A Resolution Model of Consumer Irritation Consequences and Company Strategies: Social Networking and Strategy Implications

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This paper utilizes the cognitive-neoassociationistic model, primacy and recency effects to propose superior memory for previously encountered irritating encounters. Since consumers do not forget irritating stimuli encountered in the past, this paper addresses the under-researched issue – how do consumers handle previously encountered irritations? The paper models its propositions on previous research on negative emotions (Nyer 1997) and suggests that consumers choose one of these paths to handle their irritation: taking no action, engaging in negative word of mouth (NWOM) behavior or complain to the company. Along this vein, the paper identifies three segments based on consumer responses to irritation: "No Action", "Negative Word of Mouth" and "Complain". It is recommended that companies should attempt to convert the "No Action" and "NWOM" segments into consumers who complain so that companies can utilize the feedback to formulate appropriate action strategies. The proposed irritation resolution model recommends integrating social networking tools in devising effective strategies.

INTRODUCTION: RECALLING IRRITATION

I *always used to* buy my shoes from Nine West. The brand meant that the shoes were unique in style, comfort and longevity. So, whenever I needed a pair of shoes, I only thought of Nine West. While I consider myself an infrequent shopper, I used to love the brand so much that whenever I would visit the mall, I would always check out the store for new arrivals even when I didn't need shoes. However, once I bought two cute pairs from the store and went home. Upon reaching home, I realized that the salesperson had mistakenly packed wrong size for one of the pairs that I bought. When I went to the mall next weekend to return the shoes with wrong size and told them that an incorrect shoe size was packed by mistake, the staff at the store rudely indicated that the shoes were worn and could not be returned. Despite the fact that I informed the salesperson that I always buy my shoes at the store and that I was never wore these even at my house because the shoe was two sizes large, the staff sternly said: "I am sorry but our experience tells us that customers buy expensive shoes, wear these to a party and then return them. They all have some excuses at the time of return. We believe that shoes leave our store in perfect condition. This is why we cannot take these back and sell them again." This response made me so angry and irritated that I will never forget my irritation with this incident. After this experience, neither did I visit a Nine West Store nor bought a Nine West pair of shoes from any other store.

This real-life scenario experienced by the author still lingers fresh in memory. While the author *always used to* buy Nine West shoes and would blindly trust the brand, this incident elicited so much irritation that not only has the author never visited Nine West again, she has also convinced her family

and friends to never consider this brand because of her negative experience. This customer experience runs contrary to common knowledge that companies prosper by allocating resources to build enduring interactions with their customers (Johnson and Selnes 2004). Despite standard recovery initiatives by companies, there remains a lack of an overarching theoretical and methodological approach to service recovery research (Ringberg, Odekerken-Schröder and Christensen 2007). Since there is a lack of a consistent approach to service recovery, it is unrealistic to assume that companies have developed a systematic resolution model to handle consumer irritation, which does not easily fade away from consumer memory.

Individuals encounter numerous irritating experiences in their everyday lives such as irritation during shopping (d'Astous, Roy and Simard 1995), irritation from advertisements (Fennis and Bakker 2001; Pelsmacker and Bergh 1998; Aaker and Bruzzone 1985 and Greyser 1973) and irritation from price unfairness across distribution channels (Wolk and Ebling 2010; Neslin et al., 2006 and Asheraft, 2001). However, not all irritating encounters are as negative as the one listed in the scenario above and negative experiences during shopping or with products and services vary in the degree of irritation they elicit. Furthermore, if the surrounding stimuli or experiences are similar to the ones that caused irritation at an earlier instance, do we have a theoretical understanding of irritation triggers, how memory for previous irritations works and how individuals cope up with this emotion? This paper explores the following key questions: How do individuals handle and cope up with such irritating experiences? Do they try to forget previous irritation-evoking incidents or do previous irritations linger in their memory? Do they engage in negative word-of-mouth (NWOM) and "vent" their irritations to others? Or do such irritations manifest as complaints to the company? Consequently, do consumers continue to stay irritated and switch to another brand or service?

There are a number of empirical studies on consumer irritation in advertising and other contexts and advertisements (Fennis and Bakker 2001; Ducoffe 1996; d'Astous, Roy and Simard 1995; Pelsmacker and Bergh 1998 and Aaker and Bruzzone 1985; Greyser 1973). However, relatively little attention has been paid to developing a better understanding of consumer irritation triggers, memory, subsequent coping and behavioral consequences. Interestingly, no prior research has addressed the above-mentioned lacunae from a theoretical and managerial standpoint in a manner offered by this paper.

This paper begins with a discussion of definition of consumer irritation. Next, major categories, sources and theoretical rationale behind superior memory and recall for previously encountered irritations are outlined. The next section discusses how consumers handle previously encountered irritations and proposes three segments: "No Action", "NWOM" and "Complain". These constructs are then linked to previous theoretical work in marketing and psychology to develop a resolution framework that outlines company strategies to handle the three segments.

CONCEPTUAL OVERVIEW: IRRITATION, RECALL AND NWOM

Irritation and Its Sources

The study of consumer irritation has been conducted extensively in the context of advertising in extant research (Fennis and Bakker 2001; Pelsmacker and Van den Bergh 1998; Ducoffe 1996 and Aaker and Bruzzone 1985). Irritation has been defined in the advertising literature as "provoking, annoying, causing displeasure, and momentary impatience" and is considered to be more negative than dislike (Pelsmacker and Van den Bergh 1998 and Aaker and Bruzzone 1985). Irritation has also been referred to as follows: "When advertising employs techniques that annoy, offend, insult or are overly manipulative, consumers are likely to perceive it as unwanted and irritating influence" (Ducoffe 1996, p. 23). Consumer irritation is one of the nine evoked feelings in response to advertising. The following paragraphs review consumer irritation triggers and strategies taken by marketers so far to reduce these irritations.

As more consumers experience irritating encounters in varied contexts, consumer irritation has become a topic worthy of exploratory, conceptual and empirical research. Along this vein, Consumer Reports conducted a study on identification and analysis of top irritation factors in different contexts. Inability to reach a service rep, rude and unhelpful staff, poor communications about delays, and

inadequate heating or air conditioning were listed as main sources of airline and hotel irritations (Consumer Reports 2010). Since this was an exploratory survey, this report is silent on strategies that should be adopted by these industries to minimize irritations in these common arenas.

Differential prices across distribution channels cause irritation in consumers due to perceptions of price unfairness (Wolk and Ebling 2010; Asheraft, 2001; Neslin et al., 2006). Based on these results, multichannel retailers started charging uniform prices through their different distribution channels (Wolk and Ebling 2010, Ashecraft 2001). D'Astous (2000) identified ambient factors (bad smells, unclean stores, bad music, lack of air conditioning), social issues (crowding, kids deception and high-pitch selling by salespersons) and store design (small store, change in store layout, lack of mirrors etc.) as sources of consumer irritation in the shopping context.

Irritation levels are also known to vary by media – radio ads are perceived to be less irritating than television ads and programs because the former serve as background music (Bogart 1990). Mobile phone advertising results in high irritation levels because these phones enable a direct advertiser to consumer link at any time and at all locations (Tsang, Ho and Liang 2004; Zoller, Housen and Matthews 2001). While some advertisers and marketers have responded to such irritations via permission-based marketing that focuses on advertising through personalized messages on mobile phones (Tsang, Ho and Liang 2004; Zoller, Housen and Matthews 2001), most companies still believe they can reach a well-targeted audience through mobile phones and continue to bombard consumers with product launches, coupons, phone calls and special promotions and offers (Evangelista 2011).

Why Do Previous Irritations Generate High Recall?

The cognitive–neoassociationistic model suggests that negative affect tends to activate ideas and memories associated with anger (Berkowitz 1990). These influence subsequent thought appraisals which can intensify, suppress or enrich the initial negative affect – anger. Since irritation is a negative emotion akin to anger and frustration, the theory underlying cognitive–neoassociationistic model is utilized to explain how previous irritations can affect subsequent ones. Specifically, any negative emotion-relevant thought linked to previous irritations can also activate other components of the particular emotion network to which they are linked. In particular, the brand name 'Nine West', the 'returns' sign, and 'rude and unhelpful staff' could all enhance or attenuate the irritation emotion at a later point in time in the scenario mentioned in the beginning. Do such cues allow previously encountered irritation to come back with the same intensity as the one experienced during the original incident?

Why do consumers remember Charmin's irritating Mr. Whipple's slogan and why does it still generate top of mind recall among ad slogans? Facts around Charmin's Mr. Whipple indicate that Mr. Whipple was convicted to be one of the most disliked television characters as most consumers considered Charmin's slogan as stupid and last in believability in all commercials for a period of years (Sullivan 2008). Why did Proctor and Gamble then choose to have an annoying ad and continue with the "irritating" Mr. Whipple as the spokesperson for its major brand Charmin?

The advertising successes of Charmin's irritating Mr. Whipple, HeadOn, Commonwealth Bank, Anacin and Pepto-Bismol are supported by the J-shaped model that while irritating commercials generate lesser recall than well-liked ones, they are effective in eliciting higher brand name recall than commercials that generate neutral affect (Aaker and Bruzzone 1985). Against the universally accepted and intuitive assumption that only well-liked commercials are successful, it is emphasized here that the above-mentioned commercials were successful because these were perceived to be irritating. It is posited here that these results were observed because individuals showed increased attentiveness to irritating ads and the negative affect could have stimulated a higher level of information processing in these individuals. The increased level of information processing led to superior encoding and recall of such information. Thus such "high irritation" ads were successful because they were irritating. Similarly, the author's experience with Nine West could be explained by increased attentiveness and information processing because of her irritation, which in turn led to superior encoding and proportionately superior recall i.e., superior memory of her highly irritating experience.

Why Do Individuals Retain a Superior Memory for Previously Encountered Irritations?

Primacy and Recency Effects

Through numerous studies, Ebbinghaus (1913) concluded that recall accuracy is a function of an item's position in a list. This conclusion can be explained by two popular concepts – primacy and recency effects. When an individual is asked to recall items from a list of items, and if the first few items in the list are recalled and with a greater frequency, primacy effect is operative (Bower 2000). Thus, primacy effect could explain why irritation that was experienced a long time ago can be highly memorable.

Contrarily, recency effect suggests that when individuals were asked to recall a list of items in any order from a study list, subjects began recalling the items that were last on a list and these items also generated the highest recall (Deese and Kaufman 1957 and Murdock 1962). Superior recall for last items lies in the temporal context: if memory for items is tested immediately after subjects are exposed to the item list, the current temporal context serves as a retrieval cue and accounts for a high recall of items that are last in the list (Howard and Kahana 2002). Along this vein, recency effect could explain how recently encountered irritation could be highly salient in an individual's memory.

It is important to understand why and when each of these serial position effects is operative and instrumental to predict recall for irritation at a later point in time. The prevalence of primacy effect is likely to surface because of greater amount of motivation, attention, processing, and rehearsal devoted to first items in a sequence (Murdoch 1962). This leads to elaborative processing of such information and emotions, which leads to detailed encoding and consequent superior recall of such information from memory. On the other hand, recency effect occurs because short-term memory is used to remember the most recent items and these items are still present in working memory at the time of the recall (Bjork and Whitten 1974).

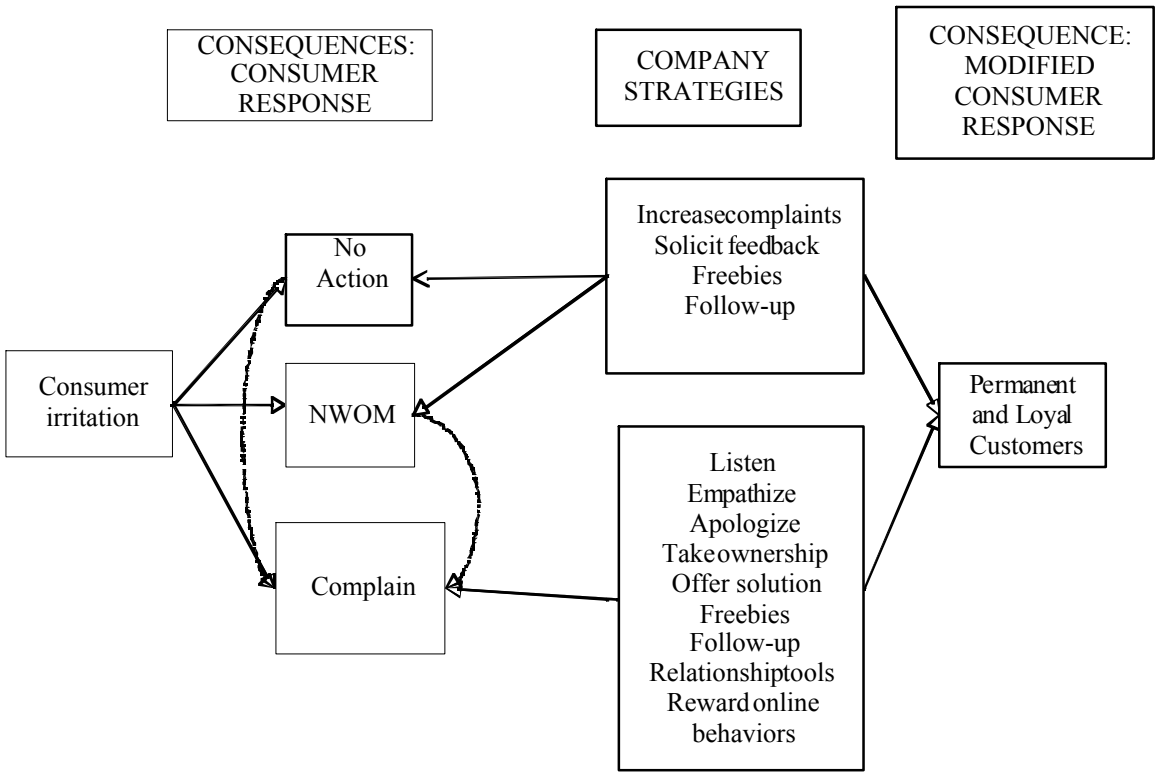
In reality, new information and experiences form distractions, which constitute noise or clutter and could interfere with memory for previous irritations. Since irritations with greater intensity experienced in the past are strongly encoded and stored in long-term memory because of primacy effect, any subsequent noises are unlikely to weaken the primacy effect and erase memory for such irritations. On the other hand, recently encountered irritations could elicit high recall if they are not very intense in magnitude, because these have been recently encountered. However, other stimuli or experiences that follow such irritations could have a stronger recency effect and result in a failure to recall even the recently encountered irritations.

Overall, primacy and recency effects explain why individuals are likely to remember their irritations: (a) experienced in the distant past (such as several years or even decades) because of primacy effect, and (b) experienced in the recent past due to a dominance of recency effect. Since previous irritations do not fade away easily from memory because of the instrumentality of primacy and recency effects, how do individuals cope up with these? What are the mechanisms that underlie such coping? The sections that follow address these important questions.

Consumer Response: Coping with Irritation

When consumers are faced with a negative emotion-evoking situation, they usually employ coping mechanisms to deal with the negative emotion (Nyer 1997). Along similar vein, this paper proposes three ways in which consumers respond to handle their irritations. First, it is possible that an individual might decide not to complain after evaluating the contentment (positive feeling) vs. the hassle (negative feeling) of complaining. The rest of the paper refers to this form of consumer response as "No Action". In a contrasting second approach, the same customer might decide to complain since complaining (a form of anger and attack) could help vent irritation. In this case, irritated consumers experience even more irritations at a later time. This is because while complaining helps vent out the negative affect, it also facilitates a recall of the experienced irritations. Lastly, consumers could combine the positive and negative feelings mentioned in the first approach and engage in negative word of mouth (NWOM) to reduce their irritations (please see Figure 1).

FIGURE 1
A RESOLUTION MODEL: CONSUMER IRRITATION CONSEQUENCES AND COMPANY STRATEGIES



A discussion of prior irritating experiences with others operates more through a reduction of discontentment (positive feeling) and less via the hassle of official complaining which results in eliciting and belaboring upon negative feelings. Since irritation is akin to dissatisfaction in that it is an emotional extension of dissatisfaction along a more negative scale, and since two thirds of dissatisfied consumers do not complain to the marketer, but rather switch providers and/or engage in NWOM (Andreason, 1985; Richins, 1983; Singh, 1988), we propose that a majority of irritated customers are likely to adopt the last approach of engaging in NWOM behavior. Word of mouth (WOM) behavior has been described in the public commitment domain as public stance of the customer's evaluation of the product or service (Davidow 2003). By engaging in NWOM behavior, a customer enters a public position that will be very hard to withdraw from if facts, evidences, and results should run contrary to the customer's position. On the other hand, most complaints made to a company are made on a one-on-one basis privately to company representatives or managers. Thus, while WOM is a behavior that could have the potential to induce high levels of public commitment (Nyer and Gopinath 2005), complaining behavior is relatively secretive.

Applying the above to handling irritation, how do consumers handle their emotion of irritation if they encounter cues similar to the ones that caused irritations in the past impact? If customers adopt the first non-complaining route, they may still be angry and irritated at a later point in time because familiar cues could trigger memory for a previous irritation incident. On the other hand, irritation is likely to linger on in the customer's memory for a longer period if the customer registers a complaint or engages in NWOM behavior because the very act of engaging in complaining or NWOM behavior rehearses the event in the

consumer's memory and connects the memory nodes related to the current ambient stimuli.

Most individuals engage in negative voice behavior to obtain emotional release (Alicke et al., 1992; Bennett, 1997; Stilwell & Salamon, 1990) from negative emotions and benefit from engaging in NWOM behavior or complaining to the company. Since irritation is a negative emotion, individuals are likely to use these tools to obtain emotional release. The next section utilizes and discusses the above theoretical understanding to offer optimal managerial strategies.

Company Strategies: Social Networking to Increase the Complaints to NWOM Ratio

Increase Customer Complaints

It is well known that customer complaints are an invaluable source of information to companies and thus should be strongly encouraged by marketers, especially as only a few dissatisfied consumers complain to the marketers. It has been documented that two thirds of dissatisfied consumers change service providers and/or engage in NWOM behavior but do not complain to the marketer (Andreason, 1985; Richins, 1983; Singh, 1988) because of the hassles of undertaking the official process of complaining. To address this issue, a first step is that official complaining be made easy for consumers. Retaining existing customers, rather than acquiring new ones should be the key strategy because of flattening market penetration in most industries – for example, wireless penetration in the US is nearly 100 percent (Azzarello and Kovak 2011). Customers reward companies that quickly solve problems by staying loyal (Thompson 2005). A speedy response can add 25 percent to customer loyalty. Toyota Motor Sales USA, Inc. has adopted a formula for customer satisfaction; maximum customer satisfaction and loyalty is a combination of doing the job right the first time and effective complaint management (Kjellerup 1998).

Therefore, companies need to strategically take measures to reduce consumer irritation and go the extra step of "delighting" (as opposed to irritating) the customer and earn their "love" so that these customers choose to stay loyal when tempted by competitive offers. The following section discusses integrating social networking tools in formulating company strategies and steps to handle "No Action" and NWOM customers.

Solicit Feedback, Freebies and Follow-up

Nyer and Gopinath (2005) found that a much larger percentage of consumers (both satisfied and dissatisfied) could be made to provide invaluable feedback simply by requesting comments from these customers. Along this vein, companies should increasingly use popular social networking tools on social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter that not only form a seamless and easy interface between the customer and the company, but also facilitate complaining to the company. This strategy would not only help consumers in documenting and venting out their irritations to the party (the company) that has the power to take corrective actions against the problem, but also offer solutions to fix the problem and provide a valuable resourceful tool to marketers. A company wide effort should be in place to provide encouragement to file official complaints to the company. In this vein, it is important to make it easy for customers to complain through the extensive use of centralized customer help-lines, 1-800 numbers, complaint/comment cards at the point of service, and easy-to-use customer appeal processes. Adopting this strategic line of thought, companies should recruit customer service teams that not only manage complaints handling at the companies' ends of the social networking websites but also ensure that such teams are well integrated with other departments of the company.

Making official complaining easy for the consumer will dissuade customers from adopting the common path of engaging in NWOM behavior, which tarnishes a company's image. It is important to point here that managers should not consider high complaint rates as being bad for the company. Instead, through social networking tools such as Facebook and Twitter described above, companies should respond to customers' complaints, take appropriate steps and inform them of their steps to fix the problem. Offering freebies to consumers who complain is another tool that can help alleviate their consumer irritation. For instance, offering free flights for airline complaints, a couple of free hotel nights for hotel service complaints, free dinners for restaurant complaints are tools that could be instrumental in

bringing down irritation. Further, companies should reach out to all customers and "follow-up" regarding their experience with the pitch that such feedbacks are useful in delivering better services next time. Such a strategy will target customers who adopted the path of staying irritated, never soliciting a feedback and never returning to the product (labeled as "No Action" group in Figure), service or the company that caused the irritation (see dotted lines in Figure 1).

Such company led initiatives are recommended to keep a company's image positive in consumers' minds. This is because consumers who are encouraged to complain and voice their emotions may not only feel less negatively about their irritation because of the opportunity to vent their feelings but also perceive the company as being sensitive and receptive to the opinions of the customer. These arguments lay down the rationale for encouraging consumers to not keep their negative feelings of irritations to themselves or vent these out as NWOM behavior. Specifically, the above steps outline an interactive strategy whereby the major segments of "No Action" and "NWOM" customers are converted to "Complain" customers. Next, specific company steps to address NWOM and irritated customers and convert them to permanent and loyal customers through relationship building tools are discussed.

Handling Customer Complaints

The benefits of satisfying customer complaints include customer loyalty, product feedback and favorable brand image (Keller 2001). Therefore, businesses should view customer complaints as windows of opportunities to improve customer perception of their product or service. Complaint handling strategies discussed next must integrate social networking as the main strategy driver. The emphasis on encouraging complaints, resolving these and informing the customer about steps taken by the company to resolve the issues can be hugely beneficial. Customers will return to a company if they are assured that the company attends to and takes care of their concerns. The following steps are recommended as key to handling customer complaints:

Listen and empathize: It is vitally important to listen to the customer. Listening to the customer and empathizing provide fertile grounds for venting out irritation and displeasure with the company. Empathizing tools include restating their problem coupled with showing an understanding of the issue.

Apologize, 'Take Ownership', Offer Solutions and Freebies

Apologizing is a strategic tool that is effective in disarming irritated customers. Taking ownership of a situation by explaining and convincing the customer about immediate steps to solve the problem are proven tools to remedy customer issues. In the absence of an immediate solution, it is vital to demonstrate that the company understands the problem and will employ diligent efforts to offer a solution. Further, offering compensation in the form of freebies (for example free dessert, gift certificate for a future visit, free merchandise or knocking off a certain percentage on the current transaction) is a prudent strategy for handling a customer problem that could have been prevented. As mentioned earlier, most customers avoid the hassle of official complaining since the process involves standing in a line and elaborating the entire process to a service representative who may not be empowered to handle strategic issues.

Empowering customer service representatives who offer immediate solutions is one of the most essential steps a company must adopt to deal with consumer complaints and irritation. In addition, companies could consider integrating customer feedback and experiences faced by frontline employees to arrive at a strategic long-term strategy. Frontline customer service employees are best placed to identify and report pivotal customer experiences and come up with effective ways of improving them. A small customer-centric team, reporting directly to the board, can design, build, and test a feedback system for make-or-break experiences and then roll out the framework for optimal solutions to customer-facing employees.

Integrating technology to offer user-friendly interfaces on popularly used social networking site such as Facebook and Twitter to offer complaint registration, solutions and freebies 24/7 will not only facilitate an increase in complaints but also reduce costs to the companies. On site user-friendly kiosks that facilitate this process at the site of the issue are recommended tools to make this strategy successful.

Follow-up and Corrective Action

An independent online polling firm must contact the customer and conduct a brief survey after every transaction. The results from the polls should then be sent to the employee who provided the service and the results should then be published and aggregated on the local intranet. Frontline employees should call a sample of customers who have consented to be contacted. Results from these calls should then be integrated with poll results on the intranet to form a database and algorithm for providing better customer service. Specifically, such database and algorithms that correct past failures provide for improving frontline staff's such that past feedback scores help devise service improvements.

Relationship Tools, Reward Online Behaviors and Permanent and Loyal Customers

Relationship tools are key to ensuring successful implementation of above strategies. Customer relationship tools that help form individualized relationships with customers (and improve customer satisfaction) and provide the highest level of customer service to the most profitable customers. To become successful, companies must go beyond simply forming efficient relationship with customers. Companies must segment their consumer database based on their online behavioral activity to identify clusters that range from the extremities of innovative online consumers – creators (create blogs, publish web pages and upload self created videos) to those of inactives (do not participate in any online activities) (Forrester Research 2008). It is important to note that the percentage of inactives declined from 44% to 25% to 12% through 2007, 2008 and 2010, and the percentage of creators and critics increased from 43% to 58% to 87%, indicating that more consumers adopt online tools to become active consumers (Rousseaue-Anderson 2010 and Bernoff 2008). For example, Kraft has rolled out a new program to encourage individuals to talk about macaroni and cheese. Specifically, whenever any two people mention the phrase "Mac & cheese" at the same time in a tweet, Kraft would send a "Mac & Jinx." link, and the first to click the link would receive 5 boxes of Kraft dinner and a t-shirt (Bernoff 2008).

Companies could use similar strategies to encourage positive online behaviors about their product categories and brands or simply establish a connection with their active online users by providing them simple rewards, which help reduce their irritation with the company's products, or simply position themselves as "no irritation" company. This pursuit could be similar to a short-term strategy adopted by Edge shave zone where Edge sent several boxes of cereals to a consumer when a consumer tweeted about his irritation with running out of cereal on a morning.

By adopting the strategies mentioned above, companies can lot only reduce consumer irritation and convert the "No Action" and "NWOM" customers into customers who complain but also convert these categories of customers into permanent and loyal customers.

DISCUSSION AND FUTURE RESEARCH

This paper discusses the under-researched construct of consumer irritation. The paper begins with a review on sources of consumer irritation and offers a rationale for superior memory for consumer irritation on the basis of primacy and recency effects. A theoretical model of irritation consequences, company strategies, and the desired consumer response - loyalty are discussed and proposed in the model (please see Figure 1). It is important to mention that this is the first paper that discusses consumer irritation coping, handling, and implications for marketers.

As appropriately commented by Bagozzi, Gopinath, and Nyer (1999), emotions are ubiquitous in marketing. For example, emotions mediate consumer information processing, response to advertising, persuasive appeals and effects of marketing stimuli. This paper has important implications for theoreticians and marketers. By gaining an understanding of stimuli such as in-store factors, salesperson, and purchase related issues that irritate customers; managers could effectively eliminate these stimuli and combat consumer irritation at the retail level.

This paper has important implications for marketers and businesses. The paper stresses upon the rationale and basic processes to encourage complaining and handling complaints. Effective strategies to reduce and eliminate consumer irritation have been outlined and discussed. Suggestions in the paper are

in line with recent research on complaining which suggests that encouraging customer complaints is key since for every person who complains, there can be hundreds who do not bother to complain but who also spread negative comments about your company (Peter 2011). Thus, most successful companies in businesses such as Toyota want their customers to complain as a speedy response to a complaint increases customer loyalty by twenty five percent – a statistic that highlights the rewards of satisfying displeased customers (Lee 2009, National Performance Review 1996). Further, since many people who resist direct marketing still embrace social technologies, we stress that encouraging complaints and complaint handling via social networking sites will pave the way to successful companies of the future (Bernoff 2008).

Future research may consider testing the proposed model of consequences of consumer irritation and company strategies to handle this negative emotion. It would be interesting to examine whether individual level variables and cultural differences influence the degree to which individuals get irritated and whether these factors moderate how consumers cope up with their irritation. For example, individuals with high need for consistency and precision may show higher levels of irritation which could manifest into lesser incremental decay of irritation over time. How does consumer irritation and complaining propensity differ by regions and cultures? It is important to note that a major problem faced by researchers seeking to examine the behaviors of real-life irritated customers in a cost-effective manner is one of finding firms that are willing to share customer information with the researchers. Future research could also look at how irritation with a brand or a firm influences information processing, consumer decision-making, and future purchases.

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