

When Smallness Backfires: How Consumers Perceive Small Companies on Instagram

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Abstract:

Who is more likely to signal optimal distinctiveness for consumers, companies advertised via small company size cues or large? This research explores how company size cues affect consumer perceptions and intentions in the context of the social media platform Instagram. Results of two studies show that a product advertised via small company size cues (vs. large) leads to higher openness to follow such a company on Instagram. However, being a small company with many followers backfires as consumers are less willing to try the company's products. Current research contributes to the social media marketing literature by challenging the previously held belief that the more followers, the better, and showing when many followers might negatively impact consumer perceptions. These findings suggest the importance of exploring the underlying mechanisms explaining the company size cues and followers size effect on consumer intentions and behavior.

Keywords: small companies, follower size, willingness to try

Track: Consumer Behavior