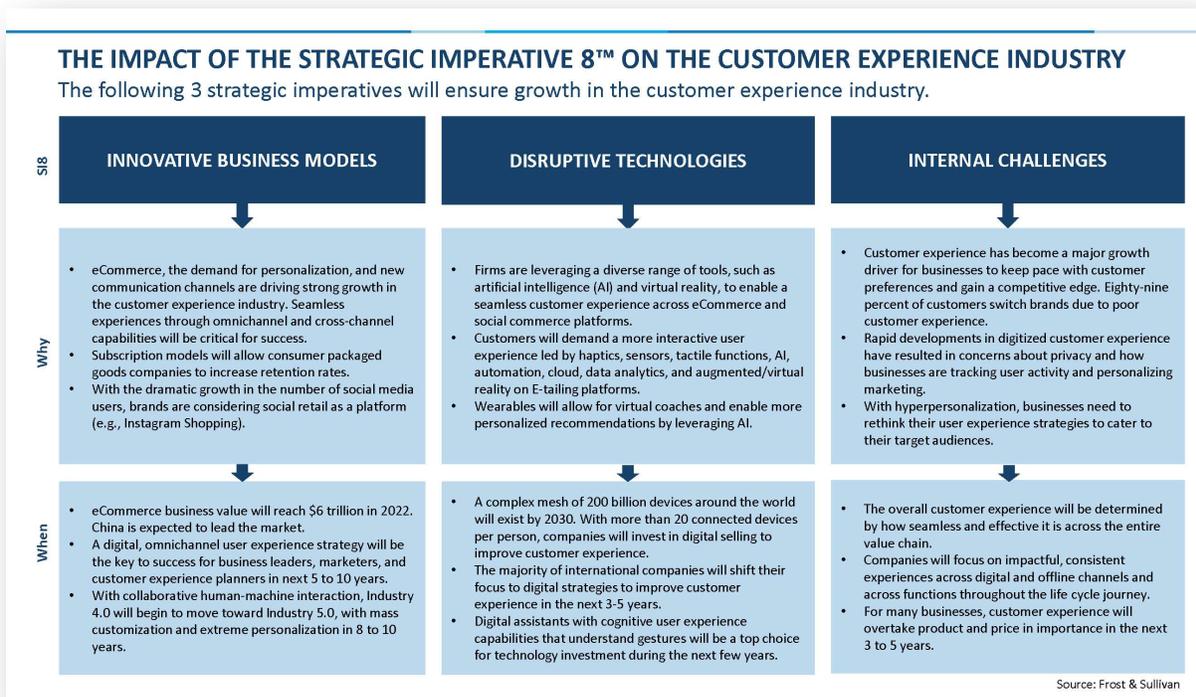
**2021**

**Product Leadership**

Global Workforce Management  
and Intraday Automation Industry  
*Excellence in Best Practices*

## Strategic Imperatives

Frost & Sullivan identifies three key strategic imperatives that impact the customer experience industry: innovative business models, disruptive technologies, and internal challenges. Every company that is competing in the customer experience space is obligated to address these imperatives proactively; failing to do so will almost certainly lead to stagnation or decline. Successful companies overcome the challenges posed by these imperatives and leverage them to drive innovation and growth. Frost & Sullivan’s recognition of QStory is a reflection of how well it is performing against the backdrop of these imperatives.



## 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 companies. QStory excels in many of the criteria in the Intraday and Workforce Management space.

AWARD CRITERIA	
<i>Product Portfolio Attributes</i>	<i>Business Impact</i>
Match to Needs	Financial Performance
Reliability and Quality	Customer Acquisition
Product/Service Value	Operational Efficiency
Positioning	Growth Potential
Design	Human Capital

### The QStory Value Proposition

QStory IDA, (Intraday Automation), is a full-suite intraday automation solution deployed in Google Cloud and charged monthly as a service. QStory is short for “queue story.”

Intraday **management** is a more sophisticated approach to optimising workforce utilisation and an extension to workforce management (WFM). Intraday management seeks to apply last-minute adjustments to contact centre staffing to address peaks and troughs in contact centre volumes when the actual traffic falls significantly outside the forecasts used to develop the schedule. Intraday **automation** simply means that the staffing adjustments and similar daily contact centre management processes are automated.

“Automation” is the operative word and the real game changer in the contact centre optimisation space. Organisations may endeavour to achieve intraday management using a traditional WFM solution and a small army of supervisors and analysts who measure schedule adherence and real-time traffic data from multiple sources. They would attempt to make adjustments manually, based on a manual view of available resources and staffing requirements across a growing number of channels, skill-sets, and training activities. However, the reliance on manual adjustments by humans and the natural limitations to the amount of data a human being is able to accept and analyse means that staffing is only improved in relation to a few parameters. A further limitation is the communication with the workforce, which, if it is also manual, causes delays and information gaps.

A great many organisations do not even attempt intraday management, even if they have the real-time data available, because they lack the time and capacity to analyse the data.

Any contact centre that has basic scheduling engine can benefit from QStory IDA, as it even offers a module that ingests scheduling data from spreadsheets. In other words, QStory does not replace the WFM system. It is a wrap-around that addresses the significant WFM functionality gaps and

complements the existing contact centre technology stack. QStory IDA accepts basic scheduling inputs delivered from the WFM system. It tracks traffic volumes and agent availability in real-time. The second agents notify QStory IDA (via the dedicated mobile app) that they are ill or running late, QStory IDA works out how the current traffic, combined with actual number of agents in the queue, will affect service levels for the rest of the day. It will recommend staffing adjustments to protect service levels.

Using proprietary algorithms built from the ground up, QStory IDA calculates the actual supply and demand balance every couple of minutes, which could never be achieved by even the most skilled human analyst. If it detects imminent overcapacity because traffic volumes are lower than the forecast, it will recommend which agents to move to off-queue activities (e.g., training, meetings, or back-office tasks) to minimise idle time and increase productivity. Finally, it will feed the schedule changes back to the WFM system without human intervention at any stage.

In essence, the QStory value proposition provides a host of unique benefits that represent top priorities for end-user organisations. It delivers people and schedule efficiency, greater workforce agility, higher agent satisfaction, greater flexibility to introduce multiple shift starts and ends (that better fit the lifestyles of work-at-home agents), higher performance, better adherence to service levels, and consequently, higher customer satisfaction. QStory creates a significant uptick in happiness amongst contact centre supervisors and directors because they can dynamically accommodate many more individual requests and no longer feel they have to be the bearers of bad news all the time. No competing solution achieves the same positive effect on contact centre operations and delivers the same breadth of benefits to end-user organisations and their agents. Finally, QStory users routinely achieve triple-digit RoI.

## Positioning

There are very few stand-alone intraday automation competitors to QStory, but QStory IDA also competes with the intraday capabilities of a number of notable WFM suites as well as with one of the world's leading contact centre platform providers.

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**- Alexander Michael, Global Practice Area Leader**

In Frost & Sullivan's opinion, QStory excels in its agent engagement capabilities, and no competing solution enables quite the same level of flexibility. Moreover, it provides a better view of all demands on the contact centre resources and better integration with business intelligence solutions, in-house learning delivery, and speech analytics. The QStory IDA platform has no limits on the number of telephone systems and WFM solutions it can integrate with at the same time.

QStory IDA is positioned as a premium solution. Costs are tiered based on number of agents and scope of deployment, with prices starting from £30 or \$45 per

named agent per month, which is almost irrelevant considering the significant RoI in just a few months. However, many end-user organisations unfairly compare QStory IDA to much less advanced solutions in the adjacent WFM space, which could create the impression that QStory IDA is expensive.

QStory 's monthly subscription includes maintenance and support. It wants to stimulate long, mutually profitable relationships with customers and feels the fixed pricing shows customers it has skin in the game and underpins the expert status it is keen to promote. It is certainly an interesting departure from the nickel-and-diming practiced by many other providers in the CX technology industry.

### **Growth Performance and Future Potential**

As a true SaaS proponent, QStory measures its performance on total annual recurring revenue, which grew a mind-blowing 800% in 2019 and an equally impressive 150% in 2020. In Frost & Sullivan's opinion, QStory IDA is a product with extraordinary customer value, excellent market fit and very few limitations. Considering that intraday automation is a market in its infancy, we are convinced QStory will be able to keep up the momentum and continue its growth trajectory.

At the moment, lack of awareness of intraday automation is QStory's main commercial challenge. Contact centres that use agent skills that are particularly valuable and expensive to acquire and maintain are probably QStory's sweet spot. However, volumes fluctuate in every contract centre, meaning everyone would benefit from intraday automation, no matter how small a contact centre may be. And every manager would benefit from the 80% reduction in manual workflows that QStory IDA delivers. Unfortunately, many managers are not aware that a solution to their intraday management challenges exists. It is relatively straightforward to articulate the challenges QStory IDA addresses and quantify the benefits it delivers.

Although CX practitioners understand intraday management and automation, the people who hold the purse strings in end-user organisations may not. As long as budget holders confuse intraday automation with WFM, they may be reluctant to make the investment.

QStory's ability to on-board new sales representatives may limit short-term growth. The company is only beginning to dip its toes into the gigantic ocean that is the U.S. market for CX platforms, and it has a value proposition that will resonate 100% with North American decision-makers. As it is currently expanding its sales and marketing capacity in the US, Frost & Sullivan would expect it to triple sales in 2021.

Another avenue of growth for QStory is CCaaS integration. Most robust CCaaS solutions come with some form of basic WFM functionality that many CCaaS deployments, especially in large organisations, decline in favour of dedicated, more advanced systems from specialised WFM providers. Because QStory IDA can handle every activity beyond creation of the schedule, organisations with QStory on top of CCaaS, could start using the CCaaS WFM functionality they are probably already paying for and save the entire investment in dedicated WFM.

*“Frost & Sullivan is impressed by the simplicity of QStory’s mission and the straightforward benefits associated with it. A contact centre that runs QStory’s intraday automation technology becomes a more flexible, responsive, nurturing and rewarding environment suited to a new breed of cross-skilled, dedicated, empathetic agents.”*

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The QStory roadmap contains several clever and highly practical features that address the challenges of hybrid working models in post-pandemic work, which will further stimulate growth. Future releases of QStory IDA will give agents the option to bid for and book desk space, and the system will manage capacity limits imposed on desks for social distancing purposes. Moreover, QStory IDA will be able to manage social distancing in the contact centre environment during the workday, making sure scheduled breaks, meetings, and training sessions do not create unwanted accumulations of people. It

will also direct agents to take their breaks in specific locations to maximise use of the physical space, and maintain social distancing.

## Creative Process and Human Capital

QStory’s workforce is scattered all over the globe. The company hires new employees for their creativity. The resourcefulness of the customer success team is particularly important given the customer-focused creative process. About 80% of QStory’s development work is directly inspired by customer challenges, and the customer success managers monitor the customer’s use of functionality and contact customers who do not use a specific functionality.

The company promotes a humble business culture and feels there is a problem if customers are not using the solution to its fullest. QStory is more responsive to customer issues than the competition and quicker to devise solutions.

Big enterprise software vendors may be slow, tedious, and expensive when they deal with customer issues, whereas QStory will generally not refuse a custom integration or module creation that embeds it further into the customer environment and increases the strength of its recurring revenue streams. The company encourages short decision cycles and direct, unfussy interaction between customer success managers and the software development team, aided by Slack channels for each customer deployment. It is working on creating customer health dashboards to further aid the creative process.

The lead time for new functionality to address a customer issue is typically as short as four weeks. QStory makes the new functionality available to the customer who inspired the idea before rolling it out to all other customers.

Although QStory expects there will come a time when the benefits of intraday automation are so widely understood that it can usefully engage with channel partners, it expects to maintain a direct sales model for the time being, in Europe as well as North America. It expects to triple its workforce during 2021, dividing its hiring more or less evenly between the U.K. and U.S.

## Conclusion

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Frost & Sullivan is impressed by the simplicity of QStory's mission and the straightforward benefits associated with it. QStory provides a structure that makes a contact centre the employer of choice, with attractive career prospects for a new breed of cross-skilled, dedicated, empathetic "super agents" who are key to effective CX delivery in the future.

A contact centre that runs QStory's intraday automation technology becomes a more flexible, responsive, nurturing, and rewarding environment and one that is better able to develop agent skills. In many countries, annual contact centre agent churn is astronomical (e.g., 25% in the UK, reaching almost 60% in the Netherlands). The rigid, intransigent metrics-focussed world of the average contact centre is partly responsible for the churn rates. However, QStory enables contact centres to build flexible environments designed for hybrid work, responsiveness, and frequent training opportunities, and its impressive growth during 2020 is testament to the universal attractiveness of its value proposition.

With its strong overall performance, QStory Ltd has earned Frost & Sullivan's 2021 Product Leadership Award.

## What You Need to Know about the Product Leadership Recognition

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Frost & Sullivan's Product Leadership Award recognises the QStory that offers a product or solution with attributes that deliver the best quality, reliability, and performance in the industry.

### Best Practices Award Analysis

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

#### *Product Portfolio Attributes*

**Match to Needs:** Customer needs directly influence and inspire the product portfolio's design and positioning

**Reliability and Quality:** Products consistently meet or exceed customer expectations for performance and length of service

**Product/Service Value:** Products or services offer the best value for the price compared to similar market offerings

**Positioning:** Products serve a unique, unmet need that competitors cannot easily replicate

**Design:** Products feature innovative designs, enhancing both visual appeal and ease of use

#### *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:** QStory 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 characterise the QStory culture, which in turn enhances employee morale and retention

