

# Business : Putting emotion back into business

We are often told not to become too “emotional” in business, but a Scottish based Business Performance Coach who is an expert in human dynamics, wants to change this, and believes it could enable businesses to work smarter, communicate better, and save money.

It’s all down to Emoticons, the quirky, cute symbols used in text messages, social media and email, which are becoming increasingly popular as a means of conveying a quick message to friends and loved ones without the need for words.

They are not without controversy, with some education and language experts saying that they are indeed replacing proper communication for young people, who will perhaps no longer be able to write a proper letter, or converse fluently in a job interview. On the morning of his recent wedding Andy Murray tweeted a message made up entirely of emoticons to convey how he expected his big day to go, from love hearts, kisses and smiles to umbrellas symbols for rain and “zzz” symbols for sleep!

✘ Rather than viewing this new instant way of communicating as entirely negative, and just for social communication between friends, Wendy Chalmers Mill, who works with a variety of companies to improve workplace morale, boost self esteem and get workers communicating more effectively, wants to why not develop a range of emoticons for use in the world of commerce.

She is interested in teaming up with a software provider to develop what she has nicknamed “Business-cons.” Wendy explained: “There continues to be a great deal of negative press on this type of symbol based communication, especially as regards young people. This technology is all around us

though, and it is very much here to stay. There has been a major shift in how we communicate on a daily basis, especially when we are busy and "on the move."

"I would like to see something far more positive come out of this fast paced technology and feel that there is huge potential for business emoticons to be developed," she said. "At the moment, and in their present format, emoticons are fun to use but are not really appropriate for the business world as they can be open to wide misinterpretation. On their own they often have to be tagged with text to make their meaning clearer. Just as a picture paints a thousand words, we would need emoticons to instantly convey the sender's meaning," she added.



Through her staff development company Positive Performance, Wendy has frequently gone directly into the workplace to review firms' existing communication processes.

"Companies can get fixated on the use of email and other visual forms of communication to make sure that they come across in a professional manner. When used correctly email and other instant messaging adds to the communication process and can support business and improve efficiency, just as using it incorrectly can cost them money. If developed and used properly business emoticons could be a major asset," she said.

As Wendy says it is all about balance and making sure that any one form of written and visual communication is not overly relied upon, at the expense of face to face contact, which still conveys the most meaning.

Finished Wendy: "Behavioural scientists have found that words make up only 8% of all communication, 34% is intonation and tone of voice, and over 58% is non-verbal, including body language."

For further details check out  
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