Emotion Tracking.

Table of Contents.

Emotion tracking. Objective market research. Insights into actions. Digital innovation. User experience. Emotions. Customer-oriented. Inspiration. People-oriented. Success. Decisions. Actions. Scientific. **Namics.**

A Merkle Company

In the fast lane with emotion tracking.

Almost all (purchasing) decisions made by the customer are based on subconscious mechanisms. When asked why the customer chose this instead of that product, he or she will give objective reasons. But they rarely tie in with the real reasons. Of course, the customer is not lying, but neither is he or she telling the truth – because he does not know the truth. With the help of emotion tracking it can be brought to light.

Emotion tracking makes the subconscious visible and paves the way to the customer. This approach provides data that are objective and reliable. This not only enables the further development of user-centred products and services, but also makes it easier to predict their success.

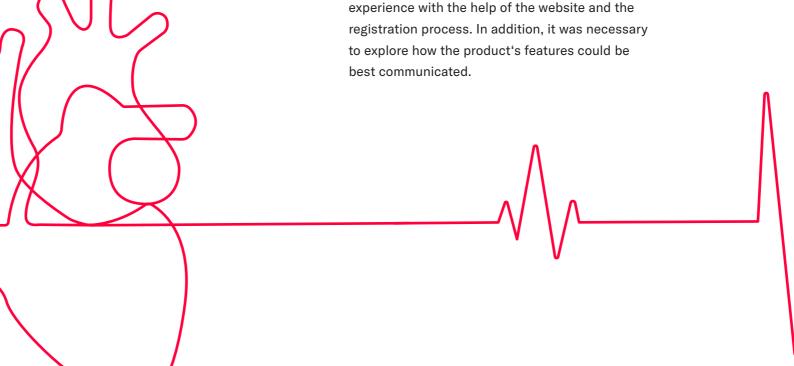## Emotion tracking taking SIXT Share as an example.

What does this look like in practice? This question is answered in the white paper using SIXT as an example. As the world's largest integrated mobility service provider, the company offers innovative mobility solutions that give customers flexibility and freedom. It is inspired and motivated by its customers. The same applies to the new, customer-centred SIXT Share car-sharing service.

This product has been available since spring 2019 and has removed the barriers between car rental and car sharing: an app allows customers to rent a car for a specific period of time – from a few minutes to 27 days. The car can be picked up and dropped off at one of SIXT's worldwide stations or in predetermined places. Customers who have this artificial intelligence-based pricing system always receive the lowest possible price.

When creating the SIXT Share website, the company assigned great importance to making its distinct focus on customers clear from the very word go. To ensure this happens, Namics relied on digital emotion tracking. The goal was to understand and optimise the customers' product experience with the help of the website and the registration process. In addition, it was necessary to explore how the product's features could be best communicated.

In this white paper you will learn:

- How emotion tracking works in theory and practice,
- What the difference is between feelings and emotions,
- What outcomes emotion tracking brings to light and
- How user-centred digital solutions can be developed from this.
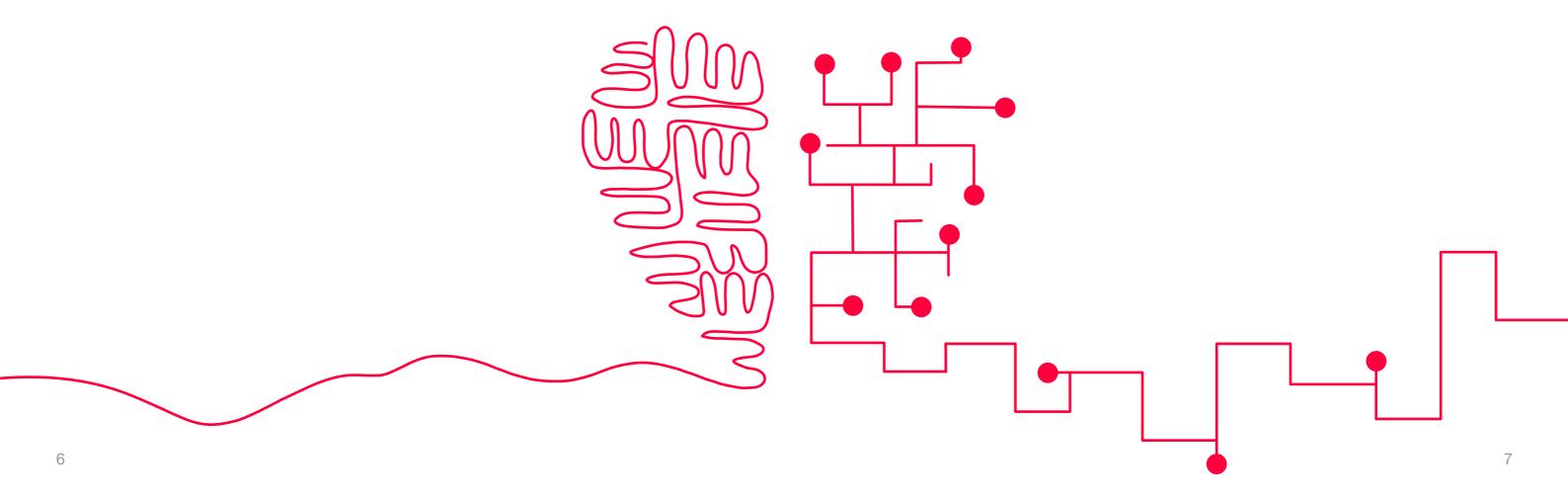
Theory.

Emotion tracking.

Many companies believe that their customers make conscious decisions. But this is a misconception. Nearly all (purchasing) decisions are based on subconscious mechanisms. Surveys can therefore only be one component in gaining a complete understanding of customers' motives. Emotion tracking is the ideal complement to this.

This method from the field of physiopsychology reliably shows how consumers judge products and services emotionally. What is particularly exciting is that this judgement cannot be manipulated and therefore offers objective and valid results from which clear recommendations can be derived.

Feeling. Emotion. Action.

In everyday language emotions are often equated with feelings. In fact, the two terms cannot be used synonymously. Feelings arise from emotions and are therefore a subjective interpretation of them and are influenced by a person's own experiences and convictions.

Emotions, on the other hand, are "automatic" physical reactions that cannot be influenced and they control our behaviour. This enables us to adapt to our environment. In short: the motivation for action arises from an emotion. The exploration of emotions provides a significant piece of the puzzle needed to fully comprehend the customer. Using this knowledge, products can be made more user-friendly and services can be tailored precisely to customer needs.

How can emotions be measured?

Emotions manifest themselves in physical reactions. Emotion tracking makes use of this: measurements are taken using sensors attached directly to the body and then evaluated by a research team.

During the interaction with digital products and services, there are numerous physiological and cognitive reactions that cannot be consciously perceived or manipulated.
These reactions provide information:

- On the appeal of the product and on the test candidate's or participant's level of awareness (i.e. interest and attention),

- About the positive or negative emotionality generated by the product or service, and

- About the participant's response to a product, e.g. relating to it or avoiding it (e.g. whether users find the product appealing due to how it is being presented and due to the landing page)
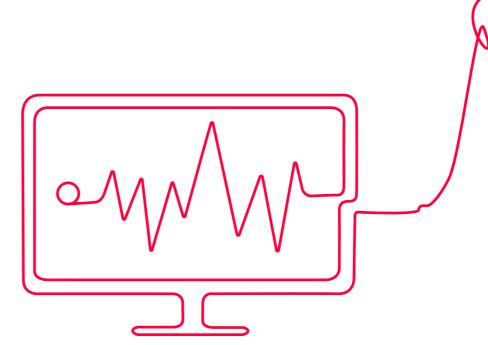
Measuring the bodily functions of online customers is not possible. However, laboratory tests with representative test candidates, in which up to five psychophysiological indicators are measured, can be implemented:

- Measuring how deep the breathing is (by a clamp on the index finger) provides information about the active interest in what is perceived.

- The "electrodermal activity", which can be determined by electrodes in the palm of the hand, increases with sweating and shows positive excitement, but also negative stress.

- Electrodes on the left-hand side of the chest record the heartbeat and thus the mental stress or the degree of relaxation.

- Electrodes for measuring brain waves are attached directly to the head. These provide information on mental stress. If this stress factor is high, negative emotionality is usually to be expected.

- The facial-muscle activity points to a positive or negative emotional activation (valence). This involves recording micro-movements at three points on the face that are invisible to the eye.

Depending on the design of the study, individual parameters can be dispensed with. On the other hand, emotion tracking can also be combined with other methods. Useful additions are, for example, interviews with the test candidates or eye tracking – a method in which a person's gaze is recorded during interaction with, for instance, a website. This allows the exact identification of the elements that cause a certain emotionality.

The analysis of the results obtained leads to insights about the tendencies and weak points. If the emotional ratings throughout the entire customer journey are positive, customer loyalty is high. After all, the human psyche is conditioned in such a way that it always seeks to repeat pleasant experiences. If negative emotions emerge, there is room for improvement in the language and images used, in the web design as a whole or in the user-friendliness. From this, specialists derive recommendations for action that enable a user-centred and optimal design of digital products.
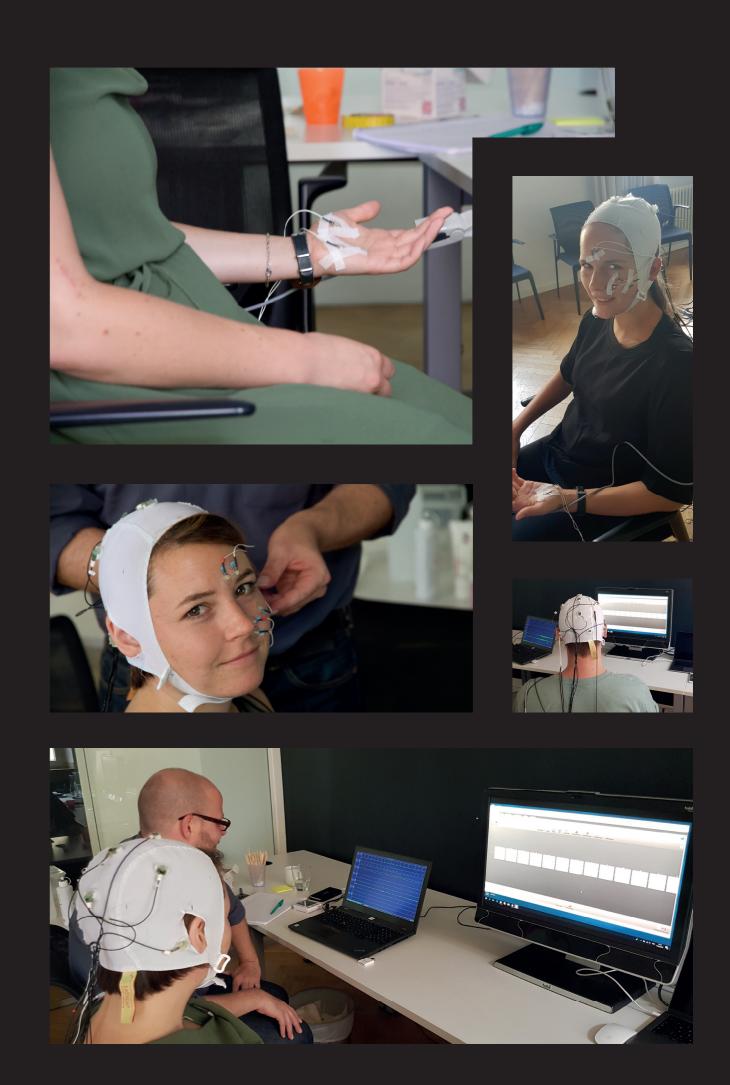
From the signs used in supermarkets to the trends in digital business, such as augmented reality: the effect on the customer is decisive for the success of the marketing measure.

Emotion tracking in market research.

The recording of physical reactions provides more objective results than a customer survey. Emotions do control behaviour, but they cannot be controlled by the individual – and therefore not be falsified. So if you want to find out what the actual effect of a product, a service, a TV spot or a web shop is on the customer, you have to go back to the origin of the emotions. The range of possible applications for this method is extremely diverse: market researchers can measure the emotionality of the test candidates on a new mobile phone model as well as the comprehensibility of a flyer.

Studies using emotion tracking are a valuable source of information, particularly for the digital world. In the absence of interaction at the face-to-face level, the customers' reactions are usually difficult to assess or understand. Measurements with the appropriate metho-dology nevertheless allow us to gain an objective understanding of how the customer perceives a new website, a new app or a new online shop. This not only enables usercentred products and services to be developed further, but also makes it easier to predict the success.

Practice.

03

The SIXT Share – case in detail.

As soon as they hit the landing page of SIXT Share, users will immediately perceive the strong customer orientation. In order to check how the design, the texts and above all the registration process were received by the user, Namics relied on emotion tracking.

Questions to be addressed.

For SIXT Share, Namics designed an intuitive and interactive landing page that users can use to get further information and register. In order to measure the impact of the page, Namics developed different text variants for product communication and two different registration procedures. These alternatives were then shown to different test candidates. In the test it was necessary to clarify:

- How the new design of the landing page affects the user emotionally.

- How to emotionalize different product messages.

- Whether users prefer emotional or factual language.

- What a customer-friendly registration process looks like.

Test scenarios.

Six different product communication texts – with different product descriptions and messages and different explanations of the pricing model – were created to analyse these questions. In addition, the design of the new landing page and two different registration routes were tested. The assessment was carried out on twelve people aged between 20 and 45.

In total, there were two test scenarios, which differed only with regard to the registration method used. In both scenarios the participants were confronted with six texts and the new landing page. In the first test scenario, half of the test group completed a short registration form on a computer and a longer registration on a smartphone. The remaining participants completed the registration of the second test scenario, which consisted of a longer form on a computer and a shorter form on the smartphone.
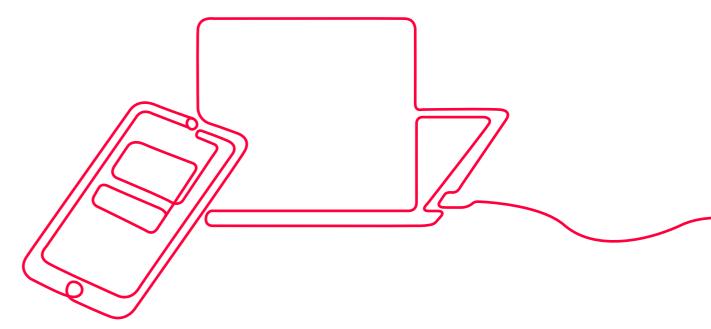
Measurement procedure.

In a 30-minute session, the emotionality of the twelve participants was measured during their interaction with six texts, the landing page and two different registration routes.

Each participant was assessed individually. After being welcomed by the research team, the participants were given a brief explanation of the procedure and their task. Electrodes were then attached to their hands, face, chest and head. Since the individual measurements basically depend on the physical constitution of the individual participants and can also be influenced by the environment, these measurements were taken before the test. This so-called baseline measurement took about two minutes.

The research team then carried out the main analysis. The participants read the texts and scrolled through the landing page. Then half of the experimental group was asked to test one of the two options of the registration process. The research team also used eye tracking to determine which terms generated the most attraction in the text comparison. After the analysis, a short Q&A session of the participants took place.

Results.

04

Digital tuning with emotion tracking.

With the tests described above, Namics is in a position to check which texts and which type of registration are best received by users. The last part of the white paper shows what the comprehensive analysis reveals and how these findings contribute to the improvement of the website.

Landing page.
Design creates a good atmosphere.

The interactive and intuitive design of the landing page evoked very positive emotions. Since the product was unknown to the participants, it can be deduced that the positive effect is directly related to the design. In addition, the positive emotional attitude of the participants was accompanied by an increased interest.

The fact that the participants understood the site and subconsciously found it interesting was shown by the balanced level of mental stress during the viewing of the new site. The subjective perception of the page was also positive. During the Q&A session, the participants said that the landing page was easy to use and appealing.

The result.
With a new and unfamiliar product, we can expect the user to experience uncertainty and emotional stress when interacting with the landing page for the first time. However, the results showed that the design counteracted these negative emotions and stimulated the participants in a positive way. The positive emotional reaction to the design has a strong influence on how a new product is perceived and ideally leads to greater brand loyalty in future.

Digital tuning with emotion tracking.

Product description.
Emotions are key.

In order to test the Wording of the product description, two texts were developed. The first text explained the product from a purely functional point of view. The simplicity when using the product and the wide range of car models were highlighted. The second text used imagery and inspirational wording.

Another difference between the texts was the way the subject of flexibility was communicated. In the first case, the participants were asked to think of possible ways in which the product could be used (e.g. "no matter where, no matter how long"), while the second text provided examples of where the product might be used (e.g. "enjoying the lake with the convertible").

The result.
The functional description neither aroused the interest nor the attention of the test subjects and caused a negative emotionality. At the same time, inaccurate information about the usage scenarios ("no matter where") caused scepticism and uncertainty. Having a very large selection of car models was also perceived as overwhelming.

On the other hand, the emotional text seemed far more appealing. The results of the analysis showed that the use of inspiring descriptions evoked positive emotions in the users and triggered interest and attention. At the same time, giving examples of possible usage reinforced the positive perception of the product.

In short: the emotional benefit (e.g. freedom or enjoyment) plays a central role when it comes to inspiring the customer. It is therefore not so much about what the product offers, and more about what the customer can experience with it.
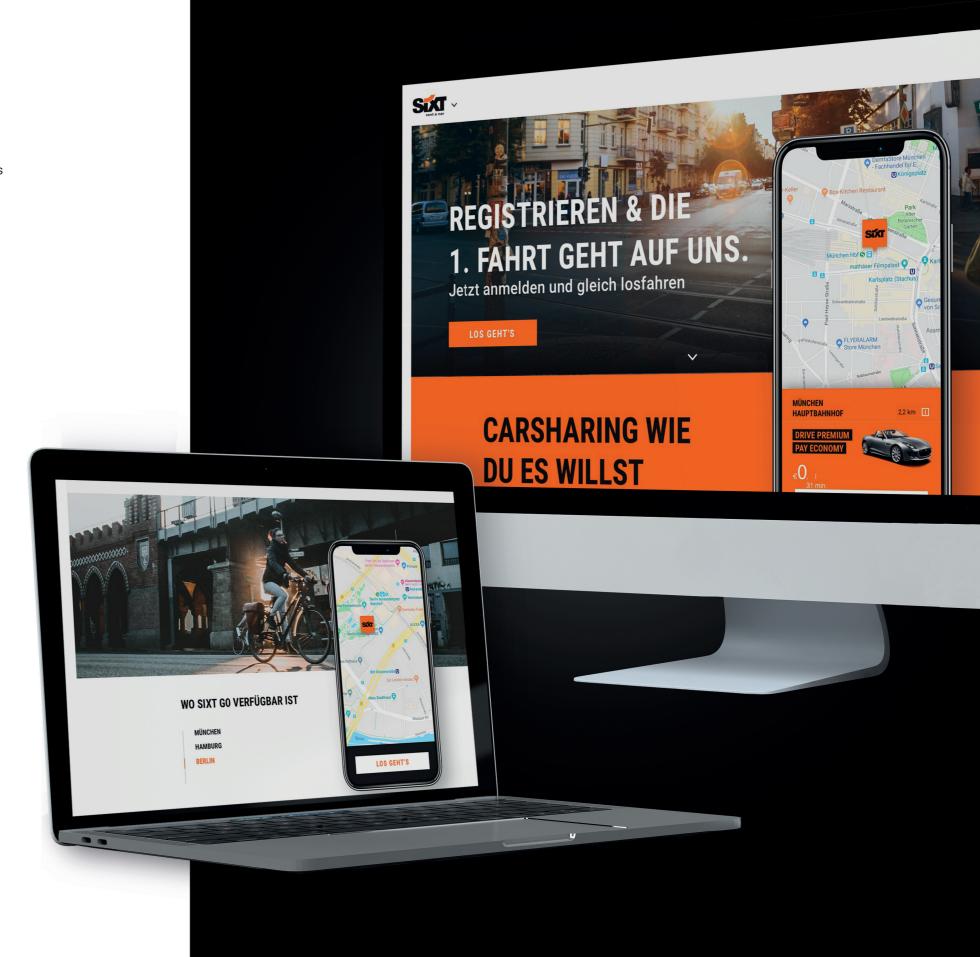
Results.

Registration.
Keep it simple.

Two different registration processes were tested in the study. Laptops and smartphones were used for both routes, but the amount of data to be entered on each device varied. Although the full registration on the computer had a better emotional effect, it also caused a higher cognitive load.

The registration on the mobile phone, on the other hand, caused more scepticism because the participants were unsure whether the process would work so quickly in real life (result from the Q&A session). However, the full functionality of the scanning process in real life (driver's licence and ID card) could reduce the scepticism observed here.

The result.

A registration process represents a barrier between customer and product. Therefore, this step must be as discreet and quick as possible. This helps to minimise user stress and to positively shape the user's experience with the new product from the very beginning.

Recommendations for action.

05

Based on these results, Namics then developed recommendations for action for SIXT Share. The most important are summarised here:

The more concrete, the better

Concrete examples and wording create clear ideas for the customer. This gives the customer a feeling of security, which in turn generates positive emotions. For this reason,
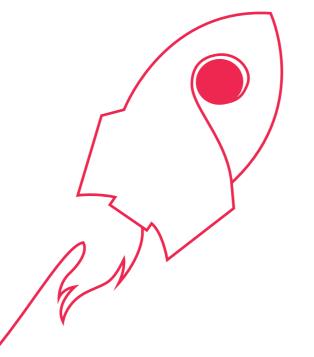fixed price quotations are always best.

Simple = ideal

Registration procedures are usually unpleasant for users. This makes it all the more important to keep the effort required to a minimum. "Simple, fast and quiet" is the motto. Interactive elements, which have nothing to do with the actual registration, are perceived as a nuisance/getting in the way. If two devices are required for registration, the transition should be seamless.

Emotional? Excellent!

You would like to highlight the emotional benefits for consumers? What an excellent idea! Our results show that emotionally formulated texts are far more appealing to the customer. However, care must be taken to always choose positive formulations. Unless, of course, you want to purposefully stop the customer from doing something. An example: instead of using the phrase "no unpleasant surprises", the phrase "you are always on the safe side" would be more appropriate.

Contact.

Would you like to find out more about emotion tracking or have your digital products tested? Then get in touch – we would be happy to hear from you!

Author
Vera Pichardo
Senior Consultant Research and Insights
E-Mail: vera.pichardo@namics.com
Telefon DE: +49 151 527 029 18

New Business Deutschland
Yvo Pesek
Principal Consultant New Business
E-Mail: yvo.pesek@namics.com
Telefon DE: +49 69 365 059 218

New Business Schweiz
Patrick Bürkle
Principal Consultant New Business
E-Mail: newbusiness@namics.com
Telefon CH: +41 71 228 67 77

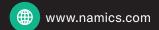**Press**
Sebastian Weber
Senior Communication Manager
E-Mail: medien@namics.com
Telefon CH: +41 41 768 23 40
Telefon DE: +49 89 649 136 840

Get in touch.

About Namics – A Merkle Company

Namics creates winners in digital transformation. As an award-winning digital specialist, Namics pursues the mission of providing holistic support for customers in their digital transformation: From vision to reality - thanks to many years of expertise in strategic consulting, innovative concepts, creative work and technological implementation from a single source. The company was founded in 1995 in St.Gallen and has been part of Merkle and thus of the Dentsu Aegis Network since 2018.

At its locations in St.Gallen, Zurich, Frankfurt, Munich, Hamburg and Belgrade, around 550 employees support the following clients from a wide variety of industries: ADAC, Boehringer Ingelheim, Bucherer, Daimler AG, DriveNow, Hansgrohe, Hoval, Jelmoli, Kaufland, KUKA, Medela, Migros, Swica, Swiss Life, UBS and Victorinox.

About Merkle

Merkle is a leading data-driven, technology-enabled, global performance marketing agency that specializes in the delivery of unique, personalized customer experiences across platforms and devices. For more than 30 years, Fortune 1000 companies and leading nonprofit organizations have partnered with Merkle to maximize the value of their customer portfolios. The agency's heritage in data, technology, and analytics forms the foundation for its unmatched skills in understanding consumer insights that drive people-based marketing strategies. Its combined strengths in performance media, customer experience, customer relationship management, loyalty, and enterprise marketing technology drive improved marketing results and competitive advantage. With 6800 employees, Merkle is headquartered in Columbia, Maryland, with 19 additional offices in the US and 33 offices in Europe and APAC. In 2016, the agency joined the Dentsu Aegis Network. For more information, visit www.merkleinc.com.