WHAT IS MARKETING'S ROLE IN PREVENTING RADICALIZATION?

QUARTERLY

MarketingNews

AMERICAN MARKETING ASSOCIATION **AMA.ORG** WINTER 2023

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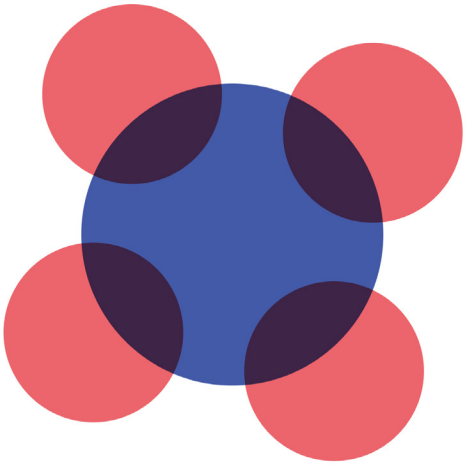


Four Strategies Define the Future of Purpose-Driven Branding

BY DAVID AAKER

In 2003, Dove conducted a study that revealed fewer than 3% of women regarded themselves as beautiful. This led to the Real Beauty campaign, which involved a host of vehicles to change perceptions. One was the "Dove Real Beauty Sketches," a short film that showed that an artist's drawing of a women based on her self-description resulted in an image far less attractive than when a stranger was the descriptor. Its "You're More Beautiful Than You Think" ad became the most viral ad ever at the time (2013), and over 85 million views were recorded on YouTube alone. Another, the "Evolution" campaign, which showed the impact of makeup, hair treatment, and lighting on appearance, got $150 million worth of free exposure. The Real Beauty campaign, together with the Dove Self-Esteem Project directed at teen girls, has reached a huge audience throughout the world and has changed attitudes and elevated self-confidence as well as become the heart of the Dove brand for nearly two decades.

Considering the Dove case as context, some questions arise: How will firms that aspire to address societal needs and problems in the purpose era actually create meaningful social impact? How will they develop social programs that make a difference and integrate them into the business strategy? The book *The Future of Purpose-Driven Branding* provides four strategies that differ substantially from those widely used because the focal point is the power of branding to enable programs to impact, nurture, and advance a business brand.

1 SOCIAL PURPOSE

A business needs to be seen as going beyond financial success to make the world better by addressing society's problems and needs. Even a higher purpose such as "building insanely great products" is not enough. Businesses should come up with programs that "make a difference" to society led by social purpose embedded in or adjacent to the business purpose. This social purpose enables firms to create programs that address societal challenges.

There are several forces that support the elevation of societal efforts. Societal challenges are increasingly visible and threatening. Businesses with resources, insights and agility are needed; governments with political gridlock, resource limitations and a lack of agility cannot do it all. More people, especially millennials and Gen Z, are looking for meaning in their professional lives beyond a paycheck. Finally, businesses, especially those without an engaging offering, need the energy and image that social programs provide.

2 SIGNATURE PROGRAMS

The centerpiece player of the purpose-driven branding model is signature social programs, such as Dove's two programs, that address societal needs or problems that touch people emotionally; are credible, impactful and committed; are branded; and lift the energy and image of a business partner brand. These signature programs are likely to impact society challenges because they are focused, have a long-term horizon and are guided and motivated by a brand. A loose assortment of grants, volunteer activities and energy goals is not adequate.

Signature social programs can be internal branded programs such as Chick-fil-A's Shared Table program, which has turned leftover food into 10 million meals for those in need. An organization can supply resources and know-how to an internal program over time and thus

control its success trajectory. Or it can be an external partner that comes with a proven record and established brand, which can substantially reduce the risk of a disappointing performance. Costco, for example, has "visionary partner" status with Feeding America, one of its signature programs.

3 INTEGRATING SIGNATURE PROGRAMS INTO THE BUSINESS

The central logic of *The Future of Purpose-Driven Branding* model is that these signature programs need to be integrated into the business strategy. A goal is to enhance the energy and image of a business partner's brand and its ability to engage and connect with its stakeholders. For many businesses, this brand enhancement is a rare opportunity to generate vibrant growth (Dove is an example). By enhancing a business, the signature program will gain both the endorsement of the business and access to its resources. It's a win-win. The alternative is for the signature program to be a self-sufficient orphan regarded as a financial deadweight.

The key idea is that the signature program enhances a partner business by building or reinforcing its brand. In contrast, most advocates of impact investing focus on helping a business by making windmills, farming organically or otherwise having or creating a business model that directly does good for society. While this is laudable, it is seldom a viable option, improving a partner's brand is almost always feasible and visible. And ESG efforts, driven by extensive measurables, are almost always playing defense.

4 BUILDING INSPIRING, CREDIBLE SIGNATURE PROGRAM BRANDS

For all this to work, for the signature social program to do its jobs of creating social impact and enhancing a business brand, it needs to build a strong program brand that will provide guidance, clarity, credibility, visibility, inspiration and a communication vehicle. In addition to the many well-understood branding concepts and tools, there are a few that are described in the book that are less known but potentially game-changing in this context. Labeled the five "branding must-do's" they include creating a social purpose, using stories to bring the program to life, finding underleveraged silver bullet brands, creating and leveraging brand communities, and scaling the signature program so that reaches more people with a deeper offering

There are plenty of vivid examples of signature social programs, many described in the book, that made an enormous impact on society and dramatically enhanced the brand of a partner business. Consider:

- Goldman Sachs 10,000 women in 2008 provided management skills and access to finance to women in underdeveloped countries. Ten years later, the goal was achieved and doubled, and Goldman showed to employees and others that its resources and know-how works to help the world.

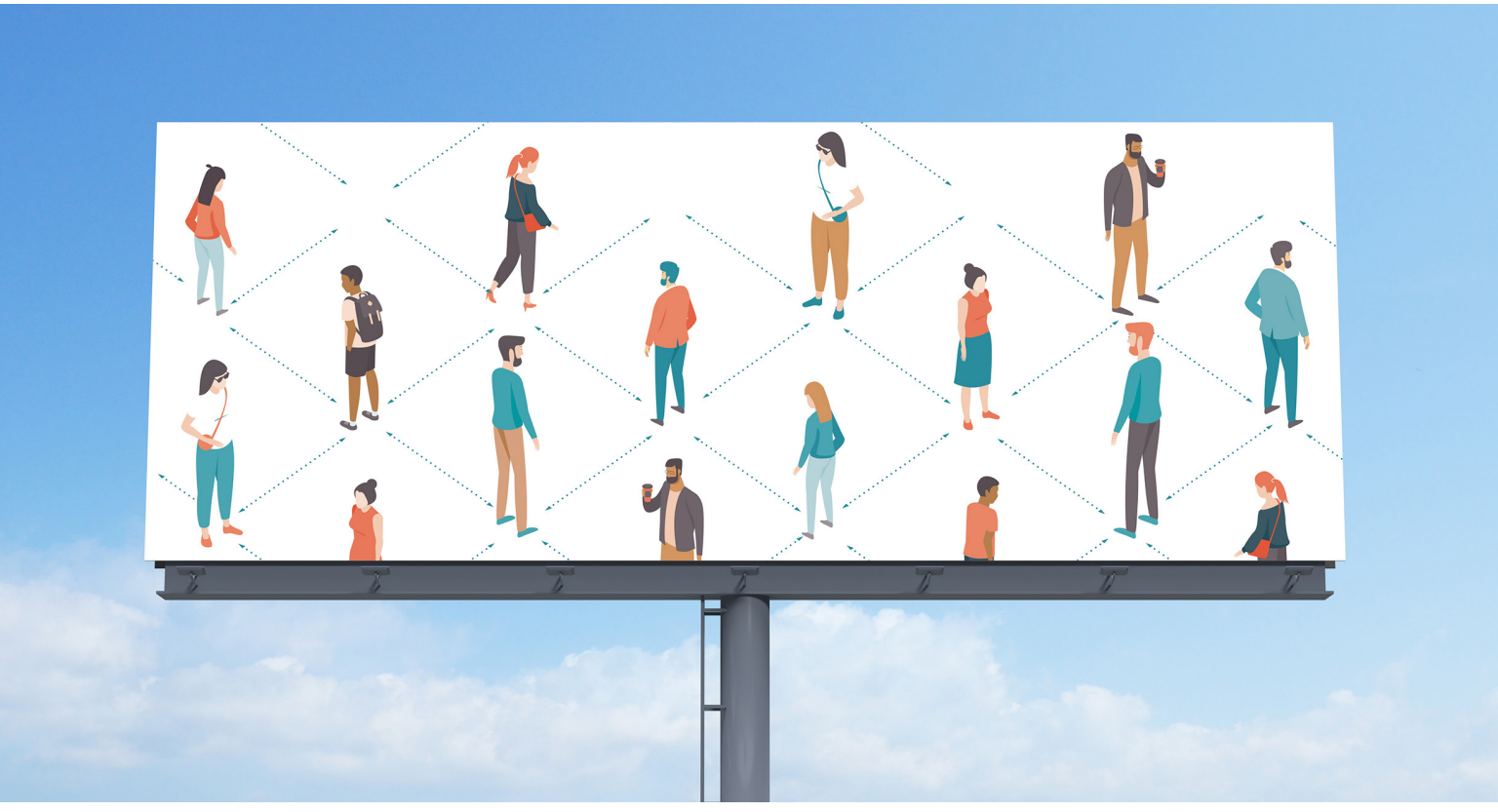
- Salesforce launched a Pledge 1% program (originally termed 1-1-1) in 1999 whereby the firm is to give 1% of its product, profits and time to address a societal need. A challenge to other firms to do the same got 10,000 takers and helped make Salesforce a social program leader.

- Thrivent, a major financial services firm, has since 2005 been a partner to Habitat to Humanity, responsible for over $285 million in donations and 6.2 million volunteer hours from a membership network of clients and employees. The effort not only created homes all over the world but reinforced the Thrivent value of "Live Generously" and provided engagement opportunities enhancing the Thrivent and Habitat brands.

- Barclays regained lost trust when the firm created a social purpose and an employee signature social program, the Digital Eagles, now 17,000 strong, that helps people adjust and thrive in the digital world. Stories about Digital Eagle engagements were successful in changing trust perceptions, in contrast to prior conventional ads, which had no impact.

The Future of Purpose-Driven Branding puts the power of branding into efforts to address society's challenges. A signature social program, either internal or in partnership with a nonprofit, with a strong brand that reflects the program's societal goal, credible approach, true impact and inspiration that surrounds it is the central construct. This signature program then enhances the business brand by fostering energy, an image lift and engagement by employees and others, which in turn creates justification to support the program with resources and endorsement—a win-win flywheel. **MN**

David Aaker, sometimes called the Father of Modern Branding, is the author of 18 books and over 100 articles on branding and business strategy. He is the Vice-Chair of Prophet, a branding, growth, and transformation consulting company.



Can Brands Influence Social Outcomes?

The impact of COVID-19-related brand advertising on social distancing behavior

BY AYAN GHOSH DASTIDAR, SARANG SUNDER AND DENISH SHAH

The initial public policy response to the COVID-19 pandemic was rife with chaotic decision making and wide variations in the implementation of governmental guidelines. Social distancing was the primary intervention proposed by most governmental agencies, but these measures/mandates saw mixed results because many were unwilling to comply due to factors such as politicization, widespread fake news, and lack of a scientific temper.

Brands, for their part, were quick to incorporate COVID-19-related narratives in their advertising strategies. While such advertisements likely influence brand-related outcomes (such as sales and customer awareness), it is not clear whether they impact social outcomes unrelated to the brand—the so-called "spillover" effects. In a new *Journal of Marketing* study, we assess the impact of COVID-19-related brand advertising on social distancing behavior.

We analyzed advertising and mobility data with quasi-experimental econometric methods and found that, in general, counties where brands ran a greater number of COVID-19-related advertisements showed higher levels of social distancing. This societal spillover of advertising was substantial. For example, a 1 percentage point increase in COVID-19-related advertising led to an average of 466 additional people (compared to 2019) staying fully at home each day. This effect was more pronounced for larger markets such as New York (6,527 people) and Los Angeles (5,612 people). Given that social distancing was critical to preventing virus spread (especially before the vaccine was developed), this spillover effect may have contributed to saving lives.

Brand manager and policymaker takeaways

1 **BRANDS** have tremendous opportunities to disseminate socially relevant messages embedded in the narratives of their TV ads to impact socially beneficial outcomes. Brands can be strategic about their advertising not only from a brand-outcome standpoint but also from a societal-outcome standpoint.

2 **GOVERNMENT AGENCIES** may need to rethink their communication strategies when dealing with major public health crises requiring public compliance with critical safety guidelines. They may benefit from adopting alternative means of communication to minimize reactance or annoyance. This may involve collaborations with trusted public figures and/or social media influencers or offering incentives to firms in certain categories (i.e., those with increased ad effectiveness) to incorporate relevant narratives in communications directed at their followers and consumers, respectively.

3 **BRAND MANAGERS AND POLICYMAKERS** could use the findings from this study to devise more efficient, targeted, and timely communication strategies to deal with future health crises. Our findings are generalizable to other public crises, such as climate change. Brand ads with relevant narratives may help increase the salience of the crisis and influence critical mitigative behaviors, such as promoting recycling and switching to clean energy.

READ THE FULL ARTICLE:
Ayan Ghosh Dastidar, Sarang Sunder, and Denish Shah (2022), "Societal Spillovers of TV Advertising – Social Distancing During a Public Health Crisis."

We also find heterogeneous advertising effects based on brand-level and demographic variables. Our results indicate that the effect of advertising on social distancing behavior is amplified among more educated populations but attenuated in more conservative and rural counties, which tend to be more white. Overall, our findings bear substantive implications for the power of brand advertisements to affect important societal outcomes and for government communication strategies. Our findings have implications for other public health emergencies (e.g., climate change) as well.

Could brand advertising fill the void when government agencies fail to adequately respond to public crises? The answer seems to be an overwhelming yes. A recent study by the Edelman Trust Barometer found that individuals tend to trust businesses (61%) more than governments (53%), and an astounding 86% believe that CEOs must lead on societal issues while 68% want CEOs to step in where governments fail. Our results concur: COVID-19-related brand advertising effects on social distancing behavior are almost 11 times stronger in the absence of a cogent policy response (e.g., shelter-in-place, masking) from government agencies. This suggests that brands may play a critical role in weathering public crises.

The Effect of Salience

We identify salience as one of the primary underlying psychological mechanisms that help explain our findings. When the pandemic was less prominent or salient in people's minds, brand advertising played a more significant role in making the pandemic and its consequences more salient in their mobility-related decision-making processes. We also find that the brand advertising effects vary based on several factors such as product category and demographics. For example, ads from certain product categories, such as entertainment, alcohol and tobacco, and politics have a negative effect on social distancing behavior. Further, the effects are stronger in areas with greater population and higher levels of education.

Although to a much lesser extent compared to brands, federal, state, and local government agencies also engaged in COVID-19-related advertising. But we find that government ads, overall, do not have a significant effect on people's social distancing behavior, although the effects seem to vary from county to county. **MN**

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Think Before Designing Your Logo

How marketers can capitalize on the power of perception to influence beliefs about brand performance

BY FELIPE M. AFFONSO AND CHRIS JANISZEWSKI

Brands are constantly updating their visual identities. Intel recently went through its third visual brand identity refresh in half a century, and its new logo has iconic symmetry, balance, and proportion. The underlying geometry is apparent in the design. Could visual design characteristics influence consumers' perceptions about the brand?

In a new *Journal of Marketing* article, we find that a sense of order and structure can reinforce claims about a brand's utilitarian benefits. Intel's visual marketing not only communicates the company's vision and positioning but also reinforces them through specific design properties. We identify a variety of design properties that can influence perceptions of structure in visual elements, including symmetry, balance, geometry, regularity, proximity, and similarity.

It is well known that customers are subliminally influenced by visual marketing tools such as logos, packages, and retail displays; they use them as a basis to make judgments about brands delivering on their promise. For brands that promise utilitarian (functional, instrumental, and useful) benefits, we find that consumers are encouraged by visual designs perceived as more orderly and structured. This suggests marketers can capitalize on the power of perception to influence beliefs about brand performance, which ultimately influences product interest and choice.

Utilitarian vs. Hedonic Brands

At the other end of the spectrum are brands such as Pepsi, which promise benefits related to enjoyment, pleasure, and experiences—collectively referred to as hedonic benefits. In this case, marketers can benefit from using visual design properties that convey lack of structure. The visual elements of Pepsi's marketing communications are relatively more asymmetric, free-flowing, unbalanced, and irregular. Our research suggests that these characteristics reinforce consumers' beliefs about the performance of hedonic-positioned brands.

In short, we find that visual design characteristics that encourage structured perceptions of visual communications (such as when the visual elements have high proximity, high similarity, and symmetry) can reinforce beliefs about utilitarian-positioned brand performance. On the other hand, visual design characteristics that encourage unstructured perceptions of visual communications (for instance, when the visual elements are asymmetrical, have low proximity, or low similarity) can reinforce beliefs about hedonic-positioned brand performance. These reinforcements occur because structure and lack of structure have specific associations that consumers use to make inferences. Our suggestions are supported by a series of carefully designed experiments, both in the lab and in the field, and an analysis of industry data.

First, we found that in a large-scale field experiment, when a perfume was positioned as utilitarian ("Long-lasting. Great for work and everyday occasions"), consumers were more likely to click on the advertisement depicting the perfume with a visual design perceived as more structured than its unstructured counterpart. When the perfume was positioned as hedonic ("Delightful. Great for special and fun occasions"), consumers were more likely to click on the advertisement depicting the perfume with a visual design perceived as more unstructured than its structured counterpart.

Second, when consumers made choices considering functional goals (such as choosing a restaurant that provides a fast and reliable experience), they were more likely to pick a restaurant perceived as structured. However, when the choice involved hedonic goals (such as choosing a restaurant providing an entertaining and exciting experience) they were likely to pick the option perceived as unstructured. Importantly, we consistently find that these effects, across a variety of visual marketing communications, induce a structured versus unstructured perception in different ways.

Finally, we find that for brands perceived as more utilitarian, structured perceptions are associated with greater financial brand valuation and customer-based brand equity than unstructured perceptions. The opposite is true for brands perceived as more hedonic.

Lessons for Chief Sales Officers

- Brands should consider using design elements that encourage structured/unstructured perceptions of logos, products, product packaging, and retail store design according to whether their brand is primarily associated with utilitarian/hedonic benefits.
- The implications of our research extend to many other visual marketing communications, including print advertisements, website layouts, and app user interfaces. Marketers can take advantage of our findings and anticipate the consequences of key visual design decisions.
- Brands could benefit in the long term from shifting the structure of their visual marketing communications to align with their brand positioning.

READ THE FULL ARTICLE:
Felipe M. Affonso and Chris Janiszewski (2022), "Marketing by Design: The Influence of Perceptual Structure on Brand Performance."

This research offers actionable insights for marketers and visual design specialists working with design, advertising, social media communications, visual merchandising, and the appearance of retail environments. Specifically, the findings suggest that perceptual structure can be used as an efficient marketing communication tool. And it can encourage consumers at the point of purchase, being a relatively costless way to reinforce brand positioning. MN

Felipe M. Affonso is a PhD candidate in marketing, University of Florida, USA. Chris Janiszewski is Russell Berrie Eminent Scholar Chair and Professor of Marketing, University of Florida, USA.

Self(ie) Disclosure: How Selfies Shape Brand Interactions

Making a cultural phenomenon work for your brand

BY DELLA GARNER AND CASEY WALDSMITH

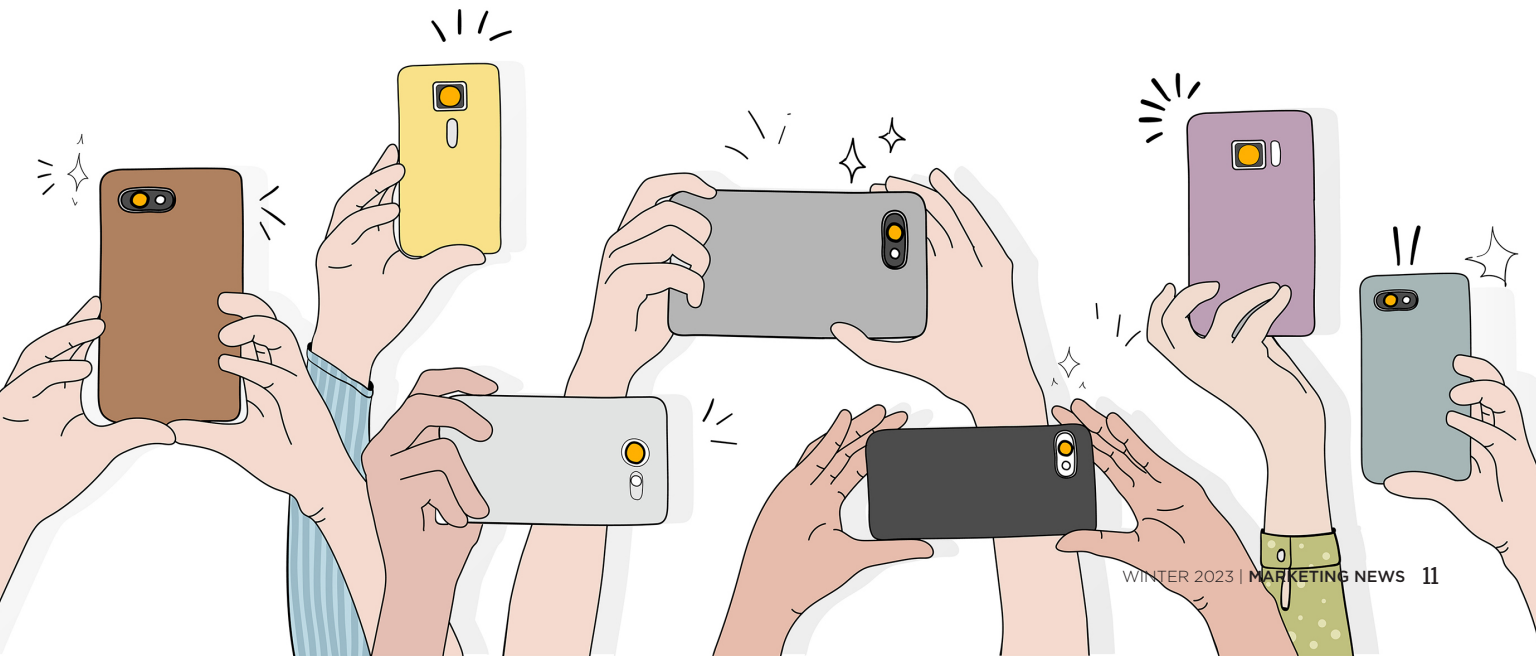
Approximately 65 million social posts include branded content. Every. Single. Day. Jochen Hartmann, Mark Heitmann, Christina Schamp, and Oded Netzer set out to academically measure the power of brand selfies. In their research, the team studied a quarter-million images from nearly 200 brands across Instagram and Twitter using sophisticated automated image analysis and text mining. We all know about selfies as a cultural phenomenon, but do these images affect how we interact with brands?

The team evaluated three types of brand-specific images: brand selfies (photos showcasing a brand with an invisible consumer), consumer selfies (photos showcasing a brand that also include the consumer's face), and packshots (standalone images of branded products). Ultimately, the type of image does matter when attracting consumers and increasing social media engagement and purchase intentions. More specifically, they found that while consumer selfies generate the most engagement via likes, faces are more powerful when it comes to purchase intentions. In fact, brand selfies received 78% more expressed purchase intentions on Twitter and 70% more expressed purchase intentions on Instagram.

Given the importance of the topic and its applicability to both academic scholars and practitioners, we were excited to learn more from the authors about their study.

Q What is the most interesting trend that you're following regarding social media right now?

A E-commerce, standing for "entertainment commerce." In the United States and Europe, e-commerce is still mainly treated as a utilitarian shopping experience. In some cases, in Asia people already use e-commerce as an entertainment experience, with influencers providing content with embedded shopping experiences in it. We are likely to see this trend of better understanding and use of influencers and micro-influencers to generate shopping opportunities. Understanding the role of selfies will play an important role in this new world. Moreover, NFTs could become a game changer for social media by allowing social media content producers to better capture the value of their content. Social media producers might be able to attain similar content rights as achieved by media companies or more expensive distribution channels, leaving more revenue to those who actually create.



Brand selfies received 78% more expressed purchase intentions on Twitter and 70% more expressed purchase intentions on Instagram.

Q How can brand managers create selfie opportunities for consumers? What part of marketing do you anticipate having the highest ROI for "brand selfies?" For example, as a brand manager would you focus on selfies inducing packaging or experiential events or does it depend on the situation?

A Brand managers can utilize our findings in three ways: (1) Tracking social media brand imagery to obtain early signals on how brand engagement is likely to evolve in social media. Our findings suggest brand selfies (ego perspective) result in more favorable observer responses than consumer selfies (portrait perspective) or simple packshots. (2) Brand managers can stimulate social media users to produce brand selfies, e.g., using dedicated packaging (e.g., the Santero "Hand" bottle) or contests (e.g., Corona beer's "Find Your Beach" campaign or Starbucks' Red Cup contest). Note that producing and posting brand selfies likely impacts brand engagement of senders as well. This needs to be taken into account by studying which type of social media brand image (brand selfies, consumer selfies, or packshots) results in the highest level of engagement of senders. (3) Our work calls for brands to move beyond simple measurement of social media engagement by likes and counting of comments and toward looking at the type of engagement, and particularly one that is targeted toward the brand rather than the social media content creator.

Q Given your expertise in this area, are there any similarities or differences you would expect comparing photos to videos? Coming out of a rise of video in TikTok, how do you feel this could affect the landscape?

A We have observed that consumer selfies result in higher levels of interest in the sender, while brand selfies drive brand interest. Videos might be able to capture the best of both worlds by allowing dynamic changes in perspectives. However, this needs to be explored by further research. Questions include the relative balance of different perspectives during the video, amount/frequency of changes, length of the video, and potential order effects. Also, it is conceivable that audio voiceovers can reinforce self-reference processing that we identify as a driver of brand engagement (e.g., "imagine enjoying this product," "this could be yours").

Q How can brands utilize these learnings with influencers? Do you see similarities and/or differences with user-generated content from consumers?

A Influencers are often well-trained and capable of choosing content to maximize reach and engagement with their profiles. Since we know that consumer selfies are more conducive to sender engagement than brand selfies are, we expect influencers to arrive at similar conclusions. This poses a challenge for marketers as high-reach users such as influencers are less likely to post the more desirable brand selfies than lower-reach average users with lower levels of experience. The optimal trade-off between reach and engagement is an empirical question marketers can address via experimentation. MN

Della Garner and Casey Waldsmith are doctoral students in marketing at University of Memphis, USA. *The team would like to thank Jochen Hartmann, Mark Heitmann, Christina Schamp, and Oded Netzer for contributing their time and effort to the Journal of Marketing Research Scholarly Insights by AMA DocSIG. This article was anchored in their expertise and insights.*

JOURNAL of MARKETING RESEARCH

READ THE FULL ARTICLE:
Jochen Hartmann, Mark Heitmann, Christina Schamp, and Oded Netzer (2021), "The Power of Brand Selfies."

Don't Fight the Flow: When and How to Change with the Culture

GAUTHIER BOCHE | VICE PRESIDENT STRATEGY & INNOVATION, MARKS PART OF SGS & CO.

Managing brands has always been about building a response to the authenticity challenge: how to be genuine? How to stop sounding like marketing? How to be real?

After 20 years focusing on brand experiences, the approach to building stronger brands seems to have taken a new path towards the development of "brand cultures." Activating the appropriate culture has indeed become the new way into consumer engagement.

So now the key question is: *What is your brand culture?* And what do we mean by *culture*?

There are many of definitions of culture, so the challenge of defining brand culture is a daunting, perhaps risky, exercise; but we must seize the opportunity of this new age of culturally tuned brand management. In the context of brands, we define culture by *a set of values, rituals, semantics, and semiotic codes that are produced by a specific human community* (like skaters, knitting lovers, conservatives, geeks, tech companies) to create a sense of identity and belonging.

The key word here is *identity*. Activating the appropriate cultural code is a way for brands to evolve their own identity to better resonate with their audiences.

Defining the right culture for a brand is not a mere communication or activation challenge (feeling the vibe) but rather an identity challenge (being the vibe). Culture is not about what you say but about what you truly are or have the intent to become.

Cultures are stronger than brands; they shape how consumers see the world, they dictate what's in, what's out, what to desire and what to despise. They change and evolve. Without great care, anyone can slip into the realm of being dated and out of touch.

Opportunistic or dated, the way to authenticity is a fine line. So the question is: *When and how should brands change with culture?*

Here are three brands that exemplify moments of cultural shift when targeting a new audience (and a new culture).

The CIA: Targeting a new audience and embracing a new culture

In 2021, to engage with a more diverse audience, the US Central Intelligence Agency (CIA) underwent a rebranding exercise, shifting from a nation's icon to fiction's cues. The objective of the rebranding effort was to encourage more diverse applicants, "people of all backgrounds and walks of life," by activating a culture and a universe they could relate to.

The romanticisation of the spy in literature, cinema and TV has always been a recruitment asset. Streaming culture, created by Netflix, is the latest avatar whereby the CIA has been making reality look like the fiction. Beyond the logo, the chosen imagery is particularly impactful – it feels like a Netflix series homepage. The agency may have been a bit too overzealous with that idea, stripping its logo of any previous cues, thereby risking losing all sense of self.

In response to Twitter backlash, the CIA ended up with a modernised version of the current logo in which the main equity has been kept.

- **What is the brand here?** The most iconic spy agency brand.
- **And the culture?** Streaming.
- **Why?** To engage a new audience (and culture).
- **How?** By following visual language, rather than owning it.

Renault: Responding to a shift of business model (and culture) in your industry

What is the future of the automotive industry? Beyond the larger-than-life Japanese escape of its former CEO, Carlos Ghosn, the French car maker Renault made a very interesting identity move in 2021. This rebranding exercise was part of a bigger Renault plan, called the *Renaulution* – aiming to pivot the company and brand into the realm of the EV.

In contrast to the CIA, Renault didn't discard its equity fully but rather renewed its existing icon. This renewed identity signals another, maybe deeper, shift within the automotive industry. The shift from a 3D to a 2D logo could indicate a business model shift from hardware (the car) to software (the electronics and AI within the car). We can see that Renault is playing catchup the Silicon Valley tech giants, including Tesla. These brands will continue to shape and drive what the future looks like—a challenge for the classic automotive brand if they're not willing to adapt to new frontiers that affect their customers day-to-day.

Renault says it is ready for what's to come.

- **What is the brand here?** A European car maker born in 1898.
- **And the culture?** Renewables and AI.
- **Why?** Shifting of an industry business model from steel to chips
- **How?** By reinventing their key brand asset.

Ben's Original: When it's too little and too late

On May 25, 2020, George Floyd died at the hands of Derek Chauvin, a white Minneapolis police officer. The scene was filmed by a witness's cell phone and quickly shared across social media. This sparked not only US protests against the use of excessive force by police against African Americans, but global protests as well, reviving the Black Lives Matter movement that emerged after the murder of Trayvon Martin in 2013.

In the context of consumer brands, this moment of conscious cultural change matters. Soon after, in June 2020, the 131-year-old PepsiCo-owned brand Aunt Jemima announced a change of name and image "to make progress toward racial equality."

A few months later, in September 2020, and after facing similar criticism of perpetuating racial stereotyping, the iconic rice brand Uncle Ben's undertook a redesign, including the brand name, that became Ben's Original. Uncle Ben, the image of a Black man in a bow tie was removed from the package. Beyond the name change, the company also announced a new brand purpose: to support disadvantaged communities with nutritious meals and better opportunities in life.

The Black Lives Matter movement created a renewed awareness of systemic racism in Western societies and initiated a contemporary activist culture. New generations won't accept any of the previous stereotypes. What was unnoticed in the past has become unacceptable today as people become increasingly aware of racial slurs and bias, unconscious or otherwise.

It's easy to look back with hindsight and critique, but Ben's Original could have done two things, earlier and better. Earlier – they waited until after the BLM movement to question their roots, understand perceptions and reappraise their identity, ignoring the glaringly obvious. Better – they should have built and forged future-forward icons as a symbol of their new brand purpose instead of merely removing the problematic ones.

In the 1990s, Ben's Original missed the speciality rice revolution (e.g., jasmine, Thai, ancient grains) as its competition steadfastly focused on the promise of convenience. Will the brand be successful this time, by leveraging the revolution of a disadvantaged community's empowerment?

- **What is the brand here?** An iconic family rice producer.
- **And the culture?** Supporting communities.
- **Why?** There is no other choice but to let go of some of the brand's heritage.
- **How?** Dropping the most iconic brand asset.

Culture can be about a specific group you want to engage, a certain industry you want to be seen to be a part of, or more broadly civil rights and anti-racism. Changes in response to culture are a matter of opportunity, like a shift in audience or business model, and pace, to avoid seeming out of touch.

Responses to culture require a realignment of corporate values and principles as well as a brand's equity and identity for it to be believable. In the case of the CIA, the agency went too far and in so doing had to circle back. Maybe Ben's Original was too little, too late? Only time will tell. And Renault? The firm is walking the cultural tightrope well for now, but it will need to prove out the shift by delivering on its new promise.

The practice of cultural foresight is fundamental to effective brand management and design, and what makes the discipline of brand design both fascinating and rewarding. When done well, business, brand and consumer reap the benefits. **MN**

Gauthier Boche is Vice President Strategy & Innovation Europe at Marks part of SGS & Co and lectures Brand Management and Design Thinking at Sorbonne University, Paris.

AMA AMERICAN MARKETING ASSOCIATION | **Foundation**

The American Marketing Association Foundation (AMAF) champions individual marketers making an impact in our profession and community. We recognize marketing visionaries who have elevated the field, and we support the next generation of marketers who will transform the profession. Congratulations to our most recent award winners!

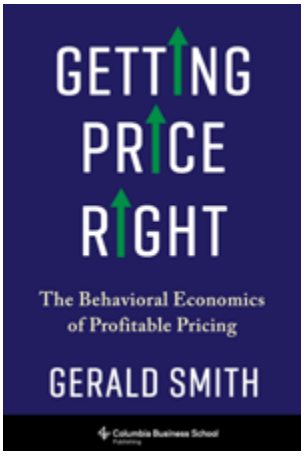
2022 Leonard L. Berry Marketing Book Award

This award recognizes books that have had a significant impact in marketing and related sub-fields.

WINNER:

Getting Price Right: The Behavioral Economics of Profitable Pricing

By Gerald Smith



Gerald Smith
Professor of Business and Chair, Marketing Department, Carroll School of Management, Boston College

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Alok Kumar,
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Rajdeep Grewal,
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

ARTICLE:

"Customer Orientation Structure for Internet-Based Business-to-Business Platform Firms,"
Journal of Marketing, September 2014

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Can Marketing Prevent Radicalization?

New *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing* special issue focuses on marketing's role in a problem that plagues today's society

BY SARAH STEIMER

From the time that Marie Louise Radanielina Hita and Yany Grégoire began exploring the role that marketing scholarship plays in preventing radicalization, the world has seen the spread of extremism — from a terrorist attack at a Parisian concert venue in 2015 to right-wing conspiracy theorists overtaking the U.S. Capitol in 2021.

Yany Grégoire

Marie Louise Radanielina Hita

What Radanielina Hita and Grégoire recognized in these movements was the ability for leaders to draw people in and keep their attention despite spreading falsehoods — which points to their mastery in marketing and communications. The scholars set out to further explore the role of marketing in radicalization by way of editing a special issue of the *Journal of Public Policy & Marketing*, a collection of articles, commentaries, and editorials.

Although social sciences scholars have long studied the topics of radicalization and extremism, marketing scholarship has been largely left out of the conversation. This special issue of the journal — *Marketing to Prevent Radicalization: Developing Insights for Policies* — is not only an exploratory publication, but Radanielina Hita and Grégoire challenged the authors to provide solutions for both marketers and policymakers. Their goal was to provide an initial framework for marketers to use as a map for diving deeper into the topic. *Marketing News* spoke with the scholars about their inspiration for the issue, why marketing should have a voice in the conversation, and how they hope the special issue motivates more scholars to explore how to stop radicalization.

Marketing News: What inspired this special issue of the *journal*?

Grégoire: I was in France at a visiting position in 2015 and it was at the time when there was a Muslim terrorist attack at the Bataclan. It was a major tragedy; they killed many people. I remember I was talking with a colleague about the horror of it. A lot of what's happening in terms of terrorists and terrorism is happening online. It's a matter of persuasion process — those people are excellent marketers. We thought, well, we should do something.

I was thinking of Mary Louise because she's an expert in health communication, so she knew a lot about the communication process of it. We just figured that we should do something new, use the lens of marketing theory to understand the marketing of those terrorist groups in order to deconstruct their strategies and prevent them from convincing people.

That was 2015, and then from there we saw that the terror is not just coming from jihadists: The terrorists come in from this idea of people being more and more polarized and doing terrible things. We thought marketing should have a voice in that conversation.

Radanielina Hita: My research interest is between consumer well-being, marketing, communications and social media. I have been looking at the use of promotion and communication in preventing bad things: My PhD was on preventing binge drinking, risky sexual behaviors and other dangerous, risky behaviors. When Yany brought up the idea of extending those research interests into incorporating the prevention of the negative effects of polarization, as a result of exposure to social media, I thought that it was fantastic. I realized that the communication process, for example, with other risky behaviors could be applied to any other types of dangerous and bad behaviors in society.

Marketing News: What were the goals for this special issue? Why bring together the articles that you did?

Grégoire: For this topic, the process was very exploratory. We didn't know what we would get. In the editorial where we identify four different topics, that really came from the submissions that we have received. We started from a blank [slate], and we came up with that conceptualization: misinformation and disinformation; violence, hate and terrorism; discrimination and racism; and a lack of confidence in institutions. We want to give a first framework so people can start something.

Radanielina Hita: In the call for papers, we used the conceptualization of radicalization — which was broader — because we'd done a little bit of research before launching the special issue and realized that most of the things that were done in radicalization — prevention of radicalization and counter radicalization — were mostly from other social

sciences and not marketing. There was a little bit from communications, but not much in terms of understanding the effects of the polarization and radicalization. We really opened up the door for getting as much knowledge as possible. We were lucky enough that we got those incredible papers that helped us to limit the possible topics in radicalization and now we have that framework.

Grégoire: We have tried to approach people from other disciplines like sociology, political science. They always thought that it was weird that people in marketing and communications wanted to talk about radicalization and terrorism. For us, it was clear that marketing has a role to play. Those organizations are excellent marketers.

Marketing News: These organizations are already doing a very good job of communicating and marketing their viewpoints. How can the field of marketing then deconstruct it in order to prevent it? What have you learned so far within this special issue?

Radanielina Hita: We first of all had to delimit the domains, and each one looked at a specific phenomenon that was related to online radicalization. For example, to address the issue of inequity, discrimination, and racism, we … also discuss the marketing and public policy implications that researchers had proposed for anyone who is working in that field. We had public policy implications on each one of these topics.

Grégoire: One of the most popular papers is on echo chambers and conspiracy beliefs. The way that people start to believe in something, we know that the first stage is seeding, and those people have bad, malevolent intentions — they will spread lies at the beginning. But then it goes in the echo chambers. People who belong to some echo chambers on social media, they really believe the information is true because they keep talking with people with the same visions. That becomes a part of their identity, to believe in the misinformation and disinformation. That persuasion process happens in two stages: seeding, where people know that they lie, versus echo, where people really believe in it.

What it means for the government and people in marketing is that, depending on the stage, you need different strategies. People in the echo chamber really believe in that and it's not about fact checking, because they will think that someone is coming from another organization and is paid to convince them otherwise. It has to come from within, from people speaking their language.

We're learning about these systems. We learn that people doing violent terror, they find a way to rationalize it through this theory of selective moral disengagement. As a marketer, we have to work on that process to re-engage them morally and socially. These papers give us the opportunity to take more specific actions to counter radicalization.

Marketing News: What seems really unique is that not only was this special issue an introduction to the topic itself within the field, but there are actually practitioner takeaways and policy takeaways.

Radanielina Hita: We expected the authors to provide marketing implications and public policy implications because that's why we launched this special issue: to understand what marketing scholars and public policymakers can do to help prevent radicalization. We thought that our voice would have an added value if we were able to provide some implications. And as we were writing the editorial as well, we were thinking about what other questions can still be researched by marketing scholars.

We launched this about six years ago, but since then, we've had lots of transformative social movements, like Black Lives Matter, the #MeToo movement, and other types of movements that have had societal impacts on branding, for example. So we speak about that a lot, because there's brand activism and brand hijacking, things like that that managers have to think about now.

Marketing News: Now that you've got the ball rolling, where do you think the research in this field will go?

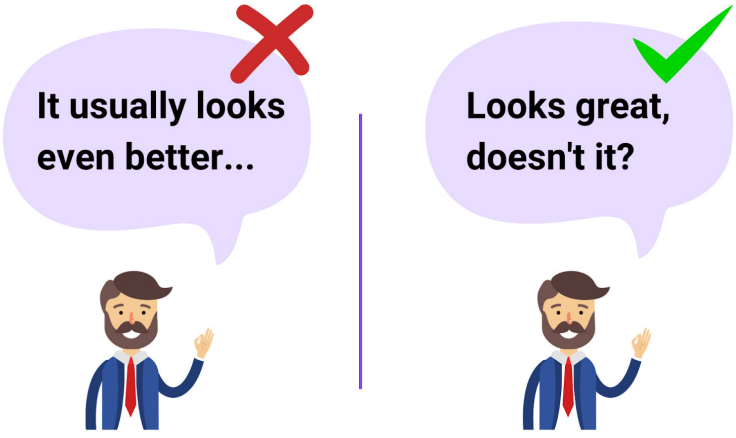
Grégoire: Based on the downloads, I can see that there is a real interest in marketing for this notion of echo chambers, the persuasion process, and conspiracy theories. I think the field is quite ready to embrace that research. There is already some literature on racism, so that will give momentum on discrimination and racism, which are big topics at the moment.

Something that I also believe that the special issue will give some legs to is this idea that people in the U.S. and elsewhere lack confidence in institutions and democratic norms. This is something we're going to start studying: How can we help our citizens regain trust and confidence in institutions?

Radanielina Hita: We are hoping for more academic interest, and even from public policy makers, in recognizing that marketing and other related fields, like communications, do have a voice in this topic. We've seen in all the papers that the process itself, which starts online with social media, is communication. It's persuasion, it's marketing, and it's branding. All of those things are legitimate questions in marketing, so we're hoping that this will spark or reinforce the interest that some scholars already have about it, and that it's something that people will look into more now.. **MN**

Sarah Steimer is a writer, editor, podcast producer, and yoga teacher living in Chicago. She has written for Marketing News, Chicago magazine, Culture magazine, the Pittsburgh Post-Gazette, and other outlets.

READ THE SPECIAL ISSUE:
Marketing to Prevent Radicalization: Developing Insights for Policies



Don't Say 'It's Usually Better'

It can backfire and hurt your sales

BY THOMAS McKINLAY

Imagine you are a real estate agent showing a house to a potential buyer. The view is usually beautiful. Unfortunately, during today's viewing it's foggy outside.

Should you simply say "Look at this view!"?

Or should you also add "Sadly it's foggy today, usually the view is even better!"?

Let's take another example. You are about to give a presentation. But your laptop is having an issue and your slides look a bit blurry.

Should you say "Sorry my slides look a bit blurry today. I'm having an issue with my laptop, usually they look better"?

Or should you stay quiet?

In both cases the research is clear: Hold your tongue and keep it to yourself.

Recommendation

Don't point out "it's usually better" when presenting or selling something.

For example, instead of saying "it looks better under a better light" or "sorry my voice is usually clearer, I'm sick today," don't say anything and pretend the imperfection is not there.

By pointing out a small imperfection, you get people to notice it when they probably wouldn't have.

People's impressions will worsen. They will be less satisfied and less likely to buy your product.

Findings

- When something (e.g., product, gift, situation) is temporarily not in its ideal condition (e.g., not perfectly clean, slower than usual), people tend to point that out. For example, "The city is very busy today, usually it's nicer." Their intention is to improve the receivers' impression.
- This study found that, in reality, pointing out the problem backfires. People's impressions worsen and they are less likely to buy.
- For example, as part of a series of 12 experiments, people were asked to imagine different scenarios and give their choices:
  - Customers were 24% less likely to buy a slightly withered plant when told "the plant looks a bit withered now due to insufficient sunlight [it would usually look better]."
  - Gift receivers were 8.3% less happy when told the dog they got as a gift was usually more friendly when not sick. They were also less grateful.
  - Diners gave a 14.6% lower Yelp rating and tipped 15.3% less when, at the end of their meal, the owner of the restaurant told them that their dish would have been even better when the crab they had was in season.
- The effect weakens or reverses when the imperfection is obvious. For example, a presenter's apology for the quality of their very blurry slides is good—but it backfires if the slides are only slightly blurry.

Why it works

- When we're presenting something we know well, we have a clear mental image of what it's like in its ideal state.
- From our perspective, the imperfections in its current state are obvious because we think in a "comparison mode," while the receiver sees it without any comparison.
- Due to the curse of knowledge, we struggle to see it from their perspective of no comparison, which is probably not that bad.
- The receiver might not even have noticed the "temporarily imperfect" feature or detail. Even if they did, they might not give it much importance.
- But when we point out the problem, we focus the receiver's attention on it, and they start thinking of the negative aspects of the object.

If you want to know about the study's limitations, the companies using it, and the steps to implement it, you can continue reading this summary on Ariyh. MN

Thomas McKinlay is founder of Ariyh—3-min practical summaries of the latest science in marketing.

JOURNAL of MARKETING RESEARCH

READ THE FULL ARTICLE:
Xilin Li, Christopher K. Hsee, and Ed O'Brien (2022), "'It Could Be Better' Can Make It Worse: When and Why People Mistakenly Communicate Upward Counterfactual Information,"

Being Alice: Here's Why We Fall into Rabbit Holes and How to Climb Back Out

The science behind this common behavior and what to do about it

BY RAVNEET BAWA AND ANDREA PELAEZ-MARTINEZ

Have you ever visited YouTube to look for a lunch recipe and 40 minutes later found yourself watching one funny cat video after another, nary a pan on the stove or chopped parsley to show? Well, then you, like many of us, have experienced going down a rabbit hole. A new *Journal of Marketing Research* study by Kaitlin Woolley and Marissa A. Sharif posits that the "rabbit hole effect" can also be externally induced, and merely consuming similar media consecutively can increase the preference for consuming additional similar media subsequently. They further find that the reason we are drawn to rabbit holes is because consecutive consumption of similar kinds of media increases the accessibility of the media category in our minds, and we end up believing the category to be more enjoyable.

Past influential research on the experience of flow and immersion has shown that consumers feel engaged and present in the ongoing experience, and it consequently

"A challenge for us was how to measure how people stop the rabbit hole. We did this in our studies by looking at when people switch to a different type of consumption."

increases their enjoyment. On one hand, it is possible that consuming similar media, one after another, leads to a feeling of boredom and decreased enjoyment. However, the authors find that the rich media experiences that we encounter on digital platforms are designed to hold a viewer's attention and increase the choice of similar media for subsequent consumption, as is evident in the binge watching behavior of consumers. This tussle between variety-seeking needs and consistency-seeking needs is unresolved; thus, the authors attempt to unravel, specifically, what leads to rabbit hole–type behavior as exhibited by media consumers.

Through a comprehensive series of lab experiments with a variety of video stimuli and manipulations of consecutiveness, similarity, and accessibility, the authors show the presence of a rabbit hole effect. They also document the underlying mechanism of anticipated enjoyment and category immersion as the drivers of this effect. Further, the authors identify potential disruptors (or not) of a rabbit hole effect by using advertisements that are similar or dissimilar to the focal stimuli category. They find that when viewers are exposed to dissimilar ad stimuli that disrupts their consumption, the rabbit hole effect is attenuated.

This research has implications for both marketing practitioners and consumer well-being. It provides evidence for how to build rabbit hole–type viewing experiences even with the presence of ads, as well as how to use variety to increase the range of viewing experiences within subscription services. Additionally, this research provides suggestions on how to create appropriate disruptions to avoid getting stuck in a rabbit hole.

We had the opportunity to talk with the authors to understand their research design considerations as well as some implications for generalizing the results of this study beyond video consumption. We share their responses here.

Q Given adults in the United States spend about 470 minutes per day with digital media (and different trend reports suggest between two to three hours on digital video), why is the psychology and behavior related to digital media consumption not a more widely studied topic in empirical marketing research?

A We would love to see more research on the psychology of digital media consumption. There are potentially a few reasons why there is not more work on this topic at the moment. First, it may be because this is an emerging area, and the landscape keeps changing. Given the research process can be slow (it may take years for a paper to come out), there may be people working on these topics and the papers have not been published yet. Second, especially given the changing landscape, it may be a difficult question to study, and to do so in a way that feels naturalistic. However, there are creative ways people are starting to study these topics (including running field studies through Twitter, for example).

Q Given the heterogeneity in content type, which reduces consistency and comparability of stimuli, what do you recommend in the research design (methods and choice of stimuli) for managing this challenge?

A Our solution to this in our article was to focus in on documenting a consistent finding using a narrow set of stimuli. For example, instead of examining all types of media one could consume, we started out with videos from YouTube. Only after we had a stable effect, and after understanding the mechanism, did we expand to other types of media (e.g., photos, stories). Once we understood more about why we find the effect to begin with, we could then better predict whether the effect would hold for different types of stimuli.

Q While fascinating, investigating behaviors that usually happen in private contexts is not easy. Is there any contextual factor of the experience that you consider important but problematic to measure?

A A challenge for us was how to measure how people stop the rabbit hole. We did this in our studies by looking at when people switch to a different type of consumption. This captures some forms of stopping the rabbit hole, but not all. For example, in reality, many times people stop the rabbit hole and go to sleep or are forced to exit to complete work or chores at home.

"We could see people falling into a rabbit hole when listening to music on Spotify for example, even if they were not watching music videos."

Q Does the effect extend to information consumption on social media? Does this contribute to information silos and echo chambers, and by extension, can the proposed effect of time delays and interruptions be used to mitigate these consequences?

A We believe the effect is due in part to the immersive nature of video stimuli. We do believe the effects we document here could speak to rabbit holes people go down outside of video media consumption (e.g., doom-scrolling on Twitter), but we have not tested that. For example, we find that this effect does not hold for standalone short stories. It would be an interesting extension to see whether the interventions we uncover for attenuating the effect would also work to prevent people from falling into echo chambers on social media.

Q The paper examines the role of ads as potential disruptors of the rabbit hole effect, contributing to the ongoing discussion about the evolution and future of TV. Since advertising represents an important source of profits even for the highly competitive market of streaming services (e.g., Netflix added ads to its basic plan again in November 2022), which other factors, besides category similarity, do you think would be critical when deciding the type of ads to include on these types of services?

A It is possible that outside of category similarity, other types of similarity may help people to focus on ads when they are in the middle of a consumption experience (e.g., similar tone, color, themes), even if the content is not the same. We also find in our studies that labelling can make content seem more versus less similar; thus, merely labelling the advertisement in a way to make it appear more similar to the video content could be helpful. Marketers should also consider the goal with the advertisement, whether it is meant to lead to a sale or to increase brand awareness, because that will also influence the types of decisions made when creating ad content.

Q You include a plentiful variety of stimuli for media consumption in the studies with a dominant visual sense stimulation—images and videos. How would you conceptualize similarity for media consumption when auditory stimulation is dominant (i.e., podcasts)? Do you think that using the podcaster's voice instead of a different voice would increase similarity with the content and therefore facilitate the rabbit hole effect?

A We see a natural extension of our findings from videos to music. That is, some of our studies used music videos: We could see people falling into a rabbit hole when listening to music on Spotify for example, even if they were not watching music videos. It is interesting to think about how this may extend to podcasts. It is possible people will fall into a rabbit hole where they seek out similar types of podcast content (although this may depend on the type of content and how immersive it is—as prior research finds certain content, like watching the news, is less likely to lead to binge watching—we could see podcasts falling into a similar category). A place where we think you could get some traction is with advertisements—sometimes podcast hosts also deliver ad content on their shows (i.e., they keep the voice the same), and other times the ads are delivered by someone other than the podcast host. Keeping the person delivering the podcast content and ad content constant may be beneficial. **MN**

Ravneet Bawa is a doctoral candidate in marketing, London School of Economics and Political Science, UK. Andrea Pelaez-Martinez is a doctoral candidate in marketing, City University of New York, USA.

READ THE FULL ARTICLE:
Woolley, Kaitlin and Marissa A. Sharif (2022), "Down a Rabbit Hole: How Prior Media Consumption Shapes Subsequent Media Consumption."