OPEN SERVICE INNOVATION AND CO-CREATING THE VALUE PROPOSITION IN ONLINE COMMUNITY BASED IDEA CONTESTS

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ABSTRACT

Models of open innovation facilitated by collaborative social technologies have greatly helped cooperation between service organizations and customers in relation to service innovation. Online community based idea contests enable service organizations to motivate external contributors to co-create value propositions through community-based rituals, practices, and behaviors. The purpose of this paper is to examine the emergent motivations, behaviors, and practices of service organizations and participants who co-create value propositions in online community based idea contests in order to understand how participants contribute in the ideation and concept developments phases of open service innovation. We present and discuss the findings of a multiple case study comprising a detailed netnographic analysis of over 3,000 participants in three online community based idea contests hosted by three global automotive service providers. Participant behavior was determined by the overlapping roles adopted by participants, their intrinsic and extrinsic, competitive and collaborative motivations, and the community relationships that developed in the community based contests studied. The findings also revealed participants’ value-creating practices were influenced by community norms and values. We conclude with a presentation of six propositions relating to open service innovation and the co-creation of value propositions in online community based idea contests, a discussion of the implications for service practitioners and some suggestions for future research in this interesting field.

Keywords: open service innovation, community based idea competitions, value proposition, user driven innovation, collective value co-creation
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INTRODUCTION

All organizations today can be described as service organizations which are involved in service-for-service exchanges (c.f. Vargo and Lusch 2008a; Vargo and Lusch 2008b; Vargo, Maglio and Akaka 2008). A hypercompetitive market environment has forced organizations to innovate at a faster rate in order to ensure that customers’ increasing demands are met (Khurana and Rosenthal 1997; Von Hippel and Katz 2002). In this context, Chesbrough (2003; 2011) recommends that service organizations migrate from a “closed service innovation” approach to an “open service innovation” approach in order to co-create value propositions\(^1\) with customers. While “closed” innovation approaches are internally focused and limited by the resources available within the firm, open service innovation seeks to identify, access, assimilate, and leverage the abundant knowledge and resources that exist beyond the boundaries of the firm in order to co-create value with external innovators (Chesbrough 2003, 2011; Teece 2007; Neyer et al. 2009).

Open business models facilitated by collaborative social technologies have greatly facilitated cooperation between service organizations and current and prospective customers in relation to open service innovation, resulting in vibrant online user innovation communities such as Dell’s Ideastorm, IBM’s Innovation Jam, Innocentive, Nine Sigma and Threadless. While the diverse benefits of such online user innovation communities have been

\(^1\) In this paper, we use the term value proposition in the context used by Vargo and Lusch (2008). It is typically the role of firms (but not always) to propose value propositions in service systems or markets. Customers can co-create value propositions with organizations when they collaborate with service organizations at any stage or part of the service innovation or new service development process. The co-creation of value propositions also incorporates the co-production of such propositions but is not merely restricted to co-production activities.
well documented (c.f. Dahlander and Magnusson 2008; Di Gangi, Wasko and Hooker 2010; Brabham 2010; Chesbrough 2011), the specific benefits of online community based idea contests as a potential source of open service innovation have received less attention. The dual competitive and collaborative nature of such contests creates an interesting dynamic which encourages and motivates participants to co-create value propositions, and is of increasing interest to both academics and practitioners (Neyer et al. 2009; Leimeister et al. 2009; Bullinger et al. 2010).

The specific focus of this paper is to increase our knowledge about the motivations, emergent behaviors, and practices of service organizations and participants who co-create value propositions in online community based idea contests and to examine the implications for service innovation. We posit that online community-based idea contests are driving a new era of open service innovation and development, which inspire participants to co-create new service ideas. Such contests enable both lead and ordinary users, motivated by a combination of monetary, non-monetary, and social factors, to contribute and co-create not only ideas but to also design and develop service concepts and prototype applications with commercially oriented service organizations, while at the same time providing a platform for dialogue and participant evaluation on service innovation-related activities. Such contests enable service organizations to directly assemble and engage with an online innovation community comprising different technological, cultural backgrounds, levels of expertise and consumption preferences in order to co-create value propositions that customers could not create independently (Teece 2007).

In this paper, we first describe the phenomena of open innovation (Chesbrough 2003; Chesbrough 2011) in online community based idea contests. We then examine the phenomenon of value co-creation in online user innovation communities and specifically examine the motivation and barriers to user participation in such ‘open calls. Following this,
we outline and discuss the findings of multiple case study comprising detailed netnographic analysis of over 3,000 participants in three online community based idea contests hosted by three global automotive service providers in order to determine why and how users, facilitated by collaborative technologies, co-create value propositions with both the service organization and other customers. We conclude with a discussion of the implications for researchers and practitioners.

OPEN SERVICE INNOVATION IN ONLINE COMMUNITY BASED IDEA CONTESTS

Open Service Innovation and Online Innovation Communities

Service organizations today can be conceptualized as operating in complex service systems, i.e. “value-co-creation configurations of people, technology, value propositions connecting internal and external service systems and shared information” (Maglio and Spohrer, 2008 p.18). In an effort to develop more customer-centric value propositions within increasingly complex and dynamic service systems, service organizations have been forced to migrate from a “closed” to an “open” service innovation approach (Chesbrough 2003, 2011; Di Gangi and Wasko 2009). In the traditional “closed” approach, firms initially examined user requirements and then developed services through tightly controlled internal processes (Pitta et al. 1996). While such an approach is internally focused and limited by the resources available within the firm, open innovation facilitates an environment where the abundant knowledge that exists external to the organization can be leveraged without hesitation for useful service innovation insights (Chesbrough 2003, 2011). Open innovation in services recognizes the focal role of customers and their experiences throughout the service innovation and new service development processes. It also acknowledges that tacit customer knowledge iteratively emerges throughout the service innovation and new service
development processes and cannot be ‘captured’ and ‘embedded’ into the service offering in advance (Chesbrough 2011).

**Online Community Based Idea Contests**

Open innovation facilitated by collaborative social technologies have greatly assisted collaboration between service organizations and users in relation to open service innovation (Dahlander and Magnusson 2008; Di Gangi et al. 2010; Chesbrough 2011). Firm hosted online innovation communities facilitate customers from around the world in coming together to share their insights, expertise, and experiences with service organizations and one another. As a result, incremental or radical service innovations, which were previously the sole remit of employees internal to the service organization, are co-created by participants within such communities (Di Gangi et al. 2010; Chesbrough 2011).

The specific focus of this paper is to examine online community based idea contests as a specific form of open service innovation. While such contests have become increasingly popular, there is limited research to guide theory development and practice in this area (Bullinger et al. 2010). Bullinger et al. (2010) define an innovation contest as “a (web based) competition of innovators who use their skills, experience, and creativity to provide a solution for a particular contest challenge defined by an organizer” (p. 291). This definition encapsulates Leimeister et al.’s (2009) notion of idea contests that involve an “invitation from an organizer, namely, a firm, to a general public or a targeted group to submit contributions on a certain topic within a predefined period of time” (p.200). Building on Van Oost et al.’s (2008) definition of online user innovation communities, Leimeister et al.’s (2009) definition of idea contests and Bullinger et al.’s (2010) definition of innovation contest, we define online community based idea contests in the context of the research reported in this paper as: “An online competition hosted by a service organization which issues an open call to individuals and/or firms (i.e. external innovators) to co-create value propositions in the
shared and meaningful context of open service innovation, while driven by the common goals of development, testing, and distribution of participant-initiated innovations, which are in turn guided by community norms and values.” Online community-based idea contests enable service organizations to implement an open service innovation approach by inviting contributors to both compete and collaborate when participating in new service development activities such as idea generation and concept development by stimulating and focusing the creativity and skills of participants in ways desired by the firm (Zwick et al. 2008).

Online community based idea contests are comprised of four critical elements: purpose, people, policies, and computer systems. The service organization who hosts the online community based idea contest typically issues the initial open call to users and frames the purpose of the competition (Sawhney et al. 2005). People, or what we refer to as users or participants throughout this paper, including ordinary users, lead-users and non-users of the service, enthusiasts and employee representatives respond to the open call, participate in the contest and engage with other participants within the community (for a comprehensive review and critique of users as innovators see Bogers et al. 2010). Table 1 provides an overview of innovative user typologies. While the host organization develops and monitors the policies, including rules, protocols, and laws that guide participant behavior during the contest, participants also perform a “self” or “community” governing and governance role in such communities. Finally, computer systems or collaborative technologies are required in order to promote a sense of togetherness and facilitate, support and moderate social interaction between members of the community (Preece 2000). Therefore such contests comprise “collaborative competences, a dynamic capability of customer orientation and knowledge interfaces,” the core requirements of a service innovation framework which integrates Service-Dominant Logic’s foundational premises (Ordanini and Parasuraman 2011, p. 4). Some common characteristics of community based idea contests include: a
contest proposition, task/topic specificity, specification of degree of elaboration of the service innovation idea that is required, organizational appearance, specified timeline, recruitment, incentivisation and motivation of participants, provision of tool kits, community functionality and rating/evaluation of service innovations ideas contributed (Piller and Walcher 2006; Leimeister et al. 2009; Bullinger et al. 2010).

Co-creation of Value Propositions in Online Community based Idea Contests

Online community based contests are examples of “crowd creation” which acknowledges that the collective “wisdom” inherent in communities typically surpasses the individual knowledge of any one member of the community (Surowiecki 2004). Other activities within the crowd sourcing phenomenon, a portmanteau of crowd and outsourcing (Howe 2009) include crowd-funding, user financing of projects such as Ulule and crowd voting communities such as NewsFuture (Lebrate and Lobre 2010). Various labels, have been applied to the value creating activities and practices of service organizations and other participants, such as customers, non-customers and service employees in online community based contests including ‘co-creation,’ ‘co-production’ and ‘prosumption’ (Kotler 1986; Ramirez 1999; Prahalad and Ramaswamy 2000; Prahalad and Ramaswamy 2004, Humphreys and Grayson 2008; Vargo and Lusch 2008).

Despite the particular label chosen, involving participants in tasks ranging from service design to quality control to co-creating value propositions is extremely beneficial for service organizations (Nambisan 2002; Füller et al. 2006). However, involving participants in the co-creation of the value proposition also presents service organizations with significant challenges (Nambisan 2002). User involvement in new service development may increase the extent of uncertainty within the service innovation process and new processes may be required to observe and maintain quality and efficiency (Lengnick-Hall 1996). In order for
users to co-create value propositions with service organizations, users may need to possess higher levels of service and technical knowledge (Von Hippel 1986). Additionally, users may resign or abdicate their role as co-creators, with the potential to disrupt the new service development process (Prahalad and Ramaswamy 2000).

Specifically, online community based idea contests allow and supports participants who wish to present and discuss their ideas and designs in the social context of the community and facilitate the provision of rich feedback to both participants and the host service organizations (Füller et al. 2010). Community members can discuss, rank and rate the new ideas or concepts proposed by others and provide feedback thereby creating a shared understanding regarding the proposed community generated service innovation, which enables new shared knowledge to emerge (Sawhney and Prandelli 2000; Sawhney, Verona and Prandelli 2005; Füller et al., 2007). Similar to the brainstorming model (Osborn 1963), participants continually interact, engage and reflect with each other within the community until the service idea or concept is continuously challenged and refined, encourage members to re-think their proposed idea in relation to the recommendations made by the community and to collectively consider and conquer previously unresolved issues (Füller et al. 2007).

In addition, contributors are also encouraged to build on the ideas of others (Paulus and Yang 2000). All participants learn from, contribute to the collective knowledge of the community, and encourage other community members to improve and elaborate these ideas (Hemetsberger and Reinhardt 2006). New knowledge is generated through the community relationships (Sawhney and Prandelli 2000) and eventually, a new collectively created value proposition may emerge that is superior one created internally by the service organization using a closed innovation approach. Users may also conduct service testing and assist the service organization in the detection of service issues early in the development process, thus minimizing time lost to re-design and re-development (Nambisan 2002). Furthermore, by
involving a diverse group of users in service testing, service organizations can obtain a
deep understanding of how services will cope in a multitude of user situations (Wichansky
2000; Dolan and Matthews 1993).

In relation to individual user participation, service organizations may regard
participants as resources, co-creators and end-users (Nambisan 2002) depending on their
levels of experience and expertise (see Table 2). The role of users as resources for innovation
has been extensively documented in the management and innovation literatures (c.f. Von
Hippel 1986). Participants in such contests may focus on specific and sometimes diverse
goals depending on whether they are lead users or ordinary users. Lead users, for example,
might play a pivotal role in forecasting future customer requirements, as they possess
technical knowledge to create a new solution for their observed needs (Lüthje and Herstatt
2004; Von Hippel 1986). As early adopters of products and services, they are opinion leaders
with the potential to promote the mass adoption of a service offering. Such participants are
motivated by the promotion of monetary rewards and competitive nature of the competition
as well as by the challenges involved in problem solving and experimenting (Von Lüthje
2004, Magnusson 2009). ‘Ordinary users’, which also includes creative consumers (Berton et
al. 2006) contribute creative ideas, albeit they may not always be as technically feasible as
those proposed by lead users (Kristensson et al. 2004).

While the majority of service organizations evaluate some type of user information
when designing their services, due to the challenges involved, many service organizations
have a tendency to use condensed and procured information when developing new services
(Pitta et al. 1996). Often service organizations find it challenging to locate suitable “user
innovators” in a cost-effective manner to stimulate, motivate, incentivize and reward any
“user innovators” identified to contribute new service ideas. Understanding users and their
requirements in their own natural settings is a much more effective means than in artificial
settings despite the fact that it might be more difficult for service organizations to engage with users in relation to more focused topics in such settings (von Hippel 2002). Previously, practical concerns, including the cost and the prevalence of suitable technologies limited such proactive and "natural" knowledge capture (Nambisan 2002). Facilitated by collaborative technologies, online community based idea contests enable service organizations to recruit and select participants using an open call, to incentivize them by means of contest prizes and provide an effective submission model for capturing their knowledge.

INSERT TABLE 2 – A Summary of Community Member Roles in the Service Innovation Process – around here

Service organizations and community members’ motivations for participating in community based idea contests

By responding to the open call of the service organization hosting the idea contest, participants actively choose to form close relationships with the host organization and with other participants (Kozinets, 1999) and actively co-create brand meaning within the community (Payne, Storbacka, Frow and Knox 2009). Participants therefore are not mere passive recipients of the contest organizations’ actions rather they also choose to actively create value and co-create value with them (Kozinets 1999). Participants in such contests emerge as ephemeral, often unstable, temporary groupings that create, share and appropriate meanings through various rituals for the duration of the idea contest (Cova 1997). Such ‘etribes’ are linked by a sense of emotional kinship and passion and provide a counterbalance to traditional sources of institutional and marketplace power such as service organizations, while at the same time selectively engaging with them in order to fulfil their own social and other needs (Cova 1997; Cova and Cova 2002; Godin 2008; Hamilton and Hewer 2010).
In terms of purpose of those who participate in online community based idea contests, Kozinets et al. (2008) note that such communities may have a *telo ludic* orientation (i.e. the online community is orientated towards achieving specific collective value co-creation outcomes, typically specified by the service organization who hosts the contest). Alternatively, such communities may display a *communo ludic* orientation (i.e. where value co-creation is both a direct product and by-product of the value creation activities of online innovation community members). These two potentially conflicting orientations, i.e. between the commercial objectives of the service organizations and the social objectives of some participants, may lead to potential tensions between community members that must be proactively managed.

In addition, the seemingly contradictory competitive and collaborative nature of community based idea contests can act as either a motivator or disincentive for different participants (Bullinger et al. 2010). As a result, service organizations need to design community based idea contests that encourage and foster both competitive and collaborative behaviors for the duration of the contest. Participants undertake social, economic and information exchanges with other community members and the service organization hosting the contest based on a complex set of motivations including financial, social, technological, and psychological factors (e.g. Wayne et al. 2010). Numerous researchers have debated the intrinsic and extrinsic motivations that drive participants to contribute to online user innovation communities, including community based idea contests (c.f. Amabile 1997; Ryan and Deci 2000, Füller 2010). Intrinsic obligation-based motivations, such as reciprocity, altruism, reputation, and community identity (Schulz 2010) occur in community-based idea contests when members act based on rationality principles (Lindenberg 2001). Community norms i.e. the “shared beliefs about what actions and attributes bring respect and approval (or
disrespect and disapproval) from oneself and others” (Cancian 1975:6) may also influence participant behavior.

Community norms in turn differ from community values which can be described as “a widely held belief or sentiment that some activities, relationships, feelings, or goals are to the community’s identity and well being” (Gould 1978: 133). Reciprocity relates to the behavior of community members who respond to the positive actions of others with positive reactions and to negative responses of others with negative reactions (Ostrom and Walker 2003). Altruistic motivations refer to the unselfish concerns of community members for the well-being of other members of the community. Reputational concerns refer to peer-recognition and status within a given community, while community identity refers to the user’s self-identification with the host community. Examples of enjoyment-based motivations include fun, intellectual stimulation and the desire to discover, innovate, and create (Schulz 2010).

Community members are also extrinsically motivated, through for example monetary rewards, bonuses or the possibility of promotion, to participate in idea contests (Amabile et al. 1994). For example, Franke and Shah (2003) observed that the community norms encouraged community members to assist each other. They also observed that the desire for personal benefit was related, not only to material reward, such as the ability to put the service innovations to personal use, but also to intrinsic motivations such as increased self esteem as a result of helping other members or increased reputation or status within a community. Specifically in relation to user motivations to participate in community based idea contests, Leimeister et al (2009) identified a number of motivations including the desire to learning (intrinsic), direct compensation (e.g. prizes) (extrinsic), self-marketing (e.g. presenting one’s skills with an online profile page) (intrinsic) and social motives (intrinsic).

In relation to the rules of engagement and interaction in online community based idea contests, Toder-Alon et al. (2005) identify two forms of participant self-regulation which
emerge as fluid and unexpected practices in community based idea contests, namely personal identity and social identity. These self-regulation types form the basis of “ritualistic communicative practices” (p. 22), which in turn leads to increased collaboration and intimacy between community members within the online community. This suggests that ritualistic behavior in community based idea contests, combined with the norms and values that govern the community may influence the nature of value co-creation and open service innovation in online community-based idea contests.

**METHODOLOGY**

Case studies of three on-line community based idea contests were conducted, which provided rich, empirical descriptions of open service innovation. Multiple case studies provide a stronger base for building theory than a single case as the resulting theoretical propositions and elaborations are induced from a variety of empirical evidence (Yin 1994; Eisenhardt and Graebner 2007). The data provided by the multiple case studies were a critical part of the inductive theory building approach that this research adopted.

The three contests studied relate to the global automotive sector and were selected using theoretical sampling, as they were considered illuminating in relation to the contemporary utilization of online community based idea contests in this particular sector. The contests studied were Volkswagen’s App my Ride, BMW’s Urban Mobility Services Contest, and Smart’s Design Contest. The BMW Group Idea Contest sought new ideas for mobility services in tomorrow's urban areas. In this sense, BMW was attempting to predict future mobility trends in the automotive sector using the experiences and creative potential of participants. The objective of Volkswagen’s App my Ride contest was to seek “Apps” (Applications) and Ideas for a prototype of a future Volkswagen infotainment system (a portmanteau of information-entertainment). According to Volkswagen, the goal of the contest was not only to co-create innovative applications, but to also involve interested users, coders,
and developers in developing Apps. Finally, Smart’s Design idea contest provided participants with an opportunity to express their creativity by producing exterior designs for Smart’s FourTwo car, in addition to providing participants with a platform to discuss, evaluate and comment upon each other’s designs.

Data for the three case studies was collected using nethnographies, interviews and naturalistic observations (Eisenhardt and Graebner 2007). In adopting a netnographic approach (Kozinets 1998; 2010) supplemented with in-depth on-line personal interviews, a detailed exploration of the language, history, practices, rituals, experiences, motivations and behaviors of participants in the three contests as they co-created value propositions with the host service organizations who had responsibility for running the competitions was possible.

Fieldwork and data collection was conducted in the three community-based idea contests over a thirteen-week period, from May 3rd to August 2nd 2010. Participant observation data and other data were collected from Volkswagen’s App My Ride community in real-time, as the contest was performed between May 3rd until June 30th 2010. However, data collection was performed retrospectively and entailed non-participant observation for BMW’s idea contest, which was conducted prior to the commencement of this research, between March and April 2010. Similarly, as Smart’s idea competition was conducted between January and February 2010 data collection was performed in a retroactive manner. The overall research process involved screening more than 100,000 posts in more than 10,000 profiles and filing all content electronically.

The netnographic data was collected and analyzed in accordance with the ethical guidelines for conducting netnographic research (Kozinets 2010). The three idea contest communities and their features were explored in general using non-participant observation in order to get an overview and a means of entry. This phase consisted of browsing through the

http://www.app-my-ride.com/jury-prizes-contest/contest
idea contests’ websites, exploring their communities and the various user profiles, reading messages, and trying to understand the structure, codes, and the distinctive ways of communication, in order to obtain a familiarity with the subject matter.

The data collected from the three communities was transcribed and each author independently read all transcripts. The transcripts were then individually and collectively analyzed, with the aid of the data analysis software tool NVivo, in order to identify the motivations, behaviors, and practices of community members and service organizations involved. This process of obtaining patterns in participants’ behavior and activities provides a more reliable basis for interpretation, in comparison with analysis of individual action independent of others. The exploration of three different contests from the same sector provided a greater ability to identify consistent participant engagement patterns across a wider range of contexts.

As not all three communities studied had private messaging systems, there was reluctance on the part of the authors to solicit the profile pages of members, despite the fact that they were publicly available, as this would have meant that the exchange of email details or other personal information would have also been accessible to anyone. In order to overcome this obstacle, users were recruited through Hyve’s Facebook fan page, which had over 1,000 members. Open invitations were sent to fans using Facebook’s private mail function in order to ensure that personal contact details were not divulged in an online public space. Fans with diverse occupations were identified, as it was felt that this diversity might reflect the open call that characterizes such contests and the diverse types of individuals they attract. This was also consistent with the non-probability purposive sampling approach conducted in the previously mentioned filtering of community posts (Belk et al. 1989).

From the wide range of candidates contacted based on their occupations, five agreed participate in in-depth interviews which were conducted using online instant messaging
applications (i.e. cyber interviews). The use of conversational, semi-directed personal cyber interviews over online instant messaging systems is effective for obtaining user insights. For example, Giesler and Pohlmann (2003) have argued that “cyber interviews not only comment on how things are remembered by informants in terms of a perspective of action, but how things are actively constructed” (2003: 274). It is this active construction of engagements, personas, and values in these online environments, which is of particular importance when attempting to understand how participants engage in online community-based idea contests.

The purpose of these cyber interviews was to cross-reference and triangulate observations recorded during the course of the data collection and analysis stages (Yin 1994). The five interviewees chosen were highly knowledgeable informants namely company representatives and lead users in the three communities. As recommended by Eisenhardt and Graebner (2007), this provided informed and diverse perspectives on the nature of participant engagement with the contests, how they interacted with the community, and what the cultural values of the community were.

OVERVIEW OF THE IDEA CONTESTS

All three of the Idea Contest platforms studied were developed by Hyve Innovation Communities (http://www.innovation-community.de/) based in Munich, Germany. While there were slight differences in the toolkits provided to participants in each of the three contests, overall the functionality of the three contests was quite similar. After registering with an idea contest, participants were provided with a profile page where they could post messages and view the submitted works of other community members (see Figure 1).

Participants could also upload an avatar so that they were easily identifiable when they interacted with other community members. As there were no central forums within the
idea contest, interactions could only take place through participants’ profile pages or by providing comments on the submitted ideas and concepts of other community members. Participation was incentivized primarily by monetary or material rewards. In addition, an in-built point allocating system for community participation acknowledged and listed the most active members in the community. Table 3 summarizes participant involvement in each community-based idea contests studied while Table 4 summarizes the main characteristics of each of the three contests studied.

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<td>INSERT TABLE 4 – Characteristics of Three Selected Idea Contests – around here</td>
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**Volkswagen’s App My Ride**

Volkswagen’s App My Ride’s community (http://www.app-my-ride.com/) centered on two separate yet interconnected activities: idea generation and App (application) development. Participants were invited to submit ideas to the community idea ‘pool’, where ideas were subsequently adopted and elaborated upon by other developers in the community (see Figure 2). This sharing dynamic emerged as a core value within the community and involved not just the sharing of feedback but also the sharing of detailed technical knowledge and ideas for further development. Membership was comprised of a mix of technically minded members and blue-sky dreamers.

Volkswagen representatives who actively contributed to the community provided leadership and guidance to participants. This leadership dynamic proved to be an additional driver force within the community, with members striving to satisfy the requests of other users or the Volkswagen representatives. In the words of the contest organizers: “the ‘App my Ride’ contest by Volkswagen seeks Apps and Ideas for possible Apps for a prototype of a
future Volkswagen infotainment system. The goal of the contest is not only to gain innovative applications, but also to involve interested users, coders and developers into the process of developing Apps” (Volkswagen 2010).

**BMW’s Urban Mobility Services Idea Contest**

According to BMW, this community idea contest (http://www.bmwgroup-ideacontest.com/) was the organization’s “first open innovation project, which was launched within BMW Group's latest innovation approach - the Co-Creation Lab” (BMW Group 2010). In contrast to Volkswagen, BMW Urban Mobility Services Idea Contest focused more on idea generation than on concept development. Due to the fact that BMW encouraged community members to come up with ideas that could be applicable in the distant future, the community encouraged and facilitated a playful and creative dynamic in order to stimulate community members’ imaginations.

While Volkswagen appointed company representatives as leadership figures within the community in order to support participants in the practical development of their ideas, BMW provided community members with more of a free rein to develop fun ideas. As stated by BMW, “the BMW Group Idea Contest ‘Tomorrow’s Urban Mobility Services’ seeks new ideas for mobility services in tomorrow’s urban areas. You can submit your creative ideas regarding innovative services in the area of automotive mobility in cities and metropolitan areas of the future. It is important that you focus your ideas and thoughts on services rather than product solutions and that you keep your creative mind directed to the future decade – and further!” (BMW Group, 2010).

**Smart’s Design Contest**
encouraged contributors’ creative and artistic ideas in order to co-create exterior car vinyl designs (see Figure 4). While Volkswagen and BMW’s idea contests focused on automotive technology services, Smart’s approach emphasized aesthetics and strongly encouraged individuality. The community provided members with a fun environment in which to share ideas, including contest-related games that encouraged community members to play and interact with each other. Culture and lifestyle played an important role in the dynamic interactions between community members and many of the designs themselves provide deep insight into the values held by their creators. It could be said that the Smart was a more focused community based idea contest, with a specific purpose of design. In the words of Smart: “Do you love to design things? Or you just want to have fun with an online platform and evaluate, comment or discuss designs with others? You got it! In this contest, you can create YOUR cool smart for two exterior designs! We invite you to take part in this contest and inspire you to open your mind for your creative designs” (Smart 2010).

The purpose of this paper was to examine the emergent motivations, behaviors, and practices of service organizations and participants who co-create value propositions in online community based idea contests in order to understand how participants contribute to the ideation and concept developments phases of open service innovation in technology-based services. The findings of the study suggest that the roles adopted by participants within the context of the contests, contributors’ intrinsic, extrinsic, competitive, and cooperative motivations, and the community relationships that developed all impacted on participant behavior in the community-based idea contests studied. In turn, the community norms and
values that emerged in the community based idea contests studied influenced participants’ value creating practices (see Figure 5).

INSERT FIGURE 5 – Co-Creation of the Value Proposition and Open Service Innovation in Online Community Based Idea Contests – around here

Participant Engagement Roles

While both lead and ordinary users actively participated in all three contests, we observed the fluid transformation of various contextual roles adopted by participants. The participant roles adopted during the ideation and concept developments phases of the open service innovation process depending on the task or the activity included: Problem Identifiers, Idea Generators, Designers, Developers, Motivators, Leaders, End Users, Evaluators, and Lurkers (see Table 5). While participants sometimes adopted different roles in different contexts, different types of engagement with the community characterized each role.

INSERT TABLE 5 – Summary of Participant Engagement Roles – around here

Problem Identifiers were important as theses participants identified the particular use contexts or everyday issues that they wished to resolve. Idea Generators comprised ordinary, creative, and lead users who proposed solutions to problems that they and the Problem Identifiers face in their everyday driving experiences. They actively sought to collaborate with other participants who had skills that they did not possess themselves, in order to progress their ideas to the next level. Idea Generators contributed novel insights that went beyond the scope of what people with technical knowledge may deem practical.

Designers relied primarily on visual communication devices to contribute content to the community, using for example sketches, 3D illustrations, or models. Designers concerned themselves with the aesthetic application of the service innovation idea and were less
concerned with the underlying technologies related to the concept. Such participants also expressed their individuality and social identity through the creation of their designs, with some designs focused on cultural enclaves rather than the host brand of the idea contest. Developers demonstrated significant technical knowledge, not alone within the realm of software programming, but also in relation to vehicle electronics. These participants provided technical advice and feedback on how the contributions of Idea Generators and Designers could be implemented. Some Developers even demonstrated an interest in incorporating some of the proposed ideas in the modification of their own cars. In other instances, Developers acknowledged their shortfalls in other disciplines such as design.

Motivators often played the dual roles of Idea Generators and Designers and actively encouraged other participants to contribute new ideas, concepts, designs, and applications for the betterment of the entire community. Motivators were some of the most socially active members of the communities, posting more comments relating to encouragement than other participants. Motivators were particularly important in the idea contests studied as they pushed the boundaries of what was deemed acceptable in terms of quality standards. Leaders, typically contest administrators or representatives of the contest organizers, emerged depending on the format and context of the idea contest. For example, in some instances, representatives from the service organization who hosted the contest actively provided feedback and leadership to participants. However, in the contest where this was not the case, leadership from within the community was less visible, possibly due to the short duration of the contest, and participants’ inability to administer the website of their own accord.

Most participants adopted the role of End Users when they contributed feedback on the ideas and concepts submitted by others based on their personal experiences of existing service offerings and contexts. Evaluators also provided feedback on the contributions of others based on their market and cultural knowledge e.g. knowledge of particular national
markets, rules, customs, laws, lifestyles, and other cultural aspects that might affect the performance of a proposed idea in a specific market or cultural context. Finally, *Lurkers* were participants who appeared to have little vested interest in the community’s activities. Lurkers may be considered non-committed but curious users, or alternatively, users or parties who seek to infiltrate a community in order to observe from afar.

**Participant Motivations for Engaging with and Contributing to Online Community Based Ideas Contests**

The findings also revealed that participants were motivated by a complex set of competitive, collaborative, extrinsic and intrinsic factors to engage with and contribute to each of the three idea contests (see Table 6). Contributors who engaged primarily in technical tasks, such as application development, appeared motivated by a quest for new knowledge or learning. For instance, one student member of the Volkswagen community commented:

> “The feedback you get from others can be helpful in making ideas better or maybe make stuff clearer in an idea, stuff I had taken for granted that people would understand.”

However not all participants were motivated by learning, perhaps due to the time commitments and effort involved.

While direct compensation, such as monetary prizes, acted as important incentives for competitive participants, this was not unilaterally the case or even where this was the case, the perceived value of the monetary prizes differed. For example, a Graphic Designer participating in the Smart community commented:

> “The prize was a lot of money, so I thought I would join and give it my best shot”

whereas in the case of the BMW community one participant commented:
“That navigator prize is not thrilling enough for me to present any ideas as yet”

Indeed while the majority of participants considered prizes as an incidental bonus, a minority of contributors appeared solely motivated by monetary gain. This overriding concern with personal gain, which characterized some contributors, tended to adversely impact on the majority and in some instances undermined their contributions and efforts. One striking example of this was observed in the Smart idea contest, which offered members with the highest activity rankings monetary prizes. An unforeseen result of this incentive was that certain members abused the system in order to increase their activity points; resulting in undesirable actions included rampant ‘spamming’ in the guise of replicated comments and the submission of thousands of designs, with little to no changes in the appearance of the works. One incensed member of the Smart community commented:

“Nearly 8500 designs from ONE person. 8500 designs with no trace of actual creativity!”

In some cases, participants persecuted those community members who unequivocally pursued direct compensation, particularly when it was felt their behavior violated cherished community values such as “originality” and “creativity.” Another Smart community member commented:

“It’s clear you have no talent and no ideas and you are just using pictures you find on the internet and stealing other people ideas, such a shame for a lousy 800 Euros”

In contrast, intrinsically motivated contributors demonstrated a true passion for their work, which often included intricate details and elaborate designs. Many participants related the personal enjoyment they experienced while exploring, creating, and innovating. One participant in the Volkswagen community noted:
“I could spend 80 hours coding for this contest [. . .] Luckily I enjoy coding, so even though the prize would be a nice thing to get, they wouldn’t be the only reason I’d take part.”

The presence of enjoyment-based motives may be of importance for organizers of such contests, as in many ways it may be unfeasible to compensate each participant for their contributions. In addition, direct compensation motives are offset by enjoyment-based motives, as highlighted in an interview with one user:

“...I could spend 80 hours coding for this contest, but unless the prize is worth at least 80 hours of my time, the prizes won’t be as much of an incentive. Luckily I enjoy coding, so even though prizes would be a nice thing to get, they wouldn’t be the only reason I’d take part.”

Although the communities observed in this study were in relative infancy, it was apparent that friendships formed between participants, and that social interactions contributed to the pleasure of the activity. Social considerations were a powerful motive for users to participate in the idea contests and community component, such as compliments and recognition, in such online ideas contest provided ample incentives for participants through compliments and recognition. For example, one participant in the Smart contest commented:

“Thanks for leaving your comments - very much appreciated (and encouraging) - very good stuff here on your 'area' too! Good luck“

Social considerations such as appreciation, compliments and reciprocal pleasantries from peers or from the host service organizations were also evident in the contests studied. It is worth noting that in the BMW contest, no cash prizes were offered, yet the platform had a higher number of posts than Volkswagen’s platform, which offered substantial cash prizes.
This might suggest that many participants in BMW’s contest had been willing to participate because of primarily intrinsic motivations.

Other contestants, such as students and company owners themselves, also viewed the competition as a platform for self-marketing. Members’ profile pages served as a pivotal communication device and in many instances, the addition of images or avatars to a member’s profile seemed to serve as a rite of passage that facilitated collaboration and was appreciated by other community members, as revealed in the following comment from a BMW community member:

“Thank you for uploading a profile picture - it's nice to know whom we are working with in this community.”

Members used their profile page to highlight their skills and to introduce themselves to the community: Profile photos often featured photos of participants' cars and listed their interests and activities. A number of participants even went as far as advertising their firm’s services on their profile page: In this context, self-marketing motives transformed from an intrinsic motivation (personal and social identity) to an extrinsic motivation (monetary-driven). All of the contests studied also featured a rating system where participants were awarded points for contributing ideas, posting comments and so on. The design of this feature also encouraged social engagement through the ranking of participant activity.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Value Co-creation and Community Values, Norms, Rituals and Relationships</th>
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</table>

The value creation practices that emerged in the community based idea contests seemed to be governed by community norms, relationships, and values. In this sense, many
participant behaviors appeared to be influenced by the community (participant led) as opposed to be controlled by the host organization (firm led). Community members seemed to share a number of values that promoted creativity, diversity, sharing, fun, and humor, amongst others, which positively encouraged opportunity identification and analysis, idea generation and concept development. The presence of the focal brand and associated brand personality also facilitated this. For example members who participated in BMW’s contest used words related to “prestige,” “status,” “power” in the description of ideas and how they relate to the overall brand. As one participant commented in one of the in-depth personal interviews:

“BMW wants people to have fun and express their creativity in the contest, and so that those values are demonstrated by members of the community.”

In another example from the BMW community, a member contributed an idea relating to park and ride services; however some participants felt that the idea did not represent the values of brand or the community members themselves:

“BMW is associated with a lot of prestige and high value because of its comparatively prohibitive cost. People who buy a BMW don’t need to queue up for a bus.”

Community values such as respect and courtesy for other members were evident in all three contests and overcame the competitive rivalries between some community members that emerged from time to time. In a similar ethos to open source development, ideas and opinions were typically freely shared with no compensation expected except for a courteous acknowledgement of assistance. Diversity also emerged as a strong community value in the interactions between community members who were representative of a wide range of cultures, economic circumstances and lifestyles were welcome to contribute to the community. One Mechanical Engineer from the BMW Community commented during a personal interview that:
“Basically, the freedom to create and express yourself and the freedom to express your opinions and views about opportunities and ideas. There are people from all over the world in the contest community, with a wide range of cultural backgrounds, so the freedom to participate is a big part of the contest.”

Freedom of expression, originality, and non-conformity were also core values in the communities. Observations suggest that community-based idea contest values freedom to express their creativity, learn new things and to share knowledge openly, often times in a fun and unfettered fashion, within the community. Finally, integrity where members acted honestly and in good spirit within the community was central to community activities. An interesting dynamic formed within the communities where members would actively elaborate on the ideas of others, with their consent. Members who did not appear to uphold the value of integrity were often confronted. For example, one user commented:

“Would you mind not stealing other people’s ideas!!!? I upload my design of my daughter’s eyes and 15 minutes later you also upload a design with an eye on it. Pretty lame if you ask me. It’s clear you have no talent and no ideas and you are just using pictures you find on the internet and stealing other people’s ideas. Such a shame for a lousy 800 Euros”

Another interesting finding was that different relationships were observed in the three community based idea contest studied. Some participants exhibited a rather self-centered view towards community interaction and led to very little trust building up between members, leaving participants feeling unfilled. On the other hand, the wide range of skills and knowledge available within the communities provided many opportunities for collaborative relationships to grow and mature, resulting in more meaningful user engagements. Groups of members collaborated on ideas and designs, or offered each other assistance with technical issues. The social and emotional engagements between community members resulted in close
bonds forming between some members. Unfortunately, the bonds formed between members tended to come to a definite end, and participants were aware of this in advance, when the idea contest ended. As a result, users offered sentimental parting messages to fellow community members: For example, one user commented on their sadness that the competition was ending and that the community in turn might disperse:

“Hi my friend, [username]. Today is the final day of this contest. I think we will all miss each other from tomorrow onwards. The last 2 months we stayed here like a community. Anyway, it’s time to leave. Thanks for your support and valuable comments. Wish you all the success and good”

Therefore, relationships of intimacy served as the foundation for enduring engagements between participants and the communities of which they are a part.

DISCUSSION

In this section, we elaborate some propositions induced from the multiple case study findings relating to the motivations, behaviors, and practices of contest participants and companies who participate in online community based idea contests.

**Proposition 1: Participants iteratively adopt a number of diverse and overlapping roles when co-creating value propositions in Community Based Idea Contests**

In relation to the roles of participants in open service innovation, Nambisan (2002) suggested that organizations might regard participants as “resources,” “co-creators” and “end-users.” The findings demonstrate that all three roles can be fulfilled, sometimes in a fluid and overlapping manner, by participants in online community-based idea contests. As a source of information and ideas, participants can act as a resource for the firm. Participants can act as co-creators with the firm; by providing feedback and analysis of opportunities,
ideas and concepts, participants have the potential to act as end-user concept evaluators (Nambisan 2002). The findings also indicate that participants adopted a number additional and sometimes overlapping roles in the three contests, namely Problem Identifier, Idea Generator, Designer, Developer, Motivator, Leader/Governor, End User (similar to Nambisan 2002), Evaluator and Lurker. When adopting these roles, participants became involved in all the organizational roles typically involved in new service development tasks.

We posit that the question of when to involve participants in the service innovation process is directly linked to the actual intention of the task e.g. generating ideas, evaluating and refining concepts, specifying product features or creating prototypes. Whereas the integration of users in the latter stages of the service development process such as concept testing is common practice, open service innovation focuses on the front-end stages of service innovation, as well as on the service design and development tasks themselves. In online community based idea contests, participants iteratively provide feedback and reveal tacit knowledge during the service innovation process (Chesbrough, 2010) as they adapt, provide multiple diverse user perspectives, and interact with other users adopting various roles such as Problem Identifier, Idea Generator, Designer, Developer, Motivator, Leader/Governor, End-User, Evaluator, and Lurker. In this way, a community of motivated users who co-create the value proposition in the community facilitated by the host organization (c.f. Vargo and Lusch, 2008) replaces the traditional stage gate process of new service development.

**Proposition 2: Participants are motivated by competitive and cooperative concerns and iteratively co-create value propositions with service organizations and with other participants in the context of community based idea contests**

Advocates of a closed innovation approach such as Christensen and Bower (1996) suggest that involving users in new service development and innovation could distract firms from exploring the opportunities generated by new disruptive technologies, thereby creating
only incremental innovations because of input from users (Magnusson 2009). Bennett and Cooper (1981) state that customers may be restricted by their present needs and be unable to provide novel, innovative ideas. Others argue that the ability of users to convey and articulate their needs is restrained by their understanding of the technical possibilities available (Hamel and Prahalad 1994). Such arguments embody a variation on the debate between technology push and market pull. Supporters of technology push suggest that users are unable to understand what new technologies can do for them and as a result are unsuitable for participating in the innovation process (e.g. Christensen and Bower 1996). Supporters of the market-pull approach view users as a productive source of ideas in the development of innovations (e.g. Von Hippel 1986). Others argue that both supply and demand factors are significant for creating innovations (Taylor 2008). This view suggests that technologies emerge because of reciprocal engagement involving firms and participants.

The findings indicate that all participants can successfully co-create value propositions leading to open service innovations in online community based idea contests. In the contests studied, certain participants appeared to be Lead Users (von Hippel, 1986) who were primarily interested in sharing their technical expertise to co-create the functional and technological aspects of the value proposition. Many lead users engaged with the challenges and tasks posed in the idea contests in a mechanistic and work-like manner. Other participants, often ordinary or non-specialist users, displayed some of the characteristics of neo-tribes and were driven by their adoration of cars in general or by the automotive brand who was hosting the contest (Cova 1997). Both specialist and non-specialist participants freely exchanged knowledge and offered assistance to other participants in a manner similar to open source communities, however some specialist users were had disconnected relationships with other community members and were only interested in the specified tasks.
We posit that this variety in motivations and behaviors is not surprising rather it reflects the values of diversity and the freedom encouraged by such contests. The true value of online community based idea contest is that members, including lead, ordinary, and creative users come from a wide range of cultural backgrounds and geographical locations. The open sharing of technical knowledge and experience that both lead and ordinary users may have obtained through their occupation, pastimes, or education can be of great benefit to a community’s overall progress in service innovation (Simmie 2003) and in the context of idea contests, the development of ideas and concepts. Ranking participants on their level of engagement accorded highly involved participants recognition and status within the community because of their commitment and contributions, while also increasing their potential of winning material rewards. In this way, even the most basic social interactions within online community-based idea contests can take the form of competitive practice as the boundaries between competitive action and co-operative interaction become increasingly blurred.

Despite the overtly competitive nature of such contests, all participants with their differing motivations and requirements of participation contribute to the collective knowledge and outcomes of the community (Wikström 1996; Hemetsberger and Reinhardt 2006). While some contributors were often willing to help their fellow participants with their creations, the social relationships and interactions between participants became the cornerstone of community friendships and trust that can extend beyond the timescale of the original contest itself. In addition, both ordinary and lead users shared personal experiences and cultural preferences relating to their consumption of related products and services. This knowledge also provided the basis for member’s feedback of other member’s ideas and concepts. It is therefore argued that community dynamics within a structured online community-based contest can provide valuable inspiration, ideas, and concepts for open service innovation and
the co-creation of value propositions overall. The interesting question as to why many participants, who were potential rivals, choose to cooperate with other participants reflects the paradox of collaboration and competition inherent in such contests.

**Proposition 3: Participants in community based Idea contests are intrinsically and extrinsically motivate to individually and collectively co-create value propositions**

Our findings suggest that participants engage with online community based contests as part of a finely balanced social system. Community or obligation-based motivations occur when participants act on principle or when they become socialized in the norms of a group or community (Lindenberg 2001; Dholakia et al. 2004). Motivations of reciprocity, altruism, reputation, and community identity have been identified in the three contests studied, which suggests that these factors play a significant role in the nature of participant engagement in such contests. An alternative explanation forwarded by Franke and Shah (2003) is the suggestion that it might be beneficial for individual community members motivated by self interest to reveal innovation-related information in such contests because their actions may encourage improvements by others or expectations of reciprocity and improving ones reputation may exist.

The findings also suggest that participants' behaviors and their propensity to share information in the contests studied was influenced by a complex set of intrinsic and extrinsic motivations (Ardichvili 2008). Leimeister et al (2009) suggests that participants are motivated to contribute by a diverse set of factors including learning, direct compensation, self-marketing and social motives. Many of these motivations were evident in the community based contests studied and in the manner in which participants engaged with other community members. Some contributors felt that participation in the contests might enhance their reputation or status within and beyond the community. This was sufficient reward for
such members and they did not necessarily expect an immediate reward or compensation from the organization or other community members (Ardichvili 2008). For other participants, the possibility of personal gain was a key motivator, in addition to other factors such as identification with the community and its goals (Ardichvili 2008).

A core theme within the management literature states that incentives promote effort and performance, and a number of studies have demonstrated the effectiveness of such incentives (e.g. Gibbons 1997; Lazear 2000). In other words, contingent rewards act as “positive reinforcers” for required behavior. In psychology, their effectiveness is much more controversial (Bénabou and Tirole 2003). A long-standing paradigm clash has placed advocates of the economic view in opposition to the “dissonance theorists”, who argue that rewards may actually impair performance, making them “negative reinforcers”, especially in the long run (e.g. Kruglanski 1978; Deci et al. 1999). This study suggests that contributor’s extrinsic motivations can be both a blessing and a curse for community-based idea contests. The findings indicate that prizes did, in some cases, act as negative reinforcers. In these instances, extrinsic motivations such as monetary gain outweighed all the positives those participants could have contributed, as greed superseded quality contributions.

**Proposition 4: Participants co-create value propositions in community based idea contests governed by community norms and values**

Much has been written about corporate cultures of innovation and their importance for sustainable innovative practices (Johnston and Bate 2003: 264; Ardichvili 2008). One of the key benefits of community based idea contests is that they evade the rigid constraints of large organizations and manage to address the potential commercial and social tensions, which may emerge during such contests. Community and cultural norms played an important role in the nature of participant interactions and relationships in the contests studied as they framed “what actions and attributes bring respect and approval (or disrespect and disapproval)”
(Cancian 1975:6; see also Nguyen et al. 2006; Füller et al. 2007). Many of these norms were based around the context of the particular contest studied (Figueiredo and Afonso 2006) and thus resulted in different forms of user engagements. The free exchange of knowledge within the communities facilitated an iterative process of opportunity identification and analysis, as well as idea generation and development (Koen et al. 2001). Kozinets (2007) suggests that community members “under the sharing caring and ethos of community prefer to distribute their works through the gift economy” (p. 208), and in online community-based idea contests, this appears to be the case, at least for those motivated by the desire to collaborate rather than to compete.

The contests studied developed a rich value system around a focal brand that complemented the shared interests and common goals of its members and sometimes even the brand personality of the focal brand itself. The existence of community based idea contents, which constitute a postmodern tribe (Cova et al, 2007), links communities of engaged participants with the brand. This notion of brand-connected cultural value is of particular relevance for these contests as participants’ contributions are a reflection of the brands co-created value (c.f. Holt 2002). In essence, the perceived core values of the brand are negotiated and reinforced by the community. Not only do these contests provide a new channel of communication between the company and consumers, but they also have the added benefit of soliciting and elaborating ideas and perspectives that reflect the core values of the brand. What the identification of these values suggests is that these community-based contests reflect many of the values associated with successful service innovation environments (Johnston and Bate 2003: 264).

**Proposition 5: The systems of governance of community based idea contests involve a careful and complex negotiation between the contest rules and their enforcement by the**
host organization and the social practices and sanctions imposed on participants for perceived breaches of the community norms and values

While service organizations hosting community based idea contests have a telo ludic and primarily commercial orientation of co-creating value propositions (Kozinets et al. 2008), they also need to acknowledge the social and communal motivations of the assembled crowd. Participants in the contests studied provided the basis for worthwhile and meaningful interactions with others in order to create novel ideas that had the potential to improve driving experiences for all. Members could collaborate, share knowledge and experiences, and build a community that respected the diversity of other community members.

However, it is also important to note that a number of problematic issues arose in some of the contests, which impinged on the values of the community, including copyright issues, intellectual property rights, and the stealing of other participants’ contributions, which then needed to be addressed by the service organization hosting the contest or by the community itself. While contest administrators had the ability to discipline community members, self-regulation within the community occurred when participants perceived that the contests’ laws and regulations were breached. For example, in one contest, members rallied against deviant participants who included copyrighted images in their submissions. Consistent breaches of community and contest laws resulted in unfavorable experiences for other ‘law abiding’ members. This “inheritance” of social practices norms e.g. following rules and laws, suggests that participants engage in online community-based idea contests in a fashion that mirrors their personal value systems and social practices (Schau et al. 2009), and as in all communities, the fringes will consist of members who do not play by the rules, regardless of the possible implications.
It is the view of the authors that participants were not oblivious to the fact that they are contributing possibly lucrative ideas and concepts for relatively little reward. As one member commented to another:

“I guess this competition is an example of "Crowdsourcing" in action, but I knew that at the start and it doesn't bug me. If it makes you angry, do something else. Life is too short to fill it with bitterness. I hope you find another fulfilling outlet for you energy. Good luck!”

This view encompasses all the good that participants see in online community-based idea contests; it is this “fulfilling outlet for energy,” that enables members to express to their creativity to a global audience; enables them to engage in activities related to their interests, and gives them an opportunity to meet like-minded individuals from a diverse range of cultural backgrounds. Despite this, service organizations cannot ignore or mistreat the desires and wishes of diverse community of ‘customer-developers’ who participate in idea contests and need to respectfully engage with them and facilitate their social needs in addition to the service organizations own commercial objectives (Di Gangi et al. 2010).

**Proposition 6: Participants in community based idea contests form social bonds and perform ritualistic value creating practices within the community**

Some community members interacted and formed relationships with each other based on “ritualistic communicative practices” (Toder-Alon et al. 2005:22) and felt sufficiently comfortable to convey and share their knowledge in an open manner. A variety of relationships were induced from the three contests studied ranging from “acquaintance” relationships (e.g. member introductions) to “disconnected” relationships, where community members simply wished to focus on the task in hand and had no desire to interact with other participants. Although, Toder-Alon et al. (2005) suggest that ritualistic communicative
practices might include sharing confessions, or secrets, some of the most intimate engagements in these communities were at the concluding stages of the contests. Considering how community norms and values were established over a 6 – 9 week period, it is possible that, if these communities were given more time to mature and develop, participant engagements would be even more intimate and worthwhile. We therefore suggest that firms integrate idea contest events into existing company-sponsored communities, with established hierarchies, norms, and values, rather than setting up bespoke communities around each separate contest event.

LIMITATIONS AND FURTHER RESEARCH DIRECTIONS

This paper has examined the nature of user engagements in community-based idea contests using a netnographic approach. The data analyzed was primarily qualitative in nature, and therefore open to a greater deal of interpretation. However, there is little doubt that such contests can contribute a valuable array of ideas and concepts for firms. The research has explored the values and norms of these communities, as well as the motivations of those who participate in the activity, and the findings suggest that there should be a great deal of optimism about participant engagement in such contests in the future.

However, it is also important for service organizations to note the possible limitations of involving those outside the organization in open service innovation and the co-creation of the value proposition using online community based idea contests. Such limitations include the fact that individual participants may be incorrect about facts or knowledge. Pitta et al (1996) notes that participants are not employees, rather they have their own personal interests and concerns that may not necessarily be shared by the service organization hosting the contest, and they can expect little direct reward for their contributions. This is where the “wisdom of crowds”, as suggested by Surowiecki (2004), has the power to aggregate the various forms of knowledge sharing within the community and provides altering points of
view, to the point that the knowledge that is accepted as true becomes an accepted fact, thereby increasing the accuracy of community knowledge.

In addition, initiatives such as online community based idea contests may be not prioritized internally within the service organization, particularly in those organizations that previously employed a closed approach to service innovation. Even in instances where organizations prioritize such initiatives, Magnusson (2003) warns that participants should not be merely used as a convenient replacement for professional designers and developers. He argues that it is a mistake to view participant contributions as advanced and ready-to-implement concepts. Instead, contributions should be considered a catalyst for the service innovation and development process. In this manner, participants can be regarded as sources of inspiration and user insight rather than implementers of new products and services. While community-based idea contests provide service organizations with a platform for inspiring innovation, the identification and selection of ideas is, in itself, not sufficient to realize service innovations. User driven service innovation insights need to be integrated with the service organizations existing resources and processes (Bjork et al. 2010).

In order for the ideas that emerge from the contest to become true innovations and eventually commercialized, company experts must effectively screen and process these ideas, develop them, market them, and support them in order for those ideas to become an innovation. The issue of idea screening and evaluation is a significant challenge in the service innovation process (Reinertsen 1999). Moreover, the large volume of ideas that are generated by participants exacerbates the task. Therefore, service organization hosting such contests need to develop standardized processes for identifying and describing the ideas submitted (Di Gangi et al. 2010). Through the use of toolkits, participants can undertake “needs-based” tasks, which can then be transferred to firms for “solutions-based” processes of implementation via the contest (Von Hippel and Katz 2002; Jeppesen 2005; Prugl and
Schreier 2006). Jeppesen (2005) argues that the benefits obtained in the interchange of need-related information via the toolkit method were likely to be offset by community support costs.

While the service organizations who hosted the three contests examined in this study provided participants with mechanisms to provide feedback on contributions, the process involved a simple voting system for community evaluation, which rated ideas by popularity. In many instances, the votes had no bearing on the jury decision, which meant that internal experts had the significant task of screening ideas on a case-by-case basis. However, participant-to-participant help functions, technical knowledge sharing and collaboration features were all features of the contests studied, which can been viewed as a promising means for firms to reduce the responsibility of support and to create conditions for better toolkit use within such innovation-related communities. More research is required in order to develop methods that could be employed by such communities to screen initial ideas more efficiently, so that the internal experts may be able to spend their time and resources on ideas and concepts that are worth serious consideration.

Future research might also examine the ethical issues relating to the potential exploitation and property rights of “working consumers” (Zwick et al. 2008; Cova and Dalli 2009; Ritzer and Jurgensen 2010). Additional research is required to understand the nature of participants’ attitudes towards service organizations who conduct initiatives such as community based idea contests or other “crowd sourcing” activities in order to determine whether users believe they are adequately compensated for their contributions. The topic may also have significant implications for service organizations in terms of their public relations and customer relationship management strategies.

Additional research focusing on the design and development of an incentive assessment framework for community-based idea contests would also be a worthwhile avenue to explore,
as more enticing incentives might encourage more participation (Leimeister et al. 2009). The data suggests that incentives must incorporate a much wider range of components than just prizes. Online innovation communities may provide a useful starting point for understanding social reward systems e.g. VIP access to special community content, or special administration powers for the most active community members. These social reward systems also have implications for consumer behavior research. For example, one could question whether consumers of high-end, luxury brands are more likely to be enticed by extra privileges such as VIP access, in comparison with users who are not as driven by “status” orientated products.

CONCLUSION

The findings of a multiple case study involving three different online community based idea contests in the global automotive sector suggest that the nature of engagements in community-based idea contests is determined by participants’ intrinsic and extrinsic, motivations, their desires to compete or collaborate combined with the community relationships, norms, and values that develop. Community members adopt multiple roles when co-creating value propositions with service organizations in these online community based idea contests as part of a finely balanced social system, which sometimes creates tensions with the commercial motivations of the service organization hosting the contest. Factors such as reciprocity, altruism, reputation, and community identity seemed to play a significant role in the nature of participant engagement in community based idea contests, in addition to other factors such as the presence or absence rewards or other monetary incentives.

While the findings suggest that service organizations should involve both lead and ordinary users in the co-creation of value propositions, the biggest challenge for service organizations is the provision of meaningful incentives for participants who might be
motivated to compete and / or collaborate, as well as sustaining user participation. While community members are a valuable resource for service organizations as they identify and analyze opportunities, provide ideas and feedback and collectively evaluate the finalized service innovation from an end-user perspective, they are a resource that needs to be respected, appropriately facilitated and possibly rewarded using a combination of monetary and non-monetary incentives.

In terms of managerial implications, we posit that service organizations should proactively recruit willing participants for their contests and ensure that they provide participants with an appropriate combination of monetary or non-monetary rewards for participants in such contests. Service organizations should not just consider the insights of lead users in open service innovation but should also recognize the valuable contribution of ordinary users can contribute to the service innovation process. While ordinary users may have difficulties engaging with any technical issues that may arise in a particular idea contests, they can act as inspiration for creativity and innovation. Finally, it is clear that contest participants are not oblivious to the fact that they were contributing possibly lucrative service ideas and concepts to service organization for relatively little reward however they may be willing to do so if the obtain relevant social, monetary and other rewards.
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### Table 1: Overview of Innovative User Typologies

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>User Type</th>
<th>Nature of Activity</th>
<th>Key Motivations</th>
<th>Examples</th>
<th>Relevant Literature</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Lead Users</strong></td>
<td>Modifying existing products or services to better suit their needs</td>
<td>Personal benefit, e.g. increased functionality, enjoyment of exploring and experimenting</td>
<td>Hackaday.com, Hacknmod.com</td>
<td>Von Hippel, 1986; Lüthje, 2004</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Open Source Software Developers</strong></td>
<td>Developing free software for distribution over the internet</td>
<td>Personal enjoyment, developing new skills, obtaining status within the community</td>
<td>Linux, JQuery</td>
<td>von Hippel and von Krogh, 2003; Raymond 1999</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Consumer Tribes</strong></td>
<td>Groups creating and sharing concept drawings or 3D models of desired products</td>
<td>Personal enjoyment, engaging with like-minded people who share similar interests</td>
<td>Niketalk.com, Macrumors.com</td>
<td>Cova, 1997; Franke and Shah, 2003; Sawhney et al., 2005;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Crowdsourced Labourers</strong></td>
<td>Undertaking a company’s stated tasks in (possible) exchange for monetary or non-monetary rewards</td>
<td>Personal enjoyment, monetary and non-monetary rewards, acquiring new skills, building their CV’s</td>
<td>Innocentive.com, 99designs.com</td>
<td>Howe (2009); Brabham (2008)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Source: Authors
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Stream</th>
<th>User Activities</th>
<th>Key Benefits for Service Innovation</th>
<th>Key Challenges for Management</th>
<th>Relevant Literature</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>User as Resource</strong></td>
<td>Contribution of ideas, experiences and knowledge</td>
<td>Users provide knowledge that transcends the “dominant logic” of internal new service development (NSD) teams;</td>
<td>Selecting and connecting with “innovative” users; Devising incentives; Capturing consumer knowledge</td>
<td>Von Hippel (1986; 2002); Pitta et al. (1996)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>User as Co-Creator</strong></td>
<td>Service design; Service development; Selection of specifications</td>
<td>Co-creators may provide a wealth of skills that exceed the capabilities of an individual NSD team</td>
<td>Managing increased project uncertainty; connecting with consumers with relevant skills</td>
<td>Prahalad and Ramaswamy (2000; 2002)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>User as End-User</strong></td>
<td>Service testing; Prototype testing; concept evaluation</td>
<td>Early detection of product flaws in development process;</td>
<td>Ensuring diversity of testers; finding cost-effective methods for capturing feedback.</td>
<td>Dolan and Matthews, (1993)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*Note: Roles adapted from Nambisan (2002: 395)*
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Platform</th>
<th>App My Ride Contest</th>
<th>BMW Idea Contest</th>
<th>Smart Design Contest</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ideas</td>
<td>386</td>
<td>312</td>
<td>52624 (Designs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Applications</td>
<td>96</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
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<tr>
<td>Members</td>
<td>553</td>
<td>640</td>
<td>9600</td>
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<td>Evaluations</td>
<td>1996</td>
<td>8671</td>
<td>608878</td>
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<td>Messages</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comments</td>
<td>1450</td>
<td>2168</td>
<td>27329</td>
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<tr>
<td>Criteria</td>
<td>App My Ride Contest</td>
<td>BMW Idea Contest</td>
<td>Smart Design Contest</td>
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<td>-------------------------------</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Task specificity</strong></td>
<td>High (seeks Apps and ideas for a future Volkswagen infotainment system)</td>
<td>High (new ideas for mobility services in tomorrow’s urban areas)</td>
<td>High (design the exterior of a Smart Fortwo)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Degree of Idea Elaboration</strong></td>
<td>Text-based description of idea, supplemented by graphical representation; implementation of application prototype</td>
<td>Text-based description of the idea’s functionality, target group, benefits, and uniqueness; Supplemented by graphical representations</td>
<td>Presentation of design from 4 exterior perspectives of the vehicle: front, rear, left and right side.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Toolkit Provided</strong></td>
<td>SDK (Software Development Kit) for application prototypes; Online form for submitting ideas</td>
<td>Online form for submitting Ideas</td>
<td>Online application for mapping designs onto various perspectives of the Smart Car</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Organizational Appearance</strong></td>
<td>Online, community-based environment; User profiles, comments and evaluation sections</td>
<td>Online, community-based environment; User profiles, comments and evaluation sections</td>
<td>Online, community-based environment; User profiles, comments and evaluation sections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Time Line</strong></td>
<td>8 week submission phase</td>
<td>6 week submission phase</td>
<td>7 week submission phase</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Incentives</strong></td>
<td>3 x monetary prizes ranging from €3000 – €1000; 1 x VIP Trip to Car Presentation; 1x 6 month internship at VW R&amp;D; 3 x VW car rental weekend vouchers</td>
<td>4 x non-monetary prizes including BMW Satnav system, iPod Touch, MINI-branded bag, MINI-branded clock</td>
<td>6 x monetary prizes ranging from €1500 - €300</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Target Group</strong></td>
<td>Application Developers; students; drivers and passengers who use infotainment systems; VW owners; non-VW owners Open to all ages.</td>
<td>Commuters, city drivers, business people, Electric car users; Open to all ages, BMW owners, non-BMW owners; Open to all ages</td>
<td>Designers, Smart car users, non-Smart car users; Open to all ages</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Role Type</td>
<td>Nature of Role Engagement</td>
<td>Illustrative Quotations</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Problem Identifier</strong></td>
<td>Identification of problems from participant’s perspective</td>
<td>“Well aside from any brief social interactions, members participate in a lot of problem identification, which is often the starting point for their ideas. Other members can take these problems identified and offer additional solution to the problem, so members learning from one another whole time”. (Personal Interview Marketing Professional BMW Community)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Idea Generator</strong></td>
<td>Identify and share existing opportunities, articulate ideas and concepts for other members of the community</td>
<td>“Unfortunately, I cannot implement this, as I can only offer ideas. I am happy if someone can develop it, and I’d be keen to be involved where possible.” (Volkswagen)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“For my part I’m Ok with people taking my ideas, so long as they enhance them in the process. I’m not a programmer so I’m intrigued to see what my ideas would look / work like if well coded.” (Volkswagen)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“Thanks [username]. Yeah, I love coming up with ideas... it is my thing. :)” (BMW)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Designer</strong></td>
<td>Focused on the aesthetic aspects of an idea or concept, as well as usability and interaction experience. Some participants used specialist language that is native to other designers.</td>
<td>“You have no idea what good design is ... you’re just like ... throwing together bright colors hundreds of times and calling it art. I could see Smart actually considering my designs for actual use, I could not see them using yours. Your designs have NO meaning or artistic intent to them whatsoever! Read the captions beside each of mine. I think about what I am doing before I submit a design. Your designs look like you swallowed a bunch of paint and vomitted it all over the car. The most creative part of your entire collection is the picture you made of yourself in 4 colors. Thats pretty good.” (Smart)</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“I have a question. is this a serious designcontest or is this a childrens playground? I'll see absolutely no creativity in 95% of the designs that are being submitted”. (Smart)</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>“Why are you all letting yourself get fooled by the appearance of his latest designs. they are not designs, it's just copy paste with a picture over a picture of a smart. where is the design? where is the originality? i too can download a picture of a smart of the internet, open the picture in photoshop and then copy a piece of another picture and click paste or fill””. (Smart)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
| **Developer** | Focused on technical implementation of ideas | “Hi [username]! I think you have the same problem as many other users here. Locally the app works fine but if you upload it doesn't work. The problem here is adobes sandbox security model. […] You
and concepts, provide technical assistance to others in the community, illustrate members’ technical knowledge of how ideas and designs can be implemented. Technical knowledge is not necessarily software development; it could also entail product design experience, usability experience, amongst others:

- “Great app! :) I’ve find two possible bugs. One is in reset button. I can't reset values.. and other is when you choice oil engine or diesel engine. It doesn't change :) Another point that I like is report button. Is a very good idea “ (Volkswagen App my Ride)
- “Well it was clear that a large amount of the people in the community weren’t techies, some had some basic understanding of how technologies worked, but very few of them could code with any degree of fluency. “

“A: Was this become a problem from your perspective? Sometimes, developers were invited to code ideas put forward by less technical members of the community, which I thought was nice, as some cool ideas were shared. I guess too that people who don’t know as much about coding don’t get as caught up in how the thing works, they just want the application to do its job, which isn’t a bad thing either. “ (Personal interview with software development member of Volkswagen Community)

Motivator

Encourages other members of the community, boost member’s morale where necessary, provide compliments:

- “Hey, nice idea. What do you think about providing a comparison on screen between gear/motor-speed/fuel-consumption showing the driver the best speed, gear and motor speed to save fuel? Keep going!”
- “Dude, your ideas are great! The transformation of this idea could be a step in the direction of making people aware of eco-friendly driving!” (Volkswagen)
- “Some members copy and past messages onto peoples profiles and ideas, stuff like “that’s great,” “nice work,” comments like that just to bring up their activity rating so that they can win prizes.” (Personal interview student participant Volkswagen Community)
- “A person could say “nice work” and mean it, but when you see the same person writing basically the exact same thing on different profiles and pages, I take it as an insult. That person could at least say “I really like the colour scheme,” or something that appreciates a specific part of that particular design, rather than just giving a generic response that provides no real worth. ….. most of the active members in the community would share more worthwhile comments or feedback. I don’t think any of the people who used to contribute pointless comments were banned from the community or anything. I guess there are always people who are going to abuse a system, in this case the activity rating system in the idea contest. “ (Personal interview student participant Volkswagen Community)
“Thanks for leaving your comments - very much appreciated (and encouraging) - very good stuff here on your 'area' too! Good luck” (Smart)

“Your designs have improved over the period of the competition a lot as well, means you do indeed have some very good ones, though they are very repetitive (Smart) Good work, awesome translation of the concept in the presentation. I like the black tiger hidden in the jungle, in the background, nice touch.” (Smart)

“Know the amount of effort a person can put into a design, and I just want to offer words of encouragement. Sometimes I might suggest some changes, but generally I just want the person to know that their work is appreciated. That way, hopefully, they will continue to create more designs and raise the standard of the competition, and give us designers something to be proud of!” (Personal Interview with Graphic Designer Participant Smart Community)

Leader/Governor

- Takes the role of a community authority figure, provides guidance on community activities. Leaders generally acted contest administrators or representatives of the contest organiser. Participants also took this role on themselves and imposed rules and norms on other members

- “Hi, looks very good! You could improve e.g. the scroll bar a little bit. Thinking of an in-car touchscreen it could be a bit bigger for easy handling” (Volkswagen Jury Member)

- “Hi emre, I had a idea similar to your "Do you have a pen" but then i saw your idea already submitted. So will it be a problem if made app of it? Karthik “…”Hi Karthik, only if you do not copy my design, it will not be a problem for me at all. Its already clear that I submitted the idea before you. Go ahead and design your app. Good luck emre” (Volkswagen App My Ride)

- “Dude, check the contest topic: “The "App my Ride" contest by Volkswagen seeks Apps and Ideas for possible Apps for a prototype of a future Volkswagen infotainment system.” Do you find anything about names for next generation of cars? I don’t think so. Please stick to the topic!” (Volkswagen App my Ride)

- “Hi to all! Please read the information given in the “Contest” section. We are looking for apps for a future infotainment system and only for this. Using the data we provide with the tooling. No new sensors, no new car-layout, no new cameras, no new car names, no new seats, …. Peter Oel, VW “ (Volkswagen App my Ride)

- “Welcome ceeuglover! Sorry to tell you, but better upfront: We’ll have any post deleted which is posted more than 3 times on a profile or an idea. I’ll be really strict in this one as in the last contest
you guys killed me :) Thanks for your understanding! Good luck!! “ (BMW)

- “Sorry to remind you again - we are searching for services, not for product - and your idea has a
  huge focus on products. However - thanks for your idea! “ (BMW)

- “Anyone that blatantly rips off an idea from somewhere else can even be ridiculed! “ (Personal
  Interview Marketing Professional Participant BMW Community)

- “This is an abuse of the contest rules. I think you are supposed to enter UNIQUE designs
  DIFFERENT from each other. Nearly 8500 designs from ONE person. 8500 designs with no trace of
  actual creativity. Obviously the activity part of the contest is what this person is hoping to win, but I
  hope the judges will see that they can spare themselves a good deal of work by eliminating any of the
  nearly 8500 designs for consideration for any award. “ (Smart)

- “What part of "Don't write the same comment on more than 3 designs" you don't understand? Did I
  already ban you from the contest once? “ (Smart)

- “Hi there, my name is Hans, I am the contest manager. Thanks for your activity, I really appreciate
  it. Yet I’d also appreciate if you stop spaming the platform with the same comment over and over
  again. We worked around the clock recently in order to get this contest on the road. Now spaming
  lowers the quality of the contest and I don’t like it. From now on, anything that looks like spaming to
  me is going to be deleted. Thanks for your understanding! Let me know when you have questions. “
  (Smart)

- “Enough with the kindergarden. We’ll get everybody who's spamming, evaluating incorrectly or
  whatever, so don't you worry about it. Discussion is over, otherwise we'll hide the activity counter
  until February 22nd“. (Hans Contest Manager – Smart)

- “Note: All submitted designs must not be protected by copyright- or other rights and/or infringe on
  the right of third parties. This includes copyrights, logos, trademarks, trade names or proprietary
  rights. The copy of designs from other sources is not allowed. Any form of copy will lead to
  immediate disqualification” (Smart)

- “The Synonymy would you mind not stealing other peoples ideas!!! i upload my design of my
  daughters eyes and 15 minutes later you also upload a design with an eye on it. pretty lame if you
  ask me. it’s clearly you have no talent and no ideas and you are just using pictures you find on the
internet and stealing other people's ideas, such a shame for a lousy 800 euros. (Smart) you have to be the owner or ordered rights of a picture when you use it. You can't google some pics and use it. You have 4 opportunities: 1. Take own photos (but don't photograph think with trademarks like a coca cola can*g*) 2. Buy rights of a picture (but I think in a contest it's waste because smart has to buy a extra license, too) 3. Make own graphics (scribble or with a program) 4. Use graphics of the configurator“ (Smart)

End-User

Contribute feedback on ideas and concepts from the participant's perspective; provide usability testing of applications personal experiences of shortfalls in existing product offerings

- “Like the idea but I'm missing something. People who drive well don't really need this, people who drive badly are either a) not concentrating on driving so probably wouldn't notice this or b) "tailgate" deliberately so would see this as a challenge I see if they can make the ring go red. Sadly, I think the better orientation is as follows: it should be configured for the rear of the car and coupled to a rear-pointing camera that can capture video and forward that video to the police in case of deliberate or persistent tailgating. I've almost lost count of the number of times I said I would make this function (or simply fit a rear-pointing camera. “ (Volkswagen)
- “I'm not sure this adds anything over and above what's already available in a SatNav device. I have a very old version of Navigator that (almost always) shows me the current speed limit in the display, and gives [a] voice warning if I exceed the limit by 10kmh. It has worked well in both Germany (kmh) and UK (mph). “ (Volkswagen)
- “...had the same idea and contacted clever-tanken.de in order to ask for an ok to use their data for an app. Turns out, they are eager to share. However, the idea is great. :)”. There was also opportunity knowledge being shared so that those with limited technical knowledge could have their ideas developed to a further extent by members with the requisite skills”. (Volkswagen)
- “I really like your app! In my old Golf I had a similar app on my notebook which used OBD Interface. But my application was not as useful as your one because I always had to take my notebook as passenger with me “ (Volkswagen app my Ride)
- “There is still something about turning a key and winding up a starter motor that is part of the driving experience... My Toyota has a tap and go ignition key where you just tap it around to the start position and it starts the car for you... you don't have to hold it there and I don't like it” (BMW)
- “I find this idea similar to several "personal transporters" around, and don't think it's such a leap in innovation. An electric motorcycle/scooter/bicycle serves the same purpose, and these are already
available“. (BMW)

- “No different than the park and ride here either... Plus I still have to sit on a crappy train with too many people who are all grumpy and a few who are the victims of hit and miss body hygiene, then I have to walk to my work place, or take another bus... and pay for this privilege... nah forget it, I'll just take my car right to the parking garage and have a happy day. Plus the point of a BMW is to drive it... I'm not going to work my ass off to afford a nice 5 series so I can get cheap ticket prices on a crap train... I think you need to get your global marketing message cleared up if this is what BMW is proposing... You would think that if nothing else is gained from this competition, you would realize that the direction of services is not where you should go “ (BMW)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Evaluator</th>
<th>Qualifies likely success of some of the ideas based on members culture knowledge, e.g. knowledge of rules, customs, laws, lifestyles, and other cultural aspects that may affect the performance of a proposed idea, aware of current trends the market,</th>
</tr>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“... I like your idea but it is - under some legislation - not as easy to tell, &quot;if you are allowed to drive&quot;. Example: in Germany you are allowed to have 0,5 % Alcohol in Blood if you behave &quot;normal&quot;. But if you show alcohol related &quot;noticeable problems&quot;, then it's also illegal to drive, if you are above 0,3 % you can lose your driving license for it. So telling someone it is &quot;safe to drive&quot; is not a good idea at all [...] maybe in your home country everything is different”. (Volkswagen App my Ride)</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>“Let me mention the target group, casually mentioned as &quot;everyone&quot;. How does one focus on &quot;everyone&quot; and provide a service. puzzles me. think we need to clarify the purpose of this research. if in developed countries that is the situation think abt the aspirational countries like India for eg where there were record auto sales last two yrs even while the rest of the world was in recession.BMW is associated with a lot of prestige and high value because of its comparatively prohibitive cost. people who buy a BMW dont need to cue up for a bus. Product, enhanced product and augmented product i.e. services concept needs a larger strategy than this”. (BMW)</td>
</tr>
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<td></td>
<td>“This is one of those obvious ideas that you think &quot;why in the world have they not done it yet???” Well, the answer I think is obvious too, it's all about the cost. I never understood why in the world would none of the car companies ever include a wide rear-view mirror that instantly eliminates blind spots in any vehicles? Bazaar, but you can only get those as an after-market accessory. I have them and can't figure out why that's not obvious to all car manufacturers, including BMW. Anyway, the self-tining glass I think should be standard, as not only is it convenient, it also improves safety. Great idea” (BMW)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Here in Brazil the big brands like as BMW are extremely expensive and don't have great access.</td>
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xxiii
For a decent future of urban mobility, we have to reach all classes, including the disadvantaged.” (BMW)

- “Guys, thanks for the comments. This concept was created to a popular audience. Here in Brazil the big brands like as BMW are extremely expensive and don't have great access. For a decent future of urban mobility, we have to reach all classes, including the disadvantaged. Thank you, bye“ (BMW)

- “very cool idea. I would love to be able to change the colour of my car on a whim. I wonder what the implications would be regarding licencing of the vehicle? What colour would you put down... I don’t think the police would like this. “ (BMW)

- “urban fabric in Colombia are forbidden, is cultural question, idea interesantei (BMW)

- If 90% of the entries are for product that make driving more fun, more relaxing and better you might learn that this is where your marketing drive should focus... If you, as a company are trying to win brownie points for some type of social green initiative, it would appear that this isn't the area to do it in... just my 2 cents” (BMW)

- “designs are loosing quality over time. I think i evaluated 50 % of your ideas and if i am honest most of them by 1 or 2 stars. if you want to contribute to the contest for the reason to increase your activity counter, then comment and vote for other designs, but don’t spam the platform” (Smart)

- “I like the ideas pix. :-) Though I must say, from personal/limited experience, that BMW have been a favourite choise for ladies who like to feel power at their feet (padel). :-) “ (BMW)

- “your idea is fascinating, in Colombia people do not respect the signals, is an interesting idea of how to control standards“ (BMW)

- “I get the feeling this idea comes from every futuristic sci-fi movie ever made! Sorry for being negative... But without a picture, this is not an innovative idea “ (BMW)

- “I thought there were some really interesting ideas shared in the community, some were almost in the realm of science fiction, but as history has shown, science fiction usually becomes reality before too long. Some were unoriginal and have been done elsewhere, but the members of the community provided that feedback to the person who created the idea. The really interesting thing about BMW is that their luxury cars feature technologies that mainstream cars might not see until years later, so
from this point of view, very futuristic ideas are welcomed within the community. “ (Personal Interview Mechanical Engineer Participant BMW Community)

- “I would say that it’s the different perspectives that can change the angle of an idea or opportunity. Ideas might have different opportunities in different cultures, so having a community made up of a diverse range of nationalities and cultures can help members to improve their ideas through the sharing of various views. “ (Personal Interview Mechanical Engineer Participant BMW Community)

- “Hi there, no offense but it would nice and cool if you came up with a little more than one word in your comments; that’s a little more valuable for the discussion”. (Smart)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lurker</th>
<th>Little or no community participation, contribute little knowledge to the community. May observe from a distance – do not typically leave comments</th>
</tr>
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</table>

- “Hello from Spain to you, it is nice to see that there are more people trying new ideas” (BMW)
Table 6: Participant Motivations for Engaging with and Contributing to Community Based Idea Contests

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Motivations</th>
<th>Incentives</th>
<th>Illustrative Quotations</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Learning          | Access to knowledge of experts, Access to the knowledge of mentors, Access to the knowledge of peers | • “The feedback you get from others can be helpful in making ideas better, or to maybe make stuff clearer in an idea, stuff I had taken for granted that people would understand. “ (Personal interview student participant in Volkswagen Community)  
• “it’s more motivating for others to suggest improvements to my designs, that way I can improve my work and learn something new! “ (Personal interview student participant in Volkswagen Community)  
• “I think it’s more about the shared interest in the contest topic, and expressing creativity in new ways. If ideas from the community ever do become reality then the whole of the community will benefit through the use of contest sponsor’s products” (Personal Interview Marketing Professional Participant in BMW Community)  
• “Thanks for leaving your comments - very much appreciated (and encouraging) .” (Smart) |
| Direct Compensation | Prizes, Career Options (e.g. internships) | • “The prize was a lot of money, so I thought I would join and give it my best shot! “ (Personal Interview Graphic Designer Participant Smart Community)  
• “Another thing, that navigator prize is not thrilling enough for me to present any ideas as yet. “ (BMW)  
• “The prizes weren’t worth a huge amount of money, but the task was not all that overly complex so I suppose that’s why. They prizes were almost like a token of appreciation than anything else! Plus from a mechanical engineering perspective, BMW would still have had to do a lot of work with the ideas to make them ready for market, so it really boils down to how much an idea on its own is worth. “ (Personal Interview Mechanical Engineer Participant BMW Community)  
• “Nearly 8500 designs from ONE person. 8500 designs with no trace of actual creativity. Obviously the activity part of the contest is what this person is hoping to win, but I hope the judges will see that they can spare themselves a good deal of work by eliminating any of the nearly 8500 designs for consideration for any award. “ (Smart)  
• “Some people just Googled images and uploaded them, it was terrible. I guess those people were just doing it to win a prize for the most activity, but it really undermined the work of genuine, hardworking designers, who put a lot of thought into their concepts. “ (Personal Interview Graphic Designer Participant Smart Community) |
| Self-Marketing    | Profiling options                               | • “I guess it’s just a chance to showcase my talents, and it’s nice to get some appreciation for your work every now and then! “ Personal Interview with Student Participant, Volkswagen Community  
• “Seeing as I’m a student, any concepts I create can be put in my portfolio, regardless of whether someone else steals my idea”. (Personal Interview with Student Participant, Volkswagen Community) |
“[Company name] Inc. is an Industrial, Product, Graphic Design Firm specialising in soft goods, graphics and package design. Our niche is designing products, which satisfy the needs in an ever growing market of products [...] Feel free to call anytime, we are always available to hear about our vision and truly enjoy cultivating new design relationships. Check us out on the web @ [email address].” (BMW)

“It’s (a pitch) basically an online form where user can describe their idea, its benefits, target market, as well as upload images of the concept. It’s like the member is trying to sell the idea to the community and the jury of the contest. Everyone has to do it if they want to contribute ideas. “ (Personal Interview Mechanical Engineer Participant BMW Community)

“I thought there might also be a chance to get some publicity for my talents if I could win a prize. Being able to say you won a car design contest would look very impressive on a CV!” (Personal Interview Graphic Designer Participant Smart Community)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Enjoyment-based Motives</th>
<th>The desire to explore</th>
<th>The desire to create</th>
<th>The desire to innovate</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>“Well I like drawing sketches of things, I’m always doodling, so I definitely enjoyed visualising my ideas, and then sharing them with the community!” (Personal Interview with Student Participant, Volkswagen Community)</td>
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<td>“I could spend 80 hours coding for this contest, but unless the prize is worth at least 80 hours of my time, the prizes won’t be as much of an incentive. Luckily I enjoy coding, so even though prizes would be a nice thing to get, they wouldn’t be the only reason I’d take part.” (Personal Interview with Software Developer Participant in Volkswagen Community)</td>
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<td>“Well if I won a prize, it would certainly be a bonus but even without a prize I still enjoyed the process, I like building and designing things, which I guess is why I’m a product design student!” (Personal Interview with Student Participant, Volkswagen Community)</td>
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<td>“It (Participation in the idea contest) gives me a chance to do something I enjoy doing, and learn new things. It also gives me a bit of a challenge, and the winning a prize would be the icing on the cake!” (Personal Interview with Software Developer Participant Volkswagen Community)</td>
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<td>“shared my ideas with the community, and gave feedback on ideas. I understand that the contest was supposed to be fun, so I wasn’t going bombard non-technical users with knowledge I have from my mechanical engineering experience.” (Personal Interview, Mechanical Engineer Participant BMW Community)</td>
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<td>“Hi Mr. Synonymy! The comments on your pages are quite entertaining :-D” (Smart)</td>
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<tr>
<td>State</td>
<td>Ritual Themes</td>
<td>Ritual Function</td>
<td>Ritual Orientation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Acquaintance</td>
<td>Anarchism, Impulsiveness, opportunism</td>
<td>Task – oriented informational Instrumental</td>
<td>Personal /Individual Identity</td>
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</table>
| Collaboration | Planning, co-ordination, structuring | Task-orientated Informational Instrumental | Social/ Community Identity | Group-centered Instrumental | Designing a concept | User 1: “Hi [User 2] If you want I could send you the part of my code or you [send] me your code and I [will] have a look at it. I don't know if it is clever to write my Email address here, because of Spam. Do you have a Facebook account?”  
User 2: “Yes you are right! A forum is really missing here! Ok I will add you on Facebook and have a look at the code. I will write to you as soon as I have found out something.”  
“I’ve decided to add it. I hope it is as you thought. A greeting and thanks for the idea! :)”  
“I’d like to say an enormous thank-you to Wolfgang and Tobias for all their help in uploading my ideas. Their effort is very much appreciated.” |
“Hi my friend, [username]. Today is the final day of this contest. I think we will all miss each other from tomorrow onwards. The last 2 months we stayed here like a community. Anyway, it’s time to leave. Thanks for your support and valuable comments. Wish you all the success and good luck. Hope we can keep in touch. Thanks again my friend.”

“Some of stuff is written in the contest rules, like no copyright material, other stuff is just like things people know are wrong, like stealing other people’s designs. So I guess you could say that the community inherits rules from everyday life, like “don’t steal”, but then again, there are always going to be people who break the rules in any community.” (Personal interview graphic designer Participant Smart Community)

“Hi there [...] Thanks for your activity, I really appreciate it. Yet I’d also appreciate it if you stop spamming the platform with the same comment over and over again. We worked around the clock recently in order to get this contest on the road. Now spamming lowers the quality of the contest and I don’t like it. From now on, anything that looks like spamming to me is going to be deleted.
Thanks for your understanding! Let me know when you have questions.

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<th>Disconnection</th>
<th>Pragmatism</th>
<th>Task-orientated</th>
<th>Personal /Individual</th>
<th>Self-centered</th>
<th>Instrumental</th>
<th>Advice seeking</th>
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<td>Informational</td>
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<td>Instrumental</td>
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*Source: Toder-Alon et al. (2005: 23) (with illustrative quotes from the contests studied)*
Figure 1: An example of an unpopulated member profile

(Source: BMW)
Figure 2: Example of some of the Apps and Ideas contributed to the Volkswagen Contest
(Source: Volkswagen/App My Ride)
Figure 3: This contest is the inaugural BMW ‘Co-Creation Lab’ event

(Source: BMW)
Figure 4: The Smart idea contest is focused on exterior designs

(Source: Smart)
Figure 5: Co-Creation of the value proposition and open service innovation in online community based idea contests.

Source: Authors