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Free bumper stickers for a better future: The long term effect of the labeling technique. Gert Cornelissen, Catholic University Leuven, Belgium; Siegfried Dewitte, Catholic University Leuven, Belgium; Luk Warlop, Catholic University Leuven, Belgium; Arnaud Liégeois, Catholic University of Louvain, Belgium; Vincent Yzerbyt, Catholic University of Louvain, Belgium; Olivier Corneille, Catholic University of Louvain, Belgium.

Abstract
We compared the labeling technique with a traditional social marketing campaign, providing thought-provoking arguments, regarding their long term effect on ecological behavior. In this study (n = 241), we provided participants either with an ecological, self-descriptive label, an information-based campaign promoting ecological behavior or no information at all, and compared behavior in a repeated social dilemma situation, framed as an ecological task. We found that labeling outperforms classical campaigns on the longer term. We did not observe the expected interaction with mental load.

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Field Experiments in Nonprofit Marketing: Social Identity and Status Influence
Contributions
Yue Shang, University of Pennsylvania
Tara Thomas, University of Michigan
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This project examines whether the level of contribution to a public good is influenced by the relational affiliation, relative status of donors, and motivational framing of the transaction as consumption versus a charitable exchange. We use a field experiment in alumni giving to study such effects. Pilot field research has shown that social factors do influence contributions, and that donors do categorize their motivational framing of the transaction differently. In this abstract, we will focus on the hypothesis and the design of the actual research.

I Gave at the Office (And I Hated It): Changes in Preference for Ethical Behavior Following an Unrelated Ethical Act
Jennifer Young, University of Texas, Austin
Julie Irwin, University of Texas, Austin

Two studies examine propensity to give to a charity following another, unrelated charitable act. We find that giving is affected both by 1) assimilation of affect from the first charitable act to the second and 2) a newly-identified phenomenon we call “gave at the office”: respondents sometimes feel that they have done their fair share of charitable giving and lose a sense of obligation to donate to subsequent activities. Manipulations of difficulty and morality of the first charitable activity determine whether people are likely to experience assimilation or “gave at the office” effects and thus influence people’s likelihood to donate to a second unrelated ethical cause.

Can a Rational Consumer Be a Good Citizen? Conflicting Goals in Today’s Society
Crina Tarasi, Arizona State University
Maura Scott, Arizona State University

According to public opinion polls, when “all other things are equal” consumers prefer “green” products (Ginsberg and Bloom 2004). However, other things are almost never equal. Price, characteristics and functionality are often poorer for environmentally friendly products, and people compromise. Our preliminary research suggests the existence of a goal hierarchy formed by consumers. The highest level of conflict is perceived between self related goals and environmental goals, while least perceived conflict is between self related goals and family and friends related goals. To explain the phenomenon we draw from the literature on social dilemmas, as well as motivation theory.

Free Bumper Stickers for a Better Future: The Long Term Effect of the Labeling Technique
Gert Cornelissen, Catholic University Leuven
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Abstract
We compared the labeling technique with a traditional social marketing campaign, providing thought-provoking arguments, regarding their long term effect on ecological behavior. In this study (n=241), we provided participants either with an ecological, self-descriptive label, an information-based campaign promoting ecological behavior or no information at all, and compared behavior in a repeated social dilemma situation, framed as an ecological task. We found that labeling outperforms classical campaigns on the longer term. We did not observe the expected interaction with mental load.

Paper Summary
Campaigns promoting different kinds of sustainable consumer behavior (e.g. buying ethical or ecological products) have often shown limited success, especially in the long term. Classical social marketing efforts, communicating arguments in favor of the sustainable alternatives, may cause consumers to think about the pros but also the cons of these purchases. Ethical and ecological products often are more expensive, require more effort to find, and their quality is trusted less. Even if these campaigns achieve short term success, people
often regress to their original purchase habits because the original drawbacks of sustainable products re-gain salience over time. We propose that ‘labeling’ the consumer might lead to better results. The labeling technique (Kraut, 1973; Miller, Brickman, & Bolen, 1975) exists of providing people with a self-defining label after an external stimulant has provoked a certain behavior. We will focus on ecological behavior. Consumers might, for example, be tempted into buying an ecological product by offering a price promotion. After this externally motivated purchase, a message is communicated which labels the consumer as an ecologically responsible person. When people accept this label as self-descriptive, their future ecological behavior might be internally motivated and hence be more robust to regression to the original purchase habits. We expect that imposing a mental load while receiving this label will result in increased acceptance of the label, and increased compliance.

Experiment

Two hundred forty-four students participated in the study for course credit. In a first phase, we provoked an ecological purchase decision. In order to do this, we provided the participants with a list of seven identically priced TV-sets, which were rated on several dimensions (Image quality, image quality in sunlight, sound quality, remote control, ecological aspects, ease of programming and quality of the manual). One of the TV-sets was superior on both image and sound quality, pretested as the most important features in the choice for a TV-set, and most participants (92.6 %) therefore chose this option. The others were discarded from the analysis. Importantly, the chosen TV set was also rated highest on ‘ecological aspects’.

Following this initial choice, participants were assigned to one of three conditions in the second phase of the experiment. Those in the ‘labeling’ group received feedback on the personality traits of the typical customer choosing this TV-set. The subjects who chose the superior TV-set learned that the people making this choice were typically ‘very concerned with the environment, and ecologically conscious’. A second group got to read an explicit plea in favor of ecologically conscious consumer behavior. These two groups read this information either when imposed to a cognitive load manipulation or not. A third, control group merely received the mental load manipulation, but did not get any information.

In the third stage of the experiment, the participants made three consecutive decisions in a social dilemma, framed as an ecological task. They were asked to imagine that they needed to buy 10 bags of potato chips for a party. The available potato chip alternatives were either packed in conventional or in bio-degradable bags. The bio-degradable bags were more expensive because they were bought less often. If enough people would buy the bio-degradable bag, its associated price could go down. After making a first decision, all participants received bogus feedback, saying that among the eight people present in the lab not enough bio-degradable bags had been bought to achieve a price decrease. They then proceeded to identical second and third rounds.

We also measured participant’s social value orientation, and asked on a seven point scale to which degree they took ecological aspects into account when making a purchase decision. Answers to the latter question demonstrated that the manipulation was successful.

Labeling had an effect on how many biodegradable bags were chosen. We assessed the effect both within and between subjects.

Within subjects, we compared behavior on choice 1 and choice 3. The choice position by communication (labeling vs explicit vs control) interaction was significant (F(2,213)=6.27, p<.01). In the explicit plea group the number of ecological choices increased, on average, from M=5.30 (SD=.38) to M=7.80 (SD=.38), in the control group it increased from M=5.31 (SD=.56) to M=7.57 (SD=.57). In the labeling group we observed the sharpest increase from M=5.07 (SD=.40) to M=8.59 (SD=.41).

The means for the three groups differed significantly in round 3 (F(2,213)=4.63); p<.01.

To examine the differential impact of the persuasion tools we tested how choice order interacted with the contrasts among the communication conditions. The contrasts between the labeling and the control condition and between the labeling and the explicit plea condition interacted with choice order (F(1,142)=8.15; p<.01 and F(1,138)=12.17; p<.01, respectively). The interaction of choice order with the contrast between the control and the explicit plea conditions, on the other hand was not significant (F<1, NS).

The effects of neither mental load nor social value orientation were significant.

The results suggest that providing people with a self-descriptive label is an effective means to achieve an internally motivated increase in sustainable consumer behavior, particularly in the longer term. Future research will deal with the generalizability of these findings to more involving situations, requiring actual personal sacrifices.

We will also investigate why mental load did not have the expected effect.

References


Do “Possessors” Really have a Stronger Desire to Possess than “Non Possessors”? Study of Consumer Desires of Visitors and Collectors of Contemporary Art Vis-à-vis Two Modes of Consumption-Access and Possession

Chen Yu, HEC School of Management

Extended Abstract

Consumer behaviour studies seem to be separated into two different approaches: the “possession” behaviours-the classical modality of purchase- considered as “the most basic and powerful fact of consumer behaviour” (Belk, 1988, 1992; Mehta and Belk, 1991; O’Guinn and Belk, 1989; Richins, 1994 etc.); the “access” behaviours- the experience within a service which permits the temporal or long-term...