# Summary

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| Paper Title | InnoCentive.com (A+B) |
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| Tags | Open Innovation, Collaboration Platform |
| Summary Conductor | Christian Saur |

# Key Takeaways

1. Collaboration with outside partners increases likelihood of finding solutions but also, and more importantly, the quality of solutions because local-search phenomena are mitigated
2. First and very important step is formulating the problem/research question in a way that outside actors can understand without internal information. There need to be guidelines to guarantee format consistency across problems
3. Collaboration and its ideal realization are highly subjective and its outcomes often unpredictable. Therefore, successful collaboration requires openness and flexibility. The platform owner is responsible for making it as easy as possible for contributors to cooperate
4. InnoCentive platform 1.0: “Seekers” who face challenges post them on the platform where individuals from various backgrounds can see them and propose a solution (after signing up and receiving additional information). Seekers evaluate solutions, choose winners who receive monetary prizes. In return, seekers receive IP of winning solutions
5. InnoCentive platform 2.0 – introducing collaboration:
   1. For seeker employees who already signed some form of NDA (no IP conflict): threaded forums where employees can jointly work towards solving a problem. Awards for those who contributed most to solution
   2. Broad public: ability to form challenge-specific team rooms (5-6 people) where self-organized groups can cooperate, supported by various tools, to submit a solution to a publicly posted problem (team-enabled evolution of original platform)

# Paper Overview

* InnoCentive: presents problems from firms´ R&D labs to diverse Solvers who are rewarded for finding solutions
  + Increases likelihood of problem being solved and solution quality (avoids local-search phenomenon), and productivity of problem solving (parallel processing possible)
  + Six challenge domains: life sciences, chemistry, physical science, engineering/design, math/computer science, business/entrepreneurship
* Broadcast Search
  + Critical starting point: articulate problem in ways external solvers can understand
  + Categories with IP implications:
    - Reduction to Practice (“an enzyme stabilizer at high pH is required”)
    - Paper/Theory (“can you formulate a simple, stable, safe injectable suspension placebo that has no pharmacological and biological activity”)
  + Other challenge types:
    - Ideation: brainstorming challenges requiring brief submissions
    - Electronic Request for Proposal: solvers bid on most cost-effective approach to solve a product and service requirements catalogue
  + Anonymity: between Seekers and Solvers and among Solvers and among Seekers
  + IP protection:
    - “Solver Agreement”: IP transfer clauses for accepted solutions; for solvers who want details for challenges
    - Seekers contractually restrained from using IP from unselected solutions
  + 3 differentiators
    - Broad pool of potential solvers from diverse backgrounds, countries, experiences
    - Shifting focus from “having a problem” to “evaluating solutions”
    - Articulating a problem yields criteria to judge proposed solutions
* Introducing Collaboration?
  + Why?
    - Arriving at the “right” solution faster leveraging collaboration
    - Seekers might be able to provide further information, improve quality and secure IP if they had insights into solving process
  + Collaboration: idea and ideal; definition in the eye of the beholder, implications unpredictable
  + How?
    - Not everything that´s technically possible should be implemented
    - Careful to not burden the contributors with too much extra work
    - Two levels:
      * Technical enablement: “team project rooms”, “whiteboards”, wikis, VoIP, shared file space, group/virtual meeting capabilities…
        + Teams choose what fits them best and collaborate across borders
      * Organization: contributors need to find teams, organize themselves, assume many managerial responsibilities previously unnecessary
    - IC´s job in collaboratively organized solving process?
    - Instead of all-or-nothing🡪 consider which approach works best in what scenarios
* Evolving value proposition: “Challenge Driven Innovation Platform”
  + Both open and team based collaboration central features
  + Started with IC@W for collaboration of internal teams
    - Threaded forums where everyone could contribute to problems
    - Program Champion + coaches
    - Prizes for biggest contributors during solving process
    - Lower entry barrier because not necessary to deliver full solution; contribution with one single comment possible
    - Expanded communication networks inside companies
    - If no internal solution, easy to expand problem to broadcast search
    - Fails when done on the cheap
  + Additional team project rooms
    - Collaboration across disciplines etc. while protecting/restricting trade secrets and corporate strategy
    - Problems:
      * Solvers working on their own felt in a disadvantage against teams
      * How to connect potential team members? FB for scientists?