SOCIAL MEDIA AND THE DESIGN OF AN INNOVATIVE ENTERPRISE

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Innovation is perceived as the key to companies’ competitiveness, it is the way forward for firms that want to grow in today’s complex and turbulent environment (Andrew et al., 2009; Barsh et al., 2007; etc.). Whether organizations are long established or new, those that manage to grasp leading positions are the ones that innovate faster and possess the relevant knowledge to uphold their innovativeness (Desouza et al., 2009). An organization’s capability to innovate is closely tied to its ability to utilize/manage/integrate its knowledge resources: innovation is definitely a knowledge intensive process (Subramaniam, 2005; Johannessen, Olsen, 2011).

Organizations thus face two simultaneous challenges: firstly, they must constantly perform and innovate to sustain their position on the marketplace and secondly, they must transform themselves so that they can navigate fundamental shifts in their environment in terms of market and technology (Garud et al., 2006). In other words, they have to re-design themselves with agility to anticipate and adapt to changes, searching constantly for innovation while sustaining performance on a daily basis.

From another view, recent literature echoes the emerging role of social media – a new practice for harnessing the power of mass collaboration, shaping new modes of behavior and facilitating knowledge flows in networks across organizational boundaries; all of these features are essential for company innovativeness (Noteboom, 2000; Weinberg et al., 2013). Actually, the use of social media has even pervaded the field of Knowledge Management (KM) through its capacity to build up collective intelligence from human interactions; these in turn lead to collaboration as long as trust and reciprocity are at work (Boughzala et al., 2010).

At the junction of these fields of interest, we propose a study that analyzes the relationships between the design requirements for an innovative enterprise and the implementation of the emerging practice of social media.
The research process adopts a conceptual analysis approach mainly based on a literature review that examines primary sources from different bodies of design theory, knowledge management and social media: design theory specifically focusing on designing for innovation, and looking at innovation as a knowledge intensive process grounded in the multidisciplinary domain of Knowledge Management. Although social media is a relatively recent topic in academic literature (Treem, Leonardi, 2012), it has been the object of numerous studies mostly from a user-perspective in the business press; this being the case, our examination focuses on the organizational use of social media; it evidences ties with the field of Knowledge Management through looking at new KM practices for accessing knowledge and collaboration (Boughzala et al., 2012).

To illustrate these perspectives, we use documentary research in a comparative study analyzing published reports on social media use and its role in organizational transformation (Bailey, 1994). Exploiting documentary sources requires assessment criteria such as authenticity, credibility, representativeness and meaning (Scott, 1990) and follows a rigorous process that results in comprehensive insights (Jashim, 2010). The sources we use are business reports available publicly or by subscription.

The paper is structured as follows: the three first sections are dedicated to the exploration of three bodies of the literature: design theory, innovation and design for innovation and, finally, social media. Based on this analysis, we discuss the potential link between the use of social media and the design of an innovative enterprise. After the illustration of hypotheses with three short cases, we highlight strengths and constraints of social media as levers of collaboration in the design of an innovative enterprise.

**DESIGNING AN ENTERPRISE**

Designing is a specific effort an organization regularly decides to embark upon to improve its current processes and practices. Authors define it as "a pragmatic effort to construct a social system that functions as desired in actual practice" (Romme, 2003), or as "an explicit and intended attempt to improve organizations" (Nystrom, Starbuck, 1981; Dunbar, Starbuck, 2006). Organization Design has attracted researchers for several decades their aim being to investigate the organizational field and, in the light of key concepts and frameworks extracted from practice, to generate prescriptions to improve organizations’ effectiveness while transforming present practices (Denyer, Transfield, 2008; Romme, 2003).
With the increasingly complex social and environmental challenges of the knowledge based economy, traditional organization research was sometimes considered as descriptive and analytical, focusing on the explanation of causes and developing theoretical knowledge at the expense of interest in solving field problems (Yoo et al., 2006; Van Aken, 2004; Huff et al., 2006). Organization and management studies have paid heed to organization design because of its relevance and potential to “bridge the worlds of theoretical and practical significances” (Jelinek, Romme, Boland, 2008, p. 317). However, there have been various perspectives and insights on the subject. In this work, we adopt the thinking of organization design not as a stable structure to aim for but as an ongoing developmental process (Dunbar, Starbuck, 2006; Meyer et al., 2005).

In our fast changing environment, organizations need to constantly question their evolution to shape their medium term future “now”, in order to better anticipate transformations. Thus, they have to shift from the static definition of “design” as “the ‘one best way’ to organize activities, completely understanding and optimizing all the cause-and-effect relationships” (Boland, Collopy, 2004) to an emerging and deliberate design process that calls upon the dynamics of organizing (Garud et al., 2006). This means that design is a process generator of dynamic sequences of solutions, each of which brings new solutions and opens avenues for new design steps (Hedberg et al., 1976, p. 43).

Garud et al. (2008) advocate design for incompleteness, recalling the “theory-design-fly-test and start-all-over-again” methodology formerly elicited by Boland et al. (2004). Based on situation awareness, design propositions are shaped according to a set of solution-oriented guidelines and imperative statements for action. Then scenarios of use are defined and after test and experimentation they are adjusted and validated, in turn inducing new processes or practices (Pascal et al., 2013). This is a spiral of development towards transformational change, mixing an intentional approach with the ability to grasp emerging evidences and solutions. As Garud stated, incompleteness is generative, serving as a trigger for the creation of many ideas on how the design can be extended and further developed (2008, p. 358).

To focus on usefulness, the design process must be related to an organization’s core components: these are people, processes, technology and governance or what Garud et al. (2006) name “generative properties” because these elements should have a synergistic effect on the developmental path.

People play a specific role in the design process since as main actors, they embody real life limitations (Dunbar, Starbuck, 2006) and their engagement is critical for the transformation’s success. They test and apply new practices,
becoming involved in the design path and contributing to a collaborative sense-making process (Bartunek, Louis, 1996).

Design projects disrupt routines and processes (Dunbar, Starbuck, 2006). To be consistent, transformation should adopt an iterative “change, measure, learn” approach to enhance coordination (Garud et al., 2006).

Technologies are a fundamental factor in the transformation process since their fast progress triggers continuous change and entails important alterations in everyday work. If technologies shape individual behavior, rules must be reconfigured while these technologies are in use, co-evolving to match human habits and working styles (Woodward, 1995; Orlikoswki, 2002).

Appropriate governance is needed to smooth the coordination of individuals with processes and perspectives. Garud et al. (2006) argue that it should be centrally facilitated to enhance connection but organizationally distributed to take advantage of the company’s knowledge and internal dynamics.

In sum, design could be seen as an effort to shift an organization from equilibrium in order to produce changes (Dunbar, Starbuck, 2006); design evidences continuous evolution via interaction with these core organizational elements.

DESIGNING FOR INNOVATION

In the knowledge economy, innovation has become an imperative for gaining competitive advantage and enhancing performance (Andrew et al., 2009; Barsh et al., 2007, etc). Numerous attempts to define innovation have led to a multifaceted concept, but in all cases it has been seen as a way of organizing human activity around the development of something new with embedded added value. According to Wolfe (1994), “...several adequate, circumscribed, theories of innovation exist, but each applies under different conditions.” Schumpeter (1939) apprehends innovation as the practical implementation of knowledge, ideas, or discoveries relying on entrepreneurial capabilities, not on inventiveness. The resource based view of the firm points out the fundamental importance of intangible resources for innovation as source of competitive advantage, knowledge being the most central of these (Hall, 1993; Barney, 1991; Grant, 1991). Peter Drucker states that, “Innovation is the specific tool of entrepreneurs, the means by which they exploit change as an opportunity for a different business or a different service” (1985, p. 55). The concept is moving from the traditional “firm centric view”, to a more “personalized, co-created view” of innovation where the individual plays a central
role (Prahalad, 2009). Authors, like Margaret J. Wheatley (1992) highlight the fostering role of “information gathered from new connections; from insights gained by journeys into other disciplines or places; from active, collegial networks and fluid, open boundaries” (1992, p. 113). This last approach underlines the power of cognitive diversity in the creative process and presages the knowledge based theory of firms’ innovation (Martin de Castro, 2011; Grant, 1996). In this study, we rely on such theories that view innovation as the most knowledge-intensive business process (Nonaka, Takeuchi, 1995). Subsequently, the innovative enterprise relies on innovation as source of competitive advantage and fosters an innovation based culture by unleashing the creative potential of employees and adopting governance that enhances the valuation and management of knowledge resources (Chauvel, 2013).

In this perspective, innovation is seen as an interactive, iterative and continuous process which affects every level of an organization: “there is now a greater recognition that novel ideas can transform any part of the value chain” (Birkinshaw et al., 2011, p. 43). Innovation results from interactions between individuals, owners of knowledge; it comes from a process of knowledge exchange and recombination (Galunic, Rodan, 1998; Quintane et al., 2011) and depends on an organization’s capacity to exploit its knowledge resources and explore new avenues.

Dougherty (2008) specifically investigated design processes that are conducive to innovation. She highlighted three fundamentals that trigger the capability to exploit and explore knowledge for innovation: fluidity, integrity and energy. Fluidity is an organization’s capacity to build linkages among people, processes, tasks and technologies so that knowledge, competences and activities flow; Integrity represents a holistic and interdisciplinary approach to problems with effective mechanisms for sharing and applying information and knowledge across department/sector boundaries; Energy deals with the emotional and physical resources needed to create a constructive and stimulating work context.

Still for Dougherty (2008, p. 426), designing an innovative enterprise requires three principles:

− To ensure fluidity, work should be enacted or organized as the professional practice of innovation, a daily concern and responsibility for each collaborator, because everybody possesses relevant knowledge to share and thus generate innovation.
− To guarantee integrity, this organization will set up horizontal flows of innovative problem setting/solving, i.e. it will develop transversal collaboration and take advantage of diversity and complementarities of skills and competences.
To ensure energy, it is important to provide a direct boost to the work of innovation, giving access to resources and acknowledging efforts with the active support of managers.

Built on these conceptual bases, our research reasoning investigates the transformation path of an enterprise (say a design effort) to become innovative. We analyze the four organization components described by Garud (2008) – people, processes, technology and governance – and explore the fundamentals prescribed by Dougherty (2008) as determinants for innovation.

**SOCIAL MEDIA**

“Social media” (SM) has become very popular. Etymologically speaking, social media dates from the ascent of humankind, since humans have always looked for different ways to communicate. Today, SM can be understood as “a group of Internet-based applications that build on the ideological and technological foundations of Web 2.0, and that allow the creation and exchange of user-generated content” (Kaplan, Haelein, 2010, p. 61). Many definitions in the literature explain the term SM by pointing toward technologies recognized implicitly as social media (e.g., blogs, wikis, SNSs, social tagging, etc.) and often without considering the way they influence behaviors when used in the context of an organization (Treem, Leonardi, 2013, p. 145).

At this point, it is important to differentiate “Web 2.0” (coined by Darcy DiNucci in 1999 and popularized by Tim O’Reilly, 2005) which refers to these collaborative technologies in themselves, from “social media” which relates to the use of these technologies in a social setting (Ahlqvist et al., 2010; Vuori, 2012). The novelty of this distinction lies in a more resolute focus on users as generators of content connected on several levels rather than on standalone content (Levy, 2013).

Already in 2009, McAfee talked about the 2.0 Enterprise, underlining the emergence of the increasing capacity for collaboration, people networking and content creation due to the freeform feature of SM technologies: they do not predefined workflows, roles or responsibilities but enable people to connect, keep in touch with distant activities, publish content for a broad audience, and “self-organize building communities and information resources without explicit coordination by any central authority” (2009, p. 4). Some consider this crucial technological development as “a paradigm shift”, in which a critical mass of users has been able to interact to create collective intelligence (Schneckenberg, 2009). In this practice, individual engagement is the basis for initiating virtual relationships and entering a dialogue with others,
a kind of horizontal linkage among users in which the boundaries between information producers and users are blurred (Ahlqvist et al., 2010).

Restraints are imposed only by those same actors (Agarwal et al., 2008). Collaborative relationships take place if trust and reciprocity are crafted and then the talents of the individual are combined with the strength and support of the whole group (Weinberg, 2013).

Employees become more autonomous, connecting with peers and better sharing tacit knowledge, expressing themselves and regaining a sense of identity (Weinberg et al., 2013). Entering a dialogue, they learn and participate, reshaping the contributions of others by adding new insights, and subsequently creating new knowledge.

Paroutis and Al Saleh (2009,) studied the benefits that explain why users are keen to use and contribute their knowledge through a socially connected web platform. They find effective communication and getting help and feedback easier, they find answers to specific problems and are informed of news or peers’ activities. They state they are motivated by the satisfaction of helping others and being helped, by sharing their passion on certain topics and “building a level of credibility tied to the individual employee” (p. 55). Building trust is both a prerequisite and an outcome: it means at once having a trustworthy intention and confidence in others’ ability and expertise (Paroutis, 2009). At the opposite end of the spectrum, lack of time, lack of knowledge about tools and lack of active managerial support are mentioned as potential barriers. Treem and Leonardi (2012) have explored the affordances of social media used in companies, highlighting how far they may affect organizational behaviors in terms of socialization, information sharing and power.

Sugarman (2010, p. 288) interestingly quotes Podolny and Page, (1998) explaining that… “network forms of organization foster learning, represent a mechanism for the attainment of status or legitimacy, provide a variety of economic benefits, facilitate the management of resource dependencies, and provide considerable autonomy for employees”.

In the light of this literature stream crossed with the former insights related to design for innovation, our research question asks what potential role the deployment of SM might have in the developmental path of an enterprise towards innovation.

**CAN SOCIAL MEDIA BE A LEVER FOR INNOVATION?**

Whatever the perspectives expressed, the leading belief is that SM enables interactions and collaboration, providing a shared virtual environment at
the organizational level (Ahlqvist et al., 2010; Vuori, 2012); however SM do not systematically lead to knowledge sharing or innovativeness; their value depends on the way they are deployed (Culnan, 2010; Swan et al., 1999; Newell et al., 2009).

As presented above, innovation is seen as the most knowledge-intensive business process (Nonaka and Takeuchi, 1995), a process of creating new knowledge, combining complementary forms of knowledge (Wiig, 1993) and a manifestation of the firm’s capability to exploit knowledge to create value (MacKinnon et al., 2002; Wang, Han, 2011). Schneckenberg (2009) recalls that in the Knowledge era, innovation is the result of the deliberate exchange of ideas between individual experts provided that organizations afford these knowledge workers efficient work environments to transform their expertise into professional performance (Switzer, 2008). He refers to Hayek (1945) to emphasize that lateral structures or unrestricted social settings such as peer networks, where people interact autonomously and are able to deploy their personal knowledge and expertise, favor for remaining creative and innovative. He also praises the idea of serendipity “by which we accidentally make a discovery while looking for something else”, as an interesting source of creativity (Schneckenberg, 2009 p. 243).

We support Johannessen and Olsen’s assumption (2011, p. 1396) that “social mechanisms among individuals and organizations initiate and sustain processes related to innovation”. These social mechanisms are close to the fundamentals advocated by Dougherty (2008). Collaboration operationalizes knowledge diversity in such a way as to create value. It facilitates the link between various types of knowledge deployed by connected actors and leads to innovation through dynamic synergies, resulting in new knowledge being applied and created. Connectivity can also be considered as a social mechanism that is an engine of innovation, through its capacity to forge interactions inside and outside the firm, to unleash expertise, creativity and knowledge combinations. Learning derived from these connections and the consequent combinations of various subjects, domains, people and organizations, underpins innovative activity (Mitra, 2000).

Kaplan and Haenlein (2010) talking of SM emphasize “It’s all about participation, sharing, and collaboration”. SM foster interactive and networked working. As knowledge is dynamic and distributed through organizations, capitalizing on this dynamic resource requires rapid and reliable flows across people, organizations, locations and times in order to push the right knowledge to the right people (Nissen, 2006). SM smooth the knowledge flows within company boundaries. Connecting people to people fits the process of tacit knowledge sharing in a bottom up process, enhancing knowledge capture, sharing and application in work contexts (Levy, 2013).
Adopting such media focuses on collaboration, building collective intelligence and social capital from human interactions. Kane (2010) quotes an interesting definition of collective intelligence proposed by Tadeusz Szuba as “a specific property of a social structure, initialized when individuals organize, acquiring the ability to solve more complex problems than individuals can”, (p. 65).

In their comparative study Swan et al. (1999) show the extent to which extant social media enhance ambidexterity, a recognized source of innovativeness (Jansen et al., 2006; Gupta et al., 2006). Indeed, SM increase the exploitation of existing knowledge through the re-use of lessons learned and best practices. And they boost the exploration of novel opportunities drawing on new sources of knowledge inside or outside the firm. These authors insist on the fact that innovation processes have become increasingly interactive and require simultaneous networking across multiple ‘communities of practice” on connected platforms, defining networking as a process of inter-relating and sense making (Weick, 1990).

In the same perspective, Vuori (2012) describes the use of SM at Nokia internally, to deploy “socially constructed interactive flows of information and knowledge” (p. 161), developing and optimizing knowledge distributed within the company boundaries. He also explains another use, called Ideasproject, or internal crowd sourcing for idea generation with the aim of improving existing products, services or practices and sharing new ideas; there is also an external idea crowd sourcing process for tapping into external company knowledge; both the internal and external dimensions are components of the company’s innovation strategy.

With the development of SM, organization members have renewed ways of learning, interacting and understanding. But all authors agree that in all cases, the use of SM triggers innovation through its capacity to enable interaction and collaboration, if supported by the necessary coordination and sponsorship of top management. It is the responsibility of management to provide governance that encourages exchanging and connecting ideas, elements conducive to innovation. Actually, the role of management is crucial in this profound transformation of work; it is essential to enable a smooth transition in the use of SM with a human centered approach (Baxter, 2014). The re-design of the organization must take account of people’s habits, routines and ways of working; it must adopt a participatory and iterative approach made up of member input, discussion, and buy-in with a concern for transparency in tune with the social climate (Weinberg, 2013), recalling the generative properties of Garud (2008) and the fundamentals of Dougherty (2008).
CONCRETE EXAMPLES OF SOCIAL MEDIA IN COMPANIES

Thus, the question is how far do these theories fit with corporate experience? The following section describes three examples from a benchmark study analyzing published reports (available publicly or by subscription)\(^1\) related to the activities of French companies, members of think tanks focusing on SM use. The three companies – Orange, JC Decaux and Renault – have been selected because of their expressed willingness to deploy SM to enhance collaboration, conducive to innovation, – in a formal transformation approach in response to internal challenges – and consequently their implication in public think tanks such as ORSE or the “Collaborative Enterprise Award”.

The historical French telecommunication provider Orange was the founder of the Observatoire des Réseaux Sociaux d’Entreprise (ORSE)\(^2\), launched in 2010 in France with a set of interested companies. ORSE offers a shared physical and virtual space, itself supported by a social network, for the promotion and exchange of best practices regarding the utilization of social media for better collaboration and innovation.

JC Decaux, a French out of home advertiser and the world number 1 in street furniture, was one of the winners of the “Collaborative Enterprise award”, launched sixteen years ago, by the professional magazine Entreprises & Carrières and the training company Cegos. This prize rewards the most exemplary accomplishments in terms of collaboration, knowledge sharing practices and participative innovation, based on the use of collaborative platform or Social Networks (formerly based on the use of intranet). The third company, Renault, the well-known French car manufacturer, was nominated for the same award.

Three years ago, Orange embraced the new social technology for its internal organization, as part of its ambitious strategic project “Conquête 2015” defined as “collaborators at the core of the business”. It has implemented a social media platform called “Plazza” which has 30 000 members and 1200 communities; the objective is to create social linkage and foster collaboration and transversal knowledge flows. It consists of three main elements:

- An enriched user profile repertory – each individual shares only what he/she wants.

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1. Published reports such as Collaboratif-info newsletter at http://www.collaboratif-info.fr/; ORSE reports; Entreprises & Carrières award reports.
Expert communities where the management questions experts and collects their insights into some important business topics.

Spontaneous communities, created by collaborators wishing to share topics of mutual interest with peers.

Plazza is synonymous with informal exchanges, a mine of information, openness to others, and freedom; indeed each individual is free but responsible for what he (she) shares. Activity is based on trust, reciprocity and voluntary contribution. The platform is disconnected from the organizational schema to liberate expression: “Plazza is not the place of the voice of THE master, it is a voluntary place”, explains the manager 2.0. It supports communication that is interpersonal, informal and collaborative; it thus contributes to creating social bonds and facilitates frequency, usability and immediacy because of connective intelligence, i.e. the capacity to find the right person able to reply to “my” question and the possibility to develop contacts organically through others. Communities are varied, mainly corresponding to two types, professional valorization and information / knowledge sharing, linked to motivation such as shared interests, mutual help and mapping. For instance, the “Customer service community” comprises people who wish to improve the client relationship in a specific sector; the “Time to Market anticipation community” focuses on testing and validating new hypotheses of deployment while a “Theater workshop community” gathers participants interested in developing short plays around the topic of Cloud Computing.

An internal survey run in 2013 showed that participation in communities remains limited to a minority, but this minority is active and visible. The survey argued that it takes time for users to become accustomed to new tools and that organizational transformation and the evolution of practices are not at all co-linear (Meyer et al., 2014).

Despite a strategic wish to relocate the human at the core of the business, human resources management (HRM) is aware of this potential “digital divide”. HRM thus wishes to anticipate the internal challenge by encouraging a collective approach, facilitating appropriate training, deploying what is called “digital eagerness”. It emphasizes the importance of matching the human approach to the technical one. The active participation of communities in such platforms is considered as critical. Training and coaching are regularly provided to community managers.

Internal studies are run to evidence the link between economic and social performance. “The idea is to point out how the collaborative approach generates innovation in comparison to an injunctive method. It is not a matter of

3. ORSE 7ème atelier – http://www.obsdesrse.com/?page_id=2362
questioning the “raison d’être” de Plazza nor to kill trust, which is essential in such a project”, concludes, the manager 2.0.

This experience, initiated with a HRM convinced of the positive impact of collaboration and knowledge flow, evidences limitations in the adoption phase and the subsequent need for appropriate leadership. But it opens interesting perspectives for the organizational innovativeness.

JC Decaux\(^4\) won an award for its “Bee project”. The company has focused its development on innovation dedicated to customers. Among several initiatives to enhance employees’ contribution to innovation, in 2011, it deployed a company social network named “Bee” to develop peer-to-peer interactions between the marketing and sales employees in 55 locations worldwide.

The idea emerged in 2008 to cope with the information sharing challenge among the different locations around the world. After a prior study to envision social and organizational levers and barriers to implementing a company social network, Decaux decided to launch such a platform to energize the sales sector and make each employee aware of the firm’s international dimension. The first step started with nine existing communities and around 500 employees.

Today, 120 communities bring together around 3000 employees who circulate ideas and information related to their jobs and responsibilities. Objectives are twofold: the need to exchange good practices and experiences of problem solving in daily tasks and the demand for new ideas for innovative practices.

The Jive platform was selected for its user-friendly features to make familiarization easier and facilitate daily tasks such as exchanging pictures and videos as is common in this business sector. If the movement started as a top management initiative, now spontaneous communities can emerge after a short enrolment process. The Sales and business development Director recognized in 2012\(^5\) that results were becoming tangible. In some foreign locations limited to small size groups, the activity is mostly run through the Bee platform, which becomes an “umbilical cord” that links them to the headquarters. It also offers an easy solution to answer specific questions; at JC Decaux, it is said that any question must have a response within 24 hours.


\(^5\) http://solutionsauxentreprises.lemonde.fr/travail-collaboratif/reseau-social-d-entreprise-l-epine-dorsale-des-groupes-internationaux_a-29-758.html
The next step aims to reduce the information overload of emails by 20% and shift the intranet to the Bee platform.

This implementation entailed uncertainties and difficulties for some employees who were reluctant to share, and managers who worried about losing control over their teams. But continuous follow-up to energize contributors and recall basic ethical rules of use has allowed its progressive deployment.

This story illustrates that collaboration conducive to innovation stems from managerial will focused on a concrete objective and aligned with organizational goals, and from a real project in which social mechanisms are developed with the support of technology, – for example here SM – and top management sponsorship.

Renault\(^6\), for several years, has favored technologies supporting collaboration, dedicating a whole department to deploying collaborative tools for employees – but with the clear intent of managing evolution and not revolution. “The challenge consists in encouraging initiatives without restraining the existing ones while avoiding a kind of anarchy with intricate social networks”, said the department manager. This evolution is managed as an insightful change management program with specific governance and appropriate communication processes: “a synthesis of two antagonistic trends, freedom and autonomy, required by employees – and the need for control and support of advancement, by the managing team responsible for the change”. Communities have been developed in four directions: business lines, innovation – fostering employees’ creativity for idea generation –, organizational and social issues.

In association with the Knowledge Manager, 2 years ago Renault launched a first event for idea generation called internal JAM, a 100% top-down approach. A “Jam” is a company-wide activity using Web-based tools provided by IBM to act as a giant suggestion box, unleashing both top-down and bottom-up contributions on specific topics. Since it is a managerial initiative, topics are defined by the top management and over three days, employees and managers are invited to participate in an open forum to express ideas and react to others’ contributions to generate collective intelligence on specific themes aligned with organizational goals. Facilitators are trained to enable participants to build on each other’s ideas. Ideas are collected, analyzed and developed so that the best ones can be implemented. This is a new way to engage employees in meaningful discussion across the organizational structure.

\(^6\) Source : http://www.collaboratif-info.fr
There are numerous benefits: a federative effect, significant participation from different company sectors (supply chain, manufacturing, administration etc.) and different locations that become aware that they all share similar concerns; it generates interesting and active exchanges and facilitates the deployment of a global team spirit. The exercise was attractive even if the direct return on investment was not evident, since the event is expensive to stage.

Taking advantage of this successful experience, the firm has set up a permanent collaborative platform with a continuous forum on different topics, selected or suggested by collaborators. Ongoing contributions are encouraged and the company ensures development and transparency about how ideas are used. Unlike the first edition, now the ideas and suggestions are bottom up. The quality of contribution supports the conviction that one unexplored idea is a potential loss of value and shows that collective intelligence, supporting the deployment of participative innovation for which members feel responsible, is a contributor to value creation.

**DISCUSSION: SOCIAL MEDIA AS LEVERS OF COLLABORATION IN THE DESIGN OF AN INNOVATIVE ENTERPRISE**

The above examples illustrate some challenges that firms can cope with. One of the major uses is “reaching” and “connecting people”. It is recognized that collaborators have to know “who knows what”, “who has specific required experience, a specific expertise”. Providing individual profile repertoires, SM facilitate the identification and location of “knowing” individually. Another feature corresponds to the emphasis on the human dimension, helping fluidity and sense making in information exchange. A document stored in a database is divorced from its context of use, and thus difficult to “read” or make sense of. With SM, you are able to ask the document’s author direct questions to confirm its meaning.

Connection leads to collaboration, provided that the culture and social climate encourage reciprocity and the deployment of collective intelligence. Collaboration implies complex factors (emotional, cultural, etc.) and is not as natural as it seems. Collaboration nurtures work in communities, based on a shared purpose and a wish to work together to develop a joint interest and create new knowledge (Wenger, 1998). It is transversal. People working together develop personal ties and start building TRUST – the fundamental bond.
A variation of collaboration enhanced by SM is internal idea generation or internal crowd sourcing which recognizes the power of collective intelligence conducive to innovation, benefiting from the deployment of cross-department knowledge and enhancing a group spirit (Vuori, 2012; Newell et al., 2009).

Recalling the fundamentals advocated by Dougherty (2008) in design for innovation, it can be said that SM guarantee fluidity and integrity to lubricate organizational processes: they make interaction easier and foster connections among actors; this means they boost horizontal knowledge flows across department boundaries. Internal frontiers are blurred, breaking down silos and fostering a conscious appropriation of collaboration in the interest of organizational performance toward more integrative practices (Weinberg et al., 2013). The most important element is people, for they are the cornerstone of this new design model, and it is they who fuel the spiral of innovation development. But their energy needs to be galvanized through a new style of leadership, comprising vision, coaching and guidance to help employees go beyond their existing knowledge. Managers play an important role in the acceptance and evolution of these new practices, encouraging autonomy and commitment for improving empowerment – well known for leveraging team efficacy and knowledge sharing.

It has also been said that the design process must combine the core components of an organization, namely: “people, processes, technology and governance” (Garud et al., 2008). It is obvious that SM have shaped users’ behavior and changed their habits, experiences and even power relations. But these same users are the organizational actors and content producers (Vuori, 2012; Boughzala et al., 2012). They in turn mold the tools they use through their practice, culture and habits. Moreover, they adapt and set out their own practices according to their needs: as people and the needs are diverse, the technology use must always be situated and context bound (Orlikoswki, 2002; Weinberg et al., 2013).

Even if SM can create value for both the enterprise and its members, adoption requires active management and calls for a culture change since it reflects a shift from vertical hierarchy to a more people centered organization with a horizontal and self-organizing functioning (Dijou, 2010). So, organizations should adjust governance principles to construct an environment more appropriate for individual and collective contributions beneficial to innovation. A key principle for a collaborative effort is to have a shared purpose and common vision (Weinberg et al., 2013). A human resources approach entailing training, clear guidelines and governance responsibilities along with recognition of individual vs collective contribution will
positively impact progress to new practices. Yoo et al. (2002) praise the management strategy of developing fairness, openness and the quality of rituals to enhance collaboration and community development through enterprise social networks.

In the effort to design an innovative enterprise, SM are not an end in themselves but they are useful as a support to interactions among organizational members. They do not create innovation but today, they may spur efficiency, agility and innovation by fostering members’ interactions in a collaborative setting (Dale, 2013). And practice reveals that SM are embraced on condition that top management is willing to cope with organizational challenges aligned with corporate strategy. This induces deep organizational transformation. But when SM are well managed and supported, acceptance is widespread.

SM do not replace an ambitious, structured and committed human resources and innovation strategy; but by restoring the human dimension to the core of organizational concerns, they contribute to creating social performance with added value and business efficiency. Nevertheless, it is worth underlining some limitations: the examples described above only deal with big companies. There are few examples of such use in SMEs, partly because the requirements are dissimilar: SME’s often face resource limitations with a modest workforce. They evolve with a flat organization, an organic way of managing and flexible but mostly operational processes; knowledge exchange is mainly tacit through informal and interpersonal channels (Edwardsson, 2013; Evangelista, 2010).

CONCLUSION

Analyzing the implementation of the emerging practice of SM in some companies shows that the required elements for designing an innovative enterprise as depicted by Dougherty (2008), – fluidity, integrity and energy – are at play. To echo the famous sentence of Kaplan and Haenlein (2010), it is all about interaction, knowledge flows and collaboration. And as it has been perceived, this deployment is only possible if there is interconnection among people, technologies, process and governance; this is in resonance with Garud’s generative properties (2008) and demands a synergistic spiral that allows these components to interact for consistent organizational sense making.

The perspectives underlined through the literature review and documentary study show SM as a social phenomenon that entails significant
transformations in the work environment; this phenomenon questions the traditional representation of work relationships and even more of work organization. There is a claim for the centrality of users and this will alter the current functioning of organizations. Voices are beginning to populate the business literature, talking about “tsunami of digital technologies”, convinced that these technologies in addition to globalization, are profoundly transforming the economy and society (ecrop.blogspot.com 2011)\(^8\).

This is in tune with the statements of Bughin et al. in a recent McKinsey survey (2011): they assert that the number of companies deploying at least one social networking technology is fast increasing. But if companies are improving their mastery of these tools, persistence in their use is far from being generalized. However, these authors express some confidence in the fact that reducing organizational barriers to the use of social technologies may lead to the redesign of new processes that are source of radical transformation. They conclude arguing that “companies that can create change themselves – instead of reacting to it – are likely to benefit the most” (2011, p. 10).

The next step of this research should overcome another limitation of the present exercise by undertaking an empirical study to observe the impact of SM implemented in a company wishing to transform itself into a collaborative enterprise. This research should aim to explore the work of design but also, the acceptance and impact on the culture, on individual vs collective behaviors, power and work relationships and consistency with the evolution of the company as a whole. Equally important is the transformational power of SM on governance style, because there seems to be a mismatch between its founding logic and the “still-reigning 20th-century model of management and organizations” (Deiser, Newton, 2013).

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