

Chapter 16

Social Media Crowdsourcing: Supporting User–Driven Innovation by Generating Ideas

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ABSTRACT

This article makes an attempt to understand crowdsourcing and its increasing importance in organizations. It explores how crowd acts as a problem solver and crowdsourcing generates ideas that lead to open innovation for an organization. The paper also throws light on how with the arrival and advancement of digital technologies, the concept of crowdsourcing has gained popularity and has received well acceptance in the organizations. This is followed by a detailed analysis on various researchers' views and thoughts on the subject. Based on the extensive literature review, this paper attempts to identify knowledge gaps and research gaps. This study is an attempt to create concepts on social media crowdsourcing and provide research directions to further explore the subject.

1. INTRODUCTION

In recent times, there has been an inordinate amount of adoption of the Internet and digital technologies by organizations for their marketing campaigns and strategies. These digital technologies and the Internet have impacted various aspects of marketing. This new adoption has also impacted the way the 4Ps are handled by the organizations over the Internet. Internet and digital technologies bring people together, and social media is one such way. Social media brings in interactions among people where they create, share, and exchange information and ideas via different online com-

munities, forums, etc. This unique feature of social media makes it popular among organizations, and its adoption by the organizations for reaching out to the users or consumers is gaining attractiveness.

Social media is changing the way the organizations think about marketing their products and services and reaching out to the consumers. It brings in the tools and processes for participation from the consumers. The presence of digital technologies differentiates social media from traditional media in various ways, such as reach, usability, frequency, and connectivity. Digital technologies bring in the capacity to harness the power of the crowd over the Internet. Organizations are finding

out ways to reach out to the masses, and adopting social media over the electronic medium or digital technologies is the best possible way because of various reasons for organizations to bank upon. This has persuaded organizations to move beyond restricting themselves only to print media campaigns. They have started exploring newer ways to reach out to the customers for engagement.

Organizations are creating online communities to gather ideas for their products or services from the crowd of consumers. Consumers on this forum may easily be considered as creators. Organizations are using digital technologies to use various ways of social media, and crowdsourcing is one of them.

Crowdsourcing is a phenomenon in which a crowd turns out to be more powerful than any individual within it. Crowdsourcing is about milking the masses and brainstorming for gathering different ideas. It is about using power of the people which brings in the wisdom of the crowd, where combined with the modern technology of today's scenario, it just becomes a powerful tool for the organization. Crowdsourcing opens up the boundaries of an organization for other and different sources of innovation. In this process, consumers can easily be seen as innovators and value creators. E-crowdsourcing or digital crowdsourcing, which is crowdsourcing over the Internet platform, brings larger participation and transparency in the process. This can be very

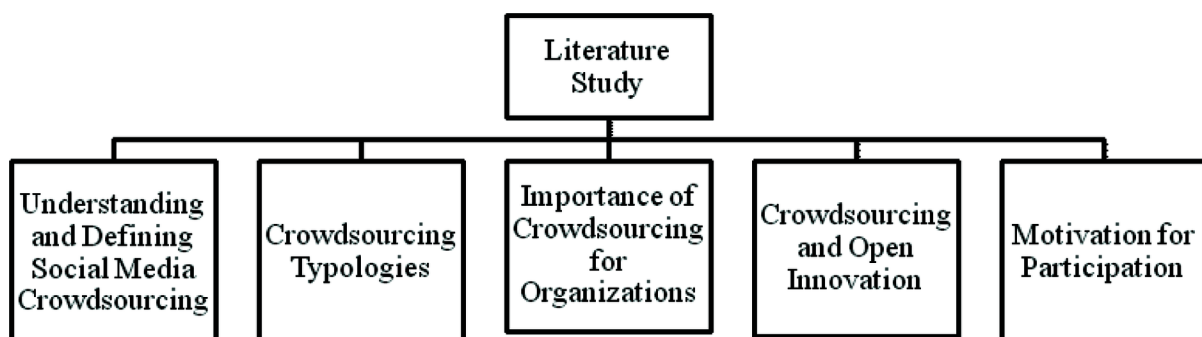
easily seen from the examples of Dell, Kit Kat, Netflix, Waitrose, etc. Crowdsourcing has moved to the center stage.

Crowdsourcing is all about consumer creativity. By utilizing the creativity of the people, multi-talent is deployed. Crowdsourcing on the online platform helps in organizational learning, saves money, and also brings people closer to the organization. An organization can exploit the power of masses via crowdsourcing for product development, service development, or delivery. It can fairly be considered as a problem-solving tool, and a solution to distant search. The topic of crowdsourcing is very much alive in the social media world and will become more acceptable and popular in the coming years. Crowdsourcing remains interesting to both organizations and users.

2. LITERATURE STUDY

The literature on social media crowdsourcing is not vast. Social media crowdsourcing is fairly a new concept that has gained strength and acceptance in recent times because of the emerging digital technologies. The topic is not much explored, but is gaining popularity among researchers and scholars because of its wide applications by organizations these days. The literature has been categorized as depicted in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Literature study on crowdsourcing



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