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Crowdsourcing, Outsourcing to Obtain a Creativity Group

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ABSTRACT

Crowdsourcing is a concept that first appeared in an article written by Jeff Howe in 2006 in the Wired Magazine in which the author illustrates the emerging phenomena of the outsourcing of various activities by companies to an undefined generally large group of people on the Internet in the form of an open call. Although this process has long been limited to the computing sector, it currently tends to cater a wider number of sectors. Firms using this process are always more numerous in order to outsource, for limited financial compensations, activities that cannot be completed by their own employees or considered too costly in terms of manpower, finances and time. This paper aims at defining, through concrete examples, how Crowdsourcing directly impact on the variables of the mix-marketing such as product development, price positioning, distribution and communication but also people, process and physical evidence. At last, the article focuses on the potential evolution of the Crowdsourcing in the coming years.

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Joseph Schumpeter argued that "the customer is not the source of innovation." Is such a vision plausible in the era of digital communication? Adopting such a categorical vision tends to hide the current trend which shows that customers, consumers and citizens realize that their roles and influences are intensifying. Despite the interactivity that was made possible by Web 2.0 and the growing number of users of social networks like Facebook, YouTube or Twitter, companies and brands have long remained cautious towards the web, perhaps because of the imminence of information and speed of movement of messages that are not necessarily controllable. Yet by 1998, the pharmaceutical company Eli Lilly launched a collaborative platform "InnoCentive" inviting companies to externalize some of the problems they are facing in order to present them to an unknown set of experts and users that may have the solution to the problem. This is reflected by the externalization of some of the companies' activities to the "crowd surfers" in order to obtain solutions at lower costs. This phenomenon was named "crowdsourcing" by Jeff Howe, in his article "The Rise of Crowdsourcing" that was published in the journal *Wired Magazine* in 2006. Since then, numerous collaborative platforms and innovation have emerged revealing the awareness of the potential of the Internet in any kind of businesses.

It is interesting to characterize the phenomenon of crowdsourcing through its influence on marketing and communication. That is why, in the first part of our research we will focus on the context in which 'crowdsourcing' appeared, this first part of our study will be led throughout an analysis of the Web 2.0 and the increasing role of consumers in their business relationship. In the second part, we are going to develop our study on the basis of the concept of crowdsourcing and the opportunities it offers to the field of marketing. Finally in the third part we are going to study the effect of the evolution of crowdsourcing.

Web 2.0 – basis of interactivity development on the web

Used for the first time in 2003 by Dale Dougherty, the term "Web 2.0" was echoed by his colleague Tim O'Reilly in 2005 (9). He latter proposed a definition of this term (9) and then he established what he considered to be the main characteristics of the "Web 2.0":

- The web as a platform of expression: the interactivity of Web 2.0 allows each user to express freely and decide whether to disclose, publish, search or exchange information.
- Leverage of collective intelligence: on the internet, millions of information are transmitted, circulated and then connected to each other. This network continues to expand through increased interaction between the different information it offers. The contribution of a multitude of individuals on a common topic (9) is richer than one person. It is in this perspective that collaborative encyclopedias such as Wikipedia have been created.

- The power of data: thanks to the Internet, some companies like Amazon, Facebook and Google have constituted substantial databases.
 - The end of a release cycle: the user is no longer a passive consumer as it has long been but a full participant. He is likely to become a true co-developer and innovator.
 - Lightweight programming models: it is to take what already exists and build innovation upon it. It is useless to create complicated systems. We must create content that are easily accessible and available.
 - Software's are set free of the computer: computer is no longer the only mean for circulating information. Mobile devices, game consoles, TV offer features that can be connected to the internet.
 - Enhance user interfaces: one must realize the potential wealth of web interfaces that are becoming increasingly interactive.
- Thanks to the web 2.0 and 1.7 billion Internet users in 2010 and 2.2 billion expected in 2013 they now can communicate and also interact, provide feedback, suggest ideas, suggest changes ... This development has generated a new type of consumer (Cova, 2008) which does not hesitate to use his creativity to deliver innovations, improvements in products or services... to live their passion and not only to satisfy an economic interest. They represent an opportunity that businesses must learn how to use in interacting with them (Cova, 2008). This has led some firms to imagine or to adapt Web business models incorporating the customer as an actor and not a single one. It is in this context that emerged the concept of crowdsourcing.

Crowdsourcing

Jeff Howe was first to use in 2006 the term crowdsourcing to define the phenomenon of outsourcing the tasks of the company by using the collective intelligence. The crowd is used for its creativity, innovative power and its expertise while benefiting from reduced costs. Howe proposed the following definition: "Crowdsourcing is the act of taking a job traditionally performed by a designated agent (Usually an employee) and outsourcing it to an undefined, large group of people generally in the form of an open call. ". Outsourcing is increasingly frequent in the production process, it consist on the fact of subcontracting a portion of secondary activities previously carried out internally to a specialized company in order to achieve savings in terms of finance and human. Contrary to this definition, crowdsourcing leads to the outsourcing of a company task from the "crowd" of Internet users. The identity of these individuals remain mostly anonymous, the company does not know the author of the work done contrary to the traditional subcontracting. Any Internet user, whether expert or enthusiast specialist can offer a solution and answer to this "open bidding." Crowdsourcing is not restrictive. Collective intelligence is solicited to be unrestricted which leads to talk about "open outsourcing" (Lebraty) versus conventional outsourcing one might

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