



Home	News	About Us	Events	Sponsors	Register
------	------	----------	--------	----------	----------



News Details

➔ **FEATURE ARTICLE - The Emotionally Intelligent Marketer**

The Emotionally Intelligent Marketer

**Dr Michael Edwardson, Corporate & Consumer Psychologist
SPEAKER AT NETWORX 'HEART & SOLD'
EVENT NEXT THURS 16TH OCT**

I'm an emotion researcher, but is it just me, or are we all a bit "emotioned out" right now. If I hear another "broad brush" reference to emotional intelligence or brands wanting to connect emotionally to their customers, I'll truly lose it and have an emotional episode of my own.

Just look at the number of books published in the last few years on the theme of emotions and marketing: *Emotional Value: Creating Strong Bonds With Your Customers*; *Emotional Branding: The New Paradigm for Connecting Brands to Customers*; *Emotional Branding: How Successful Brands Gain the Irrational Edge*; *Emotion Marketing: The Hallmark Way of Winning Customers for Life*; *The Marketing Power of Emotion*; *Emotional Capital: Maximising the Intangible Assets at the Heart of Brand and Business Success*. The list goes on and yes I've read the lot.

What actually bugs me is not this new focus on emotions but rather the hype and generality that so much of the popular view is based on.

What does it mean really to be emotionally intelligent? What does it mean to emotionally connect to your customers? These are actually important and profound questions, but as so often happens in practical application the idea can run ahead of the science or the evidence.

John Gottman is a Professor of Psychology at the University of Washington and runs the "Love Lab". It's actually a serious social psychology laboratory that uses emotion science to predict relationship difficulties. He can listen to couples and based on the 'emotion scripts' hidden in their descriptions of each other he can predict which couples are headed for trouble. He listens especially for 'contempt' scripts"; contempt being the emotion that is a pretty good predictor of relationship defection and switching behaviour.

The point I am trying to make here is that if we want to REALLY understand how emotions affect consumer behaviour, then we have to start getting specific.

And I'm not talking about "loving" a brand or "customer satisfaction". I'm talking about a serious, sophisticated, ROI approach to specific emotions, using evidence based science. When I run seminars on this, I like to ask people what they think an emotion is?

One of the limitations in our understanding of emotions is the intuitive 'naïve' idea most people have of their OWN emotions as simply feelings that are experienced.

One of the most important research findings in the last ten years is that emotions and thought, or cognition, are in fact inextricably linked. Descartes' "I think therefore I am" was never right.

Some new and powerful research based models of emotions have begun to allow us to make PREDICTIONS of how emotions will influence behaviour. In fact the behaviour is actually a fundamental part of the emotion itself.

What is an emotion? An emotion is in fact a "fuzzy set" or "prototype" comprised of a trigger event, a thought, an appraisal, a feeling, an action tendency, an action and a goal. One emotion can blend into another based on whether one or more of these component parts differ. Using this approach we can identify some 200 discrete emotions. Now that's a pretty powerful tool.

In July/August this year we published the results of a study for the Society for Consumer Affairs, based on 4000 customers of blue chip companies in Australia. We condensed these myriad emotions into seven key groupings that define the customer experience, based on arousal, valence and consumer self-identity.

One of the better and more focused definitions of emotional intelligence includes the ability to be not only emotionally aware but to possess emotional clarity. That's the ability to differentiate and make sense of different discrete emotions. The emotionally intelligent marketer has to understand what these emotions are, what they are comprised of and importantly what behaviour they predict. What are the emotions that differentiate your brand promise to the market? What are the emotions that define your customer experience? What set of emotions increase loyalty or reduce defection? How can emotions be measured and analysed? Ahhh...Heart strings and Mind games...

Michael Edwardson is Australia's foremost expert on Emotions in Business. He is a registered psychologist, lecturer in Services

Marketing and Organisational Behaviour at the University of NSW* and he is Managing Director of Psychologica, a corporate and consumer psychology consultancy. He was co-author of the 2003 SOCAP Consumer Emotion Study and he consults widely to corporate Australia.

Michael is at the forefront of thought leadership in Customer Experience Management, Consumer Psychology and Emotions in Business in Australia. Over the past six years he has published, appeared or been cited in over 80 articles, book chapters, conference papers, television and radio interviews on consumer emotions, the customer experience, and consumer psychology. **His presentation “Heart Strings & Mind Games” will be seen at the NETWORKX Heart & Sold event on Thursday 16th October.**

[Back](#)

© Brazen Productions 2003. All rights reserved|Disclaimer