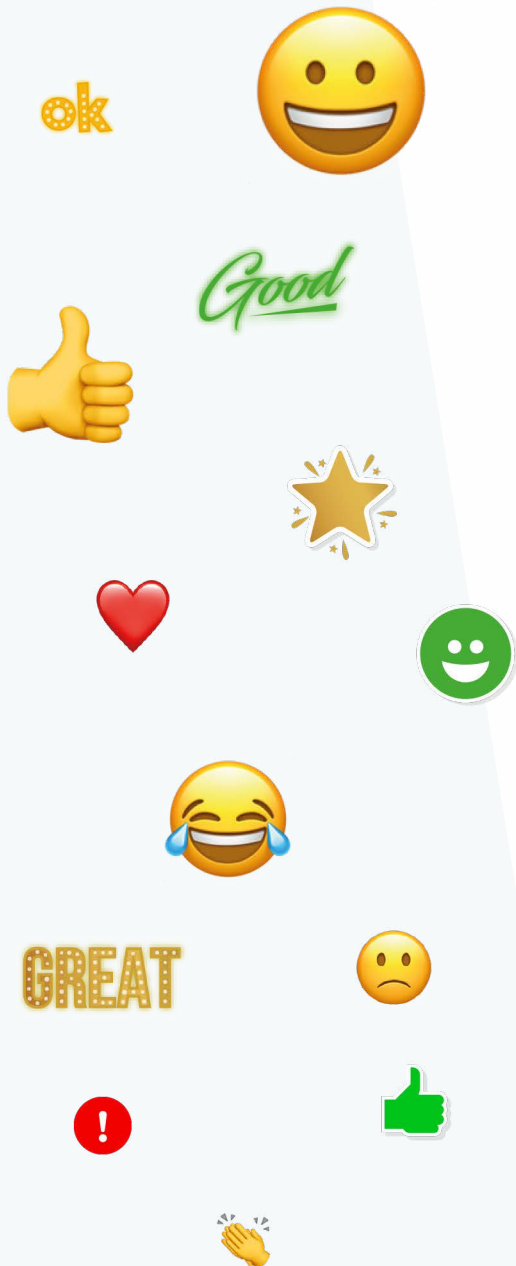


EMOJI USE IN BUSINESS: A RESEARCH REPORT

Time to give emoji a 'thumbs up'
in business comms



Executive Summary

Can you believe it's been a mere seven years since emoji hit the mainstream? Billions are now being sent each day, with all ages universally embracing the ability to add feelings and images to their written communications.

On a personal level we seem to have emoji nailed, but there's an ongoing debate about whether businesses have got their figurative heads over how to best use these modern-day hieroglyphics.

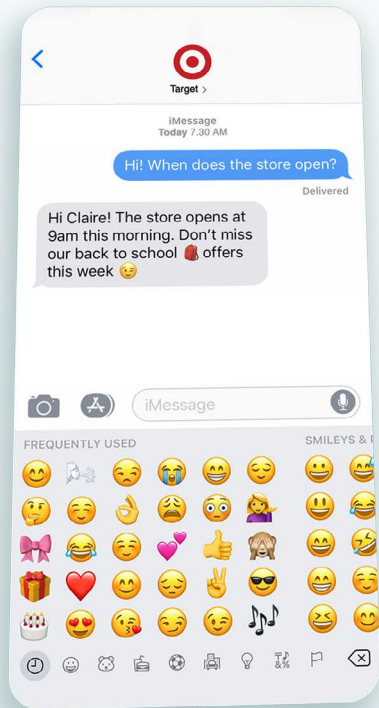
Here at Customer Thermometer, emoji, emoticons, icons and feedback symbols are our business. We pride ourselves on being the 'Instagram of feedback' – our survey software enables businesses to embed emoji into emails, so customers or employees can easily click on the icon that suits their mood. They are going down a storm, but we know that the usage of emoji in businesses is still relatively new.

Despite Googling our keyboards off, we couldn't find much information online about how emoji could and should be used by businesses. And yet we know that our own customers are increasingly using custom emoji in their feedback solutions in order to fully represent their brand and get as much engagement with their customers as possible.

We felt there was a real need to get insight into how consumers really feel about them in the workplace and what they'd like to see from brands.

They say if you want a thing done well, do it yourself – so that's exactly what we did. We commissioned original research, across 1,000 Americans, representing all ages and states, to give us brand new insight into how emoji are changing business communications. This report shares the findings with some added recommendations from us on how to take advantage of this pictorial revolution!

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The Rise of Emoji

Well if you want to go right the way back it all started with emoticons – namely facial expressions that were made out of punctuation, which were first seen in an 1881 magazine. Emoji are much like emoticons, but emoji are actual pictures instead of typographics. It then took over 100 years for them to get incorporated into computer language.

Emoji as we know them got their official start in Japan in 1999 via a local artist, Shigetaka Kurita, who wanted a simple way to convey information on the mobile platform. This is why the word “emoji” is translated to “image character” in Japanese.

They really hit the mainstream in 2012 when Apple released iOS 6, and iPhone owners discovered the emoji keyboard. It then wasn’t long before emoji made their way to Instagram, Facebook and Twitter.

Fast forward to today and you’d be hard-pressed to find a post on your social media feeds that isn’t full of different types of emoji. Did you know that the most used emoji on Twitter is ‘Face With Tears of Joy’ – the same goes for Facebook, followed by the ‘Birthday Cake’ emoji, for all those birthday greetings Facebook is keen you don’t forget.

No wonder Oxford Dictionaries named U+1F602 Face With Tears of Joy as its 2015 Word of the Year! In 2019 over 200 new emojis were introduced and Apple has detailed that new emoji will arrive on the iPhone this fall.

They are also proving very popular in business messaging platforms – over 26 million custom emojis have been created in Slack since the feature was introduced and for the 13 million daily active users of Microsoft Corp.’s Teams, emoji use is basically universal. Of course, we are finding them very effective as a way to quickly and easily see how customers and staff are feeling...



1881
Facial expressions made out of punctuation first seen



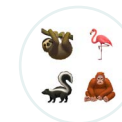
1999
Emoji get their official start in Japan



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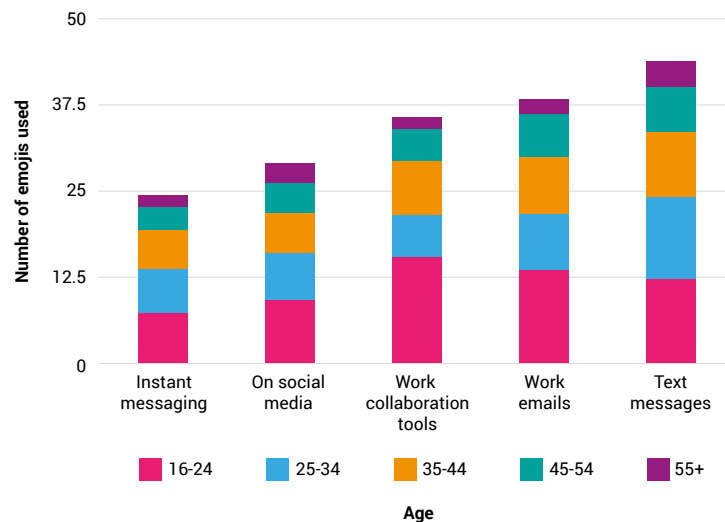
Americans are now sending an average of **34.71 emoji a day** across social media, messaging and emails

Research Results

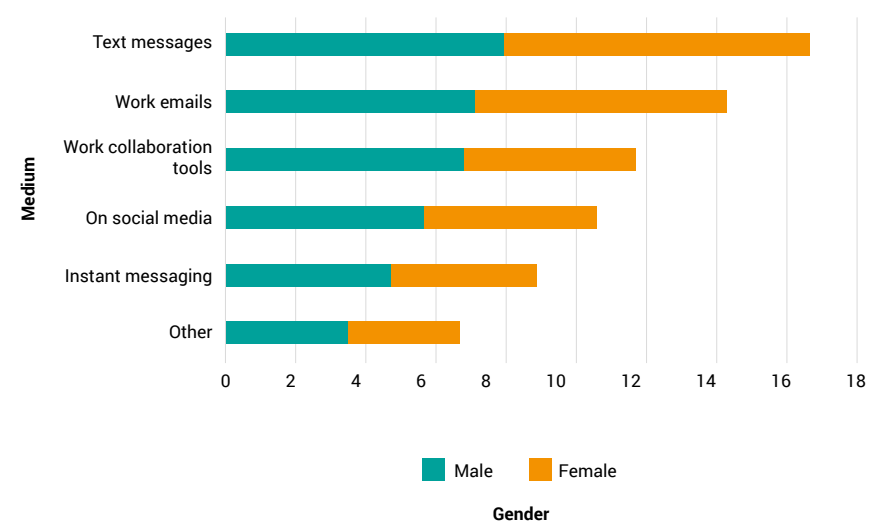
Our research clearly shows that emoji are no longer the preserve of the instant-messaging youth. In fact it reveals that they are fast becoming a staple of business communications, enhancing employee engagement, speeding interactions and reducing conflict.

Emoji usage has been universal across the age groups. *The average American is now sending an average of **34.71 emoji a day** across social media, messaging and emails.* Men are even more likely to be adding an icon, as they are sending three more a day compared to women (35.9 a day, vs. 32.8). Gen Zs (16 to 24-year-olds) are the biggest emoji-lovers as on a daily basis they are sending over five times more than Americans aged 55+.

Emojis used per day by age



Emojis used per day by gender





Over half of Americans
(55%) believe they have helped avoid conflict or misunderstandings because they help convey a 'tone'



Easier when travelling
20%



Faster than typing
35%

Drivers for Usage: Emoji in Business

Emoji may have started as something people used in their personal lives, but these little pictorial icons have certainly made the successful journey from B2B to B2C. Americans are embracing the ability to add images and feelings to their written communications whilst at work, as well as in their personal life. Over one in five (22.5%) Americans reveal they regularly add emoji to their business emails.

Women especially appreciate receiving an emoji in a work email as they deem them friendlier (87.7% vs. 73% of men). The other biggest driver for using emoji in the business environment is that **over half of Americans** (55%) believe they have helped avoid conflict or misunderstandings because they help convey a 'tone.' For over a third (35%) the biggest benefit is that they find it much quicker to reply with an emoticon, especially when they are on the move.

Emoji usage is also extending out of the workplace – businesses can also use them to engage with customers. **Over two thirds of Gen Z and Gen Y** (66.3% of 16 to 24-year-olds and 66.4% of 25 to 34-year-olds) said they are happy for brands to use emoji during any customer communications with them.



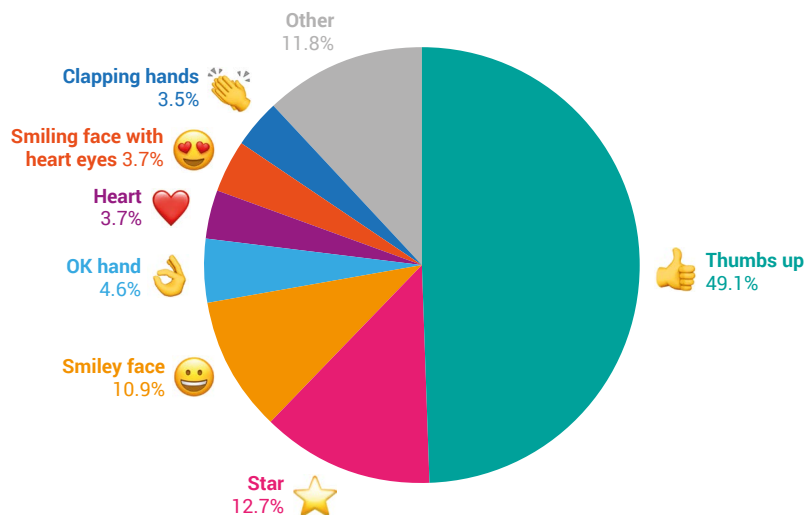
Friendliness
79%



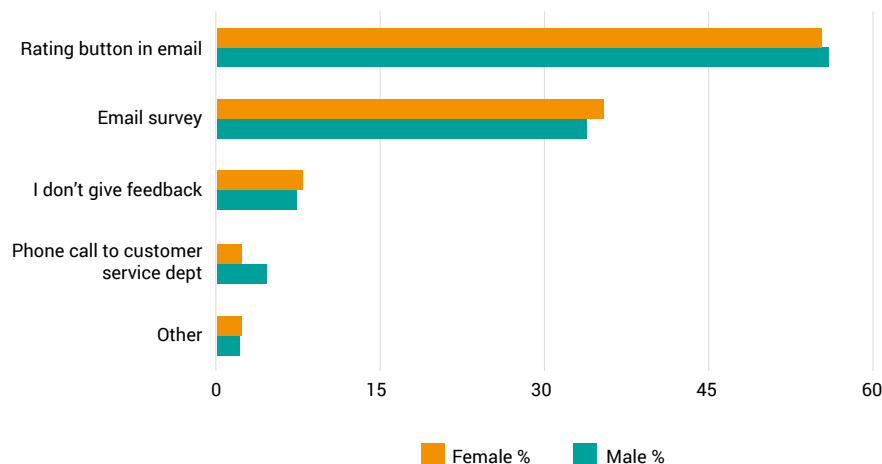
Tone
55%

Using Emoji to Give Feedback

The emoji of choice that Americans would opt for to let a brand know they are doing well



How would you most prefer to give feedback?



Interestingly there is also a place for emoji usage with customer feedback. As Warren Buffett says – feedback is a gift; brands that have better insight into customer sentiment can see a measurable impact on their bottom line. [When asked about their feedback habits, Americans claim that they are giving feedback to brands every 1.18 months.](#) For over two thirds (68%) the last time they did it was to share 'positive' feedback, followed by 18% who felt neutral and 14% who were negative.

They are highly receptive to using emoji to give their thoughts on the brand experience. The emoji of choice that Americans would opt for to let a brand know they are doing well is the 'thumbs up' (49.1%), followed by a star (12.7%), a smiley face (10.9%) an 'ok hand' (4.6%) and a heart (3.7%).

Lessons for business

Far from being a formality-fail, emoji represent the biggest advancement in the human language since the written word. For Gen Z who have grown up in a digitized world, emoji have always formed an integral part of their written communication.

Increase customer engagement

Ultimately, they are symbols that convey more than words, they help the writer quickly and simply express an emotion, tone and feeling. It's time we embrace how workers want to communicate, across email and collaboration tools like Slack and Teams, and also consider that the brevity and humanity benefits of emoji usage can also be extended into customer engagement as well.

Increase employee engagement

Businesses already recognize that customers engage better with content when they use emoji, so it clearly stands to reason that this successful way of communicating should also be applied to customers. After all, there is a clear link between how employees are treated within an organization and customer retention.

Minimize misunderstanding

An example of a way that emojis can be very effectively used in business is in email, especially when you have a remote workforce with cultural differences. By using an emoji, you can clearly illustrate the sentiment, such as whether the tone is meant to be friendly or funny. It adds personality and crucially, clarity.

Top tips for businesses:

- 1 Lead from the top** – when managers use emoji it creates a culture of acceptance
- 2 Customize** – create your own business emoji that staff can use and share to celebrate success
- 3 Check the tone** – some customers would appreciate the personal touch of an emoji, if they use one then feel free to use one



Brand tips

In marketing there's a clear correlation – emoji equal engagement. Emails with an emoji in the subject line have better click-throughs, social media posts that have images have more responses.

Words alone don't cut it anymore as they don't reflect the language changes of customers. The key now is to make sure you are matching the right symbols and pictures that support your content and tone. These emotional icons really do have the power to break down barriers; by engaging with your target market in the way they communicate you can truly humanize your brand and show your customers you aren't afraid to speak to them on a more personal level.



Top tips for brands:

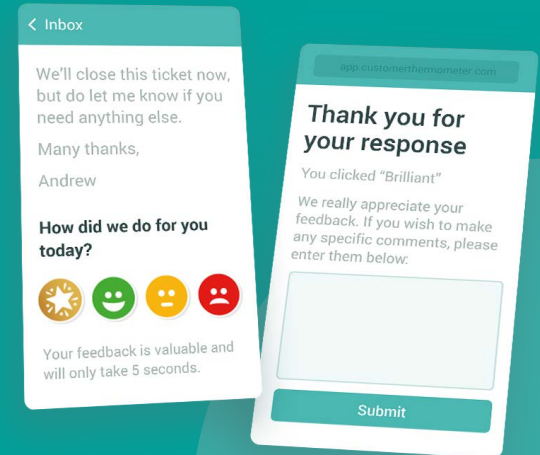


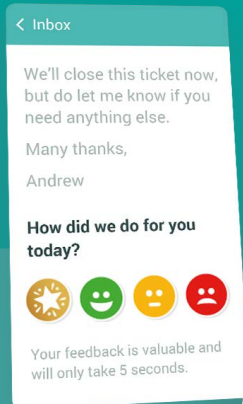
- 1 Use them in real-time** – whether it be by chat, social media or on feedback buttons; catch them in the moment and they can boost engagement
- 2 Be smart** – have some key select emoji that are 'on brand', avoid anything cryptic and make sure you and staff are sure of the meaning of the emoji they are using
- 3 Keep it smart** – emoji can complement a message, but they can't replace it

Come and give us a try

If you would like to find out how emoji can be utilised in engaging with your customers, what's stopping you? Come and give our 1-click feedback a test with a free trial to boot! 😊

Try Customer Thermometer now





Why we care

Eight years ago Customer Thermometer was founded with a very simple premise. Businesses were struggling to get feedback from customers – responses rates for surveys were dismally low plus the data was normally too old to do anything about. There had to be a better way and time was of the essence as it was the beginning of the subscription economy, so maximizing customer lifetime value was critical.

Wouldn't it be better if customers could express how they feel via one click in an email – such as a support ticket or order confirmation? Plus, to bring it to life the business could use emoji so that the customer would automatically be able to identify and click on the one that matched their feelings.

We are now helping the world's most customer-obsessed businesses get quick and accurate feedback from their customers in just seconds by letting them quickly click on an emoji. We have partnered with email, helpdesk, CRM and Professional Services Automation providers, including Salesforce, Microsoft, Zendesk, ServiceNow and ConnectWise. With over 120 billion business emails being sent every year, the market is huge – and we now have over 1,500 customers across 60+ countries. Clients range from startups to the biggest brands in the world, including Fortune 500 and FTSE100 companies and brands such as ParentPay, Land's End, Dollar Shave Club, Glossier, Catbird and Leica.

Our customers use our emoji feedback buttons in many ways – for some it's an internal HR tool to gauge employee happiness, for others it's used to measure the customer experience.

