

# Sign of the Times

**THE NUMBER OF MOBILE** phone users in 2016 will grow to 4.6 billion, according to eMarketer — that's 61 percent of the world's population — and nearly half of them will be using smartphones. For marketers, the text message is on the wall: Mobile marketing is here and it's critical for brands to up their game. To do that, brands need to adopt the language of mobile, which, increasingly, is written in emojis, those small pictographs that come programmed into device keyboards.

Some brands have already begun playing with emojis, including them in email subject lines, or if you're Domino's, letting consumers place a delivery order just by tweeting the pizza emoji. In September, Verizon did something similar to heighten awareness for its new brand identity, sending cheeseburgers to consumers in select cities who tweeted at the brand with a burger emoji. (In full disclosure, I got one of those burgers — it was delicious.) And IHOP, which hadn't updated its logo in more than 20 years, debuted a new one this past June that features a smiley face.

But it's not always about food. At the 2015 ANA Masters of Marketing Conference, Linda Boff, the chief marketing officer at General Electric, talked about GE's Emoji Table of Experiments (emojiscience.com), which uses emojis to explain science in a way that's approachable and will engage tomorrow's scientists and engineers.

Clearly, emojis are already at work in B-to-C and B-to-B, and understanding them will be a big thumbs up for marketers. — *Andrew Eitelbach*

