Impact of CSR Communication Strategies on Attitude Change After a Crisis

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Recent studies have shown that consumers demand more information about companies’ corporate social responsibility (CSR). However, communicating only positively about CSR, guaranteeing the absence of any unethical process along the whole supply chain, may result in greater deterioration in consumers’ attitude in the event of an ethical crisis. Building from the literature on schema discrepancy and attribution theory, we analyze the effect of several communication strategies on attitudes and attitude change after a crisis. Evidence is found that using a two-sided communication message is the strategy that minimizes the impact of a crisis on attitudes towards the company.

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significantly influence attitude toward the CFL bulb ($F=2.43, p =.09$) although the means were in the expected directions such that attitude decreased as the temporal distance of the savings frame increased.

Study 2

In study 2 we tested if a consumer’s temporal orientation moderated the effect of the temporal framing of savings. We predict that given the distal lifetime frame, future-oriented consumers will not discount savings, will have higher attitudes and will choose CFL bulbs over incandescent bulbs compared to present-oriented consumers. A total of 69 undergraduate research participants completed the survey. The sample was 47% male with a mean age of 21. Temporal framing of savings was manipulated, while temporal orientation was a measured variable. The temporal framing of savings was similar to the first study and had three temporal framing conditions. To measure temporal orientation the Temporal Orientation Scale (Lasane and Jones 1999) was used to determine if subjects were present or future-oriented.

Results: To analyze our predictions we ran 3 (temporal framing of savings: one month vs. one year vs. lifetime) x 2 (temporal orientation: present vs. future) MANOVA on the dependent variables of CFL attitude, and perceived CFL savings. Given the dichotomous light bulb choice variable, we ran logistic regression to test the interaction.

The logistic regression results indicate that the interaction between the temporal framing of savings and temporal orientation was significant for product choice ($\chi^2=14.70, p<.01$). In the lifetime condition, future-oriented subjects are much more likely to buy CFL bulbs (100%) compared to present-oriented subjects (33%); $\chi^2=9.59, p<.005$.

The interaction was significant for perception of savings ($F=3.66, p<.05$). Future-oriented subjects ($M=5.91$) had higher perceptions of savings given the lifetime condition compared to present-oriented subjects ($M=4.50, p<.05$). For attitude, the interaction was not significant ($p>.10$).

Discussion

In two experiments we assessed the effects of temporal framing on purchase intentions, product choice, attitude, and perception of savings. In the first study we found that in general, participants had lower purchase intentions and somewhat lower attitudes given the most distal lifetime frame compared to the proximal frames. It also appears that consumers discount the savings from a CFL bulb as temporal distance increases. In the second study we found that given the lifetime frame, present-oriented consumers were less likely to choose the CFL bulb over the incandescent and also viewed the savings from a CFL bulb as much lower compared to future-oriented consumers. These results seem to indicate that present-oriented consumers discount savings at a greater rate than future-oriented consumers.

This research is especially important given the recent focus on energy efficiency. Thus, this research also provides managerial implications. It appears that more consumers can be reached using proximal compared to distal frames of savings. Finding the most effective way to communicate the savings and efficiency of a product that will help consumers choose the better product is not only important to the manufacturers and marketers, but will be better for society in general.

References

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Recent studies have shown that consumers demand more information about companies’ corporate social responsibility (CSR). However, communicating only positively about CSR, guaranteeing the absence of any unethical process along the whole supply chain, may result in greater deterioration in consumers’ attitude in the event of an ethical crisis. Building from the literature on schema discrepancy and attribution theory, we analyze the effect of several communication strategies on attitudes and attitude change after a crisis. Evidence is found that using a two-sided communication message is the strategy that minimizes the impact of a crisis on attitudes towards the company.

A Painful Choice: Embodied Influences on Choice Perception

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Elements of consumers’ overall situation might infuse judgments of choice difficulty and product dimensions. Contrary to prior research, such choice-extrinsic influences on judgment may not be susceptible to discounting through attribution. Further, choice-extrinsic effects on judgment might be somewhat specific in that physical difficulty affects judgments relating to a feeling of discomfort, but not ones tangential to it, such as choice satisfaction. I demonstrate that the physical discomfort caused by a hand-press leads to judgments of greater choice difficulty as well as lower ratings of manufacturer ethics, but not to lower choice satisfaction (studies 1-2). If explicitly