

# OPEN SESAME!

Subject lines that work like magic

**BONUS:**

**CTAs that**

**CLICK**



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**I HATE TO BREAK IT TO YOU**, but email marketing is a crowded space. By 2021, it's estimated there will be 333 billion emails sent globally each day. Think about that for a minute — 333 BILLION.

Further complicating matters is that email marketers have a real chance of alienating subscribers if they send them too much email. Six out of 10 people feel they receive too many promotion emails from brands, according to Adsentra.

It's not all bad news for email marketers, however. According to data from MarketingSherpa, 91 percent of Americans actually WANT to receive promotional emails. The trick is to make the correspondence targeted, timely and relevant to the recipient.

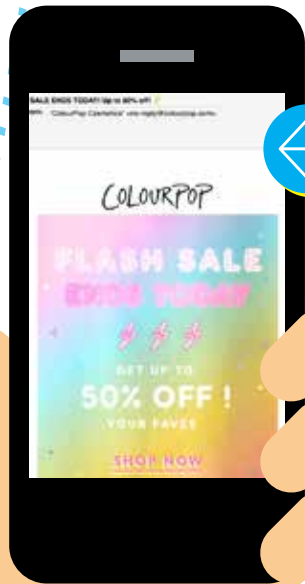
The best way to cut through the clutter and gain subscribers' attention is with a killer subject line. It's the first introduction to your brand, your offer, your products, or your content. In fact, 35 percent of consumers say they open emails based on subject lines alone. Without attention-grabbing subject lines, your email strategy is dead on delivery.



Want to see how the subtle art of email subject lines and call to actions (CTAs) should be done? Check out these recent examples that had us clicking away.

## EMAIL SUBJECT LINES WITH URGENCY

Creating a sense of urgency with your subject line is a sure-fire tactic for getting subscribers to click. Selling scarcity (e.g., a time-limited offer) [can result in an open rate 22 percent higher](#) than the industry average. Here are a few of our favorite examples:



### **SALE ENDS TODAY! Up to 50% off!** – ColourPop Cosmetics

Not only were we intrigued by a 50 percent off sale for a makeup brand that rarely has sales, but the subject line clearly puts a time limit on getting the deal. If we wanted to grab some makeup at a steal, we needed to act fast. Click, click, click.

### **Status: low in stock** – ThirdLove

The low-in-stock message gets us every time. This subject line from bra retailer ThirdLove made us worry that we'd miss out if we didn't open the email. So we did.

### **Tonight only: A denim lover's dream** – Guess

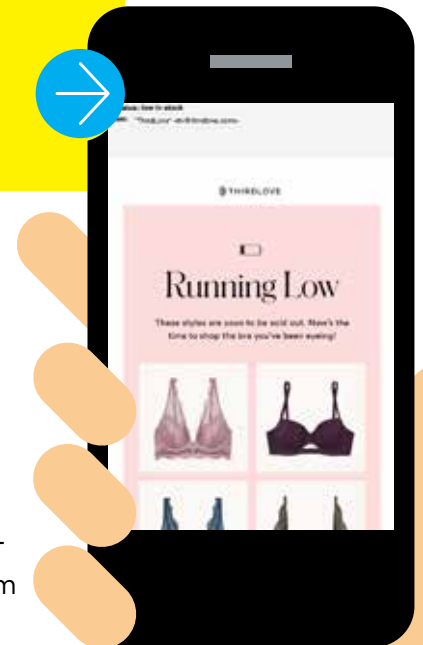
We love denim as much as the next person, so when this email came into our inboxes promising a one-night-only deal, we couldn't pass it up. Plus, we wanted to know what the "denim lover's dream" was all about. Guess used urgency and curiosity for the win.

### **Ending in 24 hours: 25% off sitewide** – Converse

When someone tells us that we only have a day to score a great deal on sneakers (or anything, for that matter), you've got our attention. This subject line from Converse paired urgency with a compelling offer, which piqued our interest.

### **One more chance to get 35% off!** – J.Crew Factory

You mean to tell us there won't be any more chances?!? This is our ONE chance to get that deal. OK, fine, we'll click.



# EMAIL SUBJECT LINES THAT PIQUE CURIOSITY

Sure, sometimes you have to go for that direct offer approach. But other times, the best email subject lines are the ones that invoke curiosity. They make people stop scrolling and ask “What?” or “Why?” Here are a couple that really made us want to know more:

## **you have to see what’s in this bag – Kate Spade**

OF COURSE we have to see what’s in the bag. Wait ... what bag? What could possibly be in it? We have to know. Job well done, Kate Spade. Job well done.

## **Something you’ve never seen before. – Free People**

We’ve seen a lot of things in our lives, so if Free People is promising that this is something we’ve NEVER seen, color us intrigued.

## **Pick you up at 6? – ELOQUII**

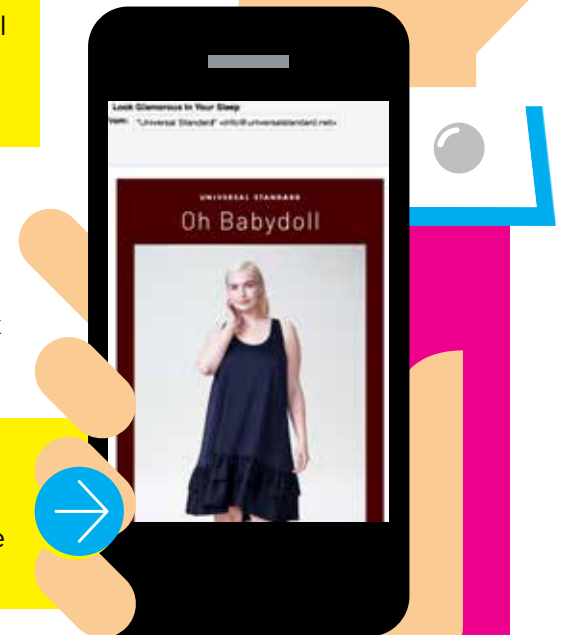
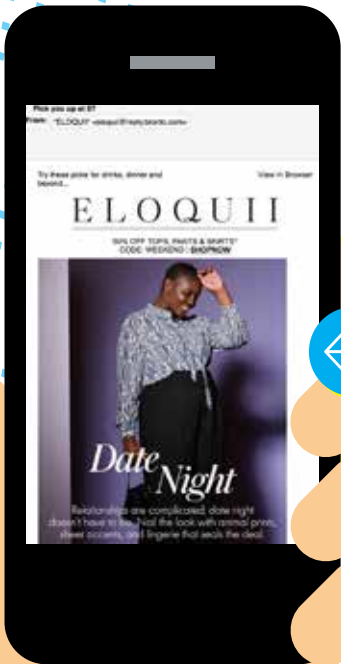
Well, we weren’t really planning on going out, but did we make some sort of date with ELOQUII? Better click on that email to find out what the deal is. We love how subtle this question-based subject line is. It definitely made us curious about the content.

## **STOP BUYING US – Chubbies**

Isn’t the whole point of an email from an e-commerce company like Chubbies to get people to buy its product? Why in the world is Chubbies telling us to stop buying its shorts? We couldn’t help but click to find out why the brand sent this email.

## **Look Glamorous In Your Sleep – Universal Standard**

Sleeping is normally reserved for cold cream and open-mouthed snoring, so if Universal Standard tells us we can look “glamorous” while we’re snoozing, we want to know how. HOW? We’ll just click and see.



# EMAIL SUBJECT LINES THAT PLAY ON SOCIAL PROOF

Social proof and customer testimonials are key tools in every marketer's toolbox. Calling out how much other people enjoy your products and/or services makes other people more inclined to take a chance on your brand. Social proof doesn't have to be limited to on-site testimonials or reviews, however. More e-commerce retailers are utilizing it to craft awesome email subject lines. These are a few of our top picks:

## Look who's Wearing Warby — Warby Parker

Warby Parker is already hip, but the brand uses this subject line to entice subscribers to check out who else is wearing the company's stylish glasses. It made us want to be part of the "Wearing Warby" club.

## Products the celebs are wearing — Sephora

Say what you will about celebrity culture, but we're hooked on following along with the latest trendsetters. We had visions of this email from Sephora instructing us on how to look like Jennifer Lawrence or Ariana Grande. So yeah, we opened it.

## These best sellers are 🔥 — Original Penguin

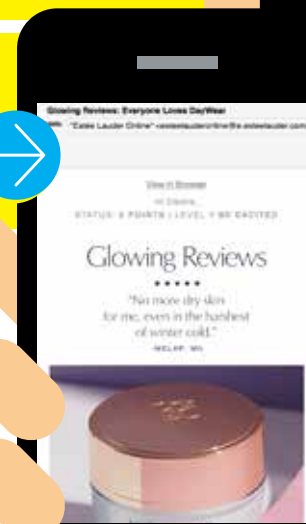
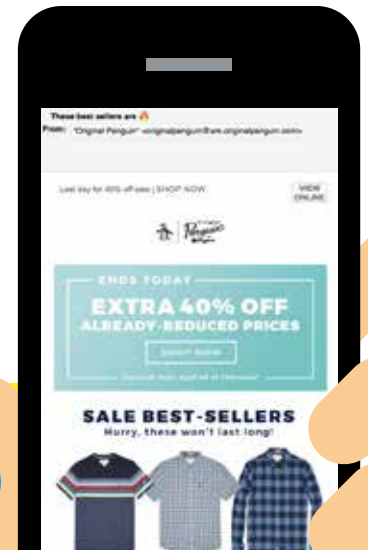
Email subject lines with emojis are popping up all over the place. Research shows that including the right emoji can boost read rates. This email from Original Penguin uses an emoji to describe the brand's best-sellers, and we didn't want to miss out on any of those fire-hot products.

## Glowing Reviews: Everyone Loves DayWear — Estee Lauder

Estee Lauder played up good reviews for its day cream in this email subject line. If everyone loves it, and the reviews are glowing, we're definitely more inclined to buy. At the very least, we clicked.

## Top-Rated Bras: The Reviews Speak for Themselves — Bare Necessities

This is another example of a brand leveraging positive reviews and top-rated products to entice people to click and read its email. Reviews really work. In fact, 84 percent of people say that they trust online reviews as much as their friends.



## BONUS: CAN'T-RESIST CTAs

Once you get people to open your email, the next step is to get them shopping your site. That's where eye-catching CTAs come into play — whether it's in the body of the email or on the landing page you drive recipients to.

Including the right CTA is a balancing act. It has to be straightforward enough so subscribers won't get confused, but also catchy enough to entice someone to click. Here are e-commerce CTAs we couldn't resist:

### Stay Clean — Casper

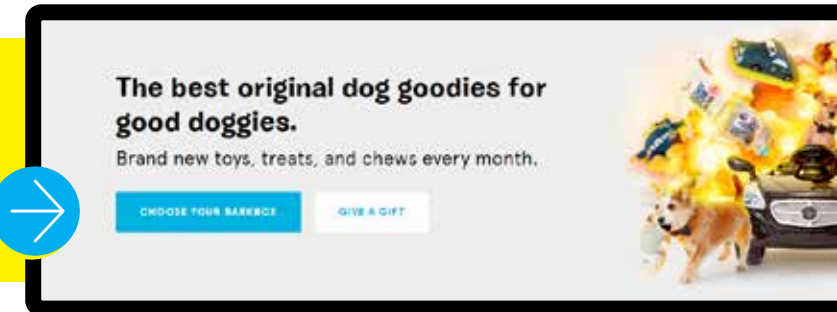
This CTA appeared in an email on how Casper's mattresses are meant to withstand dirt, spills, pet accidents, and more. The brand easily could have went with a CTA like "Learn More" but decided to get to the crux of what all people want out of a mattress — for it to stay clean.

### Take Me There / Hmm...What's Next? — Madewell

This CTA appeared on Madewell's website and was a fun, interactive experience for visitors to "choose their own adventure." The brand added a headline that said: "I'm Looking For..." and then gave users options such as "Clothes That Will Travel Anywhere." The buttons below read "Take Me There" or "Hmm...What's Next?" It's a playful take on a CTA, and we love it.

### Give a Gift — BarkBox

BarkBox, a subscription box for dog owners, used a landing page to give subscribers the option to give BarkBox as a gift. The tactic streamlined the sales funnel and reduced confusion. The simple "Give a Gift" button is a nice touch.



### Check Out All the Savings — Kay Jewelers

On a sales-focused landing page, Kay Jewelers wrote a cute rhyme: "Get a Head Start on Gifts From the Heart." The retailer easily could have wrote "Shop Now" or "View Savings," but instead it went with "Check Out All the Savings," which implies there are a lot of savings to be had. It's a small adjustment that makes a big impact.

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## TotalRetail

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