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## Does crowdsourcing help brands to enhance their customer relationships ?

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# ABSTRACT

Jeff Howe first mentioned the term 'crowdsourcing' in an article published in Wired Magazine in 2006 as a combination of "outsourcing to the crowd". Put in simple words, this concept means getting services, ideas, funds or any other contents from a large number of people. As the old saying goes, "two heads are better than one". So imagine thousands of people sharing ideas or skills for a company's.

Through the last decade, an increasing number of firms have perceived the potential of such a practice and tend to use it for any field of business. Crowdsourcing platforms have flourished on the Web proving this practice is getting more and more popular and even common.

This dissertation is focusing on this recent way of externalization from its channels of distribution to the effects on consumers. For the purpose of this paper, the emphasis is on the application of crowdsourcing in the marketing field and on its impacts on brand customer relationships. Consumers are often facing crowdsourcing campaign made by brands to get them involve. Indeed, the globally harsh competition incites companies to find new ways to attract and win the long-term loyalty of customers.

In the first part of this dissertation, literature about this specific topic and related ones are reviewed. Theories will be then compared with data collected during the qualitative market research in order to understand how crowdsourcing can help brands to enhance their customer relationships.

# KEYWORDS

| | |
|---|---|
| Marketing | Branding |
| Crowdsourcing | New technologies |
| Customer relationship | Loyalty |

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# INTRODUCTION

Crowdsourcing is a recent concept, which consists on outsourcing a task traditionally performed by employees of the company, to a group of individuals online. This new concept is often used in the marketing field to help –amongst other things- increasing brand awareness as well as winning customer loyalty. This is, indeed, what emerges from different researches on this specific topic.

In the beginning of 2014, I wrote a blog post about branding in Social Medias as part of an assignment for my Branding class. Yet, even if this first approach to the subject enabled me to discover what was crowdsourcing, I did not have a deeper insight on the different types of crowdsourcing or on the various benefits a company could get from this practice. I got curious to get more knowledge on the subject. My specialization being marketing and my professional project being linked to this field, I chose to base link two of the topics I was interested in, and thus to write my dissertation about crowdsourcing in marketing.

The abundant bibliography dedicated to the subject, including the findings of Jeff Howe in *Why the power of the crowd is driving the future of business* and of Daren Brabham in *Crowdsourcing: a model for leveraging online communities*, headed towards the application of direct documentary sources.

Crowdsourcing is a recent concept, raised to the surface by Jeff Howe in 2006 in an online magazine named The Wire. The concept consists of a company outsourcing to an online community part of the tasks the entity used to do. In other words, it means externalizing to the crowd. It got popular in the business world for reasons we will discuss latter on. Crowdsourcing can be used by any business; it can apply to any field (production, marketing, R&D…); and any individual –professional or not- can perform it.

To determine whether the use of crowdsourcing in marketing can help brands to improve their relationships with customers or not, it is more interesting to rely qualitative research based on semi-structured interviews. The use of such a type of qualitative research allows collecting data in order to understand consumers' behaviours and motivations behind the participation in brand's crowdsourcing.

The exploitation of those documentary references enables to answer the following set of questions:

- Does every company could hope for a successful return from getting into crowdsourcing in branding?

- How consumers feel towards such a practice?
- Does it really enhance their relationship with brands?
- Is it really advantageous for brands or are there other practices that are more effective in improving customer relationships?

This dissertation aims to show that indeed, crowdsourcing help brands to enhance their consumer-relationships but that there are others practices which are good alternatives to reach the same goal.

The first part deals with the review of theories about the topic: crowdsourcing. Definitions and key concepts are explained; Examples are given to illustrate the concepts specified.

The second part is dedicated to the field study. Through this part, we get a better understanding of the use of crowdsourcing in branding. A small sample of consumers was interviewed as part of a qualitative research. Respondents were chosen for their heterogeneous profiles in order to get a larger panel. The purpose was to focus on consumers to understand their point of view and perception of collaboration in branding via crowdsourcing and other practices. The collected data enable to check if researchers and their theories -pointed out in the part 1- are in harmony with the actual reality or not.

# PART 1. THEORETICAL APPROACH

## Chapter I. The growing impact of crowdsourcing on businesses

### A. The advances of new technologies

Over the last decades, globalization transformed the world into an integrated and interdependent global economy. "*We are moving toward a world in which barriers to cross-border trade and investment are declining; perceived distance is shrinking due to advances in transportation and telecommunications technology; material culture is starting to look similar the world over; and national economies are merging into an interdependent, integrated global economic system*" (C.W.L Hills, 2012). Two main factors drive the globalization process: the decrease of trade barriers to an almost disappearance and the advances in new technologies. For the purpose of this chapter of the dissertation, we will only focus on one of those two factors: the enhancement of new technologies.
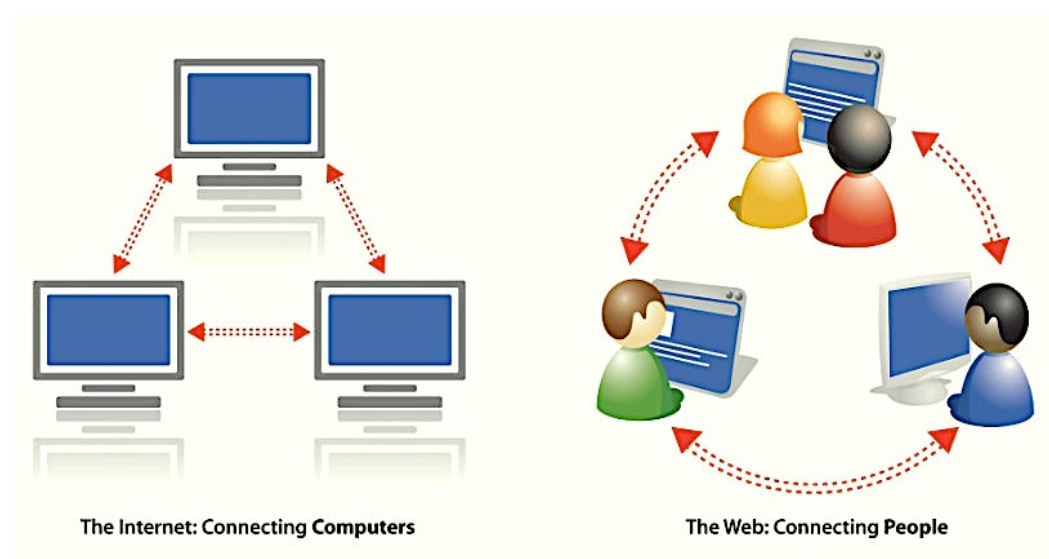
#### 1. Web 2.0

Since the end of World War II, crucial improvements happened in terms of communication and information processing. Amongst those improvements, the Internet (or Net) and the World Wide Web act as essential tools that cannot be overlooked. Technological advances resulted in a reduction of cost barriers and thus, amateurs can produced things (such as pictures, videos or websites) in a similar quality as what professionals would do. Indeed, much software has become more affordable to the average public and are not exclusively accessible by professionals. As Jeff Howe said in 2012 at a New America Foundation Conference: "*technology is so good that it's become easier for people to become very good*".

New technologies tools such as the Internet facilitate the traffic flows of information between people at less costs and better speed. With the Internet came the World Wide Web (a.k.a Web or WWW) which is defined by the Oxford Dictionaries as "*an information system on the Internet which allows documents to be connected to other documents by hypertext links, enabling the user to search for information by moving from one document to another*". This definition corresponds with the introductory part of the Web (also named Web 1.0), which set the basis of the Web. At that time, the web was

passive; companies made contents that users could only read. There were no exchanges or interactions.

Before going further through the explanation and impacts of the Web on businesses, it is important to differentiate the Internet from the Web. People commonly use the word Internet for both the Internet and the Web. However, although linked, those two terms have a different meaning. The Internet is a way of transporting contents, an interconnection of computer while the Web is a collection of digital pages running on the Internet that enables users to see or create online contents. A metaphor illustrating this differentiation would be that the Net is a restaurant and the Web the most popular dish on the menu. Figure 1 illustrates the distinction between both terms.



*Figure 1. What is the difference between the Internet and the Web? © computerhistory.org*

The term Web 2.0 was popularized in 2004 by Tim O'Reilly to name the development of the Web into a worldwide online platform, which enables more interactions between users, empowering online sharing and collaborations. According to O'Reilly (2005), "*Web 2.0 is the network as platform, spanning all connected devices; Web 2.0 applications are those that make the most of the intrinsic advantages of that platform: delivering software as a continually-updated service that gets better the more people use it, consuming and remixing data from multiple sources, including individual users, while providing their own data and services in a form that allows remixing by others, creating network effects through an 'architecture of participation', and going beyond the page metaphor of Web 1.0 to deliver rich user experiences*". This new stage of the WWW is also known as the participatory web. The online contents did not belong only to companies anymore; anyone can create and share online its own content (a website or a video for example). Kotler (2010) cited the "*age of participation*" as named by Scott McNealy, saying, "*In the age of participation, people create news, ideas, and entertainment as well as consume them*". The web 2.0 offers the opportunity to users to express themselves about any topics and to collaborate with other individuals.

This evolution has changed relationships between companies and their customers. Companies try now to build a link between their organization and their customers by involving them in many different ways. A majority of companies ask customers their opinion on some products through a comment section, let them grade goods and services offered with a star-ranking system, etc. Cloudmark gathers the individual decisions of email users about what is or is not spam, outperforming systems that rely on analysis of the messages themselves; Soundcloud act as a platform on which users can publish their own musical projects but the website also delivers music online that users can share or repost.

From this massive participation generated through the Web 2.0, businesses can improve their services and goods delivered; they can also strengthen their customer relationships. Online interactions enable firms to understand better, their targeted consumers' needs as well as enabling them to collect valuable data about their customers.

### 2. Online communities

As said earlier in the dissertation, technological improvements have changed the way companies make business. With the Web, users can participate actively in the process of creating and upgrading online contents. In a nutshell, an online community is a network of individuals sharing common interests who use the Internet and the Web to communicate with each other. Members of such a community create strong social and productive relationships based on their shared interests and aspire to reach the same goals.

Organizations should not consider the rise of online communities as a threat; instead they should embrace this direction turning it as an opportunity for their business. It does not eradicate business but make firms to change and improve their way of doing business. It became important for companies to rely on online communities for customer support, marketing, sales and product development. "*Companies are embracing new ways of connecting and communicating with their customers. They are starting to realize that engaging with their customers through an online customer community can be a great way to build customer trust, loyalty and advocacy*" (R. Sahdev quoted by V.Afshar in an huffingtonpost's article, 2014). Users are looking for sharing their knowledge and experience by being part of online communities and companies can take advantage of those exchanges between members of specific communities to either engage users toward their brands or to collect knowledge from it.

Rob Howard −founder of Zimbra Inc, formerly Telligent Systems- identified three types of online communities (Rob Howard, 2011):

- **Direct community** owned and managed by companies. The organization accesses all the data and users profiles.
- **Managed community**, run and managed by firms but the major data are collected by the host website. As an example, on Heineken's Facebook fan page most of relevant data are available and collected by Facebook. Heineken just benefits from a part of that information.
- **Participating community** created and managed by individuals or by a group of people. An illustration of a participating community would be Starbucksgossip which is a blog posting articles about Starbucks but which is not affiliated with the Starbucks Corporation. Starbucks does not have any control on what is posted on this website. However, it has the right to comment on a post like any ordinary user.

Organizations are looking for the best strategy to use efficiently online communities. Because a smart use of new technologies and online communities can benefit a firm on various aspect such as improving brand awareness, or boosting profits by reducing costs and increasing sales revenues.

### B. From consumers to prosumers

Through the last decade, consumers gained autonomy. It has been observed that consumers have become more and more active especially on the World Wide Web. They like to interact with each other, to give their opinions on everything and to share parts of their everyday lives. New technologies changed people, giving them the opportunity to connect with other people easily, instantaneously and for free. Social medias platforms such as Instagram let them post online selfies or photos of their meal; blogs enables them to write about topics they are interested in, etc. They are looking for more and more exposure and want brands to open up online as much as they do themselves.

Consumers are getting more influence power over companies' success or unpopularity because of word of mouth. If the promise of a brand is not delivered properly, then consumers will not wait long to spread negative comments online to express their dissatisfaction towards a product or a service. People tend to trust more their peers than companies. So when seeing bad reviews about a brand, the consumer is not tempted anymore to buy from the brand with negative feedbacks. The brand equity will suffer from this bad publicity, which would result in a decreasing in sales and a loss in revenues.

Toffler first used the term "prosumer" in 1980 as the combination between "producers and "consumers". Prosumers are consumers who take part in the production process of their own goods. The term can also appear as a mix of "consumer" and

"professional" to express the fact that nowadays, average consumers can generate their own content almost in a similar quality as professionals. Indeed, it has become easy for individual, after a few hours watching tutorials and practicing, to retouch photos on Photoshop or to edit videos using software like iMovie. In addition to their role of generator of content, people can also distribute their content by themselves. Numerous platforms invite consumers to deliver online their own content. People can post on YouTube the video they just filmed and share it to the world.

In an article published in Forbes magazine, the following steps were identified to help company leveraging the power of prosumers (Gunelius, 2010). First, target the key online influencers that could have an impact on your brand or product. Send them samples and ask them their opinions on your products. Join the social platforms those influencers are in and try to connect with them by being accessible and by sharing information with them. Finally, take advantages from the social web by expanding the online presence of your brand through blogs, YouTube channel, Twitter profile, Facebook fan page, etc.

This new type of consumers has the power to reach peers worldwide, to spread messages and to influence the demand. To embrace this change, companies have to be open to new opportunities. Firms have to succeed building strong relationships with those new consumers if they want to have a bright and prosperous future with successful products sales.

To stay profitable, companies have to understand this transformation in consumers' behaviour and embrace changes that occurred with the revolution of Social Web. Brands have to be coherent with the company missions represented, its values and beliefs. They also have to stay true to their brand identity and to not mistrust customers. There is a lot to take into account if a company wants its brands to be into consumers' good books, and it is a long-term task to succeed while evolving and expanding.

### C. Crowdsourcing and the power of the crowd

Jeff Howe -who first coined the term "crowdsourcing"- considers online communities as the building block of crowdsourcing. It shows that people can come together and self-organized into productive units.

Online communities are growing stronger and digital masses are capturing businesses attention. Indeed, users are no more ignored by companies and enable firms to readapt themselves to avoid obsolescence. The crowd has become an interesting source of ideas. Organizations are looking for ways to collaborate with users, to take advantage of this massive collective intelligence that is physically spread over the world but virtually gathered in a single place: the Web. One important element that contributes to the power

of the crowd is that this crowd is not homogeneous. In fact, it is composed of individuals from different backgrounds, with different characteristics, opinions and point of views confronting to other individuals. What link each member of the crowd are its common interests. This melting pot is what makes the crowd interesting for businesses because, if well used and managed, it becomes a valuable source of information. However a company must assess properly what it wants to get from the crowd and should know how to filter what comes from it.

Jeremiah Owyang suggested that businesses risk obsolescence if they underestimate the power of the crowd. He proposes three business models that big firms could apply to their business: brands as a service, marketplaces and platforms. We will focus on the third model: enable business and people to collaborate through platforms. This model permits to create value in the collaborative economy providing an online platform and inviting a crowd to collaborate alongside corporate employees. "*It may seem like an extreme point of view, but in the era of the crowd, people increasingly are empowered to get what they need from each other. The crowd is becoming more and more like a company, and it can bypass inefficient corporations*" (Owyang quoted by N. Goth Itoi in Forbes, 2014). It would be a mistake from companies to ignore online crowds, to stay still and not take into account the shift in collaborative web. We will see in the next chapter how companies can benefit from the crowd focusing on the use of crowdsourcing by brands.

**1.** <u>Definitions</u>

As evoked before starting Chapter 1B, the term 'crowdsourcing' was invented by Jeff Howe (2006) to apply an online phenomenon he defines as "*the act of a company or institution taking a function once performed by employees and outsourcing it to an undefined (and generally large) network of people in the form of an open call. This can take the form of peer-production (when the job is performed collaboratively), but is also often undertaken by sole individuals. The crucial prerequisite is the use of the open call format and the large network of potential laborers*". Using the knowledge of the crowd for specific defined tasks allow companies to perceive additional value considering that two spirits are better than one. Crowdsourcing to a community accelerate the problem solving process compared to just giving the task to one of an individual.

Chaordix –a reference platform for crowdsourced brands and products- specifies the definition writting that "*Crowdsourcing invites crowds to submit, discuss, refine and rank ideas or other contributions via the web to arrive at what have been proven economically as the most-likely-to-succeed solutions*".

For Lebraty (2008), crowdsourcing is simply a new type of outsourcing "*Le crowdsourcing signifie l'externalisation par une organisation, via un site web, d'une*

*activité auprès d'un grand nombre d'individus dont l'identité est le plus souvent anonyme*" (Crowdsourcing means for an organization to outsource a task via its website to a large number of individuals whose identity is for the most part anonymous). Crowdsourcing comes from a merger of 'outsourcing the crowd'. The general meaning for outsourcing is creating value for an organization by transferring tasks to outside suppliers instead of doing this part of work internally. Crowdsourcing offer several advantages for companies, which can explain the increasing popularity of this phenomenon in the last decade. The pros and cons will be mentioned further in this dissertation but before that, we will go deeper into the topic and take a look at the different crowdsourcing types.

**2.** <u>Types of crowdsourcing</u>

Publications identified several categories of crowdsourcing. Types differ from an author to another. In this dissertation, we will focus on classifications of two major experts in the crowdsourcing field study: Howe (2006) and Brabham (2011). In addition to those authors, the categorisation from crowdsourcing.org (2015) will be taken into consideration. Crowdsourcing.org "*is the leading industry resource offering the largest online repository of news, articles, videos, and site information on the topic of crowdsourcing and crowdfunding*" (crowdsourcing.org, 2015).

Jeff Howe's, guru of crowdsourcing who divides crowdsourcing into four main groups: crowd wisdom, crowd creation, crowd voting and crowd funding.
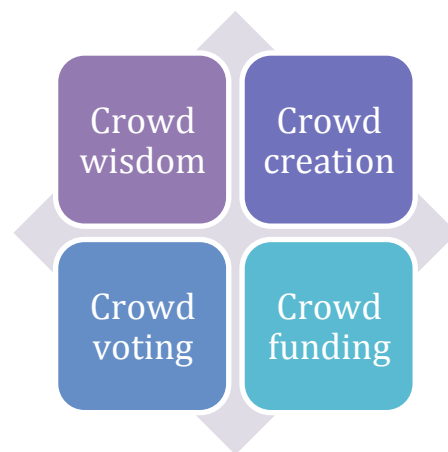


*Figure 2. Types of crowdsourcing - Jeff Howe (2009).*

- **Crowd wisdom** uses collective intelligence to solve problems and propose new ideas of products. Dell created Ideastorm, where "online brainstorm sessions allow the customer to share ideas and collaborate with one another and Dell" (Ideastorm website, 2015). A similar example would be MyStarbucksIdea.

- About **crowd creation**, members of the crowd are bringing their creative skills into creating new products. For example, Heineken launched in 2011 a crowdsourcing campaign to design "a visionary nightclub". On Threadless, members of the crowd can create design Tshirts that will then be sold.

- For **crowd voting**, individuals vote for their favourite product or idea. An example used by Howe (2006) is Threadless, a website where people can vote for their favourite design on printed Tshirts.

- Finally, **crowd funding** is maybe the most known subpart of crowdsourcing. In fact, many people confound the two terms. In crowd funding, individuals collaborate on a project by helping it financially. For example, on KissKissBangBang's platform, people can support an artist giving him 10€ to produce his album or donate 50€ to a charity for building a school in Tanzania.

Daren Brabham –one of the most important crowdsourcing researcher- considers that the segmentation of crowdsourcing should focus on categories of problems a crowd is best suited to solve, and not on problems a company wants to resolve when it turns to a crowd. He goes deeper in Howe's definition by describing crowdsourcing as "*an online, distributed problem-solving and production model that leverages the collective intelligence of online communities to serve specific organizational goals*" (Brabahm, 2011).

| Type | How it Works | Kinds of Problems | Examples |
|---|---|---|---|
| Knowledge Discovery and Management | Organization tasks crowd with finding and collecting information into a common location and format | Ideal for information gathering, organization, and reporting problems, such as the creation of collective resources | Peer-to-Patent *peertopatent.org* <br><br> SeeClickFix *seeclickfix.com* |
| Broadcast Search | Organization tasks crowd with solving empirical problems | Ideal for ideation problems with empirically provable solutions, such as scientific problems | InnoCentive *innocentive.com* <br><br> Goldcorp Challenge *Defunct* |
| Peer-Vetted Creative Production | Organization tasks crowd with creating and selecting creative ideas | Ideal for ideation problems where solutions are matters of taste or market support, such as design or aesthetic problems | Threadless *threadless.com* <br><br> Doritos Crash the Super Bowl Contest *crashthesuperbowl.com* <br><br> Next Stop Design *nextstopdesign.com* |
| Distributed Human Intelligence Tasking | Organization tasks crowd with analyzing large amounts of information | Ideal for large-scale data analysis where human intelligence is more efficient or effective than computer analysis | Amazon Mechanical Turk *mturk.com* <br><br> Subvert and Profit *subvertandprofit.com* |

*Figure 3*. A crowdsourcing typology ©Daren Brahbam (2011)

Each of the highlighted classifications puts forward look-a-like characteristics and appears to have similar categories. Indeed, all are based on the nature of the task outsourced. Below are some of those transversal categories:

- A category where practices are brought together to obtain solutions to problems defined by an organization: crowd wisdom (Howe, 2009), cloud labor (crowdsourcing.org, 2015), knowledge discovery and management approach (Brabham, 2011).

- Another one gathers activities to get creative ideas from the participants: crowd creation (Howe, 2009), crowd creativity (crowdsourcing.org, 2015), peer-vetted creative production (Brabham, 2011).

- And finally, a category that aims to collect money for a project: crowd funding.

Similarly to outsourcing, crowdsourcing enables companies to benefit from various elements. The five key factors that popularize crowdsourcing towards businesses are explained below (Salmi & Abdellatif, 2014):

- **Costs reduction** → Individuals from the crowd are not company's employees, therefore, even when a monetary incentive is given to the problem solver, it is cheaper than employing someone. Paying a regular salary would be more expensive for the firm than the amount for rewarding a task done through crowdsourcing.

- **Efficiency** → The variety of members of the crowd enable organization to either resolve problems submitting innovative ideas as well as bringing ideas that would suit the targeted consumers. Indeed, who is more likely to understand consumers' needs than a consumer itself?

- **Flexibility** → The fact that crowdsourcing is an online practice saves time and face less obstacles such as boundaries for example. Companies can access knowledge from anywhere in the world in a reduced time thanks to the progress and constant improvement of the Web.

- **Involvement of consumers** → Depending on the nature of the task asked, the organization implies more or less consumers in the creation process of a product or service. Consumers can collaborate actively with the firm instead of staying passive. Including consumers to the development of a product make them feel more involved towards some companies.

- **Motivation of participants** → As said in part A.2, participants in crowdsourcing share common interests. They are focused on solving tasks with motivational factors, which mostly depend on their personality.

- **Quality** → Companies can improve the quality of their goods and services offered by understanding customers' opinions and by knowing more about their preferences and needs.

- **Value creation** → The organization can delegate secondary tasks and spare time to focus better on its core competencies.

Thus, not only crowdsourcing is a way for organizations to solve problems but it can also be a source of new ideas at a lower cost, which creates more value for the company. At a 2012 News America Foundation Conference, Howe stated Bill Joy (co-funder of Sun Microsystem) to underline that a company should not rely only on their own employees to solve problems. Instead, a firm should crowdsourced tasks on platforms such as InnoCentive to benefit from knowledge coming from others individuals outside the organization and to solve their problems. The platform of InnoCentive acts as an intermediary between companies seeking solutions and individuals solving those problems in exchange for a monetary incentive. Joy's law is the following: "*No matter who you are, most of the smartest people work for someone else*" (Bill Joy, 1983).

In the same conference, Howe talked about Lakhani's researches about InnoCentive. In his research paper '*The value of openness in scientific problem solving*' (2007), Lakhani found three key elements when doing his researches on InnoCentive. He found the less accredited you were for a problem, the better chance you had to solve it. To say it in another way, Lakhani's studies resulted in understanding that the knowledge can come from anywhere and so companies should not limit themselves into only focusing on their experts. An individual who is not expert in a certain domain can bring the solution to a problem by applying its own knowledge to this new domain.

So, a company should look to benefit from people's knowledge outside its entity using crowdsourcing. And in order to receive positive effects from crowdsourcing, it should supervise the task given with clear instructions and manage the process.

In the final part of this Chapter 1, we will emphasize on the development of Marketing, then we will underline how crowdsourcing is used as a recent trend for marketers and brands.

## Chapter II. Benefits of crowdsourcing for brands

In this second chapter, we will shift from the general aspect of marketing to branding. Changes in consumer's behaviours will be explained before studying further more customer relationships with brands. To end with the theoretical part, we will put together the two major themes of this dissertation and link crowdsourcing with marketing practices. Examples of brands, which as led Crowdsourced marketing campaigns will illustrate and support our words.

A. Progressive marketing


    1. Evolution of marketing


Not only the Web 2.0 has changed the way business should consider consumers (as mentionend in Chapter I.A.1) but it also evolved the way marketers do their job. Indeed, the Web 2.0 widely impacted marketing activities from generating a product idea to helping sales services. But first, what is marketing and how has it evolved through decades and centuries?


According to the American Marketing Association (2013), "*Marketing is the activity, set of institutions, and processes for creating, communicating, delivering, and exchanging offerings that have value for customers, clients, partners, and society at large*". Gradually, marketing practices have changed and have "*evolved into three stages that we call Marketing 1.0, Marketing 2.0 and Marketing 3.0*" (Kotler, 2010).

In the first phase of marketing, the focus was on the product marketed. Marketing was popular during the industrial age when demand was superior to supply. The Ford T is one of the most famous example to illustrate **Marketing 1.0**. Products were standardized, sold only in one color and all marketing strategies emphasized on the product to maximise sales. Through its development, marketing had to adapt its practices to the environment and thus, had to take into consideration additional aspects rather than just focusing on the product marketed.

**Marketing 2.0** headed from the product toward customer orientation. Consumers are taken into account and marketers interacted with them but in a passive way. Firms were looking to attract customers but also to retain them. Succeeding to win customers' loyalty started to be a major goal for marketers. They had to make the product recognizable by consumers and differentiate it from competitors'. The importance of the Web as a source of marketing tool appeared during this phase.

**Marketing 3.0** is the current stage of marketing, which is characterized by "prosumers" (Alvin Toffler, 1980). Consumers are no more satisfied purchasing products or services based on their technical characteristics or on social trends. In their purchasing behaviour, consumers integrate concerns such as Social Responsibility and transparency or environmental consciousness. Those hot topics have to be promoted and linked with the products and services marketed. Companies try to involve customers and to create an emotional link with consumers. Despite globalization, products must be marketed in customized way. Consumers should feel consider as an individual and not as someone ordinary from a massive group of customers. According to Philip Kotler (2010), "*The era of Marketing 3.0 is the era where marketing practices are very much influenced by changes in consumer behaviour and attitude. It is the more sophisticated form of the consumer-*

*centric era where the consumer demands more collaborative, cultural, and spiritual marketing approaches. New wave technology facilitates the widespread dissemination of information, ideas, and public opinion that enable consumers to collaborate for value creation".*

| | MARKETING 1.0 LE MARKETING CENTRÉ SUR LE PRODUIT | MARKETING 2.0 LE MARKETING ORIENTÉ CONSOMMATEUR | MARKETING 3.0 LE MARKETING ORIENTÉ VALEURS |
|---|---|---|---|
| Objectif | Vendre des produits | Satisfaire et fidéliser les consommateurs | Améliorer la société |
| Forces utilisées | Révolution industrielle | Technologies de l'information | Technologie nouvelle vague |
| Perception du marché par les entreprises | Grand public ayant des besoins matériels | Consommateur plus intelligent exprimant des sentiments et une connaissance | L'être humain dans sa globalité exprimant des sentiments, une connaissance et une prise de conscience |
| Concept marketing clé | Le développement de produits | La différenciation | Les valeurs |
| Lignes directrices du marketing | Spécification du produit | Positionnement de produit et d'entreprise | Mission de l'entreprise, la vision et les valeurs |
| Valeurs | Fonctionnelle | Fonctionnelle et émotionnelle | Fonctionnelle, émotionnelle et spirituelle |
| Interactions avec les consommateurs | Transaction de un vers plusieurs | Transaction en tête-à-tête | Transaction de plusieurs vers plusieurs |

*Figure 3. Comparison between Marketing 1.0, 2.0 and 3.0* © *Philip Kotler (2010)*

New technologies have become major tools for companies to market their products and services, to reach and make loyal consumers. However, using Web 2.0's applications such as Social Media does not always result into a success for a company. The online strategies of organizations have to fit the firm's identity and some basic tips should be taken into consideration before launching itself into Web 2.0's applications. Some main basic principles of marketing strategy for companies, which want to get online, are:

- **Clarify your business objectives:** What do you want to benefit from being online? And which potential opportunities your firm wants to take advantage of? The most adapted online marketing tools will stand out from knowing your objectives and opportunities. Social Media marketing, Search Engine marketing or Email marketing could suit what you want to achieve from being online.

- **Optimize your website** creating pertinent content, putting relevant and powerful keywords as well as hyperlinks.

- **Update often your online content** to keep interested your customers asking relevant questions, publishing images etc. It is also extremely important to **create interaction with your customers** so they feel involved and linked to your brand.

These few tips can guide companies to avoid making mistakes online and waste time using online applications the wrong way. There is no point for a company to be online just because everyone else is online. Of course, it is obvious that nowadays being online is essential if you do not want to be lagging behind. You have to be innovative and creative when use some online marketing tools such as crowdsourcing so you can stand out and surpass your competitors. Considering Web 2.0 applications just as gadgets will not be profitable for your organization.

In order to earn value from Web 2.0, marketers can employ either the Passive or the Active marketing:

- **Passive way**
  Companies collect data through their online presence. Marketers are more into a listening and observing approach of consumers. The web acts as a source of information about the market and target consumers. It is a way for firms to identify opportunities, new market needs, consumers' preferences but also to react quickly to potential dissatisfaction as well as to correct some aspects in their marketing strategy. Nielsen Buzz Metrics provide a service for marketers to measure and analyse consumer-generated media (The Nielsen Company, 2009).

- **Active way**
  Organizations use Web 2.0 to interact and collaborate with individuals. They are looking to benefit from people knowledge to customize the customer experience at his best. Broadcasting advertising content on platform such as YouTube is a popular practice of an active web marketing approach. Another example would be to share content made by peers advertising your firm. In fact, user-made content are perceived as more trustful and credible than when it comes from the entity itself.

It is best to combine passive and active marketing in order to be more efficient, to reach positive results and achieve your objectives. Having a website enable people to find you on the Internet through search engine and to get information about your products and services offered (passive marketing). Customers will feel listened and will have a good impression towards your company if you reply to comments on your Facebook page (active marketing). It is important to use all cards in hand wisely to generate a powerful impact on consumers' mind.

2. <u>Recent web marketing trends</u>

Marketing is constantly in movement to face the fast-changing globalized environment. Marketers have to find new ways to adapt to new market trends, new customers' attitudes and to overcome competition cleverly. New trends have emerged and we will approach five of the most popular ones predicted for 2015.

## Big Data

Big Data is, in a nutshell, a massive collection of information. The concept of Big Data is way more complicated than this, but we will not go into further explanations in this dissertation. However, we will retain that the processing of those collected data is an essential concern not only for companies but also for public institutions and governments. Companies have to take advantage of Big Data in the best way so they can improve their products or services and be more competitive.

Consumers tend to be suspicious about their personal information being kept for businesses. They compare Big Data to Big Brother. So companies have to use wisely and subtly the information collected to deliver better products or services without "betraying" their customers.

## Sincerity (Côté, founder of d-modules.com, 2014)

Consumers expect from brands transparency and sincerity. They want brands to respect certain values such as environmental sustainability or social responsibility. In fact, consumers want to feel like they know the brand. They can connect with it as if it was their neighbour or the girl next door (Brand personification).

## One customer, one ad (Côté, 2014)

Consumers like to purchase products and services that seems created especially for them as individuals. As said previously, customers do not want to be considered as a bunch of clients. Each one of them wants to feel that the firm has targeted him/her in particular. So for each type of customer, a specific marketing strategy must be established. To achieve that personalization, the Big Data is very useful as a source of information.

## New influencers

The term 'new influencers' was coined by Paul Grillin to designate bloggers expert in a specific field. However, the meaning slightly changed and now, influencers are also A-List bloggers. Indeed, considering the growing popularity of bloggers and their vast communities, brands want to surf on this phenomenon to reach new customers. "*According to a McKinsey Study, marketing-inspired word-of-mouth generates more than twice the sales of paid advertising, and these customers have a 37% higher retention rate*"

*(Wong for Forbes.com, 2014).* The YouTuber Tyler Oakley (who has 6 millions subscribers) promote monthly Audible.com, a website to listen to audio books. The company made a deal with this YouTuber (and now with many more such as Caspar Lee or Alfie Deyes) so when someone subscribe and create an account, this new customer will benefit from one audio book for free. Another example would be fashion bloggers who also are big influencers and that enable brands to target a different group of potential customers. Those new influencers are a huge source of opportunities for companies to promote their brands and reach new customers.

**Collaborative marketing** (also known as participatory marketing)

In participative marketing, companies make consumers participate to the marketing process. What slightly differs from crowdsourcing is that not all collaborative marketing practices consist of substituting an "employee-made" task by a "consumer-made" task. In participatory marketing, others ways are used as customers' improvements such as comments, votes or playlists. Some participatory marketing are not even likely to be undertaken by the organization or by a freelancers. The opposite is also true. Even if for the purpose of this study we focus on crowdsourced marketing, crowdsourcing also concerns a wide variety of tasks that do not necessarily fit in the marketing field. However, when used in marketing, both practices are usually linked. Indeed, it often happens that a firm submit the crowdsourced tasks to the audience votes.

B. <u>**Brand customer relationship**</u>

Branding is part of marketing but differs slightly from it as it deals only with what is related to a brand. In a nutshell, marketing is what you do to get the message or promise of the brand delivered to customers, while branding is how you keep the promise made. Branding is a core value, the truth and spirit of the product, the service or the organization. It represents who the brand is. But what is a brand? "*A brand is a name, term, sign, symbol, or design which is intended to identify the goods or services of one seller or group of sellers and to differentiate them from those of competitors*" (American Marketing Association, 2013). For branding strategies to be successful, consumers must be persuaded that there are meaningful differences amongst brands offering the same category of products.

Brand management is "*the process of maintaining, improving, and upholding a brand so that the name is associated with positive results. Brand management involves a number of important aspects such as cost, customer satisfaction, in-store satisfaction and competition*" (businessdictionary, 2015)

To achieve a good brand-customer relationship, the organization has to build a strong brand providing a consistent brand experience to the consumers. A strong brand

uses various brand elements, which make the brand identifiable by people: name, logo, slogans, packaging, spokespersons, etc. Those elements have to be memorable, adaptable, meaningful, protectable, appealing and transferable (geographically and within products categories). The brand must be relevant and transmit a captivating story to consumers. Strong brands can act as a competitive advantage because of the value given by the perception of a brand into consumers' mind. The value of a brand is its brand equity. The brand equity is "*reflected in how [the customer] think, feel and act with the brand*" (Goni, 2015). It also impacts on prices and market shares the brand provides to the company. Succeeding in building and managing a strong brand results in greater loyalty from consumers, inelastic customers response to raise of prices, less vulnerability to competition and in marketing campaigns more effective at the international.



*Fig. 5. Seven factors that create the sweet spot between trust & dynamism* © *Matt Weiss for Havanasworldwide (2013)*

The essential thing to remember is that a brand has to be strengthened time to time based on what it learns from its customers (feedback, reviews, opinions, etc.). It would contribute to enhance the brand customer relationship.

Marketers have to move their focus from "building brands" to "building relationships". In other words, instead of looking for increasing and accumulating the number of new customers they reach, marketers should rather concentrate on the quality of their relationships with clients. Obviously, improving customers' loyalty and engagement does not prevent from attracting new customers. A balance has to be made between those two goals marketing wants to achieve. But the important is not to neglect one in favour of the other.

David Aaker quoted Fournier's dissertation where she interrelates human relationship with brand relationship. She identified seven categories of relationships giving firms an insight to understand what make consumers loyal toward a brand:

- **Behavioural interdependence**

"*The degree to which the actions of the relationship partners are intertwined. Indicators are the frequency of interaction and the importance of and involvement in the use occasion*".

Example: Facebook plays a big part in my life. I feel lost and confused if I do not have access to it.

- **Personal commitment**

"*The partners are committed to each other. There is a desire to improve or maintain the quality of the relationship over time and guilt when it is compromised*".

Example: I am loyal to Nike, even knowing they exploit young children I won't stop buying Nike.

- **Love and passion**

"*The intensity of emotional bonds between the partners, the inability to tolerate separation, and the reflection of love and passion that exist. In brand relationships, customers can develop passionate links to brands. Substitutes create discomfort*".

Example: I am an Apple fan, I have every device they made -Iphone, Ipad, Ipod, Macbook and I will buy the new Apple watch when it will be released-. One day, my angry wife threw my iPhone into the sea and to make it up to me, she lent me her Nokia phone. I didn't wanted to use a different brand than Apple and therefore I went straight away to buy a new Iphone.

- **Nostalgic connection**

"*The relationship is based in part on the memory of good times*".

<u>Example</u>: My grandma used to buy me Kinder chocolate for Christmas. I usually do not eat chocolate because I am not attracted by the taste. However, at Christmas time I always buy some Kinders wherever in the world I am, just to relive this memory.

- **Self concept connection**

"*The partners share common interests, activities and opinions. The brand reflects the interests and activities of the person*".

<u>Example</u>: I am a trendy young girl from an upper-class family in Paris. I purchase Chanel clothes, bags and perfumes because I believe the brand is representative of who I am.

- **Intimacy**

"*A deep understanding exists between partners. The consumer will achieve intimacy by knowing details about the brand and its use. One-on-one marketing programs enhance intimacy by fostering mutual understanding*".

<u>Example</u>:  I know a lot about a brand and about the company making this brand.

- **Partner quality**

"*The evaluation by one partner of the performance and attitude of the other*".

<u>Example</u>: my train was late, which made me miss my plane. I complained on the SNCF Facebook page right away. SNCF reacted quickly to my complaint, accepted its wrongs and paid me back my train ticket.


These seven major types of relationships can guide firms to identify which category of relationship they should concentrate their efforts in. They can focus on one type and dig it deeper in order to obtain a solid relationship between their brands and customers.


We said several times that consumer' behaviours and expectations had evolved actively with the development of new technologies. The Big Data is a useful source of information for companies to know more about how to create a strong and long-lasting relationship with their consumers.

It has become necessary for firms to be aware of online means of communication and to master popular digital tools.  Web platforms such as Social Medias give organizations the opportunity to shape their brand perception and to get closer from customers. But to attain customers on Social Medias, brands have to socialize and humanize their online content. Consumers have to be able to relate and rely on the brand. When customers feel respected, well-considered and fairly-treated by a brand, even if the brand disappoints them those customers will stay loyal to the brand and forgive its mistakes.

In the next part, we will see how crowdsourcing can be used to win customer loyalty in marketing and thence, how it can enhance brand customer relationships.

### C. Crowdsourced marketing

When a company uses crowdsourcing for its marketing work, it can either seek for freelancers over the world or for consumers. The choice of the "type" of participants depends of what the firm wants to achieve through its crowdsourced marketing campaign.

When looking for professional marketers external of the entity to accomplish tasks of a marketing campaign, the organization wants to gather expertise of a marketing-skilled audience. DOZ is a crowdsourced marketing company whose CEO sees crowdsourcing as an "*opportunity for brands and agencies, to scale their marketing strategies with marketers who are made for the job*" (Anji Ismail, 2014).

Whereas when asking consumers to participate in their crowdsourcing campaign, the firm's purposes are more about customer relationships and data collection about consumers.

To stay competitive, companies have their heart set on winning long-term loyalty from their customers. Some companies decided to follow the crowdsourcing trend and to apply the concept to their marketing practices. Various brands believe in crowdsourced marketing actions to strengthen their customers' engagement as consumers are directly involved in the marketing process. As explained earlier, consumers are now "prosumers"; Marketing is no more a one-way communication. The fact that a firm is looking for its consumer's opinions is an opportunity for them to get closer to the brand and to feel as part of it.

Many brands conducted successful crowdsourced marketing campaigns, which involved consumers. Four examples are provided below to illustrate different ways brands can use crowdsourcing. All chosen examples are still active platforms and projects from strong brands:

- **Pepsi Co's Group – Doritos' Crash the Super Bowl**

Every year since 2006, Pepsi Co's launch its famous crowdsourcing campaign named "Crash the Super Bowl". For this campaign, participants have to create and send the firm a 30 seconds Doritos brand ad with the aim of having this ad broadcasted live during the Super Bowl (the annual final of the National Football League championship, which is one of the most popular sport event in the USA). Videos are published on a dedicated platform.

Doritos chose ten finalists whose videos were submitted to votes. Anyone could vote for his favourite advert. The 8th edition attracted more than 4,900 submissions (according to FritoLay) and the competition ended recently: the 28th of January 2015. The winner won a job at Universal and one million of dollars as an incentive.

This campaign enables the firm to create the "buzz" and to become viral. The brand has improved its visibility, awareness and value through this initiative. This project is renewed for the last eight years, proving its roaring success.

• **The Lego Group – Ideas Lego**

People can submit Lego Set ideas and designs on the Ideas.lego's website. Each project who reached 10,000 votes, get to the project-review phase where Lego check any potential obstacles  (legal flaws for example) and evaluate the project. Then, once everything is approved, Lego launch the production of the set and sell it around the world in Lego's points of sales. The person who generated the elected idea gets 1% royalties on the product sales and winning projects are posted on the Lego Idea blog.

This crowdsourcing marketing initiative gives an insight on customers' preferences by analysing the voting phase. This source of innovation is cost-effective as ideas are generated for free and royalties for launched set represent a few expense for the firm compared to employ internally R&D experts. Also the voting phase is a great way to advertise new set before their official launch. Finally, this use of crowdsourcing widens the Lego community. Indeed, the phase where ideas are submitted can attract people from any interests –designers, enthusiasts, nostalgic fans or experts-.

• **Starbucks – My Starbucks Idea**

In 2008, Starbucks launched its crowdsourcing platform: 'My Starbucks Idea'. In this hub, customers can share their ideas regarding almost everything that is linked to the brand: from new products to improvement of the 'Starbucks experience'. Visitors of the website can view all the ideas published, while subscribers can submit, vote or comment posts. Then, a team of 'Idea Partners' –composed of over 40 Starbucks employees expert in specific areas- review ideas and present the most popular ones to the key decision-makers of the firm. An online section named 'Ideas in action' lists the ideas that are in process and that will be soon launched in some stores. Starbucks give credit for the authors of the implemented ideas but no financial rewards are given. Community members' main motivation when submitting ideas is to help improving the brand, not to get money. This is where Starbucks energy drinks' idea came from.

In addition to the benefits specified in previous examples, My Starbuck Idea platform allows customers to feel listened and considered by the brand.

- **McDonald's – My Burger (UK)**

Consumers create their perfect beef burger, which could be part of the national menu. Here again, people vote for their favourite recipe. Creators of the most popular burgers met in a kitchen to improve their product with professional cooks. The fives best burgers (chosen by a judging panel) will see their creation sold in McDonald's fast foods across the country.

Looking at the examples mentioned above, we can observe some similitudes and sort out some tips that help generating a great crowdsourcing marketing campaign:

- **Do not ask too much from your consumers and be specific** in what you want from them. Participants are not full-time engaged toward the crowdsourced tasks they do. So it would neither be attractive for consumers nor effective for a company to crowdsourced an entire advertising campaign for example. It would be better to ask for short accessible tasks in order people get involved quickly and easily by submitting a simple suggestion. Moreover, you have to explain clearly and with simple words what you want the consumers to collaborate for. And also provide also the complete terms and conditions to "set the rules".
- **Offer some incentives to the winner and finalists**. The reward does not always have to be monetary.
- **Encourage participants to spread the word** by asking their friends to vote for their ideas. It will generate traffic and boost the firm's visibility.
- **Be sure to respect the promise** specified in the terms of the crowdsourced campaign. If a firm said the winner would get his idea produced and sold in shops in addition to a certain monetary reward, then the company should not go back on its words.

Ultimately, the challenge for companies who are looking for crowdsourcing in the marketing field is to cultivate a conversation that benefits both parties. If well managed, crowdsourcing can enable a brand to create a discussion which gives consumers a sense of power and participation and which, at the same time provides marketers with a deeper understanding of their customers' wants and needs.

But does every company could hope for a successful return from getting into crowdsourcing in branding? How consumers feel towards such a practice? Does it really enhance their relationship with brands? Is it really advantageous for brands or are there other practices that are more effective in improving customer relationships? We will try to find answers to those questions by conducting a field study. Next part will be a key point to analyse if the literature review matches the understandings we got from the people questioned in the field study.

# Part 2. Fieldwork

## Chapter I. Methodology

### A. Market research

To verify our hypotheses and to get a proper understanding of the topic studied, a market research has been conducted. Market research is "*the process of gathering, analysing and interpreting information about a market, about a product or service to be offered for sale in that market, and about the past, present and potential customers for the product or service; research into the characteristics, spending habits, location and needs of your business's target market, the industry as a whole, and the particular competitors you face*" (Entrepreneur Media Inc., 2014).

Depending on the character of the study, two main researches can be made: either quantitative or qualitative. Both are complementary and can be combined to have a more accurate and global understanding of the topic studied. In that case, qualitative research would be used in the early stage of the study project and later on a quantitative research could be done.

The table below sums up characteristics of each method researchers could use depending on the objectives and goals the study is supposed to achieve. Next, each method will be explained in further details.

| Factors/ Characteristics | Qualitative Methods | Quantitative Methods |
|---|---|---|
| Research Goals/ Objectives | New ideas, thoughts, feelings, preliminary insights on and understanding of ideas and objects | Validation of facts, estimates, relationships, predictions |
| Type of Research | Normally exploratory design | Descriptive and causal designs |
| Type of Questions | Open-ended, semistructured, unstructured, deep probing | Mostly structured |
| Time of Execution | Relatively short time frames | Usually significantly longer time frames |
| Representativeness | Small samples, limited to the sampled respondents | Large samples, normally good representation of target population |
| Type of Analyses | Debriefing, subjective, content, interpretative, semiotic analyses | Statistical, descriptive, causal predictions and relationships |
| Research Skills | Interpersonal communications, observations, interpretive skills | Scientific, statistical procedure skills |
| Generalizability of Results | Very limited, only preliminary insights and understanding | Usually very good, influences about facts, estimates of relationships |

Source: Marketing Research (Shiu, Hair, Bush and Ortinau, 2009)

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*Figure 6*. Comparison between qualitative and quantitative research

**1.** Quantitative research

Based on explanations taken from April Klazema (2014), quantitative research allows collecting information about a specific target through quantifiable studies such as surveys and questionnaires amongst others. It generates data that can be turned into numbers. The study is entitled "quantitative" as it aims to establish through "counting" information regarding mapping product, price, promotion models or distribution channels. Those elements can be quantified in terms of their development or to attempt highlighting segments trends, which could be based on geography, social-professional categories, frequency, etc. Amongst other things, quantitative research is best adapted to measure precisely needs or motivations, to test specific hypothesis and examine specific relationships or to identify evidence of causal relationship. It can also help, through the non-response, to know whether or not the respondents know a particular service. Four different ways to led quantitative researches exists, they will be quickly described below (Klazema, 2014):

• **Survey research**

It is the most common type of quantitative research. Tools are questionnaires and polls to identify a trend or behaviour with precision to get the most accurate affirmations or negations of the reality.

• **Correlational research**

Correlational research aim is to explain a noticed occurrence between two variables. It establishes what the affect of one variable on another variable might be and how that correlation affects the relationship. The same survey must be led on two different groups of respondents. It is important to specify that a correlation does not often lead to a cause-and-effect relationship. For instance, in an episode of the TV series Doctor House (season 5, episode 18), it is observed that a cat lies down near a patient and this patient dies a few days later. People start believing that the cat predicted the death of this patient. But this reasoning is not correct. The cat is not the cause of death. Indeed, dying patients often have a higher body temperature than other people. Cats like to lie near a source of heat and therefore the high body temperature of this patient attracted the cat. This example illustrates the fact that a correlation relationship between two variables does not obligatory lead to a cause-and-effect relationship. However, both concepts can sometimes be linked.

- **Causal-comparative research**

    This research tries to discover a cause and effect relationship. It tries to identify how different groups are affected by the same circumstance without focusing on the relationship between those groups.

- **Experimental research**

    It is guided specifically by one or several hypotheses. It aims to establish if a hypothesis is true or not through experiments. This type of quantitative research is mostly used in the biology field.

    Quantitative researches are administrated to a large number of respondents and surveys are composed of formalized standard questions and predetermined responses. This is why, in order to get relevant information from an a survey or questionnaire, it is essential for the researcher to conscientiously prepare its questionnaire because the respondents are in a way "obliged" to choose only from suggested responses. The data presented would be tables, graphs and statistics explained.

    **2.** Qualitative research

    Some studies can be more efficient and successful if a qualitative research is made instead of a quantitative one. Qualitative research is an unstructured research used mainly in exploratory, designed to gain preliminary insights and understandings of a decision problems and opportunities. It provides a complete, detailed description of the topic studied. It can also be used to defined hypotheses. Globally, qualitative research is used when studying a little known topic, where researchers want to understand and explained behaviours of a targeted group. A small sample of people is tested through open questions.

    Qualitative research is most helpful when the research questions are not very specific; when some specific behaviour needs to be studied in depth; when the value of a product changes dramatically from situation to situation or from consumer to consumer; when exploring a research area with the intent of studying it further; or to test a new concept. As for quantitative research, there are also four main data-gathering strategies in qualitative researches and each is summarized below.

- **Focus group**

    A focus group enables participants to share different opinions, to defend and explain their point of view. The host of the focus group has an important role, as he is the

one who stimulate the participants to interact with each other. It enables researchers to collect perceptions of the population concerned without preconceptions. It also explains social behaviour on problems, their causes and solutions to these issues. Finally, it gives to researchers the opportunity to develop policies and projects in line with expectations by the people or groups concerned.

- **In-depth interviews**

In-depth interviews enables to collect information on the personal experiences of the interviewee, his lifestyle or spending habits. The one-to-one atmosphere is favourable to discuss sensitive or confidential matters. The researcher has to be diplomatic, respect the time thinking of his interlocutor, when and how to reformulate or deepen a question. In-depth interviews are usually led in face-to-face but nowadays thanks to the modern technologies, consumers can also be interviewed using Internet video technology.

Interviews can be **unstructured** (respondents are totally free), **semi-structured** (respondents are free in his answers but the researcher drives the conversation on specific themes relying on an interview guide) or **structured** (questions are defined and respondents cannot bring other subjects or ideas).
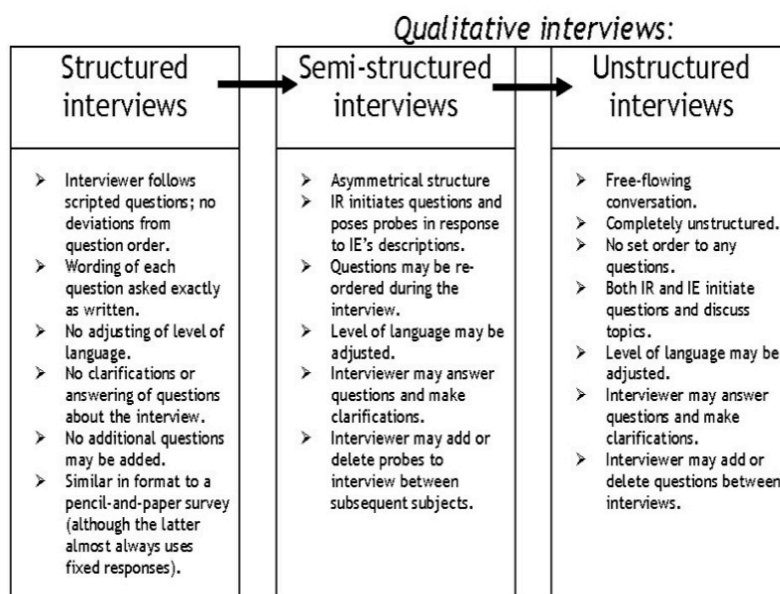


IR = Interviewer; IE = Interviewee

*Figure 7: Types of interviews. Table adapted from Berg, B. L. (2004)* © Center of Inquiry in the Liberal Arts at Wabash College

- **Observation**

The researcher observes and report elements linked with a specific environment or behaviour. For example, a coffee manufacturer going to a supermarket to observe consumers' behaviour in the coffee shelves.

- **Projective techniques**

Projective techniques are unstructured, indirect forms of questioning, which encourage respondents to project their underlying motivations, beliefs, attitudes, or feelings regarding the topic studied. Respondents are asked to react to behaviours of others. They tend to indirectly project their own feelings or motivations into the situation they have to interpret and comment.

Examples of projective techniques would be to complete an unfinished sentence, to say the first word that comes to their mind when seeing a specific word (**word association**), to play a role (**expressive techniques**), to describe pictures or to do collages (**construction techniques**).

| Tool | Description | Advantages | Disadvantages |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Focus group** | Small group discussion led by a trained moderator | <ul><li>Quick</li><li>Gain multiple perspectives</li><li>Flexibility</li><li>Info can be gathered from non-verbal responses</li></ul> | <ul><li>Reluctance for some participant to express their personal ideas</li><li>Difficult to use for sensitive topics</li><li>Hard to manage a group if researcher is not well trained</li></ul> |
| **In-depth interview** | One-to-one, probing interview between a researcher & a respondent | <ul><li>Get considerable insight from each individual</li><li>Good for understanding unusual behaviours</li><li>Free exchange of information</li></ul> | <ul><li>Results not meant to generalize</li><li>Expensive</li><li>Skilled researcher</li></ul> |
| **Observation** | Recorded notes describing observed events | <ul><li>Unobtrusive</li><li>Can yield actual behaviour patterns</li></ul> | <ul><li>Expensive</li></ul> |
| **Projective techniques** | Questioning in indirect forms | <ul><li>Good for sensitive topics</li><li>Uncover subconscious motivations, beliefs or attitudes</li></ul> | <ul><li>Risk of bias</li><li>Expensive</li><li>Need skilled interpreters</li></ul> |

*Fig.8: Advantages & disadvantages of the different qualitative data-gathering strategies*

After comparing both methods, it was decided that a qualitative method was best adapted to get the most accurate fieldwork. Indeed, the first purpose of our field research is not to measure the crowdsourced marketing trend but to understand a phenomenon. We want, in this dissertation, to understand if the use of crowdsourcing by brands strengthens its customer relationship. We want to see –among other things- if this new concept of crowdsourcing affect positively brands or not and how.

## B. <u>Data collection method</u>

### 1. <u>Sampling</u>

The sampling method selected has been the judgemental sampling (also known as purposive sampling). It is a non-probability technique, in which the population elements are selected based on the judgment of the researcher. This sampling was used to get a representative vision of the targeted population. We tried to select respondents that could match best our research based on our own judgement.

The persons interviewed had different socio-demographic profile and personalities so each interview would be different and unique. The saturation effect tried to be avoided by having heterogeneous respondents. Indeed, it happens that when selecting similar respondents, people tend to say the same things and do not bring more value to the study. For this fieldwork, the interest was to interview people who might bring new valuable elements about the topic studied.

The sample was originally composed of three types of persons: ordinary consumers, consumers who took part in a crowdsourcing marketing campaign and professional marketers. At the beginning the goal was to interview at least two persons of each type. However, not enough persons answered positively to our interview request, mainly because of their unavailability due to various reasons going from work, exams or because we where in too different time zones. This is why, in the end a smaller number of interviews occurred.

The following table gives a short profile of interviewees:

| Name | Age | Nationality | Field of activity | Took part in crowdsourcing |
|------|-----|-------------|-------------------|---------------------------|
| Manon | 24 | French | Business - Sales | No |
| Carola | 30 | Swedish | Law | No |
| Esther | 26 | Spanish | Architect | No |
| Josh | 23 | American | Business student | Yes |

*Figure 9: Profiles of the interviewees*

**2.** In-depth interviews

Once the sample defined, it is appropriate to determine the type of qualitative techniques to be carried out: the method of semi-structured interview was chosen for this fieldwork. Interviews are a direct way to get information from consumers. It was best adapted to analyse the new concept of crowdsourcing as a tool for brands. This type of interview is the most appropriate to get to understand the meaning respondents give to their experiences and feelings towards brands and crowdsourcing,

The semi-structured interview provides information of the respondent in his own words but also his views on about phenomenon or a third person behaviour. Furthermore, semi-structured interviews enable the evolution of the exchange in a good atmosphere for confidences. It is important to settle a relaxed atmosphere with small talks for example. That way, the interviewee feels comfortable, can speak openly, in his own words and in the order that suits him the best. Also, clarifications can be made so the researcher gets more detailed answers and the post-interview interpretation becomes the most accurate possible.

**3.** Interviews guide

Two different guides were realized for this study (*please refer to Appendixes 1 and 2*) in order to help structuring the conversation with the interviewee so he/she will not be distracted too often off the subject. It puts back the interviewee on the right track. Three guides have been created in order to adapt to each category of respondents. They have a common structure (same theme, similar questions) but some questions have been added or deleted in order to stay relevant for the interviewee.

The first guide was made for consumers who have never been part in a crowdsourcing. Across theme 1, and through various questions, we will try to know the

knowledge respondents have of the key concept; in other words, this theme aim to see if the questioned consumers can identify and explained what is crowdsourcing. It enables also to get an insight on the reasons why a respondent never took part in a crowdsourced campaign and if they are open on this practice.

Then the emphasis was made on respondent's perception of a perfect brand and on brand customer relationship. Through this theme, positive brand attributes are identified as well as consumers' expectations in terms of customer-relationships.

The third theme is dedicated to collaboration between brands and their customers. It aims to understand what is the respondent opinions about this situation and how does it impact his own relationship with the same brand.

The second guide targets consumers who have already been directly involved in a crowdsourcing campaign. For this guide, only part of theme 1 differs from the previous guide (*see figure 10 below*). The main purpose of theme 1 is to know about their experience in crowdsourcing and their motivations to be part of it.

| Questions theme 1: Crowdsourcing |
|---|
| Explain me what is crowdsourcing for you |
| Tell me about your experience in Crowdsourcing.<br><br>- Which company, which task?<br>- Were you already customer of the brand?<br>- How did you heard about the campaign?<br>- Why did you take part in this campaign?<br>- Would you do it again? |
| What motivated you to be part of this CS project?<br><br>*(Terms & conditions, type of project, for which company…)* |
| Afterwards this experience, how did you act towards the company you collaborate with? |
| Could you give me other examples of crowdsourcing? |
| How can a brand benefit from Crowdsourcing? |

*Figure 10: Interview guide n°2, Theme 1 out of 3 – for consumers who did crowdsourcing*

Among the techniques that could be used to revive the dialogue, active listening was an important element to exploit. During the interviews, eye contact and head nods were really important to show the respondent we were attentive to what they were saying. Approval statements have also been needed such as "Ok, I see" or "Hmm I get what you meant" to smoothly move from a theme to another. But I think for all interviews, probing questions were the key to conduct effectively the discussion. Indeed, it enabled to bring the respondent into deeper thinking so they could provide more detailed responses.

From the people we got in touch with, five answered positively to be part of the study field. Thence, five interviews were carried out and recorded. We did not get straight away to the heart of the matter. The meetings all started with an informal conversation off record, which enable to relax the respondent but most of all to learn about the interviewee's background and personality.

Each interview took place in the respondents' environment (work or home), lasted around 30 to 40 minutes and was recorded under the agreement of the respondent. Two interviews were conducted via Skype because some respondents are living abroad: in Spain and in the USA.

It was checked beforehand with participants that their words would be transposed in this dissertation and therefore, no confidential information should be shared. Prior to the interviews, we provided interviewees details about the research as well as reasons why respondents have been selected for being part of the study. Transcripts of each interview have been put in the Appendixes.

We gathered results of the led interviews and in chapter II, complementary analysis will be made. Finally we will compare the results found with the hypotheses arose previously to know if they can be proven or not.

## Chapter II. Content analysis

Content Analysis is the most common method to study the qualitative interviews or observations (Krippendorff, 2003). It involves transcribing all the qualitative data collected and organizing them by theme into a table of general analysis. Then it is to write two types of summaries: a vertical and a horizontal synthesis. The vertical analysis is used to find out what was answered by an individual for all the given themes whereas the horizontal analysis aims to understand the responses of each individual for a given theme. Finally, a synthesis of the content analysis is written to show the main results of the study.

## A. Vertical analysis

## Interviewee n°1 - Manon

| THEME | ANALYSIS | QUOTES |
|---|---|---|
| **Crowdsourcing (CS)** | – The interviewee is open to the practice only if it is for a brand she likes<br><br>– Brand should be careful when collaborating with consumers. Should crowdsourced minor tasks | *« If some companies I like do crowdsourcing for their brands, I may participate at some point (…) I would not do a task outsourced by beer brand because I don't drink beer. But I could do crowdsourcing for a brand I like for free »*<br><br>*« brands have to do their job (…) they should ask consumers just to know if they are on the right track or not »* |
| **Brand customer relationship** | – Interviewee is very sensitive to brands<br>– Trust a brand based on her experiences with the brand, on word-of-mouth and on attractiveness of advertising compaigns,<br><br>– Importance of quality, corporate social responsibility and consistency of the brand | *«For the trust the advertising campaign is quite important. If a brand has a very attractive advertising campaign, I will think about the brand positively, I'll make research about it and after step by step I trust the brand and if I'm happy with it for a few months or years, I will stay loyal to it »*<br><br>*« Actually, it's the name and all the things behind that are important to me: ethics, quality, the brand image - if it corresponds to what they say- »* |

# Interviewee n°1 - Manon

| THEME | ANALYSIS | QUOTES |
|---|---|---|
| Brand customer relationship | – Can boycott some brands<br><br>– Almost only buy from brand she knows well. Usually not attracted by unknown brand but it can happen | «For example, H&M and their factory in Bangladesh that fell down… To me it was awful and for a year I didn't buy H&M products because of what happened and what they've done »<br><br>« It's not something spontaneous for me to purchase from brands I've never heard about » |
| Collaboration brand-consumers | – Collaboration practices have no impact on her. She is not sensitive to it.<br>– Think people like collaborating with brands<br><br>– Alternatives to CS that would serve the brand: new influencers such as bloggers. | « I don't really care if a brand asks me my opinion or not, because they are professional »<br><br>« I know that a lot of my friends want their favourite brands to ask their opinion, to make them participate in some ways. People like to be involved in product development »<br><br>« If a brand gets a blogger to collaborate with it, then the brand can easily touch the blogger's fan base, reach new customers and improve the loyalty of actual consumers » |

# Interviewee n°2 - Carola

| THEME | ANALYSIS | QUOTES |
|---|---|---|
| Crowdsourcing (CS) | – Concept not so clear into the interviewee's mind. She got knowledge about crowdfunding but not CS. But once explained, she recognized several examples.<br><br>– Would be ready to get involved in a CS campaign for NGO or start-ups.<br>– Gave examples usually less known by people because less promoted in traditional medias: the Norwegian bank, WWF, Innocent juices.<br><br>– She got a negative and partially biased vision of crowdsourcing in general. | « Well I know what is "crowd funding", as it is more and more common on the Internet for music or movie projects; I do not know the notion of crowdsourcing but I guess from what I know of crowd funding that it is using the knowledge of ordinary people to spread information in a particular area »<br><br>« I would take part more easily in a crowdsourcing project for a non-profit organisation, or something entertaining on the Internet by example. I would do it easily for an environmental organization, or a charity one. For a brand, I would do it for a start-up or a brand that I really like »<br><br>« Crowdsourcing can actually be kind of pervert: a brand "uses" its consumers into its product development process, and remunerate them at a low rate » |

## Interviewee n°2 - Carola

| THEME | ANALYSIS | QUOTES |
|-------|----------|--------|
| **Crowdsourcing (CS)** | – Believes CS is useful for marketing<br><br>– Despite a bad vision of crowdsourcing, believes that if lead in a responsible and fair way, it can bring several advantages to a brand and to consumers | *« For brands I think it could be helpful notably in marketing, by crowdsourcing, they could use more samples of people needs and desires than usual. They could use ideas from their own customers for new products »*<br><br>*« People get involved, they feel like part of the team, so they promote brands themselves and like crowdsourcing is still kind of unusual, medias are talking about the brand and their crowdsourcing products »* |
| **Brand customer relationship** | – Interviewee had difficulty to identify what was a brand. Used the word brand to designate a ''for-profit business''.<br><br>– She prefers brands that have the same values and beliefs as her: ecology, ethic, fairness, honesty, respect… | *« Sorry, when I say "brands" in my mind it stands for "traditional for-profit businesses". I mixed the two words »*<br><br>*« I'm always going towards brands having a ethic or ecologic label (…) My perfect brand wouldn't use too many advertisements but instead it would get popularity by word-of-mouth. Its business must have a good impact on its local area. a brand should not have any "skeleton in the closet" to win my heart »* |

## Interviewee n°2 - Carola

| THEME | ANALYSIS | QUOTES |
|-------|----------|--------|
| **Brand customer relationships** | – Boycott some brands that scorn her values and beliefs | *« There are brands I boycott because of their image and lack of ethic and not because of their products (like Apple using planned obsolescence) »* |
| **Collaboration brand-consumers** | – Prosumers, empowerment of consumers over brands.<br><br>– Alternatives to CS that would serve the brand: Ethical consumerism | *« I guess that thanks to social networks there is more and more interactions between both (…) we're empowered and we have leverage in some way upon brands. Especially on popular brands that have global positive brand image around the world. They have to stuck to a good even high standards and reputation and thus to pamper consumers showing them they have value »* |

## Interviewee n°3 - Esther

| THEME | ANALYSIS | QUOTES |
|---|---|---|
| **Crowdsourcing (CS)** | – Concept known clearly by the interviewee (learnt at the University) but she doesn't know a lot of examples.<br><br>– Think CS benefits the brand image positively<br><br><br><br>– Would be willing to take part to a CS project under various specific conditions: nature of the task, identity of the brand, rewards… | « It shows that the company is open to more ideas, ideas that come from its customers (…) They feel less tricked by firms, more considerate but they still perceived the product has qualitative because it went into professionals' expertise »<br><br>« Yeah, something creative (…) If the tasks outsourced are **original** and **uncommon** I may participate to it. Also I **need to be inspired** by the brand and the task. I mean, it would really depend on several factors: **the brand personality, the task outsourced, how this task is "sold" by the company** (it should be explained or described in a fun way), if there is **incentive**, and so on » |

## Interviewee n°3 - Esther

| THEME | ANALYSIS | QUOTES |
|---|---|---|
| **Brand customer relationship** | – Interviewee is resistant to strong brands<br><br>– Not looking for brand she's never heard about<br><br>– Characteristics she looks in brands: fresh, modern, young, accessible.<br><br>– Advertising is key to attract the interviewee<br><br>– Brand consistency lead to trust and loyalty | « I don't know like big corporation like Starbucks or Decathlon… or Ikea »<br><br>« I won't go into buying from a brand I heard little about »<br><br>« One that has a fresh appearance, modern and young, that seems accessible for the customers… one that I can relate to »<br><br>« good advertisements affect my perception of a brand no matter if I am a client or not »<br><br>« It has to reach my expectations based on what they promised » |

# Interviewee n°3 - Esther

| THEME | ANALYSIS | QUOTES |
|---|---|---|
| Collaboration brand-consumers | - Find collaboration between brands and consumers useful and good<br><br>- Alternative to CS: trials and tests | « I think it's a good and useful idea … products are intended for consumers, but not always fit their needs. So by involving the customers a brand offer the opportunity to consumers to suggest their proper ideas to help improve products »<br><br>« Maybe with trials and tests of products? Like samples available for the clients… I think that could create awareness of the product and loyalty » |

# Interviewee n°4 - Josh

| THEME | ANALYSIS | QUOTES |
|---|---|---|
| Crowdsourcing (CS) | - Took part in the 2014 Doritos' crowdsourcing campaign and would do it again<br>- Looking for fun with friends, challenging<br>- Importance of providing structured tasks to participants<br><br>- <u>Advantages</u>: clever marketing practice, intringue people, feel involved in the brand, attract people and improve customer relationships | « the context of the task outsourced has to be framed, I mean the firm has to be careful to not have its consumers using crowdsourcing to turn against a brand»<br><br>« it is a way for brand to encourage people to express themselves and to be part of a brand (…) crowdsourcing is a clever marketing move from brands, it makes customers believe they do big thing for the brand and become "part of the team" but (…) that's more a way to attract and boost their customers' relationship » |

## Interviewee n°4 - Josh

| THEME | ANALYSIS | QUOTES |
|---|---|---|
| Brand customer relationship | – Not conscious of the influence brands have on him. Very sensitive to adverts.<br>– Advertising key to attract and get stuck into consumers' mind<br>– Trendy, affordable, that make people relate to celebrities.<br>– Importance of Social Medias, trends and celebrity endorsement | « Before this interview, I did not feel particularly sensitive towards brands. But I guess I am without noticing it. Probably due to brands' advertisements on TV or product placements » |
| Collaboration brand-consumers | – Prosumers.<br>– Through participative practices, the interviewee feel esteemed as an individual and listened by the brand<br>– Proud of buying from a brand that involves its consumers in some ways. Positive image of those brands. Loyalty reinforced.<br>– Alternative to crowdsourcing: Youtubers. | « we're not afraid to express our opinions »<br>« it feels great to feel big businesses listen to you »<br><br>« It would influence my image of the brand (…) I would keep that positive impression into my mind (…) I will feel proud (…) it will reinforce my loyalty» |

## B. Horizontal analysis

The interviews highlighted that the knowledge about **crowdsourcing** differs from one person to another. It has been observed that the ones who could define the concept where all studying in Business and discovered about it through their University classes. Once the concept explained and clarified, all respondents know at least one example of crowdsourcing proving that the trend is getting more and more popular even if consumers are not conscious that it is crowdsourcing. The totality of respondents thinks crowdsourcing has more advantages when used in the marketing field. In fact, none of them gave me examples that were not related to marketing or brands.

Only one person questioned took part in a crowdsourcing campaign. He took part in a project he knew about for several years for a famous brand he was customer of. One interviewee was reticent about crowdsourcing because she only heard about the pervert effects in certain crowdsourcing campaigns and thus had a biased and prejudicial perception of CS. But once we discussed more about crowdsourcing and detailed the example she gave, she changed a little bit her negative opinions towards crowdsourcing and by the end of the interview she was even ready to get involved in a crowdsourcing project for a brand she uses. The other respondents would be disposed to do some crowdsourcing for a brand they know. And each of them was pretty specific when explaining the characteristics a task should have in order for them to participate into a crowdsourced campaign. None of them will accept to do a crowdsourced task if it is not well structured, if it does not correspond to their interests and it does not esteem the

participant by offering concrete rewards to the winner. We observed that at least one type of tasks fit each individual according to their personality.

According to the interviewees, the major factor of success for a crowdsourcing campaign is the advertising. Indeed, the majority of CS projects known by the public are strong brands that invested a lot to promote the projects in various communication channels (television, social medias, word of mouth). By using aggressive advertising, brands should try to make the buzz around it and attract more participants or at least raise their brand awareness. The character of the task outsourced is also important. It has to be interesting and appealing to catch people's attention. Finally, incentives and concrete results are outputs that, for interviewees, contribute to the success of the campaign.

Amongst the advices given by the interviewees to brands, the most recurrent was to be careful of not "getting lost" by relying too much on participants and on their consumers.   Brands should have clear objectives when launching a crowdsourcing campaign and keep in mind that it is mainly used as a marketing tool to improve their customer relationship. Therefore, it should crowdsourced only secondary tasks they are not dependent from.

Now, about the **relation towards brands**, interviewees were all looking for brands that look like them; for brands sharing the same personality attributes, similar values and beliefs. They all tend to trust a brand they can relate to, a brand with the same spirit they have. It was interesting to observe and link what the interviewee said with its profile. Because each interviewee described a perfect brand that was –consciously or not-matching their personality (Fournier's self concept connection)

- Manon comes from an upper class background. She is looking for good quality at luxury prices. But the brand has also to be respectful of others and ethical as the values she learnt from her family.
- Esther is an arty person full of ideas. Her perfect brand is original and creative, young and modern.
- Carola is an environmental lawyer and looks for ethical brands, which respect the environment.
- Josh is a young and enthusiast dreamer. Through brands, he wants to identify himself with celebrities. He is probably trying to match his aspiration of success.

The biggest point of mutual interest that was observed after the fieldwork was the important position in respondents' mind of sustainability, ethics and social responsibility. We can assume this generation of 20-30 years old has been raised with environmental and social awareness as fundamental concerns in life. Another element on which respondents agreed was the necessity for a brand to be consistent in order to win trust and loyalty of consumers. A brand should fulfil its promises and be true to its consumers by not betraying

or disappointing them. For example, a brand sponsoring charity organization while it exploits young children in factories is not consistent.

They are mostly aware that advertising plays a massive role in their behaviour towards such-and-such brand. But they rely also on their past experiences with the brand and with brand reputation to decide whether or not they will rebuy and stay loyal.

Most of them will not search for experiencing brands they heard little about. They stay loyal to brands they know and try out new things if they receive good reviews about it. But in general they go generally to brands with strong equity.

In general, interviewees are aware of consumer empowerment and on the influence they can have on brands. They do not hesitate to take actions to put pressure on a disappointing brand by boycotting it for example. Some resistance towards strong global brands has been observed with some interviewees. Regarding the personality of those respondents, we can assume that this reluctance comes from their disapproval of mass consumption and conformism.

Theme n°3 was focusing a bit more about how the interviewees perceive a brand, which make its consumers participate in some ways. They all agree about the fact that in general, people like to be requested by brands for any matter. Consumers tend to share their opinion on the Social Medias for instance.

Moreover, they believe that it has become necessary for brands to pamper their consumers in order to be into customers' good graces. Thence, to make consumers feel they are considered and esteemed by brands, firms have to find new ideas, new practices to involve them. In general, respondents find that collaborating with consumers can benefit positively relationships between brands and their customers. All of the persons questioned think it is a good idea to stronger an existing relationship as it reinforce customers loyalty and pride towards the specific brand collaborating with its consumers.

When asking them about alternatives to crowdsourcing resulting into an improvement of brand customer relationship, they all gave different answers. This question and the answers given enable to have a better idea of what consumers may expect from brands in terms of collaboration. It also permits to discover what practices are seen as future and efficient substitutes to crowdsourcing. Within their proposals, there is various points on which brands could focus more or highlight in a better way:

- Two interviewees evoke new influencers such as bloggers and vloggers as a manner to reach new customers or to consolidate their existing customers' loyalty.
- Another recommended promoting more ethical behaviours and ethical consumerism in order to stand out and to get the trust of potential customers.
- Finally, trials and samples have been suggested, as ways to attract people and to let them know about a brand. This was a solution to overcome the fact that usually people who buy from brands they never heard about or never experienced.

C. <u>Comparison with the hypotheses</u>

Three main hypotheses have emerged from the theoretical review and can now be compared with the analysed results of the fieldwork.

The first hypothesis was the following one: any company could launch its crowdsourcing campaign and get successful results out of it. It was based on the fact that through the Web, it is easy for a company to outsource tasks at lower costs and fast pace. Crowdsourcing became very popular for companies looking for a campaign full of benefits without complex set-up. Some of those advantages mentioned were: cost reduction, efficiency, flexibility, involvement of consumers, quality, value creation and motivation of participants (Salmi & Abdellatif, 2014). In the end, any company may want to follow the trend because the practice of crowdsourcing appears full of advantages and easily reachable.

However, the fieldwork demonstrates that crowdsourcing could have negative results if the terms and conditions of the campaign have not been clearly established. Indeed, consumers feel the growing power they can have on brands. And if they disapprove for some reason the brand; they will not wait long to distort the crowdsourcing campaign. Interviewees clearly express that if they did not like some actions taken by a brand, they will not hesitate to boycott it. To avoid negative impacts and even failure of a CS campaign, the brand has to manage properly the crowd. To achieve that, it has to anticipate the limits of the project as well as prevent itself from possible abuses by defining carefully and clearly the rules of the campaign.

Another point, which has to be nuanced about this hypothesis, is that companies should expect results at their own scale. Interviews showed that little known brands have to double if not triple their efforts to attract new customers and to raise awareness. Strong brands have already a wide audience and can invest a lot in advertising to promote their crowdsourcing campaign. If we focus on those elements and on the opinions of the interviewees, it appears that the stronger the brand is, the bigger its expected results can be. Smaller brands can also expect great results but probably at a more reasonable scale.

In the end, we can say that hypothesis n°1 has been weakened by the fieldwork and can be disconfirmed: a firm cannot launch a crowdsourcing campaign thinking it could only be a success.

Hypothesis n°2 assumes that crowdsourcing enhance customer relationship of brands. Based on examples mentioned in the theoretical review (Part 1, II C. crowdsourced marketing) and on the data collected in the fieldwork, both validate the tips given in order to improve your customer relationship and to get them involved into a crowdsourced

marketing campaign. As a quick reminder, those advices were the followings: do not ask too much to your consumers, offer incentives, encourage participant to spread the word and be sure the brand promise is respected and consistent.

It has been also highlighted that prosumers are aspiring to more and more interactions with businesses and thus active marketing has become essential for a firm in order not be left behind.

The qualitative research shows that consumers act positively toward well-structured crowdsourcing and think it is a marketing practice that can be win-win if respectful of both parties: brands must be fair in the tasks and incentives offered and consumers must respect the brands by playing by the rules. Moreover, when conducting the interviews, we recognized in the respondents' answers four of Fournier's seven categories of relationships (1998): self-concept connection, intimacy, personal commitment and love and passion. Those types of relationship, according to Fournier, give firms an insight to understand what make consumers loyal towards a brand. Brands can line up their crowdsourcing projects on those categories of relationships to appear appealing and to touch customer's loyalty. Thence, if a brand leads cleverly its campaign, it was observed that consumers  (participants or not) have a more positive image of the brand, and will be willing to trust it and to stay loyal to it.

Thus, this second hypothesis is confirmed: crowdsourcing can enhance brand customer relationship. It is important not to forget that this improvement occurs depending on various factors as said when reviewing hypothesis 1.

The final hypothesis expresses that crowdsourcing is the most advantageous web marketing practice a brand can use to boost its customer relationship. We have seen earlier in the dissertation several marketing practices popular on the web (Part 1, II. A2. Recent web marketing trends). Through the interviews we have conducted, some of those trends were quoted when we asked them if they knew alternatives to crowdsourcing that could be as much beneficial to the brand in terms of enhancement of customer relationship. They were almost all evoked. Indeed, respondents found important for a brand to be sincere, consistent and transparent with its consumers (sincerity trend). Furthermore, they agreed that involving consumers (collaborative marketing) was a way to win loyalty of customers and to intrigue positively potential customers. They also emphasis on how strongly new influencers can affect their fans' purchasing behaviour.

So this hypothesis is not confirmed. Crowdsourcing can be an advantageous web marketing practice but a brand should combine it with other practices in order to strengthen as much as possible its customer relationship. There is no best way but several good ways to reach this goal.

# CONCLUSION

❖ <u>Managerial recommendations</u>

We identified some elements a manager should take into account and apply consciously if in the future, they want to experiment crowdsourcing as part of a new marketing strategic plan. Those recommendations are based on Rachel Weingarten's findings (2015) and were proven throughout the literature review and the market research. It will conclude this dissertation and help managers not to rush into a practice they have never used. Because even if you think you know well about this phenomenon, everyone – including you and us- surely still have more to discover about it. It is extremely important to be conscious that a crowdsourcing campaign may not be as effective as expected for some factors we will mention below. However, the key to success are in manager's hands and the source of a future success is right in front of them, in the crowd of consumers.

The first recommendation given would be to have confidence in your existing customer base. Indeed who know you better than your loyal clients? We said earlier that now marketing is all about relationships, about creating a strong tie with your consumers. So make the first move asking your most loyal customers' opinions and trust their words.

Secondly, face the fact consumers' wants will not always work. "*Sometimes, what seems like a great idea can turn out to be a poorly-received reality*" (Weingarten, 2015). It also may not be compatible with your business or your strategy. Lego was aware of that potential threat and anticipate it when launching its Ideas.lego platform by submitting any popular ideas in their R&D centre to be reviewed before being produced and sold on the market. Which lead us to the next advice: do not hesitate to ask for experts' opinions to connect consumers' ideas into a feasible and concrete product.

On the other hand, you also have to be careful because some customers' input comes from their "post-usage experience". This kind of ideas come from feedbacks and enables you to identify on which area you have to focus your efforts to improve your brand equity. To recap, managers have "*to listen to consumers' want, analyze the viability of implementing their ideas, and always be aware of what's truly best for your brand*" (Weingarten, 2015).

Finally, managers should not forget that when they involve consumers into their product strategy, they should focus on long-term benefits and not expect massive results right away. Indeed, participative marketing practices such as crowdsourcing are a way to reinforce brand customer relationships over time in order to create a "sustainable competitive advantage".

❖ <u>Limits of the study</u>

Apart from the managerial recommendations, we also identified some limits in the study led. The main limit comes from the market research conducted. Indeed, the small number of people interviewed does not enable us to generalize the results to a larger population. We hoped we would get the opportunity to interview professional marketers in order to get their vision on how to lead an efficient crowdsourcing campaign as well as how to attract brand customers and what practices could keep them loyal and trustful towards a specific brand. Furthermore, only one person who got involved in a crowdsourcing project answered our interviewed request. It would have been even more interesting to enlarge our fieldwork to more respondents of those categories. In addition to deepen the qualitative study, it would have been captivating to connect this exploratory research with a confirmatory research through a quantitative study.

It would also be interesting to focus other practices, to evaluate more accurately which recent marketing practice is the best for enhancing customer relationships of brands.

❖ General conclusion

This study sought to understand whether crowdsourcing was a strategic marketing tool enabling brands to strengthen their relationships with customers. We have seen through the literature review how the Web brought power into consumers' hand and how necessary it has become for brands to create strong bounds with its customers. Brands cannot be seen as cold and impersonal anymore. Consumers are seeking for interaction and to be considered as individuals. They want to get involved in brands they buy.

The matching observations we got from theoretical review and market research prove that brands that launch a crowdsourcing campaign can expect positive results in term of customer relationship. Though expected results have to be nuanced because they will occur under specific conditions, at a scale that depends on certain aspects and also on how the crowdsourcing campaign is managed. So has we said in a previous part, the same results cannot be expected for everyone as various factors have to be taken into consideration regarding the success of failure of a CS campaign.

However, other marketing trends to win customers' loyalty and attract new clients have been highlighted too by consumers themselves. The most mentioned alternative for consumers appears to be new influencers. It makes us wonder whether or not, in the future, collaboration with new influencers will become more profitable for brands than direct collaboration with consumers.

# APPENDIXES

# APPENDIX 1

**For consumers who never take part in a crowdsourced marketing campaign**

| Theme 1: Crowdsourcing | |
|---|---|
| **Questions** | **Objectives** |
| Explain me what is crowdsourcing for you | *Check if to what extent the respondent know about the key concept: crowdsourcing* |
| Could you give me examples of crowdsourcing? | *Similar as above* |
| How do you think a brand can benefit from Crowdsourcing? | *Get the opinion of the respondent about the popularity of crowdsourcing* |
| Would you be disposed to participate in a crowdsourcing project? | *Know if the respondent is open and receptive to this practice* |
| What would encourage you to be part of crowdsourcing? <br><br> *(Terms & conditions, type of project, for which company…)* | *Understand what could attract respondent to try out crowdsourcing. Have details on what a brand should highlight to interest consumers with a crowdsourced campaign* |
| **Theme 2: Consumer relationship with brands** | |
| **Questions** | **Objectives** |
| Tell me about your general behaviour/sensibility toward brands? | *Know where the consumer's position himself. Understand if consumers feel influenced and dependent to brands* |
| Describe the perfect brand <br> *(Without naming one)* | *Understand consumers' perception of a perfect brand. Get to know the characteristics they are looking for in a brand.* |
| How could a firm win your heart? | *Get suggestions about what make them being trustful and loyal to a brand* |

| Theme 3: Brand-Consumer collaboration | |
|---|---|
| Questions | Objectives |
| Tell me about collaborations between brands and consumers | *To know the knowledge consumers have on this topic* |
| How would you react towards a brand, which involve its consumers/ordinary people into its product development process? | *Understand interviewee reactions toward practices involving consumers* |
| Why do you think this brand's campaign succeeded? | *Know the characteristics that make a crowdsourcing campaign successful in the eyes of the audience* |
| For the purpose of the study, we are focusing on CS. But is there any other way brand could involve its consumers? | *Found alternatives that would serve positively brands* |

# APPENDIX 2

**For consumers who already take part in a Crowdsourced marketing process**

| Theme 1: Crowdsourcing | |
|---|---|
| **Questions** | **Objectives** |
| Explain me what is crowdsourcing for you | *Check to what extent the respondent know about the key concept: crowdsourcing* |
| Tell me about your experience in Crowdsourcing.<br><br>- Which company, which task?<br>- Were you already customer of the brand?<br>- How did you heard about the campaign?<br>- Why did you take part in this campaign?<br>- Would you do it again? | *Get an insight of the interviewee's experience. Observe and understand some verbal and non-verbal clues.* |
| What motivated you to be part of this CS project?<br><br>(Terms & conditions, type of project, for which company…) | *Identify what motivate the most the interviewee to do this specific CS task. What are valuable characteristics that can incite people to take part in CS* |
| Afterwards this experience, how did you act towards the company you collaborate with? | *Understand consumers reaction* |
| Could you give me other examples of crowdsourcing? | *Observed if there is similarity in the examples given* |
| How can a brand benefit from Crowdsourcing? | *Understand how consumers' think CS can benefit a brand* |

| Theme 2: Consumer relationship with brands | |
| --- | --- |
| **Questions** | **Objectives** |
| Tell me about your general behaviour/sensibility toward brands? | *Know where the consumer positions himself. Understand if consumers feel influenced and dependent to brands* |
| Describe the perfect brand<br><br>*(Without naming one)* | *Understand consumers' perception of a perfect brand. Get to know the characteristics they are looking for in a brand.* |
| How could a firm win your heart? | *Get suggestions about what make them being trustful and loyal to a brand* |
| Theme 3: Brand-Consumer collaboration | |
| **Questions** | **Objectives** |
| What do you think about collaborations between brands and consumers | *To know the knowledge consumers have on this topic* |
| How would you react towards a brand, which involve its consumers/ordinary people into its product development process? | *Understand interviewee reactions toward practices involving consumers* |
| Why do you think this brand's CS campaign succeeded? | *Know the characteristics that make a crowdsourcing campaign successful in the eyes of the participant* |
| We focused on CS but are there any other ways brand could involve its consumers? | *Found alternatives that would serve positively brands* |

# Appendix 3

→ *The interviewee never participated in a crowdsourcing campaign.*

**Me:** As explained the other day when we were on the phone to plan this meeting, I am doing my dissertation about crowdsourcing. The aim of this study is to know if the use of this new trend in marketing can improve brands' customer relationships.

**Manon:** Yes you explained it to me by phone the other day...

**Me:** Well, if you're okay with that, let's start the interview. Please explain me what is crowdsourcing for you.

**Manon:** Actually I don't know how to describe this very shortly but I think it is something like the consumers give their point of view about something... I don't know how to explain it clearly... Maybe like Haribo, who asked its consumers which Dragibus colour they want to see released... To me crowdsourcing is something like this but I don't know if I'm right or not.

**Me:** Yeah, you're kind of right. Mainly it was right actually. To say it simply, crowdsourcing is when a company outsources some tasks to an online community.

You already gave me some examples, but how do you think a brand can benefit from crowdsourcing?

**Manon:** Because when firms outsourced tasks, they can gather more opinions. When they ask on the web −by Facebook for example- they have millions of followers so they can have a lot of opinions so the strategy is going to be more correct, more specific to the consumers' needs because it is the consumers' point of view.

**Me:** So to sum up, you believe it enables firms to have a better insight on what consumers want?

**Manon:** Yes and I think that the product after crowdsourcing is going to be better for the consumers because consumers make it.

**Me:** True. You never participate to a crowdsourced campaign...

**Manon:** No, not yet.

**Me:** ... Would you be disposed to be part of some crowdsourcing project in the future?

**Manon:** Yeah, maybe. If some companies I like do crowdsourcing for their brands, I may participate at some point, yes. I think it can be quite fun and interesting for a consumer to give his opinion about a product and to be part of the production process... Yeah yeah it's great... Why not doing it in the future!

**Me:** Is there a specific type of crowdsourcing you would like to be part of?

**Manon:** I do not know if I'm very good in designing stuff, so maybe more on submitting ideas or voting... Like Starbucks did... I may like to give my opinion, saying what I prefer or choosing one characteristics of the product... Something like this.

**Me:** When mentioning Starbucks, are you referring to their platform My Starbucks Idea where people can submit ideas on how to improve products and services of the brand?

**Manon:** Yes exactly, that's it. This platform is really well known as an example of crowdsourcing by brands.

**Me:** So, are there some additional terms and conditions that could incite you to take part of a crowdsourced marketing campaign? Some incentives or recognition...

**Manon:** Yeah why not, of course!

**Me:** Do you think you would also do it for free? Or would it depend on the brand, its popularity or the task they offered you to do?

**Manon:** To answer honestly to the question, it would depend of the brand. I would not do a task outsourced by... beer brands. Because I don't drink beer. BUT I can do crowdsourcing for a brand I like for free but if I can get rewarded, it would be "Wow!" of course. (laughters)

**Me:** Sure. Tell me please about your general behaviour towards brands. Are you sensible to some brand more than another?

**Manon:** Yeah, yeah. Actually, advertising campaign may not have big influence on me. But I'm not gonna buy something because it's cheap. I mean, these days I am careful with my expenses but usually I won't purchase cheap things. I prefer buying something from a brand I know because I knows their values, the spirit of the brand and everything that defines the brand –which is very important to me-.

**Me:** So if I understood you properly: you only buy from brands you trust and know a lot about, isn't it?

**Manon:** Yes, that's it.

**Me:** Then, what would be the perfect brand for you? I mean in terms of characteristics. You do not especially have to name one specific brand.

**Manon:** Hmmm, good question. I don't know.... An ethical brand that provides very high quality for its products I guess. The quality is definitely the most important for me. I could pay a lot for something if it is excellent quality. I could do this. But I think the perfect brand has to be more than just ethical or produce quality things. It is more global... It depends of the salary they give to employees, I do not know... Like  H&M and their factory in Bangladesh that fell down... To me it was awful and for a year I didn't buy H&M products because of what happened and what they've done. So actually, it's the name and all the things behind that are important to me: ethics, quality, the brand image (if it corresponds to what they say).

**Me:** I see what you mean. Would you it be important for that the brand is close to its customers? Or you do not pay any attention to actions engaged by brands to make customers participate?

**Manon:** As I told you, I don't really care if a brand asks me my opinion or not because they are professional. So they are the ones who have to do the product. But I know that a lot of my friends want their favourite brands to ask their opinion, to make them participate in some ways. To me it's not so important because if I trust the brand, no need for me to interact more.

**Me:** You talked about trust... How could a firm and a brand get your trust and loyalty?

**Manon:** In having high product quality. I think for the trust the advertising campaign is quite important because if a brand has a very attractive advertising campaign, I will think about the brand positively, I'll make research about it and after step by step I trust the brand and if I'm happy with it for a few months or years, I will stay loyal to it.

But really the most important factor is the quality for me. For example I love Petit Bateau, I am very loyal to this brand. Because I love their products, and I got some Tshirts for 5 or 6 years now so it's "wow". There were black when I bought them and they are still black so this is good quality and this is how they win my trust and loyalty.

**Me:** And a brand you never heard about, how could it attract you?

**Manon:** If I like the "fashion" of the product and if someone I know have already try this brand, well I can just try –if it's affordable of course- and if I like it, I will rebuy, rebuy again and again. But it's not something spontaneous for me to purchase from brands I've never heard about.

**Me:** Yeah I understand. What do you think about cooperation between brands and consumers? Do you think it's getting popular? Is it a good thing? Or...?

**Manon:** People like to be involved in product development but I do not think it is very good. It depends of the product of course but I got in mind for the fashion. A lot of brands look at the fashion blogger to do their next fashion collection. No it doesn't work for me. It is important for the brand to be linked closely to their consumers. Because they exist thanks to those consumers but brands have to do their job. It is the job of a brand to make products. They can listen to their consumers' opinions but they also have to keep their own opinion.

**Me:** So they have to "do their jobs" by having clearly defined objectives but they can still ask consumers for minor things to...

**Manon:** Yes, they should ask consumers just to know if they are on the right track or not. But it's not the job of the consumer to make the product entirely. They cannot do the whole product process.

**Me:** Seeing that Starbucks –for example- is listening to its consumers to improve its products and services, would it get you buy more Starbucks or be more loyal?

**Manon**: No, actually it doesn't impact my loyalty or if I will buy more Starbucks or not. No I really don't care. And actually before I know the word crowdsourcing –through my university classes- I didn't know about Starbucks' platform. I buy Starbucks, if they ask me for ideas or opinion it's okay, if not it's also okay.

**Me:** it's no big deal for you…

**Manon**: exactly, I don't care.

**Me:** Which brands come to your mind when it comes from making consumers collaborate?

**Manon:** Haribo of course, Starbucks…Danone too, with the Danette…

**Me:** When they asked consumers to give flavours' ideas…

**Manon:** Yes. Ah! I have another example in mind! The music band "Fauve", they asked their fans to elect on Facebook for which song they should released for their next music video. Depending on the popularity of suggestions. They will create their next music video depending on their fans' opinions.

**Me:** It is true that music bands sometimes involve consumers in their music videos etc. So globally, the big similarities between the brands you mentioned is their popularity. Starbucks, Danone or Haribo are strong brands that everyone knows about. Do you think a little known brand with small brand awareness could conduct a successful crowdsourcing campaign?

**Manon:** yes but on another scale. Because, the example I gave was mainly about food and beverages. I don't know if crowdsourcing would have the same benefits for fashion brands or … I don't know… Car brands. Food is something that is always quite popular. Actually, the only way to not know about Starbucks is to live in the middle of nowhere. Yeah, I think that every company can do crowdsourcing to improve their customer relationship but they cannot expect the same results.

**Me:** So you think they would still get a good participation rate?

**Manon:** Yes because people love giving their opinions, they love it.

**Me:** Why do you think one of the brand you mentioned as examples have had a successful crowdsourcing campaign? Do you think because, as we said, it's popular, or…?

**Manon**: I think it's because those brands make a lot of advertisement –not Starbucks actually- but Haribo and Danone they made a lot of advertising about their crowdsourcing project: on the internet, on TV, etc. So everybody knows they could submit ideas and vote. So you cannot do crowdsourcing without advertising a lot on it. Because people don't know "yeah, they want me to share ideas but how can I do it". It's quite complicated if you do not advertise properly. Advertising is important in crowdsourcing, just to promote the "rules" or to explain the task outsourced.

**Me:** We are doing this interview in a meeting room at the Crowne Plaza, where you work. Do you think if the hotel wants to launch a crowdsourced marketing campaign, would it be successful?

**Manon**: In the guest lists yeah. Because people come here for a night or more, or for a meeting so they are involved in the place. So if we asked them ideas, or something like that, I think it will work. It's like an idea box but a bit different and on a web platform. I think yeah. I don't really know to what extent it is gonna work. But if we promote the campaign by email etc. it can work.

**Me:** Alright so during the whole discussion we focused on crowdsourcing. But do you think there are other ways a brand can involve its consumers or raise awareness to get a stronger customer relationship?

**Manon:** Yes, the bloggers. They are very very important for brands. Because most of the bloggers are in big cities such as Toulouse, Lyon or Paris so they are very close to brands. People in the middle of nowhere are not so close to certain brands but they are going to trust bloggers they like and follow. So if a brand gets a blogger to collaborate with it, then the brand can easily touch the blogger's fan base, reach new customers and improve the loyalty of actual consumers.

**Me:** Well, the interview is now done, thank so much for your cooperation!

**Manon:** You're welcome!

# Appendix 4

→ *The interviewee never participated in a crowdsourcing campaign.*

**Me:** Good afternoon Carola and thank you for accepting so quickly a date to meet. I am currently in my final year of study in the Business School of La Rochelle and I am conducted a dissertation about crowdsourcing and its impacts on brand customer relationships. I am interviewing consumers who never participated in a crowdsourcing prokect to understand their behaviour and perception towards brand involving their consumers.

**Carola:** Ok, I am not sure how much I know about crowdsourcing, marketing or branding but well, it would be a pleasure if I can help you in some ways.

**Me:** Thank you, I'm sure you'll bring interesting elements for my study. So, please tell me what is crowdsourcing for you.

**Carola:** Well I know what is "crowd funding", as it is more and more common on the Internet for music or movie projects; I do not know the notion of crowdsourcing but I guess from what I know of crowd funding that it is using the knowledge of ordinary people to spread information in a particular area.

**Me:** Your guess is almost right. The first purpose of crowdsourcing is to outsourced tasks normally performed by a company to indeed, an online crowd of ordinary people to benefits from their knowledge and different way of thinking. Crowd funding is part of crowdsourcing but other types of crowdsourcing exist.

**Carola**: Okay, I was pretty close! Anyway, it looks really an interesting topic.

**Me:** Yes it is. Now the concept has been a bit clarified, are there any examples of crowdsourcing that comes to your mind?

**Carola:** Well I think Wikipedia seems to be the best example. A basic user of the Internet can create a Wikipedia page about a specific subject by writing it himself and millions of people can read it.

There is a lot of wikis on every kind of subject on the internet; as well for some "forums", notably about medicine, people are often searching for information on the internet so some cabinets, like plastic surgery, dentistry ones, has developed some forums, with "experts" doing a kind of pre-consultation by giving some information.

**Me:** Yes Wikipedia can be considered as crowdsourcing even if some users define it as more than crowdsourcing now it developed so much.

**Carola:** I think also about a website I have visited, it was from WWF, and there was something like a crowdsourcing program: people must promote the Earth Hour or

something like that.

**Me:** Yes indeed, through the earth hour website, people can submit project to raise money (so it is crowd funding), they also ask to people to spread the word on Social Medias (word of mouth) and use other actions that involve people. For instance, recently they asked people to publish on Instagram pictures of themselves holding a "I love the reef" sign and adding particular hastags to spread the word that the great barrier reef is in danger.

**Carola**: Wow, that looks really nice. Maybe I will take part of it. Wait I just remembered another example of crowdsourcing; the Norway central bank has asked to its people to create the new design of the banknotes of Norwegian krowns. Lots of Norwegian people has got involved in it. Oh, and another one! With Innocent brand (fruit juices), at a moment there were knitted stuffs on the bottles; consumers could do some for fun and send it the brand to put it on new bottles.

**Me:** I didn't know about the Norway central bank! So considering what you mentioned, do you think a brand can benefit from crowdsourcing?

**Carola:** For brands I think it could be helpful notably in marketing, by crowdsourcing, they could use more samples of people needs and desires than usual. They could use ideas from their own customers for new products. But Crowdsourcing could be really helpful for non-profit organizations; I think people would be more pleased to participate in non-profit programs than feeling "used" by brands without being paid. Indeed I would take part more easily in a crowdsourcing project for a non-profit organisation, or something entertaining on the Internet by example. I would do it easily for an environmental organization, or a charity one. For a brand, I would do it for a start-up or a brand that I really like. But in general I think this participative method enable consumers to feel involved by participating and collaborative work is rewarding for you. However, I would be sure that some moderators check my information before being published or used.

**Me:** You dissociate environmental organization and "brands". But you know, WWF is a brand, and Greenpeace also. In a nutshell, A brand refers to a name, term, symbol, or any other type of feature that defines or identifies a seller's product or service

**Carola:** oh that's true. When I say "brands" in my mind it stands for "for-profit businesses". I mixed the two words.

**Me:** It's true that people often get confused on that. How would you describe your general sensitivity toward brands?

**Carola:** I'm always going towards brands having a ethic or ecologic label, by example I found ideas like Faguo one "for each pair of shoes sold, we plant a tree" kind of attractive. I guess I would like a brand using crowdsourcing if it doesn't seem to create a kind of "free business" for the brand but a real collaboration with their customers.

Me: Then the perfect brand for you would be….

**Carola:** Ecological with ethics consciousness. Its business must have a good impact on its local area (investments for their employees welfare and so on), catchy ideas, quality

products and fair prices. My perfect brand wouldn't use too many advertisements but instead it would get popularity by word-of-mouth (recommendations on blogs, etc) so its relation with its potential customers would be high on the social networks.

I do not have absolute favourite brand for some products, but there is some brands that I really like. And there are brands I boycott because of their image and lack of ethic and not because of their products (like Apple using planned obsolescence). So a brand should not have any "skeleton in the closet" to win my heart.

**Me:** wow, thank you for this interesting answer Carola! Earlier in the interview you evoked "real collaboration with customers". What do you means by "real collaboration" between brands and consumers?

**Carola:** Crowdsourcing can actually be kind of pervert: a brand "uses" its consumers into its product development process, and remunerate them at a low rate. By crowdsourcing, consumers are participating for free or for some goodies maybe so the brand could save some money like this. I think that some rewards in the crowdsourcing use is necessary (like offering the final products to the participants, even if it's a lost benefit on short term; if they like the product they create, they will buy a second one). I think it can be rewarding to know you participated in the development of something you can finally find in shops. It gives the impression that the brand is really prone to create useful stuffs for the consumers as a concrete purpose.

**Me:** You know, a lot of brands do actually sell the product consumers created. Lego for example, people design a set of Lego and if it get popular enough on the official platform, then it is produced and sold in-store. The "winning" participants get a percentage on sales of his product. Most of the popular brands give good incentives to the winning project.

**Carola:** oh, I didn't know that. I guess brands are getting more conscious regarding their consumers perception. It shows we're empowered and we have leverage in some way upon brands. Especially on popular brands that have global positive brand image around the world. They have to stuck to a good even high standards and reputation and thus to pamper consumers showing them they have value.

**Me:** What could you tell me about cooperation between consumers and brands?

**Carola:** I actually do not know so much about it, but I guess that thanks to social networks there is more and more interactions between both; consumers can like or follow brand "pages", ask, complain and recommend products on these public sphere, "Games" can be organized, using crowdsourcing and so on. Consumers gets kind of more power on the Internet towards brand because if the brand is a disappointment in some way, consumers will say it on Social Medias and spread the word to impact negatively the brand.

**Me:** Which brands come to your mind when it comes from making consumers collaborate?

**Carola:** I think Google do it... mhhh I don't really have other brands in mind than the one I already mentioned. Maybe Danone, which asked customers to suggest new flavours and

vote for Danette products.

**Me:** For what reasons do you think this brand's campaign succeeded?

**Carola:** People get involved, they feel like part of the team, so they promote it themselves and like crowdsourcing is still kind of unusual, medias are talking about the brand and their crowdsourcing products.

**Me:** Alright, so finally, we were focusing on crowdsourcing during the whole interview. But is there any other way brand could involve its consumers and improve their loyalty?

**Carola:** Yeah like I said about Faguo. "Buy our shoes, we will plant a tree". That's nothing, but it's pleasant! You can even give a name to your tree!

**Me:** Thank you so much for the time you allocate for this interview and for the answers provided…

**Carola:** thank you, it was a pleasure helping you with your dissertation. Have a good day.

**Me:** bye bye!

# APPENDIX 5

## INTERVIEW N°3

→ *The interviewee never participated in a crowdsourcing campaign*

**Me:** Good afternoon Esther, thank you for coming. In a few words, I am doing my dissertation about crowdsourcing and brand customer-relationships.

**Esther:** yes you explained it to me in more details in your email. Could we get into it right away please? I have an appointment in 30 minutes.

**Me:** Yes, of course. To start, please explain me what is crowdsourcing for you.

**Esther:** Mmm I would say that it's like outsourcing some activities, but asking the customers to perform them instead of externalizing the task to another company.

**Me:** Yes it is. Could you give me examples of crowdsourcing?

**Esther:** Eh… The only example that comes to my mind is from a famous Spanish website of online films, Seriesyonkis, they asked the users to design a logo for them.

**Me:** I didn't know about that. How do you think a brand can benefit from a crowdsourcing campaign?

**Esther:** Probably because it shows that the company is open to more ideas, ideas that come from its customers. So it's more likely that consumers will choose those ideas or product in the end. People usually trust more ideas that comes from peers but that are realized and produced by experts. They feel less tricked by firms, more considerate but they still perceived the product has qualitative because it went into professionals' expertise.

**Me:** Would you be disposed to participate in a crowdsourcing project?

**Esther:** Probably if I know the company… I don't know big corporations like Starbucks or Decathlon… or Ikea haha. But yeah, something creative like making a video or designing something. It would really depend on if it's a creative task or not. I am a pretty creative person, I like designing stuff and I am always full of ideas. So if the tasks outsourced are original and uncommon I may participate to it. Also I need to be inspired by the brand and the task. I mean, it would really depend on several factors: the brand personality, the task outsourced, how this task is "sold" by the company (it should be explained or described in a fun way), if there is incentive, and so on. Know I think about it, that is a lot to take into consideration for a brand to get me involved in its crowdsourcing campaign haha.

**Me:** Well it is good; at least you know what characteristics attract you haha. Now, tell me about your general behaviour toward brands?

**Esther:** Probably I'm more influenced by brands that I use the most… I won't go into buying from a brand I heard little about. But good advertisements affect my perception of

a brand no matter if I am a client or not. It can make me want to know more about a brand and to about products and services offered.

**Me:** Describe what is the perfect brand to you.

**Esther:** One that has a fresh appearance, modern and young, that seems accessible for the customers... one that I can relate to, and probably use I think.

**Me:** How could it win your heart?

**Esther:** Humm... probably with a good promotion campaign that catch my eye. But then it has to reach my expectations based on what they promised.

**Me:** How would you react towards a brand, which involve ordinary people into its product development process? Will you be more loyal knowing a brand make its consumers participate in some way?

**Esther:** I think it's a good and useful idea ... products are intended for consumers, but not always fit their needs. So by involving the customers a brand offer the opportunity to consumers to suggest their proper ideas to help improve products, I think. Or services!

**Me:** Which brands come to your mind when it comes from making consumers collaborate?

**Esther:** ... Sorry haha it doesn't ring a bell. The only one I can think of is the example I gave before about the design of the logo of that Spanish webpage.

**Me:** One last question Esther if we are not running out of time. For the purpose of this study, we are focusing on CS. But is there any other way brand could involve its consumers?

**Esther:** Maybe with trials and tests of products? Like samples available for the clients... I think that could create awareness of the product and loyalty. Are we done yet?

**Me:** Yes, thank you for taking time to be interviewed despite your busy schedule.

**Esther:** It was a pleasure. I have to go now, bye!

# Appendix 6

## Interview n°4

→ *The interviewee has participated in a crowdsourcing campaign.*

**Me:** Hello Josh, thanks for accepting to be part of an interview for my dissertation. So as explained earlier, I am in my last year of study in the Business School of La Rochelle in France. I am doing my dissertation about crowdsourcing and brand customer relationship. For my field study I wanted to interview someone that already experienced crowdsourcing. So I went on different crowdsourcing platforms and contact people. This is how I got to meet you.

**Josh:** Yes, that's a cool topic for your dissertation. I'm glad I can help in any way.

**Me:** Let's begin then. First of all, explain me what is crowdsourcing for you.

**Josh:** From my point of view, it is a way for brand to encourage people to express themselves and to be part of a brand. Obviously the context of the task outsourced has to be framed, I mean the firm has to be careful to not have its consumers using crowdsourcing to turn against a brand.

**Me:** Please tell me about your experiences in crowdsourcing.

**Josh:** I participated in last year edition of "Crash The Super Bowl" (CTSB). It's a competition organized by Doritos where you have to create a new ad for the brand. The winner gets a lot of cool stuff: his ad is aired during the (Super Bowl) game, he gets a huge amount of money and a job at Universal Studios. Do you have Doritos in France?

**Me:** no I think we don't haha

**Josh:** well in the US, that's freaking famous. Its Mexican chips. Youngsters love not only the brand for the chips but also because it always has awesome adverts and communication campaigns. You should check some out! Where was I...? Oh yeah! I am fond of viral videos on YouTube or Vine... and at that time, I'd just got a Mac Pro and so one day I saw the advert for Crash the Super Bowl on the TV, I thought "why not try to use iMovie and create my Doritos ad!". I am a fan of football and of any kind of team sports, so I obviously watch every Super Bowl since I'm a kid. That's why I already known Doritos' crowdsourcing campaign since their 1$^{st}$ edition. I find that cool and fun. And really accessible. I did it for fun with my friends and we had a good time making the video even if we didn't go far into the competition. That was a great challenge because I needed to be creative, artistic and to know how to use iMovie properly.

**Me:** you look passionate about it! And afterwards this experience, how did you act towards the company you collaborate with?

**Josh**: I don't feel like it changed so much my behaviour. I was already customer of the brand before. Wait... Maybe it changed a bit because I am not anymore attracted by other

salty snack brands. Before I used to buy Pringles sometimes but now I realize that I only buy Doritos since I took part in the CTSB. So I guess it gets me completely loyal.

**Me:** Did you take part to other crowdsourcing campaign?

**Josh**: No not yet, but if I heard about a fun tasks or challenge I feel I can do, I surely would!

**Me:** No matter what the brand is?

**Josh:** yeah if the task appears interesting for me and obviously if I have inspiration to do something good about it. But for sure a super famous brand will catch my eye first. I would be proud to say to my friends "I took part in Apple's crowdsourcing thing" or "I had the design idea for the new Starbucks' cups". You know what I mean?

**Me:** Yes I certainly do! But Doritos is a famous brand owned by Pepsi Co. So you do take part into a bigger campaign than you think.

**Josh:** Wait, what?! Doritos is Pepsi? Wow, that's massive! Awesome!

**Me:** So, to come back to crowdsourcing, how do you think a can brand benefit from it?

**Josh:** It is a way to get people interested and curious about your brand. Well obviously they need to make noise so people heard about their CS project. But I think nowadays people –especially youngster- have creativity and ideas to share. And we're not afraid to express our opinions. From my point of view, crowdsourcing is a clever marketing move from brands. It kind of make their customers believe they do big thing for the brands and become "part of the team" but in the end, the majority of the tasks offered are minor and still controlled by the firm. That's more a way to attract and boost their customers' relationship. I mean, look how crazy I've become about Doritos! And now you told me it was owned by Pepsi, I want to throw my Coke can and buy Pepsi right away! (laughters)

**Me:** Tell me about your general sensitivity toward brands?

**Josh:** Before this interview, I did not feel particularly sensitive towards brands. But I guess I am without noticing it. Probably more by brands advertised on TV or product placements in movies and music videos.

**Me:** What would be the perfect brand for you?

**Josh:** a trendy affordable brand that work with celebrities and that do a lot of entertaining advertising. Also a brand that is active on Twitter and Facebook and who answer back to your comments.

**Me:** And for a little known brand? How could it attract you?

**Josh:** Probably through advertising or by giving free samples in the street to let me try this brand and see if I like it. Or by creating the buzz in some way so everyone will start talking about it and spreading the word. If not it won't especially attract me. I am more influenced by famous firms that are well established into my mind.

**Me:** What do you think about collaborations between brands and consumers

**Josh:** I think it's great that brands seem to care about their consumers. I'm not sure they are all true in their move but it feels great to feel big businesses listen to you.

**Me:** How would you react towards a brand, which involve its ordinary people into its product development process? Would you be more loyal knowing a brand make its consumers participate in some way?

**Josh:** It would influence my image of the brand. I would find it more open and accessible. I may try to try some of this brand's products in the future. Or maybe just think about what they've done and keep that positive impression into my mind. If I'm already a customer of this brand, well I will feel proud to buy product for a cool brand that embrace new trends and esteem its customers as individuals with brain. And it's true that it will reinforce my loyalty towards that brand.

**Me:** For the purpose of the study, we are focusing on CS. But is there any other way brand could involve its consumers and improve their loyalty?

**Josh:** Hmmm maybe through YouTube. Some youtubers are getting huge out there. So I think brand should collaborate more actively with popular youtubers to promote their products and get new customers. When I think about it, some youtubers place products in their videos. More or less subtly. But yeah brands should use more youtubers or viners.

**Me:** thank you Josh for your active participation in this interview.

**Josh:** Thank you Maud, I had a good time!

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