

# People don't always want bigger and better

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Marketing scientists from Indiana, Northwestern and New York universities say some people don't seek products marketed as better or more effective.

Individuals who focus on potential gains will buy a product advertised as far superior to its competitors. However, consumers concerned with potential losses will disregard such campaigns in favor of comparisons that claim a product is similar to or just as good as established brands.

The researchers -- Shailendra Pratap Jain of Indiana University, Nidhi Agrawal of Northwestern University, and Durairaj Maheswaran, from New York University -- say their study is the first to show situations in which maximal conditions are less persuasive than minimal ones.

Maximal comparisons claim that Brand A is superior to Brand B, while minimal comparisons claim that Brand A meets conventional expectations. According to the researchers, whether you are more provoked by maximal or minimal comparisons depends on whether you are focused on advancement or maintenance.

"Most research assumes that maximal comparisons might always be more persuasive," write the authors. "Our research shows conditions when maximal frames may be less persuasive than minimal comparative frames."

The study appears in the June issue of the Journal of Consumer Research.

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