

Mitigating Negative Country-of-Origin Effects: The Role of Producer Personification

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Abstract

Adverse country-of-origin effects are an unfortunate liability faced by many brands across the world. We propose that personifying the producer in marketing communications can attenuate unfavorable country-of-origin effects. Personification creates the perception of a more communal consumer-producer relationship, that helps to counter country-level stereotypes. In six experiments, we consistently find support for our theory while ruling out alternative explanations. We also show that the positive effect personification is a persistent (vs. fleeting) effect such that even after a product breakdown/service failure, personification helps the brand. However, the agency-communion orientation of consumers moderates the effect such that high agency consumers are less susceptible to the personification strategy. Our findings contribute to the literature on country-of-origin effects and help marketers implement a low-cost intervention to counter the liability of country origin they may face.

Subject Areas: *Consumer Behaviour, Cross-cultural and International Marketing*

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