

# Crowdsourcing Ideas for Innovations: Participation or Productivity

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## **Abstract**

The success of crowdsourcing depends critically on the quality of ideators. Yet research on this topic is conflicting. The authors test two important characteristics of ideators that drive success: participation (i.e., single versus multi-contest ideators), and productivity (i.e., number of submissions). The data come from nine ideation contests conducted for large corporations. Findings are as follows. First, multi-contest ideators outperform single-contest ideators. A probable reason is that multi-contest ideators tend to be generalists who draw from broad knowledge. Second, contrary to prior findings, productivity, or the mere submission of many ideas, is not enough to generate success. Instead, ideators who submit few ideas per day are more likely to be successful than those who submit many ideas per day. Third, multi-contest ideators do better with high productivity, while single-contest ideators do worse with high productivity.

**Keywords:** *Crowdsourcing; Innovation; Productivity*

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