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# SMART User Manual

Topic Best Practices

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# Topic Best Practices

A topic enables you to boost the recognition of a specific business issue (that is, a single concept) by telling SpeechMiner what phrases to look for.

A successful topic captures the interactions that most accurately define the topic's business issue. Assigning the right phrases and properties are critical to its success.

Use the following best practice tips to fine-tune your topic definition:

## Analyze your business needs

- Before creating a topic, gather information about the business issue you want to investigate and track interactions that are generated by the specific issue.
- Invest the time in assigning the right phrases that will capture the interactions that most accurately define the business issue.

## Define the topic

- Give the topic a simple name that is concise and unambiguous. For example, if you want to quantify occurrences when customers express satisfaction, you would name the topic "Customer Satisfaction".

## Build effective phrases

- An effective phrase should match one topic definition, so that it is associated with one real-world event. For example, except for "Can I have your", the following are effective phrases for the Collect Payment topic:
  - Card information please
  - Can I have your
  - Security code on the back
  - May I have your credit card"Can I have your" is not an appropriate phrase because it can be associated with agents saying "can I have your name," "can I have your date of birth," "can I have your phone number," or customer's saying "can I have your extension number?".
- An effective phrase should not be made up of one or two words. For example, except for "Understand", the following are effective phrases for the Empathy topic:

- Completely understand your position
- Understand
- Understand your situation
- Understand what you are going through

"Understand" is not an appropriate phrase because it can be associated with agents saying "I can't understand you", "do you understand what I mean?", "I don't understand these changes".

In addition, when a phrase is short it can be easily confused with similar-sounding words or phrases. For example, "understand" can be confused with "unplanned charges".

- When creating a phrase consider the following:
  - The way people actually talk as opposed to what is grammatically correct. For example, do not hesitate to use "gonna" or "ain't".
  - Different dialects.
  - Different variations in grammatical forms and structures. For example, "Make a payment", "Making a payment", "Payment to be made".
  - Remove articles or pronouns especially at the beginning of a phrase. For example, "completely understand your" instead of "I completely understand your" or, "have tried calling" instead of "I have tried calling".
  - Multi-syllabic words are well recognized since they are phonetically unique (that is, they do not sound like/rhyme with lots of other words).

## Populate the topic with phrases

- When creating a topic, aim to use short phrases. Short phrases return the most interactions with minimal impact on accuracy. Instead of "I called you", try "called" or "called you".
- Avoid meaningless words in phrases. When adding phrases to a topic, avoid the use of short connecting words that are less likely to be recognized. Instead of "charge the account", use "charge NEAR account".
- Review interactions with the topic definition in mind and collect relevant phrases.
- Focus on the issue; not the root cause. To avoid creating a list of topics with a bias, focus on the phrases that surface the issue and not the root cause.  
For example, Design a topic related to customer dissatisfaction
  - Scenario: You want to create a topic that finds interactions in which customers have expressed dissatisfaction
  - Strategy:
    - Include words that indicate dissatisfaction (such as "not happy", frustrated, ridiculous, "very upset", Not NEAR acceptable, unhappy).
    - Do not include words that may imply dissatisfaction (such as broke, spoke twice, too expensive, etc).
    - Create independent topics for issues that are related to customer dissatisfaction (for example, High Cost, Technical Issues, etc), so that you can also identify and monitor the correlation between these independent topics and the levels of customer dissatisfaction.

- Build concise and accurate topics that can be easily monitored and can provide business value. That is, if you are interested in finding interactions with a negative outcome (for example, complaints, dissatisfaction, escalation, etc.), do not put all the relevant phrases for these issues in one topic. Instead, create a topic for each issue.

## Check your phrases

- Sort the topic phrases in alphabetical order to ensure the topic does not include duplicate phrases.
- Run Check Similar to ensure that the new topic phrases do not overlap with existing phrases.

## Topic size

Regardless of how many interactions a topic finds, the most effective topics will contain between 10-30 phrases, though successful topics can be built with fewer or more phrases. A topic should never include more than 80 phrases. Too many phrases is evidence of redundant or conflicting phrases. Review phrases regularly to ensure all phrases are crucial to their topic's success.

## Related Topics

[Create a Topic](#)