

# Do spelling mistakes matter?

The significance of spelling might seem like a trivial concern. As a nation, we have become forgiving of these slip-ups, perhaps too forgiving. A 2002 study about this phenomenon found that readers did negatively judge authors' intelligence when spelling mistakes were present in the text. A low ratio of errors (four errors in a 308-word text) was not found to have much of an impact, but a higher ratio of errors (12 errors in a 210-word text) produced a more adverse reaction.

Interestingly, participants' ability to identify the errors had no impact on how they judged the author, meaning that even ordinary people can and will form negative impressions based on spelling errors.

#### Why these errors are getting worse

In the digital age, communication has gone beyond traditional boundaries. In rural areas, people have embraced messaging apps like WhatsApp over emails. This shift has made individuals more focused on the gist of the message rather than the spelling. For them, the clarity and relevance of the content matter more than the spelling of each word.

In these communities, where connectivity is thriving through social media platforms, the acceptance of slightly wrong spelling has become normal. The emphasis is on the message, not on the grammar.

NO MORE  
SPELLING  
MISTAKES

#### People still buy, regardless

However, the implications of spelling mistakes cannot be entirely overlooked, especially when it comes to branding. While customers may be forgiving, a misspelt word can cast a shadow on the professionalism of a product or service. It raises questions about the carefulness of the branding process and may lead people to question the brand. According to a study of 1,000 UK consumers, the number one thing people hate in social media is poor spelling and grammar.

Interestingly, people do not stop buying just because of a few spelling mistakes. Consumers are more likely to forgive a minor mistake in spelling if the product or service itself meets their expectations. Yet, businesses need to recognise that every detail contributes to the overall image, and spelling mistakes



can spoil the trust carefully built through branding efforts.

#### Where these details matter

In certain scenarios, the stakes are higher, particularly when dealing with high-class products or services. Imagine being part of an exclusive club in the heart of a city — a club known for premium standards. Now, imagine encountering spelling mistakes within the club's communication. Suddenly, a sense of doubt creeps in.

For those investing in luxury or exclusivity, attention to detail becomes very important. Silly spelling errors can cast doubt on the overall quality and professionalism related to the high-class experience. It prompts members to question whether they are indeed part of the right elite circle, especially when a premium price tag is attached.

#### The verdict

The impact of spelling mistakes in

marketing is nuanced and context-dependent. In everyday communication, especially within the world of messaging apps, the focus on the message often overshadows concerns about spelling accuracy.

However, when it comes to branding, the perception game is at play. While minor errors may not directly hamper sales, they can subtly influence how a brand is perceived, particularly in high-stakes environments. Customers refuse to be associated with you.

It's something which if done well, goes unnoticed. If done wrong, has consequences.

*The author is a communications specialist with a passion for making personal and business content truly impactful.*

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Photo: Collected

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