

The 'Write' Emotion

 By [Dale Ferreira](#)

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There are four core human emotions that make us want to talk in the social space, and every piece of content we create needs to be aimed at one of these. First stop and decide whether you want to start the laughter, turn on the tears, create joy, or elicit anger before putting pen to paper.



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We can no longer create content and just expect people to have a reaction. In a world where we're being served more content than the broadcasting complaints commission after a Steve Hofmeyr radio spot, we need to make sure that we are creating something that resonates with people.

Trust me, I didn't want to use the term 'resonate' either, but it's used so often in the ad industry that I'm not sure people would even understand a synonym for it.

It's fantastic that we claim to create a message that actually causes a reaction, but what does that actually mean? What kind of content will get us to generate the reactions we want from our audience?

When we create content, we have to try to understand the core emotion that we want to illicit from our audience. Engagement is the crypto-currency of the social marketing generation. 'Reach' is lovely and tangible, but it's not nearly as rewarding as the feedback we get from the audience—the kind of immediate gratification that is like an intravenous drug ... and it powers us.

Emotion is used as a tool

The wonderful thing about emotion is that it's relatable across every single segment in any market. Emotion is used as a tool to get people to react. We live off, and sometimes act poorly on, emotions throughout the day. Just a bit earlier today I let my emotions get the better of me when I told the man who was driving badly to get lost—only to find out it was actually a lady trying to find her way home to the retirement village. This wasn't a positive engagement for either of us, but it was an emotion nonetheless and, sometimes, we are not proud of our emotions.

Anger is the emotional driver that toppled the bustling career of a racist Margate real estate agent. It has been used so effectively in South African politics, and we've also seen a PR firm lose a lot of favour (to put it kindly). At the opposite end of that, humour is also used very effectively in our social economy because people love to laugh and love to make others feel joy. Sadness and empathy are also social rocket fuel.

With every piece of content we create, we ask ourselves the simple question: "What is it that we want our audience to feel?" It's the only starting point when creating a content strategy, and it's really gratifying to see how well it works.

Now, if you'll excuse me, I have to pen an open letter of apology to the good people of the Sea Point Retirement Village.

ABOUT DALE FERREIRA

Sconetent is a digital agency that looks to partner with the best possible clients to aid them in developing a strategic message that is delivered to the correct audience at the right time.

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