Creating delightful customer experiences has become critical to customer retention and business success. For example, the difference in the compound annual revenue growth rates between companies that lead on customer experience and those that are laggards was 14% over a five year period (Manning, 2016). Ensuring effective customer experience has become an imperative to achieve differentiation in a competitive market. This requires organizations to develop strategies to transform their product/service bundle to deliver enjoyable customer experiences. The lens needed for such transformation has been discussed in the literature pertaining to the transition from goods-dominant logic to service-dominant logic (SDL). The former views the manufacturer or service provider as the creator and deliverer of value. SDL evolved to address this restrictive view of services, that was rooted in the traditional manufacturing-centric service dichotomy (Lusch and Nambisan, 2015; Ordanini and Parasuraman, 2011). SDL views tangible products as merely a means to satisfy the needs of customers, while firms offer pleasant customer experiences co-created with other actors to differentiate themselves from competitors (Ordanini and Parasuraman, 2011; Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004). SDL thus considers service as the application of “specialized competences (knowledge and skills) through deeds, processes, and performances for the benefit of another entity or the entity itself” (Vargo and Lusch, 2004, p. 2), and further proposes that the value of a product is “value in use” as defined by customers, as opposed to embedded “exchange value” proposed by sellers, thereby involving value co-creation (Li & Petrick, 2008). Hence, value is co-created by multiple actors with the customer playing a pivotal role. In the context of customer experiences - which are described as “inherently personal responses occurring only in the mind of an individual who has been engaged on an emotional, physical, intellectual or even spiritual level (Berry and Carbone 2007) - customers cannot be passive recipients of value. The experiences are created within and around them. Especially in the digital age, customers have access to diverse knowledge sources which they actively seek. They are not content to respond or merely tell the service provider what they want. They are eager to ‘show’ what they want by giving shape to their ideas and co-creating their own personalized experiences (Prahalad and Ramaswamy, 2004). The present paper posits that these “knowledge consumers” can play a significant role in creating service experiences. Companies may thus benefit from the collective knowledge of their customers to transform everyday products into engaging and memorable experiences for the customers through co-creation (Le Salle and Britton, 2003).

**Methodology**

In order to empirically investigate how the co-creation experience pans out in practice, a three stage co-creation methodology was adopted involving a project of food preparation. This involved various key stakeholders engaging in: (i) discussions on a private online community; (ii) a face to face workshop; followed by (iii) post workshop discussions on the online community.

**Stage 1: Engagement on a private online community:** An initial screening survey was done to identify members who are interested in or are responsible for preparing food either for self or family and also have explicit interest in participating in a private online community. After on-boarding, discussions an online community were generated around their lifestyles, weekday and weekend activities. From the discussions, it emerged that work pressures led to stressful situations, resulting in time constraints faced by many members, which in turn impacted their ability to adopt a balanced lifestyle and preparation of healthy, quick and easy meals. The idea of developing a quick and easy to make "meal kit" ensued from the discussions.

**Stage 2: Co-creation workshop:** Members were asked to develop their own "meal kit" that meets the criteria: (i) which can be prepared in 15 to 20 minutes, (ii) with easily available ingredients. Members brought their own ingredients and prepared the meals which was followed by a display and tasting session and a group discussion. Members discussed about the event in their online community.

**Stage 3: Post-workshop discussions on the online community:** The members further shared their views and feelings on the preparations of various members. Further concepts of meal kits emerged from mixing and matching the ingredients prepared by different members. Their reactions to the entire exercise and sharing of their feelings also formed part of member discussions.

**Findings**

**1. Individual food items have led to enjoyable social experience:** Co-creation helped transform every day products into memorable customer experiences. Customers reported that they enjoyed preparing, tasting, sharing and the mutual appreciation.

**2. Co-operation and network benefits:** Benefits of co-creation can be reaped by several actors since the new product ideas have relevance for manufacturers of varied products. An interesting array of meal kit ideas emerged that can be used by manufacturers of packaged food products, ready to make meals, frozen vegetables and condiments. Customers combined various competitors’ products to make a kit, which shows that missing items or variants in one company’s product line is being filled in by competitors products. Companies are benefiting from each other’s offerings.

**3. Customer experience elements included socialization, learning, fun and achievement:** Members reported enjoying the experience of forming the community, exchange of ideas as well as an opportunity to demonstrate their skills and creativity. Members further exchanged recipes and requests for inclusion in similar projects continued.

**4. Customers recruit other customers:** Participants co-opted their friends and shared their contacts for recruitment into the community.

**5. Positive word of mouth and User Generated Content on social networks:** Members discussed about the event in their physical and virtual social networks and shared the pictures and wrote about the experience in their social media pages and blogs.

**Implications for theory**

The study demonstrated how co-creation of value for a basic daily routine may be effectively achieved using a combination of online and physical interactions and engagement. It was found that breaking the ice and discussions among members a private online community was useful to define the scope of the project for the ensuing co-creation workshop, and finally post-workshop discussions and sharing could be done on the online community. This blend of online and offline modes was quite useful and effective and may be adopted in future studies on co-creation.

**Implications for practice**

Companies can collaborate with their customers for transforming everyday products into enjoyable customer experiences. Multiple rewards can be reaped through co-creation and achieve positive spin-offs. Private online communities help the firm maintain confidentiality and also pre-test concepts and ideas. Successful ideas that generated high interest can then be extended to the social media and owned digital media. Pretesting on a private domain also helps increase the success rate of open innovation initiative.

**Originality/value**

The blended methodology adopted enabled customer co-creation across multiple touch points – offline and online, on a private domain and public domain as well.

**Keywords:** customer experience; co-creation; S-D logic; online community; engagement