

ENDORSERS IN ADVERTISING: THE CASE OF NEGATIVE CELEBRITY INFORMATION

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ABSTRACT: The use of celebrity endorsers is a popular executional device, but it is not without risk. The authors report three studies examining how negative information about a celebrity can affect the brand the celebrity endorses. Using an associative network model of memory as a theoretical framework, they considered four moderating variables: the size of the association set for the brand, the size of the association set for the celebrity, the timing of the negative celebrity information, and the strength of the associative link between the brand and the celebrity. In the first two studies, they used a fictitious but realistic celebrity endorser and in the third they used an actual celebrity. Negative information about a celebrity resulted in a decline in attitude toward the endorsed brand only for the fictitious celebrity. That general relationship was moderated in varying degrees by association set size, timing of the negative information, and the strength of the link between brand and celebrity.

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