Does Collaboration among Participants Lead to Better Ideas in IT-based Idea Competitions?

Abstract:
Research has shown that idea competitions are a promising approach for integrating customers into open innovation activities. Furthermore research on open innovation shows that most innovations are the result of intensive collaboration processes in which many individuals contribute according to their specific strengths [20, 22, 39, 47]. So, fostering collaboration among idea contributors in idea competitions might be a very fruitful approach for unleashing the customers’ entire creative potential for “open R&D” and thus making idea competitions even more successful. This paper reports on a field study in which idea contributors could collaborate during idea generation and idea elaboration in an IT-based idea competition using the wiki technology. In order to test whether this kind of user collaboration positively influences the quality of the ideas submitted we conducted an empirical in-depth analysis of idea quality in an idea competition. Our results show that user collaboration enhances idea quality and that inducing user collaboration is a viable
design element for making idea competitions more effective. This can contribute to a more successful design, implementation and operation of idea competitions as well as to better outcomes. The article concludes with a discussion of customer groups collaborating in idea competitions (more extrinsically and more intrinsically motivated customers) and shows possibilities for future research in this area.

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