

F R O S T & S U L L I V A N

# 2024 COMPETITIVE STRATEGY LEADER

*IN THE GLOBAL  
AI-POWERED  
CROWDSOURCING  
PLATFORM INDUSTRY*

F R O S T & S U L L I V A N

2024  
BEST  
PRACTICES  
AWARD

**Tech**  
**Mahindra**

## 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. Tech Mahindra excels in many of the criteria in the AI-powered crowdsourcing platform space.

AWARD CRITERIA	
<i>Strategy Innovation</i>	<i>Customer Impact</i>
Strategy Effectiveness	Price/Performance Value
Strategy Execution	Customer Purchase Experience
Competitive Differentiation	Customer Ownership Experience
Executive Team Alignment	Customer Service Experience
Stakeholder Integration	Brand Equity

### *Populii: Tech Mahindra’s Response to Gig Economy and Crowdsourcing*

Over the last few years, crowdsourcing has gained popularity as a distinctive business model that enables companies to mobilize large and diverse groups of experts to perform microtasks or solve complex problems that would be time consuming, challenging, or expensive. Crowdsourcing gained momentum because of the COVID-19 pandemic and the rise of the gig economy, which paved the way for remote work environments, short-term contracts, and freelance work, especially for workers looking for flexible and diverse work opportunities. Moreover, advancements in digital technologies spurred the expansion of the crowdsourcing ecosystem. Companies can tap into resources with different knowledge or skills through crowdsourcing, often sourced through online platforms. These crowdsourcing platforms efficiently connect companies with a variety of talent from all over the world and across industries. Crowdsourcing platforms are well positioned to take advantage of these trends, orchestrating a wide range of tasks, such as research, writing and editing, transcription, data labeling, content moderation, survey participation, coding, graphic design, and so on.

Tech Mahindra, a leading India-based digital transformation solutions company, developed Populii, its global enterprise crowdsourcing platform that assists enterprises in tapping into the diverse and extensive expertise of the gig worker community. Populii came into fruition based on the company’s vision to capitalize on the booming market trends around the advancement in digital technologies, the gig economy, crowdsourcing, the need for agility and flexibility, and cost-effective workforce models for enterprises.

The acquisition of AI-based Zen3 Group in 2020 enabled Tech Mahindra to build Populii on the foundation of DataMime, a workflow tool that curates data across various media formats in more than 20 languages. This foundation has empowered Tech Mahindra to build a secure multi-tenant architecture and customizable workflows, enhancing the platform's functionality and user experience.

With innovation deeply rooted in Tech Mahindra's mission, the Populii platform stands out in the crowdsourcing industry for its intelligent human-in-the-loop service capabilities. The platform bridges the gap by enabling enterprises to build smarter artificial intelligence (AI) solutions by connecting them with a broader pool of resources skilled in microtasks. The platform effectively combines cloud, mobile, social, web, and AI technologies to create a new marketplace that efficiently matches enterprises to a much broader base of domain experts requiring human input, ensuring a rich and diverse experience while reducing administrative hassles. Populii utilizes proven training models that enable gig workers to deliver tasks related to AI and data management. Furthermore, these training models enhance the quality and efficiency of data, which is central to developing effective machine learning (ML) algorithms. The platform operates on the following three core principles:

- **Advise:** Tech Mahindra provides expert advice and insights through extensive domain knowledge and specialized skills for project management.
- **Annotate:** Populii's proven training models create high-quality datasets that are used to train ML models effectively.
- **Acquire:** The platform obtains structured and unstructured data (images, videos, documents, text, spatial data, etc.) in 80+ languages, catering to enterprise needs across various verticals.

Populii has successfully disrupted the traditional business process management services market, breaking down processes into microtasks suitable for crowdsourcing and enabling enterprises to access on-demand

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**- Sherrel Sonia Roche,  
Associate Director, ICT Research**

and skilled resources easily and scale workflows rapidly to meet spikes in demand. For instance, enterprises may need help in developing a next-generation AI solution because it requires substantial time and employs the right resources beyond the traditional work environment.

Populii enables enterprises to accelerate the execution of projects by tapping into a large global pool of skilled gig workers. Through its global community of more than 200,000 gig workers from over 160 countries, Populii is positioned as a significant solution platform that enables the gig economy, fostering innovation at the intersection of human intelligence and AI. Tech Mahindra ensures that its experienced crowdsourcing management

team rigorously vets gig workers based on qualifications, past project successes, and specific technology skill sets, ensuring a pool of reliable and experienced professionals that can deliver high-quality solutions.

Populii focuses on both enterprise benefits, such as scale and cost savings, and gig worker benefits, such as opportunities, flexibility, and timely payments. The platform offers many innovative features and functionalities designed to streamline workflows and maximize efficiency.

- **Customizable workflows:** Populii's customizable workflows break down processes into smaller microtasks, allowing enterprise clients to access a qualified workforce, configure qualifications and assessment criteria, and secure payment structures.
- **Continual innovation:** With a focus on solving intelligence at its primal level and applying it to products and intellectual properties, Tech Mahindra fuels continual innovation. The company invests heavily in AI and automation to enhance scalability, productivity, and quality for its clients.
- **Built-in project analytics:** The platform provides valuable insights through detailed project analytics and reporting features.
- **Flexible delivery model:** Populii's strength lies in its flexible crowd models designed to meet clients' diverse needs, from entirely unmanaged crowdsourcing to managed augmentation. The platform's unmanaged crowd model offers a cost-effective solution through flexible pricing defined by the client and resources that are only scalable within a distributed crowd. For clients that require 70 to 80% quality assurance, the crowd-managed model provides daily random manual sampling, error pattern analysis, and quality monitoring dashboards. This model ensures a focus on selecting qualified gig workers and effectively meeting the set service level agreements (SLAs). For a fully managed crowd model, Populii involves in-house subject matter experts (SMEs) to exceed clients' expectations of requiring more than 90% accuracy levels and 100% commitment to timelines. The focus is on employing quality monitoring dashboards, continual quality checks, manual sampling, and error pattern and gap analysis.
- **Easy user interface:** The platform's intuitive design ensures a smooth experience for freelancers and clients alike. The dashboard allows gig workers to view available tasks, update profiles, and track earnings, in addition to enabling customizable templates and branding for client-specific interfaces.
- **Ensures quality management:** Populii enables end-to-end quality control through multi-level checks, including crowd-based review, coaching, and managed quality assurance. The platform's quality control processes can achieve more than 95% accuracy.
- **Data security and control:** Populii easily integrates with clients' existing systems and platforms through application programming interfaces (APIs) while addressing data security concerns. The solution implements robust security measures, including encrypted communication and access controls, ensuring the confidentiality and security of proprietary data throughout the collaboration process.
- **Gig employee empowerment:** Populii has successfully created flexible work opportunities for the gig workforce, along with extensive job opportunities around user studies, writing, data management, content rating, data collection, data transcription, and data annotation with industry-leading enterprises. Registered gig employees are assigned projects aligned to their expertise, and they can choose to work on a wide range of creative or skill-based projects, set their own flexible work schedules, upskill using the extensive learning documents and videos, and enjoy the benefits of seamless integrated payment systems.

This crowdsourcing approach has resulted in a 30% reduction in operating costs and a 3 times increase in productivity for enterprise clients, compared to traditional full-time employee (FTE) models.

The company has developed a comprehensive approach to managing its gig worker community:

- **Recruitment and qualification:** Populii has a large global community of active gig employees who are initially qualified based on their language skills and basic capabilities. For specific projects, gig workers must pass additional technical assessments and qualifications to demonstrate the required skills. Furthermore, Tech Mahindra continues to invest in integrating AI-powered professional platforms and assessments to automate the gig worker qualification and onboarding process.
- **Training and upskilling:** Populii provides a knowledge base with training videos, documents, and other resources to help employees learn new skills. The platform has a coaching and review system in which top performers act as reviewers and coaches to provide feedback and guidance. As workers demonstrate improved capabilities, continual learning opportunities are provided.
- **Project execution:** Populii offers different crowdsourcing models (unmanaged, fully managed, and hybrid) to meet clients' specific needs. Work is distributed to the qualified gig worker community based on skills and availability. The platform leverages gamification and incentives to drive productivity and quality.
- **Talent retention:** The platform provides gig workers with flexibility, opportunities, and timely payments, building a loyal gig community. To retain top performers, upskilling and career progression pathways are offered as well.

With these differentiating factors and Tech Mahindra's industry expertise and resources, Populii is positioned as a unique and compelling crowdsourcing solution for enterprises. Frost & Sullivan believes that Populii is competitively positioned to meet current and future enterprise business challenges and technology needs. As adoption grows, the platform can potentially transform how enterprises manage their workforces and operations going forward.

### ***Culture of Continual Innovation Creates Successful Differentiation***

*“As an innovative company committed to driving transformative solutions, Tech Mahindra employs a range of processes and best practices to move concepts swiftly and profitably from early-stage investment to late-stage prototyping or launch. The company has set up best practices and processes to ensure efficiency and success throughout the journey.”*

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As an innovative company committed to driving transformative solutions, Tech Mahindra employs a range of processes and best practices to move concepts swiftly and profitably from early-stage investment to late-stage prototyping or launch. The company has set up best practices and processes to ensure efficiency and success throughout the journey. The company continues to foster a culture of experimentation and continual improvement, ensuring that innovative concepts are rigorously tested and refined.

Tech Mahindra allocates investments and resources to develop its talent pool, processes, and technology tools necessary to support innovation at every stage. By

embracing agile methodologies, the company maintains flexibility and adaptability throughout the development lifecycle, enabling rapid iteration and adjustment as needed.

The company leverages insights gained from past projects and adds them into its current practices, continually refining its approach to maximize efficiency and effectiveness. Furthermore, Tech Mahindra's leadership team is actively involved in the innovation process, providing timely support and guidance to expedite the advancement of promising concepts to late-stage prototyping or launch.

### ***Roadmap to Success: A Customer-centric Approach Driving an Unmatched Client Experience***

Tech Mahindra's Populii serves clients across various industry verticals, including automotive, manufacturing, hi-tech, health-tech, communications, media, retail and consumer goods, oil and gas, energy and utilities, travel, financial technology and banking, and financial services. The company has successfully completed over 1,000 projects spanning AI/ML, user studies, and data collection. Tech Mahindra aims to deliver a consistent and efficient crowdsourcing experience for both enterprises and gig workers by focusing on community support, communication, continual improvement, scalability, and client integration.

Tech Mahindra strongly believes in delivering enhanced values for its clients and tirelessly collaborates with them to uncover ways to improve. The company actively listens to its clients, understands their needs, and gleans insights from their experiences. To ensure an exceptional client service experience, the company has implemented several measures to maintain the consistent support and efficiency of its crowdsourcing process:

- **Dedicated community support team:** Populii has a 24/7 community support team that monitors issues and concerns raised by gig workers and escalates them to the technical team for quick resolution.
- **Feedback and communication channels:** The platform provides multiple channels for gig workers to provide feedback, including forums, social media, and a dedicated support page, helping the company identify and address any pain points.
- **Continual process improvements:** The team closely monitors the crowdsourcing process's performance and productivity and iteratively improves the workflows, training, and quality control measures.
- **Scalable infrastructure:** Populii's cloud-based architecture and flexible crowdsourcing models allow it to scale up or down rapidly to meet fluctuations in client demand, ensuring consistent service delivery.
- **Integrated client systems:** The platform's ability to integrate with clients' existing systems and workflows through APIs ensures seamless data exchange and process alignment.

Tech Mahindra's approach goes beyond extensive best-in-class capabilities and customer value as a strategic imperative. The company emphasizes delivering exceptional customer value through a deep understanding of clients' objectives and tailoring solutions to meet their specific requirements, effectively articulating the value proposition, offering flexible and adaptable execution models to address demand-based resource allocation, and providing cost-optimized solutions with high-quality delivery capabilities. By consistently delivering exceptional value, Tech Mahindra earns clients' trust, allowing it to scale operations rapidly to meet increasing demand.

In terms of competitive differentiation, the company offers a highly economical pricing model, compared to the vast majority of its competitors. Populii provides clients the flexibility to choose between hourly-based and transaction-based pricing models, depending on their maturity and requirements.

Furthermore, as a testament to the success of the Populii platform, Tech Mahindra's focus on the client experience and value has been pivotal in driving company growth, branding, and customer loyalty. With its commitment to understanding and addressing customer needs, the company can expand the scope of its services and engage in new service offerings, further enhancing its value proposition.

Since the launch of Populii in December 2023, the company remains dedicated to delivering tangible value to clients, thereby propelling revenue growth and demonstrating the direct impact of a customer-centric approach on financial success. Frost & Sullivan foresees the platform making an impact in areas such as data acquisition, AI/ML data training, micro-tasking, content services, and so on, where its innovative features and capabilities can transform hi-tech, eCommerce, healthcare, edtech, and many more industries.

## Conclusion

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With a focus on serving as a partner to its clients, Tech Mahindra integrates both the gig community and the AI-powered crowdsourcing platform for seamless execution. Through its Populii platform, therefore, the company stands apart in an industry where most service providers either focus solely on crowdsourcing or act only as service providers.

Populii provides a unique opportunity for enterprises to leverage the power of crowdsourcing while maintaining control, quality, and data security, clearly indicating the significant value proposition that Populii offers to both enterprises and gig workers. The company quickly adapts to evolving industry trends and market conditions and focuses on creating value for clients and gig workers.

With its strong overall performance, Tech Mahindra earns Frost & Sullivan's 2024 Global Competitive Strategy Leadership Award in the AI-powered crowdsourcing platform industry.

## What You Need to Know about the Competitive Strategy Leadership Recognition

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Frost & Sullivan's Competitive Strategy Leadership Award recognizes the company with a stand-out approach to achieving top-line growth and a superior customer experience.

### Best Practices Award Analysis

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

#### *Strategy Innovation*

**Strategy Effectiveness:** Effective strategy balances short-term performance needs with long-term aspirations and overall company vision

**Strategy Execution:** Company strategy utilizes Best Practices to support consistent and efficient processes

**Competitive Differentiation:** Solutions or products articulate and display unique competitive advantages

**Executive Team Alignment:** Executive team focuses on staying ahead of key competitors via a unified execution of its organization's mission, vision, and strategy

**Stakeholder Integration:** Company strategy reflects the needs or circumstances of all industry stakeholders, including competitors, customers, investors, and employees

#### *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



## About Frost & Sullivan

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## 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™.

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### 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 6 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 (BM)**
- **Technology (TE)**
- **Industries (IN)**
- **Customer (CU)**
- **Geographies (GE)**

