Chapter 8
The Communication and Information Role on the Innovation Process Performance in the Collaborative Context: New Service Project Cases

Thais Zaninelli
State University of Londrina, Brazil

ABSTRACT

Services are at the center of economic activity, and the New Service Development (NSD) process has gained increased attention. Given the complexity involved in this NSD process, it can be carried out by the collaboration of a network of partner companies. In this way, it becomes increasingly relevant to understand the complex NSD process and how this process happens in the Collaborative Network context, contributing to understand how CNs can potentiate NSD process as well as which CN quality factors influence NSD success. This chapter was developed based on a literature review and case studies of four complex New Service Development (NSD) processes. The main objective of this chapter is to emphasize the importance that some CN quality factors, such as information and communication management quality, have along different process stages of innovation services and by consequence the final service success.

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INTRODUCTION

Service Innovation and New Service Development (NSD) process has gained increased attention. NSD is a way of creating competitive advantage and value for customers by offering new or improved services. The NSD uses both tangible and intangible elements of production that increase the value-in-use or benefits for customers (Ottenbacher, Gnoth, & Jones, 2006).

In this context, a remarkable number of researchers and executives have attempted to identify stages that are crucial for the NSD process success and, nowadays, this process has described in the literature by a complex sequential process that emphasizes an organizational perspective concentrating on four generic stages, from the service idea generation to the service implementation.

On the one hand, there is a complexity involved along all NSD stages given the intra and extra-organizational activities and tasks which are necessary to undertake all NSD process. Due to this complexity, the different process stages can be carried out by several companies through the establishment of collaborative relationships helping to potentiate the NSD performance. From the various forms of cooperation among companies, the most evident in the last years is the Collaborative Networks (CNs), involving the cooperation between two or more partner companies, customers or providers that intend to develop a new service or product together.

On the other hand, the relationships established with partner companies along the different NSD stages can influence the NSD performance and consequently new service success. These networks established between different stakeholders are increasingly adopted in the modern management with the aim of reducing risks and costs, increasing quality patterns and optimizing product and service development processes. However, previous research indicates that some factors are indispensable for the NSD success, mainly due to this process happens in the collaborative context.

Thus, it becomes increasingly relevant to promote global service research agendas that concomitantly draw on the interdisciplinary and cross-functional perspective of academics and business executives to study NSD process. However, NSD and Collaborative Networks can be found in the literature separately, but NSD process and collaborative network in the same context is still hard to find.

Approaching these study cases, to explore new complex service development process, it is important to understand which are the main factors that influence on the NSD success in collaborative context and among them highlight the importance of the information and communication quality in this process.

Once this research was based on two realities, such as Brazil and Portugal, it was enriching to understand the challenge that involves the communication and management information across all collaborative network members, who live in different realities and cultures, but must work in concert making it possible to develop a high quality service.

Therefore, from four complex case studies of the new service development it was possible to understand and to evaluate the role of some factors such as communication and management information have into the NSD process, allowing the reader to reflect about some strategies for information and communication quality, that is clear and structured among all members of the collaborative network, enabling new service development process as well as market launch success.

This chapter main objective is to allow the reader to understand in more details about the critical role of some factors such as information and communication quality for new service success when this process happens in the collaborative networks context, mainly when the members of these networks are in different parts of the world. Therefore, this chapter was based on the research that identified desirable CNs quality factors in complex NSD projects in different stages. The study