

Nostalgia ain't what it used to be

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Exploiting nostalgia is a well-worn emotive approach to enticing customers to purchase a product or service. New work in the *International Journal of Electronic Marketing and Retailing*, has looked at how a person's character affects whether or not they are susceptible to what is commonly referred to as nostalgia marketing. One of the main

findings from the work is that given a high-quality product nostalgia marketing will be successful even given a concomitant high price, the team has found.

Kyunghee Kim, Ahreum Hong, and Yannan Li of the Graduate School of Technology Management at Kyung Hee University in South Korea explain how [nostalgia](#) appeals at an [emotional level](#) for many people. It is used in many areas of human endeavor books and movies, fashion and food, and more broadly in the marketing of such things. "People often have good memories of their past and enjoy looking back to happy times," the team writes. "They enjoy being reminded of happy memories with family and friends." As such, incorporating themes or products from the past marketers can create a unique emotional feeling in their putative customers.

The team points out that there are negative associations with nostalgia. In recent years, rather than being perceived as a positive thing, there has been a suggestion that nostalgia is somehow a psychological problem associated with an unrequited desire for the past. This is then associated with melancholy, depression, and loneliness. A more holistic view of nostalgia would be inclusive of such negative connotations but also the more positive side. A balanced view of nostalgia would see it as a complex emotion or mood associated with reflection on the past whether people, experience, ideas, or objects that are no longer part of someone's present situation.

The team suggests that marketers need to reflect on how nostalgia "ain't what it used to be" if they are to benefit from improved sales when exploiting this emotion in their advertising efforts.

More information: Kyunghee Kim et al. Effects of consumer personal characteristics and psychological factors on nostalgia marketing, *International Journal of Electronic Marketing and Retailing* (2021). [DOI:](#)

[10.1504/IJEMR.2021.112256](https://phys.org/news/2021-01-nostalgia-aint.html)

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