

Be cute! How brands can improve consumers' eWOM of political messages

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Abstract

Brands are increasingly taking a stance on political issues and are using social media to communicate their initiatives. Although consumers acknowledge brands' rights and duties to stand for political issues affecting the society, their reaction to brand activism on social media is often anything but positive. Through 2 experiments, this research explores the underlying mechanism and boundary conditions that affect the relationship between brand political communication and consumers' eWOM. Specifically, Study 1 shows how a brand political message (vs. non-political) affects consumers' metaperception (i.e., beliefs about what others think of us), which in turn influences consumers' eWOM. Study 2 proposes cuteness of brand message as the moderator of such effect. This research aims at providing insightful theoretical and practical implications for brands regarding how to communicate their political activism on social media and improve customers' eWOM.

Keywords: *Brand political activism; Metaperception; Cuteness*

Track: Product and Brand Management