

Research emotion + storytelling

Research on the concept of emotion. Ask yourself: what do I have to know about emotion in order to use it meaningful in storytelling?

Do a quick but in-depth research and process the information into a paper.

For this research I started typing in “Emotion” into the Google search bar and the first hit was the wikipedia page. This is the place I started reading to get basic knowledge about the concept of emotion.

Basics

Emotion is any conscious experience characterized by intense mental activity and a high degree of pleasure or displeasure. Scientific discourse has drifted to other meanings and there is no consensus on a definition. Emotion is often intertwined with mood, temperament, personality, disposition, and motivation.

Research of Paul Ekman led him to classify six emotions as basic: anger, disgust, fear, happiness, sadness and surprise.

After that I read a more in-depth article about emotions. The most important points of this article:

1. Emotion feelings are a phase of neurobiological activity and the key psychological/ motivational aspect of emotion. They constitute the primary motivational systems for human behavior.
2. Emotion feelings are prime factors in the evolution, organization, and operations of consciousness and the different levels of awareness.
3. The ability to symbolize feelings and put them into words provides a powerful tool for emotion regulation, influencing emotion-cognition relations, and developing high-level social skills.
4. The term “emotion” has defied definition mainly because it is multifaceted and not a unitary phenomenon or process. Use of the unqualified term “emotion” makes for misunderstandings, contradictions, and confusions in theory and research.
5. Basic emotions, emotion schemas, and emotion-schema memes are distinctly different in terms of their origin, content, causes, and effects.
6. Transitions from basic emotions to emotion schemas and emotion-schema memes are major milestones in development and in achieving social and emotion competence.
7. The psychological unconscious is an ill-defined and potentially misleading term. There is no consensus regarding its contents and functions. The concept of levels of awareness may provide a better bridge to understanding human mentality and brain/ mind processes.

8. Emotion utilization is the harnessing of an emotion's inherently adaptive emotion motivation/feeling component in constructive affective-cognitive processes and actions. Symbolization and effective communication of emotion feelings play a key role in emotion utilization, particularly in real or simulated social interactions.
9. The concept of emotion-cognition interaction, well validated in neuroscience and behavioral research, suggests that the presence of functionally distinct features in the interactants would increase both the flexibility and generality of the resultant processes.

Decisions

After that I wanted to specify more on decisions people make based on emotions. A great deal of your decisions are informed by your emotional responses because that is what emotions are designed to do: to appraise and summarize an experience and inform your actions. Emotions are not particularly sophisticated or precise, but their speed and utility make up for what they lack in sophistication and precision. Emotions, when they are not disordered, provide information about your circumstances in a simple, quick way that does not involve a lot of cognition (thinking about it). So they attempt to tell you if a situation is optimal or not aligned with your goal, and how you might approach it.

Behavior consumers

Most people believe that the choices they make result from a rational analysis of available alternatives. In reality, however, emotions greatly influence and, in many cases, even determine our decisions. When we are confronted with a decision, emotions from previous, related experiences affix values to the options we are considering. These emotions create preferences which lead to our decision. The influential role of emotion in consumer behavior is well documented:

- fMRI neuro-imagery shows that when evaluating brands, consumers primarily use emotions (personal feelings and experiences) rather than information (brand attributes, features, and facts).
- Advertising research reveals that emotional response to an ad has far greater influence on a consumer's reported intent to buy a product than does the ad's content – by a factor of 3-to-1 for television commercials and 2-to-1 for print ads.
- Research conducted by the Advertising Research Foundation concluded that the emotion of "likeability" is the measure most predictive of whether an advertisement will increase a brand's sales.
- Studies show that positive emotions toward a brand have far greater influence on consumer loyalty than trust and other judgments which are based on a brand's attributes.

Emotions are the primary reason why consumers prefer brand name products. After all, many of the products we buy are available as generic and store brands with the same ingredients and at cheaper prices. Why do we decide to pay more for brand name products?

A nationally advertised brand has power in the marketplace because it creates an emotional connection to the consumer. A brand is nothing more than a mental representation of a product in the consumer's mind. If the representation consists only of the product's attributes, features, and other information, there are no emotional links to influence consumer preference and action. The richer the emotional content of a brand's mental representation, the more likely the consumer will be a loyal user.

While emotion can be communicated effectively in a print ad or television commercial, there are other important components of a brand which have emotional dimensions. For example:

- Rich and powerful mental representations of a brand include its personality. Research reveals that consumers perceive the same type of personality characteristics in brands as they do in other people. And just like with people, they are attracted more to some personality types than others – attractions which are emotion based, not rational. Brand personality is communicated by marketers through packaging, visual imagery, and the types of words used to describe the brand.
- Another important foundation for a brand's emotions can be found in its "narrative" – the story that communicates "who" it is, what it means to the consumer, and why the consumer should care. This narrative is the basis for brand advertising and promotion.

But for consumers, perhaps the most important characteristic of emotions is that they push us toward action. In response to an emotion, humans are compelled to do something. In a physical confrontation, fear forces us to choose between "fight or flight" to insure our self-preservation. In our daily social confrontations, insecurity may cause us to buy the latest iPhone to support our positive self-identity.

Over time, marketers have developed theories about why consumers buy. Most of these err by viewing the consumer through the lens of the product. Marketers start with the features and benefits of a product and conduct consumer research to find matching needs and motivations. More recently, Internet and digital media companies added a new layer of suppositions to explain and predict consumer behavior. Their approach views the consumer through the lens of digital technology. However, they misinterpret data about the activity of online users as being a valid insight into the consumer decision-making process.

Consumers do not have a Pavlovian response to products and to their marketing programs. Nor do the fundamentals of consumer behavior change to accommodate the latest innovation in digital technology.

An understanding of consumer purchase behavior must be based on knowledge of human emotion and include the paramount influence that emotions have on decision-making.

Sources:

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