

# It's Not What You Sell - It's Whom You Sell it To

How the Customer's Character Shapes Brands and What Companies  
Do About It

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## **It's Not What You Sell - It's Whom You Sell it To**

How the Customer's Character Shapes Brands and What Companies Do About It

In this dissertation I investigate the effects of user and usage imagery on brands and how businesses employ user imagery to build brands. Over four articles I present results that suggest that user imagery affects brand personality and that companies under certain conditions adapt their behavior to optimize this effect. Although both mass market fashion and nightclubs are susceptible to the influence of user imagery, out of the two only nightclubs actively reject customers to improve its effect on brand perception. I relate these practices to the practical and financial feasibility of rejecting customers, the character of nightclubs' brands, and to their inability to differentiate their brands through any other brand personality influencer besides user imagery. In this dissertation, I also discuss the ethical ramifications of user imagery optimization through customer rejection. In one study, the role of conspicuous usage imagery on socially desirable consumer behavior is investigated. It is concluded that conspicuousness increases consumers' propensity to choose environmentally friendly products, and that this tendency is especially pronounced for individuals that are high in attention to social comparison information. The conclusion is that consumers use green products to self-enhance for the purpose of fitting in with the group rather than to stand out from it.

**Keywords:** brands, self-image congruity, brand personality, user imagery, fashion, nightclubs, green consumer behavior

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