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Thailand Marketing
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MARKETING YOUR MEANINGS TO PEOPLE

**TMRS
INSIGHTS Flash
October Issue**

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THAILAND NEEDS TO FULFILL GREATER EXPECTATION

Using AI to track emotional response to the brand

MORE IS EXPECTED FOR THAILAND

All brands need to be tracked. Most readers will have been involved with tracking studies. And in my experience the usual question is "how do we do this regularly, cheaply and in a way we can get an easy dashboard that tells us how the market feels?".

Well that is part of the work I do with my partner SignificanceSystems *. An AI based platform that quite simply takes your brand or issue, searches the whole of open internet for all content ever read about it and measures it's relevance. Yes AI. The hot topic of 2023 but for many of us using AI based market research tools is not new.

I have been using it to measure brands for near a decade because it is literally fast, accurate, neutral and cheaper than traditional methods. For example the brand "Thailand".

Starting in 2015 I have been regularly checking how strong the Thailand brand is around the world. Partly to help Thai clients understand what is the value of Thailand and Thai brands, partly to track how Thailand is seen.

"How do we do this regularly, cheaply and in a way we can get an easy dashboard that tells us how the market feels?"

I wanted to share a few examples of our regular checks on the Thailand narrative to illustrate how brands in general and the Thailand brand in this case change in reaction to the marketplaces perception of the content they see. So we have chosen 4 points since 2017 to illustrate the emotions being generated globally about Thailand.

In each case we asked the SignificanceSystems platform to search the narrative around Thailand across the whole of the English language internet. The platform searches, find and reads all content that mentions Thailand, literally terabytes of data. Any google or other search engine mention, open social media, government and company websites.

Among other things it then assesses the emotions that all that content about Thailand generates.

In the charts below you can see the results of what emotions brand Thailand has generated at four specific times over that period.

Each of the graphs show the emotions generated by the narrative about "Thailand" across the whole of the internet. Positive emotions are green, negative red. Where there is a clear tonality difference to emotions it is represented in purple. The intensity of colour represents the intensity of emotion. The width of the arc reflects the importance of the emotion.
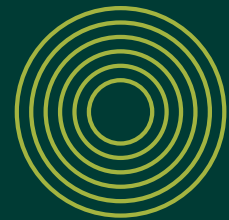
SignificanceSystems platform assesses the emotions that all that content about Thailand generates. In the charts below you can see the results of what emotions brand Thailand has generated at four specific times over that period.
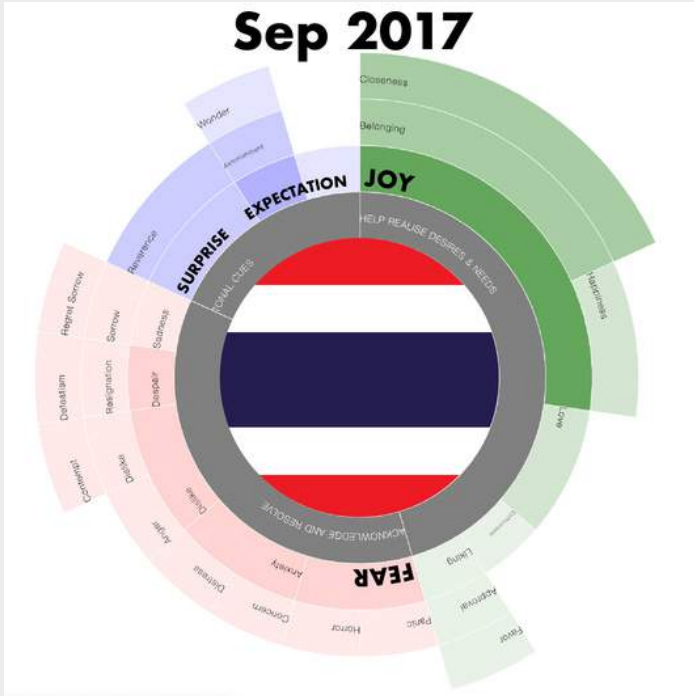
Positive emotions are green, negative red. Where there is a clear tonality difference to emotions it is represented in purple. The intensity of colour represents the intensity of emotion. The width of the arc reflects the importance of the emotion.

When you look across the four diagrams represented we see clear differences and clear progression of the position of Thailand since 2017 :

September 2017

You can see that Thailand was evoking a lot of "green" or positive emotions. Especially **"Joy"**. A lot of strong joy. There were also some negative emotions generated such as **"fear"** and **"anxiety"** but not as strong as the positive emotions. Note too there was also some **"surprise"** and **"expectation"**.

At the time we talked about the results indicating that while that the world saw Thailand in very positive ways generally and it was a source of surprise to people everywhere it was not too dissimilar from neighbouring markets such as Indonesia and Vietnam. Our in-depth look suggested that the Thailand brand was strong but needed to create more surprise and differentiation.

October 2019

Two years later and you can see the world is seeing Thailand a little differently. There is still a lot of positive **"affection"** and **"love"** generated. But notice the green/positive emotions are not as rich. There is more mildly negative emotions like **"fear"** which we found were tied to increased worries that the economy was not great but also reporting around the government and business not being very progressive. And remember around this time there was a lot more awareness of Thailand not coming to grips with an ageing, shrinking population. And also more awareness that while tourism was booming in numbers there were worries that Thailand was starting to lose it's shine compared to other destinations. But the biggest change was that **"expectation"** and **"hope"** were now the biggest emotional tones connected with the country. The world was literally expecting more from Thailand.
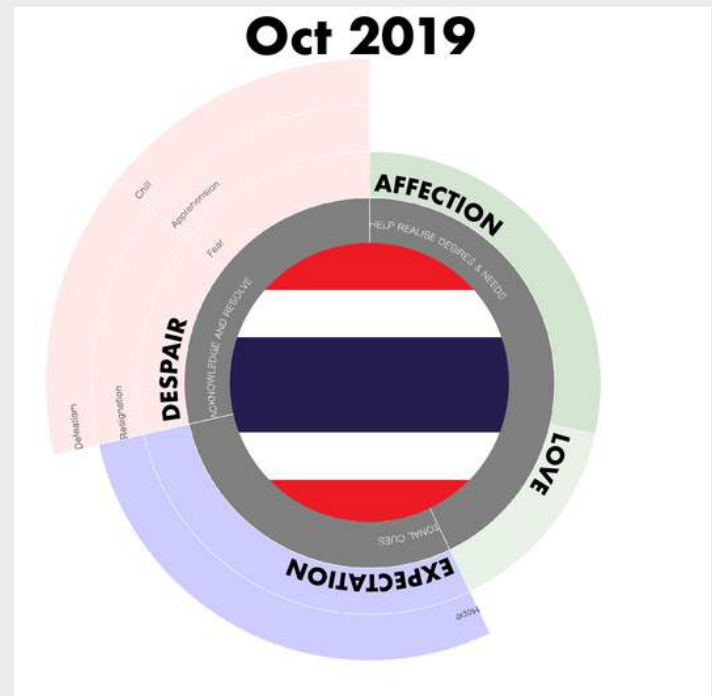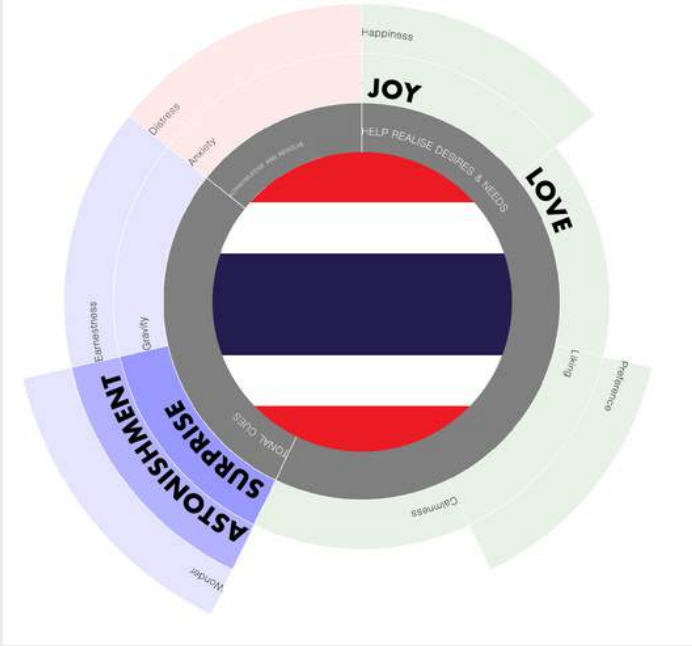
December 2022

Let's skip past the Covid years (if you want to know how the world reacted to Thailand in Covid times let me know). By December last year things were **"getting back to normal"**. Or at least that was the conversation. All the Covid scares were slipping away. The narrative around Thailand globally was generating **"love"** and **"joy"** again. But not strong love/joy. Note the pale colour of those emotions. The negative emotions had just about disappeared as Thailand was seen as having coped and was recovering well. The good news was the strength of **"astonishment"** and **"surprise"** as the world saw Thailand coming back. Astonished to rediscover Thailand. Surprised that there was good stories coming from the country. Now remember the research represents what the world saw and read and believed, not what we in Thailand might think. So looking good.

October 2023

A year later, an election that seemed to drag on forever, to the world a hard to understand process of who was the government and what was the plan, and little good news. Yes the economy was ok, the tourists numbers were coming back, there was no really shocking crisis or business collapse. But note there world saw little **"joy"**. Positive emotions have shrunk terribly. **"fear"**, **"dislike"**, **"anxiety"** are more likely to be the emotions generated by news about Thailand right now. Not terribly strong, but there is a lot of concern. When we look at the content generated about Thailand in the last few months globally it is all confusion and lacking positive news and clarity. Fortunately **"expectation"** is the dominant tone associated with Thailand. With all the issues and concerns about the country the world expects more, expects good news.
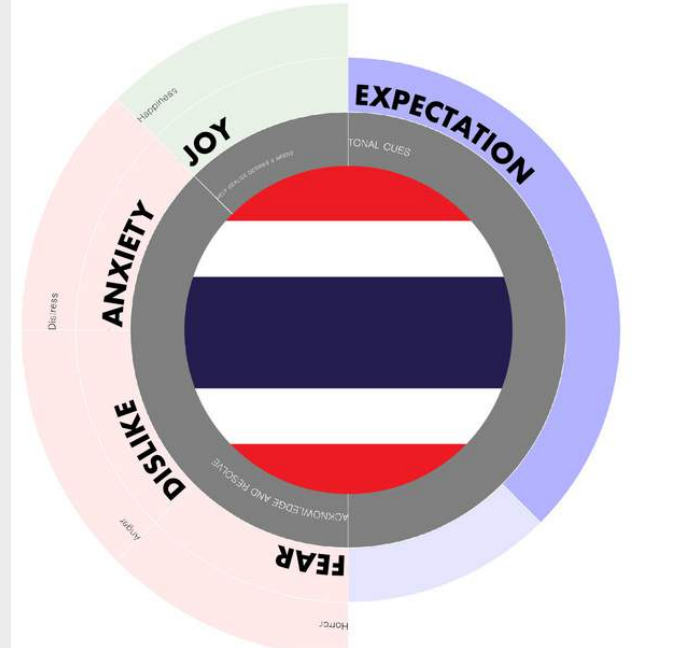
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Thailand has been on a rocky road the last 6 years. It is more a brand the world is waiting and expecting to see more good stories about.

So as we can see Thailand as a narrative or brand changes in the way the world sees it. Like all brands the marketplace reacts to the content about it, what it sees and reads and understands with different emotions as things change. Thailand has been on a rocky road the last 6 years. It is not generating the overwhelming positivity we might have expected in the past. It is more a brand the world is waiting and expecting to see more good stories about. Our research allows us to identify the sectors and issues that are performing best and those needing help. Happy to talk about that but in short : more clarity on where the country is going, more positive approaches to demographic opportunities, more news on how industry is and will grow, more diversity in tourism attractions in the face of increased competition from SE Asia neighbours when it comes to traditional attractions like beaches, sun, food, friendliness.

A huge opportunity for Thailand … we will continue tracking how the world sees our wonderful country.