

Is there a movie in the fridge?

3/26/2013

Back in 2009, I wrote a column about my daughter Jenni and the amount of text messages she sent and received during a 31 day period. Back then I did not use text messaging myself and considered the over 7,500 excessive. Now as a family we send almost 9,000 messages per month, and I actually use text messaging to communicate, especially with my children. Jenni still uses the majority of those texts, but her usage is not even a fraction of what it was four years ago. I will admit that I am not very fast at texting and try to not use all of the acronyms that usually accompany this type of communication.

Because of the size of the screen we are using on our phones, sometimes we don't type as accurately as we could. Most of the time our recipient understands the mistyping and our message gets conveyed. Sometimes one little letter mistyped can be hilarious. Here is an example between Jenni and my 15 year old son, Ben:

Jenni: You at home?

Ben: yep

Jenni: Can you check and see if Spanglish (a DVD) is upstairs?

Ben: yes, just a sec

Jenni: did you find it?

Ben: yes, what do you want done with it?

Jenni: put it in the mini fridge, thank you!

Ben: why do you want it in the movie fridge? Lol

Jenni: I'm letting someone borrow it and that will remind me to take it

Ben: oh, I see, lol

The funny thing about this conversation is that when Jenni got home and looked for the movie on top of the fridge, she couldn't find it. When she asked Ben where the movie was, he told her it was IN the fridge, just like she requested. They both had a good laugh about it. As a matter of fact Jenni found it so funny that she took a screen shot of the conversation and posted it on Facebook.

Both of my children missed obvious clues that there were typing mistakes in their conversation. Ben probably should have realized that Jenni did not think that the movie in the refrigerator would be easier to find and remember. Jenni had a chance to clarify the issue when Ben asked if she really wanted the movie inside. I blame their genetics.

Do you use texting for business? When you communicate in this manner, do you use the auto-correct feature? How about the auto-fill feature? I will tell you that I do use all of these. Do I always double check to make sure what I typed with my thumbs is what I really want to say? Because I am not very skilled at texting, I do re-read my texts before I hit the send button, especially if I have to be texting someone on behalf of the bank. The difference between bank, sank and tank is just one letter.

Because it is very difficult to convey tone in text messages, our words have to be accurate. It is not quite as important with family and friends, but as you can see from the example above, misinterpretation can happen. Finally, from what I have been told, movies don't necessarily last longer if they are stored in the fridge.

*Small Business Today is a bi-weekly feature written by Tom Friedman, market president of First National Bank, Ames-Ankeny.*