

When rentals go wrong: Study explores sharing economy and ways to boost good customer behavior

October 9 2023



A study by UNLV Lee Business School marketing professor Eda Anlamlier and colleagues used Rent the Runway data to explore the sharing economy and ways to boost good behavior among consumers. Credit: Josh Hawkins/UNLV

Consumers are increasingly paying for temporary access to products and services through companies like Rent the Runway, Netflix, Airbnb, and Uber—creating an "access-based industry" that's expected to grow to \$335 billion by 2025. But, in exchange for low prices, there's an additional cost to customers in terms of their time and effort.

From the flouting of Airbnb cleaning rules for customers, to the scratching of Netflix DVDs, to the failure to return rented luxury clothing in a timely manner (or at all), consumers can sometimes act selfishly or opportunistically and deviate from a platform's expectations—crafting their own consumption routines, hijacking the best products for long periods of time, and hurting other consumers' experiences.

So how do companies boost [good behavior](#)? A recent *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science* study—led by UNLV Lee Business School marketing professor Eda Anlamlier and colleagues—offers tips.

"To remain agile and avoid systemic problems as seen in (popular designer clothing rental platform) Rent the Runway's 2019 major service disruption, access-based platforms must incentivize consumers to keep their motivation to cooperate and care for the consequences of their actions on other consumer journeys," Anlamlier said.

The study is based on an extensive investigation of Rent the Runway and

data from nearly 2,000 [social media posts](#), 1,168 news media articles, Rent the Runway marketing materials, and interviews with bloggers and consumers.

Researchers found that the expectations of platforms that require consumers to work extensively and act as trusted partners—with minimal mistakes and damage—to keep costs low and products in good condition are too high.

"It is not realistic for platforms to expect consumers to cooperate so that all consumers can have a seamless journey. Platforms can better emphasize the collaborative nature of their business models, enforce social accountability, and realize consumer actions are not easy to substitute," said lead author and University of Illinois Chicago professor Lez Trujillo-Torres.

To regain [platform](#) control, the authors offer concrete advice to make more consumers aware of the ways they can disrupt other consumers' experiences. For example, platforms can:

- Simplify logistics and operations to help consumers behave as business partners
- Monitor, recognize, and incorporate the contributions of expert consumers
- Incentivize consumer cooperation and [social responsibility](#) toward other [consumers](#)
- Offer more substitute products to minimize product dissatisfaction

More information: Lez Trujillo-Torres et al, Access-based customer journeys, *Journal of the Academy of Marketing Science* (2023). [DOI: 10.1007/s11747-023-00942-6](#)

Provided by University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Citation: When rentals go wrong: Study explores sharing economy and ways to boost good customer behavior (2023, October 9) retrieved 28 April 2024 from <https://phys.org/news/2023-10-rentals-wrong-explores-economy-ways.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.