

How eBay pioneered the use of AI-Powered Copywriting and paved the way for marketers everywhere

The ecommerce leader embraced Phrasee and has transformed its marketing performance



Artificial intelligence.
Human language.
Awesome.



The global backdrop



\$2.4 billion

revenue in Q1, 2020

174 million+

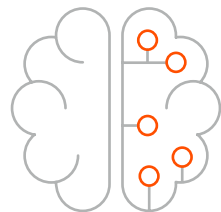
active buyers worldwide

1.5 billion

live listings

25

years of innovation



eBay is a global ecommerce leader connecting millions of buyers and sellers around the world. It exists to enable economic opportunity for individuals, entrepreneurs, businesses, and organizations of all sizes.

Netting \$2.4 billion in revenue in its last quarter, with over 174 million active buyers worldwide and 1.5 billion live listings on its marketplace in Q1, 2020, eBay is a global phenomenon.

From the day it launched, eBay has been challenging the status quo and has had a culture of innovation that has powered its business success for almost 25 years.

As the company scaled, it continuously looked for the advanced technology that could empower its people and enhance performance, especially in the way it engaged its customers.

In 2016, ever the pioneer and ahead of the wider marketing industry, eBay embraced AI technology to power its marketing language and optimize its campaigns at scale.

This is the eBay/Phrasee story.

eBay's goal

Producing marketing copy that is consistently engaging, creates impact, and drives revenue is the holy grail for marketers all over the world.

This becomes an even greater challenge for an ecommerce brand with millions of email subscribers worldwide - with over 101 million of these subscribers in the US, UK and Germany alone.

Creating the subject lines for these campaigns required a monumental effort and was extremely time-consuming for the internal team. Each week, they were tasked with creating stand-out, relevant, and high-performing content - a repetitive and creatively draining process for any marketer.

eBay's lightbulb moment was to look for a technology solution that could help in its quest to optimize marketing content at scale, starting with its email programs. Its concern was how it could achieve that without compromising its brand voice - the essence of eBay.



eBay's initial solution was to use another technology vendor professing to offer the panacea it craved.

However, the results produced were often spammy and undermined its brand, with eBay fearful it was losing control. The distinction it had through its brand tone and the customer trust that had been built over the years was at risk, and question marks emerged about the integrity of the language and the approach.

The vision for what was possible with new and emerging AI technology however remained.



We needed a creative technology solution that offered scalability but also reflected the brand's voice and adapted to the constantly changing behaviors and preferences of our audience.

Justine Del Greco, Marketing Manager Global CRM, **eBay**

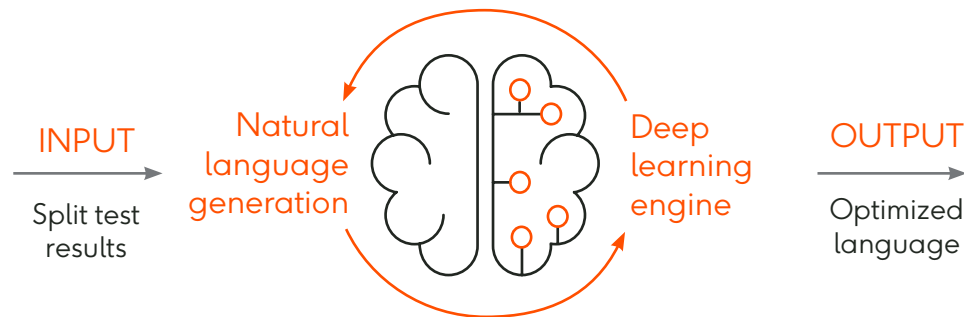


Enter Phrasee, a pioneer of AI-Powered Copywriting

eBay discovered Phrasee back in 2016, at that time a relatively new company.

Understandably, eBay put the AI-Powered Copywriting company through its paces after its previous experience. In fact, to be certain of Phrasee’s capabilities, its world-class analytics team conducted a robust six-month head-to-head test with the two vendors. Phrasee came out on top and won the global contract.

eBay benefited from what has become known as The Phrasee Effect - the measurable ROI that comes from using better language in your marketing campaigns.



At the heart of the Phrasee product are the natural language generation and deep learning models which generate copy at scale and constantly optimize its performance.

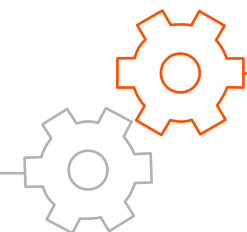
Phrasee’s team of computational linguists built eBay’s bespoke language models - the language environments that generate copy that is specific to a customer’s plans, promotions, and (most importantly) the brand tone of voice. This allowed eBay to generate copy at scale in just a few clicks.

The relationship with Phrasee went from strength to strength over four years. Phrasee’s technology offered human-sounding language customized to eBay, with machine-powered results. It was powerful and easy to use, taking just five minutes per campaign to set up - so low-touch, such high impact.

Phrasee could not only deliver the scale eBay needed at that moment and in the future, but the fact the language it generated was aligned to its brand voice was critical - the combination of machines with Phrasee’s computational linguists was a powerful and reassuring force. And the statistical performance and campaign results spoke for themselves.

Initially, Phrasee kicked off in the UK and US, two of eBay’s priority markets, with a focus on optimizing its email subject lines across multiple campaigns. With consistently incredible results in open and click-through rates compared to previous marketing performance, Phrasee’s AI technology was also rolled out to Germany.

Expansion from email subject lines into push notifications across all markets quickly followed.



Game-changing results

Since partnering with Phrasee, the results have been awesome across the UK, US and Germany. As an example, in the US, eBay has seen a 15.8% average open rate uplift and 31.2% average click rate uplift - giving consistent ROI on all campaigns. On average, Phrasee delivers over 700,000 incremental opens and 56,000 incremental clicks per campaign.

Phrasee has completely transformed the way eBay speaks to its customers online and created campaign after campaign that delivered enhanced marketing performance and ultimately increased revenue for eBay.

"Phrasee-generated language is based on scientific insight yet is human-sounding and tailored to eBay's brand voice. Machine-generated language balanced with human control made Phrasee our top choice, and we've seen significant engagement and ROI uplift ever since," added Justine Del Greco.

Beyond the impact for the business, there were some side benefits for the team that were inspired to roll-out Phrasee too, described eloquently by the former CMO of eBay UK: "Phrasee makes you money, so you're more likely to get your bonus."



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Gareth Jones, former CMO, **eBay UK**

↑ **15.8%**
average open uplift

↑ **31.2%**
average click uplift



700,000+
incremental opens per campaign

56,000+
incremental clicks per campaign



Awesome results across:



UK



US



DE

The future - marketing pioneers, working together



eBay continues to test new ideas and now thanks to Movable Ink's creative personalization platform, it can simultaneously optimize subject lines and language within an email.

By optimizing both the language in the subject line and the headline copy within the email, the compound effect is a staggering 42.3% uplift in click rate.

The eBay and Phrasee partnership was an elegant solution to a real marketing issue for a company with the ambitions and growth levels of eBay. The ecommerce giant's brand voice remained its own while securing immediate, powerful, scalable results without resorting to short-termist, clickbait tactics. Having a long-term approach and strategy was the goal of everyone and that's why the relationship has evolved year on year.

The story of Phrasee and eBay continues to go from strength to strength as the two companies pioneer new ways of working to ensure eBay's marketing language stands out from the crowd, not just via email and push notifications, but across all its digital channels.

The compound effect of using two advanced technologies:

↑ **42.3%**
average click rate uplift

The powerful combination not only shows the value of a true partnership, where technology married with trust and teamwork can deliver amazing results commercially and culturally, but it has proved the importance of having AI at the heart of your global marketing strategy.

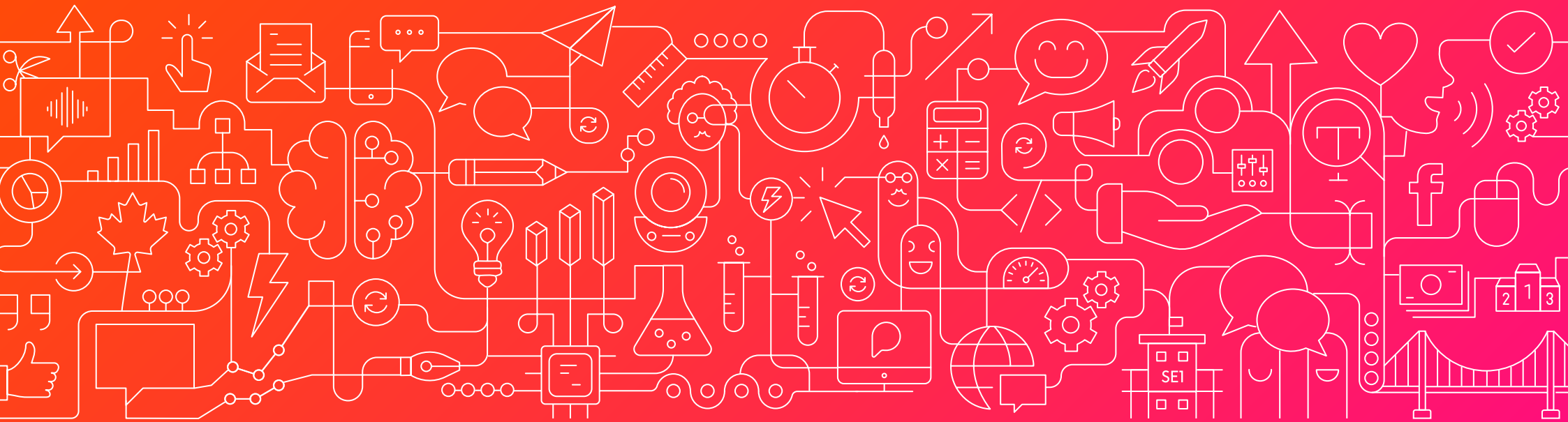
AI is the 'new normal' and eBay embracing Phrasee's AI-Powered Copywriting has paved the way for marketers everywhere to be part of a revolution.



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Want to know more? Book a demo.



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