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## For One or Many? Recommendation Targeting and Consumer Advice Integration

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# For One or Many? Recommendation Targeting and Consumer Advice Integration

**Michael Sciandra**

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As consumers, many of our most important decisions are not made in isolation. Rather, it is common for individuals to pursue, evaluate, and rely on advice from other individuals. While research on advice usage *from* multiple or individual advisors has been investigated, no research has looked at advice integration when the advice is offered *to* an individual or group. This is an important consideration of advice as online review sites (e.g. Yelp, Expedia, and Foursquare) and social media platforms (e.g. Twitter and Facebook) now make it easy for consumers to make general recommendations targeted at a large number of individuals. To help fill this knowledge gap, the current research addresses the impact of advice targeting on consumers' likelihood of integrating recommendations into their decisions. Across two experiments, we demonstrate that the acceptance of advice that is targeted at a group or an individual is dependent upon tie-strength between the advisor and the advisee. In particular, we show that when a strong tie exists, consumers are more likely to take individually targeted advice when compared to group targeted advice. Conversely, when a weak tie exists, consumers are more likely to utilize group targeted advice rather than individually targeted advice. In addition, we find that psychological reactance to the proffered advice drives this demonstrated effect. These results offer insight into consumers' advice usage and suggest that personalized advice might not always be the most effective means to influence consumer decision making.

## **ABOUT THE AUTHOR**

Michael Sciandra is an Assistant Professor of Marketing at Fairfield University. Professor Sciandra received his MBA from the Boler School of Business, John Carroll University and his PhD in Marketing from the Katz Graduate School of Business, University of Pittsburgh. Professor Sciandra's research focuses on consumer and marketer communications and includes topics such as consumer advice utilization, word-of-mouth, social media, and in-store mobile device use.