

[PERSADO]

What **20.9 Billion** AI-generated Messages Tell Us About Customer Motivation

THE 2023 CUSTOMER MOTIVATION REPORT



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Consumers felt uncertain in 2022—and it shows in how they engaged with brands.

2022 was supposed to bring a return to normal. Holiday parties and spring break trips were back on the calendar, as were rush-hour commutes and days at the office. But then came the Omicron surge and the Russian invasion of Ukraine on its heels. Suddenly, the “year of normal”—the one with the kids fully back in school, the return of mass sporting events and concerts, and of [U.S. consumers realizing their long-postponed travel plans](#)—also became a year of inflation, of ongoing supply chain disruptions, and threats of a global recession.

What impact did these conflicting experiences have on consumer engagement with brands? And how do we expect that to play out for 2023?

In this 2023 Customer Motivation Report, the Persado Content Intelligence team shares what we learned from analyzing consumer responses to 20.9 billion messages that the Persado Motivation AI Platform generated across more than 3,200 campaigns. Our analysis reveals the common threads running through the most successful marketing campaigns of 2022, and what they suggest for campaign performance in 2023.

Let's start with the data and where it comes from.

The Persado Motivation AI Platform knows how every message it generates performed—and we analyzed that data.

Persado Motivation AI is a form of Generative AI for enterprise language. In plain English, that means our technology “writes” messages that brands use to motivate customer action across all their platforms, customer journey points, and functions.

By all we mean *all*.

But our platform does not just generate messages for marketing. It also measures how those messages perform with real consumers in real contexts. We've been doing that since our founding on 12/12/12. That means we have 10 years of data about messaging performance housed in our proprietary knowledge base of words and phrases trained on a specialized dataset of enterprise language.



EMAIL



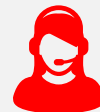
MOBILE
APPS



ONBOARDING



TEXT
MESSAGES



CUSTOMER
SERVICE



LOYALTY



WEB SITES



IVR SCRIPTS

Here's how Persado works.

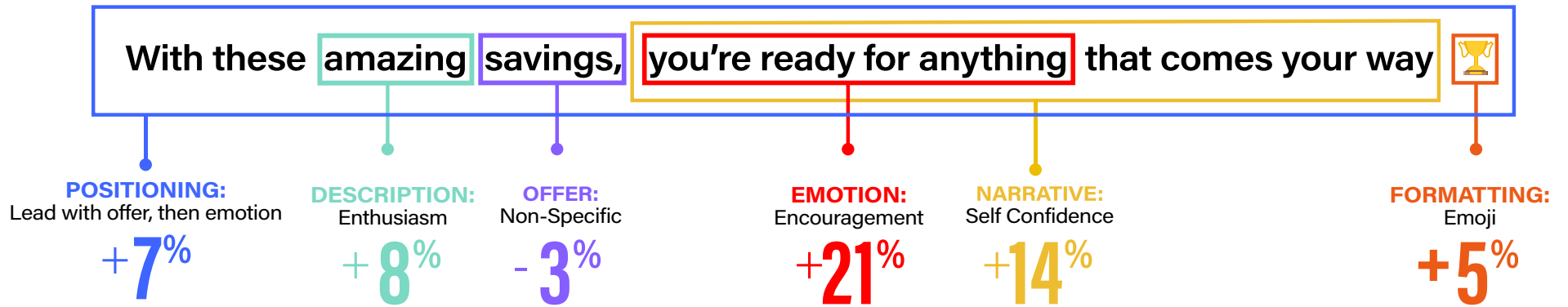
When a Persado customer plans a campaign, the brand's human creators have crafted the message and then given it to us. We run it through the Persado Motivation AI Platform, which analyzes what the message is trying to motivate people to do and then generates alternative options predicted to out-perform the original. By "out-perform" we mean the message (email, text, post, or web page) will result in more clicks, more click-throughs, more

purchases, larger cart sizes, more credit card or mortgage applications, more app downloads, fewer abandoned carts, etc.

Sometimes, our customers simply choose one of those predictive alternatives and use it. But if they want to be 100% sure they have the best performer, they run a language experiment to see how consumers respond to different versions of the message.

The data that come out of those experiments show which messages perform the best with which consumers—and why. The Persado AI can see how each version performed as a whole, as well the impact of each element of the message.

For example, we can see how much impact the subject line or CTA had on the overall message lift. Think of those elements as sources of motivation.



What elements does Persado Motivation AI measure?

The Persado Motivation AI Platform includes a knowledge base containing enterprise messages that have been tagged and scored so that our AI can measure the impact that each language element has on consumer engagement. The image on this page presents a stylized example of our highest-impact tags and scores. Persado knows what relative impact each element had for every message experiment.

<p>EMOTION</p> <p>is usually the first language element a consumer responds to. It provides the hook for initial engagement.</p>	<p>FORMATTING</p> <p>such as the use of capitals, punctuation, and emojis all reinforce the core emotions and narratives.</p>	<p>PERSONAL NARRATIVE</p> <p>is the story a campaign tells, often geared toward an individual's ambitions or personal lifestyle preferences.</p>	<p>DESCRIPTIVE LANGUAGE</p> <p>straight forwardly describes a product or service or the purpose of a message.</p>	<p>POSITIONING</p> <p>includes the grammatical rules of syntax, the order of the sentence components, and where the words are located relative to images or the CTA.</p>	<p>CALL TO ACTION</p> <p>tells the customer what to do next.</p>
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In 2022, our customers ran more than 3,200 experiments with the Persado Motivation AI Platform. These experiments captured consumer responses to nearly 21 billion messages. The resulting data gave us plenty to observe about the language that drove performance for a range of campaigns. Across channels and industries, we consistently saw brands gain a significant boost from choosing the right personal narrative for the campaign. Overall, personal narratives were responsible for an average of 46% of the total message performance in 2022 (the other 54% came from the combined impact of the other language elements described on page 3).

“
**Personal narratives
were responsible for
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of the total message
performance.**



3,200

**Experiments
Conducted**



20.9B

**Customer
Responses**

The winning narratives of 2022 promised “forever.”

The mixed messages about the economy, work, health, and travel had consumers gravitating more consistently to stories and products that promised some version of forever. Stability, reliability, consistency—those were the ideas that captured customer attention and motivated action in 2022. It helped as well if a product or service was easy to acquire and use.

That consumers would gravitate to stability in a time of continued change and disruption isn't a surprise. U.S. government data shows that overall [consumer spending rose throughout 2022](#), both because of higher prices for essentials, as well as continued demand in some socio-economic segments for optional expenditures like travel and luxury apparel. Yet economic [data also shows a drop, beginning in July, in discretionary spending](#).





From the perspective of consumer engagement, these up-and-down economic signals seemed to translate (in Persado data) to consumers putting more intention into every purchase. Short-term indulgence had waned significantly. The brands that succeeded framed their communications instead to meet shifting demand for products that were worth the expense.

For example, a home goods customer of Persado ran an experiment to optimize the language for a Facebook ad. The highest-performing variant used a narrative of QUALITY (see image) to outperform a narrative of VERSATILITY by 37 percent.



CHANNEL:  Facebook

VERSATILITY

 **Company Name**
Sponsored · 

Whether you're transforming your space or adding finishing touches, we have you covered.

QUALITY

 **Company Name**
Sponsored · 

You're invited to discover these high-quality homeware pieces today.

37%
CLICK INCREASE

What it means when a message element “out-performs” — and what it doesn’t.

There are no guarantees when it comes to consumer engagement, not even with Motivation AI. Consumers are complex and their needs change depending on their lived experience. What motivates them at one moment through one channel in one industry may fall flat in another—and we capture that in our data. Insights about what works and what doesn’t on what channel are all available to the Persado Motivation AI so that it can make recommendations and predict higher performing language by industry, time-frame, and channel. Ultimately, however, the performance lift you can expect will depend on the type of campaign, its purpose, channel, and other factors. And the only way to know for sure if a particular message will work the best for your particular campaign is to test it.



Fashion & Retail: The Year of Smart Spending

2022 saw more consumers venturing out for [sports events](#) and [travel](#), or into the office as their [employer ramped up back-to-work initiatives](#). Those trends should have motivated more closet updates.

Yet Persado campaign data on fashion and luxury campaigns showed that shoppers needed a good reason to spend on “nice to haves” from the latest designer drop.

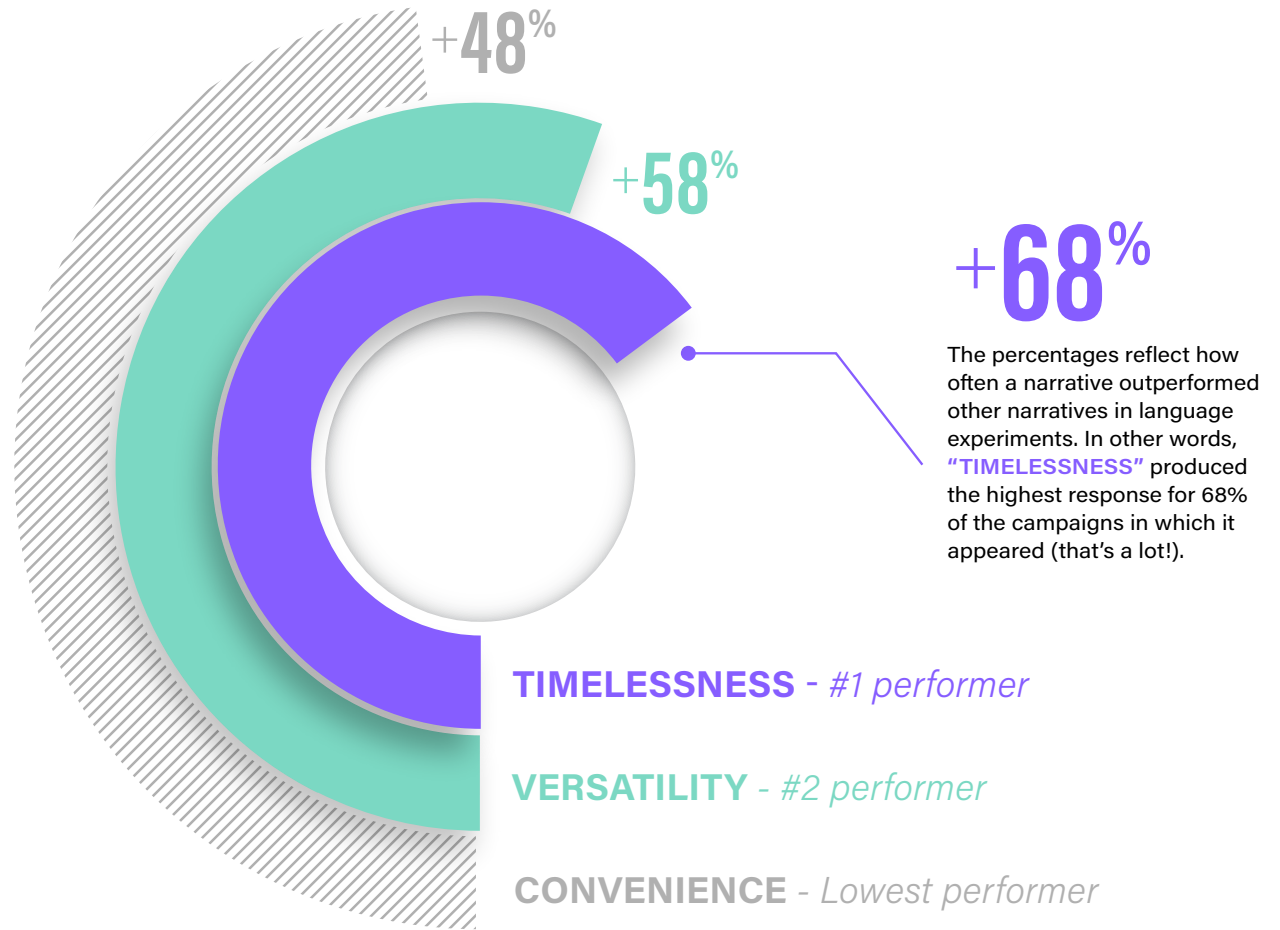
In fact, classic narratives that brands in fashion and retail typically lean on—like HYPE, INDIVIDUALITY and PRESTIGE—were unreliable motivators in 2022. Some campaigns based on these narratives did well and others didn't.

How did fashion and retail brands convince their customers to spend their tight discretionary budget with them?

By staying **TIMELESS**.

Timelessness flourished for fashion and retail in 2022.

Shoppers engaged more with campaigns that highlighted the idea of a classic, investment piece that the buyer or recipient would keep for the long term, helping shoppers feel smart and practical, even when the campaign promoted a luxury good. That is, messaging that embodied the narrative of **TIMELESSNESS** hit the mark.



The language of **TIMELESSNESS** resonated in 2022 with messages like:

Tried and true

A verified classic

Always iconic

Welcome to your new forever piece

You're going to reach for this again and again (and again)

In one experiment with an apparel retailer, Persado generated the following message of timelessness and tested it against messages that tapped into HYPE and VERSATILITY (both narratives that tend to perform well in retail):

TIMELESSNESS outperformed HYPE and VERSATILITY to produce 27% more clicks.

It is all about transcending the current moment. TIMELESS pieces never go out of style and owners never tire of them. The narrative justifies practical indulgence.

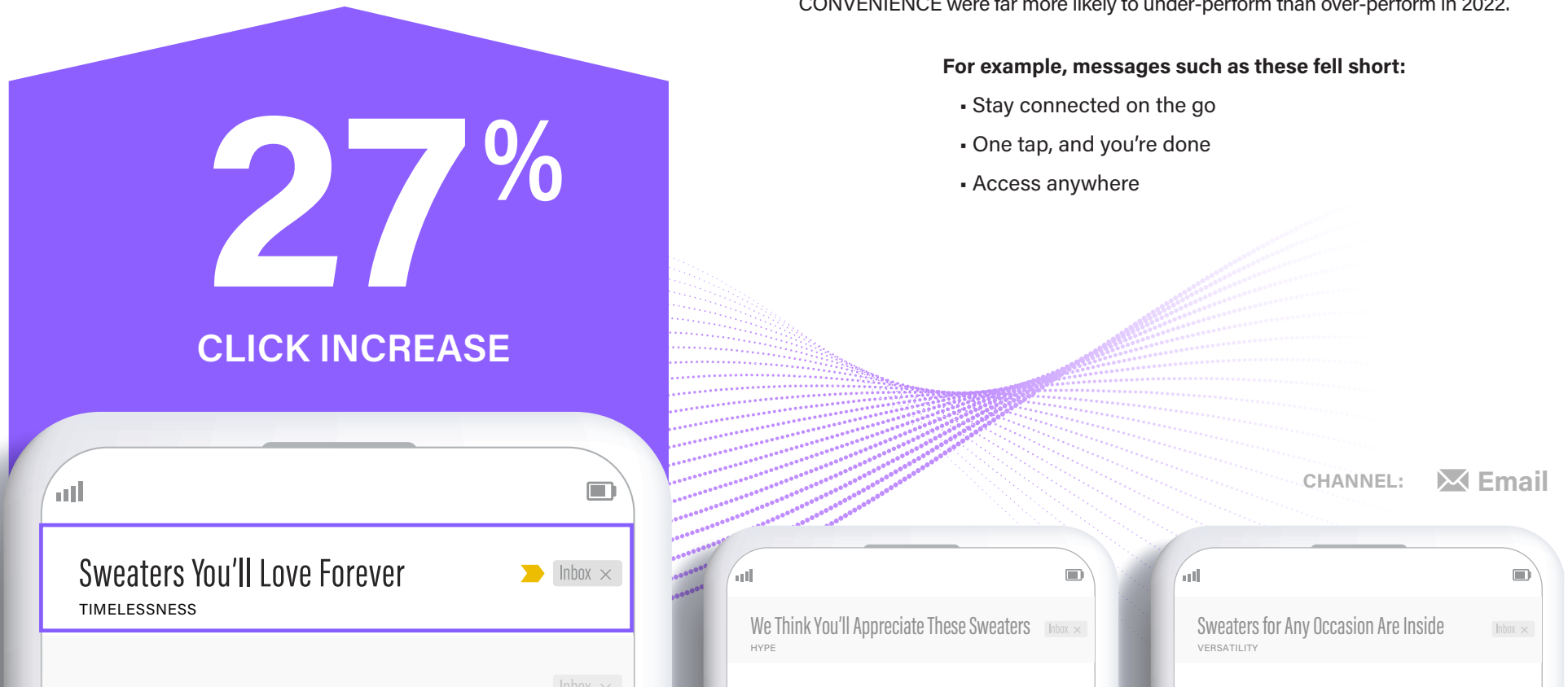
Convenience was a closeout for fashion and retail.

Consumers, more often than not, gravitate to products and services that are easy—even convenient. In 2022, many employees returned to the office to work and collaborate in person, while others maintained a video presence. Consumers also embraced social events, dining out and attending events as COVID faded from the headlines. Logic suggests that in each case, busy consumers would embrace narratives of **CONVENIENCE**.

Unfortunately, they didn't. In fact, campaigns that relied on a narrative of CONVENIENCE were far more likely to under-perform than over-perform in 2022.

For example, messages such as these fell short:

- Stay connected on the go
- One tap, and you're done
- Access anywhere



What's next for fashion and retail messaging in 2023?



The economic headwinds that dogged the second half of 2022 [are likely to hang around at least for part of 2023](#). Customers with tighter purse strings will need to see value-for-money, making **TIMELESSNESS** a likely repeat high performer for the next year. This will be especially true for shoppers dealing with financial stress. Justifying any non-essential purchases will require reassurance that they are going to get use out of them.

Other narratives Persado sees trending in fashion and retail include:

VERSATILITY. The idea that a product can serve multiple purposes or adapt to a customer's needs, such as:

Goes well with any outfit

From workday to weekend

For any season and any mood

QUALITY. Campaigns that emphasize how well-made and durable a product is, or that highlight its superior craftsmanship—all of which contribute to product longevity, such as:

Crafted to last a lifetime

Made to withstand the harshest winter

SELF-CONFIDENCE. As COVID-19's impact on daily life continues to decline and economic pressures ease, we expect self-confidence narratives to make a fast comeback after relatively lackluster 2022 performance, such as:

These will look great on you

Flatter yourself

Compliments, guaranteed

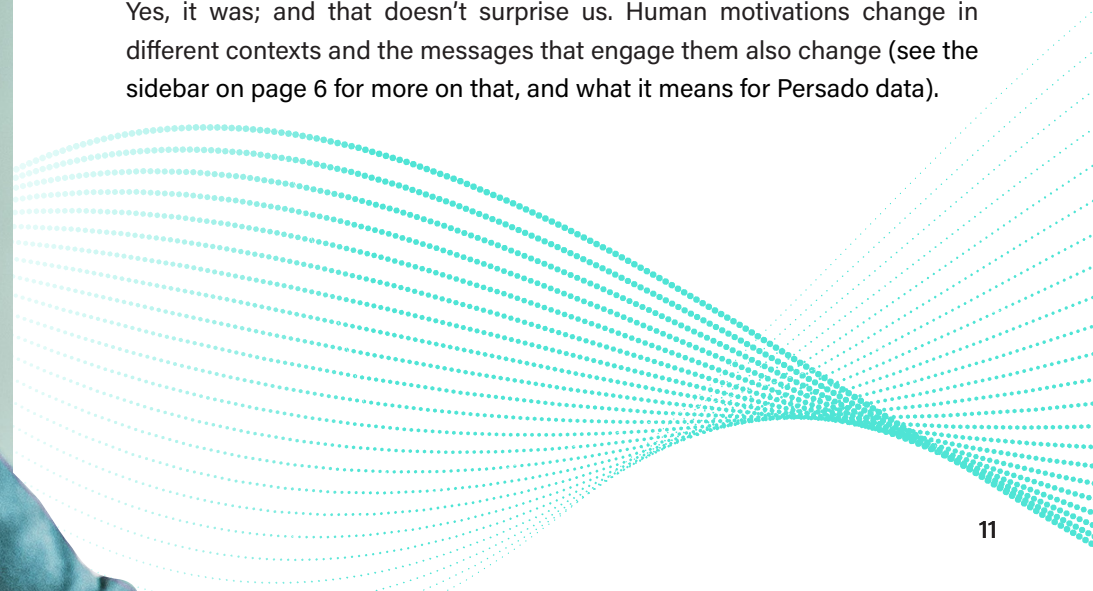


Financial Services: The Year of Ease

Money is always complicated, but 2022 ramped that up with a dose of confusion. Some consumers were still flush with savings from pandemic support payments or general social hibernation, while others were struggling under the weight of inflationary prices for food, housing, and gas. How did financial institutions engage customers in a time of mixed economic messages? By promising **CONVENIENCE**.

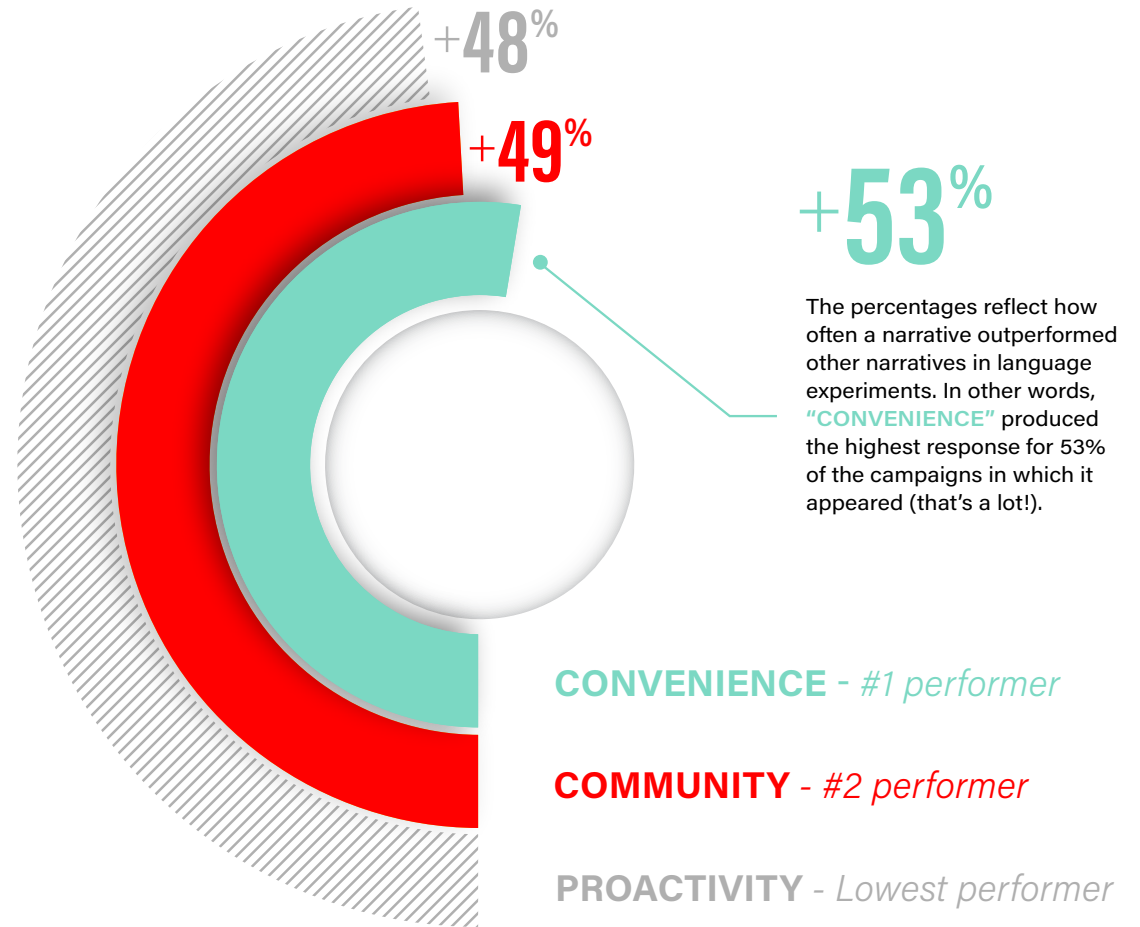
Wait, what? **CONVENIENCE** was the *worst performing narrative* for retail and fashion, but it was the top performer for financial services?

Yes, it was; and that doesn't surprise us. Human motivations change in different contexts and the messages that engage them also change (see the sidebar on page 6 for more on that, and what it means for Persado data).



Convenience worked for financial services institutions in 2022.

Narratives of **CONVENIENCE** motivated consumers across all financial services campaigns—from acquisition to servicing to compliance. These messages highlighted the ease and effortlessness of accessing and using a product.



The language of **CONVENIENCE** highlights concrete product features or tangible benefits to engage financial services customers such as:

Activate your cashback category with just one click

Go paperless & reduce clutter

Welcome to our new simple billing experience

Our easy-to-use app can help you manage your finances

***Proactivity* flopped for financial services.**

It would seem that in times of financial uncertainty, messaging about helping customers feel prepared would resonate as winning communications. Not so. 2022's lowest-performing narrative for financial service institutions was **PROACTIVITY**.

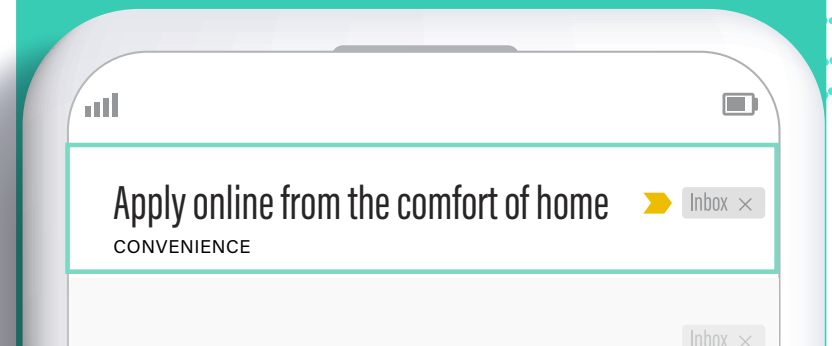
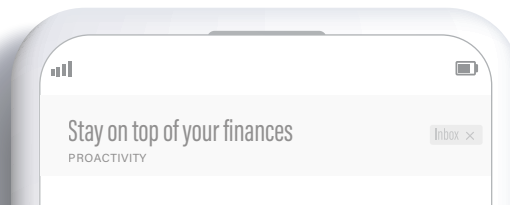
The language of PROACTIVITY encourages customers to think ahead and prepare for the future, with future-focused messaging, such as:

- Consider investing in your future
- Our app keeps you informed
- Get a head start on saving

These headlines were spot-on relevant to current events, but flopped with customers. This clear cause and effect creates a sense of transparency that might appeal to customers during a time of financial uncertainty. However, these messages about the future can also feel abstract when people are struggling to look past the current moment.

One Persado financial services customer tested CONVENIENCE language against PROACTIVITY in an email campaign to encourage more loan applications. The CONVENIENCE narrative produced a 31% higher click-through rate and 10% more applications.

CHANNEL:  Email



What's next for financial services messaging in 2023?



CONVENIENCE will continue to resonate with financial services customers in 2023. When it comes to money—a source of stress for many—making things easy and achievable will encourage customers to engage, especially as they navigate a shaky 2023. Messaging that focuses on concrete benefits and simplicity will be particularly key.

Another narrative we predict to be a high performer in 2023 is **PEACE OF MIND**. This 2022 most-used, and third-most successful narrative emphasizes safety and feeling at ease with your choices. Narratives anchored in PEACE OF MIND can give customers the final push they need to commit, especially when mitigating perceived risk.

Consider messages such as:

*Checking your rate doesn't
hurt your credit score*

A safe & secure way to store your funds



INDUSTRY DEEP DIVE #3

Travel & Leisure: The Year of Revenge Travel

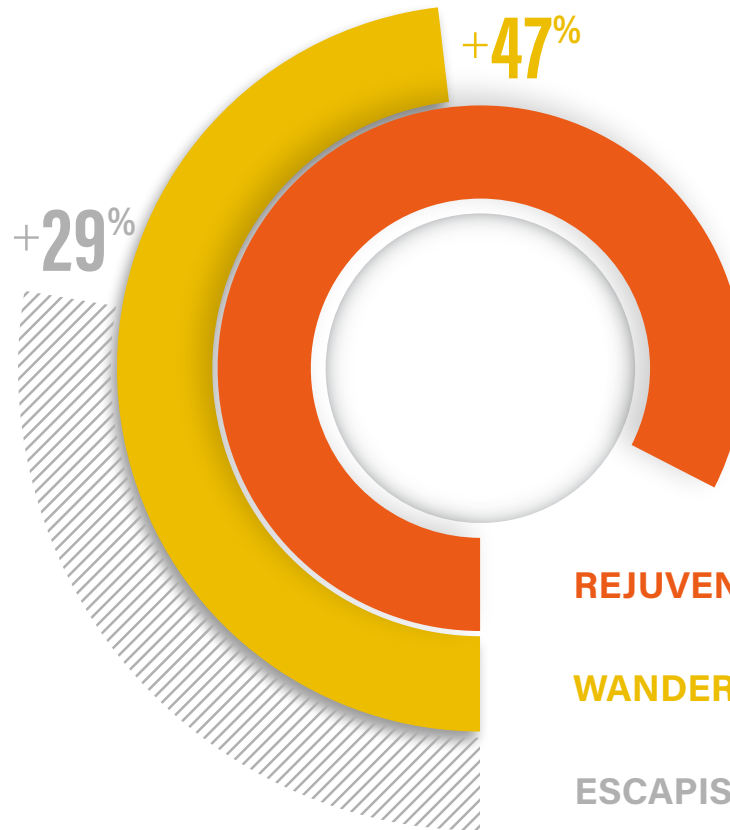
In 2021, a new phrase emerged on social media: revenge travel, defined as the act of splurging on a trip after being grounded during the pandemic. Revenge travelers are making up for lost time.

Revenge implies a negative experience, contradicting the emotions of excitement and anticipation that tend to be associated with travel and leisure—and what we would expect to see in the highest-performing travel campaigns after more than two years of lockdowns and restrictions. But “revenge travel” isn’t negative, it’s more about the desire for and love of travel, and getting the most out of it when you’re there.

Rejuvenation closed in on five stars in 2022



That sense of optimizing your downtime came through in 2022's top-performing travel narrative of **REJUVENATION**, which emphasizes the opportunity to restore minds and bodies and bring new energy and vigor into life.



+83%

The percentages reflect how often a narrative outperformed other narratives in language experiments. In other words, "REJUVENATION" produced the highest response for 83% of the campaigns in which it appeared (that's a lot!).

REJUVENATION - #1 performer

WANDERLUST - #2 performer

ESCAPIISM - Lowest performer

REJUVENATION comes through in messages like:

We're giving you an excuse to take a day off

R&R, this way

You deserve a relaxing getaway

Escapism lost its way, far behind family re-connections.

You would think that consumers would have embraced the idea of escape in 2022, but that doesn't appear to be the case. In fact, **ESCAPISM** narratives were twice as likely to underperform as overperform. This may be connected to the purpose of travel in 2022—[so many travelers were catching up on family visits](#) or going on family excursions that were less about escape than about connection.

Examples of low-performing ESCAPISM messages include:

- Dreaming about your next trip
- Re: that escape plan

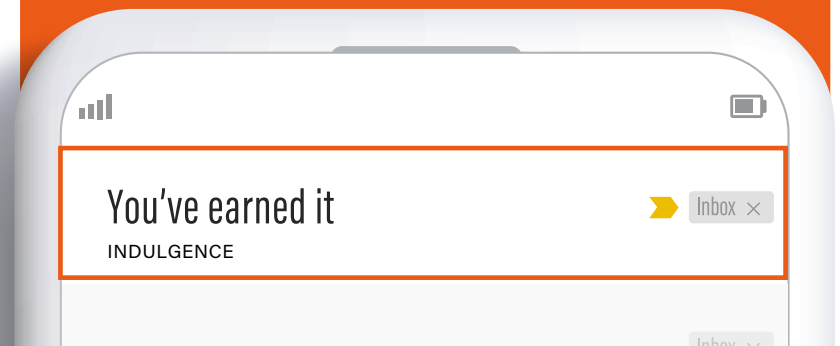
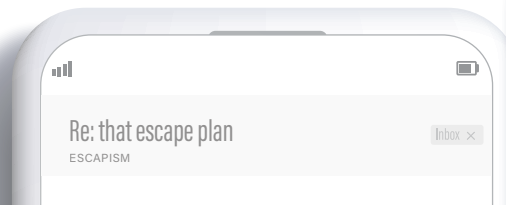
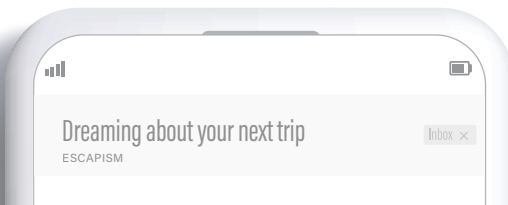
In comparison, a message with an INDULGENCE-anchored subject line "You've earned it" delivered a 25% higher click rate than the ESCAPISM message "Dreaming about your next trip".



25%

CLICK INCREASE

CHANNEL:  Email



What's next for travel and leisure messaging in 2023?



It's no question that the pandemic changed how we view travel, perhaps permanently. Roadtripping near home became a trend. The ability to work and learn remotely prompted employees to book flexcations—another travel trend where families can rent holiday homes for longer periods, mixing work and play. Next year, as interest in travel further increases, we expect customers will want to live their best life, but will prefer having more control than ever, particularly as they seek the best options and packages.

Narratives we expect to see performing well in 2023 are:

FREEDOM. Freedom is all about being in control of where you're going, and how you'll get there. With travel becoming a regular part of our lives again, the propensity to control every aspect of a trip—from the price to logistics to the itinerary—will be an important value proposition. Messaging that conveys freedom looks like:

Live your best life

Carpe diem

WANDERLUST. This narrative is all about yearning to travel, bucket list destinations, and making the most of your one life. It was the most-tested narrative in 2022 and we're expecting to see more of it in 2023 as travel is reinstated as a regular part of peoples' lives.

Oh, the places you'll go

There's a world waiting to be explored



2023: The Year of Motivation

Customer engagement: It's the key to ensuring 2023 brings revenue growth, customer retention, and increased loyalty. Businesses across retail, financial services, and travel are looking for their leverage point.

THEY CAN FIND IT IN THE POWER OF LANGUAGE.

The data in this report highlight the impact that finding the right narrative can have on campaign performance. A single word, phrase, or choice of story can transform a campaign from ignorable to engaging—and message performance comes from the transformative power of Persado Motivation AI.

Learn more about how your business
can unleash a year of motivation.

[Get started today.](#)



Persado provides the only Generative AI platform to deliver personalized communications at scale that motivates each individual to engage and act. Many of the world's largest brands, including Ally Bank, Dropbox, JPMorgan Chase, Marks & Spencer, and Verizon, have realized over \$1.5B in incremental revenue growth with Persado Motivation AI-driven hyper-personalized communications.