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Innovation creation by online basketball communities

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Abstract

This article investigates joint-development activities within online consumer groups. While research on user-innovations within communities exists for open source software as well as for emerging extreme sports like kite-surfing or rodeo kayaking in offline contexts, this study focuses on innovation activities within online consumer communities for basketball shoes, a physical consumer product in a mature market. The research shows that a small number of consumers are highly creative and possess sufficient domain specific skills and motivation to develop new innovative basketball shoes. While many community members state their experiences and problems with existing shoe models, those actively participating in joint-innovation activities tend to be driven by excitement rather than by pure need for product improvement. The high quality and variety of innovations, and general willingness of community members to share their ideas with producers, lead to the discussion of how to integrate creative online communities into a company's innovation process.



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Keywords

Innovation; Online community; Consumer goods; Knowledge creation; Virtual consumer integration; New product development

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