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HOW THE USE OF EMOJIS AFFECTS THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN USERS AND BUSINESS

The first emoji appeared in 1999, it was invented by the Japanese programmer Shigetaka Kurita. Icons became an integral part of online communication only in the 2010s thanks to the smartphones, the growing popularity of social networks and messengers.

In 2015, the Oxford Dictionary called *emoji* 🤔 the ‘word of the year’. After this recognition, brands also began to adopt digital writing. Emoji is not only about entertainment anymore, now it is an important tool for communication between business and client; it has deep functionality, history and the future.

Therefore, posts done by 150 companies according to their SMM campaigns became the *object* of the research. The *subject* is the impact of emojis on the relationship between business and user. The core *aim* of the following research is to identify how the use of emoji affects the relationship between users and business. To fulfil this aim the following *tasks* were established: to analyze posts with emojis, to assess the users’ engagement of posts with emojis, to assess the frequency of emoji use, to analyze the influence of using smiles on a brand marketing campaign. As for methods, they are the following: qualitative processing of materials, analytics, description and experiment.

According to the Adobe survey, which considers pictograms as a cultural phenomenon, 81% of respondents considered people who use emoji in correspondence more friendly. According to the study, the most popular icons were these: 😂, 😊, ❤️.

Quintly, an online social media analytics tool, provides the following figures: emoji increase user engagement by at least 15%, and 44% said they prefer to buy products advertised with smileys. In social networks, records containing icons get 57% more likes and 33% more reposting and comments, while users open push-notifications

with emoji by 85% more often. The appearance of emojis increases the chances that the user will notice what has been written. Emoji looks friendlier than a set of letters, cheers up and actually replaces the mimic that digital communication lacks.

In order to understand how emojis impact on business, 150 accounts of best companies in their segment according to their revenues were analyzed. The study revealed that 60% included at least one emoji in their post on Instagram and Facebook between January 1 and March 15, 2020. This shows that business is engaged in using emojis.

To analyze the impact of emojis on user engagement, the experiment was conducted. Two different posts on LinkedIn were run: one with emojis and one without them. The post with emojis received an interaction rate of 6,44% while post without emojis had 4,88%. Additionally, the random shows of the post without emojis were 143 times less than with emojis.

The analysis of the above-mentioned activities shows that posts with at least one emoji receive more average interactions per post. This clearly proves that emojis are not just fun decoration but a means to engage better with the target audience.

Interpretation of the results determines the following reasons why emojis increase user engagement. Firstly, they remind us of human faces. According to Churches, the author of 'Emoticons in Mind', when a person looks at an emoji, his brain behaves in the same way as when he or she looks at a real human face. Secondly, emojis correlate with happiness. When a person uses an emoji, he experiences enjoyment, happiness and perceived information richness. Thirdly, using emojis implies easy and instant text processing. To some extent, emojis are images which make a post-easy-to-process and thus, the human brain processes them quickly. Finally, emojis implicate personalization. A smile hints that there is a person sitting on the other side who is able to sympathize and rejoice with the user. This very user feels that the company is "on the same wave" and begins to trust.

Thus, an emoji is an effective tool not only in personal correspondence but also when communicating with clients. However, when using them for business, it is necessary to take into account the company's area, type of social network, as well as the content. Emojis prove to be beneficial to improve the company's metrics number. With that said, in the age of digitalization business has to express feelings and give more personal touch with the help of emojis, at the same time, it should not overuse them.