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How to use Emotional Content to Increase Visitor Response

By John Alexander

by: **John Alexander**

Did you know that many folks make "buying decisions" when they are moved emotionally? Other traditional medias have made the most of these principles and taken advantage of them for many years, whether it be a TV commercial or an ad in a magazine. People are emotional beings and people make decisions (either good or bad) when they are emotional. If something causes a customer to become upset, they become angry and try and solve it. If they become upset enough...they'll make a decision to perhaps discontinue your service and hire another service. On a positive side, the TV media bombards us with commercials that try to make an advertisers product seem fun or cute. The "emotional content" tactic is in nearly every advertising and communication media from print to radio to TV and yes, even the web. Emotional content is used to sell everything from fast food to children's toys.

What every Toy Marketer knows:

Toy marketers have known for years that the focus in a toy commercial is not so much on their new product, as much as it is on the facial expressions of the child. They're showing the absolute joy and delight of playing with that toy. Often images in the mind of the child who is viewing the commercial might evoke a sense wonder, adventure and excitement. Sometimes, a toy marketer may aim much deeper psychologically by showing the child in their commercial, enjoying their toy with either Mom or Dad sitting on the floor playing with him or her. The child viewing the program may even desire that toy more simply because they think that "if they only they had this toy", their Mom or Dad might take more time to sit down and play with them too!

Emotional Content in Traditional Marketing:

In the example above, a TV commercial does not focus on the parent...they are selling to the child. However, selling a toy on the web, in an online toy store, is different in the aspect that you are actually selling to the parent (a child does not have a visa card to place an order). The benefits of a toy that appeal to the parent will be things like, it's safety features, the fact that it "educational". However, focus on appealing to the child might zoom to the top again in a children's entertainment site. If you want to

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sell a toy, you must make it desirable to have on the child's level. Most of us who have kids, know the impact and the drive that a child can have towards getting something from a parent. When a child "wants" something, that child will persistently find a way to go after that item until usually, the parent often gives in and buys it.

What about the silly characters brought to life in a fast food commercial and various the toy giveaway promotions? Certain fast food restaurant marketers know that children have the power to drag their parents to the local fast food place based on the fact that they can get this neat toy. All of this starts by a commercial in which that tiny little toy is made to appeal to the child's emotions. Is this not true also with certain breakfast food cereals and the "free prize" or "game" you get in every box? Of course as we grow from children to adults, we are not influenced by emotional media elements anymore....or are we. Let's look now at a few actual examples from my experiences on the web.

On The Web, Emotional Content Influences Peoples "Buying Decision." Actually, with the web being a multimedia experience, we have lots of opportunity to work with emotional content. After all, your visitors are just human beings too? We're really no different online than offline. We have an important emotional side of us that can be appealed to. Here's what I have learned from my client successes.

If you are trying to sell a baby crib, but nobody is buying it,...put a cute little baby in the crib and **PEOPLE WILL BUY IT!**

If you are relying on graphics, photos, animated gifs or any type of images, you want a combination of quality with uniqueness. Will your image make your audience smile or will it make your audience cry? Where might it be appropriate to make your audience cry? Actually, all it takes it the right scenario.

Example: I know of several businesses who are utilizing messages based on the events which occurred September 11 in the US. (The Sept. 11th tragedy in the US). In these examples, the websites selling products are appealing to the visitors sense of patriotism or they may deliver messages of hope and inspiration. As important as these points are, they are also making good sales. In the case of the Sept. 11 example, some sites are selling but also contributing a portion to the cause.

This leads to another thought....be very mindful of current events and current interest topics that you hear about on the media. Sometimes the most obvious strategies can be staring us right in the face. Be mindful of all media topics and in many cases you can bring about some good out of what would otherwise be missed.

Whatever you are selling for retail online...."Lifestyle graphics" work best!

Example: If your selling a piece of furniture for the living room....display a picture of the furniture being used in someone's living room. The visitor may say to themselves...."look at this comfy looking couch". "This guy looks like he is really enjoying himself". (The image might be of a person sitting comfortably on the couch, in their living room....feet up and arms relaxed).

TIP: Lifestyle photos like this are much more influencing that just a product displayed in a showroom.

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Create pages that are not "hard sell". Instead, focus on the product benefits in way that it appeals to the emotions. (Keep in mind that many people will buy spontaneously, but they do not want to "be sold" something). Most people come to a web page in search of information. The "loud" or "hard sell" approach does not work on the web.

If you are promoting something with emotional appeal which is already established through other medias, then also use it in your web page and tie it in.

For example, what do you think of when I say the 3 words...Zoom Zoom Zoom.

Remember the web has the potential to be a powerful multimedia experience. Is there a place for the use of music to contribute to the right atmosphere? Moving your audience just takes a little thought. Let your mind think outside of what is already being done. I am not talking about traditional stuff here, like putting a flash commercial on your site. Extend your creativity and be original. Does your product or service offer a solution to people's problems? Is there a way that it can be promoted with an emotional angle to it for greater impact?

I learned that the use of Humour at times is very important. It can be in the form of text, graphics, audio, and video but just make sure it is good humour. People want to feel good on your client's web page. Good humour will influence emotion and "great humour" can funnel volumes of traffic into your site just by word of mouth.

Can you recall seeing humour used on a web page that made you laugh out loud? If so, just think back and see if you don't recall telling a friend to "check it out"! Then there may be sites where it might be hard to use humour (A funeral Parlour or perhaps a Divorce Lawyer). On the other hand, with a little creativity, who is to say it could not be done....with greatest of tact of course.

A good example of the power of emotional content can be seen in instance where something about a site is so moving that it makes the viewer want to tell everyone they know!

Example: Interview with God (Very emotional feel good stuff)

Example: Alien Song (a simple 30 second animation that is guaranteed to have you telling your friends to check it out).

So what other ideas might you consider using to make emotional impact with your audience?

Is it possible to take old ideas and put a new spin on them?

What I mean by this is taking some older ideas and refresh them. There is nothing wrong with older concepts if they work, but sometimes all they need is re-thinking. One of the first things I ever experimented with was the idea of having a little fun with the old "printable coupon" idea. You know the old "discount coupon" which can be put on a Web page so the visitor can print it and bring it in to get a discount? At the time, I thought, what else could we do besides give folks a discount coupon to print off? It needs to be fun and have a little emotional appeal and still deliver value.

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I created what I called the "SAY THE MAGIC WORD" campaign for a client.

Instead of printing coupons from my client's web site (a local Garage), I introduced the following promotion, which became somewhat popular with the client's customers.

When you visit the site, the visitor would scroll down the page and click on the image of a speaker. Suddenly you would hear a voice say "The Magic Word Is...." and it would give you a "word". Now this was not just any word, this was quite a magic word because when you take your car into the garage for a tune up, give your keys to the service manager and "say the Magic Word" you learned from the web site, they would cut your bill by 15%! Better yet, keep changing the magic word and you kept your audience coming back to the site.

People had fun with it...everyone told their friends about it, it delivered value. Honestly though, it was just a new spin on an old idea, but both the client and customer loved the concept.

I challenge you to put on your thinking cap.

You see as you introduce things like "humour" or other emotional content into use....you can also widen your scope of SEO promotion. Have you checked the top KEI values around subjects of comedy and humour? Hmm...Well I guess that's an idea to be examined then isn't it?

Explore your clients business, explore what's going on in the world, but always remember the powerful impact that emotional content can deliver, if tastefully done.

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Ecommerce: I Second That Emotional Connection

By Scott Lindsay

"We are much more emotionally attached to products for which we feel some involvement. So true personalization and customization makes a real difference." - Donald Norman (author)

There is a psychology to the products we use most. In truth, there may likely be a product that is less expensive and equal in many primary ways. However, the use of a product has certain emotional ties that link the product with a particular response. We may not be able to articulate why the product is superior; we simply know it is the only product we want to use.

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As a netpreneur involved in ecommerce it may be important to work toward finding ways to assist your customers in developing an emotional link to the products you carry.

"Creating an emotional attachment is to go beyond designing Web sites simply for usefulness and focus on meeting desires as well as user's needs. When this occurred, people would start integrating those products into their lives and start to incorporate it into daily rituals." Kelly Goto (Gotomedia - Australia)

When your customers begin to use the product and gain an emotional attachment to it you will likely discover a highly motivated client who willingly tells others about your product.

Some of the best advertising has allowed consumers to develop an emotional attachment to a product they may have never used. For instance just mentioning products like Hallmark, Smuckers, Coke or Nike often causes consumers to think about connections that bridge their emotional response to the product in question.

The emotional response may have to do with a successfully emotive marketing campaign; word of mouth advertising from emotionally connected consumers or a special moment when the product was used. That connection should not be minimized or misunderstood.

Ultimately the uniqueness of the product you are marketing will subside. If you wish to continue the sale of the product long-term you need to work to establish an emotional connection to your ecommerce product.

"Over time, competitors will imitate, patents will run out, buyers no longer can tell the difference among similar products. When the product effect dissipates, what's left is people's attachment to the brand. Strong brands recognize this." - William Dillon

One of the ways to add the potential of an emotional connection to your product may include a forum where members can talk about the effects of your product. You might also include emotive testimonials from those who already have an emotional connection to your product. Finally, include articles that place the product in a light where an emotional connection can take place. If you begin to see emotional connections to your products be very grateful.

Scott Lindsay is a web developer and entrepreneur. He is the founder of HighPowerSites and many other web projects. HighPowerSites is the easiest do-it-yourself website builder on the web. Get your

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