

“Will High Expectations Backfire?”—The Role of Innate Optimism,
Disconfirmation, and Affective Reactions when Resolving Mystery
Promotions

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Abstract

Many retailers use mystery promotions (MPs), in which the identity of the product involved is unknown until after purchase, to stimulate sales. Prior research has mainly focused on their potential to increase purchase intentions neglecting post-purchase effects. This research evaluates the overall success of MPs (vs. traditional promotions, TPs) by investigating whether the positive pre-purchase reactions (e.g., optimistic expectations) to MPs could backfire after the purchase, especially if the outcome disconfirms consumers' expectations, by decreasing loyalty intentions. The authors demonstrate that MPs do not backfire after the purchase as loyalty intentions of MP consumers receiving an undesired outcome do not fall below the level of TPs. In some cases, MPs confirming consumers' expectations (vs. TPs) may even increase loyalty intentions. This article explains this effect by an emotional spillover of positive pre-purchase affect that compensates negative disconfirmation effects.

Subject Areas: *Advertising, Customer Satisfaction and Delight, Promotion, Retailing*

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