



How to sell more climate-friendly food.

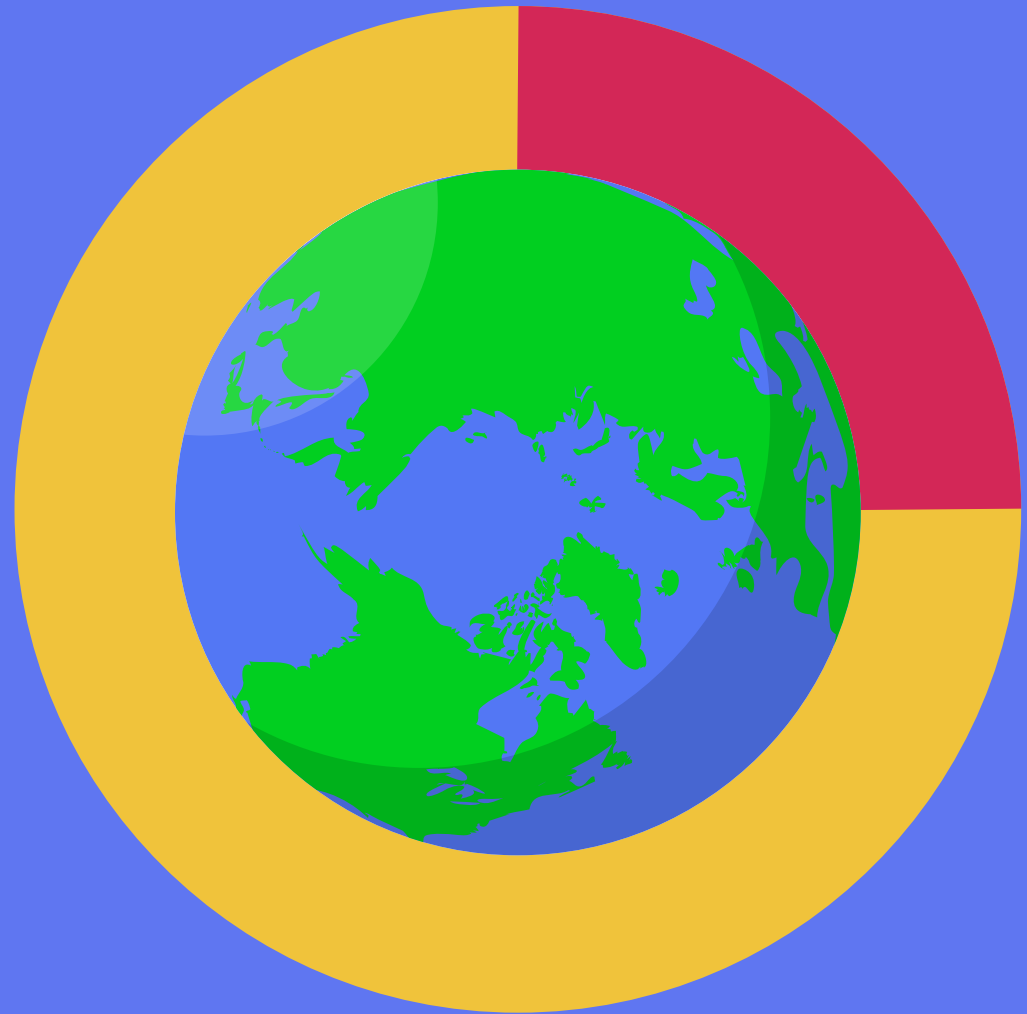
A research based strategy to double your customers' uptake of climate-friendly menu items.



Climate change and customer menu choices.

A quarter of all greenhouse gas emissions come from food production. By nudging customers to choose more plant-rich food we can make a big difference to our climate. But how can we encourage customers to do this?

WRI's research paper *Environmental Messages Promote Plant-Based Food Choices* looked at various descriptive messages designed to nudge consumers into making more environmentally friendly menu choices.



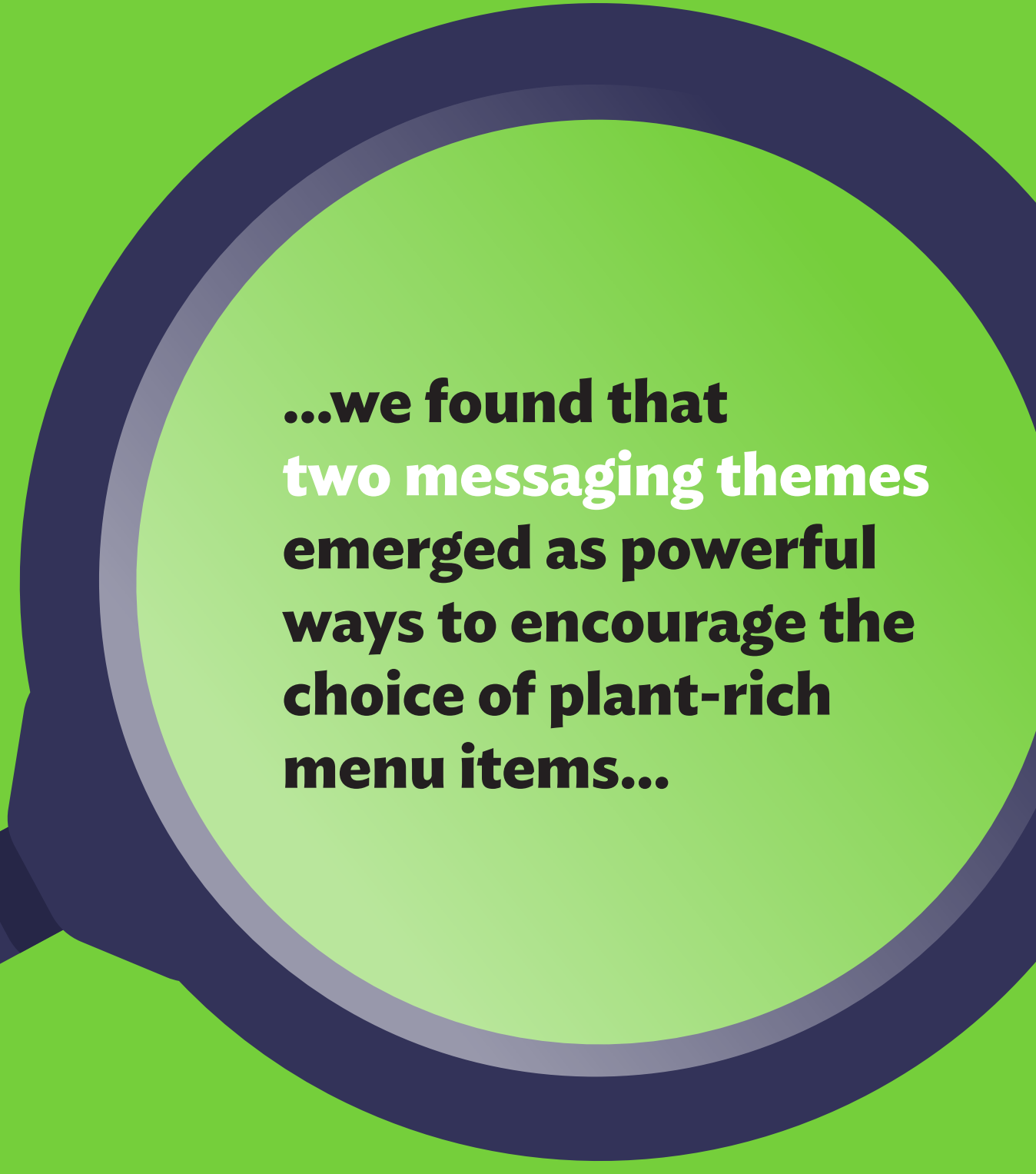
The awesome power of a nudge

A nudge is a great way to guide people into making the right decision when faced with a range of options, without restricting choice.

A nudge is a great way of helping customers make more environmentally friendly choices when sitting down to eat.

Which descriptive nudges work best?

To find out WRI researched different descriptive nudging statements that sat under 10 themes and measured which ones had the biggest influence over customer buying choices.

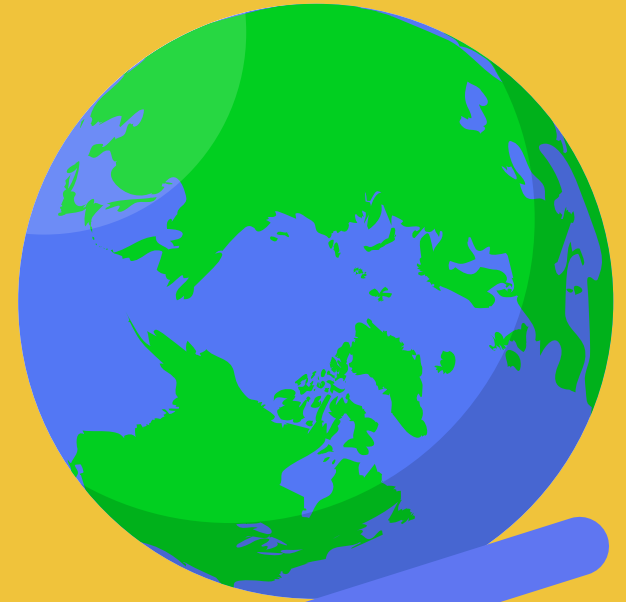


**...we found that
two messaging themes
emerged as powerful
ways to encourage the
choice of plant-rich
menu items...**

1

Small change, big difference

Surprising customers with the fact that they can make a meaningful positive impact on the environment without a significant sacrifice was a very effective nudging tool.



**This statement
more than doubled
the amount of
plant-based choices.**

“Each of us can make a positive difference to the planet. Swapping just one meat dish for a plant-based one saves greenhouse gas emissions that are equivalent to the energy used to charge your phone for 2 years. Your small change can make a big difference.”



Breaking down the nudge...

The key to making this theme work is to make a simple equivalent between an easily achievable action and an easily understandable outcome.

The messages can be broken down into three parts.

**Personal empowerment
statement**

Easily achievable action

**Easily understood
personal outcome**

**“Each of us can make
a positive difference
to the planet”**

**“Swapping just one
meat dish for a
plant-based one”**

**“Saves the
equivalent to the
energy used to
charge your phone
for 2 years”**

Making it work for you...

**Personal
empowerment
statement**

*“Everybody can make a
big difference”*

*“It’s easy to have a
positive impact on
climate change”*

*“You can make a bigger
difference than you
think”*

**Easily
achievable goal**

*“Choosing
this dish”*

*“Eating one plant-rich
meal a week”*

*“Swapping this meat
burger for this
plant-based burger”*

**Easily understood
personal outcome**

*“Saves the same energy as
needed to power a street
lamp for XX months”*

*“Releases XX football
pitches of land back to
the wild”*

*“Saves XX bathtubs of
water over a year”*



Joining a movement

**By demonstrating that the choice
they are making is one many more
people are making too.**



**This is statement
doubled the amount
of plant-based
choices made by
customers**

**“90% of Americans are making the
change to eat less meat. Join this
growing movement and choose
plant-based dishes that have less
impact on the climate and are
kinder to the planet.”**



Breaking down the nudge

The key to making this theme work is to describe the size of the group they are joining to make a difference and the behavior you would like the individual to adopt.

**Size and relevance
of group**

“90% of Americans”

Group’s behavior

**“making the change
to eat less meat”**

Call to action

**“choose plant-based
dishes that have less
impact”**

Making it work for you

**Size and relevance
of group**

“XXX of our customers”

“XX% of our diners”

*“x/x of university
students”*

Groups behavior

*“chose this plant-
rich dish last year”*

“order this menu option”

*“are eating one
plant-rich meal
everyday”*

Call to action

*“have made a huge
impact on climate
change”*

*“because it’s delicious
and reduces the effect of
climate change”*

*“join them and saved the
planet”*

In summary

By using descriptive messages that communicate the benefits of plant-based food choices, we can empower people to change their behavior and choose lower carbon dishes and make more environmentally-friendly food choices.

Customers are already looking for companies to help them make good environmental choices.

Customers are happy to be shown sustainability information about a product.

For food service companies nudging is an easy, low-cost and scalable intervention to implement.

**How did WRI land
on these findings?
Here's a deeper look
at the research.**



WRI research

The research comprised two phases. The first to delineate 10 nudge themes and their associated descriptive messages and the second to test them in two controlled trials.

Phase 1

Descriptive message development

In phase one, WRI generated a series of 10 differentially framed descriptive environmental messages

Phase 2

(Trial A) Descriptive message selection*

Subjected the 10 generated messages to a prioritization process using a large-scale online survey.

5 most effective messages

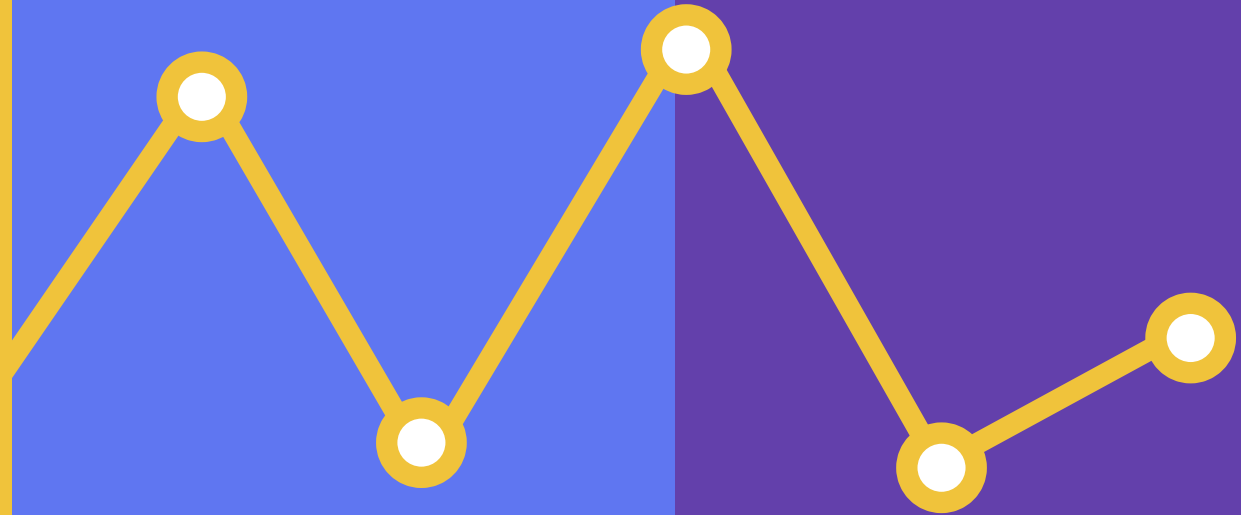
*Using paired menu item selection

Phase 2

(Trial B) Descriptive message selection**

The top performing 5 descriptive messages were subjected to a randomized controlled trial to determine which ones resulted in the largest increase in plant-based food selections from two online menus.

**Using menu layouts



Phase one... ten themes

Firstly, WRI identified 10 potential themes that could nudge consumers into making more environmentally friendly menu choices.

*Health &
environment*

The altruistic choice

Joining a movement

Aspirational choice

*A sustainable
future*

*Performance
benefits*

Taste benefits

*Small changes, big
impact*

*Connecting with
nature*

Planet, health, taste

Ten messages

After WRI identified the themes, they then through a process of refinement, amalgamation and elimination reduced 27 possible messages to the 10 most succinct messages, shown below:

“You will be surprised how much positive impact plant-based food can have on both the planet and your health. Choose plant-based dishes to lower your carbon footprint and improve nutrition. It’s about goodness for you and the planet.”

Theme: Health & environment

“Plant-based dishes are a win-win for you and the planet. They help you feel alive and full of energy. And they are kinder to the planet, with less impact on the climate. Plant-based dishes: do good and feel great.”

Theme: The altruistic choice

“90% of Americans are making the change to eat less meat. Join this growing movement and choose plant-based dishes that have less impact on the climate and are kinder to the planet.”

Theme: Joining a movement

“Movie stars and fashion icons around the world are waking up to the urgent challenge of climate change. Cutting down on meat and choosing more plant-based food is one of the ways they are reducing their impact. Join the in-crowd to make a change for a cooler planet.”

Theme: Aspirational choice

“Choosing plant-based food is the best way to feed a growing population while protecting our planet’s climate for generations to come. A greener future for our children starts on your plate.”

Theme: A sustainable future

“Plant-based dishes take their energy from vegetables grown with the power of the sun and soil. They are a source of vibrant goodness for your body that also helps the planet’s climate stay cool. Power your body with green energy.”

Theme: Performance benefits

“Plant-based dishes are stacked with fresh vegetables and flavorful herbs and spices. Making them a delicious meal, that is also kinder to the climate than meat-based dishes. Savor food that saves the planet.”

Theme: Taste benefits

“Each of us can make a positive difference to the planet. Swapping just one meat dish for a plant-based one saves greenhouse gas emissions that are equivalent to the energy used to charge your phone for 2 years. Your small change can make a big difference.”

Theme: Small changes, big impact

“Plant-based dishes are made with natural field-grown vegetables that are freshly harvested at their peak. Wholesome plant-based food that is not only kinder to the climate but also full of natural good taste.”

Theme: Connecting with nature

“Plant-based dishes are made with delicious ingredients that are better for your health and the climate than meat. Plant-based dishes are free from compromise: great taste, good for your health, and help the planet.”

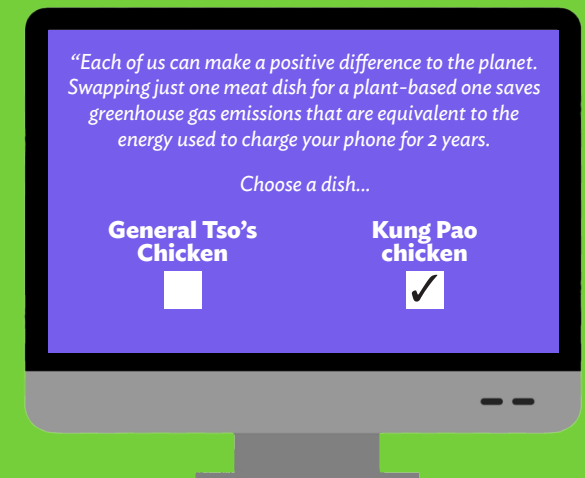
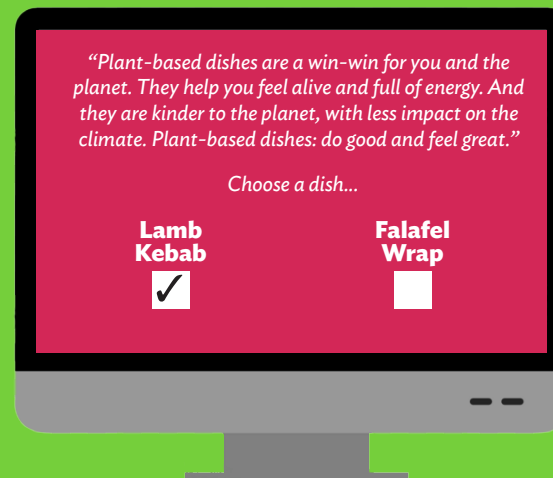
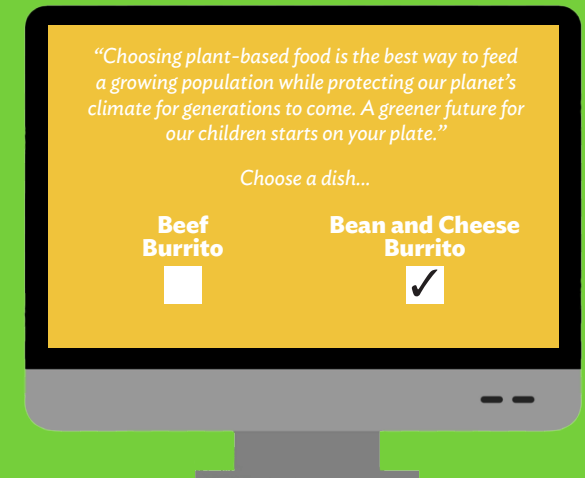
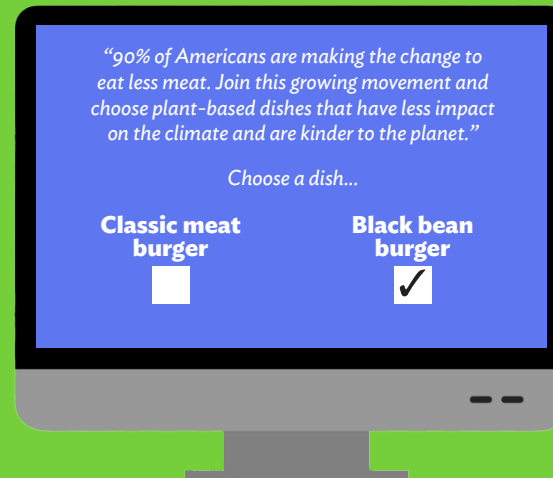
Theme: Planet, health, taste

Testing the 10 messages

WRI then tested their messages with 6,374 people by showing each of them one of the ten chosen messages and then asking them to choose between a meat-based and plant-based menu option.

To make it relevant they made sure the menu options people were given were ones typically found in restaurants across the U.S.

Then we looked at the differences between their choices and those made by a control group.



Phase two (trial b)... the results

Of the messages tested, two stood out...

More than doubled plant-based choices as compared to the control group

Small changes, big impact

“Each of us can make a positive difference to the planet. Swapping just one meat dish for a plant-based one saves greenhouse gas emissions that are equivalent to the energy used to charge your phone for 2 years. Your small change can make a big difference.”



Nearly doubled plant-based choices as compared to the control group

Joining a movement

“90% of Americans are making the change to eat less meat. Join this growing movement and choose plant-based dishes that have less impact on the climate and are kinder to the planet”



**Learn more about how
to lower the greenhouse
gases of the food
you serve by visiting
CoolFood.org**