

## List of seminar topics

### *Area Marketing & Sales*

Below you will find a list of 66 topics for your seminar thesis. The topics are clustered into 10 overarching categories. Please inform yourself about how to apply in the uploaded documents.

- I. **Marketing Strategy and Management**
- II. **Consumer Behavior and Psychology**
- III. **Price Management**
- IV. **Product and Innovation Management**
- V. **Brand and Communications Management**
- VI. **Sales Management**
- VII. **Digital Marketing**
- VIII. **Customer Relationship Management**
- IX. **Market Theory and Research Methods**
- X. **Marketing Analytics**

### I. Marketing Strategy and Management

#### 1. **New Ventures in Business-to-Government Markets: How to succeed?**

*(Chair Prof. Homburg)*

Governments are among the largest buyers in the world, making selling to the government a major business opportunity for firms. Every year, public entities award numerous contracts across diverse fields. Competing for such public contracts can be particularly attractive for new ventures. However, new firms and their offerings are often unknown to buyers, posing a potential disadvantage relative to incumbents. Additionally, firms face high regulatory standards in the governmental environment, which can be especially challenging for young companies. In light of these challenges, the question arises how new ventures can succeed in business-to-government markets. The aim of this thesis is to review relevant marketing and entrepreneurship literature and outline future research directions.

#### 2. **Exploring the Long Tail: Uncovering Niche Markets and Their Impact on Marketing Strategies** *(Chair Prof. Kuester)*

The long tail concept suggests that products with low demand or low sales volume can collectively make up a market share that rivals or exceeds the bestsellers. This concept has

\* Topics can be prepared either in English or German.

significant implications for marketing strategies, particularly in the digital age, where online retailers can stock an almost infinite variety of products. This seminar thesis aims to explore the long tail concept by examining its theoretical foundations, current state of academic research, and practical relevance for marketing. The thesis shall include a systematic review of relevant literature on the long tail concept, focusing on its evolution, key principles, and the conditions under which it is most effective. It shall analyze the impact of the long tail on consumer behavior, including how niche markets can be identified and targeted. The thesis shall propose marketing strategies that leverage the long tail by drawing on examples from various industries and digital platforms. Additionally, avenues for future research on the long tail concept shall be identified, considering emerging trends and technologies.

### **3. Balancing Well-Being and Drive: The Double-Edged Sword of Employee Contentment** *(Chair Prof. Stahl)*

Employee contentment is often seen as a positive goal for organizations, but what happens when satisfaction turns into complacency? This seminar paper aims to explore the implications of high levels of job satisfaction among employees. By reviewing the latest empirical research, this study will examine whether content employees are more motivated and productive or if they risk becoming less creative and losing their initiative. The paper will provide a balanced view, discussing both the potential benefits and drawbacks of employee contentment, and offer insights into how organizations can manage satisfaction to foster both happiness and sustained drive.

### **4. Gender Incongruence in Influencer Marketing: Navigating Gender Dynamics** *(Chair Prof. Stahl)*

The choice of influencers for products traditionally associated with the opposite gender can have unintended consequences, potentially impacting brand perception. This seminar thesis delves into the repercussions of gender incongruence in influencer marketing. Specifically, it examines scenarios where female influencers endorse male-oriented products and vice versa. The review takes into account the influence of gender stereotypes and audience expectations on community reactions. By doing so, it provides actionable insights for marketers seeking to navigate gender dynamics in influencer collaborations and mitigate potential backlash.

### **5. To Act or Not to Act: Examining Corporate Sociopolitical Activism** *(Chair Prof. Kraus)*

This thesis examines the emerging role of corporations in sociopolitical activism, focusing on their motivations, strategies, and impacts. It analyzes how corporations navigate the intersection of commerce and advocacy, weighing the benefits and risks of such involvement. Key areas of focus include the impact of corporate activism on public perception, consumer behavior, brand loyalty, and broader societal implications.

## **6. Marketing and Public Policy Interventions** *(Chair Prof. Stahl)*

Governmental actions and policies play a pivotal role in shaping consumption behavior, particularly in areas that impact public health and safety. For instance, policies like the imposition of e-cigarette taxes to curb underage smoking or menthol bans to reduce cigarette sales can have profound impacts on public health. This seminar thesis should review recent research on the effects of governmental interventions and actions from authorities on consumer well-being and consumption behavior.

## **7. Beyond the Game: The Interplay of Athlete Performance, Fan Engagement, and Market Dynamics in Modern Sports** *(Chair Prof. Stahl)*

This topic explores the multifaceted relationships between athlete performance metrics, fan engagement, and market dynamics across various sports. Through a comprehensive examination of existing research, the research seminar thesis investigates how on-field performance influences fan behavior and the critical role of personal branding in fostering long-term fan loyalty. The analysis extends to evaluating the appeal of consistent athlete performance to sponsors and the strategic significance of international athletes on global marketing efforts. Additionally, the review examines the correlation between athletes' digital presence and their in-game success, alongside the complex interplay between performance and compensation structures.

## **8. Exploring Organizational Purpose Orientations: A Literature Review** *(Chair Prof. Kraus)*

This literature review examines various organizational purpose orientations. The study aims to identify and categorize the types of purpose orientations that organizations adopt, analyzing their theoretical foundations and practical impacts. By reviewing existing research and theoretical frameworks, the review provides a comprehensive understanding of how different purpose orientations influence organizational strategies, culture, and performance. The findings offer valuable insights for organizations seeking to refine their purpose-driven approaches, emphasizing the importance of aligning purpose with organizational identity and strategic goals.

## **II. Consumer Behavior and Psychology**

### **9. Perceiving Brands Through an Ideological Lens: The Intersection of Brand Political Identity and Consumer Political Ideology** *(Chair Prof. Kuester)*

In today's polarized society, consumers increasingly attribute political identities to brands, which has a considerable impact on their purchase behavior. This phenomenon, coupled with the established research on consumers' political ideologies in the marketplace, presents a complex and evolving landscape for both marketers and researchers. This seminar thesis aims

\* Topics can be prepared either in English or German.

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to develop a comprehensive research agenda by (1) reviewing relevant theories and empirical findings from political psychology and consumer research, (2) identifying key research gaps at the intersection of brand political identity and consumer political ideology, and (3) proposing theoretically and practically important questions to advance our understanding of consumer behavior in this context.

### **10. Aligning Values with Actions: A Study on Environmental Attitudes and Consumer Behavior\*** (*Chair Prof. Kuester*)

Despite a broad consensus acknowledging humanity's responsibility for climate change, there remains a significant gap between individuals' pro-environmental attitudes and their actual behaviors. Such discrepancy challenges the efforts to promote environmentally friendly actions. This seminar thesis aims to (1) conceptualize environmental attitude, (2) explore its relationship to consumer behavior, (3) investigate factors that hinder or facilitate the translation of environmental attitudes into action, and (4) derive implications for marketing practice.

### **11. The Influence of Electric Vehicle Visibility on Green Behaviors** (*Chair Prof. Stahl*)

As the adoption of electric vehicles (EVs) continues to rise, there is a potential for spillover effects that promote other environmentally friendly behaviors. In this literature review, we explore whether the visibility and use of EVs can influence broader green behaviors. Additionally, we examine how these effects may vary among different demographic groups, such as individuals with varying political attitudes (e.g., Democrats vs. Republicans). The review synthesizes findings from existing studies on behavioral spillover, investigating the psychological and social mechanisms that drive people to adopt additional green practices after embracing EVs.

### **12. Fake it till you make it?! Perceptions and consequences of AI-generated deep fakes on social media** (*Chair Prof. Homburg*)

Deepfakes in social media refer to highly realistic, AI-generated or altered images, videos, or audio recordings that manipulate or fabricate content to make it appear authentic. They are increasingly prevalent and are gradually becoming a part of consumers' daily lives. How can consumers detect fake news or content, and what are the effects of its use and distribution? This seminar paper aims to (1) collect and synthesize current research on AI-generated fake content, and (2) assess consumer perceptions, evaluations and potential consequences of such content.

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### **13. Emotional Triggers in Online Shopping: A Deep Dive into Consumer Psychology**

*(Chair Prof. Kuester)*

Emotions play a significant role in consumer decision-making, particularly in the digital environment where sensory experiences are limited. With the rise of e-commerce, understanding the emotional triggers that influence online shopping behavior has become crucial. This seminar thesis aims to (1) explore the role of emotional triggers in online consumer behavior, (2) examine how different emotional responses, such as happiness, fear, or excitement, influence online purchasing decisions, and (3) provide a comprehensive overview of the strategies that e-commerce platforms can employ to evoke positive emotional responses. Furthermore, the thesis shall (4) discuss potential future research avenues in the realm of emotions and online shopping.

### **14. Consumer Behavior in Times of Elections: A Literature Review** *(Chair Prof. Kuester)*

Elections are unique periods of heightened political activity that affect various aspects of consumer behavior. The purpose of this seminar thesis is to provide a thorough literature review on the influence of election cycles on consumer decision-making. The thesis should (1) introduce key theories related to political behavior and consumer psychology to establish context. Next, (2) a systematic review of existing research that explores how elections directly and indirectly affect consumer behavior, such as brand loyalty or media consumption, shall be provided. Finally, the thesis shall (3) identify gaps in the current literature, highlighting areas that require further investigation, and (4) derive implications for policymakers and managers.

### **15. Minorities in a Marketing Context** *(Chair Prof. Kraus)*

In the realm of marketing, the perception of minorities holds substantial implications for businesses aiming to foster inclusivity and cultural sensitivity. The way minorities are perceived by others is influenced by various factors, including psychological effects such as minority salience and homophily. Minority salience refers to the degree to which a person's minority identity stands out in a given context and therefore it is remembered more strongly, while homophily relates to the natural tendency of individuals to gravitate towards others who share similar characteristics. This seminar thesis aims to explore the intricate interplay between minority salience, homophily, and the perception of minorities in the marketing landscape.

### **16. Beyond Customer Experiences: The Power of Managing Customer Expectations**

*(Chair Prof. Kuester)*

Managing customer experiences is crucial for successful companies, yet the role of customer expectations is often overlooked. How do customer expectations influence overall experience? Is it worthwhile for companies to invest in managing these expectations? The aim of this seminar thesis is to (1) provide a systematic literature review on the specific role that expectations have on customer satisfaction and other customer-related outcomes, such as

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customer loyalty and word of mouth. In particular, the thesis should (2) clarify when and why managing customer expectations may be especially important for marketing managers. Finally, (3) theoretical and practical implications for managing customer expectations shall be provided.

### **17. Customer Voices, Company Actions: Exploring the Impact of Review Responses on Consumer Behavior** *(Chair Prof. Homburg)*

In the age of digital connectivity, customer reviews wield significant influence over consumer decisions. Beyond merely serving as testimonials, these reviews have become pivotal touchpoints where companies can directly engage with their customer base. The way companies respond to these reviews can profoundly shape customer perceptions and subsequent behaviors. Understanding the strategic implications of these interactions is crucial for businesses aiming to foster lasting customer relationships in an increasingly transparent marketplace.

Against this background, the objectives of the seminar paper are: 1) to review relevant academic literature on the topic, 2) to investigate how manager responses impact customer behavior and 3) to outline areas for further research.

### **18. Identity in Crisis: Understanding Consumer Behavior Under Threat** *(Chair Prof. Kuester)*

When consumers perceive a threat to their self-identity or social identity, such as a loss of status within their social group, this can significantly affect their behavior and decision-making processes. This seminar thesis aims to provide a comprehensive literature review on the topic of identity threat in consumer behavior by (1) introducing foundational theories from social psychology and consumer research related to identity and identity threat and (2) reviewing existing studies on how perceived identity threats influence consumer behavior, including shifts in purchase decisions and brand loyalty. Additionally, the thesis shall (3) identify gaps in the current literature and suggest directions for future research, and (4) highlight practical implications for marketers and policymakers.

### **19. The Power of eWOM: A Comparative Analysis in B2B and B2C Environments** *(Chair Prof. Homburg)*

In today's digital age, electronic Word-of-Mouth (eWOM) has emerged as a powerful tool that significantly influences consumer behavior. For B2B companies, eWOM can shape the perceptions of professional buyers and influence corporate purchasing decisions. In B2C markets, eWOM plays a crucial role in guiding individual consumers through their purchasing journey. Thus, understanding the power of eWOM in these two contexts is vital for businesses aiming to harness its potential.

Against this background, the objectives of the seminar paper are: 1) to review relevant academic literature on the topic, 2) to investigate and compare the impact of eWOM in B2B and B2C markets, 3) to outline areas for further research in both domains.

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## **20. Beyond Stars and Words: Factors Shaping Effective Online Reviews**

*(Chair Prof. Homburg)*

In today's digital marketplace, online reviews serve as critical decision-making tools for consumers navigating purchase decisions. Beyond simplistic star ratings and textual descriptions, the effectiveness of an online review is increasingly defined by its ability to provide valuable insights and guidance. Factors such as detailed product descriptions, personal experiences, authenticity, and relevance to potential buyers play pivotal roles in shaping a review's helpfulness.

Against this backdrop, the objectives of the seminar paper are: 1) to review the relevant academic literature on the topic, 2) to analyze which factors elevate online reviews from mere critiques to influential resources, and 3) to outline areas for further research.

## **21. Keen and Green? The Influence of Consumer Involvement on Information Search and Purchasing Behavior for Sustainable Products** *(Chair Prof. Homburg)*

As sustainability becomes a key concern in many industries, understanding consumer behavior towards products labeled as sustainable is crucial. This seminar thesis explores how consumer involvement – on the one hand, with the product category and, on the other hand, with sustainability issues - affects information search and purchasing behavior for sustainable products. The goals of this seminar thesis are to (1) explain the concept of consumer involvement and its relevance in marketing and consumer behavior studies, (2) investigate how different levels of consumer involvement influence information search behavior for products labeled as sustainable, (3) analyze the impact of consumer involvement on purchasing decisions for products labeled as sustainable, and (4) explore effective marketing and communication strategies for targeting consumers with varying levels of involvement.

## **22. Close to Home: The Impact of Proximity and Home-Country Bias on Consumer Perceptions of Supply Chain Transparency** *(Chair Prof. Homburg)*

As supply chain transparency becomes increasingly important to consumers, understanding how they evaluate this transparency based on the supply chain's geographical location is crucial. This seminar thesis investigates how consumers perceive supply chain transparency, focusing on the differences between domestic and international supply chains, while considering the influence of home-country bias. The goals of this seminar thesis are to (1) define home-country bias and explain its significance in consumer decision-making, (2) examine how consumers evaluate the transparency of supply chains based on their proximity to the home country, (3) analyze the role of home-country bias in shaping consumer perceptions of supply chain transparency, and (4) explore effective communication strategies for companies to mitigate home-country bias and enhance consumer trust in supply chain transparency.

### **III. Price Management**

\* Topics can be prepared either in English or German.

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#### **IV. Product and Innovation Management**

##### **23. Customer-Centric Innovation vs. Internal Innovation: Assessing the Impact of External and Internal Drivers on Organizational Innovation** *(Chair Prof. Kraus)*

This literature review explores the impact of prioritizing customer needs versus fostering internal innovation on organizational innovation outcomes. The study examines whether it is more advantageous for organizations to drive innovation by closely responding to external customer demands or to focus on cultivating internal creative processes. By reviewing existing research and theoretical frameworks, this review provides a comprehensive understanding of the benefits and limitations associated with each approach. The findings offer valuable insights for organizations seeking to optimize their innovation strategies, helping them balance external input with internal development to enhance their competitive edge and overall performance

##### **24. A Literature Review on the Thought Worlds of Marketing and Sales** *(Chair Prof. Homburg)*

Prior research indicates that marketing and sales are often separate departments in organizational reality. Pioneering qualitative work on the interface between marketing and sales has pointed out that it is highly conflict-laden in managerial practice. The objectives of this seminar paper are (1) to review and synthesize relevant academic literature and (2) to discuss the main theory-based concepts.

##### **25. Breaking Barriers: Exploring Company-Internal Challenges to Innovation** *(Chair Prof. Stahl)*

While innovation is the lifeblood of organizational growth, internal barriers can impede its creation. This seminar thesis is dedicated to conducting a comprehensive literature review, focusing on empirical research studies that identify the company-internal factors acting as barriers to innovation. From overtime work to resistance to change, this study aims to uncover and analyze the obstacles that companies face in fostering a culture of innovation. By identifying and understanding these barriers, organizations can strategize more effectively to unleash their innovative potential.

##### **26. A literature review on customer service integration in new product development** *(Chair Prof. Homburg)*

Customer support is a key element in the successful marketing, from domestic appliances to high-tech products. Many aspects of support are strongly influenced by product design, so customer support requirements should be evaluated during new product development. The objectives of this seminar thesis are (1) to review and synthesize relevant academic literature,

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(2) provide an overview of the main aspects of customer service integration in new product development (3) and derive managerial implications.

**27. Thank You for Complaining About Us – A Literature Review on Customer Complaint Management in Companies\*** (*Chair Prof. Kuester*)

While publicly complaining customers might initially seem harmful to companies, their feedback can provide valuable insights for various departments, particularly the innovation department. Despite this potential, many companies overlook the advantages of these complaint messages. This thesis aims to provide a comprehensive review of the literature on complaint management processes. Specifically, it shall (1) explore the use and benefits of complaint messages for innovation, cross-departmental collaboration, and the error management culture within firms. These findings will be used to (2) critically examine how customer complaints can drive innovation, (3) derive implications for marketing research and practice, and (4) provide an outlook for future research directions.

**V. Brand and Communications Management**

**28. Employer Branding in the Digital Age: The Importance of Social Media and Online Reputation Management** (*Chair Prof. Stahl*)

This seminar paper explores the significance of social media and online reputation management for employer branding. The aim is to determine how companies can leverage digital channels to strengthen their employer brand and attract potential applicants. The paper should analyze both theoretical models of online communication and empirical studies on the use of social media in employer branding. Additionally, best-practice examples of successful online strategies can be examined.

**29. Between Customization and Brand Dilution: A tightrope walk for the success of popular brands** (*Chair Prof. Homburg*)

In today's age, more products and services are being tailored to unique consumer preferences and prerequisites. But how much customization and adaptation toward the customer actually hurt the brand identity? For modern businesses, striving to meet individual needs without compromising on their brand identity could become a critical challenge. This seminar paper aims at (1) review relevant literature from brand management and (2) discuss possible conflicts while developing practical recommendations to effectively integrate customization and branding.

\* Topics can be prepared either in English or German.

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### **30. Redefining Sponsorship: Sustainability and Social Responsibility Through Collaboration** *(Chair Prof. Stahl)*

Collaborative projects have emerged as a powerful tool in enhancing the sustainability and social responsibility of sponsorship partnerships. By aligning their goals and resources, sponsors and their partners can create impactful initiatives that address environmental and social issues. This seminar thesis examines the impact of collaborative projects on enhancing sustainability and social responsibility within sponsorship partnerships.

### **31. Mapping Organizational Purpose Orientations to Brand Personalities: A Literature Review** *(Chair Prof. Kraus)*

This literature review explores the relationship between organizational purpose orientations and brand personalities as defined by Aaker's framework. The study aims to identify and categorize various organizational purpose orientations and analyze how these align with distinct types of brand personalities. By reviewing existing research and theoretical frameworks, the review provides a comprehensive understanding of how different purpose orientations can be mapped to brand personalities, shaping organizational strategies, culture, and brand identity. The findings offer valuable insights for organizations seeking to align their purpose with their brand personality, highlighting the importance of integrating purpose-driven approaches with brand identity to enhance overall strategic effectiveness.

### **32. Multichannel Conflicts: The Consequences of Incongruent Information in Omni-Channel Marketing** *(Chair Prof. Stahl)*

In this seminar paper, the impact of inconsistencies and discrepancies in information disseminated across various channels in the context of Omni-Channel marketing is to be examined. It should be discussed how incongruent information affects customer perception and decision-making, and what strategies companies can develop to avoid or minimize such discrepancies. Additionally, the importance of an integrated communication strategy in the context of Omni-Channel marketing will be highlighted.

### **33. Overloaded and Overwhelmed: The Effects of Information Overload on Consumer Behavior and Decision-Making in Supply Chain Transparency** *(Chair Prof. Homburg)*

As consumers increasingly demand detailed information about supply chains, the risk of information overload poses a significant challenge to companies providing such supply chain transparency. This seminar thesis investigates how excessive or complex supply chain information impacts consumer behavior and decision-making processes. The goals of this seminar thesis are to (1) define and explain the concept of information overload, (2) examine how overly excessive or complex supply chain information affects consumers' information search and processing, (3) analyze the impact of information overload on consumer decision-

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making and behavior, and (4) explore strategies for companies to manage and present supply chain information effectively to mitigate the effects of information overload.

**34. Unequal Playing Field: Investigating Sponsorship Disparities Between Male and Female Athletes in Sports** (*Chair Prof. Stahl*)

This seminar thesis explores and analyzes the disparities in sponsorship deals between male and female athletes across various sports. By examining a broad range of existing research, the paper seeks to uncover the underlying factors contributing to the gender gap in sponsorships. The review delves into the historical context, societal attitudes, and market dynamics that influence sponsorship decisions, highlighting the differences in visibility, media coverage, and perceived marketability of male versus female athletes. Additionally, the paper investigates the role of performance metrics, personal branding, and digital presence in securing sponsorship deals, comparing how these elements impact male and female athletes differently.

**35. The Impact of Employer Branding on Corporate Culture: Internal and External Perceptions** (*Chair Prof. Stahl*)

This seminar paper investigates how employer branding influences corporate culture and how this culture is perceived both internally by employees and externally by potential applicants. The aim is to understand whether and how a strong employer brand contributes to creating a positive corporate culture. The paper should analyze theoretical models of corporate culture and empirical studies on the perception of employer branding initiatives.

## **VI. Sales Management**

**36. Unpacking Growth in Sales and Key Account Management Literature: A State-of-the-Art Literature Review** (*Chair Prof. Homburg*)

Companies frequently aim for growth in sales and key account management (KAM), yet the pathways to achieving this growth are complex and multifaceted. This thesis sets out to (1) systematically review and categorize the academic research on growth strategies in sales and KAM, (2) delineate the concept of growth from adjacent concepts such as long-term orientation and sustainability, and (3) derive the implications for managerial practice and future research avenues.

**37. My Pay is my Choice: An Investigation of Tailoring Compensation to each Sales and Key Account Manager** (*Chair Prof. Homburg*)

Tailoring compensation structures to the unique motivations, strengths, and roles of individual sales and KAM managers can confer a competitive advantage. This thesis aims to (1) review

\* Topics can be prepared either in English or German.

the existing literature on personalized compensation strategies, (2) analyze the impact of tailored compensation on sales behaviors and outcomes, and (3) offer practical recommendations for managers while highlighting areas for future scholarly research.

### **38. Team Pay in Sales Practice: Balancing Accountability and Team Spirit**

*(Chair Prof. Homburg)*

Implementing team-based compensation in sales and key account management (KAM) can be a powerful tool for fostering collaboration and achieving collective goals, yet managers face multiple challenges. This study aims to (1) review the existing literature on team-based compensation in sales and KAM, (2) examine the practical applications and complexities of team-based pay structures, and (3) derive implications for managerial practice and future research directions.

### **39. Goal setting in sales: More than just performance implications? (Chair Prof. Homburg)**

Goal setting is vital in sales management. Specifically, goal setting within the sales context describes the process of defining clear, measurable targets for salespeople to achieve. Overall, within the sales function, goal setting is highly relevant as it motivates individuals and teams, aligns their efforts with company objectives, and drives performance. However, different approaches to goal setting can have diverse effects on salespeople, sales teams, and organizations as a whole. Against this background, the aim of this work is to (1) review existing literature on goal setting especially focusing on the sales function, (2) demonstrate the opportunities and challenges of goal setting as a managerial tool, and (3) derive practical implications for companies.

### **40. AI along the sales funnel: A story of two tales (Chair Prof. Homburg)**

Firms are increasingly able to implement Artificial Intelligence (AI) across the sales function. For instance, AI can automate lead generation, personalize customer interactions, and optimize sales strategies. However, recent research shows that the application of AI tools does not always lead to superior results from both the firm and customer perspectives. Against this background, the main goal of this thesis is to (1) review existing literature on potential use cases and implications of AI tools along the sales funnel, (2) demonstrate potential pitfalls when implementing AI tools, and (3) derive managerial strategies for the successful application of AI tools across the sales funnel.

### **41. Framing Strategies in Business-to-Business Sales (Chair Prof. Homburg)**

According to framing theory, the way in which messages are presented (“framed”) influence how receivers interpret the information and make decisions. For example, framing can be used to emphasize selected message elements to promote a specific perspective. As different presentation styles and formats can lead to varying consumer responses, framing effects are

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also relevant for business-to-business (B2B) sales. In particular, value arguments may be framed differently in different selling situations to increase their effectiveness. The aim of this thesis is to examine how framing affects consumers' decision-making and how firms can apply framing strategies in B2B settings.

#### **42. The Adoption of Sales Technology** (*Chair Prof. Homburg*)

Recent technological advancements have led to the emergence of novel sales technologies. These technologies have the potential to substantially improve sales effectiveness and efficiency. However, salespeople are often hesitant to adopt new tools. As the digital transformation is among the most important topics for companies, the question arises what drives technology acceptance in sales. Therefore, the aim of this thesis is to examine relevant adoption factors with respect to sales technology.

#### **43. The Green Potential: Sustainability as a Value Driver** (*Chair Prof. Homburg*)

As businesses increasingly prioritize sustainability, understanding how to create and capture value through sustainable business models and sustainable offerings becomes crucial in both B2C and B2B markets. This seminar thesis aims to (1) explore and analyze academic literature on value creation through sustainability and value communication in both B2C and B2B contexts, (2) examine how sustainability drives various dimensions of value (e.g., economic, environmental, social, and relational) for both suppliers and customers, and (3) outline future research directions and derive managerial approaches to create unique value propositions through sustainability, as well as strategies to communicate sustainability-related value.

### **VII. Digital Marketing**

#### **44. Personalized Digital Nudging: Leveraging AI for Socially Beneficial Decision-Making\*** (*Chair Prof. Kuester*)

Nudging involves influencing individuals to make decisions beneficial to both society and themselves. As decision-making increasingly occurs in digital environments, the concept of digital nudging has gained greater relevance. With the advancement of Artificial Intelligence (AI), it is now possible to create highly personalized nudges by using information about the consumer, including their intentions and the context of their situation. This seminar thesis aims to (1) provide an overview of AI-driven nudging, (2) examine the challenges and opportunities associated with this approach, and (3) identify existing research gaps, particularly concerning the implementation of AI-driven nudging. Additionally, the thesis shall (4) explore the implications of these findings for marketing, providing insights into how AI can be effectively harnessed to influence consumer behavior.

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**45. How Question Format and Design Shapes Online Feedback** (*Chair Prof. Kraus*)

In today's digital landscape, online opinions and reviews play a pivotal role in shaping consumer decision-making. However, the format utilized to elicit consumer opinions, such as rating scales, question types, and overall length of a feedback survey, significantly impacts what and how individuals share their thoughts. Moreover, format shapes the way online opinions are ultimately perceived. This seminar thesis summarizes findings on the dynamic interplay between review formats and consumer perceptions and how the design and structure of online reviews influence both the expression and reception of consumer opinions.

**46. The More, The Better? – A Literature Review on the Design of Rating Systems on Platforms\*** (*Chair Prof. Kuester*)

Rating systems play an important role in shaping the dynamics of platforms like Uber and Airbnb, as well as rating websites such as Tripadvisor or Yelp. The efficacy of these systems hinges on their design and the users' comprehension of their purpose and interpretation. This seminar thesis aims to provide an overview of the development of rating systems on platforms. Specifically, this thesis shall (1) investigate key attributes of rating systems and design choices, assessing their challenges, benefits, and drawbacks from a user perspective. These findings shall be used to (2) critically discuss the design and use of rating systems. Finally, (3) implications for marketing research and platform managers designing rating systems, as well as (4) an outlook for future research shall be derived.

**47. Perception and Impact of Chatbots in Customer Communication** (*Chair Prof. Stahl*)

Since the introduction of ChatGPT, awareness and use of chatbots have surged, particularly in customer service. Businesses, especially in service industries like airlines, are increasingly relying on chatbots to handle customer queries and provide specific services, often directing customers to these digital assistants instead of traditional hotlines. In this context, this seminar thesis aims to explore how users perceive chatbots and what factors influence their interactions with them, with a particular focus on the chatbot's design and appearance. Additionally, the paper will review relevant literature to assess the positive and negative effects of chatbot usage on consumers, examining key aspects such as customer satisfaction and word-of-mouth communication.

**48. The Distinction Between Chatbots and Conversational Agents: Analyzing Interaction Modes and Their Impact on User Experience** (*Chair Prof. Stahl*)

Conversational agents, including chatbots and other dialogue systems, have become increasingly prevalent in various industries, enabling communication between humans and software. While all chatbots are a subset of conversational agents, not all conversational agents qualify as chatbots. The distinction lies primarily in the mode of interaction: chatbots facilitate text-based communication, whereas conversational agents encompass a broader range of systems that can engage in more natural, often voice-based, dialogues with users. In

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this context, this seminar thesis will explore the differences between chatbots and other conversational agents, focusing on how these varying interaction modes influence user experience and satisfaction. By examining relevant literature, including comparisons between text-based chatbots and voice assistants like Amazon's Alexa, the paper aims to provide insights into the specific applications and effectiveness of different types of conversational agents in various communication contexts. The study will also consider how these differences affect user engagement, accessibility, and overall service efficiency.

**49. Revolutionizing Retail: Status Quo of digital technologies in Brick-and-Mortar Stores**  
*(Chair Prof. Homburg)*

The traditional retail setting is undergoing a significant transformation as brick-and-mortar stores increasingly adopt digital technologies, such as Beacons, to enhance customers' shopping experiences and gain in-depth understanding of consumer data and behavior. The objectives of this seminar thesis are (1) to review and synthesize relevant academic literature about the use of digital technologies, specifically Beacons, in retail and omni-channel contexts, and (2) to discuss the diverse ways in which the technology is transforming the customer experience. Please outline implications for retailers aiming to benefit from the new opportunities offered by digital technologies in physical retail stores.

**50. Algorithms as service providers: Factors influencing consumers' perception of machine decisions** *(Chair Prof. Stahl)*

Algorithms as a Service (AaaS) are often machine learning methods, which are often referred to as artificial intelligence. Although the models can sometimes deliver better results than humans and at the same time save financial and time resources, their use does not always have to make sense. The customer's assessment of task-dependent decision-making aspects such as ability, accuracy and usefulness, as well as fairness and authenticity, plays at least as important a role. Customer aversion to such technologies is not uncommon and can reduce success immensely. In this sense, the seminar thesis aims to provide an overview of the areas and services in which AI tools are commonly used in customer contact and how the decision-making factors on the customer side differ depending on the situation. In addition, empirical results to date on consumer perception of machine decisions and implications for management are summarized based on relevant studies.

**51. AI as Catalyst? How Artificial Intelligence Revolutionizes Customer Engagement and Value Creation** *(Chair Prof. Homburg)*

As artificial intelligence (AI) continues to evolve, its potential to transform marketing strategies and practices grows exponentially. This seminar thesis aims to (1) review and synthesize academic literature on the applications of AI in marketing, focusing on both B2B and B2C contexts, (2) examine how AI technologies are reshaping customer engagement, personalization, and value creation in marketing processes, and (3) explore the ethical

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considerations, challenges, and future opportunities of AI-driven marketing, and outline directions for further research.

### **52. Gender-Specific Negotiations in Influencer Marketing** *(Chair Prof. Stahl)*

In the influencer marketing industry, effective negotiation plays a crucial role in defining collaboration terms and pricing. Despite the industry's predominantly female workforce, the impact of gender on negotiation strategies and outcomes remains insufficiently explored. This research investigates how women approach negotiations differently when advocating for themselves versus negotiating on behalf of others. Additionally, it examines the influence of positive prior negotiation experiences on their overall performance. Drawing from gender studies and negotiation theory, this study delves into concepts such as role congruity and stereotype threat. Its objective is to uncover whether and how women in this field adapt their negotiation strategies based on context and past successes.

## **VIII. Customer Relationship Management**

### **53. The Data Quality in Customer Relationship Management (CRM) – Systems**

*(Chair Prof. Homburg)*

Large organizations, as well as Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs), have implemented CRM-Systems. Nevertheless, studies indicate mixed results regarding the quality of data in the system. The storage, collection, and appropriate use of such data is a major challenge for firms. The objectives of this seminar thesis are (1) to review and synthesize relevant academic literature, (2) provide an overview of the problems and solutions of data quality management in CRM Systems (3) and derive managerial implications.

### **54. From Trust to Treachery: Exploring Betrayal in Sales** *(Chair Prof. Homburg)*

Betrayal in buyer-seller relationships is a critical issue in sales management. Betrayal in this context refers to actions that break trust, such as misrepresenting products, failing to deliver on promises, or engaging in unethical behavior. The relevance of understanding betrayal lies in its significant impact on customer loyalty, satisfaction, and long-term business success. Furthermore, there are various forms of betrayal, including deceit, negligence, and broken commitments. Against this background, the aim of this work is to (1) review existing literature on the relevance and effects of betrayal in buyer-seller relationships, (2) explore the different forms of betrayal, and (3) propose strategies for maintaining trust and integrity in these relationships.



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**55. Marketing in the Automotive Industry** (*Chair Prof. Stahl*)

The automotive market is fiercely competitive, with companies continuously striving to attract and retain customers amidst shifting consumer preferences and technological advancements. Successful customer acquisition and retention strategies are crucial for sustaining growth and ensuring long-term profitability in this dynamic industry. What do customers care about when buying automobiles and how have preferences shifted over time? How can marketers react? This seminar thesis should summarize the various marketing strategies automotive companies employ to acquire new customers and retain existing ones, potentially also contrasting strategies in internal combustion engines (ICE) vs. battery electric vehicle (BEV) markets.

**56. Beyond the Deal: Building and Sustaining Buyer-Seller Relationships in B2B Markets** (*Chair Prof. Homburg*)

In today's rapidly changing business landscape, the ability to build and sustain strong buyer-seller relationships is crucial for long-term success in B2B markets. This seminar thesis aims to (1) review and synthesize academic literature on the key factors and strategies involved in establishing and maintaining buyer-seller relationships, (2) examine how these buyer-seller interactions evolve over time and adapt to changing business environment (e.g., market conditions, technological advancements, and shifting customer needs), and (3) outline future research directions in the field of B2B relationship marketing and derive managerial approaches for strengthening relationship bonds between buyers and sellers.

**IX. Market Theory and Research Methods****57. The Elaboration-Likelihood Model of Persuasion: Overview, Applications and Critiques\*** (*Chair Prof. Kuester*)

The Elaboration-Likelihood Model of persuasion (ELM), developed by Petty and Cacioppo in the 1980s, is a well-established framework that explains how individuals process persuasive messages. Widely used in marketing research, advertising, and psychology, ELM offers valuable insights into consumer behavior. This seminar thesis aims to provide an overview of the development, properties, and functioning of ELM in a marketing context. Specifically, this thesis shall (1) investigate the applications and critiques of ELM, present various use cases, and analyze its benefits and challenges for marketing scholars. These findings shall be used to (2) critically discuss the use of ELM and its appropriate areas of application, (3) derive implications for marketing research and practice, such as marketing communication agencies, and (4) provide an outlook for future research directions.

\* Topics can be prepared either in English or German.

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**58. Predictive Evaluation in Marketing: Leveraging the power of Graph Network Analysis**  
*(Chair Prof. Kraus)*

Graph theory is a branch of mathematics examining the structures modeling the relationship between objects. It is a powerful tool for discovering valuable information about relationships in complex data, representing significant business opportunity. In the social sciences, graph analysis has been applied within predictive analytics frameworks, in contexts ranging from predicting advertising response or product adoption to forecasting corporate default.

**59. Transformer based Machine Learning in Marketing Research** *(Chair Prof. Stahl)*

The seminar thesis will explore the use of neural network-based transformers within the realm of marketing research. It will examine how transformer models are used to analyze consumer behavior, predict market trends and optimize marketing strategies.

**60. Recommendation Systems in Marketing Research** *(Chair Prof. Stahl)*

The seminar thesis will explore academic papers that utilize recommendation systems to conduct research, analyzing how these systems enhance customer engagement, boost sales, and optimize marketing strategies. The student will systematically compare different types of recommenders and discuss the state of the art.

**61. Innovative Approaches to Marketing Using Recommender Systems** *(Chair Prof. Kraus)*

Recommender Systems are used in marketing to personalize consumer interactions. By leveraging advanced algorithms, it's possible to enhance marketing strategies, improve consumer engagement, and optimize campaign effectiveness through tailored recommendations.

**62. Evaluating Employee Online Reviews: Unveiling Validity and Biases for Meaningful Insights** *(Chair Prof. Stahl)*

In the era of digital connectivity, employee online reviews have emerged as a unique source of information for organizations. However, their validity and potential biases have not been thoroughly explored, setting the stage for this seminar paper's investigation. Drawing on a state-of-the-art literature review, this study will assess the general validity of online reviews and subsequently apply this understanding to examine the credibility of employee online reviews. By addressing these gaps, this research aims to enhance the reliability of employee feedback and provide critical insights for leveraging this valuable resource for organizational improvement.

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### **63. Rationality, Morality, and Sustainability: Examining Theories of Environmentally Sustainable Consumer Behavior\*** *(Chair Prof. Kuester)*

The natural environment faces significant threats from various environmental issues. One crucial element in mitigating these threats is environmentally sustainable consumer behavior, which not only protects the environment but also benefits society at large. This seminar thesis aims to (1) develop a clear and comprehensive understanding of what constitutes environmentally sustainable consumer behavior, (2) analyze the primary theories that explain sustainable consumption from both rational and moral perspectives, and (3) assess the variables within these theories, scrutinizing their effectiveness and limitations in explaining sustainable consumer behavior. Finally, the thesis shall (4) identify and discuss potential areas for future research in this field.

### **64. Evolution and Application of Causal Inference Methods in Marketing Research** *(Chair Prof. Stahl)*

This thesis explores the historical development and contemporary application of causal inference methods in marketing research, highlighting key theoretical advancements and practical implementations. It examines how econometric models, experimental designs, and modern machine learning techniques have transformed the ability to accurately assess the impact of marketing strategies on consumer behavior and business performance in the context of causal inference.

## **X. Marketing Analytics**

### **65. Machine Learning Approaches to Predict Consumer and Retail Metrics** *(Chair Prof. Kraus)*

Marketing analytics frequently utilize multiple machine learning models, each possessing unique properties that make them suitable for specific scenarios. Fine-tuning these models is a crucial aspect of data mining processes. In data-driven marketing, the approach involves fitting several models to a given case, tuning their hyperparameters, and evaluating their performance.

### **66. Analyzing Satellite Data for Business Purposes** *(Chair Prof. Stahl)*

Satellite technology has provided unprecedented insights into various fields such as environmental monitoring, urban planning, agriculture, and disaster management. However, its analysis first involves complex processes to transform the raw data into meaningful information. This seminar thesis should provide a comprehensive overview of how satellite data can be processed and analyzed for practical marketing and business purposes.

\* Topics can be prepared either in English or German.