

# Are All Multi-Item Promotion Frames Created Equal?

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## **Abstract**

With multi-item promotions, consumers receive a discount if they buy a certain number of units of a product. Multi-item promotions can be framed in different ways, e.g., ‘buy 2, get 1 free’, or ‘3 for X€’. So far, empirical research has only compared subsets of possible frames. We study six different frames based on a framework of five underlying frame characteristics. We test our hypotheses in a survey-based experiment in four product categories. We find that the frame ‘buy 2, get 1 free’ is the most effective, while ‘buy 3, save X%’ is typically the least effective. ‘Buy 2, get 3’ works so well because the quantity requirement is described with a smaller anchor (‘buy 2’ rather than ‘buy 3’), and ‘for free’ is an attractive cue. These results imply that managers can increase promotion effectiveness at no extra cost, simply by changing the wording on the packaging or on promotion signs.

**Keywords:** *multi-item promotions; framing; experiment*

**Track:** Pricing & Promotions