

User entrepreneurship: Accidental entrepreneurs, hobbyists and professionals as innovation actors in Tourism

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The paper analyzes two innovative organizations in the well-being field with recent strands of user innovation and service concepts. The Service dominant (SD) logic of marketing (Lusch and Vargo, 2008) incorporates co-creation and a strong network lens and strengthens the perspective that innovative actors can be anywhere in the network of the organization. The Lead user theory (Erich von Hippel, 1986) defines the user ahead of the population in a rising trend, and that more frequently innovates if extreme needs or tastes call for a better solution. I argue that the recent papers by Shah & Tripsas (2007) highlighting “*The Accidental Entrepreneur*” as a heavy user innovating and the paper by Chatterji & Fabrizio (2008) focusing on “*Professional Users as Source of Innovation*” can help to expand the traditional innovation concepts in line with SD logic and Lead user theory. The research method is a case-study using historical data and interviews with managers and network partners. The Blue Lagoon case in Iceland describes a skin patient (*Accidental entrepreneur*) that tried the wastewater mead from a geothermal power plant that evolved in 20 years into a mass tourism spa nearby with over 400 thousand visitors yearly. The Bedruthan Steps and Scarlet Hotels have been pioneers in the sustainable eco-friendly tourism in England. The company has a long history of innovating inside the luxury well-being concept. The family that has run it last 50 years has experimented with new environmental methods creating green solutions. The source of innovations from the family has partly been built on their own hobby as “keen gardeners” and family members using their professional experience to build a new “dream vacation” hotel that has been selected as one of the leading sustainable hotels in the world.

Keywords: Entrepreneurship, Lead-user, Innovation, SD logic, Well-being tourism, accidental entrepreneurs, hobbyists, professionals