Martec

A Buyer's Guide to

EMOTION RESEARCH

Martec

Table of
CONTENTS

A Practical Approach to Emotion Research

Emotion research

is a growing trend – a simple Google search for the term reveals thousands of hits extolling the virtues of emotion analysis.

With so many options, which direction should you take your emotion research? Who can help you?

There are *four aspects* to consider when selecting a market research firm that focuses on emotion research. You need a solution that is:

1. **Seamless**

2. **Simple**

3. **Scalable**

4. **Scientific**

SEAMLESS

For any research, the process should integrate smoothly with your existing methodologies. You don't want to completely change the direction of your research docket – it's better to have a solution that simply plugs in to the work you're already doing. Whether your process is qualitative, quantitative, online or in person, don't replace it – look for a way to supplement it.

SIMPLE

The simpler, the better when it comes to emotion research. You need a way to study emotions in customers that is cost-effective and efficient – while still being scientific and proven. If the research process is complex and prolonged, you'll be frustrated with a lack of progress and miss out on valuable time to act on the research findings. And the findings shouldn't need a scientist to explain.

> " *No matter what kind of research you are doing, the process should be able to integrate smoothly with your existing methodologies.* "

SCALABLE

Scalability is one of the primary disqualifiers of market research companies studying emotion – their process involves techniques that work at a small scale but aren't able to meet the needs of large companies.

When emotion research is approached from a neuroscience angle, it often involves costly machines and other time-consuming elements. If the research process for one subject costs $2,000, the cost of reaching hundreds or thousands for a large-scale study is crippling.

SCIENTIFIC

Most emotion research methods involve neuroscientists doing market research. This has a number of "fish out of water" challenges, because the business environment is so different from the science environment.

What you really need is a market research company using neuroscience to research emotions. Market research companies are in sync with the processes and pace of business, and build the research process (using science tools) to meet the needs of businesses.
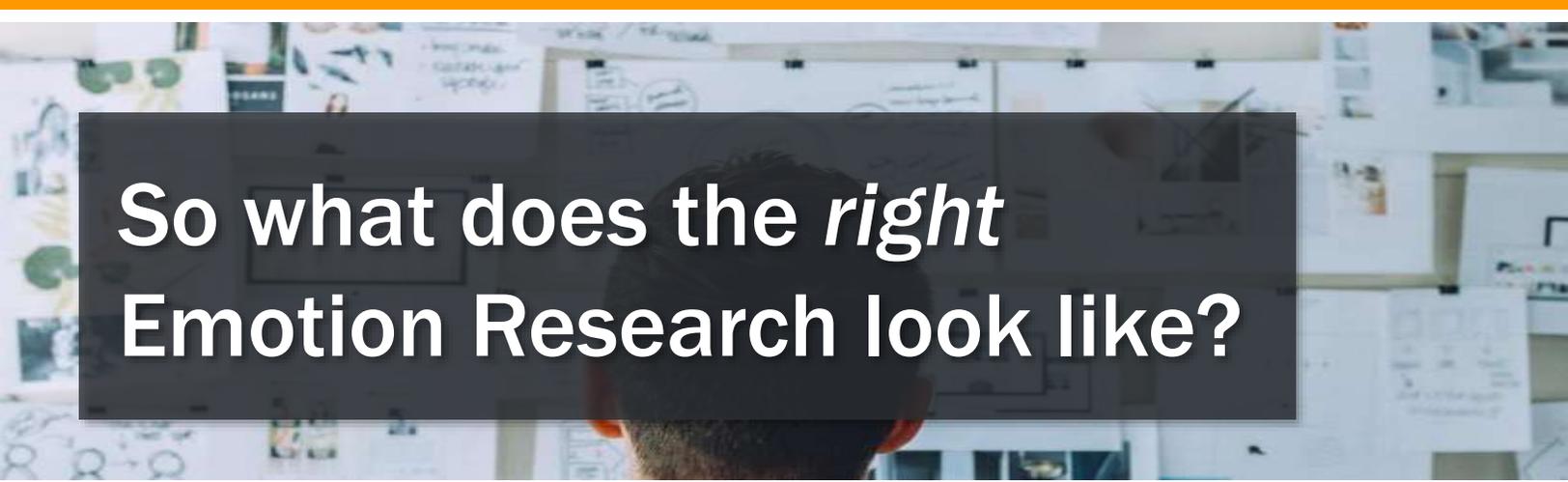
So what does the *right* Emotion Research look like?

The solution that fits best with these 4 criteria is a **language-based** study of emotions. Basing an emotion study in language allows you to cut out the need for expensive machines and uncomfortable environments, but still gets to the heart of customers' true feelings.

Research has proven that a person's word choice reveals non-conscious emotions that reflect their true feelings toward a brand. By asking open-ended questions, we're able to uncover **actionable brand insights** that tap into the power of emotion.

We use tools such as patented linguistic algorithms and **Martec Emotion Score** (MES) to uncover these non-conscious emotions and categorize them in a way that is easy to understand and analyze.

A person's word choice reveals non-conscious emotions that reflect their true feelings toward a brand
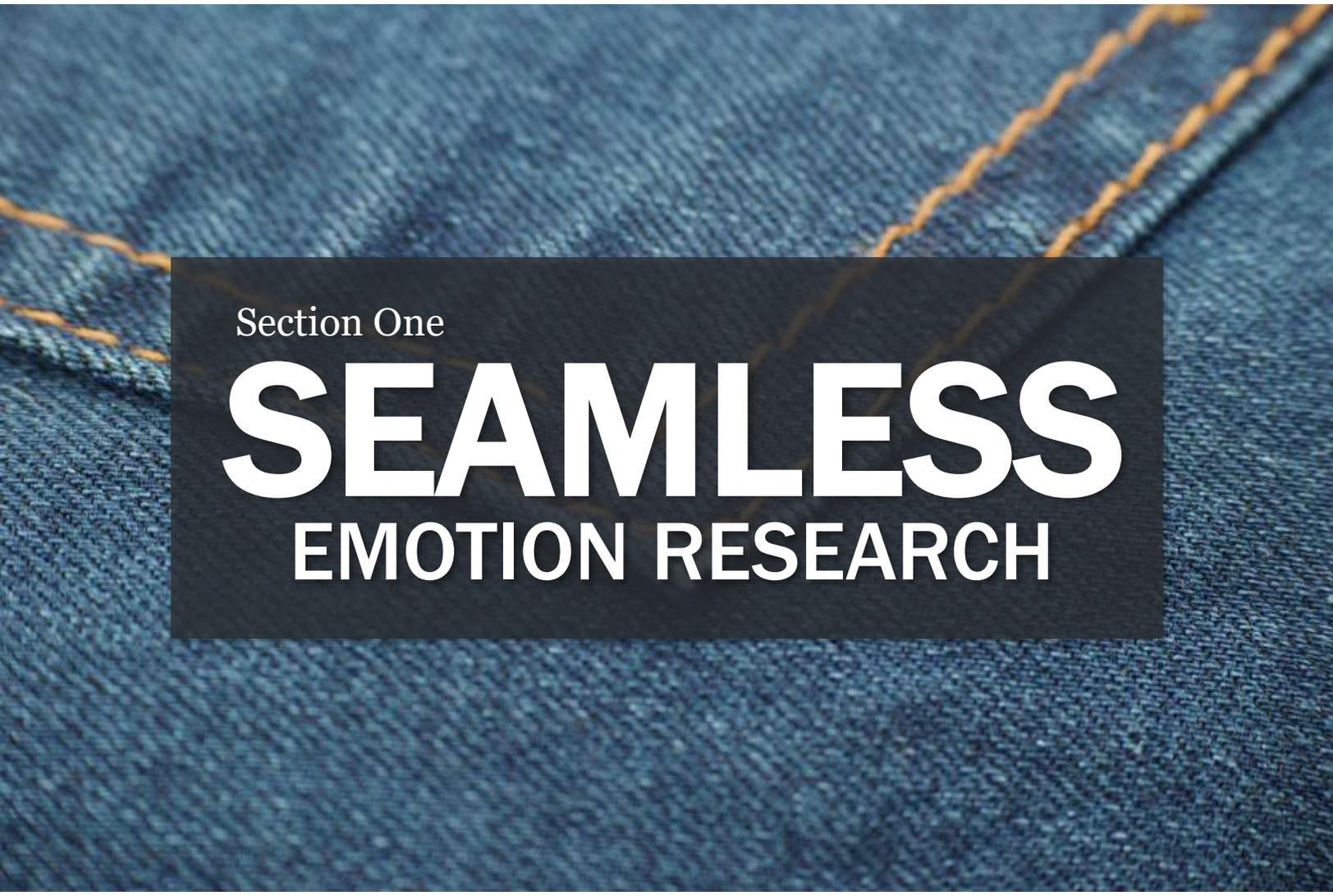
Section One

SEAMLESS

EMOTION RESEARCH

**Supplement your existing processes, don't replace them!**

Emotion research should integrate with your current projects. It's far easier to supplement your existing process with new techniques than to scrap everything and start from scratch. There is an approach that's non-invasive and doesn't require a lot of effort or a complete overhaul of your research process.

The key is to use language.

Because language is ubiquitous, it is an ideal raw material for emotion research. Language can be integrated with virtually any existing research technique, be it qualitative or quantitative. And language-based results are easier to understand, so that your marketing & communications team can begin using the insights immediately.

Our Emotion Intelligence techniques don't require you to replace your existing partners or scrap your existing plans – you simply plug us in to the brand-tracking, needs-based segmentation, and other research you're already doing.

The simple addition of our language analysis tool is a *low-risk* option for market researchers who want to understand their customers' emotions better.
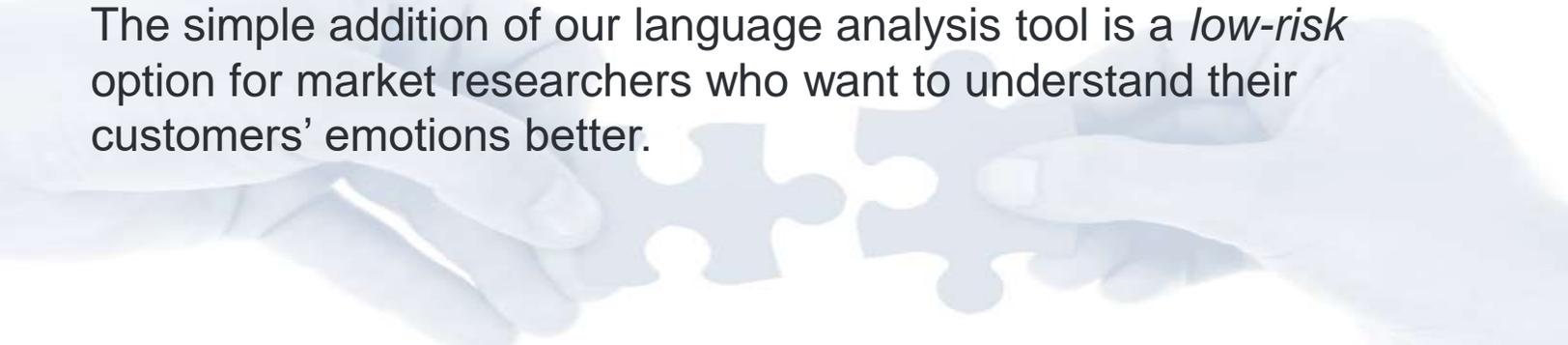
There are 3 ways to use emotion research to work with you:

1. The simplest way is to **take your data from a completed or ongoing research project**. The data can be used analyzed using algorithms for emotion detection. What you'll get back is actionable insights into customer emotions, with little-to-no effort on your part.

2. The next level of engagement is to **get advice on enhancements** you can do to your ongoing research. This could be as simple as tweaking the way you're already asking questions, or maybe suggesting new questions to add to a discussion guide or other survey instrument you're using.

3. The most comprehensive way of using emotion research is to have a research group **run the entire research process**. If you don't have the time or resources to do the research internally, the firm can take over the process for you and produce the insights into emotion that you need.

Section Two

SIMPLE
EMOTION RESEARCH

A Simple Approach

Don't over-engineer your emotion research!

When it comes to market research, it seems that every day there is a new technique for gaining an understanding of your customers.

Emotion research, however, may just claim the title for most fragmented; nearly every market research company approaches the study of emotions differently. You can find hundreds of companies with complicated techniques for uncovering the emotions of consumers, when all you really want is a simple solution that provides your company actionable insights with a limited amount of time and effort.

But what does a simple solution look like, exactly? It focuses on two areas: the research process, and the end results.

A frequent concern we hear from clients interested in doing emotion research is whether the process will be time-consuming and difficult. The assumption is that such research must require fieldwork that is invasive and costly, requiring a complex apparatus or unusual techniques, and that collecting and analyzing that data implies the need for specialized scientists who exclusively study human emotions. This doesn't have to be the case.

With advancing technologies and techniques in emotion research, you now have options that are simple and straightforward enough to be completed in a few weeks, rather than months. There are solutions that focus on analyzing more accessible data such as language, which simplifies the fieldwork immensely.

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As opposed to physiological approaches, language-based analysis can be done with nearly any type of research process that you may already have in place. Focus group research? Simple. Just add in some specifically-worded discussion topics. Surveys? No problem. Just plug-in a couple specific questions that will elicit more (and better) open-ended responses, and you'll get the data needed to analyze respondents' emotions. There are even options for analyzing the data you already have available from past market research – with the right team, emotion can be pulled from that as well.

You shouldn't need a scientist in the room with you just to explain what all the charts and data mean

You need results that are straightforward enough to understand and act upon, not abstract ideas that leave you wondering what to do next. With the right approach, you shouldn't need a scientist in the room with you just to explain what all the charts and data mean. Ideally, the research findings should easily lead to real-world solutions, such as improved marketing communications, better segmentation, or better-targeted product development.

For example, imagine you work for a company that sells monthly subscription boxes, such as Birchbox or Dollar Shave Club. Say you wanted to know what you could do to better connect with your customers emotionally. If you hired someone to do emotion research for your company and they came back with massive amounts of raw data that had to be explained by a PhD statistician or neuroscientist, and in the end only proved the majority of your current customers felt pleasant emotions toward your brand – what would you do with that data? How would you turn that information into a strategy for improving your emotional connection with customers?

Now imagine the same scenario, but this time you hire a company to do emotion research that returns with a brief, clear presentation of the findings in business language. You read it and find that millennial females living in urban areas express strong feelings of security and contentment regarding your monthly subscription boxes. Meanwhile, males aged 55+ living in rural areas express high levels of contempt, yet also reveal feelings of joy regarding your product. Using this information, you can adjust your communications focus for each group and forge stronger emotional connections with your customers.

Approaching emotion research through **language analysis** will not only ensure the fieldwork process is quick and easy, but will produce results that are relevant, specific, and valuable. That is what makes for a simple emotion research project that results in actionable insights.

Section Three

SCALABLE
EMOTION RESEARCH
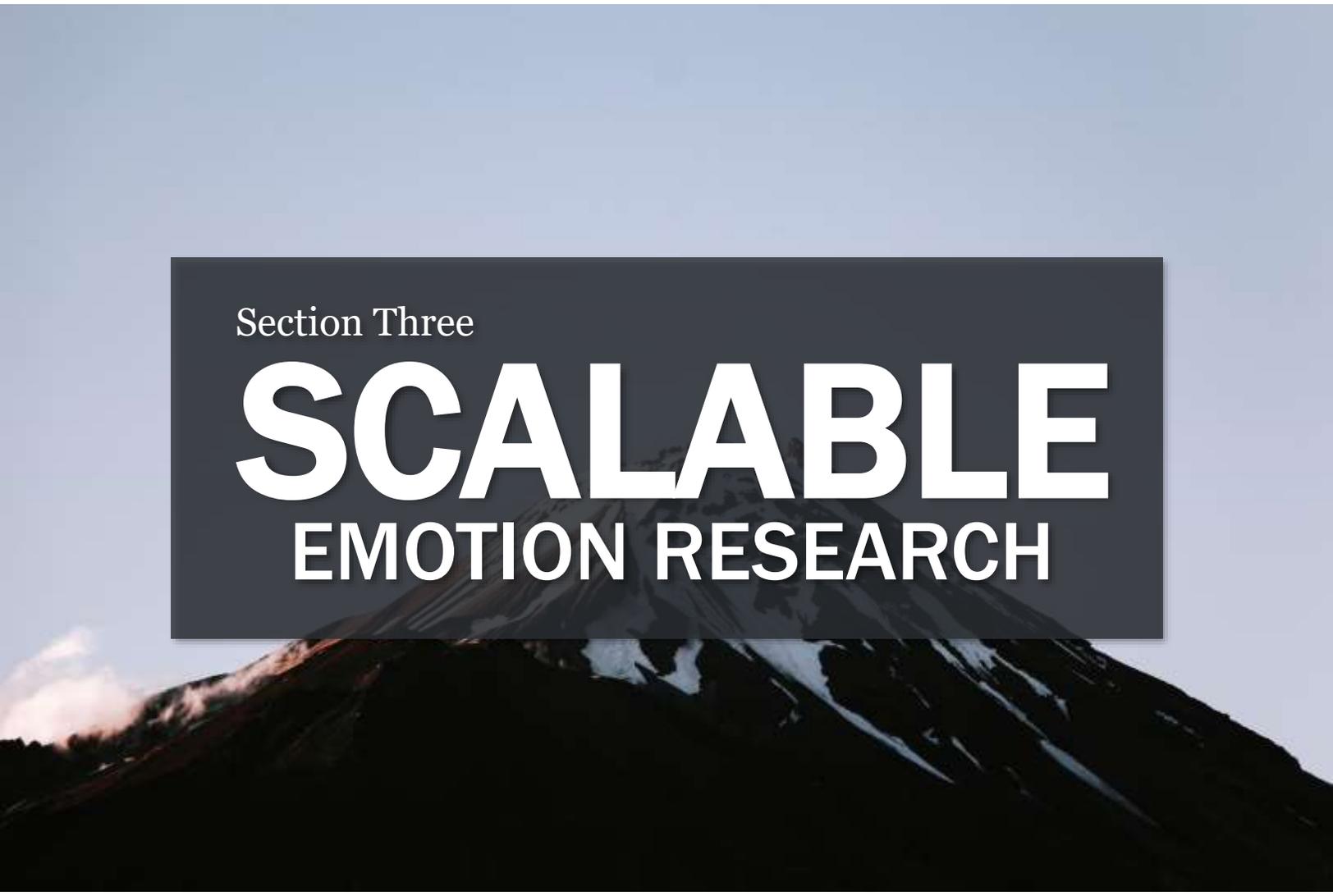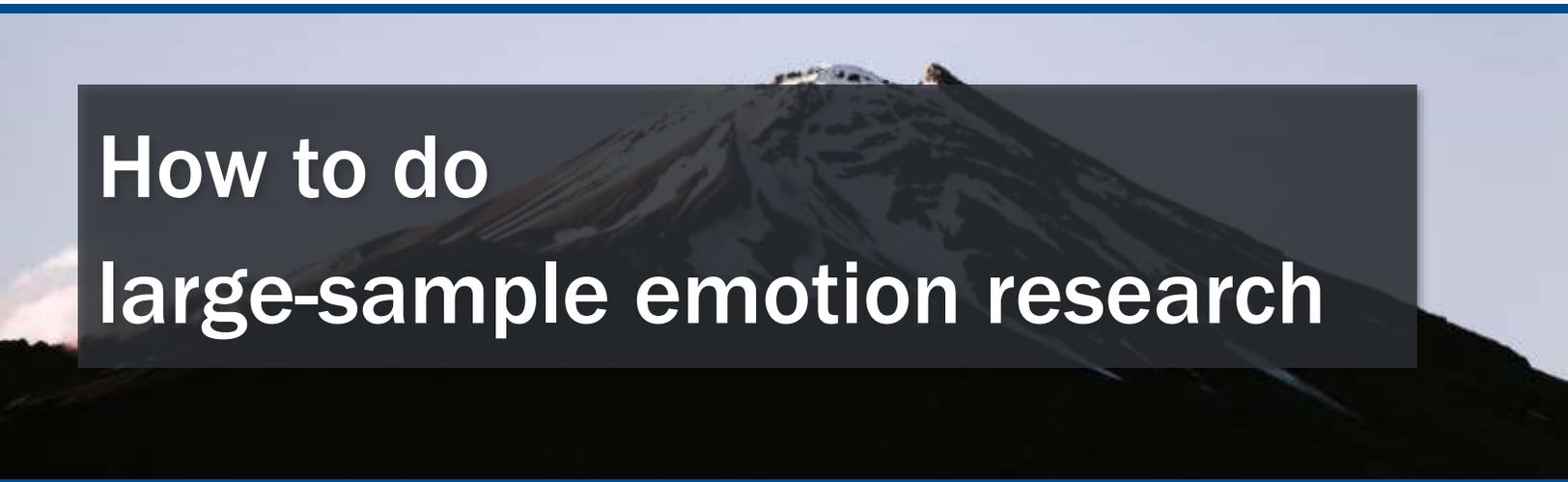
How to do
large-sample emotion research

Breaking through the myths surrounding emotion research

Emotion research is not scalable when it is based in a lab setting with high-tech machines and neuroscientists who specialize in human emotions.

On the other hand, it is scalable when analyzing language to understand customer emotions.

Perhaps the most significant advantage of using language to do emotion research is the scalability it allows. Most emotion research techniques are small sample and cannot be done in large scale due to the cost and complexity of the work. If you need to increase your sample size, using language analysis to discover and understand customer emotions is the best option.

For example, imagine you are conducting a survey on the food and beverage industry in which your company wants to determine whether its current marketing tactics are truly resonating with potential customers.

You begin with the small scale, exploratory phase, but you know you need a larger sample to get a clearer picture of customer emotions. If neuro-based emotion research methods cost your company $1,000 per participant to conduct, the idea of scaling up is completely cost-prohibitive and you won't be able to accomplish your goals within budget.

In this instance, you are better off performing emotion research through language analysis. Because language is *ubiquitous*, the cost to conduct studies is much lower and the timeline is much faster.

No matter what kind of research you are conducting – quantitative, qualitative, focus group work, surveys, etc. – it can easily be scaled up to accommodate a larger sample size. Unlike other emotion research methods that are primarily physiological, language analysis is easy to accomplish with techniques that are conducive to large sample work.

The larger your sample, the more confident you can be in your results. The more confident you are in your results, the better your business decisions. It's a win-win.

Section Four

SCIENTIFIC
EMOTION RESEARCH

Scientific Emotion Research

Emotion research is becoming more popular, but there are many arguments about the "best" or "most accurate" way to complete it. There are those who go the neuroscience route, using fMRIs, eye tracking, and other physiological measurements to capture how subjects are feeling. On the other hand, there are those who don't go deep enough, simply ranking a respondent's feedback as positive or negative, with no attempt to delve further into the wide range of emotions encompassed within the pleasant and unpleasant category.

Analyzing language gives scientific accuracy, with an efficient and scalable research process. Many approaches to linguistic emotion-analysis exist, but we have found the most success with tools that approach emotion research through the lens of Plutchik's Wheel of Emotions.

The basis of Plutchik's Wheel is to pare down the vast number of emotions into a smaller, more manageable set of emotion "channels" that focus on what type of emotion is present, which allows for a simpler conceptualization of human feelings.

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Our Emotion Wheel

Using a dictionary of over 10,000 emotion words, we've developed a **patented algorithm** that organizes emotion words into a simple framework based upon Plutchik's Wheel of Emotions. On the left below, you'll see Plutchik's Wheel of Emotion channels. The right image is the analytical framework Martec has adapted for use in discovering and mapping customer emotions.
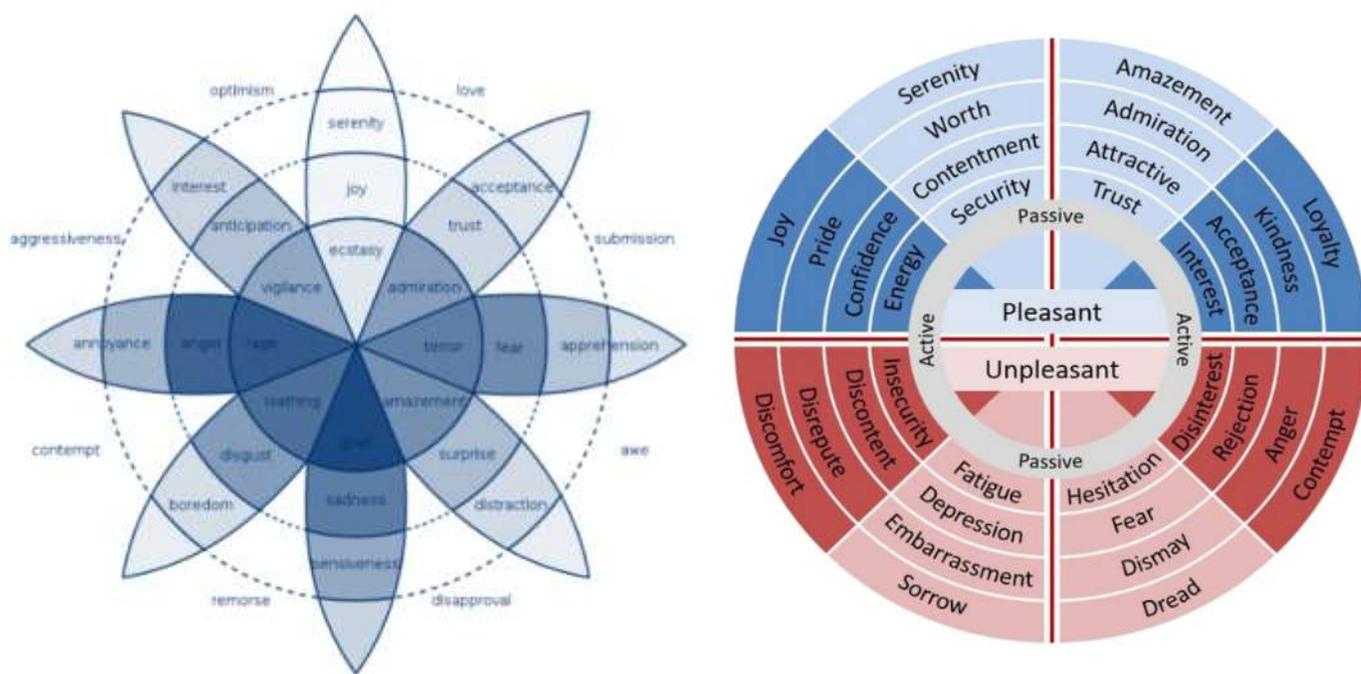
In both images, each emotion "channel" is representative of a specific type of emotion defined by four main channel properties:

- *Enjoyment*
    - *Interest*
        - *Commitment*
            - *Passion*

ENJOYMENT

Unpleasant → Pleasant

The first property is **Enjoyment**: is an emotion is unpleasant or pleasant? This is a fairly obvious element and the base level for sentiment analysis. While a good starting point, enjoyment is all too often where companies stop in their emotion analysis. Just understanding whether an emotion is pleasant or unpleasant is important, but insufficient to really drive actionable outcomes.

INTEREST

Inward → Outward

The next property is **Interest**: is the person feeling inward (about "me") emotions or outward (about what is outside/my environment) emotions. This property is crucial if you want to effectively communicate with your customers or target audience. If your customers are feeling emotions that are predominantly about themselves (inward) and your communications are focusing on your product/brand only (outward), your message may not be truly heard.

COMMITMENT

Passive → Active

The third property is **Commitment**: whether the person feels like being active or passive. Some emotions, such as Joy, are active in nature, meaning the person feels like doing something (e.g. telling a friend, celebrating, etc.). Other emotions, such as Serenity, are passive and result in a desire to do "nothing" (e.g. relaxing on a beach). Understanding whether your customers are feeling active or passive is essential if you want to motivate them to action…you need to understand their emotional starting point.

PASSION

Mild → Intense

Finally, the last property is **Passion**: how "strong" is the emotion. Saying that "not all emotions are created equal" seems obvious but knowing how strong various emotions are can be tricky. Plutchik's Wheel provides an excellent guidepost for determining which emotions are stronger and therefore of higher priority to address/leverage.

Our Emotion Wheel

Combining these 4 properties produces a simple-to-understand framework (matrix) of 32 emotion channels, grouped into eight channel groups which manifests into an **Emotion Landscape**. The Emotion Landscape identifies the most prominent emotions for given topic(s) and provides a starting point for further analyses, digging into key emotion channels and beginning to understand how to better connect and communicate with target audiences or customers.
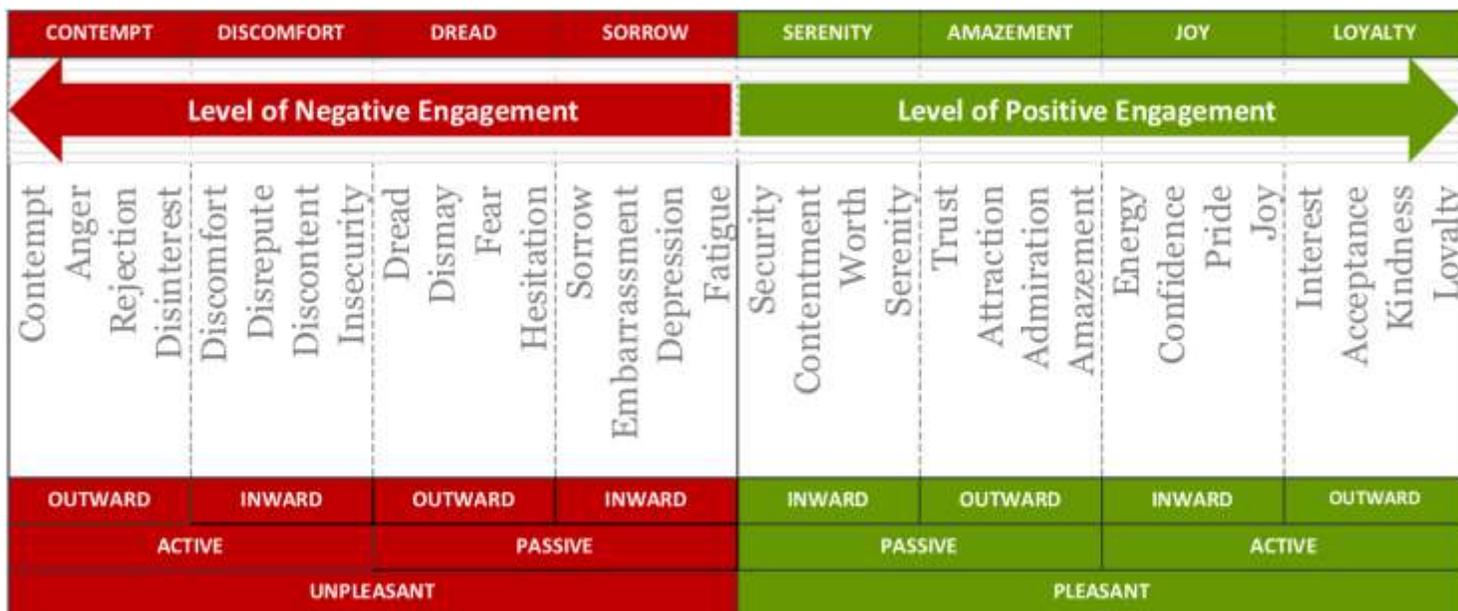
The result is that you don't need to understand how to "deal with" 10,000 emotions...you simply need to understand the degree to which specific **types** of emotions are being felt and then, by working with the associated primary properties of those emotions, you can identify the optimal and appropriate actions.
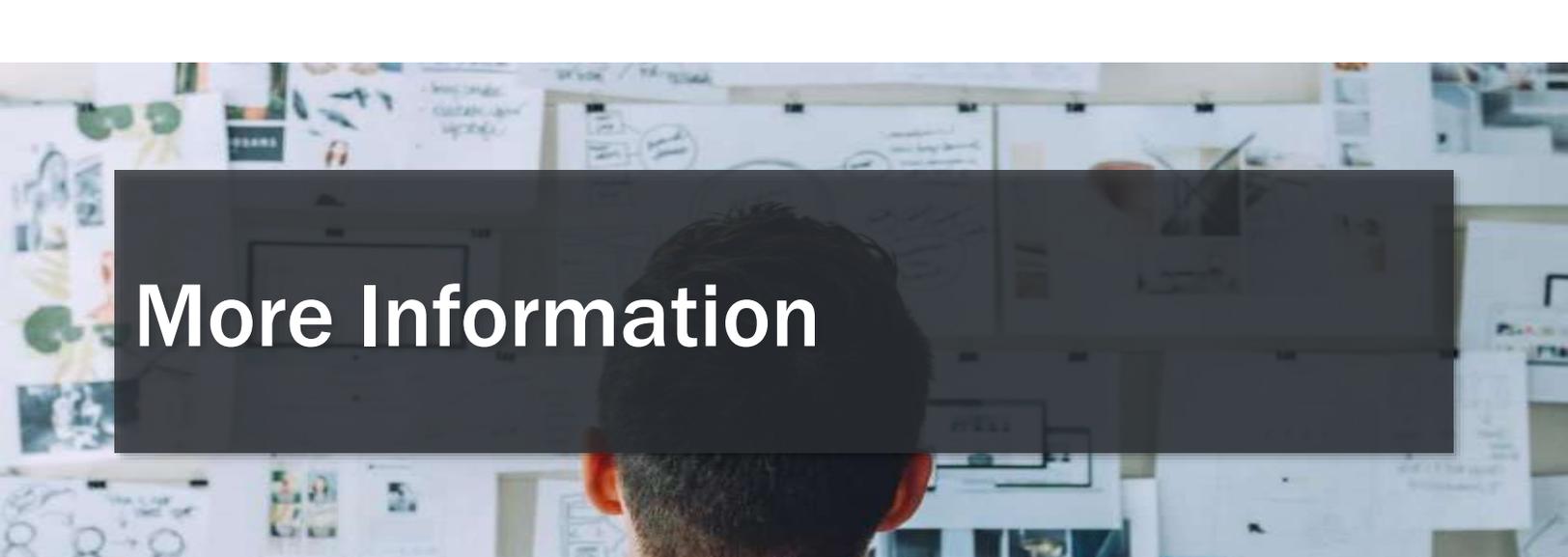
More Information

To learn more about how we approach the study of emotions, [download our brief on Emotion Intelligence here](#) or look at a practical application of emotion research in our study of on [early stage innovation and persona development](#). If you're interested in getting started on emotion research, feel free to reach out to us by [email or phone](#).

CONTACT

For a free trial of our Emotion Intelligence tools.
Email us at tmginfo@martecgroup.com or call us at 888.811.5755.

Learn more