Marketing Department
Boltzmannstraße 20
14195 Berlin

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Research Seminar in Marketing – Summer Term 2026

Effective Communication Strategies for Product Recalls

Bachelor Program in Business Administration

Prof. Dr. Sascha Raithel, FU Berlin
Jan von Schlieben-Troschke, FU Berlin

General Information:

Students enrolled in the bachelor's degree program in Business Administration are expected to familiarize themselves with and critically evaluate current research questions from a specific area of business administration in the research seminar.

The management of product recalls presents significant challenges for executives and regulatory authorities. A particular risk arises from malfunctioning products (e.g., exploding batteries in the Samsung Galaxy Note) that, despite a recall by the manufacturer, are not returned but instead continue to be used by consumers. In cases of product malfunction, there is not only a risk to consumer health but also the potential for severe reputational damage and lawsuits against companies. In the worst-case scenario, this can even lead to corporate bankruptcy (e.g., Takata). Despite these risks, the percentage of items actually returned by consumers is often low. For example, in the United States, recall rates in many product categories are well below 10% (CPSC 2018).

In this research seminar, students will examine this issue from a marketing perspective and address the question: How should product recall communications be designed to ensure that as many affected consumers as possible participate in the recall?

Students will work in **groups of three** to explore different aspects of this question. In addition to a theoretical engagement with the topic, each group will also **conduct empirical research and perform an experimental investigation**. Each group will

analyze the effect of a design, content or channel manipulation in product recall communication.

Mandatory reading for the Seminar: The short book "Product Recall Management – Preparation, Execution, and Recovery" serves as the foundational resource for the seminar discussions and the research questions addressed by the students. As such, all participating students are required to familiarize themselves with its content. The book is available free of charge within the FU network: https://link.springer.com/book/10.1007/978-3-658-45587-3

Learning Objectives of the Seminar:

- Students will understand the theories and interrelationships of relevant topics (e.g., product recall campaigns, marketing communication) and will be able to derive hypotheses for experimental research.
- Students will develop methodological knowledge in the field of quantitative research and apply it in an experimental investigation. This includes developing a questionnaire, collecting data, and analyzing and interpreting results.
- Preparation for the bachelor's thesis and master's program: Students will gain an introduction to academic work, including discussing various literature sources and citation methods, structuring academic papers, and understanding and applying empirical methods.
- Additionally, students will practice presentation techniques, strategies for time and self-management, and teamwork skills.

Schedule

Date and Place		Topics and Content
03.04.2026	Until 12:00pm (noon)	**Application Deadline**
10.04.2026	Until 11:59pm	**Confirmation of Admission & Communication of Subtopics**
17.04.2026	Until 11:59pm	**Students must:** • Confirm their participation or withdraw from the seminar • Indicate their preferences for subtopics
22.04.2026	9:15am-1:00pm (in person)	**Seminar kick-off** • Introduction to the seminar and to product recalls • **Guest lecture by Silvia Raschke** (Bundesamt für Verbraucherschutz und Lebensmittelsicherheit) • Performance implications of recalls, the role of customers, and the product recall management cycle • Crafting effective recall notifications • Topic assignment and organizational details
05.05.2026	10:00am-2:00pm (in person)	**Product safety and product recalls in practice** • Guest lecture by Cameron Crowley **Scientific Research (1)** • Fundamentals of scientific research • Introduction to experimental research • Tips for presentations
13.05.2026	4:00pm-6:00pm (online)	**Guest lecture by Saro Turner (Law Firm Slater Vecchio)** **Consultation**
20.05.2026	2:00pm-6:00pm (in person)	**Interim Presentation** • Presentation and discussion of theoretical background (incl. hypothesis development) and planned experimental manipulations **Scientific Research (2)** • Introduction to the analysis of experiments
10.06.2026	2:00pm-4:00pm (online)	**Consultation & Review of Thesis Structure**
24.06.2026	10:00am-5:00pm (in person)	**Final Presentation** • Presentation and discussion of experiment results **Scientific Research (3)** • Tips for writing the seminar paper
01.07.2026	4:00pm-6:00pm (Online)	**Consultation**
17.07.2026	Until 12:00pm (noon)	**Submission** • Submit seminar paper (PDF) along with Stata do-file via email

Assessment Components

The seminar comprises 3 weekly contact hours (equivalent to 6 ECTS credits). Attendance at the scheduled sessions is mandatory. The assessment components for this seminar are as follows:

- Delivering the interim presentation (3 minutes per person) (10%)
- Delivering the final presentation (8 minutes per person) (30%)
- Participation in discussions and providing feedback to other groups (10%)
- Written report in the form of a seminar paper (10 pages per person) (50%)

Application process

The seminar is aimed at bachelor's students (Business Administration) who, during the summer semester 2026, are enrolled in or have completed at least one advanced module ("Vertiefungsmodul") in the field of Marketing.

Interested students should send their application by **April 3, 2026, at 12 PM (noon)** to jan.schlieben-troschke@fu-berlin.de. Applications will only be considered if they include the following three documents: 1) the completed registration form attached, 2) a motivation letter **in English language** (max. half a page) and 3) a current transcript of your academic achievements.

The number of participants is limited to 24 students. Selection criteria include:

- Motivation: Why are you interested in the topic of product recall management? What interests you about experiments? (max. half a page)
- Qualifications: Your prior academic performance, particularly in the field of Marketing.

Exceptional circumstances may be taken into account during the selection process. If this applies to you, please inform us before the application deadline.

Acceptance notifications will be sent via email until April 10, 2026. If you are accepted, you must confirm your participation or withdraw from the seminar by April 17, 2026 (11:59pm). Once confirmed, your registration is binding.

Unclaimed spots will be offered to applicants on the waiting list. If you decide not to participate after the withdrawal deadline on April 17, 2025, your exam attempt will be considered failed, and you may face disadvantages in the selection process for research seminars in Marketing in future semesters.