Crowdsourcing as Tools for Launching a Wikibrand.
The Case of Ligury: a Wikibrand for a Wikidestination

by
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Abstract. «The FLIRT (Focus, Language, Incentives, Rules and Tools) model of Crowdsourcing building upon Viitamäki and updated by Moffitt and Dover, permits to develop models allowing to highlight the contribution of the customers / population in the development and improvement of new brands set up by the companies. Thus, these models were used to build a wikibrand relying on a community highly involved in the process of value creation and success of products. Interested in the region of Ligury in Italy, the objective of this paper is to verify how Moffit's model can be used in the context of territorial marketing as a tool of wiki destination.

1 Introduction

Crowdsourcing is the process of getting work or funding, usually online, from a crowd of people. The word is a combination of the words 'crowd' and 'outsourcing'. The idea is to take work and outsource it to a crowd of workers. This can take the form of peer-production but is also often undertaken by sole individuals (Brussee, et al., 2013).

Howe (2008) identified four developments that have contributed to the rise of crowdsourcing: the increase of the in the number of well educated; well informed "amateurs"; the increasing popularity of open source software as a widely publicized and successful example of collective production; the availability of online communication and publication tools made possible by the web, and the growth of online communities made possible by this online tools.

Open Innovation and Crowdsourcing have become two intensively researched and discussed topics, and they have attracted a lot of attention among academics, as well as in practice. The use of Open Innovation and Crowdsourcing has already been discussed in various domains and different settings and the body of literature on them has been continuously growing.

Today, more and more companies consider the implementation of Open Innovation and Crowdsourcing into their business strategies. Looking at the diversity of the projects and initiatives from all over the world, it can be stated that the phenomenon has already found its way into a large variety of areas of industry and society.

However, the tourism industry is partly missing the online and offline discussion about Open Innovation and Crowdsourcing.

What can the inhabitants of a region do to boost tourism of their area? Three concepts exist: Wikibrand, Crowdsourcing, and the FLIRT model. Crowdsourcing is a concept that is profusely used, nowadays, to garner interest from within, while a Wikibrand engages its customers.

The main question of our research is the following one: could the concept of crowdsourcing allow the territorial development through the contributors of the company/the organization?

The FLIRT models (both the original and the updated version) teach us how to be strategic, tactical and technical. Seeing as how internet users are becoming more proficient we are

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essentially looking at a lot of untapped affordable resources.

Below we get a glimpse at just how an organization, or in this case a region, can become an innovative wikibrand and which tools can be used in the process. This article provides an introduction to Crowdsourcing and wikibrand and shows how Crowdsourcing could be used as tools for launching wikibrand.

2 Literature review
2.1 What is Crowdsourcing?

Developed by Jeff Howe and Mark Robinson in the June 2006 issue of Wired magazine (Howe, 2006f), the term crowdsourcing describes a new web-based business model that harnesses the creative solutions of a distributed network of individuals through what amounts to an open call for proposals.

Simply defined, crowdsourcing represents 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. This can take the form of peer-production (when the job is performed collaboratively), but is also often undertaken by sole individuals. The crucial prerequisite is the use of the open call format and the large network of potential laborers. (2006a: 5).

According to Jeff Howe (2006), Crowdsourcing "Is the act of taking a job traditionally performed by a designated agent (usually an employee) and outsourcing it to an undefined, generally large group of people in the form of an open call". The task doesn't even have to be proposed immediately to employees or contractors. The company can "make the choice to employ the crowd to perform labor that could alternatively be performed by an assigned group of employees or contactors." Howe (2006).

Holley (2010) suggests 4 recommendations for useful Crowdsourcing:

1) To set a clear target that needs several people to achieve.

2) To set up an infrastructure for the internal organization of people and set up, manage and complete the project.

3) To create tasks that tickle some interests, set a reasonable reward, make the task easy to fulfill and create a stimulating and attractive website.

4) To create an online community of participants and treat the contribution from every participant visibly and respectfully.

Howe does say that what companies used to outsource workers from China and India, but that is no longer the case and the phenomena known as Crowdsourcing is on the rise. There is a newly discovered source of cheap labor which is essentially regular people that use their 'spare cycles' to find solutions to problems, conduct research and development and of course to generate content. Howe (2006) classifies 4 types of Crowdsourcing laborers: The Professional, The Packager, The Tinkerer and The Masses. The bottom-line is that companies are able to get a different outlook and solution to a query or issue and they can do so very cheaply.

2.2 What is Wikibrand?

A study released by Pew Research Studies in 2013 reveals that 81% of 13-18 year olds who are online are creating some sort of content and posting it to the web. Internet users are becoming more proficient. Essentially we are looking at a lot of untapped affordable resources. Below we get a glimpse at just how an organization can become an innovative Wikibrand and which tools can be used in the process.

Moffitt and Dover (2011) defined wikibrands' as; "a progressive set of organizations, products, services, ideas and causes that tap into the powers of customer participation, social influence and collaboration to drive business value".

What companies used to do was simply broadcast directly to their target audience, what they do now is engage their customers in a more 'collaborative interaction' in order to add more value to the services provided by their organization. Here are some points to keep in mind when trying to become a wikibrand:

Your Customer is at the Epicenter of Your Organizations –Your customer is essential in

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assisting and supporting your innovation, experience, insight, support, brand evangelism and exposure.

Authenticity and Transparency are Essential Organizational Tender of Sustainable Enterprises – The reason for your existence and the authenticity of your organization carry more weight than what it is you claim to do.

Only by Standing out from the crowd will people notice you and talk about you – most efforts no matter how good they are tend to be ignored both online and Offline simply because they are not deemed to be unique enough, dynamic enough or visionary enough. The aim should be to become the 1% of efforts that do get recognized.

"Strength is Determined by the Power of Your Network" – Connect profoundly in order to, transform your "business culture and operating models for the future." (Moffitt and Dover, 2011) The fast moving World – Things which are deemed fresh and exciting today are considered out-of-date tomorrow. Paradigm changes are happening at break neck speeds and in order to keep up and accommodate the customer's needs, business processes and thinking have to keep up.

2.3 Introduction to the theoretical model: The FLIRT model of Viitamäki (2007) updated by Moffitt and Dover (2011)

Developed by Viitamaki (2007), the FLIRT model views the phenomenon from the perspective of a company considering closer collaboration with customers and online customer communities.

According to Viitamäki (2007) FLIRT model provides a framework that describes the different elements of crowdsourcing and can be used to examine the success of crowdsourcing projects. This model suggests a set of five main elements – Focus, Language, Incentives, Rules and Tools. These elements describe the major components that are necessary to harbor and support a successful crowdsourcing project.

Focus – It deals with strategic level questions and seeks answers to three main questions: Why, who and with which organizational resources and capabilities, through answering

these issues, the scope, scale and depth of the collaboration are defined on a high level. The Why refers to business needs of the company that the crowdsourcing effort should answer and derives primarily from the rationale for open innovation (Chesbrough, 2003), and Piller et al.'s (2005) reasons for fostering communities of co-design. The Who part needs to be addressed in order to determine who the company primarily wants to engage and is founded on the other hand on Füller et al.'s (2006) determinants of desired user features and on the other Surowiecki's (2004) requirement of diversity in the participant base as well as Piller et al.'s calling for open participation reduce mass confusion. The resources and capabilities question relates to the organizations capabilities and resources. It has been noted by Füller et al. (2006) that succeeding in collaboration requires dedicated resources and effort and ensuring these is also one of Prahalad and Ramaswamy's key challenges. Also Nambisan (2002) writes that the company needs to be able to cope with the added 27uncertainty and risk and also that the cognitive compatibility of the firm's internal team with the external participants is necessary.

The next three attributes are the scope, scale and depth of the crowdsourcing efforts, and these attributes can be defined as the defining attributes, since they determine the visible actions to be taken. The scope of the crowdsourcing effort deals with where in its business the company wants to utilize crowdsourcing. Practically all the previous collaboration frameworks consider this aspect to some extent, as they deal with different areas and alternatives for benefiting from collaboration. The scale refers to both the extent to which the crowdsourcing activity spreads within the company from its core locus, but also the collaborative venture's time scale and temporal structure (Nambisan, 2002).

Depth is the final sub element of Focus and is seen as important as Nambisan (2002) as well as Prahalad and Ramaswamy all consider degree of user access and control a critical issue, because of which also risk assessment (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004a) of growing uncertainty is

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necessary.

Language – The language element of the project is crucial in communicating with participants. Since what you are looking for is immediate contact with a targeted segment of the population, there is no room for generic messages. This is personal one on one communication and participants will see through any non-authentic messages or language. Communication should also be transparent and show that you understand and respect the community of participants.

Language issues in the FLIRT model are based on Prahalad and Ramaswamy's (2004a, b) call for active and interactive dialogue that goes beyond simply listening and involves also acting. Transparency is also one Prahalad and Ramaswamy's crucial requirements when it comes the mindset of the company initiating the dialogue. Also the common purpose and common cultural context binding the participants together as presented by Bouras et al. (2005) and communication of the collaborative offering through marketing communications or peer recommendations are part of the Language element.

Incentives and Outreach – There must be some type of incentive to compel participants to be involved in the project. Viitamäki outlines two main types of incentives, intrinsic and extrinsic. Intrinsic incentives include a challenge, a creative opportunity, to satisfy a curiosity, or for learning and fun. Extrinsic incentives can include both material and immaterial rewards. Immaterial rewards such as fame, recognition, access to resources or material rewards such as the opportunity to own beta products and try beta services, or monetary rewards. Adequate incentives for participation are required to ensure that the project has a critical mass of participants necessary for success.

Rules - and guidelines for the project must be defined before the project is initiated in order to guide the participants towards the goals and objectives of the project. Rules should be laid out for: initiation, interaction, intellectual exchange, manufacturing constraints or any other boundary conditions involving policy,

scope or physical restrictions.

Rules for initiation focus on what can be done anonymously, what needs to be done by a registered participant and when such registration needs to occur. Interaction and intellectual exchange rules should be established depending on the desired outcome as well as the nature of the project. If the project is a competitive individual solution to a given problem, then interaction before the submission deadline might need to be limited. On the other hand, if innovation and creativity are the main objectives and there is no specific reward for being the best solution then a collaborative approach can be used that maximizes interaction. Communication protocols and guidelines also need to be established to ensure that there isn't abuse of participants from other participants (e.g. verbal abuse or non-professional language).

Rules also deal with rules of (voluntary) participation (Bouras et al., 2005), setting the requirements for entering the community and can also help realize the requirement of independence of opinion among the participants, a necessary requirement for Surowiecki's (2004) wisdom of crowds to emerge. Rules thus spell out the guidelines with which the participants – both the company and its customers – need to abide.

Tools and Platforms – tools need to be in place for the project to proceed. Depending on the scope and objective of the project, some of the following tools will be needed: platform, creation tools, skills and knowledge and analysis tools.

The platform can either be custom built, purchased from a third party or a hybrid of the two. Most crowdsourcing projects leverage the crowd of web users and therefore the platform is usually web based. This type of platform needs not only a software based solution, but also the hardware and infrastructure to support the expected number of participants. If the project has a creative element then tools for encouraging and allowing for creativity need to be in place. These tools should be user friendly and have the capabilities to create the type of products that fit the goals of the project. If the project is very

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specific to a certain industry or topic, specialized skills or knowledge might be required to participate meaningfully in the project. Special attention should be given to this target participant group to ensure that you not only attract these participants to the project, but also that the tools you supply are familiar and similar to tools that they are already accustomed to. All of these tools are required to host a successful project and ensure that the full potential of the participants is reflected in the final product.

Be it noted that in addition to building the platform by itself, the company can opt to join already existing communities for collaboration, in which case community identification (Füller, 2006) in order to find relevant participants comes into question. Especially in today's world where consumers are joining many kinds of digital communities and networks for different needs and purposes, the question of multiple, shifting and overlapping membership and participation becomes relevant and the so-called social portability, to which other communities can the customer take the planned crowdsourcing community with her. In addition to the platform itself, issues of interaction design for the tools of creation (Füller et al., 2006) need to be addressed. Furthermore, tools also include the means to aggregate created knowledge (Surowiecki, 2004; Nambisan, 2002) and convert it into meaningful action within the company (Nambisan, 2002).

The FLIRT model, explain, Moffitt and Dover, tells us how to launch and sustain a Wikibrand over time. But to increase the level of engagement and keep alive the ecosystem of Wikibrand, the authors update the version of the FLIRT Viitamäki's model by adding the following four elements: Variables and understanding, Internalization of benefits, Community Life cycle and community management of community (Figure 1.). These elements could be defined as:

Variables and understanding – Measuring and monitoring of the metrics, knowledge and foresight from being profoundly digitally engaged. Internalization of benefits – bridging the gap between the actual state of the client and

the employee's encounter.

Community management – the extent, degree, personnel and supply of one's digital "front lines and tools" Moffitt & Dover (2010).

Community Life cycle – The growth and regeneration of digital engagement being regularly assigned on a weekly, quarterly or annual basis.

However both models serve these 2 purposes:

It's a different take on the idea that 1% of people create, 9% contribute and 90% consume. It essentially describes the roles of different participants in a Crowdsourcing environment.
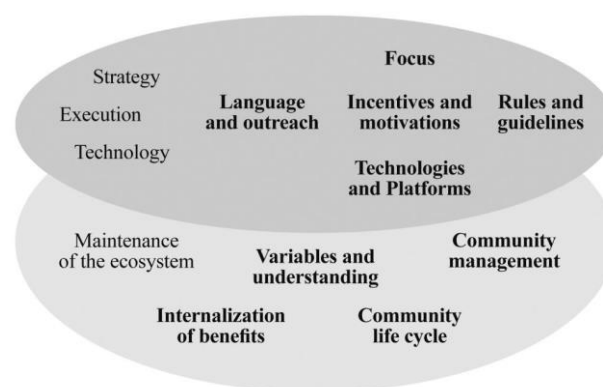

Figure 1. The FLIRT model
Source: Moffitt, et al. (2011, p. 119)

3 An Empirical Test Application of Moffitt et al. (2011)'s model for Ligury Wikibrand
3.1 Methodology and Analysis

This paper is based on qualitative research approach as is focused on the word than the numbers. This applies to our research question, which is based primarily on written sources, as well as an interview with Giueseppe Giaccardi, CEO of Giaccardi & Associati Consulting who contributes to implemente Ligury's wikibrand. After collecting some datas through literature, observation and web browsing, we try to analyse both Ligury's blog and it's facebook page, dedicate to the wikidestination, to observe how community was implicated in the project: *"Building and maintaining a Liguria wikibrand"*.

3.2 Liguria at a glance

Liguria is an Italian region of 1,583,628 inhabitants, located in the northwest of the peninsula. It borders with France (Provence-Alpes-Côte d'Azur), Piedmont, Emilia-Romagna and Tuscany.

Liguria is attractive for tourists due to its coasts (such as Riviera dei Fiori, Portofino, Cinque Terre, Porto Venere) and history (Genoa).

According to the Regional Tourism Observatory, from 2008 to 2012, in Liguria visitors are overall decreased by 4.51% and the average length of stay reduced from 3.9 to 3.6 days. In any case, during this period, foreign tourism was higher than the Italian average (+19.14% arrivals compared to +13.39 %). The national tourism, on the other hand, essentially maintained the same trend. In Table 1 are reported arrivals and presences during 2008-2012.

Table 1. Arrivals and presences in Liguria (2008-2012)

Years	Italians			Foreigners			Total		
	Arrivals	Presences	Average Length of stay	Arrivals	Presences	Average Length of stay	Arrivals	Presences	Average Length of stay
2008	2.398.562	9.899.242	4,13	1.261.584	4.246.688	3,37	3.660.146	14.145.930	3,86
2009	2.403.091	9.863.136	4,10	1.251.458	4.114.736	3,29	3.654.549	13.977.782	3,82
2010	2.332.409	9.487.580	4,07	1.359.107	4.324.666	3,18	3.691.516	13.812.246	3,74
2011	2.388.550	9.422.580	3,94	1.497.913	4.747.349	3,17	3.886.463	14.169.929	3,65
2012	2.224.466	8.748.721	3,93	1.503.103	4.747.349	3,17	3.727.569	13.508.349	3,62

Source: Regional Tourism Observatory (2013), Annual Report 2012

In Table 2 are reported arrivals in each area for the period (2010-2012).

Table 2. Arrivals in Liguria (2010-2012)

Area	Years			Δ% 2010-2011	Δ% 2011-2012
	2010	2011	2012		
Imperia	736.435	750.364	760.116	1,89	1,30
Savona	1.022.576	1.071.368	1.034972	4,77	-3,40
Genova	1.373.441	1.444.924	1.375.764	5,2	-4,79
La Spezia	559.064	619.807	556.717	10,87	-10,18
Total	**3.691.516**	**3.886.463**	**3.727569**		
Average				**5,68**	**-4,27**

Source: Regional Tourism Observatory (2013), Annual Report 2012

During 2012 Italian and foreign tourists spent about 5.5 billion euro. It is interesting to underline that 5.1% of regional GDP is dependent on tourism and provides employment to about 29 thousand people. Considering the importance of tourism, in 2013 Regional Authorities approved a three years plan based on a wikibrand approach.

4 Liguria as a wikibrand

"Liguria: a wikibrand for a wikidestination" is the title of the plan for tourism introduced in 2013. The plan is based on a strategy that aims to strengthen the brand "Liguria", through the participation of citizens, people involved in the tourism business and, obviously, tourists.

4.1 The strategy

The strategy starts from the consideration that there is not "only one Liguria", but a "different Liguria" that lives in the imagination of millions of people, which changes according to their own experiences. A "different Liguria" that lives in the hearts and minds of those who live it, of those who visit for the first time, of those who return after years and for those who are willing to visit it in the future. The strategy wants to encourage the development of different visions, through stories, photos, movies, on blog and social networks. It helps to create ideas, content and emotions that become a collective narrative about Liguria, which is the result of different perceptions and experiences.

The project is based on an information framework that includes a blog (www.la liguriaracconta.it – it can be translated as "Liguria-tells") and social networks. The message is clear: "bloggers, photographers, tourists, and food or sports lovers, Ligurians for one day. If you do not want to leave your heart here, share your story by signing into 'Tell us about your Liguria'".

4.2 The application of the FLIRT model

As mentioned above, FLIRT is the acronym for Focus, Language, Incentives, Rules and Tools.
Focus. The first element includes strategic

objectives and goals of the project. The plan identifies six objectives: growth of brand reputation, develop of relationships in the international markets, promotion of new integrated products, consolidation in the domestic market, evolution of the web site and integration of the tourism system (culture, mobility, etc.). Main objectives, basically, are to promote the area, to suggest new experiences, to share information among bloggers and operators. As part of this strategy, an element of strength is the "*Manifesto of the values and purposes of tourism*", which has already submitted and signed by hundreds of operators. The Manifesto was created to promote and share across Europe the importance of tourism as an asset for growth and economic and social development.

Language. Communication is crucial in crowd-sourcing and the language used to communicate is an important part of a successful project. Information in the blog are in Italian and partially in English and German. As declared, "it will be like sitting around a fire in the night and take turns to tell and listen to stories. You and us, it does not matter whoever begins to speak: what matters is feeling like telling one's stories and experiences, from one traveler to another".

Incentives. According to the model, adequate incentives for participation are required to ensure that the project has critical mass of participants necessary for success. Rewards are essentially immaterial, such as recognition and access to updated information about Liguria. The most relevant incentive is the opportunity to share experiences among tourists, operators and people living in Liguria.

Periodically are organized competitions for bloggers or photographer: best works are rewarded with a weekend in Liguria or typical regional products. Moreover, every month a "guest blogger", chosen by the editors, becomes Ligurian correspondent.

Rules. Communication guidelines are needed to be established to ensure that there is not abuse of participants from other participants. In the specific case, the blog asks only to avoid unseemly comments or advertising. Moreover, in order to facilitate the reading of comments,

bloggers are invited to not be too long. In any case an editorial staff supervises all the comments before publication.

Tools. The communication strategy focuses on major social networks with the aim to increase awareness and brand reputation of Liguria, through the involvement and participation of its community. Each social network provides specific information and, for each one, has been assigned a community manager who constantly follows the account according to communication strategies.

The hearth of the project is represented by the blog www.la liguriaracconta.it. It is the starting point to access to social networks, such as Facebook, Twitter, Instgram, YouTube, Pinterest. Numbers are impressive for a project on tourism. In almost one year have been reached more than 2.400 pins on Pinterest, 4.300 followers on Twitter, 63.000 fans on Facebook.

A specific initiatives is FaceStar project: it is expected to involve about 45 famous Ligurians willing to collaborate for the promotion of Liguria in the world through stories and interviews.

5 Findings

During 2013, Giaccardi & Associati, market analysis and business strategies, Ravenna, Italy, conducted a survey on Facebook pages operated by Italian Regional Authorities on Tourism, in order to examine the state of the art. Particularly, they have examined the pages of the regions available on social networks (except Calabria, Molise and Valle d' Aosta) and the Facebook page of "Italia.it", that has been used as a benchmark.

The focus was on the number of "I Like", on the number of "those who talk about it" and, finally, on the index of engagement between the two data.

Liguria is the only region that appears in the top five for each of the three indices. It demonstrates a good strategy on social networks, recognized even by his followers, at least with regard to the presence on Facebook.

In detail:

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a) *I like*: the region that has collected the most is Sicily (nearly 180 thousand), then Tuscany with almost 130 thousand, Trentino with 60 thousand and Liguria over 20 thousand. All other regions do not reach 20 thousand fans. Italia.it exceeded about 12 thousand I like (Figure 2).
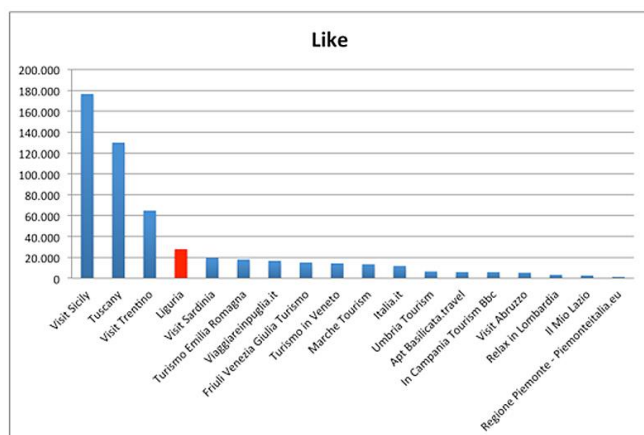

Figure 2. "I like"

b) *Talking about this*: Tuscany is able to create a relevant interest with almost 140 thousand people who "talk about it". Behind it, Trentino, Veneto, Sicily and Liguria are confirmed at the top of this ranking. (Figure 3)
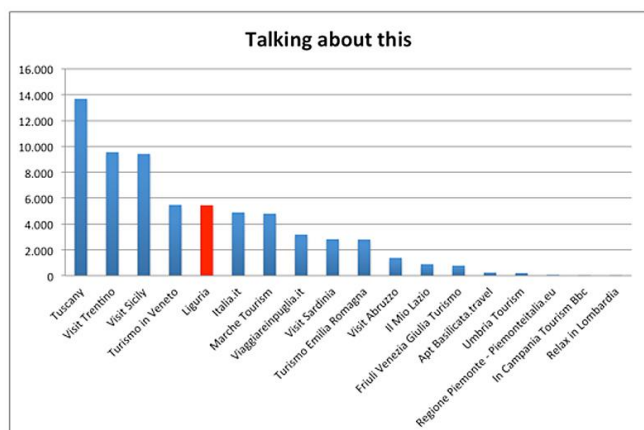
Figure 3. "Talking about it"

c) *Engage index*: italia.it is the page that creates more connection with the fans (41,59 %), followed by the Veneto (38%), Marche (35%), Lazio (34%) and Liguria (close to 20 %) (Figure 4).
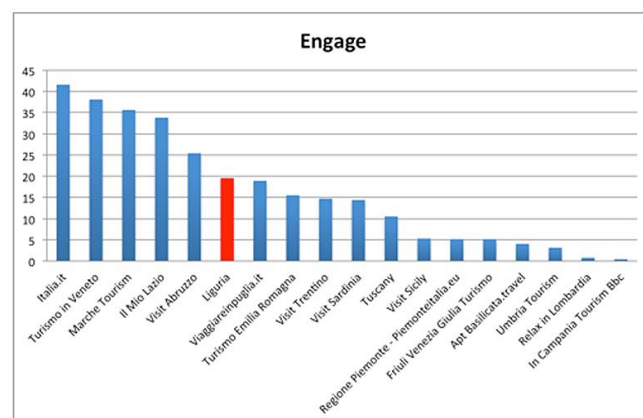

Figure 4. Engage index

6 Conclusions

Crowdsourcing is not ideal for every field of business but in the case of the following different fields it has been quite helpful: innovation, new product development, product design, existing product feature enhancement, production (both digital and physical products), evaluation (of ideas, products, services, features and content), marketing (customer created advertising, viral marketing, etc.), territorial marketing, distribution and Customer support.

Using Crowdsourcing starts with the strategic question which goal one wants to achieve. Regarding our case, in one year many goals have been reached, but many things still remain to achieve. Particularly, it is necessary to improve the blog based on an international perspective. Bloggers are mostly Italians and share their information in Italian. It represents a real limit, considering that foreign tourism is increasing compared to domestic tourism. Community managers should provide a summary of most relevant information in other language, such as Russian, Chinese, French and Spanish.

Liguria is the first and, at the moment, the only Italian region to have adopted a wikibrand strategy. Probably main results are still to come and it is too early to draw conclusions. In any case, in a highly competitive global scenario, Liguria is in the forefront in the strategies on tourism and represents a "state of the art" for other European regions.

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