



Autonomy etalk: Recipient of the
2007 North American Frost & Sullivan Award for
Product Innovation



“Partnering with clients to create innovative growth strategies”

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Award Description

The Frost & Sullivan Award for Product Innovation is presented each year to the company that has demonstrated excellence in new products and technologies within their industry. The recipient company has shown innovation by launching a broad line of emerging products and technologies.

Research Methodology

To choose a recipient of this Award, the analyst team tracks all new product launches, R&D spending, products in development, and new product features and modifications. This is accomplished through interviews with the market participants and extensive secondary and technology research. All new product launches and new products in development in each company are compared and evaluated based on degree of innovation and customer satisfaction. Companies are then ranked by number of new product launches and new products in development.

Measurement Criteria

In addition to the methodology describe above, there are specific criteria used to determine final competitor rankings in this industry. The recipient of this Award has excelled based on one or more of the following criteria:

- Significance of new product(s) in their industry
- Competitive advantage of new product(s) in their industry
- Product innovation in terms of unique or revolutionary technology
- Product acceptance in the marketplace
- New product value-added services provided to customers
- Number of competitors with similar product(s)



etalk, which has been providing highly regarded workforce optimization tools for call centers for the better part of two decades, was acquired by Autonomy in 2005. That acquisition injected a powerful set of new resources and new ideas into the company that allowed etalk to branch out in critical new ways, enlarging its potential market and enhancing its core product line.

One of the reasons why the union was such a good fit is because Autonomy's core competence has been the taming of unstructured data in other (non contact center) areas of the enterprise. Autonomy's IDOL platform (Intelligent Data Operating Layer) provides a means for connecting different applications that perform analysis on various types of unstructured data.

Autonomy, with the IDOL platform, has been a pioneer in the creation of what the company calls "meaning based computing" – the effort to allow users to search and access unstructured data from many sources. This technology includes enterprise search, content classification, categorization and clustering, taxonomy creation and management, information presentation, and desktop search tools. By automatically analyzing, identifying and prioritizing the main concepts within a file, whether audio, video, or text, Meaning Based Computing connects users to a range of related information contextually linked to the original text. This provides call center agents or business managers with valuable supporting material and even richer customer intelligence to apply to their business objectives.

With the call center correctly identified as the source of a teeming mass of unstructured data, the combination of etalk's call recording and quality monitoring platform, Qfiniti, with IDOL led to the development of new capabilities for understanding what is going on at the point of the customer interaction.

Autonomy etalk's development has included a focus on moving the analysis of call center data beyond the center itself. What begins with call center operations (QM) quickly becomes a tool for managing performance and feeding back ideas for improvement (performance management) and then, in the latest iteration, becomes a critical vehicle for analyzing multiple customer contact channels for deeper insight. Autonomy etalk has made significant product advances in speech analytics and "sentiment analysis", along with understanding the content of instant messages, emails and chat sessions.

To amplify the market impact of the IDOL platform on etalk's information gathering, the company has unrolled a series of advances in speech analytics. Chief among the improvements is Qfiniti Explore, a conceptual model of speech recognition that achieves very high levels of accuracy.

Implemented with the Qfiniti Enterprise suite, contact centers have at their disposal an information gathering substructure that records, stores, analyzes and interprets the whole mass of unstructured data loose that stem from all types of customer interactions. Autonomy etalk's innovations have been to accrete new types of information into an already advanced prescriptive system. The company's expertise has always been in identifying areas of performance weakness and prescribing detailed fixes for operations. Integrating into the IDOL platform has given it a new breadth of access into enterprise data sources. The company has shown a commitment to organizing the information from the contact center and making it relevant (and important) to executives in other roles.

Autonomy etalk has spent a lot of time and resources on the engine that controls its speech recognition model. What often goes unremarked is that the quality of any analysis performed on voice recordings is going to depend heavily on the quality of the recording itself. Improvements to the system's ability to parse the content of the call directly lead to improvements in the system's ability to make other, more abstract and sophisticated judgments about the meaning of the content. By devoting energy to the substructure, etalk is helping to assure that its development efforts on the analysis side bear better fruit.

A second innovation of note is the development of a visual display system for that information (structured or unstructured). The company calls it "clustering": it presents two-dimensional maps of related concepts that emerge from analysis of call data, including the content of voice calls. The maps show "regions" of conceptual similarity and difference, allowing users to quickly identify non-obvious problems and connections between different data points.

Autonomy etalk's product strategy has been to anticipate the relationship between the contact center and the enterprise and productize its offering based on that connection. For example, as the center grows in sophistication, it evolves from needing tools to perform simple call recording to needing to manage agent performance, to feed back support information to agents, and ultimately to analyze the content of interactions that span multiple channels.

That pathway projects the goals of the centers further away from simple center operations over time, towards improvements in customer satisfaction and ultimately toward overall enterprise strategy.

Autonomy etalk has also taken steps to respond to the needs of specific vertical segments of its customer base. The company recently added support for the Payment Card Industry (PCI) Data Security Standards to its recording suite. In large, high-volume segments like hospitality and credit card processing, the use of call recordings for compliance or quality assurance can clash with the need to protect private customer data. These organizations must consider the security implications of these recordings, particularly when they contain customers' sensitive financial data such as credit card and bank account information. Call centers that do not comply with the PCI standards risk unauthorized access that could result in financial loss or damage the valuable relationships businesses have worked to establish with their customers. Autonomy etalk's Intelligent Contact Center solution provides several features that utilize a combination of metadata collected from the call and speech analytics to pinpoint the portions of a call or screen recording that need to be blocked from certain users.

We believe that Autonomy etalk has taken off in a strikingly innovative direction with its current product and with its roadmap for ongoing product development. We also think that its acquisition by Autonomy, giving it a broader global footprint and access to a keen engineering environment, will enable it to break into the top tier of APO suite vendors in coming years. We are therefore delighted to recognize Autonomy etalk with the 2007 Frost & Sullivan Product Innovation Award in the North American Agent Performance Optimization (APO) market.



About Frost & Sullivan

Frost & Sullivan, a global growth consulting company founded in 1961, partners with clients to create value through innovative growth strategies. The foundation of this partnership approach is our Growth Partnership Services platform, whereby we provide industry research, marketing strategies, consulting and training to our clients to help grow their business. A key benefit that Frost & Sullivan brings to its clients is a global perspective on a broad range of industries, markets, technologies, econometrics, and demographics. With a client list that includes Global 1000 companies, emerging companies, as well as the investment community, Frost & Sullivan has evolved into one of the premier growth consulting companies in the world.

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