

SHOPPING FOR BIKES THE AKUMEN WAY

Every week I take my bike on the train with me to our office in Exeter and every week I am met with the same problem: There are limited spaces on the train for bikes. There is a simple solution to this that is shown to me each and every week: buy a folding bicycle.

I have been a keen cyclist for a while now and have a strong attachment to my bike. When buying a bike, the most important thing I have always found is how I will feel about the bike, I need to have that intangible attachment to it in order for me to want to ride it and also to encourage me to really take care of it, but how will I know what I will actually feel about a bike when all the description gives me is the technical breakdown? To get a measure of these deeper feelings I need to look at what customers think, and that means reading reviews.

I have decided to use our software to do this for me. The software can rate the emotional response of owners of 3 folding bikes within my budget of £250 and then I can see how they compare to the responses of people owning a more expensive bike.

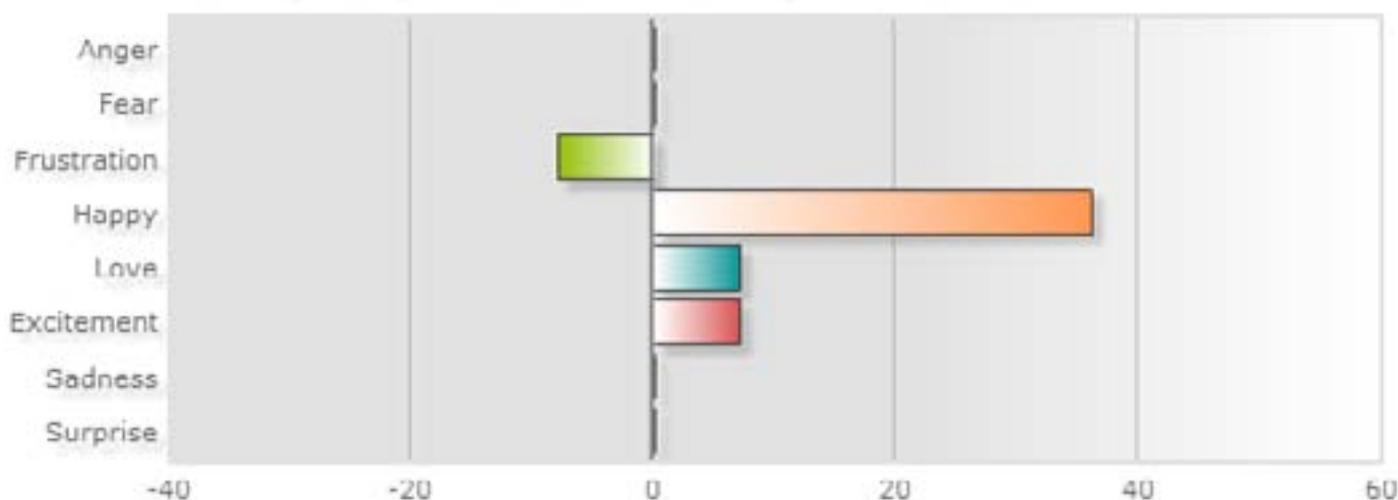
(If you are unfamiliar with how our software works or want more information on our methodology go to www.akumen.co.uk)

The three bikes I've chosen to look at are, firstly, the '[Urban Lite 2](#)' by Urban Lite, a magnesium alloy light weight bike (£219.99 at Amazon). Next we will see a seemingly unbranded folding bike sold through an Amazon seller, '[Bargins-Galore](#)' (£139.95 at Amazon).



Finally the '[Reflex Easy Street](#)' by Reflex, a model that is currently on promotion on Amazon, we will see if that's indicative of anything later (£139.95 at Amazon).

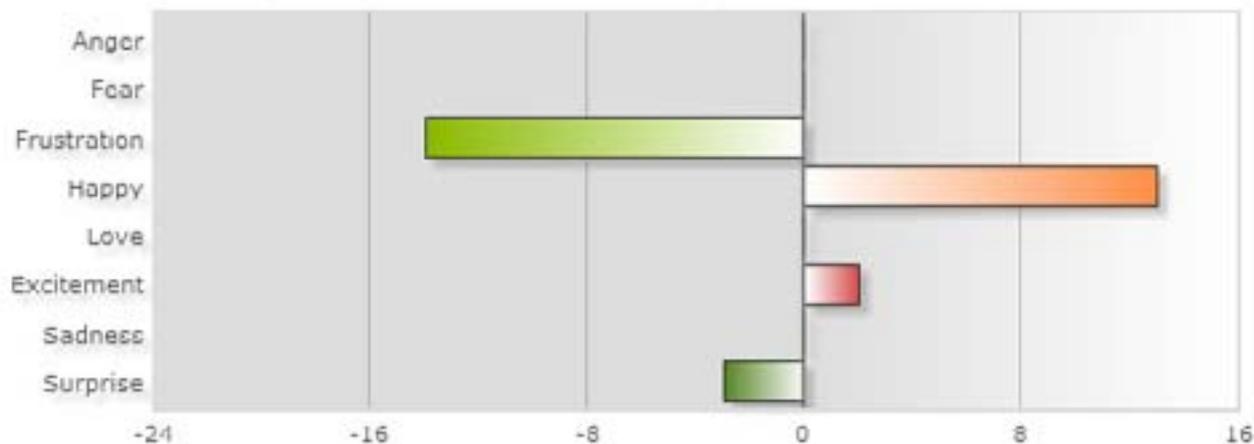
Before we start we need a benchmark. If we look at higher end models we can try to see which budget model will give us the closest possible experience. I have looked at feedback on 2 different models from [Brompton](#), a higher end manufacturer, and used the software to see what customers think. The following graphs show the emotional response of customers. The software counts each time a word or phrase related to one of the emotions on the 'Y' axis occurs in the customers online feedback. The larger the bar, the stronger the combined emotions of the customers.



You can see that for the most part Brompton bikes make people happy. There is a feeling of love and also of excitement which is exactly what I would look for in a bike. Also important to note here is the feeling of frustration. This is familiar to all bike owners and is something that you would like to minimise, it is valuable to see though, that even when you spend a bit more money you cannot escape this!

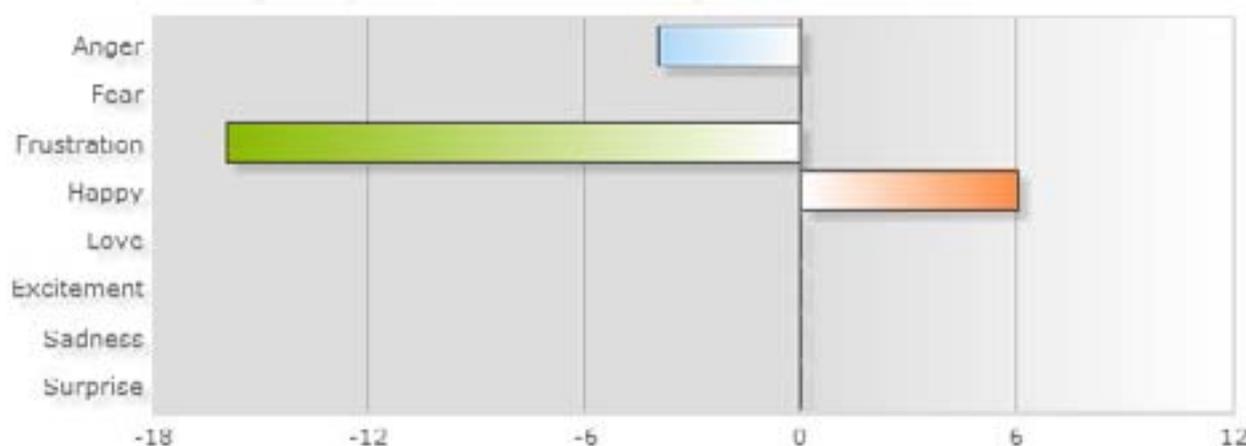
Now lets see how the lower budget bikes I'm interested in compare.

So, we start with the ['Urban Lite'](#).



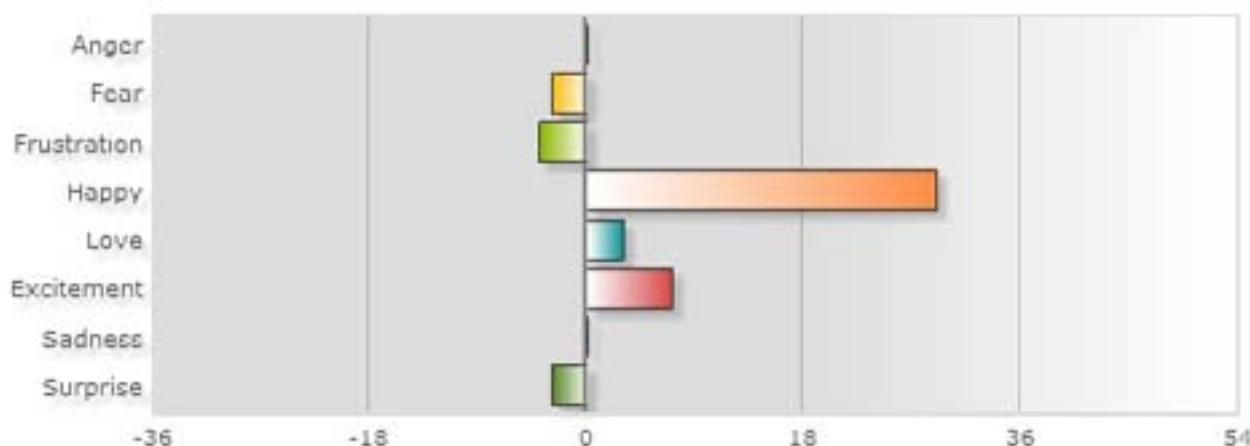
Well, thats not so good! There is still a feeling of happiness but now the biggest feeling is frustration. Also, there is no love for this bike!

Ok, lets try taking a look at our unbranded folder from ["Bargins-Galore"](#).



Again, not good! Much less happiness and now a feeling of anger. It's not looking too good for the lower budget folding bikes so far!

Finally, lets try the ['Reflex Easy Street'](#).



Well this is much better! This isn't looking far from our bench mark. There is a strong feeling of happiness, some love and a nice bit of excitement. There's a bit of fear that we don't see from the Brompton but otherwise a good match!

Well, it's pretty obvious which bike I will choose here, the ['Reflex Easy Street'](#). From the customer experience, you can get just as much enjoyment out of it as you would a higher end bike. I would also steer clear of both other bikes, they just don't seem to provide the feelings that you want to feel towards your bike. And to think, I got all of this just by making use of real customer experiences!