Crowdsourcing- Encourage It Out

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CrowdSourcing- Encourage It Out

Exploring the different aspects of Crowdsourcing

A short series discussing Crowdsourcing

That sudden surge within the crowd

Posted on

Have you ever been caught up in a sudden surge within a crowd, when it all suddenly moves, temporarily sweeping you off your feet, making the pulse race a little more until you actually begin to enjoy the sensation?

It brings out a sudden rush of emotions. It can be intense, it moves you in a particular direction, often you are struggling to regain control, and everything around you heightens in your awareness. You love it or you hate it.

Either way it gives a real rush.

Imagine harnessing all this sudden energy in different ways. Crowdsourcing often taps into these rushes of energy, insights and excitement The goal here is to move the crowd towards a new direction in their collective thinking to solve a problem.

To get a diverse group of individuals caught up, you need to really give them something they need to go too and want to participate in. The getting caught up in a football match, or simply letting yourself completely go at a concert, can be as nearly as emotional for you as for the performers.

Crowdsourcing is going one better

Yet in crowdsourcing you simply can go one better, you are the one performing, you are participating and delivering your ideas, thoughts, solutions. Others are reacting, responding, picking up on this surge of energy and collectively you begin to build something that answers a specific challenge. It actually becomes an even better rush.

Crowdsourcing today is being used across many challenges that are tackling social issues, global concerns, individual community or organizational questions that need "our" opinion and engagement. The concern for me is as we have this greater access to technology, crowdsourcing is spawning everywhere. How do you break through and attract the crowd?

Knowing what we are getting into becomes critical to participate

Designing the challenge becomes critical. To appeal we need to know what we are moving towards to feel we can freely take part. This is becoming much harder work as crowdsourcing reaches across so much and often is seeking out the opinion of those that are harder to reach. It has to separate itself out, *my standing out from the crowd*, by its needed 'litmus test' of being a crowd-worthy distinctive and simple idea that offers a concept that captures our imagination and the wish to participate.

We need it to always know if it is crowd-worthy

These crowd-worthy challenges trigger us into action. We just simply want to take part, to contribute. The fun begins for the organizers. They really need to offer a compelling set of reasons not just for us to participate initially but find the multiple ways to hook us in to continue to help in building from all the collective efforts. They need to provide a robust platform that responds to this sudden rush of energy but also find ways to keep it generating and moving along, in contributions and activity spiraling up the engagements, exchanges and growing involvement and interest.

It often does need a really significant thinking through if you want to really delve into a real challenge; it can equally be a challenge that is simply 'put out there' to gather and illicit 'quick' opinions. There is our need to understand "the shades of crowd separation" on who it might attract and what can be expected as the response and then be quick enough to adapt if it draws in suddenly really different participants.

Crowdsourcing is straddling so much today.

We need to tackle globalization issues, we need to come together to solve problems that impact lives, we worry over security, we seek to customize many things, we seek alternatives, we are tackling convergence in different ways, we are seeking out the freeing of our time far more than in the past.

Equally crowdsourcing is probing the experience economy, wanting to understand authenticity, explore privacy matters, pushing to form new connections, curate and filter lots of different stuff, much of what we are doing is blurring and crowdsourcing is attempting to pick this apart to help.

So where is crowdsourcing heading?

There are inherent risks in 'casting a wide net' as much can slip through the netting if you are chasing the big fish, you miss often the tastiest and sort after. Challenges are emerging in so many different ways and where you go and 'fish' will often determine the catch.

The question is increasingly becoming who do we use as crowd providers to help us in our challenges? The risk of over-hype, of contributor fatigue is partly driving the industry offering 'crowd solutions' so spend time getting to understand what is being offered to see that it delivers on your crowd sourcing needs. Do remember you need to have a good 'going in plan' even if these change once you talk with the specialists in this field.

These specialists are the ones that can separate rhetoric, provide a robust understanding of all the needs, from building an increasing "governance of understanding" They work constantly on rules, language, technology, outreach, listening, content provision and focus intent. They provide a robust platform and good analytical capability to be a partner of choice, offering the venue the crowd wants to 'surge' towards.

That is yet again, another rush to stand out in a crowd, to be at the front in the ability to provide a comprehensive package and knowledge, to be able to 'marshal' the event, to give the best possible experience for the crowd to participate and contribute .

There are some interesting times for all those wanting to be in the crowd or organizing the events, making it a dedicated time and a great experience.

Evaluating Crowdsourcing – offering a bright future?

Posted on August 1, 2016 by paul4innovating

Crowdsourcing has been growing in interest for some time to change our thinking in innovation discovery. It can hold a key for us to help solve vexing questions, real challenges, and connect different voices that builds into a community that can combine and open up the fields of opportunity for new solutions.

Crowdsourcing does have both the potential to point towards disrupting possibilities, extends the concept of open innovation into a wider source of participation from a diverse community not possible to reach by other means as effectively. It can simply connect a 'crowd' of people to a common purpose. All in all, if applied carefully it can provide you with a leading edge of innovation knowledge and insight.

I wanted to step back a little and take a more measured look at crowdsourcing over three posts. This is part one.

Crowdsourcing must be a powerful concept then?

Potentially the answer is yes, yet it does come with many "buts" that need the understanding to extract the value of the crowd and that can become complicated. There are a growing number of experts or specialised resources that can 'host' your crowd challenge but you need to be clear on what you are attempting and be reassured those that you work with do have the expertise they claim.

According to different sources the 'crowd economy' has been growing 50 to 70% per year in the last two years but admittedly from a low base. Will it continue to grow at these rates or even more? I believe the chances are more, yet this will be determined by those that understand and learn the practices, pitfalls and levers to this, and that is going to be decided by organizations determined to put in the time and dedicated resources into learning, so they can translate the "emerging practices" into their practices that provide value, impact and returns.

Crowdsourcing does have a sound potential to compliment or simply become your principal source of turning concepts and challenges into solid ideas that do have an impact. It certainly has its place alongside the reliance on simply internally generated ideas but crowdsourcing needs to be well understood and have its own process to work through.

Is the crowd economy the way of the future?

Is it faster, potentially lower costs than the alternatives of discovery but can sometimes generate overwhelming data. The insights or real nuggets need teasing out and determining.

What do you gain that is additional to what you are currently doing?

The top line metrics to begin thinking this through lie in determining the impact you are looking for, understanding the reach potential and different engagement possibilities, determine and ensure there is a level of satisfaction to all those that participate, clarify the cost of any such implementation / initiative in setting up, learning and translating into commercial outcomes and getting a good sense of your ability to deliver on all those great new ideas in resources, time and cost.

Every conversation, challenge, event and community building is likely to be different and that lack of the ability to have a repeating process will certainly drive the cost of origination a lot higher. That needs understanding, and convincing those above that the setup and origination costs for each crowdsourcing challenge or project are going to contain a fair amount of the costing. We will go into that in a future post covering different challenges today.

Here is a definition of crowdsourcing that does seem right to me.

I like this extract from the New York Times:

"*Crowdsourcing is the practice of engaging a 'crowd' or group for a common goal- often innovation, problem-solving or efficiency. Crowdsourcing can take place on many different levels and across various industries (social and government). Thanks to our growing connectivity, it is now easier than ever for individuals to collectively contribute- whether with ideas, time, expertise or funds- to a project or cause. This collective mobilisation is crowdsourcing*"

They go on to say:

"*This phenomenon can provide organisations with access to new ideas and solutions, deeper consumer engagement, opportunities for co-creation, optimisation of tasks, and reduced costs. The internet and social media have brought organisations closer to stakeholders, laying the groundwork for new ways of collaborating and creating value together like never before. The approach is being embraced:*

"*Crowds are a hit. Millions of people, connected by the internet, are contributing ideas and information to projects big and small. Crowdsourcing, as it is called, is helping to solve tricky*

problems and providing localised information. And with the right knowledge, contributing to the crowd- and using its wisdom- is easier than ever"

So where are you on the crowd continuum? Is it to simply make money, to produce better results or help create a better world or are you bravely attempting all three?

What are the top objectives for launching a crowd venture?

I've looked at a fair number of these top objectives but CrowdsourcingWeek.com offers these six.

1) Crowdsourcing solves problems from non-traditional sources,

2) it funds new ideas and businesses,

3) identifies crowd-based insights to surface new perspectives,

4) delivers awareness, publicity and buzz value,

5) it can launch a product / service / idea or news and finally

6) it can create breakthrough innovation.

So where is this crowdsourcing movement heading?

Again there are plenty of thoughts and suggestions. Firstly we have the bigger "meta" trends or present phenomena driving much of our thinking.

The constant rise of social networks and the media, the equal rise of the entrepreneurial, startup culture is feeding this need for lower cost, but extracting greater insights. The reduction in mass marketing effectiveness, a tightening up of capital and limited resources drives even more the efficiencies expected from our organizations and crowdsourcing makes up with gaining more abilities for agility, understanding and gaining evidence of shifts that are taking place faster than traditional research techniques can provide as trends important to your specific issues you need solutions for.

Equally, the authenticity, transparency, trust and credibility are all changing. There is a rise of the independent voice, free agents, opinion shapers, independent parties who can now greatly influence outcomes than ever before. Users are generating more content and insights that are affecting enterprises and how what and why products, service and often the business model has to be constantly checked, refreshed and aligned. Lastly, here you have a generation 'thing' where the Gen Y seem to be significantly different than past generations and that needs greater understanding to account for.

We are seeing increasing calls for greater speed, increased customization, engagement, authenticity, the different view on value, functionality. The monetization needs greater understanding, security and vested interests need greater collaboration and increased

connections. It is a global, connected, converging world that needs a constant attention to curation, filtering and context relating than ever.

We need to understand and attempt to manage in this rapidly changing environment.

Crowdsourcing is emerging and still has controversial emotions and questions

In this opening post on establishing a top-level clarity on crowdsourcing, I'd like to offer these questions we need to raise, then explore and find answers too. In the second part of this post, we'll see what answers we have, or just admit they still out there need solutions or open to more discussion.

These are:

1. There needs to be a more central source of reference around crowdsourcing. Until we achieve this it will remain fragmented and silo's of knowledge, experience and leading practice remains buried from the majority and the individual learning curve, and will prevent crowdsourcing to become mainstream.
2. There are still very few people inside organisations who really understand all the differences, value and danger points on how crowd collaborations really work.
3. Those within the developing world are likely to embrace crowdsourcing faster than the developed world as they can sense a real competitive advantage.
4. We will need to find and establish better ways to manage and curate crowd-based efforts than we have available to us now. Will these be through specialised organisations or developed on a backbone of internal practices and experience tapping into a cloud-based set of solutions you "grab and string" together to meet specific challenges?
5. Will larger companies accelerate their investments in the crowd economy on growing recognition of its valuable part to play in growth and innovation, or will they remain laggards to smaller companies better positioned to extract and invest in crowd techniques, as they tap into these low-cost solutions to manage understanding and engagement on a global scale, one that is unable to be achieved without the IoT and low cost of technology?

In the next post, we will explore a host of current issues

We need to draw out numerous concerns, constraints, obstacles, and build the case towards embracing crowdsourcing in more significant ways. We will look at current concerns, obstacles, and challenges, as well as lay out this thinking-through process, describe valuable attributes and the varied choices we need to consider.

So Are You Thinking Crowdsourcing?

Posted on August 5, 2016 by paul4innovating

image source: http://www.creatorbase.com

Crowdsourcing does have a real potential in my mind but does seem to have some formidable issues to work through, to be well understood and managed.

Partnering with experts in this field will help overcome many of these barriers or at least have reassuring suggestions for resolving them. Let's take a look at some of these here in this post.

Certainly, I think over time we will learn what works for us and also what becomes leading practice, so we can become a lot clearer on crowdsourcing position and value to us, within our context, terms and circumstances.

That is why it will be *really hard* to cite 'best practice' as each crowdsourcing challenge will need different inputs and will yield very different outcomes for each unique challenge or problem raised.

Continuing with my exploring crowdsourcing.

Part one is **here.** Within this second post, I want to offer some different thoughts to work through around the issues and concerns that came out in my researching the subject. There is a part three coming out in a few days to finish this mini-series off.

Let's start here by raising some of the biggest concerns you might have over crowdsourcing?

- Will crowdsourcing provide predictable outcomes? No, everything you do to make for a good result still might not eventually deliver on this for all the preparation work you put in. You are literally in the hands of the 'crowd' and how they take to it or not.
- The management time to oversee crowd efforts will seemingly seem excessive at times but then you strike "pay dirt" and then suddenly it all seems worthwhile. Getting this clear in its resource needs and establishing the expectations needs working on, so you minimise pushback

- You may seem to get great answers but these might only come from a narrow representation of the population and they can miscue your results, if not spotted. Finding a way to counter this needs thinking through.
- The reactions between those placing the challenge and the crowd can turn from friendly to hostile if the management of the flow and continued acknowledgement and recognition of the contributions are not managed thoughtfully and given a constant 'reality check' back to the challenge to keep it always on scope, or adjusted to reflect the new thinking.
- Sometimes a crowdsourcing problem is hijacked by a party with a cause, or it becomes more of a competition between selected individuals that influence and shape the debate. You need to intervene and sometimes be firm in imaginative ways to allow other voices to be heard and not dampened down.
- The ability to build a greater collaboration gets 'beaten' back by these strongly held views that overshadow the other voices you are wanting here. Seek out all possible views, encourage diversity.
- How do you deal with potential plagiarism, intellectual property rights or those deliberately seeking funds or engagement for their means? Is there an opportunity for scandal or a potential for fraud? Be alert to these and have some of your own experts readily on hand to refer these and clarify. This is a very tricky area to handle.

You at least do need some awareness of these traps and have some part answer too in preparation, as they can come at you fast and furious or in stealth mode that catches you unaware.

Each of these mentioned above can be potential pitfalls that might put many off but this is a significant part of why partnering with established crowdsourcing platforms can help avoid these or resolve them.

Selecting good partners to help you with managing crowdsourcing becomes important

Just simply selecting a partner to help you in hosting, assisting and providing different services can be daunting but don't let that put you off. You can research the choices fairly well, prior any engagement with a little researching.

With the good partners, you certainly can separate their rhetoric from their strengths by judging how they are building an increasing "governance of understanding". They are working constantly on rules, language, technology, outreach, listening, content provision and focus intent, through a robust platform and analytical ability.

Those partners are emerging stronger as crowdsourcing grows to be a partner of choice, the venue the crowd wants to 'surge' towards as they sense and feel the platform helps them and the contracting parties genuinely wanting to extract the best out of the crowd by addressing the pitfalls and showing the ways they have resolved these in their emerging experiences and practices.

How are you thinking through a crowdsourcing initiative?

There is a host of issues to think through. Some of these are real challenges but you need some 'reasonable' semblance of understanding around these often 'knotty' issues:

- **Resource Focus** – not being able to align resources, culture and systems to drive interest.
- **Technology** – not having the right platform to host the activity or the bandwidth, to handle the flows both in and then back out then lacking a clear analytical capability to manage and build from this as a set of data insights.
- **Listening** – not listening enough, not paying consistent attention but staying tuned-out and lacking the ability to respond, and build quickly enough on a promising idea to draw out more contributions from the community.
- **Content** – not providing frequent and interesting content to build, feed off and interact with. Not clarifying or framing enough at the beginning or along the way.
- **Constrained Outreach** – not broad enough, constrained in resources, feedback or reaction so it quickly 'dies' as it is not 'dynamic' enough to gain the attention and attract a representative crowd so the result delivers poor value back.
- **Lacking a crowdsourcing culture** – without dedicated passion within the group that is there driving the effort, or lacking the knowledge to fuel and build from incoming knowledge 'just enough' to build and connect this further stops the build. A climate of trust comes from this dedication and empowerment, and openly engaging within communities.
- **Lacking community management** – which has to span initla resourcing, hosting, engagement, dialogues, responding to conversations at different peak and lull periods requires a strong resource commitment plan.
- **Rules and Governance that are not strong enough** in their guidelines for all within the community to understand where the lines are and might become crossed. Or having experience in handling fast flowing legal, regulatory and management oversight issues, or simply knowing when to quickly refer these to those that can decide.
- **A lack of comprehensive tools** – to provide all the necessary features to attract, tap into depth and enable customer engagement and feeling of contributions being read, and actively worked upon.

Then you have the internal ones to think through

How are you going to attract in the broader management understanding within your organisation in accepting this activity to achieve a greater engagement through crowdsourcing techniques to tap into the wisdom that lies within?

For instance, before you mount any internal crowdsourcing you need to have thought through different issues to have some good answers to some of the potential pitfalls or of barriers that might be raised on crowdsourcing:

- Not being able to internalize the benefits and bring those inside the organisation to yield a tangible 'commercial' or problem solved, the ideas remain just simply ideas.
- The challenge although intellectually interesting, lacks the strategic focus that ties this to solving the business or social need specifically.
- The lack of incentives both to those participating and in rewarding for the results 'kills' the end result.
- Poor measurements that were unable to track, monitor and access success as the return on the investment limit any momentum going forward.
- In all your determination to structure the crowd activity, you can overlook that important part of a sense of identity. You fail to present your business in a real, human, personable and trustworthy way and leave it too vague and open enough, to not 'draw-in' as you would have liked.

Reading these I am sure it seems a daunting list but getting some sense or feeling towards each of these allows for a stronger result.

Then, we have the internal obstacles to overcome or address

They include:

1. Will the organisation adopt crowdsourcing as valuable to have? What silo's of 'threat' need addressing?
2. Will there really be enough staff to manage this and all the demands placed on them to be engaged, open and responsive to those outside contributing in?
3. The senior managers that worry over a possible set of perceived risks, moving reluctantly from a status quo or a sense of losing control. How do you address these real concerns?
4. Suddenly having challenges or problems moving from the inside to the outside has to be managed, will the company culture accept this desire to be open enough on issues, challenges or problems it wants to find solutions to without 'tipping its hat' to the competition?
5. A sudden flow of ideas coming in will mean more legal, regulatory and management engagement than normal as the crowd may expect a fast reaction, and they won't recognise the internal hurdles or considerations involved. This becomes part of crowd management.
6. The sudden availability of technical skills or expertise, ready for a good honest dialogue often puts those experts on the spot, this needs handling carefully.
7. Many crowdsourcing initiatives fail, you need to internally gain acceptance that this can happen and certainly will. You need to condition acceptance if they appreciate the real potential of the "raw" value potential. It is like VC investing, one big win dwarfs the losses of many promising ideas that did not make it but you needed seeding to try.

Launching a crowd initiative can have significant 'added' benefits

With all the obstacles, barriers and issues presented here, it might make you wonder if crowdsourcing is worth the effort. Clearly, crowdsourcing is not for everyone. Diving straight in might seem a great idea but the gradual learning approach by building scale and size in the challenge or problem to solve is a preferred route in my opinion.

Crowdsourcing does seem to have a potential for delivering a different viewpoint on solving challenges, issues and complex problems but does have some formidable issues to be well thought through.

I hope this 'list of lists' helps prompt you to become aware, to think about and attempt to work through these so you are in good shape to get real value out of your crowdsourcing engagements that all can value, extract something and appreciate.

A final post on crowdsourcing is next up in a few day's time. Part one is here "Evaluating crowdsourcing – offering a bright future"

The Growing Value in that Crowd- Encourage it Out.

Posted on by paul4innovating

The use of crowdsourcing: the goal for me, is to engage and move the crowd towards a new direction, by encouraging out individual thinking and discovery, searching for combining these contributions; ones that lead to novel, new answers that move a challenge forward into a solution, one that has improved value over the existing.

The community is encouraged to form, lead and build, taking ideas and thinking onto discovery journeys, seeking out and building on each other's contributions.

The individual building blocks (like Lego) connect into a collective whole, that piece together, progressively being combined, to solve a problem, to frame something that leads to an answer of meeting the challenge initially set up.

The overriding need is to release the forces within the crowd, by seeking out and gaining their engagement and connection as something 'they' believe they can contribute into; as here lies the discovery of many, combining and 'feeding off' of each other, to change the existing into the preferred.

This is the third post on crowdsourcing that might offer some general background statements. Part one is **here** and part two is **here.**

Crowdsourcing can be powerful if harnessed well.

After a fairly detailed exploratory working through crowdsourcing in this mini-series, I wanted to offer my 'take', to help our thinking though in formulating clearer positions in this, to see its increasing value as contributing into an innovation management system.

Crowdsourcing does offer increasing value as a contributor into our innovation management system. It can open up a real rich potential of tapping into diverse opinions that were difficult to reach in the past. Yet it does, from my perspective, need thoughtfully working through in its application and the expected end results, as each will challenge the initial assumptions and that is exactly what you will be looking for, challenging the accepted knowns and revealing the many unknowns.

Crowdsourcing can become potentially part of your heavy-armoury for innovation discovery, a rich place to seek out better innovation, often radical solutions.

In what ways does Crowdsourcing help us?

Crowdsourcing is allowing diverse communities to come together.

Crowdsourcing is allowing broader groups of people to come together, to gather around a challenge or problem and through the collective diversity of insights, experience or suggestions, offer solutions Without this collective wisdom it often would not be as possible to discover or piece together radically different answer or crack complex problems or determine pathways that would have remained undiscovered without this broad range of expertise and diversity of knowledge available through the use of our connected webs.

Today we are seeing a significant movement in crowdsourcing by the fact that many communities are forming through finding the independent voice, by collectively working on issues that would not have been as possible without these crowdsourcing platforms. Today there is a growing participation happening on-line, forming around challenges, ideas, projects, non-profits, people and important social and business issues.

They are truly organic, feeding off all the contributions.

The use of crowdsourcing is growing as a vital part of discovering innovation that can transform through the tapping into a community and leverage their combined thinking, feeding off and building from each other.

The potential for discovering something radically different, solving a complex problem or simply collecting a rich array of potential innovation solutions can be discovered using crowdsourcing. It offers an exciting future, managed well.

The great thing is you (each of us participating) are the ones performing, participating and delivering your ideas, thoughts, solutions into a community of others wanting to build from this diverse thinking to contribute to the challenge offered. You are making a contribution that can potentially build into something radically different or determine a new path to explore. Participation and contribution become highly valued.

Others then begin to react to your contribution, they start reacting, responding, picking up on this surge of creative energy. Collectively you combine to begin to build something that answers a specific problem. It lets all of us in, to participate and contribute.

Getting to this point needs a lot of organising to set the scene, to provide the organisers with the connections, to see the possibilities, to allow ideas and suggestions to simply 'flow' and build.

Knowing what we are getting into becomes critical to want to jump in and take part

Designing the challenge becomes critical. We need to always know or believe it is crowd-worthy. It is these crowd-worthy challenges which trigger us into action.

It needs a significant thinking through if you want to delve into a real challenge; it can equally be a challenge that is simply one to 'put out there' to gather and illicit 'quick' opinions. Much of what we are doing is blurring and crowdsourcing is attempting to pick this apart to help.

Crowdsourcing comes in multiple guises

It took me some time to make these connections but these are all seeking out a digital crowd engagement. Crowdsourcing can be under social fundraising, collaborative consumption, customer co-creation, peer-to-peer economy, collective intelligence, open innovation and crowdfunding to name some, not all. They all are working within the crowd economy.

Dealing in the Crowd has become so fragmented, is this healthy or is it a present constraint?

The urgent need is to try to bring some organisation into the variables offered under the broad crowd umbrella. It can be a real labyrinth of working out what you are trying to achieve, knowing where to go to mount your crowdsourcing challenge and who to work with to believe you have the 'best' and most experienced platform that can manage it. There is so many 'crowd' platforms set around tasks, content, innovation, funding, learning, testing, media exploration, cause-related, design, competitions, services, property, lending / loans, citizen engagement and travel.

There is a **directory of crowdsourcing** that becomes an essential 'go to' place early on to get your bearings on what is out there and can help shape your thinking and needs. It seems like there are new **crowdfunding** platforms launching literally every day, so establishing that your choice does have the 'right' track record, has been around long enough to build traction and a good reputation, becomes a major task in itself. Compare and contrast and read the case histories.

Ones that spring out for me as leading the 'crowd pack' are Kickstarter, Rockethub, Patreon, Peerbackers, Indiegogo, Gofundme as well as Crowdcast, Quirky, Threadless and Mob4Hire.

Also, let us not forget **Airbnb** operates in this crowd economy. It is a very crowded (excuse the pun) and difficult place to start and figure out who to partner with. Finding the right partner to crowdsource with can clearly make or break any initiative so this validating needs to be undertaken well.

For me, Crowdsourcing can be beneficial in the following ways:

1. It can deliver an awareness and buzz that provides positive publicity and value to you.
2. It can qualify and test emerging ideas and the thinking through early enough to gain significant improvements or recognition that they lack scale appeal.
3. It can simply be a primary source of engagement with the public and stakeholders and influencers to receive invaluable feedback and confidence of message, direction, contribution and value.

4. It 'puts out there' crowd-based challenges that bring to the surface fresh insights and raises alternatives to adopting and adapting within your innovation activity.
5. It can 'solve' problems from those normal non-traditional sources that it would be hard to reach and engage without a higher level of commitment.
6. You can keep crowdsourcing specifically for worthy causes that build social responsibility identification and contribution.
7. Make it a core part of your innovation where you are seeking out breakthrough new innovations that can radically challenge and alter existing thinking.
8. You can use it for launching and evaluating a product / service / idea or news-worthy event.
9. It can help drive overall spend efficiencies and saving costs through obtaining feedback and suggestions on improvements of service and seeking out comparable approaches the crowd is more likely to be aware of.
10. It allows participates to engage, seek dialogue and have conversations that build a sense of identity and common purpose.

Crowdsourcing is straddling so much today but it can offer a really broad potential for 'finding' innovation

It needs recognition of the real potential in crowdsourcing, when structured and formed well can be highly valuable and part of our learning journey to solving problems and challenges that might not be solved by internal means alone.

The overcoming of both risk and depth of understanding of what you are trying to achieve in its use is hard work to work through. So is the art of engagement with the crowd.

The way forward: building, testing, probing, gaining experience and community understanding

I clearly would recommend you can build from small pilots towards larger scale, allowing those around to learn, value and appreciate the contribution that crowdsourcing can give us as a rich source of fresh ideas from broad or targeted communities, not easily obtained by any other means.

In Summary

"Crowdsourcing is probing the experience economy, wanting to understand authenticity, explore individual views, pushing to form new connections, curate and filter lots of different stuff. Much of what we are doing is blurring and crowdsourcing is attempting to pick this apart to help".

Each crowd occasion will be different, that is its value, in attracting a highly diverse, hard to reach diversity to be drawn out of different communities, that needs encouraging in ways to contribute, sensing their voices are wanting to be heard and then being valued.

This tapping in and building on the diversity of thinking gives huge potential to solving so many different issues and challenges, for those willing to put in the organising commitment and who want to seek out the hidden value that lies within the crowd, in break-through ways.

About Paul Hobcraft

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I simply enjoy innovation. I got 'hooked' fifteen years ago and since then have increasingly focused on innovation until it is 100% of my business thinking and activities today.

I research across innovation, looking to develop novel innovation solutions and frameworks where appropriate. I provide possible answers to many issues associated with innovation with a range of solutions that underpin my advisory, coaching and consulting work at www.agilityinnovation.com .

The aim is to support individuals, teams and organisations, in their innovation activity, applying what I have learnt to further develop core innovation understanding, so clients can achieve positive and sustaining results from their innovating activities.

For me, ***innovation needs to enter the DNA of our organisations*** and our own individual make-up. In my writing, I try to offer a range of thoughts on different aspects of innovation to help each of us to understand this subject better.

Innovation as a source for our growth fascinates me.

As for my personal journey

How I got to this point I can only say it has been varied, challenging but full of fun and learning. This has taken me to live and work in Saudi Arabia, Kenya, Malaysia, Switzerland, the Netherlands, USA, Hong Kong, Australia, and recently twelve years in Singapore. Today, I live in Switzerland, my adopted home.

I've worked in a number of senior positions within global corporations, in global, regional, country and functional levels tackling different challenges that have included start-ups. turn-rounds and significant re-engineering and operational design or automation across a global network.

The work has been varied, the challenges diverse coming from starting up different businesses in emerging markets, turning difficult ones around in challenging economic and market conditions more than once, re-engineering a global organization over a three year period choosing to live permanently out of a suitcase (or two) for months at a time in each

of the major global locations as the best way to deliver the changes, and finally simply accelerating companies, getting them through to critical mass points, for achieving their positive contributing footprint, within the world.

In 2000 I went into my own business of consulting and advisory work, firstly based in Asia and then in recent years, based in Switzerland

After I moved to Ticino in Switzerland, from Singapore I am spending different times between the two regions, although Europe holds an increasingly more central role. All the time my focus is on innovation and many of the related topics that move it increasingly towards a core within organisations. Innovation understanding does 'simply span' globally and I have been fortunate on building on the foundations initially laid down in Asia and advanced while in Europe through an ever-expanding network of collaborators, knowledge and insights.

My present focus is spent building this innovation practice, providing advice on building the right capabilities and capacities, into organisations or individuals wanting to advance on what they have already in place; to improve, accelerate and develop their innovation competencies and understandings of the 'fit' of innovation.

Paul Hobcraft has been voted into the top innovation bloggers over a consistent period from 2012 on a leading Global Innovation Community- Innovation Excellence- ,

"These accolades are highly appreciated and valued- they inspire me to keep innovating in my own unique way and style. These recognitions help me believe I can contribute to the wider innovation community we are all part of"

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