

Forgoing Consumption of Products that Others Cannot Access

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Abstract

The choice of which and how many market segments to target is one of the most important marketing decisions. Companies might avoid offering products that only cater to consumers with very specific needs and characteristics because these may not always be profitable. We argue, however, that offering products accessible to a wider customer base may be beneficial for companies, as the perceptions that the brand is more inclusive may improve consumer attitudes toward the brand and increase purchase intentions. Five experiments reveal that consumers who can access a consumption experience forgo this when aware that other consumers lack access to the same experience, partly because they believe such consumption will make them feel guilty. We observed that the likelihood to forgo consumption is greater when the experience is inaccessible to close (vs. distant) others. Brands that made their products inaccessible to some consumers were also evaluated less favorably.

Keywords: *Nonconsumption; Inclusion; Anticipated guilt*

Track: Consumer Behaviour