

Inspiration in the Customer Journey

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Inspiration in the Customer Journey

Abstract

Inspiring customers lies at the heart of marketing, and customer inspiration may increase demand, motivate customers' exploration behavior, and build customer loyalty. However, due to the explosion of digital technologies, the ubiquity of mobile, the "platformization" of business, and more general the rise of new channels, customers now interact with firms through a myriad of touchpoints. As a result, customer journeys have become more extensive and versatile, which makes it difficult for firms to inspire their customers. The challenge of inspiration in complex journeys requires not only a holistic view of customers' channel choice but also insights into the psychological processes and drivers of customer inspiration. To date, there is still limited research focusing on inspiration in customer journeys. This special session addresses this shortcoming with four research papers.

The first paper titled "What Drives Channel Choice in Multichannel Customer Journeys: A Meta-Analysis" by Umut Konus, Carla Silveira Netto, and Sara Valentini uses a meta-analysis to provide a systematic empirical review of both antecedents and consequences of channel choice within complex customer journeys. Customers' channel choice influences a firm's ability to inspire their customers, and these cumulative insights provide some important foundational knowledge to foster inspiration during the customer journey.

The second paper titled "How to Inspire Experts: A Goal-Systemic Perspective on Inspiration?" by Tim M. Boettger merges recent conceptualizations of inspiration with goal systems theory to uncover the psychological mechanism that leads to inspiration. Three studies test predictions derived from a goal-systemic perspective on inspiration in the context of physical exercising. The results support predictions regarding the effects of (1) novelty and expertise, (2) goal conflict, and (3) abstract vs. concrete mindsets on inspiration.

The third paper titled "What Drives Customer Inspiration in Retailing?" by Heiner Evanschitzky, Christof Backhaus, Markus Blut, Marc Linzmajer, and Thomas Rudolph applies the disruption theory of inspiration to the context of retail marketing. Combining a qualitative critical incident study of 1,174 consumers with a quantitative study of 874 retail customers using structural equation modelling, the authors build a model that identifies several drivers of customer inspiration.

The fourth paper titled "In-Store Inspiration: How to Elicit Impulse Buying with Video Ads in the Shopper Journey" by Dennis Herhausen, Dhruv Grewal, and Davide Scheidegger investigates customer inspiration at the point of purchase with 142 randomized field experiments that include 52,400,331 shopping journeys. The cumulative results indicate that the product category and the video content determine the effectiveness of in-store inspiration.