

# Why does stating your intention lead you to purchase your favorite brand?

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If you say you're going to buy something, you're more likely to do it. But why is that? According to a new study in the *Journal of Consumer Research*, stating an intention leads consumers to action—and makes them more likely to purchase their preferred brands.

"Simply responding to an intention question has the potential to activate an intention," write authors Anneleen Van Kerckhove, Maggie Geuens, and Iris Vermeir (Ghent University). "The activation of an intention next changes how easily certain brands come to mind, which then influences brand choices."

In a series of studies the researchers had participants fill in a questionnaire on their preferences among fictitious or existing candy bar brands. Some participants answered an "intention question" (How likely are you to purchase a candy bar in the near future?), while others answered an attitude question (How positive or negative are you about the candy bars available to you?).

"Those who responded to an intention question were more likely to choose the brand they previously indicated they preferred the most, irrespective of whether they were asked immediately after the intention question to make a brand choice decision or whether there was a delay between filling in the intention question and making the brand choice decision," the authors write.

Consumers are motivated to fulfill their intentions, and this motivation

narrows their focus. "The intention puts the intention-related [brand](#) to the front of consumers' minds and pushes other well-liked brands to the back until the consumer has accomplished the intention," the authors write.

"To the best of our knowledge, these research findings provide the first evidence for the role of a motivational component in the occurrence of the question-behavior effect," the authors conclude.

**More information:** Anneleen Van Kerckhove, Maggie Geuens, and Iris Vermeir. "A Motivational Account of the Question-Behavior Effect." *Journal of Consumer Research*: June 2012 (published online August 17, 2011).

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