

Foot-in-the-Door and Door-in-the-Face: An Imperfect Memory Approach

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Abstract

This paper studies persuasion that exploits the decision-maker's imperfect memory. The persuader chooses whether to make a target request immediately or a relevant alternative request before the target request. The decision-maker observes private information about the request, which can be forgotten later but inferred rationally. The single framework captures diametrically opposite persuasion techniques known in practice, "foot-in-the-door" and "door-in-the-face," in equilibrium, depending on the difficulty of persuasion. Specifically, regardless of extensive equilibrium multiplicity, all equilibrium persuasion strategies are foot-in-the-door if the target request is sufficiently demanding, whereas all equilibrium persuasion strategies are door-in-the-face if it is not sufficiently demanding.

Keywords: Foot-in-the-door, door-in-the-face, persuasion, imperfect recall

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