

Trees, Vaccines and Co: When to Use Nonmonetary Framing in Consumer Donations

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Abstract

Firms and nonprofits increasingly use nonmonetary framing (e.g., donating one tree rather than money) in their cause-related marketing promotions (CMP). However, literature provides no insights into whether consumers react more positively to such nonmonetary framing compared to monetary framing. In this work, we draw on a unique secondary field dataset as well as experimental evidence to examine when using nonmonetary donation frames are more (vs. less) successful than monetary ones. Findings from our field data show that using nonmonetary (vs. monetary) framing in CMPs significantly increases actual sales. However, we highlight two important boundary conditions. In particular, the positive nonmonetary effect (1) is attenuated for utilitarian (vs. hedonic) product categories and (2) fully reverses for products that have a low (vs. high) relative price position compared to other products in this category. Lab experiments shed light on the psychological mechanisms behind these effects.

Subject Areas: *Consumer Behaviour, Promotion*

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