

Reading a Salesperson's Face: An Experimental Study Employing Real-Time Response Measurement

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Abstract

Sales research provides considerable support for the effectiveness of nonverbal communication. Despite its importance, the difficulty of measuring nonverbal cues persists. This study introduces an objective approach for measuring nonverbal behaviors in a sales context with a facial reader. We contribute to the sales literature by relating facial expressiveness to customer responses, measured in real-time by means of a program analyzer, which allows evaluative measures simultaneously while being exposed to sales presentations. Results indicate differences in customers' reactions according to the facial expressiveness of the salesperson. Besides managerial implications, this study offers guidance on how to improve sales performance.