

New research examines 'jilting effect' on consumers

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New research from the Penn State Smeal College of Business suggests that when people have an expectation of receiving a highly attractive option and then it falls through, what they possess no longer seems as satisfying as it once did.

"The Jilting Effect: Antecedents, Mechanisms, and Consequences for Preference," a forthcoming article in the *Journal of Marketing Research*, was co-authored by former Smeal doctoral student Aaron Garvey, an assistant professor of marketing at the University of Kentucky; Meg Meloy, professor of marketing in Smeal and the Calvin E. and Pamela T. Zimmerman University Endowed Fellow; and Baba Shiv, The Sanwa Bank, Limited, Professor of Marketing at the Stanford Graduate School of Business.

"We find that when people experience a jilt—that is, they expect to receive something extremely attractive but their hopes are dashed—the experience of the jilt drives them to no longer be content with the status quo and instead motivates consumers to seek out new and different alternatives," Meloy said.

The research findings have implications for managers across a broad range of consumer product sectors. Businesses must guard against inadvertently jilting consumers via situations like new product stock-outs, launch delays, and cancellations resulting in heightened exposure to competitor threats.

"Jilting, even though often unintentionally initiated by a firm or circumstances beyond the firm's control, may undermine adherence to the incumbent brand," Garvey said. "For a competitor, however, jilting situations may represent an opportunity to steal share away from the incumbent brand."

Provided by Pennsylvania State University

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