# MIXED FEELINGS

how to cultivate emotional engagement in web design

**PSYCHOLOGY SUGGESTS** that most people buy according to how they *feel* about a product (their emotions) rather than logic. Cultivating an emotional bond with your customers is important—and it's becoming more difficult to do. If your website isn't tuned to resonate with your audience's emotions, you could be losing business.

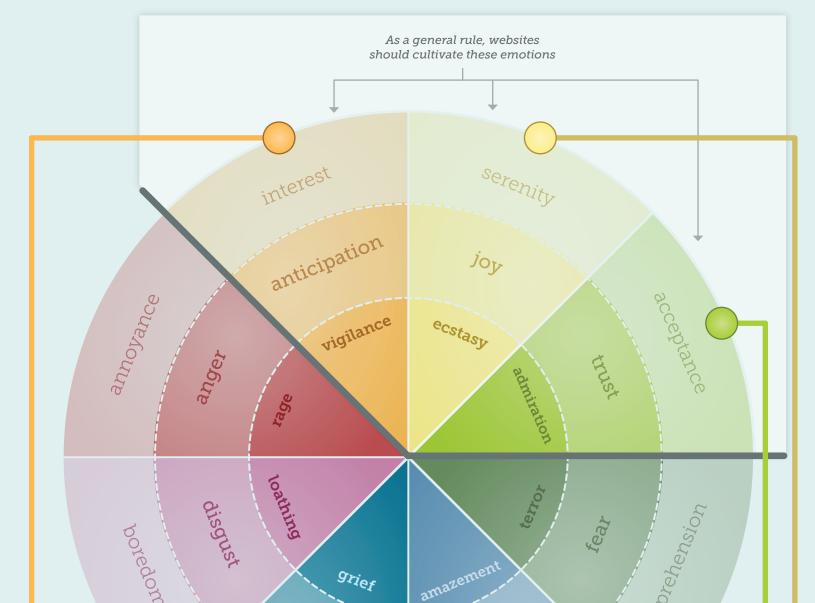
In this graphic, we'll briefly explore how to best cultivate these emotions in your customers, and how these (and other factors) influence purchase decisions.



#### PLUTCHIK'S EMOTION WHEEL



In 1980, Robert Plutchik (a psychologist) created what is now known as "Plutchik's wheel of emotions" to describe how emotions are related. A simplified version of this wheel is shown below. According to Plutchik, there are 8 primary bipolar emotions: joy versus sadness; anger versus fear; trust versus disgust; and surprise versus anticipation. These emotions can also be expressed at different intensities. *Note: the color values used in this emotion wheel are arbitrary and don't necessarily foster the emotions they inspire visually.* 



#### **3 EMOTIONS TO CULTIVATE**

surprise

distraction

#### Anticipation

Humans are naturally curious. You can use this to your advantage when designing your site. Enticing imagery, trigger words, and premium content all help motivate visitors to become customers.



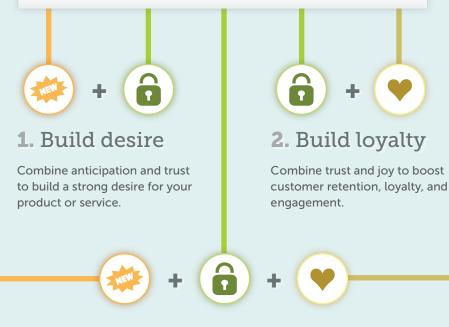
sadness

pensiveness

Visitors need to feel safe when interacting with your site. You can build trust through brandname endorsements, well-known referrers, trusted reviews, and third-party certifications. Happy customers mean wellengaged, repeat customers. Keep customers happy by offering valuable free content, valuable premium content, strong positive imagery, and well-written copy.

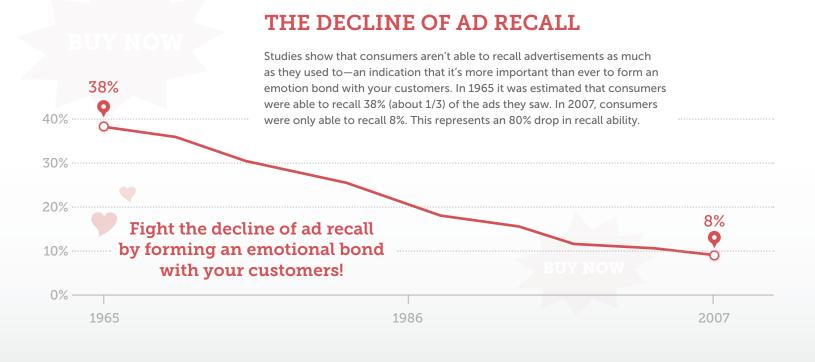
Joy

#### USE THESE EMOTIONS TO ...



#### 3. Build your business

By cultivating all 3 emotions in your web design, you're able to boost conversion rates, decrease bounce rates, and grow your business.



#### EMOTIONAL FACTORS THAT INFLUENCE PURCHASE DECISIONS

Up to 90% of purchase decisions are motivated by unconscious emotional response. Research suggests that the majority of purchase decisions are made unconsciously and in a matter of seconds—sometimes at the point of sale—by relying on mental shortcuts and unconscious emotional associations. Below are some emotional factors that can influence purchase decisions. Special thanks to **@jayehret**.

#### The "thinking" factor

People prefer to buy without thinking. If people are required to think too much when interacting with your site, you are exhausting them, and the unconscious mind doesn't like that.

**WHAT TO DO:** Make the purchase process easy. Narrow your product choices, cut out unnecessary information.

#### The "risk" factor

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People have a natural aversion to risk. As a general rule, people feel loss more powerfully than they feel gain. The unconscious mind is preoccupied with safety.

WHAT TO DO: Consider positioning your product as being the "safe" option over being the "new" option or the "revolutionary" option.

## The "first impression" factor

People are highly influenced by their first impressions. People are primed by first impressions and the first things people say about a product.

**WHAT TO DO:** Ensure that a customer's first encounter with your business is as memorable and enjoyable as possible.

## The "social validity" factor

People will follow the crowd. Unconsciously, the mind likes to move with the herd and see what other people like. People want social proof before they purchase something.

WHAT TO DO: Provide your customers with proof that other people are buying (and benefiting from) your product.

## 

#### SPECIAL THANKS TO

@jayehret, @smashingmag

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