

Older consumers prefer emotional appeals

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UCLA and University of Pennsylvania scientists say their research indicates older consumers are more emotional. The researchers say additional emotion often causes susceptibility to misleading advertising. But in a study of age-based reactions to advertising appeals, the researchers found in many cases, age is less of a factor than motivational states and goals.

In two experiments, the researchers sought to better understand how "time horizon" affects a consumer's interpretation of a marketing message.

"We find that older adults generally prefer and have better memory for emotional appeals. In contrast, younger adults tend to prefer and have better memory for more rational appeals," explained researchers Patti Williams of the University of Pennsylvania and Aimee Drolet of the University of California-Los Angeles.

"However, when time horizon perspectives are manipulated to be short, all participants prefer emotional appeals, regardless of age. Similarly, when time horizon perspectives are manipulated to be long, all prefer rational appeals, regardless of age," they said.

Williams and Drolet said their research is exceptionally important due to a burgeoning older population of consumers, who comprise a major market segment.

The study will appear in a forthcoming issue of the Journal of Consumer

Research.

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