

Matching brands: Why do consumers prefer Tostitos salsa with Tostitos tortilla chips?

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Consumers prefer matching brands for products that are consumed together because they believe products from the same brand have been designed to go together, according to a new study in the *Journal of Consumer Research*.

"How much do brand combinations affect how much consumers enjoy products that are consumed together? It seems that matching brand labels enhance enjoyment by encouraging consumers to believe that the products were tested and designed to go well together," write authors Ryan Rahinel and Joseph P. Redden (both University of Minnesota).

In one study, consumers ate Tostitos brand tortilla chips and Tostitos brand salsa but were told that the chips and salsa were various combinations of fictional [brand names](#) ("Festivity" or "Party Time"). Consumers enjoyed the chips and salsa more when told that the two foods were from the same brand.

In another study, consumers again ate Tostitos tortilla chips and salsa but were told that the chips and salsa were various combinations of "Brand A" and "Brand B." Some were told that the brands had conducted joint research and design on the two products, while others were told that the brands had coordinated on matters unrelated to taste ([coupons](#) and distribution). The latter group of consumers enjoyed chips and salsa from the same brand more than chips and salsa from different brands. However, both groups enjoyed the chips and salsa more when told that the brands had conducted joint product research and design, regardless

of the brands they were told they were consuming.

"There is no universal answer to which brand a consumer likes the most. The brand a consumer prefers for a particular product depends on the [brand](#) of other products with which it is being combined. A company that offers products that are consumed together will have an advantage over other rival brands that do not offer both individual [products](#), since [consumers](#) will want to have matching brands," the authors conclude.

More information: Ryan Rahinel and Joseph P. Redden. "Brands as Product Coordinators: Matching Brands Make Joint Consumption Experiences More Enjoyable." *Journal of Consumer Research*: April 2013.

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