

# The Unresolved Uncertainty Effect: Do Brands Gain or Lose Stars When Consumers Have to Wait for Resolution of Brand-Led Uncertainty?

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## **Abstract**

We live in a world full of uncertainty. In many cases, people have to wait for a period before uncertainty is resolved. Given the increase in human-generated uncertainty, it is important to understand how consumers feel and behave during the waiting period. This research investigates if and when consumers like or dislike a waiting period and its cause. In a series of four studies, we consistently show that the net effect of a brand-led waiting period is positive for the brand. This positive effect is driven by the heightened excitement of high construal individuals. Low construal individuals experience discomfort during the waiting period. The discomfort, in turn, decreases their stimulus appraisal. This research offers both theoretical and managerial implications by identifying the benefits evoked by the waiting period (e.g. in uncertain promotions).

**Keywords:** *uncertain promotions; excitement; psychological discomfort*

**Track:** Pricing & Promotions