

What Drives Consumers to Defend Your Brand Against Criticism? Egoistic versus Altruistic Motives

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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, there is only few research about consumers who are defending brands and even less on their motives. With three empirical studies, we identified an impulsive, reflective, and mixed brand defense form. While our results show that the impulsive form is most prevalent, evidence implies that a reflective form is more effective. Further, we observed that different motivational drivers guide these three brand defense forms. Our results suggest that defenders striving for self-enhancement write reflective defense comments, whereas those seeking entertainment defend more impulsively. Consumers with a strong brand relationship, driven by reciprocal altruism, applied all three forms. This paper has important implications for academics and marketing managers and provides a roadmap for future research.

Keywords: *Consumer Brand Defense; Customer Engagement; Reputation Management*

Track: Relationship Marketing