

A Typology of Consumer Brand Defenders: When Egoists, Justice Fighters and Brand Fans Defend your Brand

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Abstract

Recently, it became evident that more and more consumers defend brands online against criticism. Although this phenomenon is of high practical relevance to recover from negative critique such as NWOM, so far, research about the motives that drive consumers to defend a brand is very limited. Drawing on prosocial behavior literature, we identify key motives as drivers of consumer brand defense (CBD), namely, egoism, reciprocal altruism, and equity restoration as well as the consumer-brand relationship and its hot and rather cold components. A large-scale study with 570 actual brand defenders and a subsequent cluster analysis lead to three distinct brand defender types: the egoists, the justice fighters, and the brand fans. Thereby, we extend the literature on prosocial behavior to the phenomenon of CBD and conclude with recommendations for managers based on the three defender types.

Keywords: *Consumer Brand Defense; Prosocial Behavior; Reputation Management*

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