

2021 BEST PRACTICES SCHEDULE

Issue Month	Important Deadlines	Title	Roundtable Date
January/February Issue	Commit: 11/19/20 Copy Due: 12/1/20 Marketed: January	Megatrends in Customer Experience: Near-Term Adjustments and Long-Term Structural Changes	1/20/21
January/February Issue	Commit: 11/19/20 Copy Due: 12/1/20 Marketed: January	Sales and Marketing Tools That Drive Business-to-Business Quota Achievement	6/30/21
January/February Issue	Commit: 11/19/20 Copy Due: 12/1/20 Marketed: February	Master Data Management – A Single View of the Truth	7/28/21
January/February Issue	Commit: 11/19/20 Copy Due: 12/1/20 Marketed: February	Linking Employee and Customer Experience: Workforce Engagement Management	10/27/21
March Issue	Commit: 1/28/21 Copy Due: 2/4/21	Customer Experience Management for Driving B2C Growth	8/25/21
March Issue	Commit: 1/28/21 Copy Due: 2/4/21	Customer Service in a Smartphone World	12/1/21
April Issue	Commit: 2/26/21 Copy Due: 3/5/21	Designing a Customer Engagement Center	9/1/21
April Issue	Commit: 2/26/21 Copy Due: 3/5/21	Creating a Customer-First Organization: Technology and People	9/15/21
May Issue	Commit: 3/31/21 Copy Due: 4/7/21	The State of Knowledge Management in an AI World	9/29/21
May Issue	Commit: 3/31/21 Copy Due: 4/7/21	Conversational AI: The Future of Customer Service?	10/13/21
June Issue	Commit: 4/3/21 Copy Due: 5/7/21	2021 Contact Center Innovations – Successful Case Study Snapshots	11/3/21
June Issue	Commit: 4/3/21 Copy Due: 5/7/21	Personalization Done Right: Using Data and Technology to Strengthen Customer Relationships	11/17/21
June Issue	Commit: 4/3/21 Copy Due: 5/7/21	C-Level Leadership: Who Owns Customer Experience	12/15/21

Schedule is subject to change.

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Issue Month	Important Deadlines	Title	Roundtable Date
July/August Issue	Commit: 5/28/21 Copy Due: 6/7/21 Marketed: July	Customer Journey Analytics to Improve CX at Scale	1/27/21
July/August Issue	Commit: 5/28/21 Copy Due: 6/7/21 Marketed: July	The Omnichannel Support Imperative	3/24/21
July/August Issue	Commit: 5/28/21 Copy Due: 6/7/21 Marketed: August	Supercharging Your Contact Center With Artificial Intelligence	2/10/21
July/August Issue	Commit: 5/28/21 Copy Due: 6/7/21 Marketed: August	Top Data Quality Issues for a Data-Driven Decade	2/24/21
September Issue	Commit: 7/30/21 Copy Due: 8/6/21	Analytics and Business Intelligence Solutions for Challenging Times	6/16/21
September Issue	Commit: 7/30/21 Copy Due: 8/6/21	Workforce Optimization for More Productive Agents and More Satisfied Customers	4/27/21
October Issue	Commit: 8/30/21 Copy Due: 9/7/21	Voice of the Customer Strategies and Tactics for Better Customer Insights	4/21/21
October Issue	Commit: 8/30/21 Copy Due: 9/7/21	Smart IVRs for Exceptional Service	3/10/21
November/December Issue	Commit: 10/29/21 Copy Due: 11/5/21 Marketed: November	Virtual Contact Centers: Lessons Learned in Uncertain Times	5/5/21
November/December Issue	Commit: 10/29/21 Copy Due: 11/5/21 Marketed: November	Smart Field Service Management Strategies	5/19/21
November/December Issue	Commit: 10/29/21 Copy Due: 11/5/21 Marketed: November	Transformational CX – Designing Experiences That Wow Customers	7/14/21
November/December Issue	Commit: 10/29/21 Copy Due: 11/5/21 Marketed: December	Speech Analytics and AI: A Game Changer for CX	6/2/21
November/December Issue	Commit: 10/29/21 Copy Due: 11/5/21 Marketed: December	I Prefer Self-Service – Don't Make Me Talk to a CSR	8/11/21

Schedule is subject to change.

2021 BEST PRACTICES DEEP DIVES

JANUARY/FEBRUARY ISSUE

Commit: 11/19/20 | Copy Due: 12/1/20 | Marketed: JANUARY

➔ **Megatrends in Customer Experience: Near-Term Adjustments and Long-Term Structural Changes**

If there has been a bright spot in the COVID-19 crisis, now entering its second year, it is the role technology has played in serving customers despite extraordinary circumstances. The implementation of key technologies before the pandemic struck has enabled organizations and employees to continue to provide excellent customer support despite the unique challenges.

What started as a scramble to enable business continuity for employees and customers alike has grown into an effort to adapt to the long-term realities that organizations now face.

But what still needs to be done in 2021 to deal with the new normal? What are the long-term ramifications for organizations that want to build on the lessons learned in these difficult times to better serve customers beyond 2021?

Contribute to our Best Practices special section and inform our engaged readers with your take on the key trends of 2021 and what changes you think will live on after the current crisis subsides.

Roundtable Date: January 20, 2021

➔ **Sales and Marketing Tools That Drive B2B Quota Achievement**

Are you looking for technology tools to supercharge your B2B salesforce and create better alignment between your marketing team and your frontline sales team? This Best Practices installment will highlight tools that are focused on delivering actionable leads and closing sales in a B2B environment.

Our contributors will discuss a wide range of sales and marketing tools for closing deals, including solutions for AI sales assistants, sales enablement, contract management, e-signatures, partner management, quote management, sales acceleration, sales analytics, sales gamification, and sales intelligence.

This Best Practices installment will offer practical tips for filling our readers' sales pipelines, targeting high-probability opportunities, and shortening sales cycles.

Roundtable Date: June 30, 2021

JANUARY/FEBRUARY ISSUE

Commit: 11/19/20 | Copy Due: 12/1/20 | Marketed: FEBRUARY

➔ **Master Data Management – A Single View of the Truth**

Data collection is probably the most straightforward aspect of a data-driven business strategy, but combining many databases into an up-to-date, single view of your customers is a challenging undertaking.

Master data management (MDM) links all the critical business data of an enterprise to a single reference point. It reduces errors and helps pave the way for artificial intelligence and other technologies expected to dominate business applications in the 2020s.

Contribute to this Best Practices installment and educate our readers on how to create a master data management system, MDM tips and tricks, and the benefits that will accrue in the decade to come.

Roundtable Date: July 28, 2021

➔ **Linking Employee and Customer Experience: Workforce Engagement Management**

In 2021, most large organizations have prioritized improving their customer experience (CX) metrics to distinguish their business and successfully compete in their markets. What is overlooked in many scenarios? The role employees have in making this top priority a reality.

The impact employees have on CX is undeniable. Engaged, well-trained employees are more likely to deliver excellent experiences, even in the face of difficult interactions. Engaged employees are more productive, get more value from the tools they use, and leave less often.

How do you engage your workforce? In this Best Practices installment, our readers will benefit from your recommendations and experiences.

Roundtable Date: October 27, 2021

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2021 BEST PRACTICES DEEP DIVES *(cont.)*

MARCH ISSUE

Commit: 1/28/21 | Copy Due: 2/4/21

➔ Customer Experience Management for Driving B2C Growth

Customer experience management (CEM) platforms will be a crucial growth driver of the business-to-consumer (B2C) sector in the next decade. The market for CEM solutions is estimated to grow 18% annually through 2027, with eventual sales hitting \$27 billion. This market is hot right now for a reason.

Large consumer B2C companies need data-centric, artificial intelligence-enhanced solutions to drive efficiencies for, and interactions with, their customers.

This month's Best Practices installment will outline the benefits of CEM and the results achieved with well-planned implementations.

Roundtable Date: August 25, 2021

➔ Customer Service in a Smartphone World

Sixty percent of U.S. households do not have a landline, just a smartphone. In a nation of 330 million people, there are 276 million smartphones. Is it time to transition to a mobile-first customer service strategy?

With smartphones, users can access all the service channels—voice, chat, apps, even video—on one device. The challenge for many organizations is to redirect their customer support efforts to leverage this undeniable device preference among the majority of consumers.

Contribute to this Best Practices special section and give our engaged readers your take on how to make the transition to a mobile-first customer strategy.

Roundtable Date: December 1, 2021

APRIL ISSUE

Commit: 2/26/21 | Copy Due: 3/5/21

➔ Designing a Customer Engagement Center

The evolution from call center to contact center to customer engagement center (CEC) reflects an evolving vision for an organization's central customer-facing entity, a vision that centers on delivering consistent, high-quality customer experiences (CX).

A well-designed CEC will provide highly personalized customer communications from every current and future channel for interacting with customers. It emphasizes a single view of the customer, which includes knowing their previous history, their intent, their sentiments, and even proactively anticipating their needs. The improvements in CX will drive all of the positive outcomes and operational efficiencies for the customer service organization that CEOs love.

Add your recommendations to this month's Best Practices installment and educate our readers on how to design a customer engagement center to maximize business outcomes and intelligently leverage the new crop of AI-assisted solutions, which will only increase in the next decade.

Roundtable Date: September 1, 2021

➔ Creating a Customer-First Organization: Technology and People

What does creating a customer-first organization really mean? Fundamentally, it means viewing all aspects of the sales journey first from your customers' perspective, and then from your company's.

It could take the form of a liberal return policy with free shipping from an online shoe store, which helps customers overcome their reluctance to buy shoes online. That willingness to put customers first can increase sales and profits significantly beyond the cost of shifting risk from customers to the company. Does incurring extra costs make good business sense? Ask Zappos.

This Best Practices installment will offer recommendations to our readers on how to put customers at the center of all their decision making.

Roundtable Date: September 15, 2021

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2021 BEST PRACTICES DEEP DIVES *(cont.)*

MAY ISSUE

Commit: 3/31/21 | Copy Due: 4/7/21

➔ The State of **Knowledge Management** in an **AI World**

Traditional knowledge management (KM) focuses on creating content, storing it, indexing it, and retrieving it to answer relevant questions. Subject matter experts create and curate content and revise it when necessary. Artificial intelligence (AI) and related technologies promise to automate this process and deliver a perfect answer to specific questions.

Make sure you contribute to this month's Best Practices installment, where we'll demonstrate to readers how AI can leverage their previous investments in KM and how they should make the transition from traditional KM to the next incarnation that harnesses the power of AI.

Roundtable Date: September 29, 2021

➔ **Conversational AI: The Future of Customer Service?**

There is no doubt that conversational artificial intelligence (AI) has the potential to deliver far more personalized customer service at lower cost by combining historical data with natural language processing that continuously learns from interactions. The impact on customer loyalty and retention is enormous.

Conversational AI can not only identify and resolve service issues quickly and efficiently, but also track customer actions and glean sentiment data to identify customers who are at high risk of leaving. This allows organizations to optimize next-best-action strategies and personalize the end-to-end customer experience.

Tell our readers what is possible with conversational AI today, and how this technology will be used to transform customer service.

Roundtable Date: October 13, 2021

JUNE ISSUE

Commit: 4/3/21 | Copy Due: 5/7/21

➔ **Contact Center Innovations – Successful Case Study Snapshots**

In this unique Best Practices installment, we will challenge you to give concrete examples and quick case studies of actual implementations you have delivered, measured with success metrics. We will look at return-on-investment numbers, big returns on key performance indicators, and examples of significant digital transformation they've achieved.

You will inform our readers on how to get executive buy-in for their strategic contact center transformations by highlighting real-world results to help them build a strong business case of their own.

[Sponsors will present brief case study examples, success stories, or other information our readers can use to substantiate their business cases.]

Roundtable Date: November 3, 2021

➔ **Personalization Done Right: Using Data and Technology to Strengthen Customer Relationships**

Personalization is an extremely powerful concept that can strengthen the bond between customer and brand if carried out correctly. Data and technology are the key tools for weaving relevant information into customer communications.

In this Best Practices installment, we will focus on how to accomplish personalization at scale, offer best practices to drive successful personalization strategies, the quick wins our readers can expect, and the long-term effects generated from a personalization strategy.

Contribute to this Best Practices special section and tell our audience how to deliver relevant personal experiences.

Roundtable Date: November 17, 2021

➔ **C-Level Leadership: Who Owns the Customer Experience?**

With the vast number of tools, data sources, and stakeholders involved in the strategic success of customer experience (CX), what role do C-level executives play in tying all the elements together? Clearly, the CTO has to make it happen from a technology perspective, but who is the driving the bus, or are CTOs fielding an endless stream of disjointed requests?

Contribute to this Best Practices installment and educate our readers on how to balance the decision-making process between C-level service, marketing, sales, and IT leadership. Tell them how to balance competing viewpoints and reconcile basic questions that have to be addressed for the grand vision to be achieved.

Roundtable Date: December 15, 2021

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2021 **BEST PRACTICES** DEEP DIVES *(cont.)*

JULY/AUGUST ISSUE

Commit: 5/28/21 | Copy Due: 6/7/21 | Marketed: JULY

➤ **Customer Journey Analytics to Improve CX at Scale**

Improving the customer journey is one of the most relevant components of the critical overarching goal of enhancing customer experience (CX) at scale. The customer journey affects every customer, after all, and journey improvements power key performance indicators that drive the bottom line. The larger the organization, the more difficult it is to overcome structural, technological, and cultural challenges that impede change and increase risk.

Tell our audience how customer journey analytics can help their companies understand and transform their own journeys, keeping them firmly on target with continuous improvements across customer satisfaction, financial, and strategic metrics.

Roundtable Date: January 27, 2021

➤ **Supercharging Your Contact Center With Artificial Intelligence**

Artificial intelligence (AI) and machine learning technologies are already rapidly transforming the contact center due to their promise of better customer experiences at lower cost. A recent study predicted that the market for contact center AI technology would increase from \$800 million in 2019 to \$2.8 billion by 2024. These new tools offer organizations a boost in customer retention, loyalty, and, ultimately, revenue and shareholder value.

The benefits of a well-orchestrated contact center AI program also include more effective and satisfied agents, which increases employee retention. New agent time-to-train, job satisfaction, and turnover-rate metrics are substantially improved with better technology tools.

In this month's Best Practices installment, inform our readers what they can do to transform their contact centers with AI, as well as the rewards they can expect to earn from their efforts.

Roundtable Date: February 10, 2021

JULY/AUGUST ISSUE

Commit: 5/28/21 | Copy Due: 6/7/21 | Marketed: AUGUST

➤ **Top Data Quality Issues for a Data-Driven Decade**

The success of current and future data-driven customer strategies depends on high-quality, trusted data. But the ease of collecting massive amounts of data often has the unintended consequence of diluting the overall quality of the information leaders need to power their strategic investments in analytics, artificial intelligence (AI), and data-driven customer programs.

Fortunately for them, this fundamental issue is not insurmountable.

Contribute to our Best Practices special section and provide our readers with your take on how their organizations can improve data quality and reap the benefits of data-driven customer strategies.

Roundtable Date: February 24, 2021

➤ **The Omnichannel Support Imperative**

According to one current survey, two out of three customers use at least three channels, on average, to connect with customer service. That's one of the more conservative estimates of how customers are inclined to switch channels when contacting a company for support. The critical point here is that customers will use the most convenient communication method available to them at any given moment.

Organizations must respond coherently to channel-hopping customers by unifying data across all of their customer support touchpoints so that the information gathered in one channel is seamlessly available in others.

Many of our readers' organizations struggle to unify data across channels. Make sure to educate them in this Best Practices installment, helping them achieve a clear, consistent omnichannel support strategy.

Roundtable Date: March 24, 2021

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2021 BEST PRACTICES DEEP DIVES *(cont.)*

SEPTEMBER ISSUE

Commit: 7/30/21 | Copy Due: 8/6/21

➤ **Analytics and Business Intelligence Solutions for Challenging Times**

2021 will be a year of rapid change, a departure from the pre-pandemic world that will see the establishment of a “new normal” way of doing business. Many industries will scramble to survive, and others will benefit from the sudden shift in the economy and consumer demand, but the economy will not return to business as usual.

Business intelligence (BI) solutions collect and analyze current, actionable data to provide insights into improving business operations. Business analytics (BA) tools also analyze historical data and predict business trends, which can help organizations stay prepared even in times of great uncertainty.

Contribute to this Best Practices installment and tell our audience how BA and BI can help them make intelligent, data-driven decisions to keep their organizations ready for the next new normal stage in the post-pandemic economy.

Roundtable Date: June 16, 2021

➤ **Workforce Optimization for More Productive Agents and More Satisfied Customers**

The experience of the past year has highlighted workforce optimization (WFO) as a critical component of managing contact center agents comprehensively, regardless of location.

WFO solutions encompass many different technologies and applications and enable excellent customer service by supporting agents as frontline brand ambassadors. Call recording, quality monitoring, workforce management, coaching and e-learning, performance management, and even speech analytics fall under the WFO umbrella. From the call center to the back office, WFO is a crucial component to any customer-focused enterprise.

Contribute to this month’s Best Practices installment and tell our readers how WFO solutions enable contact centers to run efficiently and increase customer satisfaction.

Roundtable Date: April 7, 2021

OCTOBER ISSUE

Commit: 8/30/21 | Copy Due: 9/7/21

➤ **Voice-of-the-Customer Strategies and Tactics for Better Customer Insights**

Top-performing businesses pay close attention to how their customers feel about their experiences with a product or service, and voice-of-the-customer (VoC) programs deliver those crucial insights.

Getting to the heart of what a customer is thinking, feeling, and intending to do in the future is a difficult task, but gleaming actionable insights is crucial for companies to stay on track.

Offer your expertise in this month’s Best Practices installment, telling our readers how their organizations can gather useful feedback to keep their offerings in line with their customers’ needs and desires.

Roundtable Date: April 21, 2021

➤ **Smart IVRs for Exceptional Service**

Interactive voice response (IVR) solutions have evolved tremendously over the past few years and still manage half of all customer inquiries, especially for complex issues. Fortunately, this workhorse of customer service has expanded far beyond the much-maligned phone-tree-based systems that have frustrated customers for decades.

Modern IVRs can incorporate natural language processing, conversational AI, and call-back features; predict caller intent; capture information for context and continuity; and include a whole host of customer-friendly features that can quickly and painlessly retrieve information.

Tell our readers about the latest advances in IVR technology and how you can help their businesses serve customers quickly and accurately.

Roundtable Date: March 10, 2021

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2021 BEST PRACTICES DEEP DIVES *(cont.)*

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER ISSUE

Commit: 10/29/21 | Copy Due: 11/5/21 | Marketed: NOVEMBER

➔ **Virtual Contact Centers: Lessons Learned in Uncertain Times**

There are plenty of practical benefits gained by implementing a virtual contact center in your organization, ones that have nothing to do with preparing for a worst-case scenario—which we’ve all collectively experienced in the past year. But one benefit that very early on made itself a necessity is the ability to conduct business seamlessly even in the face of calamity.

Fortunately, virtual contact centers offer all the customer-facing components businesses need to serve customers, including voice, email, chat, messaging, and self-service tools, to answer questions quickly and deliver on key performance indicators. They also can support a far-flung workforce with workforce optimization, coaching, and other employee-focused engagement tools to help develop agent skills and improve retention. Plus, they enable business continuity by virtue of their very architecture.

Contribute to our Best Practices special section and inform our readers with your take on how their organizations can benefit by moving their contact centers into the cloud.

Roundtable Date: May 5, 2021

➔ **Smart Field Service Management Strategies for 2021**

The field service market is estimated to hit \$1.6 billion in 2020. Sending technicians into the field is an expensive proposition; field service reps have to be well-trained, have good customer service skills, and have the technology and tools to keep them on track and on time.

Customers need to be able to schedule appointments online, at a convenient time for them and be kept in the loop when bad weather, traffic, or other realities prevent the technician from arriving on time.

Fortunately, many solutions and best practices can systematically improve the odds that field service calls will be punctual, technicians will be well-equipped with spare parts and the necessary skills, and customers will be satisfied.

Contribute to this month’s Best Practices installment and tell our readers how to build a world-class field service organization.

Roundtable Date: May 19, 2021

➔ **Transformational CX: Designing Experiences That Wow Customers**

It seems that every survey of business leaders cites customer experience (CX) as a crucial stated goal for their organization. But how does a company deliver CX that differentiates them from their competitors? What priorities should they focus on first? How do they truly transform their CX efforts in a way that customers notice and that leads to the business outcomes executives expect?

The first step is to reimagine the CX process with the customer as the central constituent. This takes executive buy-in and a long-range vision that affects every aspect of the core business strategies and processes. Many newer business models have leap-frogged into the future because they were unencumbered by legacy systems and ways of doing business. They proved new strategies and models could produce extreme success.

Contribute to this extremely popular Best Practices installment and educate our readers with advice that will help them transform their organization’s CX efforts in a way that wows customers and delivers tangible results.

Roundtable Date: July 14, 2021

NOVEMBER/DECEMBER ISSUE

Commit: 10/29/21 | Copy Due: 11/5/21 | Marketed: DECEMBER

➔ **Speech Analytics and AI: A Game Changer for CX**

The combination of speech analytics and artificial intelligence (AI) is a powerful tool for understanding what customers are communicating and how to address their intent, even in real time. That’s a game changer. Natural language processing and understanding technologies can be extended one step further to include quality management and agent coaching, even while the customer is still on the phone.

Self-reported surveys certainly provide useful information, but speech analytics and AI can provide a much more accurate picture of what customers are communicating because the technologies are working with all the information, not just a sample of the whole.

This Best Practices installment is your chance to show our readers what can be accomplished when speech analytics and AI are the drivers of customer experience.

Roundtable Date: June 2, 2021

➔ **I Prefer Self-Service—Don’t Make Me Talk to a CSR**

Does your company inadvertently add to their operational costs by encouraging customers to call your contact center? Let’s face it, with 75% of customers preferring to give self-service a try rather than talk to a customer service representative, you’re at odds with delivering what customers desire while increasing your own costs. That’s a lose-lose strategy.

The landscape of solutions offering increasingly savvy self-service, via the web, mobile apps, and voice, has changed dramatically in the past few years. But delivering poor self-service that nudges customers willing to try serving themselves to the phone channel is a failure from both perspectives.

Contribute to our Best Practices special section and inform our audience with your take on what they can do to satisfy their customers by catering to their preferences.

Roundtable Date: August 11, 2021