

When Less Pressure Leads to More Talk: Sales Tactics and Word-of-Mouth

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Abstract

This research investigates how encourage-to-deliberate versus pressure-to-purchase sales tactics influence consumers' positive word-of-mouth (WOM) behavior. Drawing from research on influence tactics and self-determination theory, we propose that encourage-to-deliberate tactics, emphasizing rational persuasion, are more likely to trigger positive WOM, compared to pressure-to-purchase tactics. Through five experimental studies, we demonstrate that this effect is mediated by customers' sense of agency - the experience of being the initiator of one's actions and their consequences. We find that self-efficacy moderates this relationship, with the positive effect of encourage-to-deliberate tactics being stronger for customers with low (vs. high) self-efficacy. Our findings extend sales influence research beyond immediate purchase outcomes to electronic word-of-mouth behavior, offering implications for how retailers can foster positive WOM through agency-supportive sales approaches.

Keywords: Sales tactics; Word-of-mouth (WOM); Customer agency.

Track: Consumer Behavior