Crowdsourcing, A guide to crowd innovation (https://info.chaordix.com/crowdsourcing-guide?utm_term=crowdsourcing&utm_campaign=Call%20%2B%20utm_source=adwords&utm_medium=ppc&hsa_gclid=kwd:2946488956&hsa_gclsrc=g&hsa_net=adwords&hsa_winner=3&hsa_ad=290726138123&hsa_acc=9396368280&hsa_kw=crowdsourcing&hsa_cam=909215198&gsid=J0KQjw3KzdBRDW-ARIsAJRTMTvZqMtdWCZF1b9j3CE8zHeTDOHYhBrT0-T7aoouWPeuVTm8aAq2EA&Lw_wcB).

References


The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines the term “crowdsourcing” as: “the practice of obtaining needed services, ideas or content by soliciting contributions from a large group of people and especially from the online community rather than from traditional employees or suppliers.” Some refer to crowdsourcing as the “new outsourcing.”

The process starts with presenting an open challenge. Then, volunteers (crowd) brainstorm and submit their solutions, and finally, the organization picks the best idea and usually compensates the selected inventor. The premise of the crowdsourcing concept is that “crowd,” a group of people who participate in a crowdsourcing activity, can come up with better answers to a problem than the smartest individual.” The crowd can be anyone with a computer, smartphone and Internet access. Although crowdsourcing has been used for centuries, the Internet has enabled organizations to crowdsource from people they may not have been able to reach before. Five principal features of the crowd are diversity, anonymity, large size, randomness and suitability.

The “crowdsourced task” is an activity that is outsourced to a crowd. Companies create sets of questions, referred to as “community briefs” or “call-for-entries,” which people can respond. The “crowdsourcing” is the organization or individual that seeks the problem-solving help from the crowd. The leading user of crowdsourcing is the customer goods industry, which includes many of the large brands in the food and beverage industry such as Nestle, Coca-Cola, Danone, and Unilever. Fair incentive, open call, ethical behavior and privacy provisions are the pillars of the practice.

Outsourcing can be done internally or externally. The internal crowdsourcing can be a reasonable alternative to leverage the expertise and knowledge of employees working at a large industrial firm. Employees may have better knowledge of the products, processes, operational parameters and services involved. Some companies can resort to their own networks and contacts that include experts in various fields.

Crowdsourcing has a number of benefits: 1) Receiving fresh and original content and easing the reliance on specified experts or consultants, 2) Expanding your brand, 3) Outsourcing some of the tasks that cannot be undertaken by computers and need to be completed by humans, 4) Potentially lowering research and development costs and 5) Speeding up the innovation process. One of the limitations of crowdsourcing is in general, companies do not build long-term relationships with participants or customers during this process. Since crowdsourcing is a voluntary pursuit where the possibility of payback for work is low (in most cases the idea must be selected to receive a compensation), the participants are likely to be specialized, knowledgeable and/or very interested in your company/brand. The data generated during crowdsourcing may overwhelm the food industry due to lack of internal resources i.e., time and technical experts to process the information. There is also risk of lack of crowd participation and loss of control. The crowd may not always have the organization’s best interests and make unpredictable moves. The
organization may lose control over the crowd behavior resulting in a project outcome that may not benefit, even hurt the organization.

The “crowdsourcing platform” is where the crowd and the crowdsourcer meet and the actual activity takes place. Technology must be employed to reach a large number of individuals and make the challenge truly open to a crowd with enough diversity of opinion, experience, and expertise and generate novel ideas. Organizations have used “Social Collaboration Tools” like chat apps and social media to put out open calls for ideas and usually keep further communication on that app or platform. On these platforms, users can be encouraged to submit ideas, or “like” the ones they support. However, there are usually no means available to encourage the crowd to keep coming back. Data processing tools for effectively aggregate, score and rank submitted ideas are not available on these platforms either.

Idea Management Tools go a step further from Social Collaboration Tools by initiating idea contests and then keeping the crowd engaged towards implementation. These platforms usually have more specialized workflows for ongoing evaluation and collaboration, even after ideas have closed. They help companies with aggregating, sorting and identifying feasible ideas. However, the crowd do not become an engaged community throughout the process.

Crowdsourcing Marketplaces connect parties to fulfill tasks, usually one with an idea, with a service or skill, to fulfill the idea to another. Crowdsourcing marketplaces connect people from one crowd with another crowd i.e., outsourcing a task or a call for ideas from a skilled labor pool, but one in which the personal identities of crowd participants are usually hidden and long-term bonds among the brand and crowd do not develop.

Market Research VoC (Voice of the Customer) platforms focus on customer experience and engage crowds to join the platform to create a community. They facilitate research activities such as surveys, which can then be used by organizations to improve their products and services. These platforms also can be referred to as customer intelligence platforms. They are customer-centric, encourage loyalty between the brand and the customer. Platforms like these aim to move beyond crowds and form communities, where organizations and the consumer. Platforms like these aim to move beyond crowds and form communities, where organizations and the consumer.

Co-creative Community Innovation Platforms are the highest level of the crowdsourcing technology spectrum. On these platforms, participants take part in a range of gamified and collaborative activities, including creative challenges, interactive tasks, discussions and other creative exercises to collect deeper customer insights, such as storytelling and photo associations and more. Co-creative community members are able to form social interactions within the platform and contribute to an organization they are already interested and invested. They feel valued while they are engaged throughout the innovation processes. Co-creative community platforms give organizations the ability to incorporate the latest digital trends to always stay connected with their community via mobile alerts to direct messaging and keep them engaged and involved for the long-term.

eYeka (https://en.eyeka.com/), Amazon Mechanic Turk (https://www.mturk.com/) and Tongal (https://tongal.com/) are frequently used online intermediary crowdsourcing and co-creation platforms that allow companies to announce and conduct campaigns through the Internet.

In a majority of the crowdsourcing campaigns, the winners are chosen by a jury. The platforms help screen the suggestions and provide information to the jury. In some cases, the crowd and public may comment and vote for a winner.

Three different approaches are frequently used in the food and beverage industry: crowdsourcing as ideation, customer engagement and for creation/production. The ideation campaigns ask for inspirational ideas and designs. Most common ideation campaigns are about marketing, but it also can be about sustainability issues or even brand image. For example, an open call can be posted online for ideas such as new products, formulation, flavor, color or packaging. For example, an open call can be posted online for ideas such as new products, formulation, flavor, color or packaging.

Crowdsourcing and co-creation platforms are similar to the ideation with the important difference in the purpose and end product. In this case, crowdsourcing and co-creation platforms are running, as the audience might differ depending on your needs. Incentivizing the crowd is also essential.

Manage, review and score ideas. Evaluate the process by asking the following questions: Are you getting quality ideas? Do you need to extend the challenge? Or should you end it earlier? Are any of the ideas ready for the next phase of development?

Implement ideas and crowdsourced products. Here are some questions to ask during the implementation stage: What is needed for your company to act on the ideas presented? Who, within the organization, needs to champion these ideas to move them forward? What do you need to implement the best idea, and do you have the resources to do so?

Reviewing performance. Some questions to ask at this stage: Did the challenge meet expectations? What could you have done differently? Were there any unexpected results, and can you follow that lead?

2) Clearly define the challenge by starting with a statement that provides parameters to encourage ideation. The statement should not be too broad and must provide constraints.

3) Define challenge phases. A challenge must have a beginning and an end. The beginning of a challenge can be where you set the stage for people to collabo-
rate. In the middle of the challenge, the community can be encouraged to vet the ideas submitted thus far, and with the guidance of moderators, help iden-
tify or rank the ideas. At the end, organizations can collaborate with the communities as to what comes next after ideas have been selected.

4) Add complementary activities. Engage the commu-

nity and keep them involved in the process. Quizzes, polls, short surveys and related discussion topics are good activities.

5) Promote the challenge and recruit the crowd. Keep in mind, although the crowd may already be comprised of stakeholders or fans, you may have to recruit a subset of this crowd for the challenge you are running, as the audience might differ depending on your needs. Incentivizing the crowd is also essential.

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