

2018

The Influence of Consumer Habits in the Customer Journey: How the Habit Loop Can Change the Game

Charla F. Brown
The University of South Alabama

Follow this and additional works at: https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/amp-proceedings_2018

 Part of the [Marketing Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Brown, Charla F., "The Influence of Consumer Habits in the Customer Journey: How the Habit Loop Can Change the Game" (2018). *Association of Marketing Theory and Practice Proceedings 2018*. 39.
https://digitalcommons.georgiasouthern.edu/amp-proceedings_2018/39

This conference proceeding is brought to you for free and open access by the Association of Marketing Theory and Practice Proceedings at Digital Commons@Georgia Southern. It has been accepted for inclusion in Association of Marketing Theory and Practice Proceedings 2018 by an authorized administrator of Digital Commons@Georgia Southern. For more information, please contact digitalcommons@georgiasouthern.edu.

The Influence of Consumer Habits in the Customer Journey: How the Habit Loop Can Change the Game

Charla F. Brown

The University of South Alabama

ABSTRACT

The role of consumer habit can be an undervalued predictor of purchase behavior. Habit literature gleans from psychology that the simple influence of a habit in relation to purchase behavior can be an ingrained act. Facets of habit literature recognize the driving influence of habits in consumer decision making, but there remains a disconnect between habit perpetuation and a marketer's ability to influence it. What is often overlooked is the automatic response involved in the customer's decision-making process. While there is intense focus in marketing curricula on consumer behavioral marketing, the extent of habit's impact on consumer purchase decisions can be underestimated. Habits can influence automatically and can be perpetuated through a loop of cue-to-routine-to-reward and is followed throughout the customer's path to purchase. The question for a marketer becomes: At what point in the customer journey would a habit be most vulnerable to change? Determining the best indicator of habit as a predictor of purchase or a gateway to change could be a valuable tool to marketers; it could change the marketing game. The purpose of this paper is to examine this cue-routine-reward loop in consumer purchase decisions to determine opportunities for habit change or perpetuation.

For an examination of the role of habits on consumer behavior, I use Duhigg's (2012) habit loop framework of cue-routine-reward to weave in habit literature and offer propositions on how to influence consumer decision making. Each area of this habit loop reflects actions taking place across the customer journey as proposed by Lemon and Verhoef (2016) from pre-purchase, purchase, to post-purchase. As habit formation and its impact on consumer decision making could influence each of these phases, this paper represents a fusion of the habit loop and the customer journey. The purpose of this examination is to observe when and where a habit can be predicted, reinforced, replicated, disrupted or replaced. While a consumer's self-reported strength of habit may exert influence on ensuing behavior, I examine the moderating role of habit strength in the relationship between context cues and routine at the pre-purchase and purchase stage. Accordingly, I offer the following propositions:

Proposition 1: Habit strength moderates the relationship between context cues at the pre-purchase stage and routine at the purchase stage.

Proposition 2: The routine stage of the purchasing behavior activity is subject to habit disruption.

Proposition 3: Reward programs lead to habit perpetuation at the post-purchase stage.

ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Charla F. Brown received her Masters of Public Administration from The University of Alabama and is currently pursuing a Doctor of Business Administration with a Marketing Concentration from The University of South Alabama's Mitchell College of Business. She is an adjunct instructor of Marketing in the Sorrell College of Business at Troy University. Her research interests center around consumer behavior and include consumer habit formation, perpetuation, and disruption.

