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Crowdsourcing Instead of Outsourcing?

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A new buzzword is spreading through the market: crowdsourcing. To outsource a task to an unlimited number of volunteering



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experts and get a solution almost for free. Isn't it a dream? A miraculous tool for the execution and funding of projects, access to an unlimited labor pool.

Will crowdsourcing have an impact on outsourcing? If the model can be used for public projects such as Wikipedia and politics, or even for open source software development, can we use crowdsourcing for routine outsourcing projects?

Let's have a close look. In fact, crowdsourcing provides many benefits. Among them are:

An unlimited labor pool. You do not have restrictions typical for an enterprise. You can attract not only your employees but whole groups of society. Anyone can participate, at least anyone interested.

An enormous pool of ideas as a consequence. The whole world brainstorms for you.

Immediate feedback of all the participants.

However, there are several limitations that almost annihilate all the positive impacts of crowdsourcing for the outsourcing of a day-to-day process:

Time management. Can you plan a project when you don't know how many participants you have, how much time they will spare for you and what productivity to expect? I'm afraid not, and it's not a result your customer will like.

Quality and expertise. If you want to get medical advice, you can, of course, post your question in social media. And you will get thousands of answers. But how will you choose the right ones?

Information security. It just has nothing in common with a crowdsourcing project.

Motivation and manageability. You can easily persuade people to do something for their common good one time, but it's much more difficult to inspire them to do something on a daily basis.

And though for many people it's a pleasure and honor to work pro bono, they don't like to do anything for free just to fatten your wallet.

However, there are several cases when you can attract people to a commercial project. There are two tools for it: People like to share their opinions and people like to see their ideas appreciated.

So if you want to test a new product or to get an idea of how your customers will like a new design, just let them have a look at it. You will receive immediate feedback and thousands of eager users will put your product to the test as thoroughly as a professional auditor could do. Enjoy free market research and testing! (Just make sure that the sample is correct).

We also see a continuously enlarging number of examples when crowdsourcing is used for getting new ideas. Logos and product design, slogans and images are readily provided by creative persons for many enterprises and public bodies. Your customers can produce a fountain of ideas, just give them a chance!

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