

Would you sleep on a chunk of ice? Building your 'experience resume'

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If sleeping on a bed of ice or eating bacon-flavored ice cream doesn't sound too appealing, consider the tale you'll have to tell about it later. According to a new study in the *Journal of Consumer Research*, some people can't resist a chance to collect experiences.

"Recent marketing trends suggest that many consumers are attracted to unusual and novel consumption experiences and choose vacations, leisure activities, and celebrations that are predicted to be less pleasurable and enjoyable," write authors Anat Keinan (Harvard Business School) and Ran Kivetz (Columbia Business School).

"A fascinating example is the increasing popularity of Ice Hotels, where visitors sleep on beds made of ice in frigid temperatures of 25° F. A similar trend is observed in consumers' dining preferences: many restaurants are trying to attract consumers by offering unusual entrees and desserts. Such gastronomic innovations include tequila-mustard sorbet, bacon-flavored ice cream, and chocolate truffles with vinegar and anchovies."

Consumers are attracted to these activities and products because they view them as opportunities to collect new experiences and build their "experiential CV," the authors write. And this desire is connected to people's continual striving to use time efficiently and productively.

"This desire to accomplish more in less time is so powerful that it not only affects consumers' performance in vocational (or "production")

settings, but can also influence their leisure preferences and consumption choices," the authors write.

In a series of experiments, the researchers found that a "productivity orientation" made participants more inclined to desire collectible experiences. They examined revelers celebrating New Year's Eve in New York City's Times Square, AARP members attending conferences on retirement and aging, park visitors, train and airport travelers, and people who are trying to visit all 50 states.

"Our findings suggest that marketers of unusual [consumption](#) experiences and innovative products should target [consumers](#) who are concerned with being productive (and collecting experiences)," the authors write.

More information: Anat Keinan and Ran Kivetz. "Productivity Orientation and the Consumption of Collectable Experiences." *Journal of Consumer Research*.

Provided by University of Chicago

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