

TEAMS

An Infusion of Diverse Members Can Transform Work Styles

Although the importance of diversity is beyond dispute, little empirical evidence exists on how the presence of individuals from varying cultures and backgrounds affects the functioning of a work group. New research on the influx of Soviet players into the National Hockey League after the breakup of the Soviet Union sheds some light.

International competitions prior to 1988—the year the USSR began to fracture—demonstrated that Soviet players had a dramatically different approach to the game than players from the United States and Canada did. They relied on highly skilled skating and constant movement and passing, whereas North American players had an individualistic approach that depended on sheer physical aggression more than finely honed skill. Gathering nearly 50 years' worth of data and using the five seasons before and after 1989–1990 to analyze the Soviet players' effects, the researchers determined that the average number of penalty minutes per player per game—a figure that had risen steadily for two decades—began to drop dramatically

with those athletes' arrival. Although those players did spend less time in the penalty box per game than their North American teammates did, the overall decline was driven mainly by a drop-off in fighting and other aggressive behavior among U.S. and Canadian players. It held true on teams that were merely facing opponents with Russian members as well as on ones with Russian members themselves, and the level of aggression and the number of costly minutes in the penalty box were diminished even in games during which no Russians were on the ice for either side.

“The hockey style brought about by Russian players was adopted and diffused within and across North American teams and players,” the researchers conclude, adding, “Our findings generalize to those settings where workers can approach the same task in different ways and adopt different work styles. This is where the transfer and diffusion of skills, insights, and experiences among peers with different cultures and backgrounds is possible, and can boost organizational performance.”

 **ABOUT THE RESEARCH** “*Work Style Diversity and Diffusion Within and Across Organizations: Evidence from Soviet-Style Hockey*,” by Francesco Amodio, Sam Hoey, and Jeremy Schneider (Management Science, forthcoming)

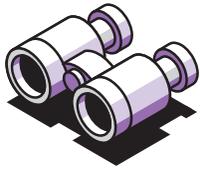
MARKETING

Should Your Slogan Be Likable or Memorable? It Probably Can't Be Both

Slogans are integral to a brand's identity, and firms spend untold sums creating and communicating them. Yet advice on how to craft a winning one is scant, apart from holistic, fuzzy suggestions (“be creative”; “capture the soul of the brand”). A new study homes in on the linguistic properties that cause people either to like or to remember a slogan—and shows why it's hard to come up with one that does both.

In one experiment, the researchers analyzed 820 slogans on several dimensions. They had 594 participants each view 50 of the slogans and then asked them how much they liked each one and whether they were familiar with it. They also gave a test to see which of the slogans people recalled having just seen.

People preferred slogans that omitted the brand's name and were easier to read and process: those that were fairly short and used relatively common and abstract words along with words that are perceptually distinct (meaning they don't look or sound like very many other words; think, for example, of the



THE ECONOMIC COST OF POPULISM

After 15 years of populist rule, GDP is 10% lower, on average, than it would have been if a nonpopulist had been in charge, according to a global analysis of 51 populist presidents and prime ministers from 1900 to 2020. “Populist Leaders and the Economy,” by Manuel Funke, Moritz Schularick, and Christoph Trebesch (forthcoming)

difference between *equinox* and *can*). But those qualities also made slogans harder to remember. A subsequent experiment found similar results and showed that altering a word or words without changing the meaning could make a slogan more or less likeable or memorable. Experiments using online video ads found the same general pattern. And a field study showed that consumers were more apt to click on a product link in an online ad when the slogan had likable properties rather than memorable ones.

Prior research shows that when people can process information fluently, they’re more likely to have a positive attitude toward it and to believe that it’s true. When processing takes more work, people pay closer attention and have a better chance of retaining the information, but that usually doesn’t translate to increased liking.

“Whether marketers should seek to improve attitudes toward or memory of slogans depends on whether the brand is already well-known,” the researchers write. “Brands that are new, have a small market share, or are trying to expand to new markets would benefit by using less fluent slogans that include the brand name along with words that are less frequently used, less distinctive, and more concrete.” By contrast, they add, “Brands that are already well-known should...create fluent slogans that are shorter [and] omit the brand name.”

ABOUT THE RESEARCH “*Intel Inside: The Linguistic Properties of Effective Slogans*,” by Brady T. Hodges, Zachary Estes, and Caleb Warren (Journal of Consumer Research, forthcoming)

WRITTEN INTRODUCTIONS

Highlight Your Accomplishments and Convey Warmth

To impress new contacts, you need to play up your competence—but without a personal interaction, it’s hard to do so without appearing arrogant. A recent study suggests a viable approach.

The researchers collected 200 introductions from LinkedIn and gave each of 274 participants three to read. Participants assessed the extent to which writers included details about their outcomes and the journeys leading to those outcomes and rated them on competence and warmth. Most writers emphasized outcomes, but those who focused more heavily on journeys scored higher on warmth. Subsequent studies found that people saw journey information as signaling humility and authenticity, which boosted perceptions of warmth, and that including difficulties in the journey information

also made writers appear warmer. The pattern held when HR professionals did the evaluating, and they were more interested in connecting with people who included journey information.

“Our argument is not that journey information is categorically ‘better’ than outcome information,” the researchers write. Rather, adding journey information to outcome information can create a more favorable impression and increase the odds of further conversation. They conclude with a word of caution: Because recruiters, managers, and others may have limited time and patience, “advising people to include journey information in introductions should be accompanied by an admonition to do so without making them long-winded.”

ABOUT THE RESEARCH “*It’s the Journey, Not Just the Destination: Conveying Interpersonal Warmth in Written Introductions*,” by Kelly A. Nault, Ovul Sezer, and Nadav Klein (Organizational Behavior and Human Decision Processes, 2023)



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