

Decision Processes Colloquia

Monday, March 18, 2019

Where: 340 JMHH

When: 12:00 – 1:20 pm

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Made by Mistake: When Mistakes Increase Product Preference

ABSTRACT:

Mistakes are often undesirable and frequently result in negative inferences about the person or company that made the mistake. Consequently, research suggests that information about mistakes is rarely shared with consumers. However, we find that consumers actually prefer products that were made by mistake to otherwise identical products that were made intentionally. This preference arises because consumers perceive that a product made by mistake is more improbable relative to a product made intentionally, and thus, view the product as more unique. We find converging evidence for this preference in a field study, six experiments, and eBay auction sales. Importantly, this preference holds regardless of whether the mistake enhances or detracts from the product. However, in domains where consumers do not value uniqueness (e.g., utilitarian goods), the preference is eliminated.

