

Tapping TLC's 'emoji-nal' rebrand

By Leigh Andrews

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What better way to target the youth market than in their own communication style? Here's how TLC Entertainment is doing just that with its latest brand campaign.

Earlier this week, we reported that emojis are taking centre stage in [TLC Entertainment's new brand campaign](#) this month.



Stephen Royle, senior creative director at Discovery Networks CEEMEA

As part of the refreshed on-air look, incorporating a more colourful and vibrant feel as well as a whole new logo, the 'OMG with heart' campaign harnesses the attraction of emojis – no longer just for interpersonal youth chats on the smaller screens, they're now popping up in mainstream communication and proving themselves as ways for brands to get real-time responsive feedback right from their audience.

It's a bold and timely move. Stephen Royle, senior creative director at Discovery Networks CEEMEA led the in-house development of the emoji-driven campaign. He explains it's intended to give viewers a closer connection with TLC's shows as it highlights stories he describes as "incredibly brave, moving, and entertaining," like *Cake Boss* and *Fat Chance* by making them feel personal and relevant through personality, warmth and positivity, through the two core values of surprise and emotion.

Keeping TV 'televisual' and online 'digital'

Obviously the campaign won't be limited to TV – the multiple creative executions featuring emojis extend across print ads and digital assets, where we're [most familiar](#) with using yellow smiley faces and red hearts instead of text to convey an emotional reaction.

But TLC Entertainment's own emoji library was specially designed, along with rules about how to use them and being conscious of maintaining what he calls "a televisual style" on air – clean and glossy, using animations, and not overdosing with emojis, as they're there to elevate and enhance the stories and emotions on the channel, not to become the story themselves.



A selection of the specially designed emojis in TLC Entertainment's library.

So while they'll be more playful and edgy in the digital environment in using the emojis more freely and creating different styles and clip durations, they'll be treading very carefully when it comes to introducing what he calls "the more low-fi and user-generated styles of the digital world," into the TV medium.

"We're immersed in the world of emojis right now," says Royle, but that doesn't mean communication will be emoji-based across the rest of Discovery Network's brands. "Emoji language is warm, playful and compassionate – just like TLC," he explains. So it's a natural fit with the TLC brand personality. Now that they've used this language to package one of their brands, they don't envisage repeating it with another, apart from in certain ad hoc projects and campaigns as they're just so visually powerful, engaging, and versatile.

That's for sure. You can play around with that versatility yourself and join in the TLC Entertainment conversation by exploring their new emojis through the meme generator launching their new [Africa website](#) launching on Sunday, 8 May as well as by liking them and more [on Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

ABOUT LEIGH ANDREWS

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