

SMASHing

Accelerating innovation through optimised use of social media



SMASHing—Social Media And Innovation

Suitable use of social media gives companies the opportunity to improve and accelerate their innovation processes. Allowing access to the ideas of a large community by facilitating collaboration and idea generation, these new tools are sources of genuine opportunities. The SMASHing project therefore intends to identify best practices, resources that can generate value, and impacts of the use of social media within organisations.

INSPIRATION

On the one hand, the use of social networks in the private sphere is widespread, but on the other companies are still struggling to take advantage of social media at the level of organisational processes even as their marketing departments are aware of the opportunities they offer. "Through the use of these new tools, a company can access new resources, and notably benefit from open innovation processes", explains Pierre-Jean Barlatier, a researcher at LIST. Social media may be envisaged as an internal idea generation platform or even a platform open to the outside. The concept of crowdsourcing consists of calling upon a large number of parties, via these new tools in particular, to source new ideas. Companies such as LEGO or Procter & Gamble, amongst others, have adopted and implemented these new concepts so as to innovate by involving a wider community.

INNOVATION

The SMASHing project, jointly funded by the National Research Fund (FNR) within the framework of an international programme in partnership with the Swiss National Fund (FNS), aims to study opportunities offered by the use of social media in terms of innovation at company level. "Making the most of these opportunities involves undertaking a certain amount of change at organisational level. It is necessary to have a solid understanding of the new innovation process, to control it, and to master its openings and limitations", explains Pierre-Jean Barlatier. Social media can also allow the company to open up towards the outside. "Thanks to them, additional resources can be accessed which do not often exist within the company", continues Pierre-Jean Barlatier. "Concerns lie in the loss of control of information and knowledge". On the basis of case studies undertaken on successful initiatives in this area, the objective of the research project is to identify best practices and evaluate the organisational stakes involved in the proper use of social media, changes to innovation processes, as well as related opportunities. SMASHing is therefore particularly interested in open-innovation processes in order to assist companies in implementing these. "We will also look at the motivations of employees in using these media and how to associate these stakes and driving forces with policies of use", clarifies Pierre-Jean Barlatier.

IMPACT

SMASHing intends to capture best practices pertaining to the use of social media, with the purpose of drawing on general learnings. "One of the challenges lies in articulating these new innovation processes with those which currently exist, so as to capture the best ways of generating value which result from optimal use of social networks", explains Pierre-Jean Barlatier. "Beyond structural notions, it is not only necessary to work on corporate culture, but also to take into consideration regulatory aspects pertaining to new uses which fuel innovation. Companies should better understand these stakes, in order to accelerate their innovation processes and transform their organisation".

Partners

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