

The Undesirable Effects of Proactive Customer Service Delivery

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Abstract

Given the numerous benefits of proactive as compared to reactive customer service delivery, service providers have opted for an increasing proactivity and thus self-starting actions in customer-facing service delivery. However, knowledge is missing on the question of how communicating this strategy of a proactive customer service delivery is received by the consumer. Drawing on cue utilization theory and the literature on manipulative intent, the findings of three experimental studies provide the following key findings on this perspective: (1) Consumers prefer service providers that inform about reactive as compared to proactive customer service delivery. (2) Consumers infer from a communication of proactive (versus reactive) customer service delivery ulterior motives of the service provider. (3) This association is particularly salient and relevant for the formation of preferences when the service provider is characterized by higher (versus lower) masculinity.

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