

# Use nostalgia to engage new audiences

Everyone remembers where they were when a positive life event happened. What color clothes were you wearing? What did it smell like? How did you feel?

Any object or experience may transport you back to that exact moment, bringing up feelings of joy and familiarity. Some memories stick with us because they resonate so deeply.

In the same way, people crave meaningful experiences they can remember fondly and proudly that associates with your brand. It's those moments that capture a memory that employees, channel partners and customers will treasure forever.

## Tap into your audiences' emotions with nostalgia marketing

Nostalgia marketing associates a brand's product or service with memories from the past, so the brand's target audience forms an emotional connection. When done successfully, your brand becomes part of their identity.

Nostalgia marketing is personal, and it connects brands with people on a deeper emotional level.

For example, would you rather bring back an original watercolor of the beach you walked on during vacation or snag a sweatshirt in the airport before your flight home? Selecting the right products—and gifting them at the right time—transforms your brand's product into a keepsake souvenir.

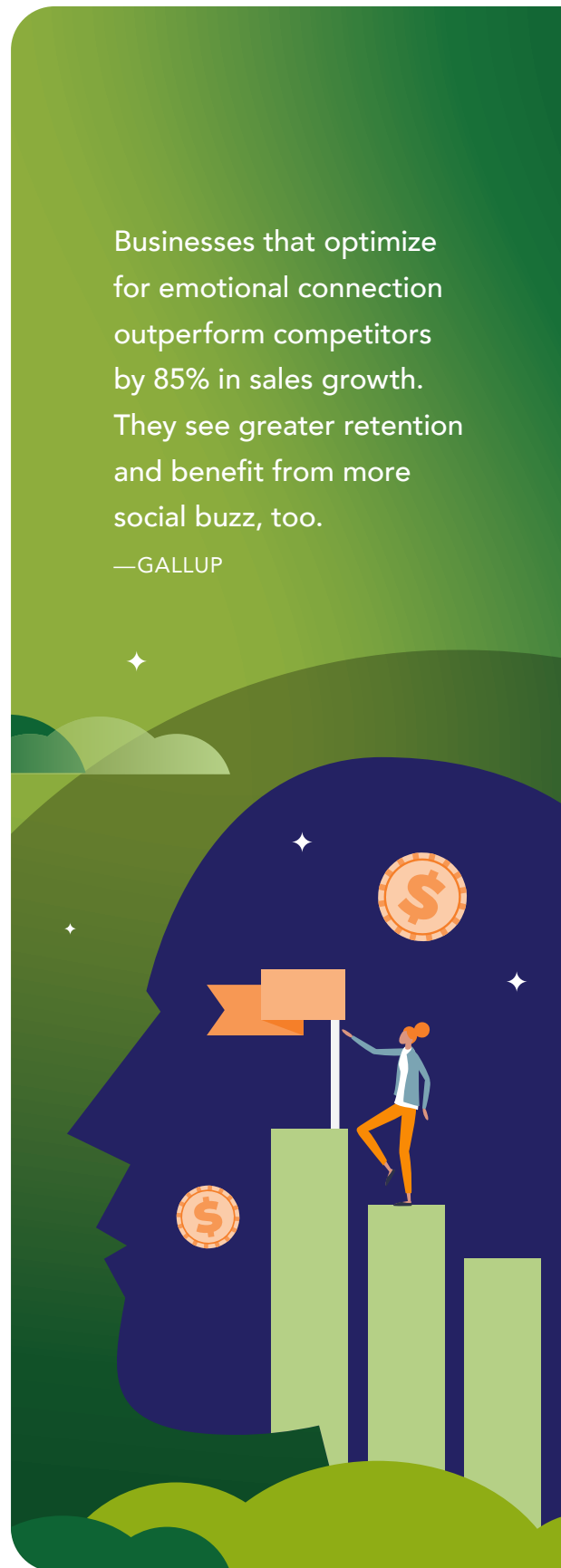
Psychology Today shared experimental evidence that indicates people experience nostalgia as an overwhelmingly positive emotion. It boosts one's mood, invigorates positive memories, and can even foster feelings of warmth, happiness and comfort.

Our experienced experts at ITA Group and CMB, a full-service market research firm and a member of our community of companies, foster the same emotions when working on our clients' programs.

**Read what they have to say about how they ensure all audience types find something to connect with. →**

Businesses that optimize for emotional connection outperform competitors by 85% in sales growth. They see greater retention and benefit from more social buzz, too.

—GALLUP





## CASEY MOHAN

Vice President, Qualitative Insights & Strategy, CMB

Qualitative methods elevate the voice of the customer and help uncover the right emotions to create effective nostalgia marketing strategies. Empathy mapping is one way to gain a rich understanding of emotional territories and key moments of nostalgia. In addition, empathy mapping helps researchers understand and empathize with audience's experience, emotions and perspectives. It also identifies emotional triggers that evoke nostalgia.

When brands understand an audience's emotional response and their emotional connection to memories, they can identify unique positioning opportunities, inform messaging and guide customer experience design.

CMB's proprietary emotionAI tool identifies key emotions and moments, at scale. This tool combines qualitative and quantitative insights, offering a unique lens into the competitive landscape and uncovering emotional connections people have with a brand.

Using emotionAI during empathy mapping enhances understanding of audience emotions and memories, helping brands create more impactful nostalgic marketing strategies.



## SASHA MCCUNE

Vice President, Media, Entertainment & Culture, CMB

Given the recent trend cycle, it's evident that nostalgia is having a big moment. Roller-rink retro revival is back with a modern twist (and what an amazing Super Bowl Halftime Show twist). Barbie made a smash hit comeback this past summer (despite initial skepticism). Behind these big wins is masterfully engineered nostalgia.

That begs the question: Can you manufacture and create nostalgia? How do you know when the time is right for a revival? Is there a secret formula? Cracking positivity starts with great research to explore the authentic levers behind nostalgia as well as other complex emotions.

For example, nostalgia has different meanings when it's active vs. passive, or positive (from a place of joy) vs. negative (from a place of longing). Taking a more complex approach to measuring emotions and sentiment in your discovery research, development cycles and concept testing is how brands end up with award-winning marketing strategies and engagement moments that last.

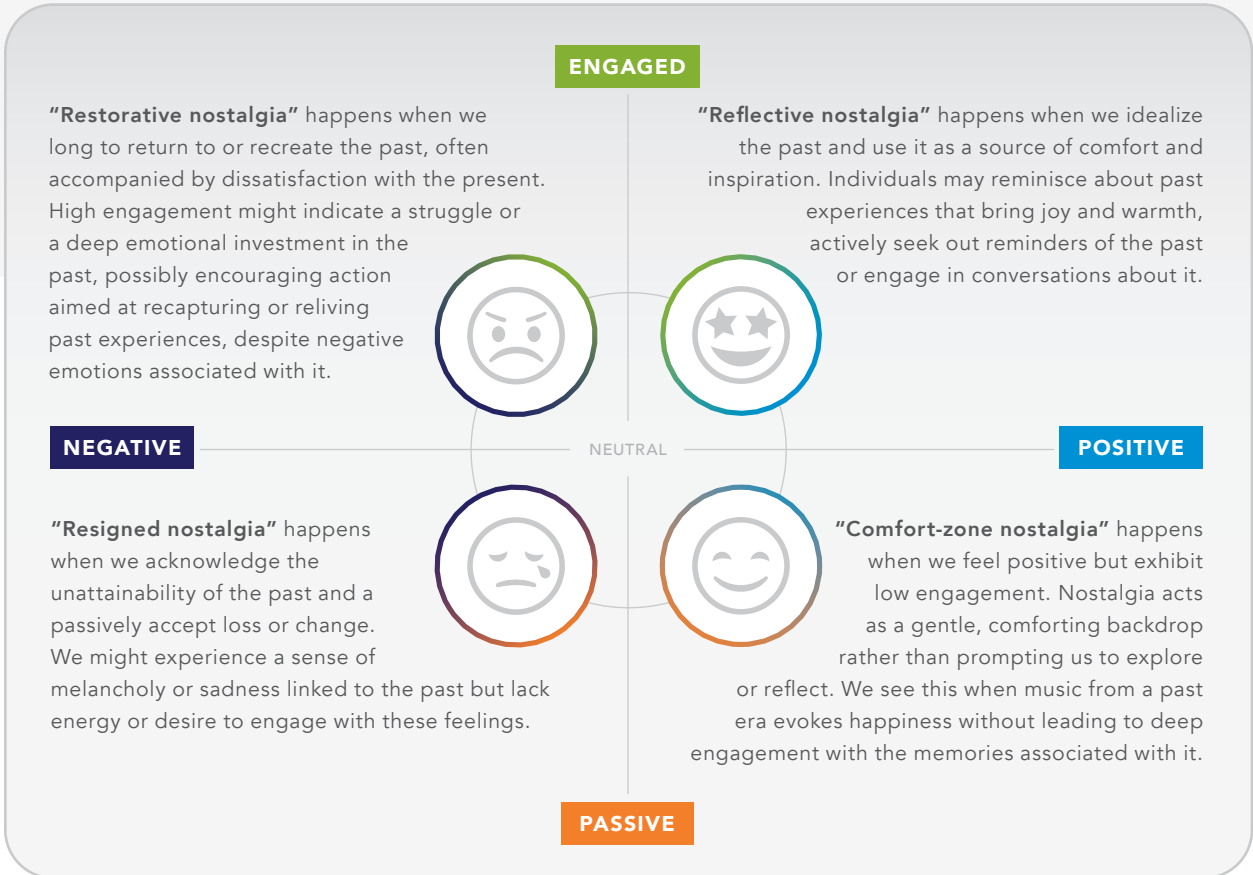
Our analysts use tools like emotionAI, as well as known psychology frameworks for emotions to help brands get deeper into the underlying sentiments behind core emotions.



## RICHARD SCIONTI

Vice President, Product Development & Innovation, CMB

Building off what Sasha and Casey mentioned about emotionAI, here's a visual look at how nostalgia can have different impacts. Using this framework helps brands identify and meet customers where they are when creating product and services.



## MEGAN MERRY

Creative Design Director, ITA Group

When working through a concept with the team, we always anchor back to the human emotion: Why should they care? What's the benefit to them? How can this make their life easier or better? Once we have those questions cared for, we have a strong way to position the content in an impactful way to our participants. Sparking an emotion in our participants is what keeps our programs relevant and participants engaged.



**ERICA LALK**

Senior Manager, Strategy Team,  
Event Solutions, ITA Group

Some stories stick with us. Think of the books you've held on to through the years. We all have favorite stories we keep copies of because they resonate so deeply. Event professionals are now tapping into that nostalgia emotion when using storytelling in immersive event design. Storytelling and other key psychological elements build brand loyalty by infusing emotion in immersive experience design.

We draw from storytelling patterns to encourage involvement. The more attendees participate in activations, the more your brand's event becomes a part of their personal story. You want attendees to share your brand's story again and again. Creating a compelling narrative and infusing thoughtful details into your events helps attendees capture a memory they'll treasure forever.

**Lasting brand loyalty comes from emotional connections**

Nostalgia is essential to the human experience. As a marketing tool, it's a powerful way to engage with your audiences on a deeper, more emotional level. One that builds long-term brand loyalty.

**Make your brand's story one your people want to look back on fondly.**