

USE OF EMOTICONS IN BUSINESS COMMUNICATION

Emoticons and Emojis are experiencing a global boom. Emoji is the next stage in evolution of the text-based emoticons that have been around since the 1980s. They initially were only used by the pioneers on chat rooms, MSN, Facebook, and the like, today they have sneaked their way into everyday personal and business communication. Whereas emoticons are limited to using standard keyboard characters, emoji symbols are significantly more complex visual icons representing human emotions in the shape of pictographic faces. In the latest release of Unicode, there are almost 1000 different emoji that are included in communication.

The use of emoticons in business is a good practice, but it should be used with great care not to alienate the customer. There are certainly exceptions to every rule, but knowing company's customer well will dictate how much emoticons are used in communications. Emoji do not provide context and they hardly provoke positive emotion in the customer. Their use might even offend some people who may think that they are not being taken seriously. It is recommended not to use emoticons when a customer has a serious complaint or it is the first communication through email.

As with many things in marketing and customer service, knowing the customer and the way that they communicate is key to success.