Crowdsourcing in the Production of Video Advertising – The Emerging Roles of Crowdsourcing Platforms

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"You can call it crowdsourcing, co-creation or open source innovation. The point is, the reality is, advertising will continue to be democratized. With this radical democratization, the structures of advertising organizations are being transformed. Radically."

John Winsor, co-founder of Victors & Spoils[1]

1. Introduction

Advertising has always relied on creativity as the most important resource for inspiration. Defined as any paid form of non-personal communication about an organization, product, service, or idea by an identified sponsor (Belch & Belch, 2003), advertising is one of the many different activities comprised in the so-called creative industries (Howkins, 2004). In spite of global uncertainty, economic troubles in Europe and lackluster conditions in the US, overall global ad spending is still expected to increase in 2013, albeit at a modest rate (IAB-UK, 2012; Vranica, 2012). As it relates to individual categories, TV is expected to rise 2.8% to $63.8 billion, while internet ad spending, which includes mobile, search, social display is expected to grow a whopping 18.1%. Video advertising is seen as a particularly effective way to promote brands and products (Dishmann, 2011; Torng, 2012). Online, the demand of video advertising revenue will even grow faster than that of all

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[1] http://www.johnwinsor.com/my_weblog/2012/11/what-will-advertising-look-like-in-2020.html/

other advertising channels, at an annual growth rate of 19.6% globally from 2011 to 2016, increasing from $4.7 billion to $11.4 billion. Furthermore, it seems obvious that the audience for mobile video will rapidly grow as smartphone and tablet adoption becomes standard. There are already 25 million US adults who consume, on average, 4 hours and 20 minutes of mobile video every month (Stutzmann, Paderni & Madigan, Corinne, 2011).

One of the key questions for brands and organizations is to find ways to create quality video content at an affordable cost. This chapter deals with this particular application of creative production: namely film and video production for advertising, hereafter called "video advertising". Traditionally, the production of video advertising has been – and still is – carried out by the creative services of advertising agencies. As part of its mission to plan and execute advertising programs for its clients, agencies usually handle the video advertising production process, whether it is done internally or with external video production houses. But many argue that this process is too long and costly: one of the suggested solutions is to use crowdsourcing as a way to generate video content for brands (DeJulio, 2012; Winter & Hill, 2009). The "creative core" of decision-makers in the production of video content are increasingly becoming open to creative input from the outside (Telo, Sanchez-Navarro & Leibovitz, 2012), and online creative platforms are becoming a new venue for these creative individuals to create for brands. This chapter argues that the video advertising industry is undergoing a fundamental change with the advent of a new set of intermediaries that we will call creative crowdsourcing platforms.

To explain what role crowdsourcing plays in the contemporary video advertising landscape, we organize this chapter as follows: first, it is important to define crowdsourcing and differentiate it with related concepts like traditional outsourcing, open source projects or user-generated advertising. We then describe how the use of crowdsourcing has evolved over time, shifting away from the initial amateur focus to becoming an integral part of the advertising production process, involving freelance video advertising professionals. Finally, we describe four models that are currently used by crowdsourcing platforms to create video content for brands, illustrating that the crowd can be solicited in different ways of the production process today. We end the present chapter with a discussion of the evolution of creative crowdsourcing platforms over time.

2. Crowdsourcing as a novel way to create video content

2.1 What is crowdsourcing?

Coined in February 2006 by venture capitalist Steve Jurvetson and popularized in the June 2006 issue of Wired (Brabham, 2013), the term crowdsourcing describes a new way of organizing work. Originally, crowdsourcing was defined by Jeff Howe as "*the act of a company or institution taking a function once performed by employees and outsourcing it to an undefined (and generally large) network of people in the form of an open call*" (Howe, 2006). Crowdsourcing is the precise process by which a company posts a problem online, a vast number of individuals offer solutions to the problem, the winning ideas are awarded some form of a bounty, and the company uses the output for its own gain (Brabham, 2008; Estellés-Arolas & González-Ladrón-de-Guevara, 2012). Crowdsourcing has grown in popularity so much so that the term was officially added to the Webster Dictionary in 2011[2]. Today, crowdsourcing is being used for a variety of tasks, from the execution of simple tasks that have nothing to do with advertising to the generation of creative ideas and/or advertising content for brands, where people are asked to submit more elaborate creative productions (Brabham, 2010; Kleemann, Voß, & Rieder, 2008; Penin & Burger-Helmchen, 2011; Schenk & Guittard, 2011). This chapter focuses on creative crowdsourcing, which we define as crowdsourcing of tasks that rely primarily on people's creative abilities to be executed, hence falling under the roof of creative industries. Creative crowdsourcing is often used by organizations for their innovation and marketing efforts, as the creative output of the crowd allows them to have access to a variety of fresh ideas to use (Erickson, Petrick, Trauth, & Erickson, 2012; Howe, 2008; Whitla, 2009). This form of crowdsourcing has also been called crowd creation (Howe, 2008), peer-vetted creative production (Brabham, 2010), crowdsourcing of creative tasks (Schenk &

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[2] http://www.merriam-webster.com/info/newwords11.htm

Guittard, 2011) or crowdsourcing of inventive activities (Penin & Burger-Helmchen, 2011) in previous academic literature.

2.2 What is crowdsourcing not?

Hiring a freelancer, whether it is offline or over the internet, does not constitute crowdsourcing as there is no open call for participation and the individuals who apply are not asked to submit a creative ideas; they are just applying to be chosen as a collaborator. Hence, we don't see this type of contracting as crowdsourcing but as a direct collaboration between a firm and an individual (Barley & Kunda, 2006; Malone & Laubacher, 1998). Recent academic work aligns this position, preferring terms like "*online platform for contract labor*" (Agrawal, Lacetera, & Lyons, 2012) or "*online platform for outsourced contracts*" (Ghani, Kerr, & Stanton, 2012) or "*spot labor markets [where] you know what kind of solution you are looking for and what an appropriate solver looks like*" (Boudreau & Lakhani, 2013). Crowdsourcing is also different from open source projects, which might be a good setting for software projects, but are not suited for private company processes because it requires access to the essential elements of the product (Brabham, 2008). We would also like to differentiate crowdsourcing from user-generated advertising, where amateurs spontaneously create advertisements for brands (Kleemann et al., 2008). This type of initiatives can be described as "*brokering between aspiring amateurs and commercial content firms,*" (Van Dijck, 2009), but we think it's still different from crowdsourcing, as no individuals or organizations asked for this content originally.

2.3 Crowdsourcing of video content: from amateur participation to professional work

Early examples in the literature of the use of crowdsourcing in the production of video advertising include L'Oreal's ad contest on Current TV, Doritos' Crash The Super Bowl contest, Converse's homemade commercial contest on ConverseGallery.com, or Chevrolet's initiative to allow people to customize

30-second spots for the Tahoe vehicle[3] (Brabham, 2008; Lawrence & Fournier, 2010; Wexler, 2011). These examples of crowd-sourced video advertising were not primarily initiated to generate creative content, but mostly to generate buzz and conversation around the brands. "*The success of user-generated campaigns is partly due to their content, sure, but also partly to their novelty*" said Robert Moskowitz, a consultant and author, in an article about video advertising contests (Moskowitz, 2006).

For example, Doritos' first edition of Crash The Super Bowl was primarily managed by integrated communication agency OMD, and supported by the ad agency Goodby, Silverstein & Partners, the media agency TPN as well as the PR agency Ketchum. Crash the Super Bowl exceeded the initial goal of $5 million in PR value by garnering 1 billion media impressions, an estimated ad equivalency of more than $30 million dollars. "*The hidden driver of our program was the public relations campaign*", the brand explained in a statement[4], "*the strong consumer aspect of Crash the Super Bowl enabled effective PR, while maintaining ongoing mainstream news coverage at each phase*". Early crowdsourcing initiatives were more PR stunts than ways to produce video content to be used for actual advertising. Campaigns were backed by massive budgets to promote video contests beforehand, to manage and handle brand reputation during, and to communicate and air the winners after the contests. "*Even the most well-known brands often spend millions of dollars upfront to get the word out to consumers*", explained the New York Times about advertising contests, underlining that they "*have nothing to do with cost savings*".

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[3] The latter has even be widely discussed as a case of "crowd slapping", which describes the crowd's ability to influence a crowdsourcing initiative in order to harm a brand or a product (Howe, 2008)

[4] 2008 Bronze Effie Winner Statement, in the category Entertainment & Sporting Events, http://s3.amazonaws.com/effie_assets/2008/2592/2008_2592_pdf_1.pdf accessed on January 28th 2013

2.4 The rise of creative crowdsourcing platforms

The early examples described above show anecdotal evidence about the birth of the phenomenon, in which most of the initiatives were managed by traditional agencies. Nowadays, while integrated agencies still remain in control of campaign creation and coordination, brands are also increasingly relying on creative crowdsourcing platforms to generate video content to feed their marketing efforts. Organizing video contests to generate buzz or to revamp a brand image still exists, but we also see the emergence of new types of video advertising contests, that are launched to actually produce promotional content for brands[5].

For marketers, online video contests on crowdsourcing platforms even become a radical differentiation compared to the early examples of video crowdsourcing for advertising. Nowadays, when it comes to crowd-sourced video content production, quality is becoming increasingly important: "*It is unsustainable to believe that a significant volume of high-quality ads will be produced by everyday consumers who are only guaranteed a reward if they win*", explains Calle Sjoenell, creative director at BBH, in Forrester's "Crowdsourcing Gains Legitimacy for Advertisers" (Stutzmann et al., 2011). According to this report, using crowdsourcing for advertising is quickly becoming a middle-way between consumer-generated advertising and the work of traditional agencies. It allows them to get content in a very fast and cost-effective way compared to the traditional production process handled by agencies (Behan, 2012; DeJulio, 2012; Stutzmann et al., 2011; Whitla, 2009). Not only does crowdsourcing lower the costs to generate one advertisement, but a very important aspect is that they get numerous propositions from a variety of actors who all work on the same brand brief, which also allows them to identify new brand insights by seeing how a heterogeneous crowd of creative individuals interprets the same creative brief. About the "Energizing Refreshment" contest on eYeka, Coca-Cola's Leonardo O'Grady explained that "*we knew we'd have a number of new perspectives on a common brief that we could*

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[5] Sometimes even behind closed curtains, as creative crowdsourcing platforms increasingly run contests that are not open to everyone, or in which the brand is not identified, because of confidentiality reasons

use to develop our own idea", highlighting that the initiative had a ripple-effect on the way Coca-Cola thinks about the creative process (Moth, 2012).

The rise of creative crowdsourcing platforms is being showcased on an interactive timeline that visualizes how the use of creative crowdsourcing has exploded among brands since the mid-2000's[6]. This timeline features a wide variety of creative crowdsourcing initiatives organized or sponsored by the 100 brands included in Interbrand's Best Global Brands ranking, and shows that the number of video contests has increased significantly since 2006, mostly due to video contests on creative crowdsourcing platforms (Figure 1). From that date onwards, the number of advertising contests organized on creative crowdsourcing platforms exploded, with a peak in 2011, while the number of video contests organized independently remained stable.

Figure 1

NUMBER OF VIDEO CONTESTS HELD BY THE WORLD'S
MOST VALUABLE BRANDS SINCE 2006S

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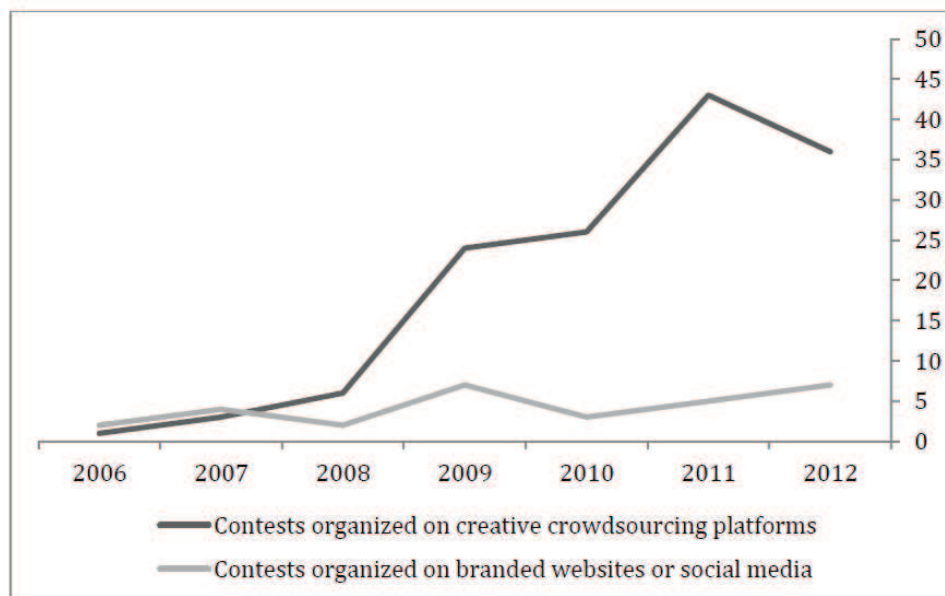
[6] http://www.tiki-toki.com/timeline/entry/52997/Crowdsourcing-by-Worlds-Best-Global-Brands accessed on February 18th 2013 11

The objective of the chapter is to present these creative crowdsourcing platforms, and to present the role take in the overall process of video advertising production and distribution. To do that, our chapter will be based on a multiple case study methodology.

2.5 DESCRIPTION OF OUR MULTIPLE CASE STUDY METHODOLOGY

The case study method allows researchers to explore, describe or explain real-life events such as organizational and managerial changes, or the evolution of particular industries. Case studies are often used when the goal of the research is to relate particular phenomena, like crowdsourcing, to broader contexts, such as the production of video content for advertising (Yin, 2002). This is exactly the aim of this chapter, whereby we want to describe how crowdsourcing-based web platforms are increasingly being used to produce video content for brands and organizations.

The recent phenomenon of crowdsourcing has been described in a variety of contexts, such as innovation tournaments, creative execution or micro-working markets, but we find that the academic field has not addressed this trend in advertising. To our knowledge, the current literature does not go beyond the description of early examples of crowdsourcing, or user-generated video content. Also, and more importantly, no research has been dedicated to crowdsourcing-based video production, a trend that is disrupting the traditional model of agency-controlled video production. This type of work is indeed often initiated and controlled by the creative services of full-service ad agencies, or by specialized creative boutiques like production houses (Belch & Belch, 2003; Grabher, 2002). To explore this novel set of actors, we chose a multiple case study research design to explore and describe the growing role of creative platforms for the production of video advertising. We focus our research on companies that control web-based platforms on which contributors participate to a variable extent in the production of video content for brands and organizations. Our population comprises 15 creative crowdsourcing platforms that intermediate the creation of video advertising for brands and organizations (Table 1).

Table 1

LIST OF CREATIVE CORWDSOURCING PLATFORMS
ENCOMPASSED IN OUR STUDY

Name	Origin	Year founded	Tagline	Network size*
Blur Group	UK	2010	"The Creative Service Exchange"	24.500
Concept Cupboard	UK	2010	"Giving you access to the UK's best young designers"	-
eYeka	France	2006	"The co-creation community"	250.000
Genero	USA	2009	"Video projects"	-
GeniousRocket	USA	2007	"The first curated corwdsourcing company"	500
Mofilm	UK	2009	"The biggest brand video contests and competitions"	30.000
Poptent	USA	2007	"The trusted global source fpr creative video solutions"	60.000
Production Party	Australia	2012	"Australia's largest video production marketplace"	-
Talenthouse	USA	2009	"Creative collaboration"	-
Tongal	USA	2008	"Where the best ideas find the best filmmakers"	-
Userfarm	Italy	2010	"Viral Video Campaigns through competitions from brands, agencies and publishers"	37.500
Victors & Spoils	USA	2009	"The world's first creative (ad) agency built on crowdsourcing principles"	15.000**
Womadz	USA	2012	"Word of mouth advertising"	-
Wooshii	UK	2009	"Professional video production company"	5.000
Zooppa	Italy	2007	"People-powered brand energy"	185.000

* In March 2013, when the present chapter has been submitted
** At the moment of its acquisition by Havas

We gathered information about these companies using desk research, going further into their precise offerings, analyzing their *modi operandi* to apply crowdsourcing for video production, and by looking closely at what stage of video advertising production they are being used. This allowed us to identify the role that the different crowdsourcing platforms take in the production of video content.

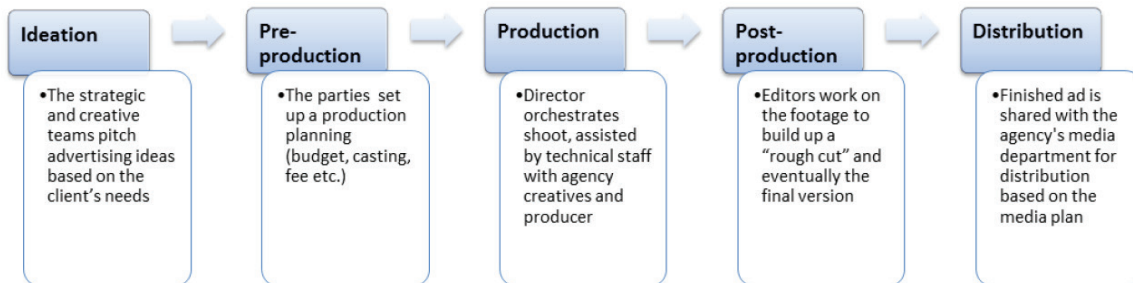## 3. Roles of crowdsourcing platforms dedicated to video advertising

3.1 The traditional production process of video advertising

In order to understand the role that creative crowdsourcing platforms play in the production of video advertising, we need to look at the way it traditionally gets produced. The creation and distribution of video advertising is often managed by advertising agencies, and particularly their creative services, for the production, and media departments, for the distribution (Belch & Belch, 2003). In some cases, especially in large agencies, a "traffic department" coordinates all phases of production to see that the ads are completed on time and that all deadlines for submitting the ads to the media are met (Belch & Belch, 2003; Grabher, 2002). These agencies come in all shapes and sizes, from specialists which focus on specific media vehicles to full-service agencies who include strategic planning, project management, media buying as well as creative work (Blattberg, 2011). Once the decision to use video advertising as part of a brand's communication strategy has been taken, the first step of the production process is to find ideas based on this brand's brief, target audience and desired impact[7]. Then, once an idea has been "sold" by an agency and "bought" by a client, the next steps of bringing the ideas to life in the production process are usually pre-production (scheduling the shooting, casting the participants etc.), production (directing and shooting the actual spot), and post-production (editing the film, including adding special effects, music etc.). The media departments of advertising agencies then take care of the distribution of the produced ads. This results in a five-step process, from ideation to distribution, which is depicted in the following figure (figure 2). We will now briefly explain each

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[7] The decision to create a video advertisement is only a minor part of advertising and communication agencies' role. A variety of other services are being provided to transform the brand's objectives into an actionable and effective communication strategy. By focusing on the creation of video content, this chapter leaves broader strategic services aside.

of the steps, describing the nature of the work and the stakeholders that are involved in each of them.

Figure 2

The Simplified Video Advertising Production Process

Ideation	Pre-production	Production	Post-production	Distribution
•The strategic and creative teams pitch advertising ideas based on the client's needs	•The parties set up a production planning (budget, casting, fee etc.)	•Director orchestrates shoot, assisted by technical staff with agency creatives and producer	•Editors work on the footage to build up a "rough cut" and eventually the final version	•Finished ad is shared with the agency's media department for distribution based on the media plan

3.1.1 Ideation based on the creative brief

The first step in the production of a video commercial is the creative idea generation phase, which is based on the creative brief. This creative brief is a short document, usually one or two pages, used in agencies to provide guidance in executing creative work on behalf of their clients. It is not provided directly by the client, but by the agencies' strategic teams whose role it is to translate the clients' needs into actionable communication strategies, in which video advertising is often a significant component. A good brief contains information about the market, the product, its positioning, key benefits and differences with the competition. The brief is the most important document that circulates within the agencies, and must be imaginative, concise and yet highly focused. It provides the necessary information and lays down the path to come up with a single-minded campaign idea (Kimani, 1996). It is important that the creative brief is well understood by the creative teams primarily because they actually write the advertisements.

The creative directors should be involved in signing off the creative brief, as their role is to ensure that there is fertile ground in the strategy. The creative team begins the ideation period whereby the art director and copywriter partners start pitching their ideas to each other and when they have enough good ideas they then share them with the creative director.

This is an ongoing process where ideas are thrown out, others nurtured and others developed further, where copywriters and art directors work under the direction of creative directors (Wells, Burnett, & Moriarty, 2002). During the creative process, agency producers are often consulted to talk about the feasibility of executing certain ideas, but account managers and account planners may also provide input and guidance (Grabher, 2002). Ideas are then presented and explained to the client, using the already approved creative brief as the yardstick to select the idea that move forward into development[8].

3.1.2 Pre-Production

The first phase of the actual production process brings all the parties together who are needed to bring the video commercial to life. In large agencies, a traffic department is responsible for making sure projects are done efficiently and profitably, functioning like project managers where they open up jobs, route approval internally, staff the projects and keep track of timelines and budgets. There are typically three meetings that take place during this pre-production phase: Planning is the first meeting, and it establishes what the video is to achieve, the second is the story-boarding of the idea where every shot the audience will see is planned out which helps reveal any holes in the script and also helps plan time and costs, the final meeting is to gain agreement on the budget. All these meetings aim to bring final agreement on casting, music, production schedule, property and wardrobe recommendations, recommended locations and finally an agreed upon production quotation/fee. This final agreement is the necessary step to move into the actual production process of the video footage for the commercial.

3.1.3 Production

Production is when the actual footage for the commercial is being created based on the plans and specifications agreed on in the previous

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[8] Sometimes, depending on the client, the brand, the investment or schedule, the creative ideas either move directly into production or into consumer testing for validation and further refinement.

phase. The role of the director is critical to bringing the creative vision of the commercial to life. Based on previous collaborations and the strategic objectives of the advertisement, the director will then choose his creative team to set up a project-based collaboration between in-house creative and external collaborators, who will be commissioned to plan and execute the production of the video commercial (Grabher, 2002). The creative team, managed by a producer, is responsible for creating the ad, with shooting often taking only one or two days. Other key principals involved in the production process include the agency creative team, the casting team and talent, the lighting team and camera crew all working closely with the director to bring to life his ultimate vision of the video content.

3.1.4 Post-production

The post-production phase is where it all starts to come together. This is a critical, yet invisible stage. The editing process begins with going through all the footage to choose the best frames to build up a "draft" without voice, music or computer graphics. Once this edit has been approved by the client, the editing process continues and it includes sound mixing, color correction, the incorporation of graphic effects and all necessary elements to create a "rough cut" for the client. This almost final video allows the client to offer any additional input before completing the project with the final cut. The agency producers manage this process, working closely with the production and editing houses, liaising with the agency teams and the client for approvals throughout the editing process. Once approved, the right formats and right materials get released to media networks for distribution.

3.1.5 Distribution

In a digital world, distribution is critical. The key to airing the most perfect spot made is to air it nationally so that the most people can see it and then set up an online presence so people can find it and share it easily.

For a traditional TV buy, the finished ad is shared with the agency's media department, which then places the media based on an already approved media plan. The media plan is usually developed concurrently with the creative development and production process. This expertise resides with the agency's media planners and buyers. This team is charged with where to advertise (geography), when to advertise (timing) and what media vehicles to use (media mix) to ensure that the target audience will most likely to see the intended advertising. Distribution of advertising consists of the purchasing of advertising space, the broadcasting of the ads, and the measurement of its effectiveness. Without a TV buy, it is quite a challenge to distribute online and this is compounded by the millions of videos being uploaded every day on sites like YouTube (Dawson et al., 2011). Very often, online distribution of video content is being amplified by specific service providers whose role it is to push the content to viewers and reach the targeted audience. We represent this five-step process, with production at its center, is represented in the following figure.

Figure 3
The Video Advertising Production Process,
Including External Stakeholders
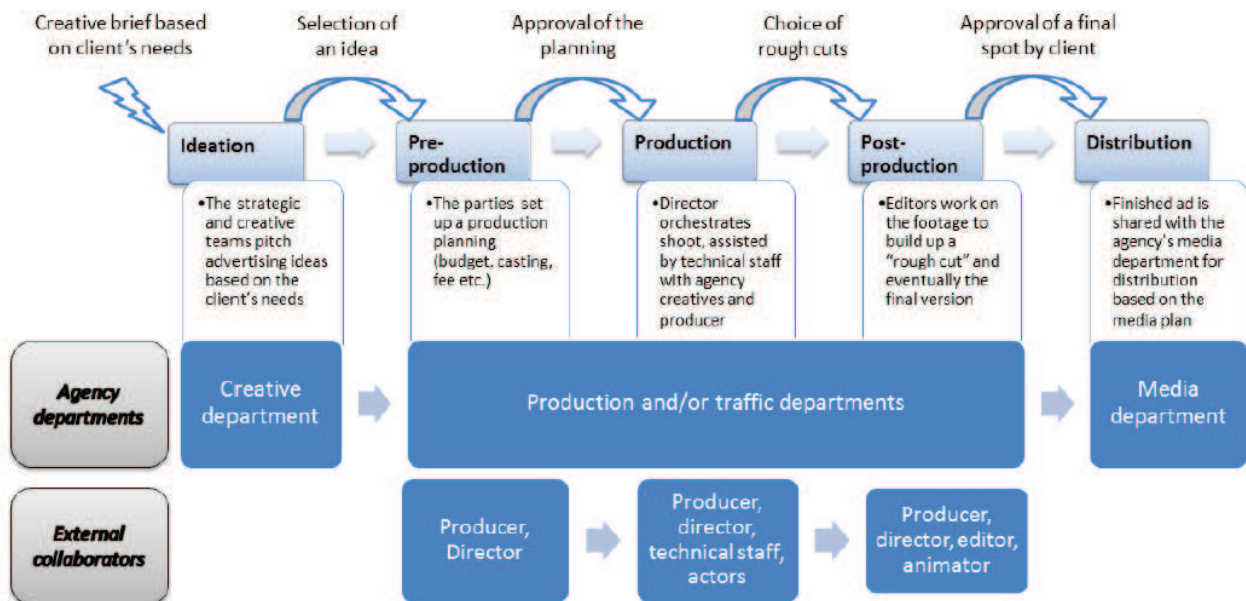
Now that we have a basic and common understanding of video advertisement creation, we can describe the different services that creative crowdsourcing platforms can provide, playing significant roles in this process.

4. Uses of crowdsourcing in the creation of video advertising

This section explores the different ways crowdsourcing can be used by advertising professionals in the previously presented process. An often used mechanism is that of contests, or competitions, which can be defined as a one-to multiple-round, time-limited competition calling on the general public or a specific target group to make use of their expertise, skills or creativity in order to submit solutions for particular tasks defined by the organizers who strive for a creative solution (Adamczyk, Bullinger, & Möslein, 2012). In the space of advertising content creation, we have identified four dominant uses of crowdsourcing in the creation of video advertising: idea contests can be used to generate simple ideas, to be used by organizations for the creation of advertisements in a traditional manner; call for pitches can be used to identify talented individuals to work and co-create the spots with; simple contests allow organizations to gather video content after a one-round, traditional competition, and stage-based contests allow them to have more control throughout the process by being involved at different stages and channeling the crowd's creativity. We choose to present these four crowdsourcing models in this order as it reflects the growing implication of the crowd along the video production process, from low crowd involvement at the very beginning of the process (idea contests) to higher crowd involvement throughout the whole production process (stage-based contests).

4.1 Crowdsourcing creative inspiration: idea contests

At the beginning of the video advertising creation process is the ideation phase. Crowdsourcing can be used in this phase to find original

and creative ideas of advertising spots, thus leveraging the creativity and the diversity of the crowd (Winsor, 2013). Examples of the first type of crowdsourcing initiatives, where only the ideas matter, can be found on eYeka, where the food-products multinational corporation Danone launched several contests with the objective of gathering creative ideas to inspire advertising. In one contest for the Actimel brand[9], for example, the company was looking for stories of "how Actimel gives people the inner strength to do great big thing," requiring members of the crowd to submit their ideas in any form, from pictures and slideshow presentations to storyboards. In another contest for the South-African Danone brand Yogi-Sip[10], the objective was to gather creative ideas to inspire a commercial around the theme of "the coolest way to keep going," and winning ideas came from countries as diverse as Algeria, Ecuador and Portugal[11]. On another crowdsourcing platform, Userfarm, Microsoft tasked the creative individuals registered on the Userfarm platform to "come up with an idea for a video that will bring the essence of the new Windows Phone to life" for the launch of its Windows Phone. Dozens of ideas have been submitted by members of the crowd, allowing the brand to explore a diversity of creative routes to use for its communication.
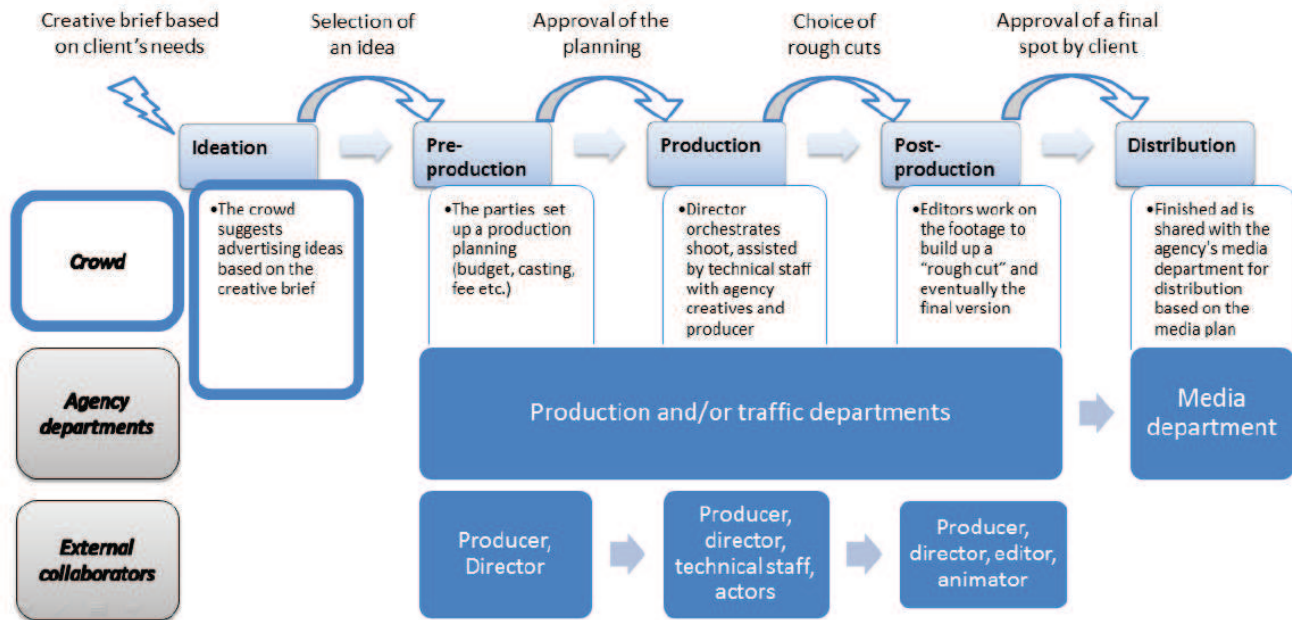
These examples illustrate the possibility of using crowdsourcing in the idea generation phase, with brands getting a high number of raw ideas to inspire their advertising. In this type of creative crowdsourcing initiatives, the value comes from the openness to ideas, wherever they come from, and whoever submits them. There is no need to be a copywriter, a screenwriter or a video production professional to participate; only the idea and the story is 21 rewarded (DeJulio, 2012; Whitla, 2009). These contests usually last a couple of weeks and the brands "walk away" with the ideas without further collaboration with the crowd, using the ideas (or not) to work with their internal communication department and/or advertising agencies.

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[9] http://en.eyeka.com/projects/6661-Actimel

[10] http://en.eyeka.com/projects/7256-Yogi-Sip

[11] http://blogen.eyeka.com/2012/12/20/yogi-sips-winners-are-here/

Figure 4
The Video Advertising Production Process
Using Crowdsourcing at the Idea Generation Phase

Creative brief based on client's needs | Selection of an idea | Approval of the planning | Choice of rough cuts | Approval of a final spot by client

| Ideation | Pre-production | Production | Post-production | Distribution |

Crowd
- The crowd suggests advertising ideas based on the creative brief

- The parties set up a production planning (budget, casting, fee etc.)

- Director orchestrates shoot, assisted by technical staff with agency creatives and producer

- Editors work on the footage to build up a "rough cut" and eventually the final version

- Finished ad is shared with the agency's media department for distribution based on the media plan

Agency departments

Production and/or traffic departments

Media department

External collaborators

Producer, Director → Producer, director, technical staff, actors → Producer, director, editor, animator

4.2 Crowdsourcing creative talent: call for pitches

Another way to use crowdsourcing is for talent and skill identification. Some creative crowdsourcing platforms indeed use crowdsourcing as a matchmaking mechanism to connect companies to skilled video makers for the execution of specific projects (Lampel, Jha, & Bhalla, 2012). Companies can indeed submit "briefs" on these websites, along with a budget and a deadline, and participants submit so-called "pitches" to present their ideas. Here, instead of just gathering creative ideas and using them for internal purposes the companies are looking for both the ideas and the individual to execute these ideas; sourcing ideas and talent. In this model, crowdsourcing is used in the initial ideation phase and the subsequent production phases (production and distribution) are not based on crowdsourcing principles, but are executed in the traditional manner, in direct collaboration with the chosen creator (Behan, 2012).

Websites such as Blur, Concept Cupboard, Production Party or Wooshii organize call for pitches targeting small and medium sized enterprises (SMEs) or start-ups. Other platforms also offer a similar service to major corporations for leading brands. GeniusRocket, for example, allow brands to tap into a select group of their most valuable members, among which the client companies can then select the creator(s) to work with to produce their video advertisement. In this model, the primary role of the platform is not to organize a contest and to screen incoming entries (whether these are ideas or finished ads) but to select and coordinate the teams who work on project pitches for GeniusRocket's clients. For each video project, the company scans its community for teams and these teams then submit ideas based on the creative brief. The client then chooses the best ideas, rewards them with a prize thus acquiring the intellectual property, and the process moves forward to the creation of storyboards, which can be refined based on quantitative or qualitative research, and the production, which will again be handled by a creative team from the curated community. GeniusRocket pioneered this "curated crowdsourcing" approach, and other companies have followed. The contest organizers Mofilm offers a service called Mofilm Pro, and Poptent launched a business unit called Poptent Productions, run by the producer Jon Seidman (Behan, 2012). The latter claims to offer a "faster, more nimble alternative to traditional video production methods" by tapping into its crowd of selected filmmakers. Illustrating this call for pitches crowdsourcing model, the New York Times reported about the very first Super Bowl ad for Danone (I used the USA spelling of Danone because it was a US project) which was created by two Poptent community members, whose idea was selected among many others submitted in response to Danone's creative brief posted mid-2011, and the final spot was produced "with the advice of the Danone's creative agency of record Y&R New York" (Elliott, 2012). In the call for pitches model, the contest takes place at an early stage, and the subsequent stages are based on direct collaboration between the chosen creator and the company.

Figure 5

The Video Advertising Production Process Using Crowdsourcing to Cast Talent at the Initial Phase
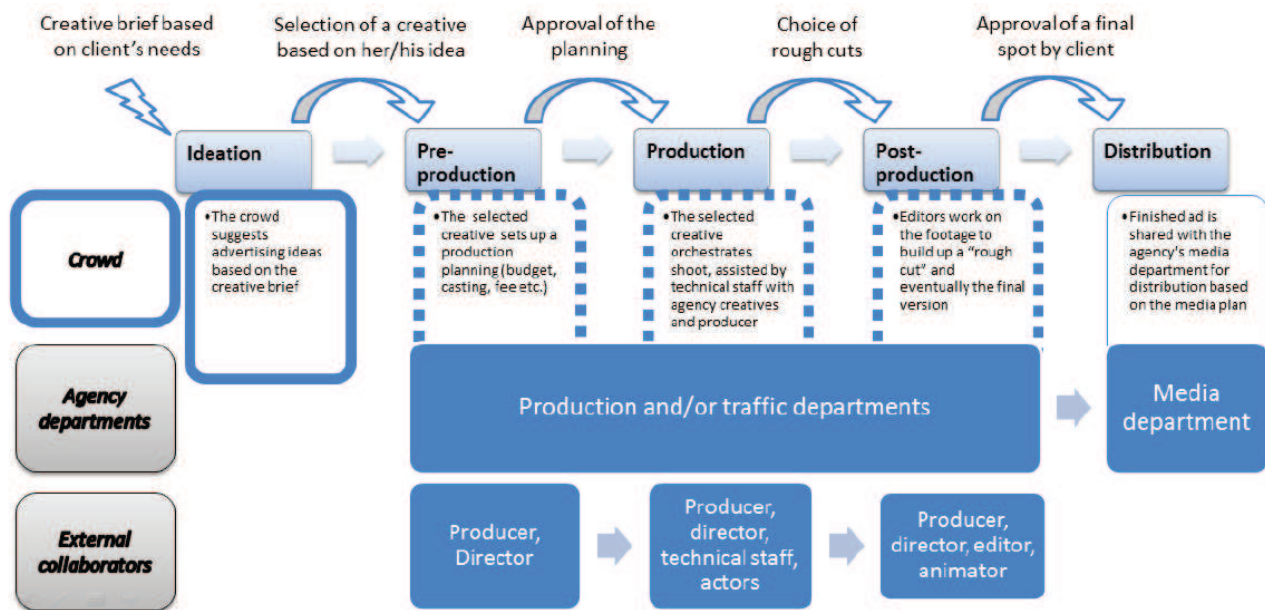
4.3 Crowdsourcing finished content: simple contests

The most often encountered use of crowdsourcing in the production of video advertisements through crowdsourcing is still the use of simple contests. This is the original, most basic approach to crowdsourcing whereby a company posts a problem online, a vast number of individuals offer solutions to the problem before a specific deadline, the winning ideas are awarded some form of a bounty, and the company uses the idea for its own gain (Brabham, 2008). When it comes to video advertising, this type of initiative requires participants to complete all stages needed to come up with an advertisement: ideation (finding the idea), pre-production (preparing the shooting), production (shooting) and post-production (editing the material).

There are numerous web-based companies that allow organizations to tap into their communities to generate video content through one-round

contests: Leading providers include eYeka, Mofilm, Poptent and Zooppa (Stutzmann et al., 2011), but other companies exist, albeit they have less experience in working with major brands: Genero, Talenthouse, Userfarm, and Womadz. These creative crowdsourcing platforms have all organized video contests by which they asked their respective communities of video makers to come up with advertisements for brands. All participants are asked to submit their entries before a predefined date, and they compete within a defined framework which usually includes a creative brief, prize money for the winners, judging criteria and potential participation restrictions linked to the type of product[12].

Such contests usually last between 4 and 12 weeks and generate dozens of videos coming from members of the crowd. These turnaround times are much shorter than those observed in the traditional process, and allow brands to get a variety of videos, interpreting the same creative brief in different ways. The below figure represents the simple contest model, in which the client only provides input by guiding the creative brief at the beginning, selecting winners at the end and supervising its distribution. One of the major setbacks of this type of setting is that there is a high uncertainty about the output from the crowd, and ultimately the success of the creative crowdsourcing initiative (Blattberg, 2011). Additionally, participants don't know whether their idea and execution will please the brand and be rewarded with a prize, which is why some people view this competitive, one-stage approach of crowdsourcing contests as risky and inefficient.

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[12] Some product sectors are heavily regulated, like the alcohol or pharmaceutical industries, which can the openness of participation to residents of a given country or individuals above a certain age.

Figure 6
THE VIDEO ADVERTISING PRODUCTION PROCESS
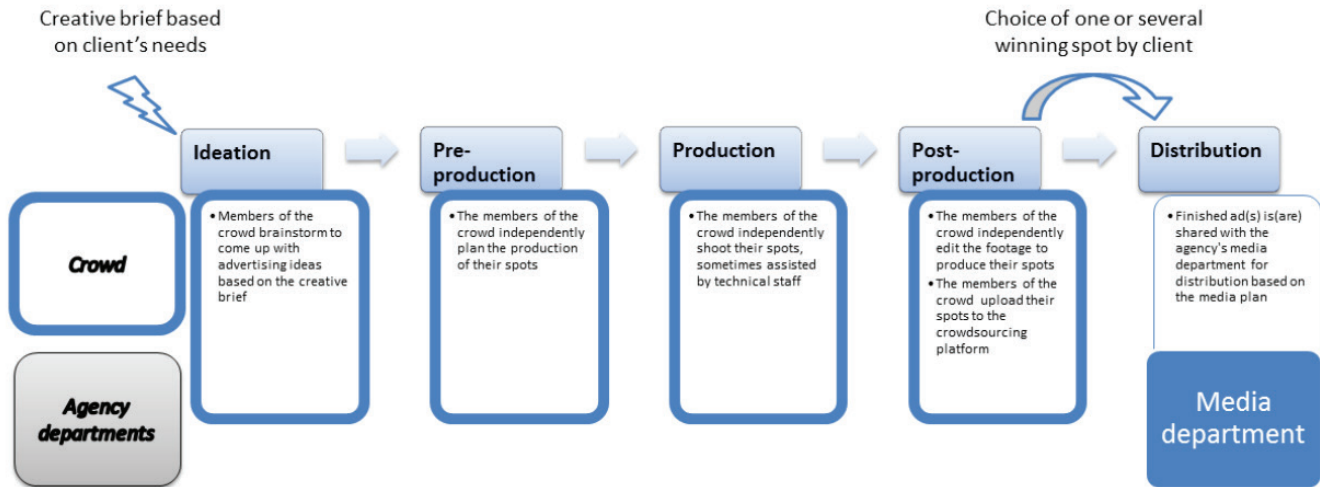
4.4 CROWDSOURCING FINISHED CONTENT: STAGE-BASED CONTESTS

One way to direct the crowd's creativity is to break down the production process and to infuse crowdsourcing in different stages, and to organize stage-based contests. Creative crowdsourcing platform Tongal, for example, breaks down the production process in three phases, which results in three sub-contests for one video project: an idea contest, a pitch contest, and a production contest. In the first step, the crowd is asked to submit ideas in no more than 140 characters, based on the creative brief provided by the brand. The brand then chooses the best ideas, whose authors get a several hundred dollars prize, and the crowd is then solicited again to submit pitches based on these shortlisted ideas. At the end of this second step, the brand scouts these pitches and chooses the ones it prefers, rewarding its authors with another cash prize. The last step of a video project is the actual video contest, where crowd members are asked to produce and submit spots based on the previously rewarded ideas[13]. At the end of this final phase, the

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[13] Tongal also allows "wildcard submissions" where creators submit videos that are not based on previously rewarded ideas. "Take a creative gamble, and see how it fares against the judges' top picks from the previous round," Tongal explains on its website.

brand can choose one or several spots to purchase, acquiring the intellectual property to use it for advertising.

The advantage of this model is that the crowd's creativity is being channeled by the brand, which can decide in which direction the crowd should work by rewarding some ideas rather than others. Another advantage of this mechanism is that the scope of potential participants is broader since it is not restricted to video makers only; someone with just good ideas can participate in the early phases, which is not possible in one-round video contests. "By breaking creativity into smaller pieces, we allow people in all walks of life to compete," one of Tongal's founders explains (DeJulio, 2012). Recent research has underlined that channeling the crowd's creativity by signaling which ideas are best can also lead to less diverse ideas in the long term (Bayus, 2012), which is an interesting limitation to explore in the advertising area. This model seems to be working well as Tongal produced advertisements have started making inroads into the landscape of traditionally-produced, successful video ads. In August 2011, a 37-second stop-motion video called "Duck Tron," produced for Duck Tape via Tongal, went viral by garnering over 2 million views in less than two weeks after release, placing second on the Ad Age Viral Video Chart, the only crowd-sourced video ever to do so. And in 2013, two spots aired on the Super Bowl, for Mennen Speed Stick and Dunder Mifflin, were produced via Tongal, which shows the viability of this emerging model (Elliott, 2012; Heitner, 2013).

It is certainly an interesting hybrid model, where the process uses the distributed creativity of the crowd while leveraging different skill sets among crowd members. The brand, or the advertising agency that represent the brand's interest, has to invest more time and resources in the intermediate stages, but this investment is rewarded by more control and guidance along the creative process. As some brands hesitate to embrace crowdsourcing because of the risk it represents by potentially harming their brand, Tongal's model constitutes an interesting and innovative alternative to traditional contest-based crowdsourcing. A simplified representation is proposed in the following illustration, where the client's role is illustrated by its involvement between each step of the process.

Figure 7

THE VIDEO ADVERTISING PRODUCTION PROCESS
USING CROWDSOURCING IN THE FORM OF STAGE-BASED CONTESTS
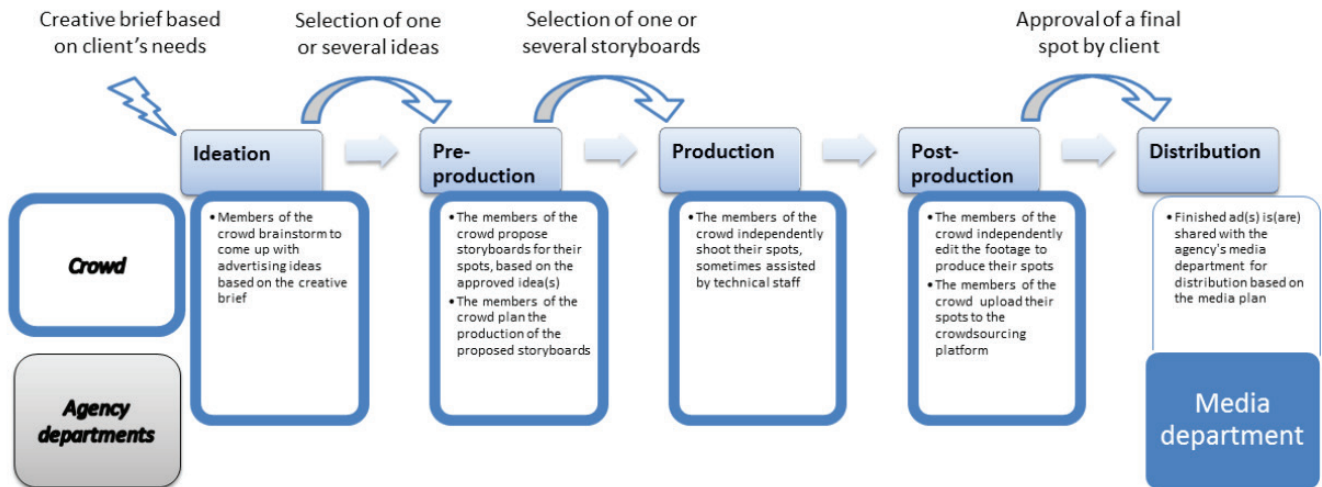
Now that we have presented the four dominant crowdsourcing models used for the creation of video advertising content, a legitimate question would be to know whether there is a relationship between the use of these different models and a sort of crowdsourcing maturity on the part of the brands, their advertising agencies, the crowdsourcing platforms or even the participants. Are some forms of crowdsourcing more or less desirable than others?

5. EXPLAINING THE DIFFERENT CROWDSOURCING MODELS

Early forms of crowdsourcing were simple contests, initiated by brands to generate conversations and engagement around their products, and managed with their traditional media and advertising agencies. As we have explained, with the rise of creative crowdsourcing platforms dedicated to the production of branded video content, different models have appeared, and today we see the four models coexist in the advertising world: idea contests, calls for

pitches, simple contests and stage-based contests. Many of the companies included in our study have been using the very same models since their respective foundation. However, other companies have evolved and adopted their crowdsourcing models over time (Table 2).

Table 2

Evolution of Crowdsourcing Models
by Creative Crowdsourcing Platforms

Platform	Uses... *(Crowdsourcing model)*	For... *(Type of clients)*	Since... *(Year)*
eYeka	Simple contests	Global brands	2006
	Idea contests	Global brands	→ 2010
Poptent	Simple contests	Global brands	2007
	Calls for pitches	Global brands	→ 2012
GeniusRocket	Simple contests	Global brands	2007
	Calls for pitches	Global brands	→ 2010
Mofilm	Simple contests	Global brands	2009
	Calls for pitches	Global brands	→ 2010
Userfarm	Simple contests	Global brands	2010
	Idea contests	Global brands	→ 2012

Many creative crowdsourcing platforms have indeed started by using the simple contest model to create video content, starting as early as 2006 with eYeka, 2007 with Poptent (called XLNTads at that time) or GeniusRocket, 2009 with Mofilm and 2010 with Userfarm. While this is still a widely used crowdsourcing model, some of these companies have also adopted other crowdsourcing models to accommodate the needs of their existing clients, namely big companies that run global brands. eYeka and Userfarm, for example, have started running idea contests on their respective platforms, starting as early as 2010 for eYeka and 2012 for Userfarm. In these cases, idea contests are being organized on their websites in the very same way than the initially running advertising video contests. Other companies, like Poptent and Mofilm, have launched specific business units to organize call for pitches for their clients. To allow brands to work directly with some

of its most talented filmmakers, Mofilm launched Mofilm Pro in November 2010[14], and Poptent launched Poptent Productions in April 2012[15].

The most radical evolution of the contest-based crowdsourcing model is to change its business model completely, which is what GeniusRocket did by dropping the simple contest model to focus on its so-called "curated crowdsourcing" model, a form of call for pitches that we already described above. GeniusRocket's model straddles the line between traditional collaboration found within the traditional advertising agency world, and open call crowdsourcing, to delivering the quality of an agency with the creative breadth a crowd of talent offers. This particular crowdsourcing model is another rare but highly revelatory example of the evolution of the model when it comes to leveraging crowds to produced video content for brands. Taken together, the above mentioned evolutions of the traditional simple contest model allow crowdsourcing platforms to use the creative power of the crowd, which is at the basis of creative crowdsourcing, and at the same time to lower the risks that the open contest model implies.

6. Conclusion

The purpose of this chapter was to present the growing role that crowdsourcing plays in the production video content used for advertising purposes by brands. Given the difficulty of churning out a steady stream of new and engaging content, crowdsourcing ideas and content is increasingly becoming a new tool in advertisers' tool kits. Marketers are beginning to turn to crowdsourcing in varying degrees, as they seek to have an ongoing dialogue with consumers.

We have seen that the first examples of crowdsourcing were mostly integrated into PR-driven marketing campaigns, some of which are still being

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[14] http://brand-e.biz/mofilm-crowdsources-the-pros_10235.html

[15] http://thenextweb.com/media/2012/04/12/crowdsourced-video-company-poptent-launches-a-premium-video-production-unit-aimed-at-big-brands/

run today. But we have also seen that these famous examples do not represent the majority of initiatives, and that a lot of brands use crowdsourcing as a fast, global and cost-effective way to generate video content to be used to advertise their brands online or offline. We have underlined that creative crowdsourcing platforms do not operate in the same way nor do they target the same types of clients. Through a multiple case study methodology, and after presenting the production process of video advertising, we have indeed identified four dominant ways of sourcing video content from the crowd: idea contests are being used to get fresh ideas to inspire the makers of advertisements, call for pitches allow small and large organizations to identify talented creative individuals or companies to work with, simple contests allow organizations to gather video content in a traditional competitive setting, and stage-based contests allow clients to have more control throughout the process by being involved at different stages of the process.

We chose to present these four models in this order because they reflect the varying role the crowd plays in the production of video content: idea contests only engage the crowd at the early ideation phase, calls for pitches engage a selected member of the crowd throughout the production process, simple contests task the crowd to accomplish all stages of the process until submission, and stage-based contests do the same by incorporating several moments of interaction points between the initiating brand and the crowd. Our research highlights the diversity of models that brands and agencies can mobilize to engage crowds in the production of original video content for their advertising, and also underlines the growing complexity of the crowdsourcing phenomenon.

We see the use of idea generation and simple contests as the popular ways companies are using crowdsourcing. They start out to engage and empower their consumers and encourage those customers to interact with their brand and to suggest ideas for advertising commercials. It is an opportunity to generate content, fuel viral ads and conduct cost effective market research. The rise of "curated crowdsourcing" in the call for pitches model and the stage-based contest model begins to point to a refinement of the broad definition of sourcing from the crowd. The nascent movement towards precision and gaining control appears to be an evolution of the crowdsourcing model, which urges us to adapt our understanding of the

concept beyond the early definitions. This pushes us to question the original, quite narrow definition of crowdsourcing given the innovative forms that have emerged to better accommodate the needs of advertising professionals looking to source creative video content. The diversity of models identified in this chapter reflects the current research trend that aims to identify and classify crowdsourcing models based on the workflow organization or the type of tasks that are being crowd-sourced (Adamczyk et al., 2012; Erickson et al., 2012; Geiger, Schulze, Seedorf, Nickerson, & Schader, 2011).

After reviewing the literature on crowdsourcing as well as analyzing the different models of web based crowdsourcing companies, we believe the future of crowdsourcing for the production of video advertising looks bright. We cannot be too sure of the form it will take given changes in technology, but we are certain that companies will continue to remain consumer-centric and thus engage consumers in crowdsourcing initiatives for their authentic point of view. In video production, we specifically see the liberation of experts such as producer or director and the empowerment of general consumers armed with camera to become the producer, director and editor of a brand's story. With experts now playing the role of collaborators, we expect to see a rise in creativity resulting in rich video content. As consumers begin to participate and feel more empowered, they will become confident to influence and solve problems with interesting stories that capture their experience with the brand (Jenkins & Deuze, 2008). Curating content and engaging clients in more steps along the way in the video crowdsourcing process is an interesting evolution and one that we recommend to continue to monitor. The ability to break down each phase of the video production process and engage consumers while cherry picking the best ideas and talent is indication of a movement towards professionalism. In some cases this is driven by clients desire to have high quality video advertising to run either nationally or feed their social channels. We can assume that clients are seeking to reward their consumers with quality content that is relevant, surprisingly and delightful.

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