A community-amplified crowdsourcing method utilizing “the correspondent” mode in service innovation. Lessons learned from QualityHunters2 of Finnair and Helsinki Airport

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Structure of presentation

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Motivation for the research

Customer integration has become a must in innovation activities

The service sector is rarely portrayed as being at the innovation forefront or containing the most innovative companies.

• Especially transport and logistics industry feature a smaller share of innovative firms when compared to the other service subsectors.

Reflected in service industry innovation research

• Mostly conducted regarding knowledge-intensive business services, IT, and financial services.

> The passenger airline industry is one of the largest and most commoditized service industries and it would benefit from more customer-centric service innovation research.

Gleich and Richter, 2008; Rothkopf, 2009; Rothkopf and Wald, 2011
Approaches for customer integration in service (and product) innovation

Community-based innovation, customer co-creation, open innovation, user innovation,… and lately CROWDSOURCING

“A collaboration model enabled by people-centric web technologies to solve individual, organizational, and societal problems using a dynamically formed crowd of interested people who respond to an open call for participation.” Pedersen et al. (2013), HICSS

Two most common crowdsourcing models today:
• one-time challenges (various contests) and
• on-going communities

Research gap

Prior IS research has not yet paid sufficient attention how to design effective crowdsourcing initiatives and processes

Companies face **challenges** e.g. in deciding:

- in which phase(s) of the innovation process they should use social media and what platforms to consider in their strategy.
- what is wanted from the participants (e.g. ideas, information, solutions or brand enhancement),
- what way of involvement suits best for the objectives and participants,
- how long commitment is needed for the process of involvement,
- what is the degree of competitive vs. community processes utilized, and
- how to efficiently evaluate all the noisy input typically generated.

Research goal and question

The goal of the research is to advance knowledge of crowdsourcing used in service innovation. Specifically:

- Can the typical crowdsourcing (CS) process offered e.g. by many intermediaries be improved with an online-community augmented correspondent method?

- The **CS process** is the design of a step-by-step plan of action for solving a CS problem - it commonly consists of three main phases (Pedersen et al., 2013):
  - **crowd creation** (generating ideas),
  - **crowd wisdom** (reducing, clarifying and organizing the ideas),
  - and **crowd voting** (evaluating ideas and building consensus).
Four modes for customer integration in service innovation


<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use situation (activities and interactions at a specific situation)</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>In situ</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>THE CORRESPONDENT</strong>, reporting live from the situation</td>
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<tr>
<td>Empathic design, lead-user method, CUDIT method</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>THE TESTER</strong>, reporting from the virtual heaven</td>
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<td>Information acceleration, avatar-based innovation</td>
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A **correspondent** is a customer who is in or has experience in a real service context and who is in or just about to enter a real-life, value-creating situation.
Research methodology

Case study:
Qualityhunters2 (QH2) crowdsourcing initiative of Finnair and Helsinki Airport

Data collection
• Online observation throughout the initiative
• Web survey for the CS participants
• Interview of the campaign organizer (from a communications agency)
Join the conversation!

To everyone that sent in their applications. Thank you! We’re now in the process of going through the vast number of applications and trying to find the 7 Quality Hunters. Here is where we are now:

- **Recruitment**
- **Quality Hunter Selection**
- **Quality Hunters in Action**
- **VOTE ON BEST IDEAS**
- **REALISING THE IDEAS**

Search for the Quality Hunters launched
Recruitment ends
20.10. Quality Hunters introduced
Development ideas summed up
Number 1 idea introduced

The stage is now set for you. Take part in the discussion and have your say on the way air travel should be done. To inspire everyone, our guest writers are continuing with their excellent blog posts. Give us a shout on Twitter or comment on the blog posts; we love hearing from you! The 7 Quality Hunters will be introduced on October 20. There will be a few big surprises that we are very excited about – we think that you will be too.

Join the discussion, win intercontinental VIP flights!
7 QH’s as “correspondents” for 7 themes

.... hired to travel the world and seek out fresh ideas on quality and how to improve air travel and the airport experience

7 THEMES: On the move, Socializing, Entertainment, Shopping, Food & Drink, Business Class, Services

Tailormade website at www.qualityhunters2.com with blogging features built for community discussions.

In addition, twitter was used: @qualityhunters hub account and individual hunters’ twitter accounts

The prize was based on active discussions within the QH community
Interactions at the website & twitter

Postcards from the Edge: Picture Perfect Seoul

To come full circle and close the Korean chapter I give you the ultimate present! This time I will present to you my impressions from South Korea via a nice little video, complete with traffic, art, protesting people and some

11/06/13

1 Comment

Just Hong Kong

Wouldn’t we like to find the perfect airport?

A place where travelers are happy.

7 NOV 2011
By Francesca Lim

qualityhunters

We are searching for talented people with an interest in all aspects of travelling. An initiative by #Finnair to improve quality of #travel

http://qualityhunters2.com

Tweet to @qualityhunters

qualityhunters qualityhunters
Request and interesting airline travel-related topic and we will make a nice discussion out of it :) Best tweets retweeted #travel
45 seconds ago

qualityhunters qualityhunters
@arjantupan Those are excellent topics, putting them down on paper :) It’s excellent when the community requests subjects
4 minutes ago

qualityhunters qualityhunters
RT @arjantupan: One topic is airport flow. Another could be in-flight information. For me, that is sometimes too much, and not clear enough.
7 minutes ago

qualityhunters qualityhunters
@jamesmcbennett @airlinetrends also posted: "Tokyo Roppongi Hills' Mori Tower at sunset!" and make pictures for the Flickr group :)
Third of the participants did not follow the twitter discussions!

The most active community members were active in both platforms.

60% were more active in website/blogs (avg. 34 visits), 30% in twitter (avg. 43 visits), and 10% in both.
Crowd wisdom & voting phases - a new widget at the site was introduced

Time to round up the ideas!

Help Helsinki Airport and Finnair to find the best ideas to improve air travel and the airport experience.

Submit your ideas
Name
Email
Twitter account (optional)
Submit

The Idea Meter

Not a topic  Hot topic

Finnair Cocktail
6 comments
#qhcocktail

complimentary comfort bag for eco class passengers
9 comments
#qhcomfortbag
How the participants perceived the QH2 crowdsourcing initiative and the forums?

33% online story of the 7 QH’s
27% for people interested in travelling
16% ideation contest
10% online brand community
2% a forum to complain about airlines
1% forum for Finnair’s fans

Comments from participants:

brilliant idea, extremely useful, fantastic concept, almost excellent, fun, engaging, direct, personal, innovative, looking forward to reading new stories, very interesting and informative, love it!
Implications for research and practice

The correspondent mode - amplified with the community - was a successful approach in innovating new services

• Method was capable of catching the micro-level processes of service through users’ real-life participation

• Often the most expensive and time-consuming option. In this case the correspondents’ jobs were so desired that it formed the basis for the magnitude & international visibility of the initiative.

• QH2 was planned as a one-time contest > resulted in an active brand community as a side product (thanks to @qualityhunters twitter hub)

• Several new service ideas were implemented immediately after the campaign ended; others were developed further with the community

The CS process is challenging to plan ahead step-by-step

• However, the process should be kept transparent all the time!
Concluding remarks

Finnair & Helsinki Airport declared the QH2 initiative successful. Airline consultancy Simplyflying listed QH2 first in the top-10 crowdsourcing initiatives by airlines and airports.

A year after QH2 the financial figures of Finnair went markedly up:

• Smart customer integration in service innovation can be a winning strategy in highly commoditized service industries!

The third season of QH was launched late March, 2013:

• website, twitter, FB and four 2-day workshops with a dozen participants from all over the world to ideate things related to stages of air travel: at home, at the airport, on board, on arrival

More research is needed from the correspondent mode of innovation:

• Forthcoming research on developing a research landscaping service for doctoral students at the Aalto University Library (Co-create 2013 conf.)
Questions or comments?

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