

Marketing Colloquia

Wednesday, September 4, 2013

Where: 741 JMHH

When: 12:00 PM to 1:20 PM

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Experiential Gifts Are More Socially Connecting than Material Gifts

ABSTRACT: Interpersonal relationships are essential to well-being, and gifts are often given to cultivate these relationships. To both inform gift givers of what to give and gain insight into the connecting function of gifts, this research experimentally investigates what type of gifts best connects people—material gifts (objects for the recipients to keep) or experiential gifts (events for the recipients to live through). Experiments examining actual and hypothetical gift exchanges in real-life relationships reveal that people who receive experiential gifts consequently feel more connected to their gift giver than those who receive material gifts, regardless of whether the gift is consumed together. The connecting power of experiential gifts stems from the emotion that is evoked when the gifts are consumed, not when the gifts are received. Giving experiential gifts is thus identified as a highly effective form of prosocial spending.