

Two Sides of the Same Coin? Long-Term Effects of Cross- and Up-Selling

Wiebke Keller
University of Tübingen
Niklas Nagel
University of Freiburg

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Abstract

Cross- and up-selling are widely used strategies in retailing, with the potential to influence customer behavior and shape firm performance. While both aim to boost customer spending and loyalty, they differ in their mechanisms and effects. Analyzing data from over 410 opticians and 2.3 million customers over 20 years (2001–2021), this study reveals key insights: up-selling drives higher short-term profits, while cross-selling enhances long-term profitability. Up-selling works best in less competitive markets, whereas cross-selling excels in competitive environments. Both strategies are particularly effective with newer customers. These findings highlight how retailers can balance short- and long-term goals by coordinating cross- and up-selling strategies effectively.

Track: Retailing & Omni-Channel Management