

# Quick wins for the quick serve sector



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The holiday season is a mixed bag for the quick serve sector. On the one hand, people are stopping in for a quick bite to refuel between their holiday shopping. On the other hand, people are spending more time cooking at home with their families and less time dining out. Either way, it's a time of year when quick serve competitors are wrestling for the attention of consumers who may have other spending priorities in mind.



But the most successful brands don't just sit back and accept their lot: they use this time to start experimenting, optimizing, and finetuning their marketing.

**They ask the vital questions:**

- What if you could turn the potential holiday season slowdown into a speed up?
- What if holiday season is the perfect time to test and learn, to build a bulletproof strategy that can be deployed at any time of the year, busy or not?
- What if now's the time to increase in-store footfall by optimizing your digital marketing - just as the high streets are filling up?
- What if this is the vital moment to edge ahead of the competition?

We think it's the perfect time for all of those things. So to start you off on the right foot, we've got some data, insights and action points to share. Read on to see what we've learned, and feel free to steal the best bits for yourself!

# What's going to **resonate** with your audience?

Let's talk about what the most successful brands have been saying to their customers during peak season. How can we pierce through the marketing mayhem of holiday season and pinpoint what messages will break through a crowded inbox?

Fortunately, Phrasee's team of language specialists have analyzed hundreds of thousands of email subject lines to determine the most successful marketing language during peak season.

## Here's what we found:

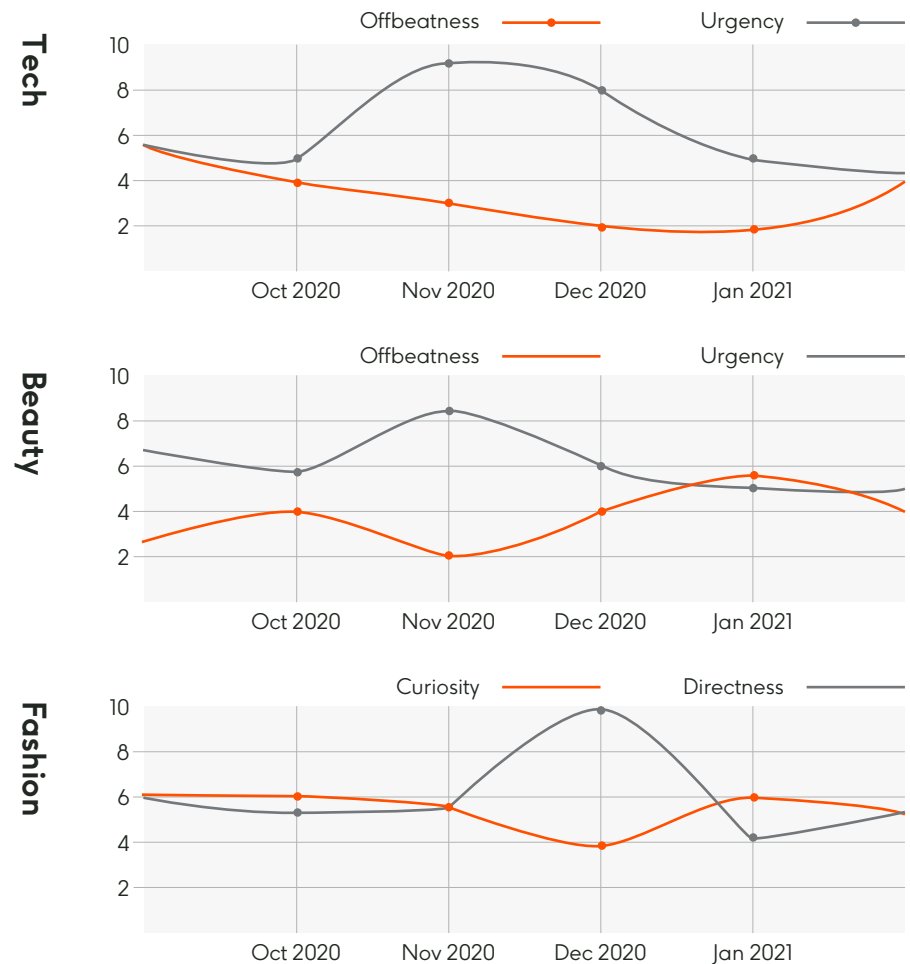


Inboxes are extra-crowded during the holiday season, and the email subject lines that are **clear, concise, and direct** tend to perform better.



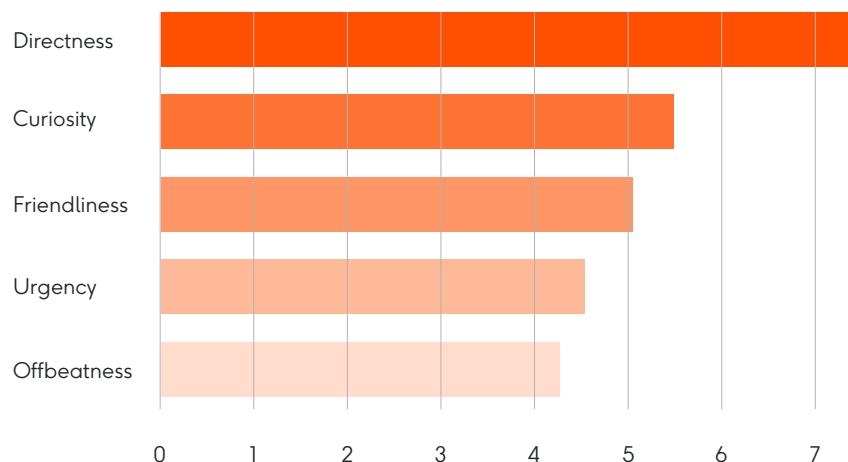
## Directness wins

Fig. 1: Emotions of high-performing subject line copy (2020 peak period)



## 2 Sensitivity rules

Fig. 2: Emotions of high-performing subject line copy (2021 so far)



Due to the seriousness of the pandemic, **marketers have been using less offbeat language than they used to**. You can experiment with this language to stand out from the crowd, but with rapidly changing world events, **you run the risk of seeming insensitive if a dire news story drops between send and open**.

## 3 Engagement is generational

Fig. 3: Use caution with subject lines that are overly trendy!

PhrasseeMail

Compose

Inbox (214)

Starred

Important

Sent Mail

Drafts

Spam

Getting takeout is lit 🔥🔥🔥

👊 This pizza is suuuuch a flex

👋 Say TTYL to the food at home

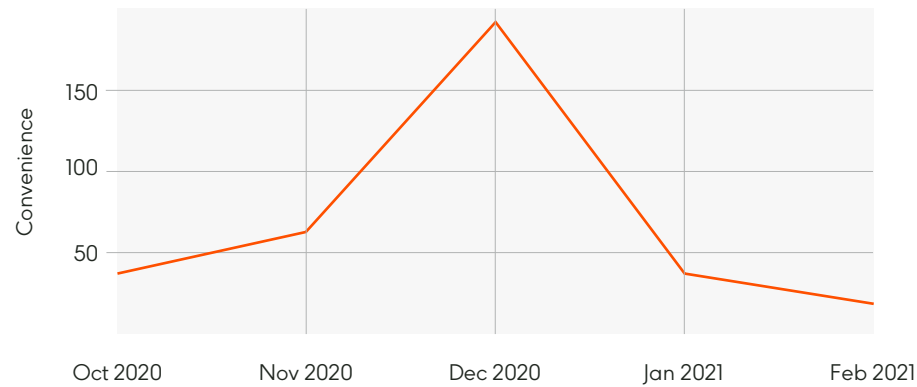
Because pizza is bae 💕

TFW the pizza is delivered to your door...

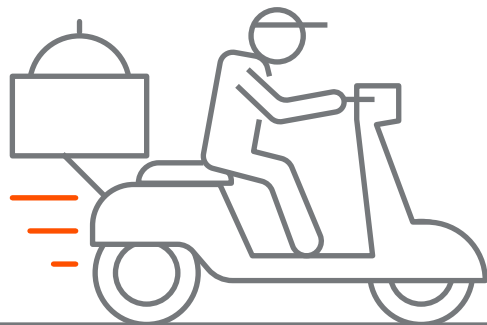
Whether they're ordering online (the majority of Gen-Z and Millennials) or in-person (preferred by 84% of Boomers), keep in mind that all of your customers are communicating more with you digitally. **The offbeat and silly language may not work as well for older folks as it would on younger groups.** Certain emojis or slang may be confusing, so **use caution with anything that may be overly trendy if you're addressing older audiences.** After all, you want them opening your emails, responding to triggers and engaging with your loyalty programs, not heading off to Urban Dictionary to decode your messages.

## 4 Convenience crushes

Fig. 4: Brands prioritize mentioning convenience language

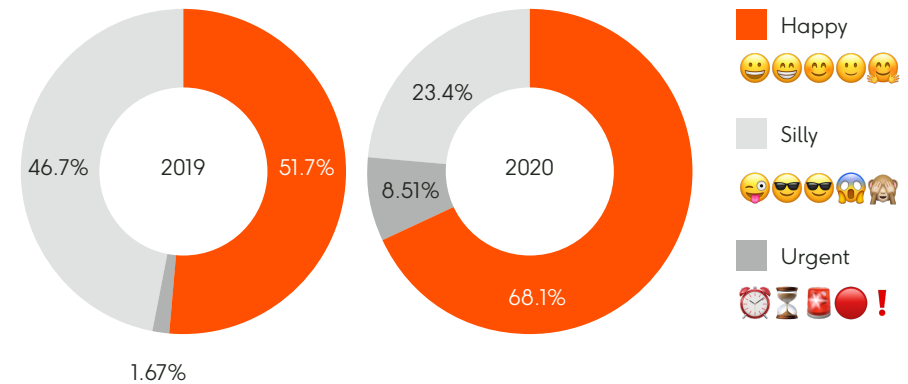


Convenience is a big hit with customers. **This is why emails that mentioned curbside pickup, home delivery, and other convenience phrases spiked during 2020's holiday season.** We expect customers to continue engaging with these features now that they've had so long to get used to them.



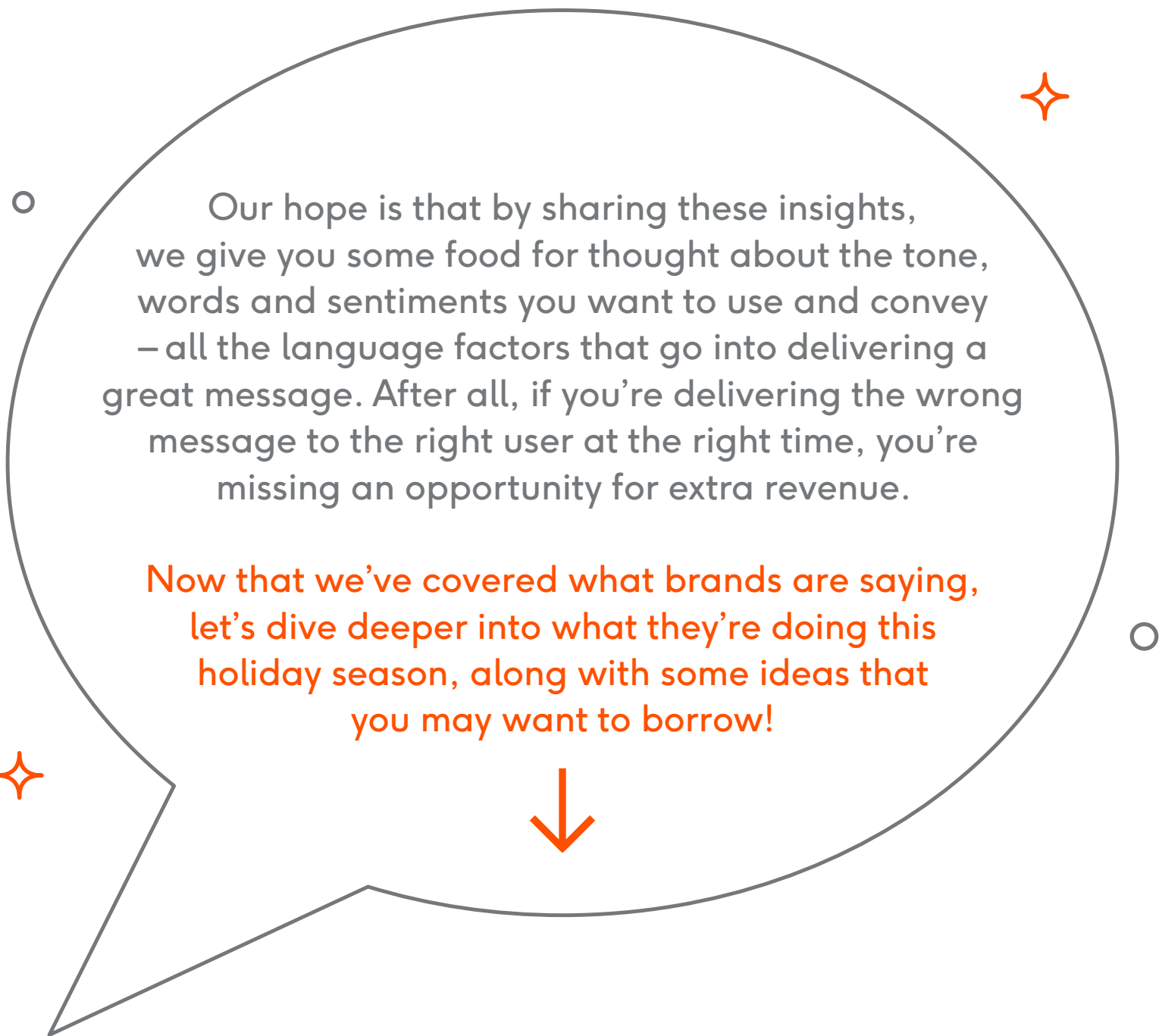
## 4 Emojis are in

Fig. 5: Emoji usage change (2019-2020)



We found some surprises when we looked at recent emoji usage in digital marketing:

- **Happy emojis were up during 2020's holiday season.** While this may seem counterintuitive given the seriousness of the time, our numbers suggest that brands wanted to **give their audiences a break from the doom and gloom.** We expect those happy emojis to be used even more often this holiday season.
- While happy emojis were up, **silly ones were down** as brands tried to strike the right balance of being sensitive but not overly depressing.
- Less popular was the use of **urgency-themed emojis** during last year's holiday season. **We recommend brands exercise caution and empathy when using these emoji types,** as they have the potential to exacerbate anxiety in an already trying time. Remember, emotions matter.



Our hope is that by sharing these insights, we give you some food for thought about the tone, words and sentiments you want to use and convey – all the language factors that go into delivering a great message. After all, if you're delivering the wrong message to the right user at the right time, you're missing an opportunity for extra revenue.

Now that we've covered what brands are saying, let's dive deeper into what they're doing this holiday season, along with some ideas that you may want to borrow!



# The **action plan** for quick serve

**Let us be clear:** the plan that works for everyone else may not work for you because **your brand is unique and special**. That being said, there may be parts of everyone else's plan that apply to your brand. Or it may just be useful to see what everyone else is up to so that you can zig when they zag!

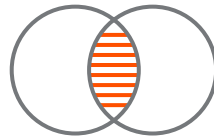
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Here are some trends that we think you could incorporate into your marketing strategy:



## **Loyalty is taking center stage.**

With CMOs focusing on retention over new land grabs, **customer loyalty is taking centre stage - so you have to keep yours engaged now more than ever**. A great way to do this is by optimizing your existing communications for maximum engagement. You can do this by making sure that personalized triggers like abandoned cart or loyalty program emails are always being presented with the language that is most likely to drive each user to open, click, and purchase.



## **The digital and the physical are merging.**

The blending of the digital and physical realms is accelerating rapidly. **Providing in-person experiences that pair neatly with the digital world could help differentiate your brand and help increase customer loyalty** through a better experience. For example, imagine ordering online and then driving up to a window where your food was instantly available once you showed your QR code to a scanner – no waiting necessary.



## **Audience segmentation makes sense.**

The older your customers are, the more likely they're ready to return to a pre-COVID-19 lifestyle, while younger generations are embracing digital changes. **Segmentation along age lines may help you target each group with the messages that work best for their mindset**, but all age groups are going to be a little more digital than they used to be.

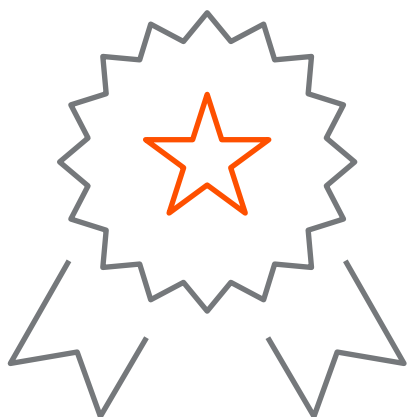
# How you can **say it better**

We've covered the language and marketing strategies currently resonating with customers - now let's put them into practice. Here are the tactical wins that can help your brand **say it better**.

1

## **ABT: Always be testing.**

While it's good to see what's working for everyone else, **it's important to know what works specifically for your brand**, and that what works today may not tomorrow. A **test-and-learn environment** – ideally using multivariate testing at scale - is the way to go if you want to continuously optimize while gathering critical data. However, all that testing can be very time-consuming; if you'd like to leave the science to a proven platform that makes testing as simple as the click of a magic button, [we're here to help!](https://www.phrasee.co)



2

## **Lean in to loyalty.**

How can you thank your customers for choosing you in a way that keeps them coming back for more? Can you turn a monthly customer into a weekly customer? A weekly customer into a two-times-a-week customer? **Segment your audience by visit frequency and experiment** to see which offers are going to move them to the next loyalty tier.

3

## **Optimize your triggered messages.**

Your loyalty program emails are just begging to be improved! If you're only A/B testing, you're missing a huge opportunity. Start delivering quick wins even before peak season by **switching to multivariate testing** and optimizing the language in your lifecycle communications. Trust us: your Customer Lifetime Value will soar.

4

## **Get a direct link.**

With options like UberEats, Doordash, and Deliveroo, there are more layers now between you and your customers. Being able to communicate with them directly – without being subject to another company's whims – is a huge advantage. So what incentives can you offer to get as many email addresses in your database as possible? If you spend time over the next few months focused on this goal, you'll be well positioned against your competitors for 2022.

5

## **Prepare for change.**

Between climate change, new COVID-19 variants, and political instability, you never know what messaging might be appropriate one day but not the next. Be prepared to turn off scheduled messaging for segments of your audience who might be affected by news events. And think about how your brand can be helpful during those times; if there's a heat wave and you've got ice cream, don't hold back! If you serve delicious soups, keep a lid on it!



# How much could your triggers be making for you?

Trigger notifications are an awesome way to reach out to customers directly with immediate and tailored interactions. We've talked a lot about loyalty in this paper; your push strategy could be the key to maximizing customer retention, driving regular engagement, and turning clicks into loyal customers.

**With Phrasee-optimized triggered messages, you could see:**



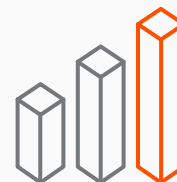
**29%**  
more opens



**35%**  
more clicks



**44%**  
more sales

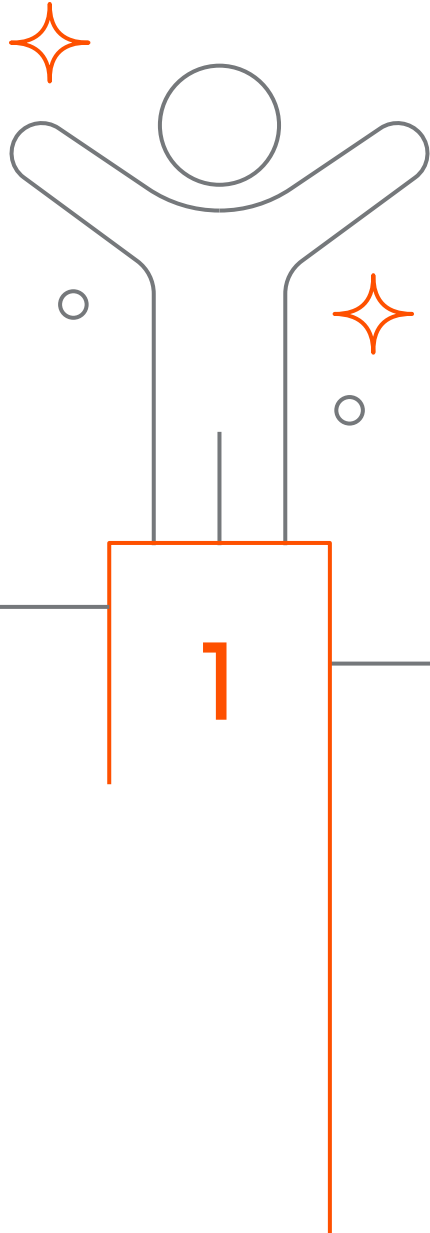


**46%**  
more revenue  
from your email  
program



**\$3.2**  
million in  
extra revenue  
each year





Remember, the holiday season isn't always the busiest time of year for the quick serve sector, which makes it the perfect time to experiment. Test early and often, gather your data, get some quick wins, and prepare to crush it in 2022. Clear eyes, full hearts, fast food!

Phrasee helps global brands *say it better*.



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