

Worse than Bad: Inferences About Product Quality from Memory

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Abstract Could brands associated with mostly negative information—those with poor reputations—be perceived as superior to unrecognized brands? A reasonable consumer should value reputation; however, it is also sensible to put a heavy weight on brand recognition. To investigate this question, the authors study consumers’ inferences about brand quality in five domains. Results suggest that brands associated with predominantly negative information are indeed perceived as of higher quality than unrecognized brands. In addition, when consumer inferences are predicted based on different memory cues, the frequency of encountering a brand dominates what people profess to know about it. The authors explore the ecological rationality of this strategy by studying the relationship between expert-judged quality and consumer knowledge.

Keywords Product Quality • Memory • Reputation • Brand Quality

References

References Available Upon Request

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