
Editorial

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The central tenet of the dominant paradigm in marketing is the imperative to understand customer's needs and expectations in order to deliver a product or a service which fulfil those wants. However, academics and practitioners have known for a long time that this is something easier to say than to practice. There are many reasons for that. Among them is the difficulty to get a good understanding of customers' expectations through market surveys due to the limitations of sampling, the bias in the questionnaires or in the answers from the respondents.

Another issue is the priority given to other functions in many companies where R&D, manufacturing or finance department may lead the business priorities without taking into account the customers expectations. In the field of technology products and services, another well-known difficulty is the lack of ability from customers to figure out the value of radical innovations which are difficult to understand.

However, things have changed in the recent years with the raise of the internet and its massive adoption by consumers, especially with the development of interactive websites, the blossoming of social networks and the explosion of platform applications for smartphones connecting directly to the internet.

Thus, the marketing approach for innovative technology solutions has progressed from the 'lead users' idea-generation' to 'value co-creation' to 'open innovation' and 'crowd-sourcing'.

This special issue with ISPIM offers a good opportunity to consider the latest academic development about how companies are finding new ways to listen to their

customers and to integrate them in the design of innovative solutions which are offering them a new and better value.

The first paper entitled ‘Reconsidering the role of brainstorming in the marketing of technology-driven innovation’ revisits the role of brainstorming as a source of ideas for technology driven companies. Most specifically, it considers a user-centric approach of brainstorming based on the integration of lead users’ inputs; it differs from the traditional company-centric brainstorming which relies on the contributions from researchers or marketers only. The article details a pilot project for designing mobile and internet products and applications which are derived from this approach. Then it studies whether such an approach is helpful in maximising the success rate of technology innovation as well as the potential for market launch.

The second paper moves us from brainstorming to the *practices for efficient customer collaboration in innovation*. It provides an organisational perspective about the integration of industrial customers in the innovation process of business-to-business solutions, based on a longitudinal case study of a software company. The paper makes an interesting distinction between internal and external customers. It analyses the reasons why the communication with those two different categories of customers should be integrated in innovation practices at all the levels of the system development organisation. It also investigates the practical ways to implement such a recommendation, in particular through social networks.

The third paper also focuses on the collaboration with the customers in the innovation development of software applications but in another industry. It scrutinises the *motivational profiles of the iPhone and android developers*. Indeed, with the increasing development of the smartphones, these value-added applications are influencing the eco-system for mobile services. The article analyses the characteristics and the motivations of those application developers as well as their rationale for choosing a given application development platform between Android or Apple iPhone. The research identifies four main categories of developers. This typology may be of interest to companies wishing to entice a given category of developers for creating new kind of application based on their operating system. For academics, the paper presents original data related to a relatively new phenomenon that is anticipated to grow extremely quickly in the near future.

The fourth paper presents another vision of this mobile application business as it comes with an industry perspective. It evaluates *the dynamism of the two-sided application store market* which offers lucrative opportunity for the telecommunication operators but also third parties and new entrants. The article details the specificity of this business described as a ‘two-sided industry’ because those application platforms are bringing together two groups of customers, the users but also the advertisers, and two groups of providers, the telecommunication operators and the application software developers. The article makes a sound analysis of the competitive landscape. It demonstrates that standardisation is to become a major issue but it also shows that currently operators are ill prepared to this evolution as the successful management of application store business requires a different set of organisational capabilities. The paper concludes about the main issues regarding the status of the entry barriers to this promising sector and the possible positioning of the new entrants.

The fifth paper, ‘Consumer driven innovation in website design: structured experimentation in landing page optimisation’, considers the importance of the collaboration with customers in software development from a business-to-consumers

viewpoint. It explores how the design of new websites can be optimised by integrating the feed-back and suggestions of the end users at the early stage of the development. More specifically, it introduces an advanced form of landing page optimisation. The research tests a large number of experimentally designed web pages prototypes with consumers and finds the optimal solutions on an aggregated, segmented and individual basis. The main conclusions are that a structured experimentation allows for more reliable detection of consumer preferences in web page design and that consequently consumer research should be a central part in planning an innovation process to optimise website experiences.

In a similar business-to-consumer perspective, the last paper studies the use of *public web-based idea portals* in order to get new ideas from consumers. The article makes an appraisal of these crowdsourcing tools as those portals are getting increasingly popular since the late '90s. Interestingly, some of them are offering their service to other companies and do turn out as being additional market research tools.

The article provides a robust typology of those new websites. It underlines the weaknesses of some of them, but it identifies also a significant number of strong 'idea portals' which offers already interesting results and promising mediation approaches. The article concludes with a listing of the tentative criteria for companies which want to select the adequate website in order to get original and interesting idea for new products or services.

This special issue is the first collaboration of the *IJTMkt* with the International Society for Professional Innovation Management (ISPIM), a worldwide network of innovation management professionals from research, industry and intermediary organisations. ISPIM's goals are to create a worldwide network of excellence in the field of innovation management, to enhance collaboration between its members and to be at the forefront of research on innovation. The first versions of the papers in this special issue were originally presented at the XXI ISPIM Conference at Bilbao, Spain in 2010. For this publication in the *IJTMkt*, all papers were revised, based on a double-blind review process.

Enjoy your reading and do not hesitate to send us your comments as well as your next academic paper about the marketing of technology based solutions – we are looking forward to it.