

Should you use Emojis in Email Subject Lines?



There is a new craze in Email Marketing: using of Emojis in Email Subject Lines. Kenscio brings to you a WHITE PAPER elaborating this trend and the best practices that you can adopt for winning Email Marketing Campaigns with Emojis.





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WHAT ARE 'EMOJIS'?

Have you noticed how Emoji's have invaded the world? Look around you. Emojis are literally everywhere in our daily lives: in our text messages, in our chat channels, in online blog posts and even in our mailbox. They have become some sort of parallel universal language.

Emoji's take the standard text smiley face and bring it to the next level. For any reaction, whether you're happy 😊, crying laughing 😂, or relieved 😌, emoji's allow you to express how you're feeling. And email marketers are feeling it.

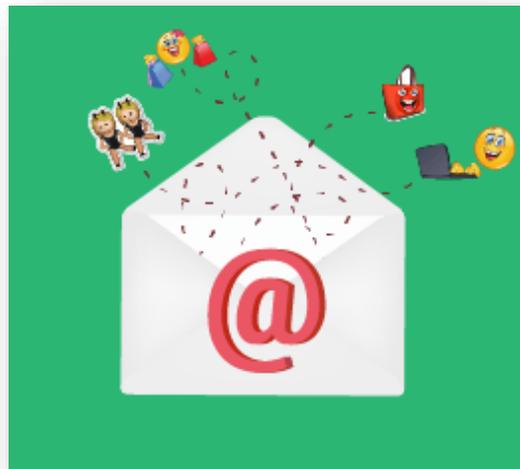
If you are an email marketer, you've probably been tempted to include a small smiling Santa 🎅 or a fashionable shoe 👠 somewhere in your latest Christmas or Sales campaign, hoping that these cute little icons would attract clicks.

Marketers would be wrong to leave Emojis out of their email game: when used wisely, they can create peaks of engagement amongst their subscribers. Now we're all set to start sending the right Emojis to the right audience, and to the open rates!

WHY EMOJIS ARE USED?

Like big cities, inboxes are crowded places that have limited real estate to work with. Marketers are increasingly embracing emoji as a quick, easy, and expressive way to stand out in their subscribers' inboxes.

By using emoji in place of words, or to complement words, marketers have unlocked a new way to engage and connect with their subscribers. And engagement is the name of the game when it comes to email marketing.



The effect that emoji have on engagement and the resulting benefit is undeniable.



USAGE OF EMOJIS, GLOBAL PERSPECTIVE

Cultural adaptation of Emojis as a part of subject line is strikingly different across geographies. A qualitative study carried out by MailJet reveals variant response towards different Emojis. A few interesting points follow:

1. Brits are 63% more likely to open an email if the subject line includes an Emoji.
2. For British audience, open rates surged by as much as 95% by usage of crying Emojis 🥲
3. Tearful Emojis, such as the face with tears of joy Emoji 😄 and the loudly crying Emoji 🥲 generated the best results.
4. In the US, the average increase in open rates is very less as compared to UK. The emotional expressions don't gain attention everywhere equally.
5. In Spain, net results for emails sent with an Emoji in the subject line showed no registrable rise in open rates.
6. Open actually dipped by an average 11% amongst French recipients, further indicating the strong cultural differences between European markets
7. Overall, usage of Emojis have a positive impact in countries like UK and USA. But, it has a negative impact in European Countries.
8. Friendly Emojis like laughing with tears of joy 😄 has overall positive impact across all countries. Whereas, extreme expression like crying face 🥲 had positive impact in UK/US, but negative impact in European Countries (France).

USAGE OF EMOJIS, INDIAN PERSPECTIVE

Kenscio conducted a thorough research on usage of Emojis and its overall reception among Indian subscribers. Two different industries were analysed: **Ecommerce** and Online Travels.

We found only a few companies are using Emojis in Subject lines. Where we couldn't find equivalent comparison, we took their close competitive global brand, who has presence in India.

For ecommerce, we selected **Flipkart** vs **Snapdeal** and for online travel brands, we selected **Cleartrip** and **Expedia**.



KEY FINDINGS: ECOMMERCE

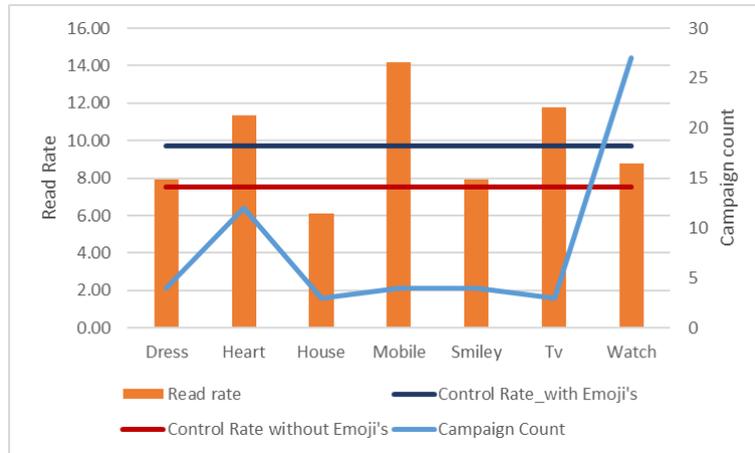
1. Popular Emojis used by Indian Ecommerce brands Flipkart and Snapdeal, based on their Read rate are shown in this graph.

Brand	Avg Read rate with Emoji	Avg Read rate without Emoji
Flipkart	9.25	7.53
Snapdeal	29.06	21.42

2. The read rate of email consistently performed higher than non-emoji mailers for both the brands.
3. Flipkart has sent around 23 email communications containing Emojis in subject line in the last 6 months (October 2016 to April 2017). The corresponding number of such promotional mailers for Snapdeal is just 9 in last 6 months.
4. The Emojis used by Flipkart are unique, such as: scissor, bags, Eyes and TV, Dress, Shoes, House and Heart, Couple, Car, Camera etc. Snapdeal uses conventional Emojis like watch, diamond, Fire, etc.

Emoji_Type	Campaign Count	Read rate
Dress	4	7.94
Heart	12	11.35
House	3	6.11
Mobile	4	14.18
Smiley	4	7.93
Tv	3	11.75
Watch	27	8.79

5. Positive Emojis are more popular than neutral Emojis. There is almost no negative Emojis across all the ecommerce emails. Celebration/Happiness, Mobile, Cars etc. are very popular with high open rate.
6. An overview of the read rate of all the campaigns of Flipkart shows a positive impact of using Emojis in Email Subject Lines. In a few case, the Mailers with Emojis are more popular than non-emoji mailers. Below is the complete chart of Flipkart mailers since October 2016 to April 2017.



Use of Emojis for both brands showed higher open rates. Flipkart has used this tactic more frequently as seen from their increased campaign counts with Emojis, to get higher open rates.

KEY FINDINGS: ONLINE TRAVEL PORTALS

- For Online Travel and Tourism brands, the performance is shown below.

Brand	Avg Read rate with Emoji	Avg Read rate without Emoji
Expedia	9.29	8.75
Cleartrip	18.29	12.98

- Popular Emojis used by Expedia are:

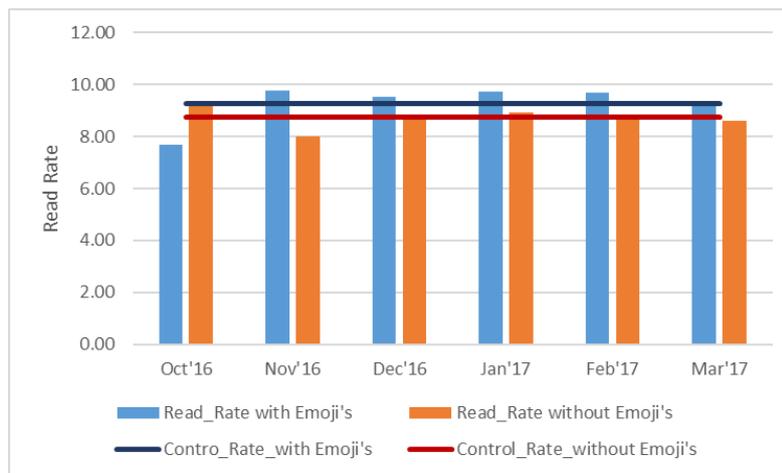
Emoji_Type	Campaign count	Read Rate
Clock	6	8.52
Icon	7	8.42
Smiley	21	8.79
Tick Box	25	10.23
Others	16	9.05



3. Cleartrip used the following Emojis in last 6 months:

Emoji_Type	Campaign Count	Read Rate
Aeroplane	3	23.98
Beer Mug	1	16.93
Heart	3	10.23

4. Overall, usage of Emojis has a positive impact as can be seen from this graph of usage of Emojis by Expedia over the period of last 6 months.



Use of Emojis has resulted in higher open rates for both the brands. Expedia has been using this tactic in more number of campaigns. Cleartrip has the right opportunity to try it in more number of campaigns to see the consistency in increased in open rates and adopt the tactic and be ahead of other players.

SUMMARY: EMOJIS FOR INDIAN AUDIENCE

1. As observed from above analysis, it can be inferred that, in India, objective Emojis (Aeroplane, star, Mobile, Beer etc.) are more popular than emoticons (Expressive Emojis like smiling, crying, laughing etc.). This can be also further elaborated by Hofstede's cultural dimensions theory that interprets cultural differences from one crucial perspective of human psychology: masculinity vs. femininity (task orientation versus person-orientation). Indian is a developing market and mostly masculine in nature (preference towards material rewards, competition, assertiveness etc.). Developed countries like the US nurtures feminine culture (preference to empathy, caring/modesty). This difference can be easily seen in the kind of Emojis that are used.
2. A general summary can be drawn from the above analysis about usage of Emojis in Email Subject lines. Usage of Emojis enhances the open rates of emails as compared to non-emoji mailers. And this is particularly true for ecommerce companies. However, it's important to consider the context in which these symbols are used.
3. In India context, it is also essential to take into consideration the aesthetics behind usage of Emojis. Besides being contextual, the Emojis must be unique, attention-grabbing and colourful. Due to exposure to various Emojis across various communication channels such as WhatsApp, Facebook, Messenger and Twitter, it is becoming increasingly competitive to win customer's attention with Emojis.



- Awards (Trophy), Gift Box, Fireworks, Car, Camera, Mobile etc. are on the top of the list of popular Emojis. The psyche behind it is easily apprehensible. Next time you have something tempting to offer to your customers, let the Emojis do the talking on the subject line.

LIMITATIONS OF USING EMOJIS

From 🙄 to the open-inducing 🛒, there are heaps of emoji to choose from, but not all of them show up properly on different mobile devices and email clients. If this happens, subscribers may see this ☐ or just the word 'emoji' instead of your intended icon. This is very concerning

EMAIL CLIENT SUPPORT FOR EMOJIS

Sometimes within one section you'll have several examples. Here's a great way of laying those out.

As marketers, we have to keep in mind that there are many different email clients out there like Outlook, Gmail, Apple Mail, Thunderbird, etc. And, all these email clients don't render email the same way (wouldn't that be a dream!)

Because we can't force all the email clients to play nice and render our emails the same way, it's important to know that your emoji may look different in the different clients. So how do you know which email clients are particularly problematic for emoji?

To see what would happen when we included emoji in our email subject lines, we tested a variety in the most popular email clients and found they were generally well supported:

Email client	Symbols display in subject line?
Outlook 2007/10/13	✓
Outlook 2003	×
Outlook.com	ⓘ
iPhone / iPad (iOS)	ⓘ
Apple Mail	✓
Yahoo! Mail	✓
Gmail	✓
Windows Mail	✓
Android Mail	✓

With the exception of Outlook 2003, there was near-universal support. Outlook.com and iOS devices included an additional twist – instead of displaying the basic characters, some symbols like ❤️ are replaced by the word 'emoji', or a small graphic instead.

With an Android device, you can insert an emoji using the appropriate button on the standard Android keyboard. However, emoji inserted in this way will be visible in Inbox on Android but not necessarily in the web version.



Keep in mind that if an emoji isn't supported in the email client, the recipient may see a □ character instead.

Remember: Gmail has some extra special considerations when using emoji. You may notice in Gmail when you use emoji in the subject line the icon will look different in the inbox view and after the email has been opened. This is due to the inbox view using the Android version of the emoji, meanwhile, the opened email view uses Google's own emoji style.

BEST PRACTICES FOR USING EMOJIS IN EMAIL SUBJECT LINES

1. Only contextual communications can derive the best of Emojis. Use appropriate, attractive Emojis on subject lines without distorting the novelty of the communication
2. Use Emojis within 20 characters so as to keep it visible in inbox, whether viewing in a desktop or a mobile device
3. Always ensure seamless rendering of the subject lines across all devices, ESPs and Browsers before final deployment.
4. Track the performance of various Emojis time to time. Customer's inclination towards Emojis in subject lines can also vary based on brand reputation and positioning. An Emoji that performs well with one brand doesn't necessarily have to deliver same success for another brand.

CONCLUSION

Subject lines with Emojis can work wonder if done properly. There are piles of promotional emails that bombard an inbox every day. Using Emojis can standout your Email inside inbox striking subscribers' attention. But the fundamental of marketing remains the same: being contextual and consistent in communications.

To know more about Emojis and their usability in Email marketing, contact email us at enquiries@kenscio.com . The email-marketing professionals at Kenscio have the expertise to optimize your email campaigns and consistently deliver the results you're looking for.