

Join the Co-Creation Wave!

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Co-creation is a new business buzz word that has taken the commercial world by storm, and is a direct result of Web 2.0 and social media development. If you have not joined the wave yet, don't despair. Many small businesses have yet to join the plunge, but it is one that you really should be taking advantage of.

What is Co-creation?

Co-creation has developed into a buzz-word for business and organizational management over the past decade. Essentially, co-creation is interpreted as the process of close involvement of end-users (customers) in the development of services and products, a process that includes the consumer as a vital part of the development process. Input is sought on product design, color, variations, and so on. A far cry from entrenched Fordism and Taylorism approaches to marketing and development, co-creation affords both choice and voice to consumers. The informed customer is valued, and adds value to the design process.

Co-creation did not evolve directly from the business sector – it just gained a visible momentum there. Open source development movements which have ultimately led to rich social media application development, mirrored the co-creation process much earlier and continues to develop diverse tools that people from all walks of life can use to co-create digital content in a variety of forms.

The principles of co-creation are evident in vital communities of practice, social groups,

and expert teams where people come together to collaboratively create and share information, knowledge, and content beyond market exchange. This is where Web 2.0 comes in - providing the tools for easy, accessible means for gathering customer input, insights, and ideas.

Tapping the Power of Web 2.0

There are many ways that you can engage your web site visitors in a way that builds both value and loyalty. All of the methods discussed in this Web 2.0 series are very applicable to the co-creation process. Blogs, wikis, folksonomies, as well as other methods including feedback forms, surveys, polls, and dialogue forums can be used to invite your visitors to 'have a say' in what you offer. This applies to both services and products.

Principles of Co-Creation

There are some simple yet fundamental principles to incorporate in order to truly engage your site visitors and customers in the co-creation process.

These include the following:

- Value and acknowledge their input
- Provide easy, accessible means to communicate - make sure they know where to respond without glitches
- Clearly explain what you need from them - make it easy for them to answer your questions or give input on an idea
- Allow all visitors to give input - you never know where the next great idea is going to come from!
- Prove that you are listening - keep them up to date on how their input is being applied
- Make the process fun!
- Acknowledge their input publicly - let others know what a help they've been!
- Keep them engaged - someone needs to keep on top of the responses, and respond to them, both privately and publicly.

Adding Web 2.0 capabilities can help you to become a co-creation star, and attract far more visitors and customers than you enjoy now. By incorporating the choice and voice of your customers and site visitors, you can put your site on the cutting edge of interactivity and popularity, plus make sure that what you offer is what people want and need.

Related Links:

[Co-Creation Rules](#)

[ReDesignMe Co-Creation Communities](#)

[The Co-Creation Connection](#)