WHAT MOTIVATES THE B2B CUSTOMER AND PARTNER TO PARTICIPATE IN ONLINE INNOVATION?

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Executive Summary

The aim of the present report was to investigate motivational factors driving business-to-business (B2B) customers, partners and clients to participate in innovation processes utilizing social media in B2B contexts. The study was realized through a literature review and the motivational factors employed in six different companies successfully implementing social media in innovation processes were also studied. The top 10 motivational factors found in the investigation are:

1. Interesting, relevant, and enjoying content published by the B2B company as well as B2B customers, partners and clients.
2. Recognition and visibility for contribution.
3. Reciprocity from the company.
4. Possibility to influence and a sense of empowerment.
5. Networking possibilities.
6. Challenges and contests, which lead to skill development, awaken curiosity, and that might be experienced as enjoying and fun.
7. Possibility to interact and communicate effectively with the B2B company and other members of the community.
8. Receiving incentives and rewards, including monetary rewards (such as money, products, pay checks, trophies and awards) and rewards other than monetary (such as praise, approval, honor-roll lists, top ten lists, privileges, attention, public recognition, special titles).
9. Opportunities to enhance professional status and build a level of credibility.
10. Openness, transparency and a sense of trust created by the B2B company.

Dissatisfaction with and a need to improve existing products or services is another factor found to motivate participation and engagement. A sense of obligation to contribute might also drive participation. It is generally recommended that a set of motivators is used instead of only one or two. Which motivational factors to choose when initiating a project like this depends on the project’s goals, types of interaction tools used, type of industry, product or service, and target group, as well as the level of interaction and innovation and possibly also culture. As these factors vary widely between projects, and due to the novelty of the field it is difficult or impossible to say that one set of motivational factors work for all types of B2B companies. Further research and good case studies are needed in order to fully understand this complex issue.

However, the probability of succeeding in creating innovations by utilizing social media in the B2B context increases if motivational factors appropriate for a specific target group are employed as well as social media platforms and applications that the customers, clients and partners already use and are familiar with. Further measures to be taken include minimizing barriers such as bad usability and user experience of the platform, information overload, confidentiality considerations, lack of support, lack of reciprocity and recognition from the company, as well as a lack of trust concerning the accuracy of information. B2B customers’, partners’ or clients’ participation and engagement should be experienced as worthwhile in terms of both benefits and resources (including time, physical and psychological effort).
The investigation was conducted as part of the SOITA - Sosiaalinen media innovaatioprosessin tukena asiakasrajapinnassa – project, which investigates and pilots the possibilities social media holds in innovation processes in B2B contexts. The aim of the project as a whole is to improve Finnish large and small companies’ ability to be more customer-centric and to draw advantages from open innovation. The project is funded by TEKES and executed in cooperation with Tampere University of Technology, MediaCity/Åbo Akademi University and the Digibusiness – cluster.
1 Introduction

The aim of the current investigation was to explore what kind of factors drive B2B customers’ and partners’ engagement in online innovations. There is currently a quite low adoption of social media innovation in the B2B sector. This is mainly due to a lack of understanding the possibilities of social media in innovation, difficulties assessing the financial gains from social media, difficulties in adopting new mental models and practices needed for the adoption, as well as a lack of evidence from similar cases using social media in innovation (Kärkkäinen et al., 2010). However, B2B companies do see a potential in using social media innovation but the highest potential in using social media is seen in one-way customer interaction (Jussila et al., 2010; Kärkkäinen, et al., 2010). Less potential is seen in the more social and collaborative types of interaction (Jussila et al., 2010; Kärkkäinen, et al., 2010). Jussila et al. (2010) found that social media do offer novel ways of enhancing and enriching B2B customer interaction and creating new knowledge and information related to customers. Benefits that producers might derive from using social media are ideas for product or service development, feedback on products or services at different development stages, identification of trends and general know-how of professionals outside of the company etc. Further, motives found for B2B companies to invest in B2B integration through social media are: transparency, integration of partners, new distribution channels, customer loyalty, information sharing, an optimization of time, i.e. a more time-effective re-organization of processes in labor hours, as well as an optimization of costs, i.e. reducing process-related costs in regard to process performance and maintenance (Frick & Schubert, 2010). However, gaining these benefits and successfully adopting social media in B2B innovation requires an understanding of what kind of factors motivate, drive and discourage engagement, participation and contribution of B2B customers, clients and partners. Due to the novelty of the field this issue is not well understood and good case studies are scarce. Therefore the objective of the current study is to find out how companies can stimulate and support customer and partner participation in B2B social media innovations and what kind of intrinsic factors motivate participation.

The investigation was conducted within the frame of the SOITA - Sosiaalinen media innovaatioprosessin tukena asiakasrajapinnassa – project, which investigates and pilots the possibilities social media hold in innovation processes in B2B contexts. The aim of the project as a whole is to improve Finnish large and small companies’ ability to be more customer-centric and to draw advantages from open innovation. The project is executed in cooperation with Tampere University of Technology, MediaCity/Åbo Akademi University and the Digibusiness – cluster.

Objectives

The current investigation was conducted as a literature review during spring and fall in 2011. The main objective was to investigate motivational factors involved in utilizing social media in innovation processes in business-to-business contexts. The barriers impeding on participation were also investigated. A further objective was to investigate the strategy or strategies B2B companies use to motivate partners, clients and customers to engage in innovation through social media. This was realized by reviewing B2B companies’ web sites and secondary sources such as actual case studies and case presentations available online. The findings from the literature review were derived from
different fields including open innovation and community participation, knowledge management and knowledge sharing, and new product development in both B2C and B2B contexts.

The main findings from the literature review on motivational factors are reported in chapter 2 and the illustrative cases are presented in chapter 3. Conclusions are made in chapter 4.
2 Motivation for online innovation participation

2.1 What is motivation?

In order to create successful social media platforms for innovation in B2B contexts, it is important to understand what kind of factors drive and discourage engagement, participation and contribution of the end-users, i.e. B2B partners, customers and clients. Being motivated is about being moved to do something, i.e. a “person who feels no impetus or inspiration to act is [...] characterized as unmotivated, whereas someone who is energized or activated toward an end is considered motivated” (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 54). The researchers have made a basic distinction between intrinsic motivation and extrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation refers to the motivation of doing something because it is inherently interesting, enjoyable and satisfying. “When intrinsically motivated a person is moved to act for the fun or challenge entailed rather than because of external rewards or pressures” (Ryan & Deci, 2000, p. 56). Extrinsic motivation on the other hand refers to the motivation of doing something because it leads to a separable outcome, such as a reward. There are a number of theories of motivation explaining human behavior in different types of activities and contexts and some of these have been related to participation in online innovation. Füller (2006), for instance, refers to the social exchange theory when investigating the reasons why consumers engage in producer initiated virtual new product development. According to the theory, people do things because they expect the activity to be rewarding. Accordingly, B2B customers and partners would be motivated to participate in social media innovation because they expect it to be rewarding. B2B customers and partners might be driven by intangible rewards, such as recognition or by tangible rewards, such as money, titles, certificates, free design tools etc. The activity itself might also be experienced as rewarding due to it being fun, challenging or interesting. Extrinsically motivated actions can be performed with resentment, resistance and disinterest due to outside pressure. However, actions can also be performed with an attitude of willingness and acceptance, where the extrinsic goal is “self-endorsed and thus adopted with a sense of volition” (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Hence, B2B customers, clients and partners may participate in online interaction and innovation because they experience the task as fun, challenging or interesting, or they may participate because of an expected outcome, such as recognition, incentives, better products or services, etc.

2.2 Factors motivating participation

The action of participating in innovation by utilizing social media may originate from different types of motives as well different levels of motivation. A number of studies have investigated the motivational factors driving users and consumers to participate and engage in online innovations, including new product development, collaboration and knowledge sharing. Füller (2006), for instance, investigated motivational factors involved in participating in virtual new product development. He found that consumers participate due to intrinsic motivational factors, internalized extrinsic factors and extrinsic factors. The intrinsic motivators found include curiosity and intrinsic playful tasks, i.e. a customer or consumer will participate in online new product development if the task awakens his or her curiosity or if the task is experienced as playful and fun. The internalized extrinsic factors Füller found in his study include altruism and community support, making friends.
and networking, self-efficacy, information seeking, skill development, recognition and visibility. The extrinsic factors found include a personal need for product or service development, dissatisfaction with existing products or services and monetary rewards or other type of compensation.

Hoyer et al. (2010) found similar results when investigating consumer-level motivators of co-creation in new product development. The researchers categorized the motivators found into financial benefits including direct financial rewards such as money or profit-sharing as well as indirect rewards such as intellectual property or visibility, social benefits including titles, recognition (i.e. status, social esteem, strengthening ties to relevant others), technical benefits including gaining technology or product/service knowledge by participating in forums or groups run by the manufacturer or the service provider, and psychological rewards/benefits including intrinsic motivation, sense of self-expression, pride, and enjoyment of the process.

The motivational factors found in these studies are similar to the factors involved in general online innovation participation and community participation. In an extensive review of empirical findings related to online innovation in B2C contexts, Antikainen and Väänänen (2008; 20010) found a large number of motivational factors, which were divided into intrinsic and extrinsic factors motivating behavior. The intrinsic factors include altruism (i.e. concern for the community) and the need to belong to a group; enjoyment, fun and a sense of recreation of participating; social relationships and social support; ideology; interesting objectives, intellectual stimulation and knowledge exchange; reciprocity; a sense of efficiency and empowerment as well as a sense of obligation to contribute. The extrinsic factors found include monetary rewards (such as money, products, pay checks, trophies and awards); rewards other than monetary (such as praise, approval, honor-roll lists, top ten lists, privileges, attention, public recognition, special titles); dissatisfaction with existing products or services and the need for software improvement; recognition from company and peers as well as reputation and enhancement of professional status.

In sum, major factors contributing to consumer-level motivation for participating in innovation processes online include:

- Incentives and monetary rewards
- Intangible rewards (such as honor-roll lists, top ten lists, privileges, attention, public recognition, special titles)
- Reciprocity from the company
- Receiving recognition and visibility for contributions
- Interesting objectives and content
- Intellectual stimulation and challenges
- Enhancement of professional status
- Networking possibilities
- Enjoyment, fun and recreation
- Sense of efficacy and empowerment
- Sense of obligation to contribute
- Altruism
- Knowledge exchange, personal learning and skill development
Another field related to the research question concerns motivational factors involved in knowledge sharing in intra-organizational contexts, which has been investigated to some extent. In a study investigating motivational factors among users and non-users of a platform for participating in intra-organizational knowledge sharing, Paroutis & Al Saleh (2009) found that users and non-users are motivated by the following factors:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Users’ motives</th>
<th>Non-users’ motives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Effective communication</td>
<td>Having one’s contributions recognized</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Managing personal knowledge</td>
<td>General support and endorsement of management for web 2.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Generating discussion about new concepts and ideas</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Finding answers to particular problems</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Staying informed about the latest news and activities of fellow colleagues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expanding one’s social network</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Building a level of credibility</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Satisfaction in helping others</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Passion for certain topics and one’s area of practice</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The same study also investigated factors affecting willingness to use social media in the context of intra-organizational knowledge sharing and what was found was that factors affecting willingness to use social media are related to old habits of doing things, expected benefits and rewards, perceived support from the organization and management as well as trust issues.

The most important motivational factors enhancing intra-organizational knowledge sharing was summarized in a recent doctoral dissertation (Vuori, 2011). These factors are:

- Contributing to the company’s success
- Receiving incentives and rewards
- Feeling empowered
- Gaining knowledge in return, i.e. reciprocity
- Boosting own reputation
- Adding value to knowledge
- Trusting that sharing is worthwhile, i.e. that it has a positive effect on the company’s or their own success

Hence, participation in online innovation and knowledge sharing can be encouraged by a company in the form of rewards and recognition. However, intrinsic motivational factors are also important in driving actual participation, sometimes even more important than extrinsic factors. According to the self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2000), intrinsic factors are more effective than extrinsic factors in driving behavior. Empirical evidence for this has been found in several studies. Jeon et al., (2011), for instance, found that even though both extrinsic and intrinsic motivational factors have a positive effect on knowledge sharing attitudes, the intrinsic factors (e.g. enjoyment in helping others and need for affiliation) are more significant. Similar results were found in a study investigating...
employees’ attitudes and intention of knowledge sharing (Lin, 2007). The results in the study showed that factors such as reciprocal benefits, knowledge self-efficacy and enjoyment in helping others were significantly associated with knowledge sharing attitudes and intentions. Expected rewards, on the other hand, did not significantly influence employees’ knowledge sharing attitudes and behavior intentions. Besides intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors, participation and engagement are also influenced by other members’ activity, motivation and interaction in a community (Zhou et al., 2011). The members’ engagement in an intra-organizational community is influenced by perceived usefulness of the community, commitment, trust, self-efficacy and outcome expectation (Vuori, 2011).

In a study investigating motivation involved in crowdsourcing contests, Zheng (2011) found that the motivation to receive money was not associated with participation intention. The motivation to gain recognition was, on the other hand, positively associated with participation intention. The study further revealed that intrinsic motivation had a strong significant effect on participation intention. The effect of intrinsic motivation was approximately twice the effect of recognition. According to Füller (2006) intrinsic interest and curiosity are the most important motives for the consumers’ willingness to participate in virtual new product development. Incentives might trigger customers to participate in co-creation, however, the risks are that the incentive is more important to the participants than intrinsic motivation such as interest, which might lead to a poorer contribution outcome (Füller, 2006).

According to several researchers (e.g. Hoyer et al., 2010), a combination of motivators should be used in order to increase the probability of consumers to commit to and participate in innovation processes and co-creation. However, the importance of the different motivational factors found in the research literature might differ due to the type of platform being used, type of industry, the complexity of the product or service being developed or the level of interaction (i.e. one-way interaction, two-way interaction or community level interaction). There is not a lot of empirical research related to this. Some effort has been made regarding motivation for contributing to different types of social media platforms. Moore & Serva (2007), for instance, found that contribution to wikis is driven by altruism, belonging and sense of community, collaboration, egotism (i.e. attention-getting and peer recognition), empathy and compassion, understanding, knowledge and seeking information, self-efficacy, power and influence, ownership, reciprocity and moral obligation, fairness, reputation and social standing, status, self-esteem and respect, positive reinforcement. Contributing to forums is driven by similar factors except collaboration, power and influence, ownership, reciprocity, moral obligation and fairness. Emotional support on the other hand was a factor found motivating the contribution to forums but not to wikis. The contribution to blogs was found to be driven by collaboration, egoism, i.e. personal gain and generation of employment, egotism (i.e. attention-getting and peer recognition), power and influence, ownership, reputation and social standing, status, self – expressions. Hence, the study shows that the set of motives involved in different social media platforms do vary. Further research is needed in order to understand what sets of and levels of motives are involved in the different and complex settings in B2B contexts.
2.3 Barriers impeding participation

In order to successfully adopt social media in innovation processes it is also important to be aware of the barriers impeding participation and to minimize these as much as possible. For instance, design tools and toolkits which are easy to use have been found to facilitate engagement in open innovation (cf. Antikainen, Mäkipää, & Ahonen, 2010; Oreg & Nov, 2007). This means that bad usability and bad user experience of the tools and toolkits used might be experienced as a barrier to participate. Vuori (2011) refers to the technology acceptance model (TAM) when claiming that the two key factors affecting information technology acceptance are perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use. The effort of learning to use a tool and using it should not exceed the gains (Vuori, 2011).

Hew and Hara (2007) investigated barriers that impede knowledge sharing in online environments and they found that engagement was discouraged by the following factors:

- No additional information to add
- Unfamiliarity with the subject
- Perceived inability to utilize knowledge
- Lack of time
- The technology
- Attitude
- Confidentiality considerations
- Not wanting to cause a fight

Another study investigated the barriers for participating in intra-organizational knowledge sharing among people who were already users of a particular platform and people who didn’t use the platform (Paroutis & Al-Saleh, 2009). The study revealed that users were discouraged by the following factors barriers:

- lack of reciprocity from the company
- lack of support from the company
- lack of recognition from the company
- information overload
- fear of publishing something confidential
- lack of trust concerning the accuracy of information

The non-users in the study reported barriers such as:

- too time consuming
- lack of knowledge regarding the tools
- unawareness or cynicism of values that the use could provide
- perceptions of risks
- effectiveness and convenience of using existing tools
- lack of organizational or management support
- fear of violating company policy

The factors affecting non-users are especially important for companies planning to adopt social media for knowledge sharing purposes (Vuori, 2011) and this could also be applied to the context...
and subject of this report. Vuori (2011) explains that as all participants and contributors are non-users of a particular social media tool in a particular context at first it is important to be aware of and to minimize the barriers.

Hence, there are actions that companies could take in order to avoid, minimize and overcome potential barriers of customer participation in innovation processes realized through social media. By conducting usability and user experience tests on the social media applications and platforms chosen or created, barriers related to the technology can be avoided. Further measures that can be taken by the company include being reciprocal, open and transparent, supportive, and reliable. Also, recognizing participation and contribution is another action to be taken in order to minimize barriers experienced by participants. The factors experienced as barriers in the studies conducted include the lack of several factors which work as motivators when present.
3 Illustrative cases

In order to shed further light on motivational factors specifically involved in the B2B context, six cases are presented next. The selected cases use different types of social media platforms to reach their target group and they employ different strategies in order to motivate engagement and participation in innovation. Good scientific case studies regarding B2B online innovation are difficult to find due to the novelty of the field. Therefore, the information here was compiled from a review of the B2B companies’ websites and secondary sources such as actual case studies and case presentations available online. The motivators used in the different cases are presented in Table 1. Each case is described in more detail further on in the chapter.

Table 1. A summary of motivational factors found in six different cases utilizing social media in innovation processes.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Company</th>
<th>Platform(s)</th>
<th>Tangible rewards</th>
<th>Intangible rewards and intrinsic factors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Autodesk /AutoCAD Facebook fan page AutoCAD Exchange</td>
<td>Sunglasses used in a quiz (Facebook) Learning and productivity tools (AutoCAD Exchange)</td>
<td>Interesting and entertaining content Influence Possibility to interact and network Possibility to influence events, give feedback etc. Participation by company Contests and challenges</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bombardier YourRail interior design contest</td>
<td>Money and Netbooks</td>
<td>Recognition Networking possibilities Active dialogue by the company Contests and challenge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dell IdeaStorm</td>
<td>No tangible rewards</td>
<td>Recognition and visibility Recognition program Sense of influence by being able to vote and comment Contests and challenge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Psion IngenuityWorking</td>
<td>Shares common components and tools</td>
<td>Possibility to interact, collaborate and network Top leaders participate in discussion and run blogs Marketplace for partners to advertise and sell innovations Recognition of highly rated solutions</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RS Components DesignSpark</td>
<td>Free design tools available to members Monetary rewards used in contests</td>
<td>Online resources Design support Interesting and unique content Networking possibilities Contests and challenge</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SAP SAP Community Network</td>
<td>No tangible rewards</td>
<td>Possibility to interact and network Possibility to exchange ideas Possibility to influence by giving feedback and collaborate etc. Possibility to build reputation Recognition program</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
As table 1, and the more detailed case presentations below, show, the selected cases are a heterogenic group. The cases were chosen due to their different strategies of engaging participants in innovation. Whereas Dell and SAP don’t use tangible rewards to facilitate participation and contribution, Autodesk/AutoCAD, Bombardier and RS Components use monetary rewards in order to foster contributions, especially in contests. Autodesk/AutoCAD, Psion and RS Components also allow members to freely use design tools or learning and productivity tools. Intangible rewards as well as motivators related to more intrinsic factors are used in all cases. These include giving recognition for contribution, publishing interesting and relevant content, creating networking opportunities as well as possibilities to influence by, for instance, voting, and giving feedback. In the recognition program developed by SAP, the members that receive recognition for active contribution also receive a quite large number of privileges (see the case presentation below). Further motivational factors found in all of the illustrative cases include giving the members different types of challenges and/or running contest, giving them the opportunity to build reputation and keep an active dialogue with the company. Some of the companies’ leaders (Autodesk, Bombardier and Psion) also run blogs and are active in the discussions in the communities. A final motivational factor found in the case of Psion, is a marketplace for partners to advertise and sell innovations. The illustrative cases are described in more detail in the following sections.

3.1 Autodesk/AutoCAD

Autodesk is a software company creating programs for 3D design, engineering and entertainment. The company introduced the AutoCAD software, a design program, in 1982. A few years ago the company created a fan page on Facebook in order to reach and engage their young AutoCAD customers, including young designers or students. The main aim of the effort was brand-building but the company encourages active engagement by the customers as they are able to share and post comments, views, likes, questions etc. In order to engage their B2B customers and to encourage two-way interaction, the company delivers informative and entertaining content through the fan page. Examples of interesting content provided by AutoCAD include: Facecasts where AutoCAD specialists discuss different topics and the audience is able to interact with the presenter; sessions from the Autodesk University event; different types of tips, quizzes and polls. The company has also made a live software launch on Facebook where the audience could interact directly with the people launching the software. The company has also aired a series of five short episodes called Technology Makeover. In this series a company received a full tech makeover and Autodesk is planning to conduct a Facebook contest in order to find the next firm to participate in a similar series. (Hibbard, 2012)

Examples of other ways of rewarding and encouraging engagement include designer sun glasses handed out to the ten first members who had the right answer to a quiz posted on the Facebook fan page when it was first set up. Further, when AutoCAD was about to launch MAC software they asked their fans to co-design the launch announcement as well as give ideas for when and how the launch would take place and who would be involved. (Hibbard, 2012)

Autodesk has also created an online hub called AutoCAD Exchange which offers customers learning and productivity tools, tips and tricks, news, discussions, blog posts, design showcases, possibility to ask experts, etc. (http://autocad.autodesk.com/?nd=home)
3.2 Bombardier

Bombardier is a global transportation company operating two industry-leading businesses, namely aerospace and rail transportation. In 2009 Bombardier created an online innovation community, where the company launched the YourRail interior design contest. The contest was about creating new and innovative interior designs for trains. The contest’s target group was broad, including professionals, students, hobby designers and those interested in the topic. The participants were asked to submit designs that were either hand-drawn or computer-generated using a 3D configuration tool, or in written form explaining the interior idea. The participants could either design a seat upholstery or freely create interior design for different types of passengers (leisure, business and everyday). The submissions were ranked by community members as well as transportation experts using a five-star system. Later a jury composed of company executives and external experts selected the winning designs.

In order to generate interest in the contest, the company used social media channels like Facebook and Twitter. Further, in order to encourage engagement the company kept a dialogue going with the members of the YourRail community. The winning designs were rewarded by recognition and tangible rewards. The winning designs were presented at InnoTrans 2010 and they received special recognition on the website. The tangible rewards included monetary prizes in the range of 200-2000 euro depending on the contest category and placement among the top three designs. Netbooks were handed out to designers, which designs didn’t make it to the top three but still were among the top ten. Also, the most active contributor in the community/contest (with regard to the number of ideas, votes, and comments) was also recognized on the website. The web-based "open innovation" generated 4,300 entries and 2,500 registered community members. The platform has remained available as a network and new campaigns are being planned.

http://yourail-design.bombardier.com/

3.3 Dell

Dell, which is a supplier of computer systems, has used social media in several projects where the aim has been to generate new ideas. In 2007 Dell launched an open discussion forum called IdeaStorm. The target group is Dell customers, which means it is not specifically a B2B case. However, it is a good example of online innovation and how to engage participants without using tangible rewards. The IdeaStorm is a forum for customers to exchange information and ideas, create or modify products and services, and propose solutions. In 2009 Dell added “Storm Sessions” to the site. In the “Storm Sessions” Dell posts a specific topic and asks customers to submit ideas and feedback related to the topic. Customers are also able to vote and comment on any topic as long as the session is active. After the session is closed the ideas are reviewed by Dell and the customers are informed about how and when an idea will be implemented. These sessions are only open for a limited time. Customers are also allowed to submit ideas for “Storm Sessions” topics.
There are no tangible rewards associated with IdeaStorm, however, members receive recognition and visibility for ideas that are popular among the other community members. When an idea is submitted it appears on the “Recent Ideas” tab where members are able to promote or demote the idea. By promoting an idea that a member likes, the idea gets 10 points. However, if an idea is demoted it loses 10 points. The total score indicates how well-liked an idea is. The higher the score, the higher it is on the "Popular Ideas" page. If the score is high enough, it will appear on the front page. Until now over 16,000 ideas have been submitted and over 490 ideas have been implemented.

Dell also recently launched the Rockstar program in order to give recognition to active community members and to encourage them to support the Dell community and assist other members. The program is aimed at members who have actively contributed to problem solving and ideation as well as helped customers learn about Dell products and services. Recognized Community Rockstars receive a badge along with a number of exclusive privileges and benefits including online & offline events. The benefits include a program badge on their Dell Community Forum profile and share across the Web, hashtags for the respective communities for use on Twitter & social channels, listing on the Dell Community Rockstar page on community.dell.com, and a leaderboard on DCF showing monthly contributions. Further privileges include monthly updates from Dell on hot issues, support updates, product news, etc., possibility of moderation capabilities, access to private forums for connecting with Dell and each other, quarterly meetings with groups across Dell Membership in Program Advisory Council, early messaging and “insider” information under Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA). A recognized Rockstar also gets a dedicated program manager, annual program gift, logoed merchandise, access to beta programs and early product reviews and he or she also gets to participate in Dell events (store demos, industry events, etc.).

Idea Partner has also been added since the launch. The aim here is to improve feedback from inside Dell. Active engagement in Idea Partner has been encouraged by titles such as Inventor of the year by which Dell honors innovators that are “ingenious, curious and inventive” regarding delivering technology solutions to customers. These engineers are also recognized through the Dell Fellows program.

http://www.idealstorm.com/

3.4 Psion

Psion is a manufacturer of ruggedized handheld devices. In 2010 the company launched a community called IngenuityWorking to help improve product performance, innovation, support, and marketing. The target group of the community is Psion's employees, partners, and customers. The company’s social media strategy also entailed setting up corporate Facebook and Twitter accounts as well as a new blog. The company required that all employees open Twitter accounts and become active on IngenuityWorking, which resulted in a sense of ownership among the employees. The company’s new values include openness, trust and collective ingenuity. (Keitt, 2011)

Through IngenuityWorking the members are able to communicate and collaborate and to share expertise regarding software, hardware, best practices, innovative technologies etc. The members of the community work with Psion on developing solutions, however, the community also allows members to find collaboration partners among the other members. Psion shares components and
tools with the users which enable them to create tailored modules for mobile devices built on Psion’s platform. The platform provides centrally located tools and support to allow anyone to help customers, top executive leaders participate in discussions and they run blogs, and it provides a marketplace for partners to advertise and sell their innovations (IngenuityLive). Solutions that are highly rated are recognized as they appear on the IngenuityLive landing page. Psion was able to develop and launch a new device platform called Omnii, which was developed in collaboration between the company and a network of international partners in the IngenuityWorking community. (Keitt, 2011)

http://community.psion.com/

3.5 RS Components

RS Components is a large distributor of electronic products. In order to engage and facilitate collaboration among electronic engineers, the company created a social media hub called DesignSpark. In order to reach their target group, the community was launched in four different languages (English, German, Japanese and Simplified Chinese). RS Components made the effort of creating DesignSpark in a different branding to that of the company in order to facilitate a more open atmosphere of asking questions, solving problems, and interacting. DesignSpark also include DesignSpark PCB, which is a fully featured free design tool available for the members of the community.

RS Components is also running competitions in the DesignSpark hub. The chipKIT Challenge, running until 27th March 2012, is a competition of designing an Open-Source energy-efficient and eco-friendly device and an extension card developed using the DesignSpark’s PCB tool. Entries judged to have the most energy efficient solution will win a share of US Dollars $10,000 cash. All of the entries are Open Source which means that the design entries will be shared with the community at the end of the competition in order to enable others to gain from the knowledge and expertise. In the beginning of 2012 the company also ran the Community Choice Awards for the most popular and most creative project proposal.

Factors motivating and encouraging engagement include online resources and design support for engineers, interesting and unique content created by both the company and the community members, free design tools available, possibility to ask questions and discuss topics of interest, possibility to connect to other members, possibility to win monetary prizes by participating in contests, etc

http://www.designspark.com/home

3.6 SAP

SAP, a major software company, created the SAP Community Network (SCN) (http://www.sap.com/communities/index.epx ) in order to facilitate connections between SAP customers, partners, employees, and experts. The SAP Community Network covers developers, IT
professionals, business process experts, business users, business intelligence pro’s, professors and students. The network enables members to network, exchange ideas, build reputation and give feedback to the company. In order to further motivate members to make high quality contributions the company has established a Community Recognition Program based on contribution points (http://www.sdn.sap.com/irj/scn/recognition-program). Points are assigned differently between different content areas (i.e. forums, blogs, wiki and articles) in the community. In the forums, the original poster gives points to other members for the best answers provided, SCN Moderators (SAP and external moderators) assign points for blog posts and wiki contributions and they also assign points to articles, white papers, rich media content, etc. The points members receive for contributing grows over the years but the SCN recognition program is based on the points gathered during the last 12 months. This means that in order to maintain the contribution status obtained during the year the members have to contribute on a regular basis, as it is tied to the most recent contributions. (Rodgers, 2011)

Active contribution in the community is further recognized by badges (bronze, silver, gold or platinum depending on the number of points collected) assigned to the member’s name in the community. Active contributors are also highlighted in various places on SCN and in some of the company’s communications. The names of all active contributors are listed on the website at the end of the year. Active Contributors with Gold and Platinum status may also be featured in SCN Spotlights. Topic Leader is a title given, at the end of the year, to the top three contributors in a specific category on SCN. They receive additional recognition on SCN and are involved in exclusive activities at events such as SAP TechEd. To achieve Topic Leader status, points across all areas of contribution (blogs, forums, wikis, articles and rich media content) are considered. SAP mentors are experts nominated by the Community and SAP. They are chosen for their quality of contribution and influence in the community, on SCN and outside SCN. (Rodgers, 2011)

Hence, in order to motivate engagement and participation, SAP offer SCN members the possibilities to interact and network, to exchange ideas, to build reputation, to influence by giving feedback and by collaborating as well as by using a recognition program with special benefits given for high quality contributions.
4 Conclusion and discussion

The current report investigated motivational factors involved in driving engagement in innovation through social media, specifically in the B2B contexts. The producers’ benefits and issues regarding the use of social media in innovation processes in B2B contexts have been studied to some extent. However, the literature review revealed a lack of widespread empirical research addressing the issue of what motivates the B2B partners, clients and customers to participate in such a process. Relevant literature was found in related fields including open innovation, virtual new product development and knowledge sharing in B2C and B2B contexts. A review of cases that have successfully utilized social media in B2B innovation processes revealed similar motivational factors to those found in the research literature.

In all, the results of the current investigation show that firms can stimulate participation by increased consumer benefits, and reduced consumer costs (in terms of time, resources, physical and psychological effort). By drawing on the results from the literature review as well as the review of illustrative cases it can be concluded that the top ten motivators for customers to engage in innovation through social media in B2B and B2C contexts include:

11. Interesting, relevant, and enjoying content
12. Recognition and visibility for contribution
13. Reciprocity from the company
14. Possibility to influence and a sense of empowerment
15. Networking possibilities
16. Challenges and contests
17. Possibility to interact and communicate effectively
18. Receiving incentives and rewards
19. Enhancement of professional status and building a level of credibility
20. Openness, transparency and trust

Further reasons for participating in online innovation include dissatisfaction with existing products and services and a need for software, service or product improvement. A sense of obligation to contribute might also drive participation. Researchers generally recommend the use of a set of motivators instead of only one or two. However, it is difficult or impossible to say that one set of motivational factors work for all types of B2B companies. This is due to the fact that B2B companies utilizing social media in innovation processes have different goals, employ different types of interaction tools, belong to different types of industries, target different types of customer, partner and client groups, work with different types of products and services, as well as vary in the level of interaction and innovation. There might also be cultural differences regarding motivational factors. The level of motivation required for actual participation as well types of motivation required do differ between cases. Some research has already demonstrated that different sets of motivational factors are involved in the use of different types of social media platforms. One should also keep in mind that there are individual differences between members of the same target group regarding willingness, interest and ability to participate. Some members are more willing to share ideas and participate in discussions, whereas others are prone to be more passive, only looking for information.
and keeping up with latest events and news. These different segments of members belonging to the same target group might be motivated by different sets of motivational factors.

By employing appropriate sets of motivational factors, knowing what types of social media platforms and applications the customers, clients and partners already use and are familiar with as well as minimizing barriers such as bad usability of the platform, information overload, confidentiality considerations, lack of support, lack of reciprocity and recognition from the company, as well as a lack of trust concerning the accuracy of information, a company should be one step closer to successfully utilizing social media in innovation processes in B2B contexts. The participation should be experienced as worthwhile in terms of both benefits and resources, including time, physical and psychological effort. However, further research is needed as well as practical examples of successful cases in order to be able to understand the complex and little understood issue of customer, client and partner participation in the innovation process by utilizing social media.
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