



The Definitive Emoji Guide for Social Media Marketers



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SOCIAL



Including emoji in Tweets is shown to increase engagement by [25.4 percent](#) over emoji-free messages, and using them in Facebook posts can [increase your number of Likes by 57 percent](#), and comments and shares by 33 percent.

With those numbers, it's no surprise that emoji regularly pop up in online marketing campaigns. But, as with any newer digital development, businesses need to know the proper way to

Bonus: [Download a free guide](#) to discover which hashtags to use to boost traffic and target customers on social media. And then learn how you can use Hootsuite to measure results.

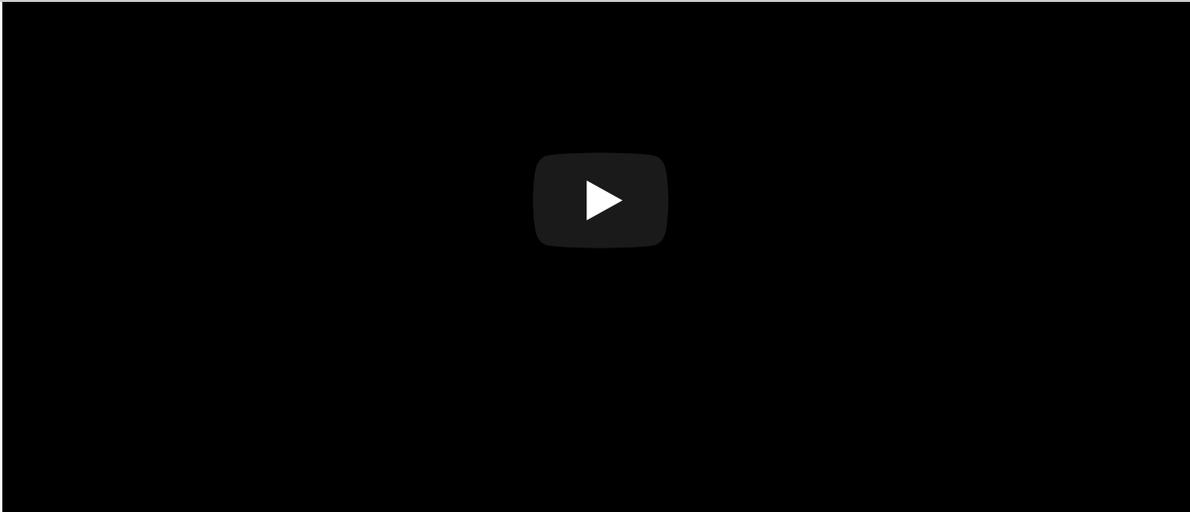
Emoji marketing tips for social media success

Know the meaning behind the emoji

One of the biggest blunders a brand can make on social media when using emoji is using them incorrectly. Don't put that eggplant emoji in a company Tweet unless you know *exactly* what you are doing.

You want to position your brand as an authority and in-the-know. Don't put your company's reputation at risk by posting an emoji that doesn't mean what you think it means. A big fear of many social media marketers is seeming out of touch, so make sure you keep up with the latest emoji developments and meanings.

A great resource is [Emojipedia](#), which serves not only as an emoji dictionary, but also shares the latest developments and news in the emoji world. For example, when iOS 10 came out, Emojipedia published [an article](#) that showcased the new emoji and how they will look on other software platforms.



Use emoji for real-time engagement and reactive messaging

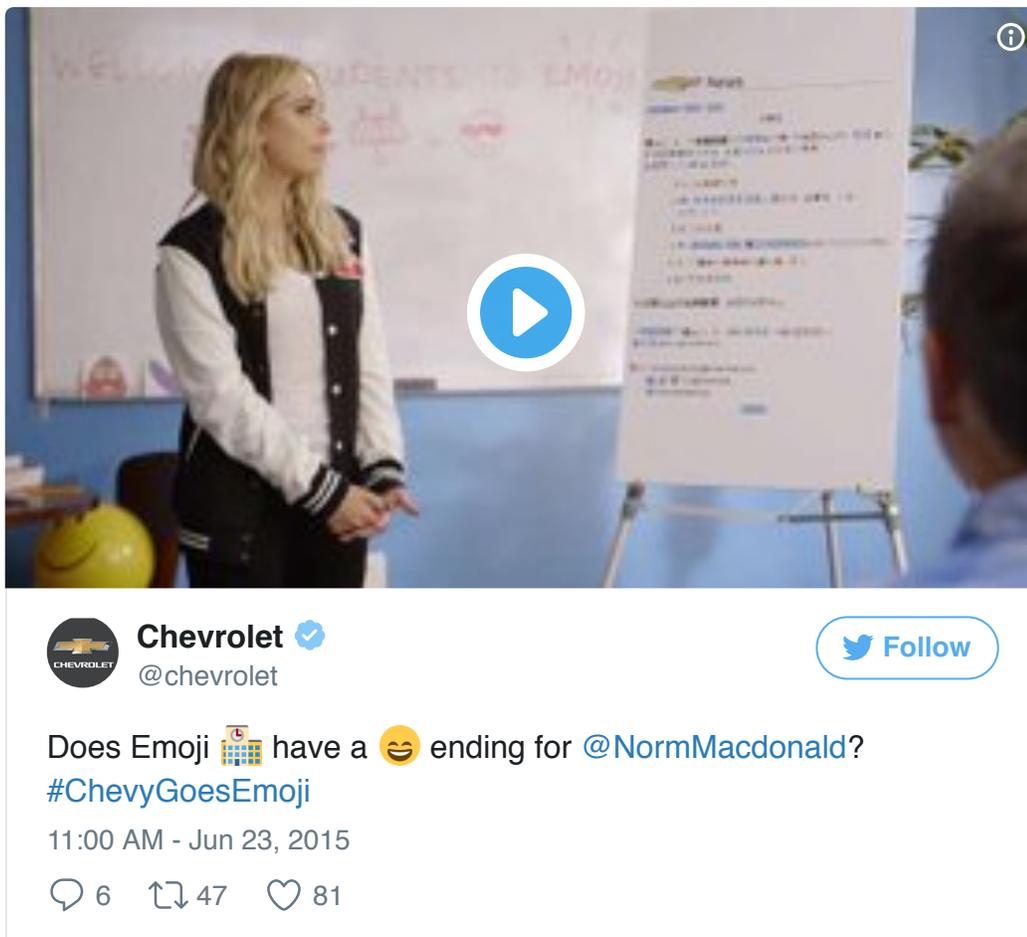
While long, pre-composed emoji messages can sometimes miss the mark, a well-timed post can benefit from an emoji... or 10.

Brands started using emoji to show their customers the human side of the business, so there's no reason why you shouldn't include emoji in a Tweet or Instagram post the same way you would in a text message (when appropriate). And if the occasion calls for it, you can get creative with emoji art, even if the current emoji keyboard doesn't have a symbol that corresponds with your brand:



Stay away from cryptic messages

Just because the language of emoji has transcended cultural barriers, you shouldn't assume all your customers are fluent speakers. While emoji-exclusive copy might make for a [fun quiz](#) or an [interesting article](#), it may not be the best idea for a press release. This was the way Chevrolet announced the 2016 Cruze model in [#ChevyGoesEmoji](#) campaign:



To their credit, the company did follow up the release with [a decoded explanation](#) and a series of YouTube videos titled [Emoji Academy](#), which focused on educating the public on the art of emoji decryption.

While the element of intrigue certainly has worked in some companies' favor, most people likely won't take the time to translate something written with only emoji. Unless you can make your

Remember, social media only works if you're able to communicate a message clearly. Don't leave your audience scratching their heads with your emoji use.

Use custom emoji strategically

Marketing campaigns involving custom-made emoji and emoji keyboards have become increasingly popular over the past few years, but only a few of them got attention past initial curiosity about the release. Big brands like IKEA and Foot Locker have given us emoji depicting Allen keys and fancy sneakers, but are those sorely missing from our daily emoji interactions in the first place?



Image via IKEA

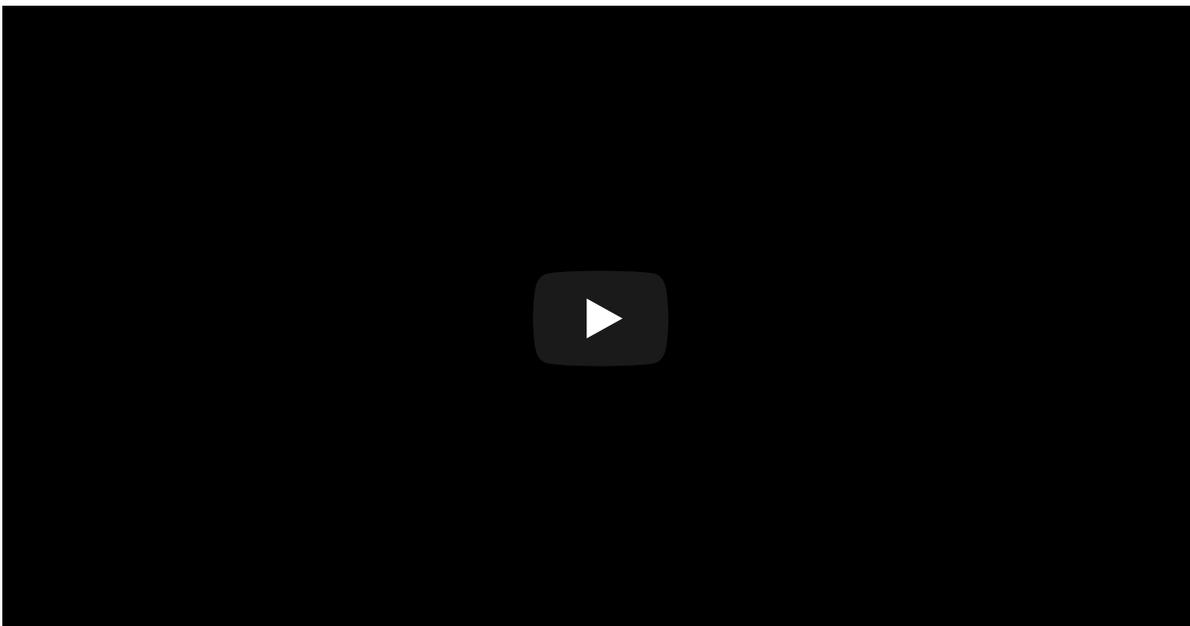
Unless your message is somewhere along the lines of “Taking our dachshund to IKEA for some meatballs,” (although that personally sounds like a dream day to me) it's unlikely that people will go on using custom emoji keyboards on a regular basis—which is a questionable result for so much dedicated design work.

If you do decide to create your own custom emoji, instead of inventing new icons for fun, why not do it for a good cause? Take WWF, who [created a set of custom emoji to represent](#)

#EndangeredEmoji icons came with a specific set of instructions: whenever a user Tweeted one of the custom emoji, a donation would be made to save the animal's real-life counterpart. Besides being adorable, this kind of custom emoji campaign gives your audience a reason to continue using the emoji in the future.

Looking for an easy way to get into custom emoji? Try Bitmoji. These personalized cartoon avatars are free to make and can be used to express a multitude of feelings, expressions, and situations. The best way of using Bitmoji to personalize your business is by basing it on a real human being—your CEO or social media manager, for example.

Once you've downloaded the app and added the Bitmoji keyboard to your phone, you can easily add Bitmoji to a tweet or send them through Facebook Messenger. But the easiest way to incorporate Bitmoji into your social presence is by taking advantage of the Bitmoji Snapchat integration. You can add a Bitmoji to your Snap by simply selecting the sticky note icon from the menu (just like you would to add a regular emoji).



You can also add a Bitmoji to a custom geofilter you create for your business. Just ensure your Bitmoji account is linked to your Snapchat account, and you'll be able to add one when you're setting up your geofilter on [Snapchat's website](#).

Create an interactive experience

You don't have to create your own custom emoji keyboard to get people talking. Think about the reason why brands choose to include emoji in their marketing campaigns: they're something familiar to most mobile users who use them in their everyday communications.

Incorporate this habit and make your audience part of the campaign. For example, U.S. beverage brand Tampico [made up a social media game](#) that requires users to guess a winning emoji combination out of 24 options.

Participants were asked to comment on the company's social media channels with their emoji guesses and include the campaign hashtag, [#TampicoEmojiball](#). Once the campaign was closed, the increased user engagement made it clear that Tampico was one of the big winners themselves.

It doesn't take too many emoji to win an award or the affection of your audience or customers. Domino's Emoji Ordering campaign focused on a single emoji: the pizza slice. Tweeting the emoji to Domino's official account along with a hashtag [#EasyOrder](#) allows users to place an order in a matter of seconds.

The campaign combined the popularity of emoji with a new way to bring its products to customers. If you want to get people talking about your brand using emoji, give them a good reason to talk to you first.

Recognize the appropriate time and place for emoji

As with text messaging, a lot can get lost in translation when using emoji in professional communications. To make sure that your emoji use doesn't end up feeling like you're playing a digital game of 'telephone,' be sure that you not only know the meaning of your emoji (as mentioned above) as well as the context.

emoji could be appropriate.

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word that's like nails on the chalkboard to me) are the only ones who will respond well to your brand's use of emoji, but you'll need to do some audience research and testing to figure out just who you're talking to.

So if you're an email marketer and thinking about using an emoji in one of your subject lines, try it for one week. The next week, don't use any emoji in your email subject lines or body. Which test had higher open and click-through rates ?

The same testing model can be used on social media. Pay attention to your levels of engagement and the reception from your audience when you use emoji and when you don't. You can then use this information to drive future social media campaigns and strategies.

A world without emoji is not a world I want to be a part of. Heed the advice here to get the most out of your emoji marketing campaign, and bring a little to your audience and online community.

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Thank you Dara, great article and very resourceful. You've made good points about how emojis can be used out of the wrong context and i've seen it happen too often to the point of cringe! Another issue to point out is the differences of emoji appealing across different social platforms e.g. Facebook vs Twitter and OS platforms e.g. Android vs Apple.

- KN

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