

FRUITFUL ENGAGEMENT: FRAMING THE VALUE OF IMPERFECT PRODUCE THROUGH SIGNAGE IN RETAIL SERVICES



Centre for Behavioural
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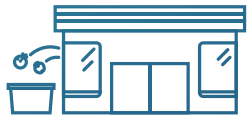
WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?



Food waste is a global issue that has significant economic, environmental, and social consequences



Between 30% and 50% of all food produced is wasted throughout the supply chain (Jurgilevich et al., 2016)



While there are many contributors to food waste, Australian supermarkets generated over 200,000 tonnes of food waste in 2016/17 (current baseline) (Arcadis, 2019)



To address this waste, some retailers have started selling aesthetically ‘imperfect produce’ (Grewal et al., 2019), which is considered “produce that is unattractive but perfectly edible” (Mukherjee et al., 2021, p. 1061).



While aesthetically imperfect fruit and vegetables are often sold by supermarkets to reduce food waste, many consumers are reluctant to purchase these products.

Research highlights that retail signage can promote the purchase of imperfect produce; however, we do not know:

- (1) how customer value propositions (CVPs) that frame the value of imperfect produce through retail signage affect customer engagement with imperfect produce and
- (2) whether consumers’ value orientation moderates this relationship.

WHAT DID WE DO?

We ran an online experiment with 253 Australian consumers to test which customer value proposition would result in engagement with imperfect produce.

We tested four different types of customer value propositions formatted as retail signage in the fruit and vege section of a supermarket

4 different customer value propositions tested in the experiment



Manipulation 1:
Thrift

**GRAB YOURSELF
A BARGAIN**

YOU SAVE A FEW BUCKS
WHEN YOU BUY IMPERFECT
FRUIT AND VEGETABLES



Manipulation 2:
Innovation

**ENJOY BEING
THE FIRST**

YOU LEAD THE WAY
WHEN YOU BUY IMPERFECT
FRUIT AND VEGETABLES



Manipulation 3:
Normalisation

**WE'RE ALL
DOING IT**

YOUR FRIENDS WILL APPROVE
WHEN YOU BUY IMPERFECT
FRUIT AND VEGETABLES



Manipulation 4:
Salvation

SAVE THE PLANET

YOU LOOK AFTER THE
ENVIRONMENT
WHEN YOU BUY IMPERFECT
FRUIT AND VEGETABLES



WHAT DID WE DO?

Customers were asked about their engagement levels with imperfect produce before and after showing them one of four retail signs:



Affective engagement
(how they feel about imperfect produce)



Cognitive engagement
(what they think about imperfect produce)



Behavioural engagement
(buying imperfect produce)

We also asked customers questions about their values (biospheric, altruistic and egoistic) to see if this affected their responses.

WHAT DID WE FIND OUT?



Salvation customer value proposition was the most effective retail signage for customer engagement with imperfect produce..



The Salvation condition increased all three dimensions of customer engagement, suggesting it is the most effective of the four CVPs.



Highlighting the value of purchasing imperfect produce as environmentally conscious behaviour in increases customers' affective, behavioural and cognitive

WHAT DID WE FIND OUT?



The Innovation and Normalisation customer value propositions increased behavioural positive engagement



The thrift customer value proposition had no effect on positive customer engagement. This suggests that highlighting discount pricing or the value from financial savings does not improve customer engagement with imperfect produce.



Participants who had a high egoistic value orientation when viewing the Thrift CVP or a high biospheric value orientation when viewing the Salvation condition experienced increased cognitive positive customer engagement

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