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Scholarly Pursuits: Business Insights from Driehaus Faculty Research

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Why Do We Buy What We Buy?



↑
James Mourey explores consumer behavior in his new book.

Why will you buy a T-shirt for \$29.99, but not \$30? Who buys the bizarre items—for example, a replica of Gandalf’s staff from “Lord of the Rings”—offered in the airline magazine SkyMall? These and other questions are pondered by Assistant Marketing Professor James Mourey in his book, “Urge: Why You Really Want What You Want (And How to Make Everyone Want What You’ve Got).” **“It turns out that knowing who buys what or why people buy isn’t nearly as straightforward as you think,”** Mourey writes. “Some people buy products because they like them. Others buy products because other people like them. People often buy products they don’t need (we’re all guilty of that), and some even buy products they may not even want...but if we dig a bit deeper, we can start to uncover some systematic consistencies that help us make better predictions about why consumers do the weird things that they do.”



Workplace Bullies Aim at Star and Subpar Performers

Workplace bullies most often target colleagues who are high or low performers, according to a study co-authored by Assistant Professor of Management Jaclyn Jensen for the Journal of Applied Psychology. **Low performers tend to be the focus of overt hostility, such as yelling, while high performers are more likely to be victimized by subtle aggression, such as backstabbing and sabotage.** “Although good performance is often emphasized,” the study notes, “these results suggest concern for high performers and whether or not they ‘have a target on their back.’” To defuse bullying, managers should avoid performance metrics that compare employees directly and mentor low performers, Jensen and her co-authors suggest.

Fifty Alternatives to Downsizing

Layoff

“Organizational downsizing fails to achieve two major goals: increases in effectiveness and efficiency,” writes Associate Management Professor Marty Martin in a study he co-wrote for the International Journal of Business and Social Research. “Alternatives are warranted to achieve these two goals without resorting to organizational downsizing.” Martin and his research colleagues offer 50 alternatives to downsizing, from furlough days and retirement

incentives to asking employees, customers and suppliers for their ideas for reducing costs and generating revenue. **“There are times when downsizing is necessary and appropriate. There are also times when downsizing is not the best solution.** These differences should be squarely addressed by the key decision makers within organizations to lay out a decision-making model that includes alternatives.”