

Awesome Objects: Manipulating Vastness Unrelated to Size Makes Products More Awe-Inspiring and Promotes Consumer Curiosity

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Abstract

This research investigates how dimensions of vastness unrelated to physical size can elicit awe and promote consumer curiosity. Across 11 studies ($n = 3,700$), we manipulated different dimensions of vastness in objects by emphasizing their age (e.g., a gemstone that predates life on Earth), spiciness (e.g., a sauce as strong as five gallons of Tabasco), social power, potency, and conceptual design, among other dimensions. Manipulating these vastness dimensions in studies 1a-1h consistently increased participants' awe toward both museum objects and more mundane products. Study 2 shows that need for accommodation mediates the effect of vastness on awe. Finally, connecting to existing literature on awe and curiosity, in Studies 3 and 4 we demonstrate that awe-inspiring, high-vastness conditions heighten consumer curiosity and increase requests for product information. These findings highlight vastness and awe as tools for product marketers to increase consumer engagement.

Track: Consumer Behaviour