

The Moderating Role of Product Knowledge and Control on Consumers' Interest in Mystery Promotions

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Abstract

Many retailers use mystery promotions, in which they consciously conceal information about the promoted product until after the purchase, to attract customers and stimulate sales. Prior research has looked at several aspects on how retailers can achieve favorable consumer responses with mystery marketing. However, what is missing is the factor of design and an understanding of the impact of different design elements of such promotions. This research examines how the design elements of transparency and control impact consumers' interest in mystery promotions. The authors demonstrate that transparency has a positive effect on consumers with low-level product knowledge and conversely a negative effect on consumers with high-level product knowledge. When providing consumers additionally with high control, though, the effects are inverted. Hence, managers need to design mystery promotions purposefully based on the target groups' prior product knowledge to avoid unintended negative effects.

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