

Don't You Dare Push Me: How Persuasive Social Media Tactics Shape Customer Engagement

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SUMMARY

How do social media users react when marketers inform them about positive brand attributes or simply encourage them to click on a link? A study published in the *Journal for the Association of Consumer Research* suggests that such seemingly harmless techniques can severely backfire. In social media, many consumers deem it inexcusable when marketers just play their traditional role as advertisers instead of socializing with them. Particularly when marketers enhance brand posts with advertising tone (featuring favorable aspects of the brand or product) and calls to action (soliciting brand-related behavior like engaging or purchasing) at the same time. Most importantly, social media users punish marketers for employing such “twin tactics” of persuasion by engaging less with the brand in social media. Interestingly, social media users who feel connected to a social media brand community do not perceive such tactics as lapses in firm behavior. That is, for consumers who have forged strong connections with the brand and fellow brand community members, the negative interplay of the two tactics vanishes, alleviating undesirable consequences for the brand. The authors also

find that, on its own, advertising tone may also damage engagement (counter to marketers' expectations) while calls to action may enhance engagement (in line with marketers' expectations). Consequently, the research findings partially contrast with current social media practices and has the potential to improve marketers' management of social media brand communities.