

# THE LOYALTY EFFECT



How Rewards Boost Email Marketing Engagement

**RESEARCH REPORT**



# Table of Contents

## **01 Executive Summary**

Top Takeouts

## **03 The Loyalty Landscape**

Global and Local Trends

## **06 Research Rationale**

Data Collection and Methodology

## **08 Behavioural Linguistics**

Analysing the Language of Loyalty

## **11 Research Findings**

Insights on Incentives

**A** The Power of Partnerships

**B** Community and Belonging

**C** Don't Delay, Act Today

**D** Prestige and Exclusivity

**E** Ownership and Possession

**F** Moreish Marketing

## **23 Final Thoughts**

There's Longevity in Loyalty

## **25 Research Partnership & References**

Everlytic and BreadCrumbs Linguistics



Click on a page number, and you'll instantly be linked there!





# Executive Summary

## Top Takeouts

Incentives and Rewards Marketing is on the Rise

### Discounts. Cashbacks. Freebies. Perks.

Whether used in standalone campaigns, built into established loyalty programmes, or to add value to a brand campaign, **marketing that uses rewards is on the rise.**

This strategy to incorporate **incentives**, although not new, is being adopted by businesses across industries to help **positively influence consumer behaviour**, **drive loyalty** and **enhance consumer satisfaction**.

This research report highlights the **top 20 rewards-driven mailers** sent through the **Everlytic platform** in 2024, ranked by key engagement metrics, including **open rates** and **click-through rates**.

**The top mailers** came from 10 industries

➤ Agriculture & Environmental

➤ Business & Consulting Services

➤ E-commerce

➤ Education & Training

➤ Financial Institutions

➤ Hospitality, Travel & Tourism

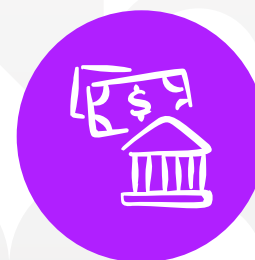
➤ Medical & Healthcare

➤ Property & Real Estate

➤ Publishing & Media

➤ Retail & Wholesale

**Top performing industries**



Financial  
Institutions



Education  
& Training



Publishing  
& Media



# Top Takeouts From This Report

## Open rates are higher than ever.

From mid-70% to a top performer of **98.18%**, rewards-based mailers consistently outperform industry averages by **33%**. The key drivers of this include **powerful subject lines** and **attention-grabbing pre-header text**.

## Say yes to short, simple sentences and clear content.

This aligns to a key component of good loyalty programmes; to be simple, easy to use and have straightforward explanations. The top performing mailers averaged a **readability score of 64%**, which is considered ideal for a broad audience.

## Move over retail brands.

**Financial services** have taken the lead, beating traditional retail brands with sharper, more engaging rewards messaging.

## Emojis return.

Once on the decline, emojis have bounced back. These fun icons can help to **humanise brands, increase engagement, and improve readability**.

## Not just freebies, feelings matter too.

**Intrinsic rewards**, like compliments and recognition, appeal to our sense of **self** and **engage customers just as strongly** as tangible perks. They build emotional connection without adding a cost.

## Exclamation marks are making moves.

Subject lines featuring special offers, limited deals and get-it-while-it's-hot messaging – powered by FOMO. Messaging with **urgency and exclusivity**, especially in subject lines and pre-header text have proven to be the most effective.

## Give readers ownership.

By framing rewards as already **“yours”**, readers inherently perceive a sense of ownership and possession, making them more likely to continue engaging with the mailer content and **take the actions** needed to claim this reward.

## More rewards, more impact.

Brands are positioning their rewards as **more generous, flexible and value-packed** to stand out in the highly competitive loyalty market and get consumers to engage more.



**The South African loyalty landscape is evolving, placing a higher emphasis on relevance, simplicity and perceived value.** Brands that can communicate this clearly and effectively aren't just seeing **higher engagement**; they're building stronger, **longer-lasting relationships** with their audiences.



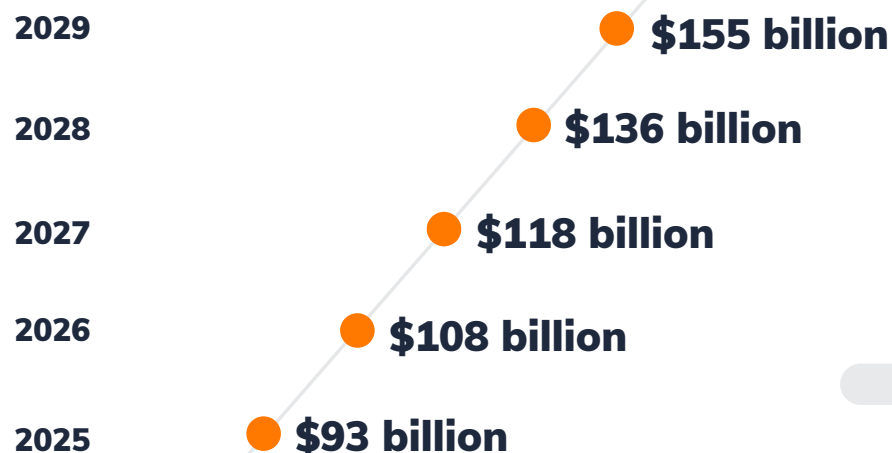
# The Loyalty Landscape

## Global and Local Trends

**Loyalty and rewards programmes are everywhere.**

These initiatives are designed to **incentivise specific actions and deepen engagement** – offering value in return for loyalty. Whether it's **earning points, unlocking perks, or receiving exclusive offers**, the goal **remains the same:**

**Retain customers and keep them coming back.**



The loyalty market is projected to grow significantly, with forecasts indicating a substantial increase in value over the next few years.

So much so that, according to Research and Markets (2025), the global loyalty market is expected to expand by as much as **16% in 2025**, and drive the global market from **\$93 billion to \$155 billion by 2029**.



# Key Drivers of Growth

## Value Matters More Than Ever

Today's consumers are increasingly **price-sensitive** and looking for value in the products and services they purchase. As a result, **rewards programmes that offer tangible benefits**, like discounts, savings, and instant rewards, are gaining popularity. To meet this demand, brands are shifting towards **cashback offers, digital vouchers and real-time point conversions**, making it easier for consumers to see and redeem value instantly.

## Digital Transformation is Well Underway

With **mobile-first marketing strategies** on the rise, brands and businesses are building incentive capabilities directly into their communication platforms through mobile apps and **digital payment solutions**. These integrations can offer consumers quick and convenient access, which increases the possibility of ongoing engagement.

## Changing Consumer Preferences

As consumer expectations evolve, brands must adapt – not just **what** they offer, but **how** they present it. In an increasingly competitive loyalty landscape, the pressure is on to craft more **innovative, compelling rewards**. This means **bigger, better offers** that truly capture attention and drive deeper engagement.



## Adding the “Personal” in Personalisation

Brands are leveraging their data analytics to create more **individualised consumer engagement**. There's a growing emphasis on uniquely **tailored content** and more **personalised rewards**, with consumers aligning with brands that offer more **relevant experiences** designed with them in mind.

## Competitive Multi-Industry Players

Once dominated by retail businesses, **loyalty and rewards programmes** have now expanded across nearly every industry – including healthcare, telecommunications and financial services. From **once-off discounts to tiered memberships and subscription models**, brands are leveraging a variety of approaches to stay competitive and retain customer loyalty.



66

South African consumers are particularly value-conscious, with loyalty programmes playing a significant role in their purchasing decisions. Programmes that offer relevant experiences and other tangible benefits will continue to thrive in the eyes of consumers.

Truth Loyalty White Paper, 2024/25

99

The loyalty landscape in South Africa is also rapidly **evolving**. According to the most recent Truth and Loyalty White Paper, most South Africans (**76-82%**) participate in loyalty programmes – often across as many as **10 different programmes per person**.

This widespread adoption is supported by the country's use of **digital tools and platforms** and have reshaped how brands interact and engage with their consumers. The integration of mobile apps and the steady increase of mobile devices to access brand content through inboxes and social media has made **incentive marketing more engaging and easily accessible** than ever.

What's clear is that loyalty programmes in South Africa are centered on **value, ease of access, and relevance**. Brands that can meet these expectations are not only building stronger customer relationships, but are also positioning themselves for greater engagements and long-term business growth.



# Research Rationale

## Data and Methodology

For this report, we analysed the **top 20 best-performing reward- and incentive-based emails sent through the Everlytic platform in 2024**. We identified all mailers that included rewards-related content by filtering emails using **specific keywords such as:**

- gift • voucher • coupon • reward • loyalty • points • status • tiers
- VIP • earn • burn • recognition • cash back • discount • bonus
- cash reward • redeem • unlock • refer • referral • claim your gift
- use your points • activate offer • birthday reward • gift for you
- priority access • incentive • loyalty club • loyalty card • membership
- member-exclusive • exclusive • gold • platinum • silver • premium
- member • club benefits • frequent buyer • subscriber perks
- renewal incentive • programme

These emails spanned a **wide range of industries** and served **multiple communication objectives** – from sales and on-boarding to engagement and retention. By ranking them according to **key engagement metrics** like open and click-through rates, this report highlights what's working best when it comes to rewards-based messaging.

### The top 3 industries with the best performing mailers



**Financial  
Institutions**

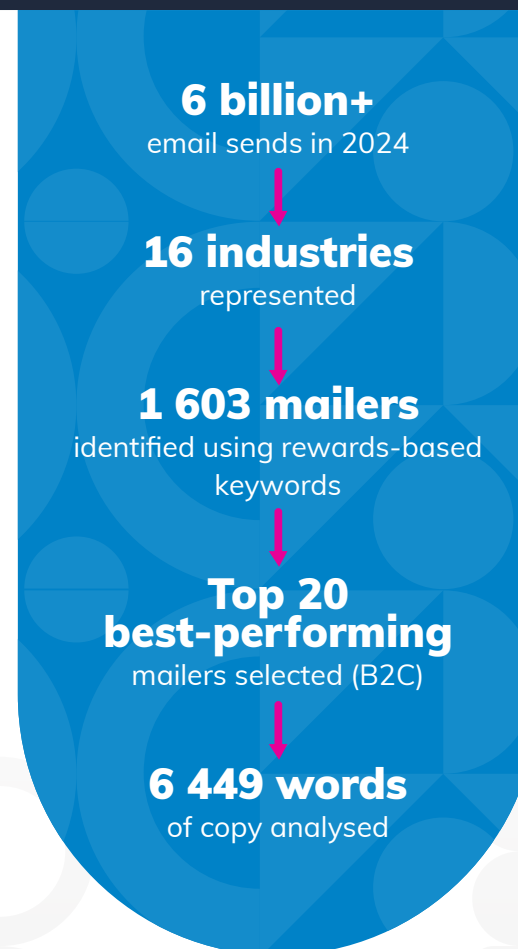


**Education  
& Training**



**Publishing  
& Media**

[Back to  
Table of  
Contents](#)







# What Makes a Mailer Successful?

When it comes to email marketing, **success isn't just about sending**, it's about **engagement**.

To assess our performance in this report, we used a set of foundational metrics that reveal how audiences interact with email content:



## **Open Rate (OR)**

How many recipients opened the email



## **Click-Through Rate (CTR)**

The percentage who clicked on a link



## **Click-to-Open Rate (CTOR)**

The ratio of clicks to opens, showing content relevance



## **Unsubscribe Rate (UR)**

How many opted out after receiving the mailer



## **Bounce Rate (BR)**

The percentage of emails that couldn't be delivered



Everlytic gives you access to these metrics, and more, directly within the platform. This empowers your brand teams to track performance against industry benchmarks and take clear, informed steps to optimise every campaign.

– Louise Krog, Executive Head of Sales and Marketing, Everlytic

# Behavioural Linguistics

## Analysing the Language of Loyalty

Behavioural Linguistics is a field that applies **scientific principles of language to influence behaviour**, essentially using language to 'nudge' people towards desired actions. It draws on insights from Nudge Theory, Psychology, Sociolinguistics and Marketing.

66

**Carefully and cleverly crafted language is a powerful tool for persuasion and behavioural change.**

– Tegan Crymble, Head of Behavioural Insights, BreadCrumbs Linguistics

99



### Nudge Theory

Leverages the concept of 'nudging', where **subtle changes in the presentation of information** can lead people to make different choices.



### Sociolinguistics

Considers the **social context and cultural norms** surrounding language use, recognising that language can have different effects on different audiences.



### Psychology

Incorporates **psychological principles related to persuasion, cognitive biases and decision-making** to understand how language impacts people's thought processes which leads to actions and behaviour.



### Marketing

Applies **marketing principles** to ensure that language is used effectively to achieve specific goals, such as increasing sales or promoting a particular next best action in a consumer journey.



Back to  
Table of  
Contents



# Behavioural Linguistics

## Analysing the Language of Loyalty

Behavioural Linguistics is a field that applies **scientific principles of language to influence behaviour**, essentially using language to 'nudge' people towards desired actions. It draws on insights from Nudge Theory, Psychology, Sociolinguistics and Marketing.

66

**Carefully and cleverly crafted language is a powerful tool for persuasion and behavioural change**

– Tegan Crymble, Head of Behavioural Insights, BreadCrumbs Linguistics

99



### Nudge Theory

Leverages the concept of 'nudging', where **subtle changes in the presentation of information** can lead people to make different choices.



### Psychology

Incorporates **psychological principles related to persuasion, cognitive biases and decision-making** to understand how language impacts people's thought processes which lead to actions and behaviour.



### Sociolinguistics

Considers the **social context and cultural norms** surrounding language use, recognising that language can have different effects on different audiences.



### Marketing

Applies **marketing principles** to ensure that language is used effectively to achieve specific goals, such as increasing sales or promoting a particular next best action in a consumer journey.



# The Art and Science of Communication

For this analysis, the following **5 pillars from Behavioural Linguistics** was considered.

## SEMANTICS

### words

Vocabulary  
choice and word  
frequencies

## SYNTAX

### grammar

Sentence length, tense  
and grammar,  
including ? and !

## PHONETICS

### sounds

Sounds and literary  
devices, including  
alliteration and metaphors

## VISUALS

### imagery

Colour, emojis and  
imagery, including fonts  
and bullet points

## HEURISTICS

### biases

Patterns in how people  
process information to  
make decisions

Understanding how language shapes behaviour and decision-making is crucial in effective communication. By incorporating **behavioural insights**, we can tailor our messages to resonate with our audiences, making our content **more persuasive and impactful**.



# Research Findings – Insights on Incentives

Let's dive into the data. The top-performing rewards-based mailers reveal **a number of trends you can apply** to shape and sharpen your next email campaign.

## Engagement and Readability Trends

### Open Rates Exceeded Expectations

Across industries, Everlytic marketing emails in 2024 typically saw open rates around **33%**. But in this rewards-focused set, the top 20 mailers delivered significantly stronger results – ranging from the **mid-70s** to an impressive **98.18%**. That's a clear indicator of effective subject lines and pre-header copy built to capture attention.

### Clear, Concise Content Wins

A consistent theme across the top performers was the use of **short, snappy sentences** and **straightforward language**. These included:

**"Easy" "Convenient"**  
**"It's as easy as 1, 2, tap"**  
**"As easy as possible for you"**

Many of these mailers also used **step-by-step breakdowns** for how to register and redeem rewards; minimising friction and improving comprehension.

### Readability Matters

To test readability, we ran the top mailers through the **Flesh-Kincaid Calculator**. This tool assigns a score from 0 to 100, with higher scores indicating easier readability. A score of 100 means the text is very easy to understand, while a score of 0 suggests a very complex text. **A score of 60% or higher** is considered ideal for general audiences.



The average readability score among the top performers?

**64%** – right in the sweet spot for accessibility and engagement.





# Improving Readability Through Smart Design

To keep readers engaged, top-performing mailers made use of navigation devices (**visual and structural cues or breadcrumbs**) that guide attention and improve readability.

**These included:**

➤ Bullet Points

➤ Infographic-style Visuals

➤ Sub-headings

➤ Numbered Lists

➤ Bolded Key Text

➤ Strategic Font Colour Changes

## **6** Key Messaging Themes from the Top Mailers

A closer look at the dataset revealed six dominant themes that consistently drove engagement across campaigns.

1



**The Power of Partnerships**

2



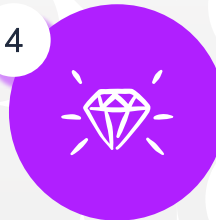
**Community and Belonging**

3



**Don't Delay, Act Today**

4



**Prestige and Exclusivity**

5



**Ownership and Possession**

6



**Moreish Marketing**



Next, we explore each of these themes in detail, with real-world examples from the top mailers.

**A**

## The Power of Partnerships



Free coffee from your **medical aid**.



Shopping **vouchers** from your **pharmacy**.



Flights and travel **perks** from your **bank**.



Spa **discounts** ... from your **car insurer**.



What do these have in common? The most successful mailers in our dataset leveraged the power of reward partnerships to boost their message and elevate their offering.

This collaborative loyalty model is becoming increasingly popular, with non-competing brands joining forces to provide shared value. We're seeing more campaigns where members can earn and redeem points across **multiple reward partners** – giving the consumer the freedom to choose rewards that matter most to them.

In 2024, an Olympic year, several campaigns tapped into Paris-themed rewards, using the global recognition of the Games to increase engagement.

Aligning with **high-profile events** or **trusted brands** adds **relevance** and **excitement** to incentive messaging.

Additionally, incorporating partner brands and using visuals like their logos in your campaigns, demonstrates that others trust your business.

This links to a behavioural principle called social proof. **Social proof** is a tool used to **build trust** and **encourage engagement** through the endorsement of others, in this case, other brands. **This helps to give your brand more credibility.**

**Key Insight:** Financial service businesses, including banks and insurers, are leading the way in engaging rewards and engagement, thanks to smart, collaborative partnerships that amplify perceived value.



B

# Community and Belonging

Transactional loyalty is no longer enough. According to the Truth Loyalty White Paper (2025), emotional loyalty – driven by values, purpose and connection – is rising in importance. Here, brands are shifting focus towards **storytelling, brand purpose and exclusive experiences** to create **deeper, more meaningful emotional bonds** with their audience.

This introduces the theme of **community and belonging**. Top mailers in our dataset frequently used language that signalled membership, exclusivity and connection.

Phrases like

“**Access to**” rewards programmes that are membership-based, with

“**Opportunities that come with being a member**”

“**Member-only benefits**” that

“**You can now get**”

These messages help recipients feel like they’re **part of something bigger**; a valued member of a **connected, purpose-driven brand community**. That emotional connection strengthens engagement and loyalty.



## Oh Hello, Emoji

### They’re back!

These small digital icons are used to express an idea or emotion and succeed in livening up content.

They add **playfulness and personality** and (when used strategically) can help to make content more **relatable and attention-grabbing**, leading to higher click-through rates and engagement. They also help to boost emotional connection and brand personality, and can help your brand come across as more trustworthy.

### Top emojis in the dataset



Back to  
Table of  
Contents





# Intrinsic Motivation Driving Belonging (and Behaviour) Through Emotion

*The best news? You don't need bigger budgets to make a big impact. Often, intrinsic rewards work just as well.*

**Intrinsic rewards** are internal motivations or psychological benefits. Unlike extrinsic rewards (like coffees or flight discounts), intrinsic rewards are personal and focused on **celebrating the individual** with language rooted in accomplishment and purpose. These emotional cues can inspire connection and boost retention.

## **Examples from top mailers:**



Recognises and celebrates **exceptional academic achievements**



**Recognition** of your achievements



**Investing in your growth** and committing to excellence in your field



Imagine **celebrating** your incredible achievements



**You are truly part of the excellence**

**Key Insight:** We love coffee. But we also love a compliment. Intrinsic rewards that appeal to our sense of self can be just as effective, if not more so, than physical rewards.



C

## Don't Delay, Act Today.

DON'T MISS OUT

**Don't miss out on this reward!**  
**Don't miss out on this opportunity.**  
**Don't miss out!**

The above lines often appeared in top-performing mailers. **Why? Because FOMO (fear of missing out) works.** We don't want to miss out on something free or something we've been told is ours and is just waiting to be claimed. That's why **urgency** and **time-scarcity** were dominant in messaging strategies across the best campaigns.

### **Urgency-Led Language That Drove Action**

Top mailers used high-impact phrasing such as:

- Unlocking
- Claim your bonus reward
- Benefits that await you
- Rewards waiting

And time-sensitive prompts like

- Limited time only
- Offer ends before the end of March
- Before the closing date
- Before it expires
- If you do not take up this offer by the deadline, you will no longer be eligible

[Back to Table of Contents](#)





# The Exclamation Mark is Making a Comeback (!)

Forget the old writing rule of one exclamation mark per 1 000 words. In these campaigns, imperative language (and exclamation marks) were everywhere, especially in the subject lines.

## In the top 20 mailers

Imperative tone (commands) led the way:

➤ Don't miss out!

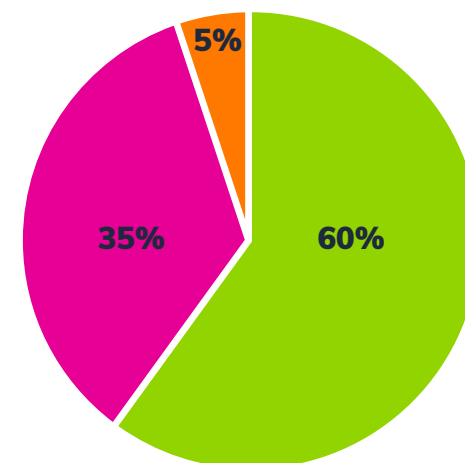
Declarative tone (statements) followed:

➤ This offer ends soon.

Interrogative tone (questions) was used least often:

➤ Ready to claim your reward?

- [! ] **Imperatives:** command action and drive a sense of urgency
- [? ] **Declaratives:** tell us something or give information
- [. ] **Interrogatives:** pique our interest and require a response



## Examples from the top mailers

- Make the most of this opportunity to win big!
- Start your application today to get first option on rooms
- Help us enhance your experience, and get a coffee on us
- Help us test & review our new app!
- Don't miss out! Switch to us today!

Exclamation marks, especially when paired with emotion-packed adjectives like “thrilled”, “delighted”, “excited”, “honoured”, increase urgency and emotion, making the content feel more immediate and compelling.

## Why This Works – The Psychology Behind It

This urgency taps into a behavioural science concept called **present bias**, which is our natural tendency to **prioritise immediate rewards** over future benefits. By using phrases that emphasise immediacy, brands prompt recipients to act now rather than delay.

**Key Insight: FOMO, urgency and scarcity messaging**, especially in subject lines and pre-header text, played a major role in driving engagement. The strategic use of exclamation marks helped amplify this effect.



D

## Prestige and Exclusivity

**Prestige and exclusivity** are powerful marketing levers used to signal high status, drive desirability and increase demand. Top-performing mailers frequently tapped into this theme, making recipients feel part of a select group with access to something others couldn't easily get. Brands achieved this through messaging that implied **scarcity, special access, and elevated value**.

### Eligibility – Friction That **Adds Value**

Another key technique was reinforcing the idea of eligibility. Using phrases like **“qualify”, “eligible” and “take advantage”** emphasise that not everyone can claim the benefit.

In behavioural psychology, **positive friction can be a good strategy**. When something isn't available to everyone, it becomes more desirable. The effort required to access it increases its perceived value, a dynamic particularly effective in rewards programmes.

Common phrases used included:

- Offering you access
- This is an exclusive offer
- First priority
- Exclusive benefits
- Exclusively for you
- This exclusive offer



[Back to Table of Contents](#)



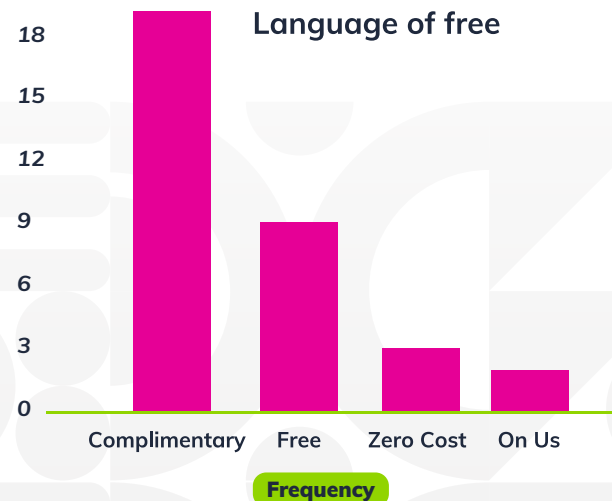
# The Power of Free

Alongside exclusivity, **the power of “free”** also plays a major role in the top mailers. This taps into our psychological bias toward valuing free items more than their actual cost. The mere presence of the word “free” triggers large amounts of dopamine in our brain, making us **feel happy** and more likely to **act quickly**.

In the current challenging economic climate, offering free items or services – like a free coffee, free event access, or value-adds – can be a great **consumer retention strategy**.

More than that, it also triggers another key behavioural response: **reciprocity**.

This is the instinct to **return a favour of goodwill**, often through future engagement or brand loyalty.



**Key Insight:** “Free” works. From coffees to exclusive event invites; including no-cost add-ons can significantly help to boost engagement across all engagement metrics.

## Strategy Note

### A Word of Caution

As with all behavioural tactics, **balance is key**. While the power of free is compelling, overusing it can lead to diminishing returns.

If used too often, it **may devalue your offering** or create a perception that your brand always gives things away, reducing long-term impact and potentially **weakening brand trust**.

HMMM?  
↙



### Test and iterate.

The best results come from **understanding what resonates most** with your specific audience and applying behavioural insights in a way that feels strategic, not gimmicky.

E

# Ownership and Possession

When consumers feel **personally connected** to a brand, they're more likely to stay loyal, make repeat purchases and become more **engaged brand advocates**. One of the most effective ways to nurture this connection, is by giving consumers a sense of ownership.

## What Drives Ownership in Loyalty Campaigns

Ownership doesn't just come from physical products, it can come from time, effort or emotional investment.

In loyalty programmes, this often means

- Earning points
- Submitting forms
- Making repeat purchases
- Engaging with branded content

Our analysis of the **top 20 mailers** showed a clear pattern of language that creates this **sense of personal investment**.

# The Language of Belonging Word Frequency Patterns

This is a useful lens to see what stands out most, and unravel themes and patterns across multiple texts. By analysing word frequencies across the dataset, we identified recurring use of:

1

**Second-person pronouns (you / your)** – making messages feel personal

2

**Relationship-building language (we / our)** – reinforcing brand connection

you / your and we / our, membership, rewards, more, get, earn, access, complimentary, voucher, spend, new, shopping, join, all, entries, time, apply, benefits, offer

- |                        |                                    |
|------------------------|------------------------------------|
| ➤ Your ticket to Paris | ➤ We'd love you to try             |
| ➤ Your experience      | ➤ We encourage you to submit       |
| ➤ Your application     | ➤ Our care                         |
| ➤ Your success         | ➤ We look forward to welcoming you |
| ➤ Your coffee voucher  | ➤ Our way of welcoming you         |

Back to  
Table of  
Contents



# The Behavioural Principle: Endowment

This strategy is backed by behavioural science, specifically a principle called the **endowment effect**. This suggests people **place higher value on things they own** (or believe they own).

Closely tied to this is **loss aversion**: the idea that the pain of losing something we already have outweighs the joy of gaining something new. So when readers are told rewards are already theirs, they're more likely to act, because not doing so would feel like a loss.



**Key Insight:** Framing rewards as already **“yours”** triggers a **sense of ownership** and increases action. The use of second-person language and inclusive messaging helps create a personalised, value-driven experience.



F

# Moreish Marketing

In today's fast-paced, hyper-competitive world of quicker, better, bigger, consumers aren't just looking for value, they are looking for more. **More perks. More savings. More benefits. More reasons to stay engaged.**

Nowhere is this more evident than in the loyalty and rewards landscape, where **competition for consumer attention is fierce**. To cut through the noise, top-performing brands are using language of abundance and addition, which is often reinforced with visual symbols like “+” and “↑”.

## Language That Signals More

Successful mailers used phrasing that communicates scale, enhancement, and added value.

Examples include:

- |                        |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| ➤ Boost your rewards   | ➤ Get more value      |
| ➤ Your boosted rewards | ➤ Earn bonus entries! |
| ➤ Earn bonus entries!  | ➤ Earn the maximum    |
| ➤ Even more ways       | ➤ The many advantages |
| ➤ A wealth of benefits |                       |

**Key Insight:** To stand out in today's loyalty landscape, brands are positioning their rewards as **expansive, dynamic, and upgradeable**. The promise of “more” not only boosts perceived value, it encourages repeat engagement.

This “but that's not all” messaging style creates anticipation and frames the experience as generous, layered, and worth engaging with.



### Levelling Up: The Power of Tiers and Status

Another key trend in our dataset was that of **tiers and status**. A tiered rewards programme is a loyalty system that offers **progressively better benefits** as consumers move through different levels or tiers, typically based on spend or engagement.



### Top-Performing Mailers

Top-performing mailers clearly communicated how members could “level up” their status. Successful programmes made it **easy to understand how to move through the tiers**, with messaging that positioned progression as **both achievable and rewarding**.



### Why this works

Tiered structures tap into behavioural motivators like **achievement, status, and goal orientation**. They give consumers a reason to keep coming back to unlock the next level of benefit.





# Final Thoughts

## There's Longevity in Loyalty

As loyalty and rewards programmes continue to evolve both globally and in South Africa, this space is becoming increasingly crowded and highly competitive. In this landscape, **how you communicate** your brand's value often matters more than the type, quality, cost and frequency of the reward itself. Even no-cost rewards that rely on intrinsic motivators are proving successful to drive **engagement and action**.

Whether it's high-value offers or **zero-cost, intrinsic motivators** like recognition and status, success lies in messaging that drives action, builds connection, and makes the reward feel **worth it**.

South Africa is home to some of the **most sophisticated loyalty programmes in the world**, many built on best-practice digital and gamification strategies. According to the latest Truth Loyalty White Paper (2025), 27 of these local programmes are ranked according to consumer engagement – **2** of which feature in this report dataset as Everlytic clients.

Loyalty concepts are **embedded in our brand culture and content**; from branded rewards currencies, to hashtag-driven awareness days, to promoting reward allocations and spend, and even brand sign-offs with reward-centric messaging.





# More Than Just Rewards

Loyalty programmes are more than just a way to show value to consumers; they are communication tools. They open the door to more frequent, more relevant, and more engaging interactions with your audience.

Language



Ideology



Behaviour

By applying **behavioural linguistics** principles in your email strategy, copy, design, roll-out and analysis; it can help you better understand your consumers, uncovering insights into their decision-making and what makes them act in the ways they do.



When done right,  
loyalty emails can do the following:

- 1 Build brand affinity and positive sentiment
- 2 Convince adopting a viewpoint
- 3 Drive a desired action

At their core, loyalty programmes are **behavioural engines**, designed to change actions through both

- **Extrinsic motivations** (discounts, benefits, bonuses), and
- **Intrinsic motivations** (recognition, belonging, purpose)

These work by motivating individuals to **move toward a positive reward or avoid missing out**, the exact behaviours we observed in our top-performing campaigns.



## References

Everlytic. 2024.

**Data taken from platform**

Everlytic. 2022.

**Email Marketing Benchmarks Report**

Research and Markets. 2025.

**Loyalty Programs Market**

Intelligence and Future  
Growth Dynamics.

The Point of Loyalty. 2025.

**For Love or Money**

Global benchmarking report on consumer  
loyalty and loyalty program research.

TLC Worldwide. 2025.

**The Future of Loyalty**

Trends and Insights for 2025.

Truth Loyalty. 2025.

**South African Loyalty Landscape**  
for the 2024/25 White Paper.

## Research Partnership

This report has been compiled as part of an Everlytic and BreadCrumbs Linguistics research partnership.



**Everlytic** is South Africa's largest digital messaging platform, responsible for billions of communication sends every year from the top companies in the country. Everlytic offers the tools to communicate through bulk email, SMS, Whatsapp, voice broadcasting, and web push notifications – with data tracking and analytics insights to boost engagement success.



**BreadCrumbs Linguistics** is an award-winning behavioural communications firm that uses a science-backed approach to communication. BreadCrumbs designs marketing and communication campaigns aligned to behavioural best practice and publishes research papers across topics of communication and behavioural theory.



[www.everlytic.com](http://www.everlytic.com) | [www.thebreadcrumbs.co.za](http://www.thebreadcrumbs.co.za)  
[sales@everlytic.com](mailto:sales@everlytic.com) | [hello@thebreadcrumbs.co.za](mailto:hello@thebreadcrumbs.co.za)