"No Risk, No Innovation?" - The Effects of the Fluency of Brand Names on Consumers’ Responses to Innovations

Result in Brief

Project information

FLUENTBRAND
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What's in a brand name?

The name of a brand can make or break a product or service. An EU initiative looked into the ease or difficulty with which names are pronounced and how this affects consumer response.

Most research provides insight into real-word brand names or semantically meaningful ones at the expense of completely made-up names. Recent evidence suggests that it is not just real-word brand names that are more readily adopted and remembered.

The EU-funded FLUENTBRAND ("No risk, no innovation?" - The effects of the fluency of brand names on consumers' responses to innovations) project examined how the sound of non-word brand names can convey meaning and how this impacts consumer preferences and memory.

Project partners conducted a series of lab and online experiments with students that focused on the relationship between fluency experiences and their effects on consumers' preferences to innovative consumer products. Specifically, they investigated the fluency effects on consumer preferences and
memory, recognition and recall of non-word brand names. To this end, 30 different non-word brand names were created and pretested at the start of the project. An eye-tracking test showed that students needed less effort for easily pronounced fluent names than for difficult ones.

Overall, findings reveal an inclination towards names that are easy to pronounce and process. They also suggest this may only be the case for conventional products that are used daily. Additionally, results show that a slight increase in the difficulty level of pronunciation boosts consumer preference for exclusive product brand names.

FLUENTBRAND proposed a sound alternative to brand naming for marketers that offers creativity and flexibility while providing less risk legally when positioning products in the global market.

Keywords

Brand name, consumer response, innovation, fluency, non-word brand names

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