

MARKETING COLLOQUIA

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Date: Tuesday, September 25, 2018

Where: 741 JMHH

When: 12:00 PM to 1:20 PM

CONSUMER STREAKS

ABSTRACT: Technology is making it increasingly easy for consumers to track their repeated behaviors over time, leading consumers to be more aware of their streaks of consecutive behaviors than ever before. But how do these streaks (and whether they are broken or remain intact) affect consumers' subsequent decisions to continue those behaviors in the future? Across several studies, I show that, compared to intact streaks, broken streaks make consumers less likely to continue a behavior, even when the break is caused by external events outside of their control. This effect occurs because consumers are motivated to maintain their streaks, which provide them with a sense of accomplishment. Consistent with our "streaks as goals" theory, making streaks more salient (e.g., through behavioral tracking or the framing of behavior) encourages people to preserve them even more when they remain intact, but magnifies the negative effects of broken streaks. Furthermore, consumers are less likely to continue after a "missed" behavior when that miss breaks a streak than when they have not yet established a streak. Finally, this effect is diminished when consumers have the opportunity to "repair" a broken streak, thus providing a potential solution for firms that wish to highlight streaks without incurring the costs of salient broken streaks. These findings provide insight into the trade-offs involved in motivating repeated consumption behaviors by increasing the salience of consumers' streaks.