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More Research Priorities

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From the Editor

More Research Priorities

You may recall that in my July 2014 editorial, I presented a list of research priorities that came out of a joint academic and practitioner discussion at the VCU Innovation Summit and *JPIM* Thought Leadership Symposium. At the recent 2014 PDMA Research Forum in Denver, a similar discussion took place between academic and practitioner participants, who were asked to generate a list of research priorities that will drive NPD research initiatives going forward. This discussion and the subsequent list of priorities (listed below in random order), was developed by the Co-chairs of the Research Forum, Wim Biemans and Fred Langerak.

1. How to manage customer involvement in NPD?
 - Which customers should companies involve in their innovation projects? Lead users? Emergent customers? Enthusiastic amateurs?
 - How can companies simultaneously involve immediate and downstream customers?
 - Should, and if so how can, companies' link innovation stages with different types of customers and types of contributions?
 - How should companies manage the involvement of different types of customers?
 - What are the differences in customer involvement between B2C and B2B? And between products and services?
2. How to manage the business ecosystem?
 - In which situations is horizontal collaboration (co-development with partners at the same level of the value chain) and in which situations is vertical collaboration (with partners at different levels of the value chain) for product development relevant?
 - Which tools can companies use to identify and select horizontal and vertical NPD partners?
 - How can companies align the disparate NPD interests of these various partners in their business ecosystem?
 - How can companies develop new business models to insulate new products from the competition?
- How can a company's ecosystem be used to find more business in markets, products and customers?
3. How to manage service innovation?
 - What are the key characteristics of a systematic process for service innovation?
 - How and where do service characteristics (such as intangibility) impact the service innovation process?
 - How should the service innovation process be modified to reflect the realities of different types of services (e.g. professional service, product service, experiential service)?
 - How do companies benchmark and set goals for service innovation?
 - How should companies manage combinations of product and service innovation?
4. How to leverage the use of digital/social/mobile media in NPD?
 - How should NPD team members use mobile and social media to communicate with other team members and potential customers?
 - What is the utility of digital, mobile, and social media as NPD research tools?
 - What is the role of social media in generating new product and service ideas? How can it be used as a complement to traditional idea generation methods?
 - How can relevant content be produced to engage customers in NPD through social media?
 - What is the right way to monitor/screen social media for new product ideas?
5. How to deal with crowd sourcing?
 - What is the effect of crowd sourcing on the organization and management of NPD? Are traditional tasks, roles and responsibilities challenged and how?
 - What is the dark side (e.g., information overload, loss of control, winner takes all, intellectual property issues) of crowd sourcing?
 - How can companies 'qualify' crowd sourcers? How can/should they evaluate and assess what crowd sourcers do?

6. How to innovate in data-rich environments?
 - How can companies improve their analytical capabilities to make better NPD decisions and implement them within NPD teams?
 - How can new product ideas be inferred in data-rich environments? What is the appropriate role of experimentation?
 - What new analytical methods can be developed to generate better new product ideas from unstructured data (e.g., social media)?
 - What methods can be used to make real-time NPD decisions in a data-rich environment?
 - How should/can project-level data be used to build more powerful program-level NPD programs?
7. How can traditional NPD thinking and processes be transformed in established companies?
 - What best practices can be leveraged to NPD from successful start-ups?
 - What is the value or role of “attitude” in changing how a company works?
 - What is entrepreneurialism and can it be taught and applied in NPD?
 - Is it possible to “bootstrap” a new product in an existing company?
8. How to measure and sustain NPD performance?
 - How can companies evaluate the efficiency and effectiveness of their NPD efforts?
 - What is the right scope and measurement for NPD success?
 - How can/should companies balance the portfolio of different projects in the development pipeline?

Short and long term projects in portfolio management?

- How can NPD performance be sustained over and throughout business cycles?
 - How can the effectiveness of individual innovators (in teams) be measured?
9. How to create a culture that truly embraces design and creativity?
 - What fosters and kills NPD-related creativity in companies?
 - What are the best ways to measure the value of NPD-related creativity across the organization?
 - How can design be infused in creativity and product (service) development?
 - How can design specs best be incorporated in the entire the NPD process?
 10. Other topics
 - What is the value of NPD certification?
 - What are the key characteristics of a systematic process for innovation in public-private partnerships?
 - What are the most salient ethical dilemmas in NPD and how might companies deal with them?

Hopefully, these research priorities will serve to direct the academic community to areas that are considered to be of interest and importance in advancing the body of knowledge in the domain of new product development and management.

Wim Biemans and Fred Langerak