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«Cognitive Biases» im Marketing



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Cognitive Biases as Boosters

Using Cognitive Biases to Improve
Communication Recall for Emmi Jogurtpur

Only one in three Swiss brands strategically uses insights from consumer psychology research when developing new marketing communication. However, if done in a structured and strategic way, applying these insights can boost a brand's marketing performance. We present the successful application of insights from consumer psychology research to Emmi Jogurtpur. We show how it can be done and how successful it can be for brands.

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In Switzerland, only one in three brands strategically applies insights from consumer psychology research to their marketing communication (Ackermann et al., 2020). At the same time, researchers and communication experts have developed a structured process, “bias-based creativity”, that bridges the gap between marketing research and practice (Fuchs et al., 2020a, b). “Bias-based creativity” lays out the exact steps of how to effectively apply insights from research to marketing communication strategy. The present article covers the application of this process to Emmi Jogurtpur and its results for the brand and the product. It demonstrates that the potential for applying insights from consumer psychology, cognitive biases, and other such effects to marketing communication is sizeable and should be taken into consideration by marketers.

Background

In 2020, the situation for Emmi Jogurtpur on the Swiss yogurt market was challenging. After having been widely distributed in the Swiss market for more than 7 years, its performance didn't look good: According to Emmi's research, Jogurtpur had an unaided awareness of only 2% (i.e., only 2% of consumers could recall the brand without any support) and merely 55% of consumers reported that they could recognize it after having been shown it. In contrast, the market leader Nestlé Hirz was recognized by 79% of all Swiss consumers, a 44% advantage over Emmi Jogurtpur.

Additionally, consumers apparently misconceived the point of Emmi Jogurtpur. The unique quality of Emmi Jogurtpur is that it is a product with only three ingredients and without any artificial additives: just yogurt, fruits, and sugar. It is a unique and innovative production process that allows Emmi – an expert at milk processing – to use so few ingredients. As a reference point, the average yogurt sold on the Swiss market has 5 to 6 ingredients. These additional ingredients

in other yogurts may be flavorings, colorants, or thickeners.

According to Emmi's research, however, consumers didn't understand what was special about it since many assumed that all yogurts were made of only these three ingredients. Some even assumed that the few ingredients implied a lacking, bland, or neutral taste. Emmi was convinced that the marketing communication and packaging did too little to emphasize the delicious and enjoyable taste of the yogurt.

Buying yogurt is a typical example of a low-involvement purchase decision (Oladjei Samuel & Bellman, 2005). These types of purchases are made spontaneously, directly in the store, and impulsively. Consumers do not elaborately weigh the advantages and disadvantages of one brand of yogurt versus another. Often, consumers are only aware of a limited number of products in the category. They apply heuristics to make the purchase decisions: For example, they simply buy the one they always buy, the cheapest one, the most popular one, or the one they recognize from advertisements. This is due to the fact that a low-involvement purchase comes with little risk: Consumers are unlikely to lose a lot of money if they buy the “wrong” brand of yogurt (financial risk). Also, their peers are unlikely to judge them for their choice of yogurt (social risk; Mitchell, 1999). A product that lacks consumer understanding and differentiation – such as Emmi Jogurtpur – and competes in a low-involvement product category is bound to suffer. It showed in Nielsen's market data: While the Swiss yogurt market grew by 7.4% in 2020 due to COVID-19 lockdowns in Switzerland (Bucher et al., 2021), sales of Emmi Jogurtpur declined by 1.5%. This meant that even though the category was booming, Emmi Jogurtpur could not profit from the growth and even decreased in sales and market share.

Thus, Emmi planned to re-design the packaging of Emmi Jogurtpur and launch it at the beginning of 2021 (see figure 1).



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Management Summary

Only one in three Swiss brands strategically applies insights from consumer psychology research. Based on a case study of a successful and structured application of insights from consumer psychology research to the marketing communication of Emmi Jogurtpur, we show how they boosted the brand's results. After running the campaign infused with insights from consumer psychology in 2021, Emmi Jogurtpur's sales grew by 16.7% in a market that shrank by 4.8% during the same period. This was a complete turnaround from the year before, when Emmi Jogurtpur's sales had decreased by 1.5%.

Figure 1: The Old and the New Packaging Design of Emmi Jogurtpur



The old Emmi packaging design before 2021

Image Source: <https://www.avecnow.ch/products/emmi-jogurt-pur-erdbeer-150g>, retrieved June 15, 2022.



The new Emmi packaging design launched in 2021

Image Source: <https://group.emmi.com/che/de/marken-produkte/product-overview-page/emmi-jogurt-pur-erdbeer-150g>, retrieved June 15, 2022.

Based on the findings, the new packaging featured more pictures of fruit, a bigger logo, and, most importantly, the icon “100% taste with only 3 ingredients.” The icon had a big “3” that highlighted what made the yogurt so unique. At the same time, this icon referred to the 100% taste. The previous packaging design had neither mentioned the three ingredients nor the taste. Rather, it had featured the claim “no additives”, which consumers failed to understand without context. The mentions of “PUR”, “only 3 ingredients”, “100% taste”, and the general increase in food appeal on the packaging were meant to facilitate consumer understanding of the product. This was the chance to make consumers appreciate what Emmi Jogurtpur stood for.

Theory

As part of their efforts, Emmi also briefed a new campaign. An interdisciplinary

team including the authors of this article was engaged. Specifically, Emmi posed the challenge that the campaign should solve the issue at the core of Emmi Jogurtpur. Thus, it should get consumers to understand its core benefit (“100% taste with only 3 ingredients”) and drive more consumers to choose it in store. The team decided that the campaign should build on the new packaging design that highlighted the three ingredients more than the previous design had done.¹

Applying the structured process of “bias-based creativity” (Fuchs et al., 2020a, b) and having consulted the relevant research and literature, the team identified a set of suitable effects. Bias-based creativity is based on previous work on cognitive biases. It groups available effects according to the steps of the consumer decision process (i.e., awareness, consideration, evaluation, purchase, and loyalty; Vakratsas & Ambler, 1999) and the most

frequent problems at these stages – e.g., “awareness” and “lack of recall” in this situation. The process then proposes a list of suitable effects that can be used to overcome the problem at hand. After a discussion of the effects proposed by bias-based creativity, the team agreed that the unusual presentation effect (also known as the bizarreness effect; Geraci et al., 2013) should be used for Emmi Jogurtpur.²

The unusual presentation effect is based on the finding that people can better remember information presented in unusual ways versus common ways (Einstein & McDaniel, 1987; Worthen, 2012). For example, Geraci et al. (2013) compared unusually presented information (e.g., “The BISCUITS screamed when the OVEN jumped out the WINDOW”) vs. commonly presented information (e.g., “The BISCUITS were visible through the OVEN WINDOW”) and subsequently

¹While the packaging design was not based on the cognitive bias selected – as it predated the communication development – the communication itself was. The new packaging design influenced bias selection and communication development. ²Other effects proposed (but not pursued any further) were the humor effect (Walker et al., 2003), the Von Restorff effect (Von Restorff, 1933), the picture superiority effect (Shepard, 1967), the negativity bias (Kanouse & Hanson, 1987), and anthropomorphism (Landwehr et al., 2011).

Figure 2: Other Memorable Marketing Campaigns (Unknowingly) Making Use of the Unusual Presentation Effect



Clockwise, from top left: Digitec Galaxus, Snickers, Wingo, and 1818 Auskunft. Image Sources: Digitec Galaxus: <https://i.ytimg.com/vi/YnnbntV8Tts/maxresdefault.jpg>, Snickers: <https://www.horizont.net/news/media/12/Row-Atkins-in-sein-Paraderol-al-Mr-Be-fr-Snicke-118119-amp.jpeg>, Wingo: <https://i.ytimg.com/vi/1m1rzlFwbNY/maxresdefault.jpg>, 1818 Auskunft: <https://i.ytimg.com/vi/Y7sZhEcUXJ0/maxresdefault.jpg>, all retrieved June 15, 2022.

vertisement more dominant and easier to recall when the consumer is making the purchase decision in the store. It does so at the expense of the recall of commonly presented information. This finding made the unusual presentation effect suitable for Emmi, since the team working on the challenge wanted to improve the performance of the marketing communication of Emmi Jogurtpur (i.e., improve recall) and make it the winning option at the point of sale (i.e., make it the dominant recalled advertisement).

In the past, there have been a few examples of brands and products that have made use of this effect, albeit in completely different product categories, e.g., campaigns by Digitec Galaxus, Snickers, 1818 Auskunft, and Wingo (see figure 2). In all campaigns, information is presented in a highly unusual way. In some cases, the campaigns manage to present the focal benefit in an unusual way (e.g., quick hunger satisfaction for Snickers, see figure 2). It remains important to reiterate, however, that these brands most likely did not apply a structured process to select the ideal effect for their campaign. Rather, these advertisements seem to be the result of successful coincidences and good intuition of the practitioners in charge. The case of Emmi Jogurtpur, however, shows that there is a process (i.e., “bias-based creativity”; Fuchs et al. 2020a, b) that enables the creation of these highly performant ads in a more structured, strategic and planned way, irrespective of intuitions and coincidences.

Marketing Strategy

The creative team then got to work. It took Emmi’s brief and the unusual presentation effect into account and created the following communication concept: It showed how Switzerland was the land of “3”. Switzerland was founded by three cantons, Swiss greet each other with three kisses, and so on. Accordingly, Switzerland’s yogurt should also have

Main Propositions

- 1 The application of insights from consumer psychology can increase the effectiveness of marketing communication.
- 2 Insights, cognitive biases, and effects derived from consumer psychology must be carefully selected and tailored to the business challenge.
- 3 The marketing communication concepts should undergo testing before being put on air to ensure that the communication achieves the intended goals.
- 4 If selected, tailored, applied, and tested correctly, the application of insights from consumer psychology research can lead to outstanding results by effectively influencing the everyday decisions and behaviors of consumers.

asked participants to recall the words in uppercase (i.e., BISCUITS, OVEN, and WINDOW). When these words were presented in an unusual context, 38% were recalled. When the words were presented commonly, only 28% were recalled. Thus, consumers could recall 36% more of the words when these were presented in an unusual way.

Moreover, there is support for the hypothesis that the unusual presentation effect does not work via the information being encoded in a different way. Rather, information that is being presented unusually is recalled in an easier and more powerful manner compared to commonly presented information (Geraci et al., 2013; McDaniel et al., 2005). This means that for the unusual presentation effect to work in marketing communication consumers do not necessarily need to pay more attention to the advertisement or to experience it differently – it even works when the advertisement is presented like any other advertisement. The unusual presentation effect works at retrieval, making the ad-

three ingredients – just like Emmi Jogurtpur.

This idea created the foundation for a highly unusual and unique yogurt advertisement (see figure 3), an advertisement unlike any other spot in the category and targeted on the focal benefit, “100% taste with only 3 ingredients.”

This execution was unusual and unique, as few advertisements for yogurts highlight the number of ingredients and do it in such an unusual way (i.e., tying the number of ingredients to the history and

culture of a country) to emphasize the main benefits.

The result is a humorous video that uses whimsy and humor to place the number three in various Swiss contexts. The number three is staged in the most unusual situations. At the same time, it is suggested that the number three is authentically Swiss. In this way, the spot makes unique use of the unusual presentation effect to create an easily recallable and memorable advertisement that links the number three to Switzerland and the yogurt category. The spot was produced in German and French and was broadcast online and on TV.

Figure 3: The Emmi Jogurtpur Advertisement Inspired By The Unusual Presentation Effect

	The packaging is displayed and the camera zooms into the icon highlighting “100% taste with only 3 ingredients.”
	Then, the advertisement shows how everything in Switzerland comes in threes. It starts with the “Rütlichschwur,” the legendary oath of the three founding cantons of Switzerland.
	It then goes on to show that the Swiss greet each other with three kisses on the cheek, ...
	... that Switzerland has the “Three-Lakes-Country,” ...
	... that every Swiss needs to do a three-week-long military training, ...
	... that Switzerland has three official languages (while the fourth language, Rhaeto-Romance, is often overlooked), ...
	... that Switzerland has presumably only three days of summer, ...
	... that one needs to hand in one’s driver’s license after having been caught speeding three times, ...
	... and that the Swiss even invented the triangle (depicting the Matterhorn).
	Then, it is revealed that this elaborate story is being told by a father to his daughter on why this yogurt – Emmi Jogurtpur – has only three ingredients. The only yogurt with only three ingredients in Switzerland.

Image Source: Emmi YouTube Channel, https://youtu.be/u_eFtSgIDLA, retrieved April 11, 2022.

Results

After one year of the new packaging design and the new campaign being in the market, the results exceeded expectations. In 2021 – the year the new campaign was aired for the first time, Emmi Jogurtpur’s sales grew by 16.7% according to Nielsen market data. Emmi Jogurtpur grew in spite of the market contracting by 4.8% in 2021. This turnaround stood in stark contrast to the previous year (2020), when Emmi Jogurtpur’s sales had declined by 1.5% in a market that grew by 7.4%. This means that in spite of the market for yogurts in Switzerland contracting, Emmi Jogurtpur’s sales grew strongly. This shows that in the purchase situation (i.e., in the store), the marketing communication likely worked, and consumers chose Emmi Jogurtpur instead of competitive brands in 2021.³

Moreover, it seems that consumers finally understood Emmi Jogurtpur and recognized its value. With respect to product-related attributes (Keller, 1993), Emmi Jogurtpur saw significant year-on-year improvements in brand tracking results – specifically regarding the attributes “tastes good”, “no additives”, and “high quality”. It seems like the marketing communication was a first step towards changing the consumer belief that Emmi Jogurtpur tastes neutral or bland.

Brand satisfaction and brand recommendation also increased significantly for Emmi Jogurtpur after having been on the decline in the previous year. And the most promising sign of all was that Emmi Jogurtpur had been the most sampled product in the category in 2021, with 11% of all consumers reporting that they had sampled (i.e., bought for the first time) Emmi Jogurtpur during the past 12 months. This is in line with how the unusual presentation effect is hypothesized to work, namely that it results in a stronger recall of the information (vs. stronger encoding, Geraci et al., 2013; McDaniel et al., 2005). In the store, when consumers stood in front of the shelf, the unusual presentation effect boosted the recall of the spot focusing on the number “3” and resulted in more consumers trying Emmi Jogurtpur for the first time.

Lastly, the mix of science and practice that was applied to this new campaign also garnered media attention. The unique approach was reported in various media outlets, further drawing attention to the product (Persönlich, 2020).

Conclusion

As reported in the introduction, in Switzerland only one out of three brands strategically applies insights from consumer psychology research to their marketing communication (Ackermann et al., 2020). With the help of the Emmi Jogurtpur case, we aim to show the potential brands may unlock when making use of insights from research on consumer psychology, cognitive biases, and other such effects. These insights are published in academic journals, theoretically accessible to anyone. The “bias-based creativity” process (Fuchs et al., 2020a, b) outlines the steps that need to be taken to integrate these insights into a brand’s marketing strategy. This ensures that suitable, powerful, and novel effects are applied to communication challenges.

Lessons Learned

- 1 Identify the business challenge: Insights from consumer psychology are tools and their application should not be the goal in itself – they should be applied to solve a specific business challenge.
- 2 Select & tailor: As soon as the challenge is identified, brands should work together with experts in consumer psychology to identify and tailor suitable effects, insights, and cognitive biases.
- 3 Develop & test: The marketing communication concept derived from this process should be tested to ensure that it works as expected and addresses the challenge identified in the first step.
- 4 Execute & air: The last step is to execute the communication concept, air it in the relevant marketplace, and track its results.

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