

The dark side of customer-brand relationships: Revenge following customer satisfaction

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Abstract

Following service failures, dissatisfied customers increasingly turn to social media to voice their complaint online. In this research, we demonstrate that react with two key desires (i.e. revenge and reconciliation) to cope with the failure and that the customer-brand status (together with the attribution of blame) trigger these desires. Most importantly, however, we show that the two desires evolve during the service recovery episode from diffuse desires to concrete intentions (e.g., NWOM) and we further demonstrate that recovery satisfaction can unexpectedly affect this evolution. This study is able to provide empirical evidence that (depending on their relationship status), customers differently interpret a firm's recovery efforts either positively or negatively. Committed customers, for example, take a satisfactory recovery attempt as a cue that their initial grudge against the involved brand is justified. A perception that triggers revenge and unfavorable customer-brand reactions.

Keywords: *service failure; online complaining; customer satisfaction*

Track: Relationship Marketing