

Brand Activism in Social Media: The Effect of Sarcastic and Explanatory Responses and Social Identity on Consumer Brand Attitude

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Resumo

Brands have been shifting from a neutral to a more proactive stance on controversial issues. By publicly taking side on a hot-topic debate, these companies are likely to be questioned by part of their consumers who do not agree with the brand's positioning. Brands usually use either a sarcastic or an explanatory tone to reply to consumers. However, it is unclear which type of response is the most effective for building brands' reputation. In two experiments, we demonstrate that: (1) explanatory (vs sarcastic) responses are better evaluated; (2) this relation is mediated by perceived aggressiveness, (3) while out-group members evaluate better explanatory responses, in-group members evaluate both type of responses similarly; and (4) when sarcastic responses are not aggressive, both type of responses are evaluated similarly.

