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The **2021 Glossy Awards** honor the companies and campaigns that have helped define the worlds of beauty and fashion over the past year. This year's finalists highlight key stories of growing businesses working tirelessly to reach millennials and Generation Z — critical audiences whose values differ sharply from previous generations. Rather than looking to stand out, younger consumers are more curious about where fashion and beauty brands fit into the world around them. At the top of that list are questions about sustainability, transparency and technology.

This year's picks spotlight the importance of responding to the times — pandemic and lockdown and all the bright spots that beauty and fashion could offer during months of quarantine and social unrest. It was also clear that winning teams emerged from organizations with future-forward founders, sustainable business practices and solid tech partnerships. All were essential ingredients for up-and-coming brands looking to make a splash, respect their customers and remain at the forefront of their shoppers' minds — and wallets.

In this two-part guide — the first part focusing on the Glossy Beauty Awards and the second half spotlighting the Glossy Fashion Awards — we look at the winning programs, highlighting what worked best for the creators who made them and the lessons marketers can take from the campaigns our judges selected.

Glossy Beauty Awards

Best Influencer Partnership

IPSY - ‘Ultimate Make-Off Challenge’

IPSY

Program

Khloé Kardashian’s debut as IPSY brand partner was aired exclusively on the brand’s IGTV in September 2020. Khloé battled ITEM Beauty co-founder Addison Rae in a hilarious, face-to-face tiny hands “Make-Off” challenge. Viewers were urged to tune in and vote #TeamKoko or #TeamAddison for a chance to win a one-year membership to IPSY’s Glam Bag, $500 worth of Good American apparel and an ITEM Beauty haul.

Insights

Contests call for engagement and IPSY put two high-profile contestants head to head, with a healthy dose of lighthearted competition. Fans responded. The campaign event kept the activation simple and the focus on the stars. Meanwhile, the incentive raised the stakes for all the hashtaggers and the swag centralized the brands in play. In the end, everybody won.

Best Consumer Collaboration

Native - Plastic Free Deodorant

NATIVE

Program

Across 2019 and 2020, personal-care brand Native witnessed a 900% social-media spike in the call for plastic-free packaging. Responding to that obvious demand, Native introduced Plastic Free, a paperboard-packaged product that the brand estimates will help reduce landfill waste by up to 169 tons per year.

Insights

Especially when it comes to sustainable environmental issues, the customer is talking, and brands that listen are winning their spend. Native matched its new product to the idea of personal care that is also careful to protect the world around us, and its first successful initiative has become the opportunity to expand the story to all its packaging in every product category. By listening to social signals, Native now stands for something sustainable in significant ways — and the collaborative move makes for loyal customers.

Best Brand Collaboration

Beekman 1802 and Schitt's Creek

BEEKMAN
1802

Program

As the Canadan hit comedy 'Schitt's Creek' wrapped up its final season, Beekman 1802 partnered with the show to celebrate. Recreating the apothecary from the fictional world of the Roses in upstate New York, they dug deep into the archives and revived a fan-favorite heirloom rose fragrance in packaging that emulated the tastes of 'Schitt's Creek' character David Rose.

Insights

Bolstering Beekman 1802's messaging with the power of two fan bases, the two-month campaign cemented a relationship between viewers of a popular sitcom and connoisseurs of personal care and luxury products such as soap, candles, lip balm, body cream and more. Fandom is a valuable commodity for any brand, and Beekman 1802 increased its capital with the immersive ideas of its 'Schitt's Creek' collaboration.

Best Digital Event Series

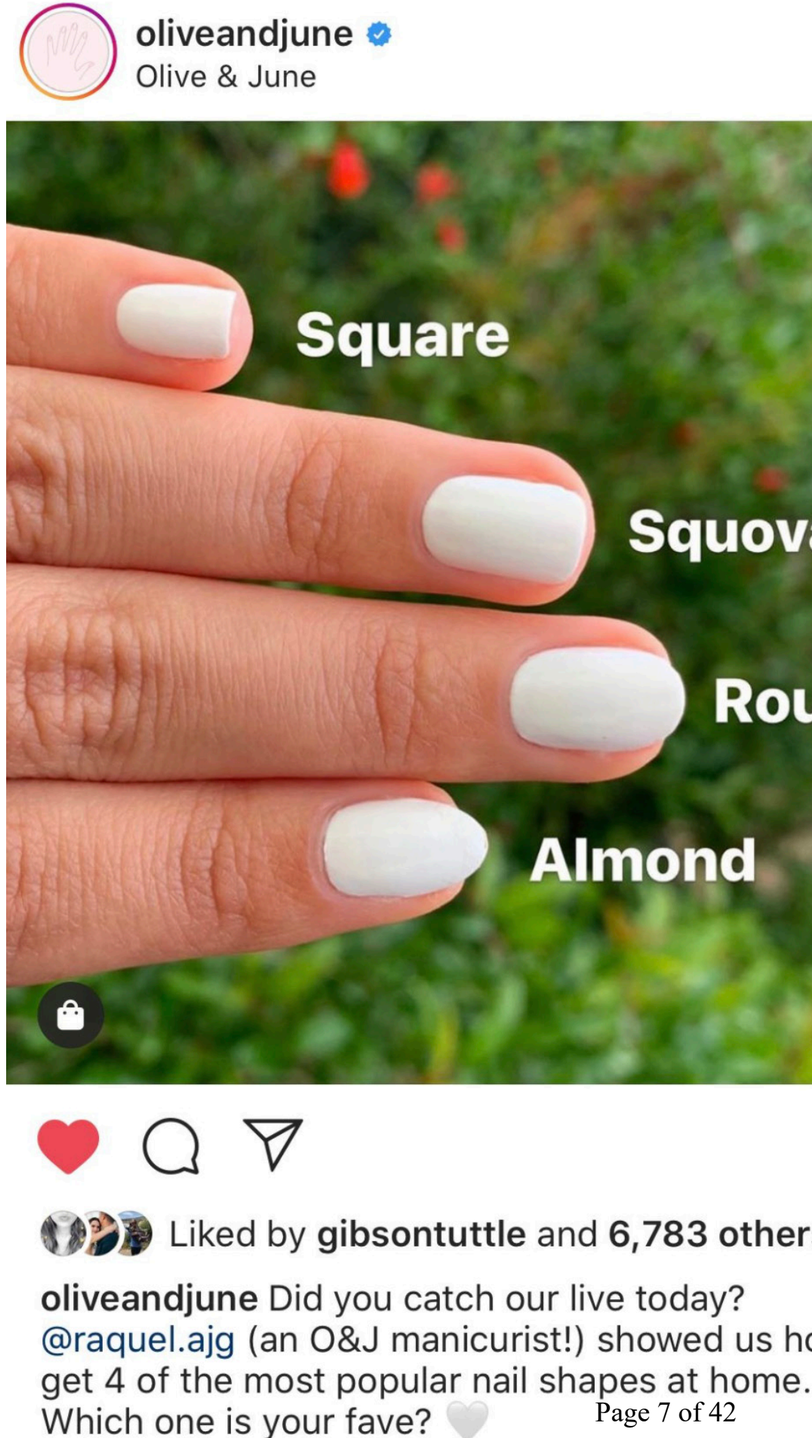
Olive & June - ‘Mani Bootcamp’

Program

Olive & June responded to the 2020 lockdown’s closure of nail salons with a one-week program that put at-home manicure skills at everybody’s fingertips. The brand’s videos started with the basics and built to increasingly advanced techniques such as nail art. The ‘Mani Bootcamp’ was brought to life across IG Live, IG TV and Zoom, where everyone was invited to join at no cost.

Insights

Once the pandemic hit, Olive & June listened to the heartbeat of their brand — their community. With the concept that learning how to do nails at home during quarantine could be a bright spot during very dark times, and with people everywhere lacking salon options, the educational campaign restored one element of normalcy to its customers — allowing them to look and feel better, amounting to an authentically positive experience for both the brand and its loyal fans.



Best Use of SMS | Attentive and Supergoop!

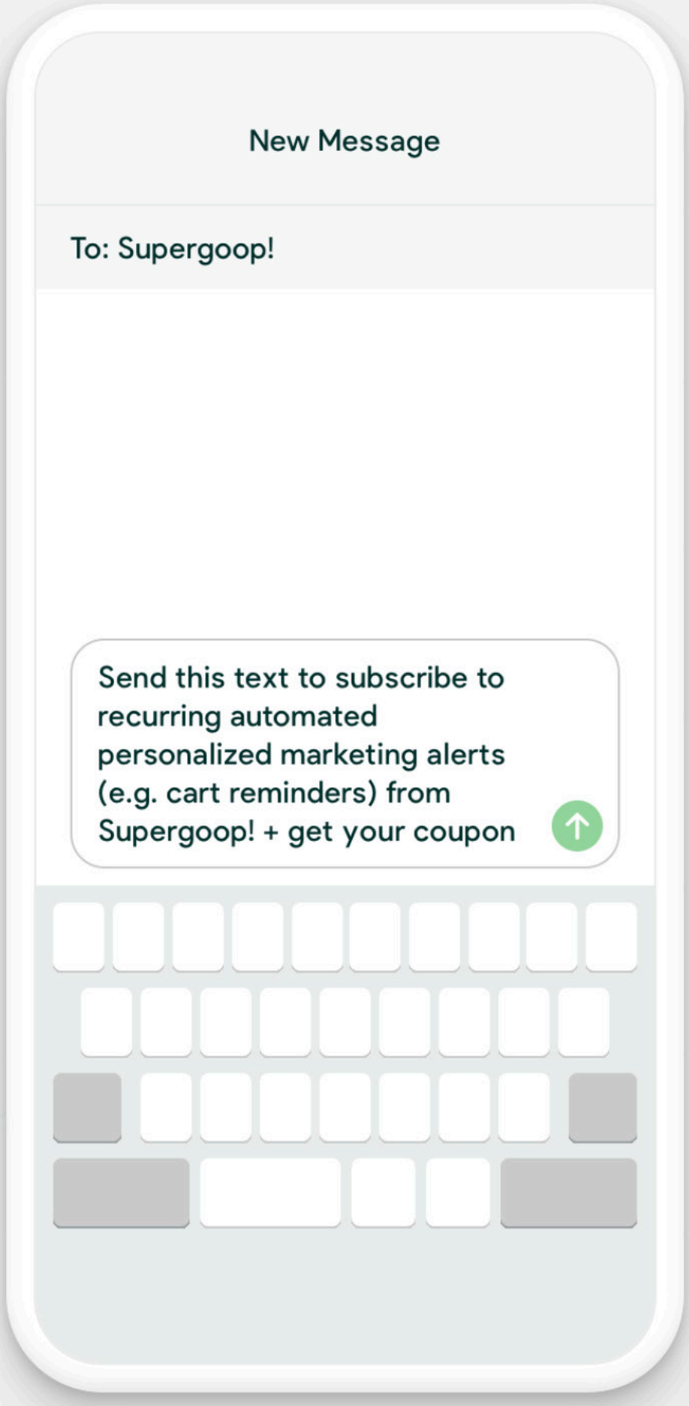
attentive®

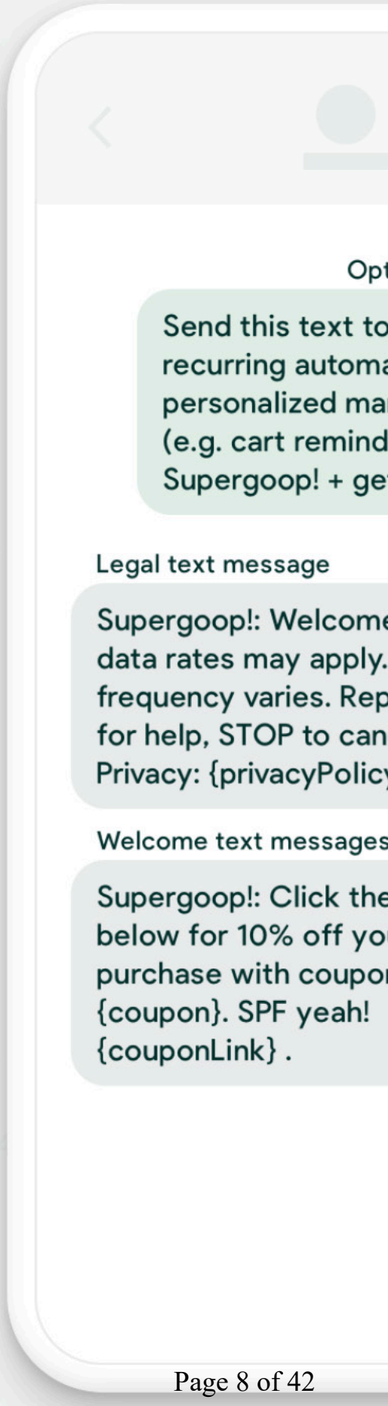
Program

Starting with an easy opt-in system and device-agnostic sign-up creatives, Supergoop! used its text messaging channel to reward its most loyal mobile shoppers with exclusive early access to new products and limited-time offers. Coupling that approach with seasonal messages, individualized reminders about available coupon codes and recently abandoned carts, Supergoop! worked with Attentive to fully automate its messaging conversation.

Insights

The key to successful personalization in the digital space is scale, and convenience and automation are key to the recipe. Supergoop! and Attentive knew the prestige skincare brand had an audience of fans who wanted close conversation and first-access options, but they had to provide both in a seamless and consistent way. The outcome took some technology expertise, and their partnership put that element into play for an SMS win.





Best Use of TikTok

NYX Professional Makeup - #ButterGlossPop Challenge

Program

In March 2020, NYX Professional Makeup put the lens on its Butter Gloss fans, inviting loyal users to “pop your gloss” and showcase the lip-gloss in their own expressive way to the tune of original music by M. Maggie and Tie Hixon. Joining the action were leading TikTok influencers such as Mahogany Lox, Addison Rae, Avani and Brent Rivera. NYX Professional Makeup further incentivized the campaign by running a limited online sale and offering a grand prize of $1,200 worth of products to a random winner. The program featured an integrated shopping experience as well.

Insights

Time and again, winning Glossy Awards entries highlight the power of participation. Bringing fans into a musical and star-studded showcase turned their energy into authentic and compelling creatives. NYX Professional Makeup was also certain to provide some performance-focused activations, keeping the conversions at the center of the “pop your gloss” experience.

NYX PROFESSIONAL MAKEUP

Best Use of Instagram | Spotlight Oral Care

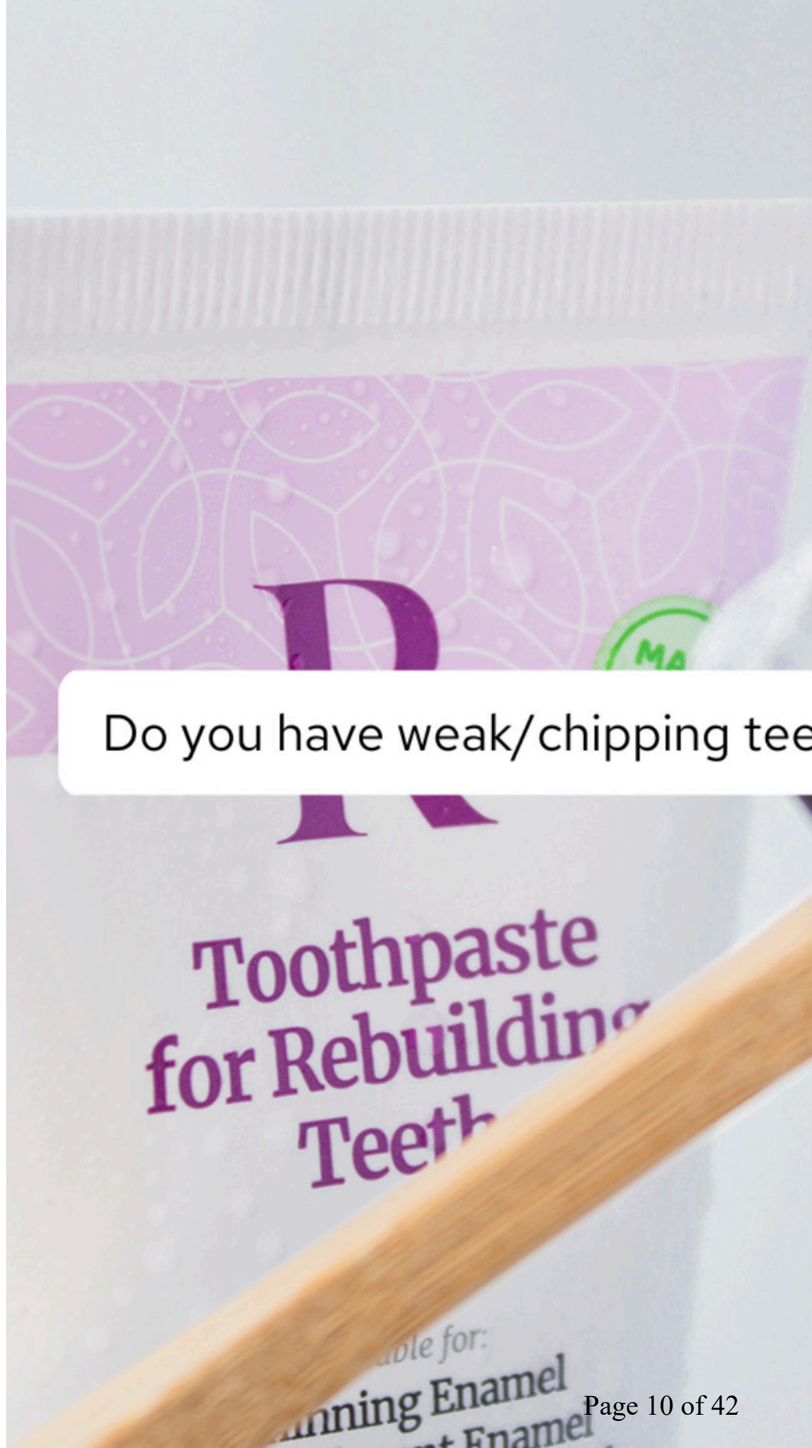
Spotlight Oral Care

Program

Launching a campaign designed to support their customers in a time of quarantine, oral-care brand Spotlight brought its founders, who are dentists, to a series of Instagram Stories and posts to share their expert insights, how-tos and tips. The topics ranged from whitening, bruxism — stress-related grinding and clenching of the teeth (a growing issue during the pandemic — and more. Shared up to four times weekly and collectively pinned to the page's highlights for easy reference, the campaign was largely based on patient and customer inquiries across a range of channels.

Insights

Going beyond product promotion, Spotlight shared the "why" behind certain ingredients and guided their consumers through effectively using them to meet their oral care needs. Hitting the mark on context and cadence as well, the topics not only were highly relevant to the times, but also the campaign's consistency allowed Spotlight's founders to effectively interact and build a relationship with followers.



Best Use of Video

Bevel - ‘Created for Kings’

BEVEL

Program

Personal grooming brand Bevel foregrounded Black men as powerful, beautiful and beloved throughout its ‘Created for Kings’ campaign. Comprising uplifting depictions of Black men across all walks of life, the campaign launched with a central message: “Black man, you are seen. You are loved. You are a King.” As the program further promoted hair, skin and body products, the messaging remained meaningful, thanks to the approach that Tia Cummings, Bevel’s vice president of marketing, kept at its core.

Insights

When advertising transcends a product, it often does so by centralizing a message that connects in some way to the brand, but elevates the discourse. ‘Created for Kings’ allowed its creator’s personal vision to carry the campaign, standing for something greater than — and yet wholly connected to — personal care.

Best Use of Technology & Best Use of Customization

Yves Saint Laurent Beauté - Rouge Sur Mesure

Program

In January 2021, L'Oréal and Yves Saint Laurent Beauté unveiled their new AI-powered system — Rouge Sur Mesure, Powered by Perso — a smart at-home device that allowed consumers to create their own personalized lipsticks. Utilizing color-cartridge sets from YSL's ranges of red, nude, orange and pink, users created thousands of bespoke shades of YSL's Velvet Cream Matte Finish lipstick with a single touch. With an attendant app, at-home users also accessed expertise and advice from YSL Beauty brand representatives.

Insights

L'Oréal and Yves Saint Laurent Beauté scored two wins with a combination of technology and personalization that elevated the at-home product experience to an entirely new level — expanding the beauty customer's personal kit to match individual expectations, complexions and outfits. The program offered a blend of convenience, creativity and connections (via the app), allowing fans to become co-creators and have a line of lipsticks that no one else could copy.

Best Multi-Platform Campaign

SheaMoisture and BBDO NY - ‘It Comes Naturally’

Program

In a forward-looking celebration of Black identity and Black women, the SheaMoisture ‘It Comes Naturally’ campaign featured six Black female artists — Monica Ahanonu, Rachelle Baker, Bisa Butler, Alexis Eke, Linda Mawala and Reyna Noriega — each commissioned to bring to life the stories, legacy and heritage of Black women across generations. SheaMoisture pledged proceeds from every purchase to direct investment in Black women entrepreneurs.

Insights

Operating with the core belief that commerce can bring economic independence — and empower women to break cycles of poverty — SheaMoisture already partners with women-led co-ops in Northern Ghana to source their namesake shea butter. This new campaign put further resources into both the co-ops and the communities it serves throughout the U.S., proving to SheaMoisture’s customers that the brand is engaged in a long-term social-impact practice. More than just a campaign to garner positive attention and brand lift, SheaMoisture’s new program amplified the brand’s enduring Community Commerce — an authentic business model.

Best Product, Category or Sub-Brand Launch Campaign

The Nue Co. - Forest Lungs

THE NUE
CO

Program

The Nue Co. expanded its line of wellness products in 2020 with Forest Lungs, a unisex anti-stress fragrance fusing olfactory chemistry and patented technology to replicate molecular compounds produced in forests called phytoncides. Phytoncides are credited for positive health benefits, namely reduction in stress and anxiety, and boosting the parasympathetic nervous system. The digital launch campaign featured owned, earned and paid media content, including an interactive product page on The Nue Co. site. And the campaign was further amplified with the support of The Nue Co.'s brand and social communities, plus a virtual plant-potting workshop with the press.

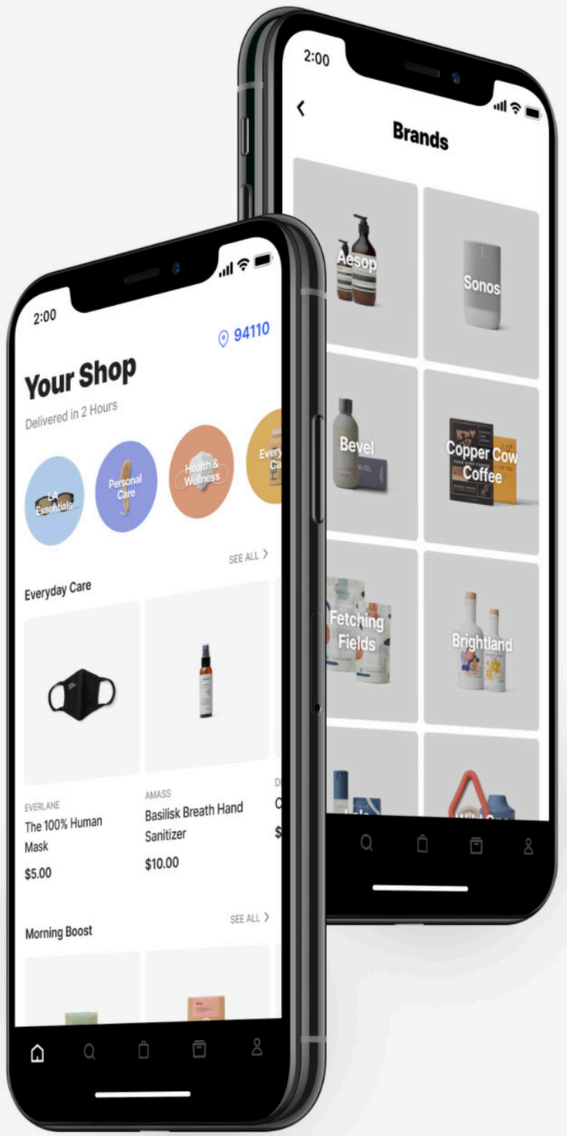
Insights

Loyal wellness customers know their trends and The Nue Co. tapped into an industry concept of "medicalizing nature" (i.e., prescribing time in nature as part of patient care). Add to that the brand's commitment to sustainability — all of The Nue Co.'s products are responsibly sourced and 95% of the materials are recyclable via the brand's in-house circular recycling program — and Forest Lungs not only expanded its product line, it dovetailed with all the factors that already bring its closest fans closer.

Best Use of an Emerging Digital Platform

FastAF by Darkstore

FASTAF



Program

In September 2020, as at-home shopping surged, Darkstore launched the FASTAF app to provide two-hour delivery of personal care, pantry and quality essentials. FASTAF uses strategically placed micro-fulfillment "dark stores," establishing local delivery networks with a priority focus on DTC brands.

Insights

Timing and convencies proved essential to shoppers in 2020, as they worked through seismic changes across communities but still needed their essentials — and customers still wanted thoughtful curation to be part of their retail experience. Meanwhile, direct-to-consumer brands rode a wave of e-commerce that flowed from the heart of their business model. Darkstore seized the opportunity that appeared right at the intersection of those two factors, disrupting delivery and closing a critical gap for quarantined customers.

Best
E-Commerce
Experience

eos Products - Donut Day Microbatch

Program

Eos played to its base's sweet tooth in 2020 with its limited-edition donut-themed Microbatch lip balms. Timed to coincide with Donut Day, the new scents have been an annual hit with the Eos crowd and marketing the exclusives via Facebook, Instagram, Instagram Stories, Twitter and TikTok with in-house content and add-ons like giphy stickers generated millions of engagements from the brand's 9-million-plus followers. The new campaign created so much demand in 2020 that 1,300 added their names to the Eos waiting list for the egg-shaped dispensers and their candy-filled tops.

Insights

Playing into an undeniably fun and craveworthy new product, Eos also tapped the powerful force of FOMO. By teasing the new Donut Day drop and then ramping up interest across social and email, the lip-balm brand succeeded in creating a phenomenon among its loyal customers, plus press response that further amplified the campaign.

Best Omnichannel Experience

Function of Beauty and Target

function — of beauty

Program

In a Target exclusive, Function of Beauty unlocked the chemistry behind the personalized shampoo and conditioner blends for every customer. Picking a base that matches one of four hair types — straight, wavy, curly or coily — each Function of Beauty customer then chose up to three different boosters to round out the mix for their individual body and haircare outcomes. Including help from a Function of Beauty hair chemist, complete routines launched at exploration-friendly price of less than $30.

Insights

Consumers have recast their journeys as personal paths, and Function of Beauty identified an avenue to meet every haircare customer on their own terms. Focusing on functional results, customer education and control as the recipe for satisfaction, Target and Function of Beauty scored a personalization bullseye in 2020.

Best Strategy Pivot

Byrdie - Byrdie Beauty Lab

Program

As live events evaporated in 2020, Byrdie transformed its annual gathering — Byrdie Beauty Lab — into a virtual tentpole for 1,400 attendees. The company brought digital content to life through masterclasses with top industry professionals, skincare and wellness workshops and a panel discussion celebrating Black creators in the beauty industry. The free sessions offered experiences that embodied Byrdie's key pillars: representation, expertise and transparency.

Insights

For Byrdie, the Beauty Lab transitioning to a digital format unlocked opportunities to include more diverse programming, and allowed more attendees than ever to get involved. Hailing from all backgrounds, and showcasing a wide range of inclusivity, 2020 marked a milestone for the company — Byrdie stood for something new and significant in an industry in need of change.

BYRDIE

Best Sustainability Initiative

ATHR Beauty

ĀTHR BEAUTY

Program

Founder Tiila Abbitt left her role as head of product development and R&D for sustainability at Sephora to launch an ethical and sustainable brand without compromise. Now, ATHR Beauty is an award-winning, five-star rated, zero-waste cosmetic company. Each of its eyeshadow palettes is packaged with FSC certified paper, made of recycled plastic, printed with water-based soy inks and manufactured with biodegradable films and recycled aluminum pans. The brand does not use mirrors or magnets because they are not recyclable and contribute to rare-earth mining and ATHR Beauty will only manufacture in regions and facilities that are child-labor and forced-labor free.

Insights

When it comes to brands that represent models for 360-degree approaches to sustainability, ATHR Beauty can stand up and be counted. Without question, the company's commitment to materials and practices that protect the planet are central to its mission, and its approach to doing business while doing good is also unquestionable. Tiila Abbitt hasn't just built a company, she and her teams have made an impact.

Best CSR Initiative

Unilever and Weber Shandwick - TRESemmé Future Stylists Fund

TRESemmé USED BY PROFESSIONALS | FUTURE STYLISTS FUND

Program

In a new $100,000 scholarship program, TRESemmé is helping Black women with a passion for haircare careers offset the cost of tuition for an accredited cosmetology school of their choosing. The program picks 10 applicants to receive grants, and then, beyond reducing financial barriers of cosmetology school, the applicants plug into other career-advancing opportunities ranging from exposure through brand channels to mentorship from TRESemmé celebrity stylists.

Insights

In its research, TRESemmé found that hairstylists lack education and training when it comes to styling and caring for textured, curly and coily hair types — 75% of stylists wish they had more training on how to style Black hair. The brand also took a stand on advancement and equity, a twofold project that is not only opening doors for people who might not otherwise access the skills they need, but also positions TRESemmé as an advocate for equal opportunity.

Most Engaged Brand Community

Glow Recipe

GLOW RECIPE

Program

Glow Recipe held its first-ever 'Glow Together Virtual Summit' in November 2020. The one-day event covered topics such as career, wellness, self-care and beauty with the goal of leaving attendees inspired, connected and empowered to be present in the moment. The brand donated all net proceeds from the event to Project Beauty Share which provides personal hygiene, cosmetics and beauty products to nonprofit organizations serving women and families overcoming abuse, addiction, homelessness and poverty.

Insights

Glow Recipe doubled down yet again on its hyper-engaged community — the Glow Gang — engaging members in ways that expand beyond their product offering. In a year with such unprecedented events, the brand had an overarching goal to bring the community together around issues central to the brand–customer conversation in 2020. With 'Glow Together,' the beauty brand reinforced its story, and its commitment, to providing a moral compass within its beauty-purchase journey.

Best Breakthrough Startup

Susteau (formerly OWA Haircare) - Moondust Collection

SUSTEAU

Program

Susteau caters to eco-conscious consumers seeking out high-performing, accessible alternatives to everyday hair products. In 2020, the company released Moondust Hair Wash, a powder shampoo that transforms to liquid when activated with water. The brand followed up on the launch by releasing a powder-to-liquid conditioner to provide a dual option for consumers.

Insights

Susteau's objective was to prove to potential customers that waterless shampoo would perform equally, or better, than its liquid counterpart. To ensure the products would gain repeat customers, the brand designed the shampoo with the intention to offer a unique product — equivalent to traveling to a new destination — but one that also felt familiar enough to tap the known customer base.

Founder of the Year

Jesseca Dupart, founder, Kaleidoscope Hair Products

Program

Jesseca Dupart founded Kaleidoscope Hair Products as a solution-oriented haircare brand dedicated to long and healthy hair, while providing resolution for hair-health issues. A licensed hairstylist, Dupart has developed products such as Miracle Drops, designed to help clients experiencing hair loss conditions such as alopecia.

Insights

As a founder, Dupart has also used her platform to launch a charitable extension called Kaleidoscope Kares. The charity has donated funds to help with school tuitions and more than $50,000 to the City of New Orleans through the #WhatsHot: Bridge the Digital Divide charitable initiative, providing free Wi-Fi to more than 8,000 families that did not have access due to the pandemic.

Beauty Brand of the Year

The Nue Co.

Program

Supplement brand The Nue Co. has a mission to connect inner and outer beauty through its sustainably-made health products, which include tinctures, powders, capsules and sprays. In 2020, the brand expanded beyond the U.S. for the first time, launching in the U.K. and Europe. The brand also launched nine new SKUs during the pandemic, including the Pill, a topical supplement that comes as an all-in-one serum, and Forest Lungs, the brand's second anti-stress supplement sold in fragrance form.

Insights

While launching new products during a pandemic was important and impressive for The Nue Co., the brand also maintained that CSR initiatives were a key element of its brand identity. The brand formed a long-term partnership with Charity:water, in which 1% of all online sales help fund five water projects in developing countries. Additionally, the brand launched a refill program across its three best sellers, with packing made from 28% post-consumer recycled content that can be recycled through all household programs.

THE NUE CO

Glossy Fashion Awards

Best Influencer Partnership

Lycored

Program

Wellness brand Lycored saw an opportunity to make consumers more aware of the ingestible skincare space and empower them to challenge traditional notions of beauty. To do so, Lycored partnered with makeup artist Erin Parsons to offer encouragement to models at New York Fashion Week. Parsons and her virtual fashion community wrote short, uplifting notes of wisdom that were delivered to models backstage during the Christian Siriano show.

Insights

The program was an extension of Lycored's Pop of Positivity campaign, designed to help people in isolation connect during the pandemic. The partnership was also an example of how brand initiatives can evolve over time if they adhere to what's happening in culture and society. These programs fall under the umbrella of Lycored's ongoing #Rethinkbeautiful initiative, which for three years has invited people to write love letters to themselves — reinforcing that beauty lies within.

Lycored
Cultivating wellness.

Best Digital Event Series | JOOR - JOOR Passport

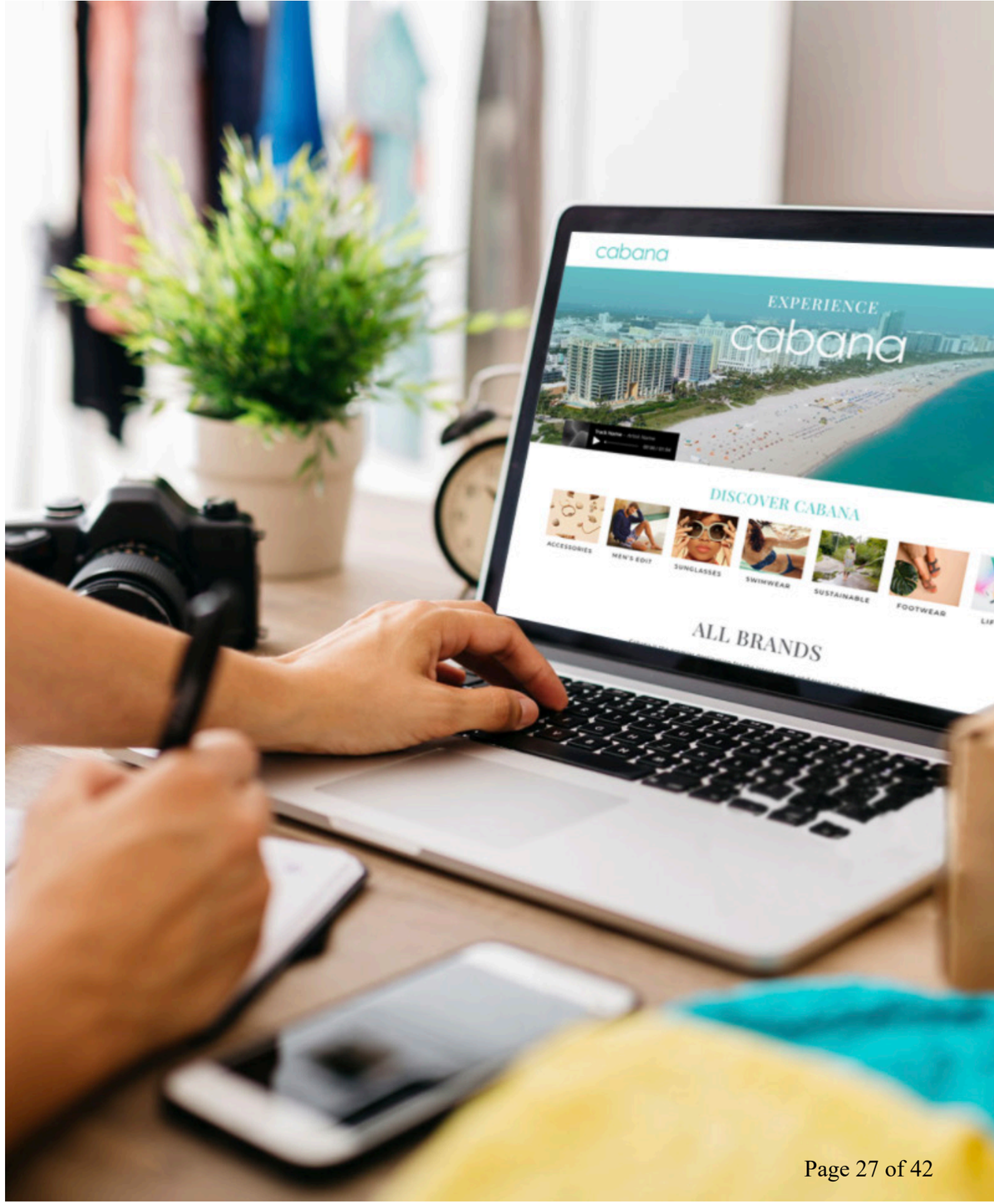
JOOR

Program

JOOR, a digital platform for wholesale management, offers virtual showrooms that run independently of the buying calendar to provide 24/7 global wholesale shopping. The company's JOOR Passport centralizes the virtual tradeshow and Fashion Week experience by creating a simple UX. There's a single login, website and app for the digital marketplace, allowing retailers to discover new styles, designers and brands to create more connections.

Insights

Taking showrooms virtual became a specifically effective way to generate buzz for and attendance to major fashion events in a time of quarantine. In 2020, JOOR Passport hosted 17 international events that drew more than 155,000 visitors. These included London Fashion Week, Cabana, Liberty Men's and the company's own JOOR Showcase.



Best Use of Video

FIGS - New Icons

FIGS

Program

Healthcare apparel brand FIGS launched New Icons, a campaign that presented healthcare professionals with the same distinction that has traditionally been reserved for professionals. The campaign consisted of commercial films spotlighting the stories of five healthcare providers, along with additional content that included OOH placements, a capsule collection, digital and social content and a grant initiative to support the next generation of healthcare workers.

Insights

Video campaigns can be an outlet for giving back — the grant initiative selected five winners to receive $50,000 to help pay for tuition and loans. The videos also were an effective channel in highlighting the journeys and goals of real healthcare professionals during the pandemic, a time when the industry was being increasingly — and rightfully — recognized and celebrated.

Best Use of Technology | Flare

Program

Flare launched in 2020, offering a line of wearable, tech-enabled safety bracelets and jewelry for women. Flare's products are designed to help customers get out of unsafe situations by connecting with a custom app. Each piece of jewelry has a hidden button that triggers text messages and GPS tracking to friends, as well as a pre-recorded call to the user's phone.

Insights

Flare is breaking barriers in the safety industry, which is largely dominated by men. The standard safety products — whistles, alarms and sprays — often make dangerous situations worse and aren't informed by how these situations can escalate. Flare's safety jewelry is designed by survivors of assault and informed by what women actually want and need, acknowledging that many groups and demographics are exposed to unsafe circumstances daily.

Best Product, Category or Sub-Brand Launch Campaign

Bombas

Program

Sock and apparel brand Bombas, which donates to homeless shelters and related charities for every item purchased, launched an underwear line in January 2021. The new product is designed with small innovations for everyday comfort, including moisture-wicking blended fabrics, reduced seaming, no tags, a soft leg-opening and waistband elasticity.

Insights

The most effective product launches are those with the larger brand mission in mind. With the launch of the underwear, Bombas now sells the top three requested clothing items in homeless shelters — socks, underwear and T-shirts. Launching new products can also be a new opportunity to reach new customers. Bombas' team intentionally focused on the underwear silhouette designs and how each product could tailor to a diverse range of body types.

Best Omnichannel Experience

Fashionphile

Program

Fashionphile, a fashion resale website for designer handbags and accessories, is disrupting the retail industry at large with a customer experience program that ranges from physical studios to virtual appointments and a free pick-up service. Notably, the company has selling studios within physical Neiman Marcus locations and virtual appointment scheduling, where customers are able to meet with trained procurement specialists and sell from home.

Insights

Giving customers convenience and choice with how they want to buy and sell is essential to growing a business. And dovetailing services with the times is critical to keeping them and fostering loyalty. Fashionphile's free pick-up service also extends to UPS locations. Additionally, the company offers a personal-shopper program for customers who don't want to shop in person and a refresh program, allowing users to return their items for a percentage of the purchase price.

FASHIONPHILE

Best Strategy Pivot

David's Bridal and January Digital

DAVID'S BRIDAL

JANUARY DIGITAL

Program

The pandemic forced couples to cancel their planned weddings and the wedding industry had to quickly adapt to a new environment where in-person celebrations were unsafe. In response, David's Bridal and January Digital used connected TV to deliver in-store and virtual appointment messaging to support brides' shopping experiences. Through geo-targeting and consumer insights, the brand was able to determine the appropriate target-set for both options.

Insights

Investing in CTV allowed David's Bridal and January Digital to continue driving messaging for in-store appointments — historically where the brand sees an average conversion rate of more than 70% — while not driving up ad spend. Geo-targeting also helped the brand ensure its messaging for two options were reaching the right groups, which in turn would drive lift potential at the stores.

Best Resale Site

Rebag

Program

Luxury handbag resale site Rebag debuted Clair AI, an image recognition technology that allows customers to easily reveal the value of their items and eliminate the guesswork that comes with making a purchase. Using the Rebag app, the tech enables users to scan a handbag and, within seconds, identify the brand, model, style and price. The program, which took more than six years to create, recognizes more than 15,000 existing Clair codes with 91% accuracy and is supported by millions of image references.

Insights

Image recognition tech can provide transparency, especially in the resale market, which is notoriously opaque. The technology allows people without knowledge of the resale industry to access the resale value of a handbag instantly, which further drives the brand's goal of making the luxury industry accessible to all consumers.

REBAG

Most Inclusive Brand | Good American

GOOD AMERICAN

Program

In the past year, denim and activewear brand Good American launched two categories known for their lack of inclusive offerings: swimwear and footwear. The swimwear collection, which was in design and development for two years, features products that offer support and adjustability without sacrificing style, such as double drawstrings, wider straps and accentuating design details. The footwear category offers shoes ranging from heels and sandals to flats and boots, with a sizing system that considers widths in feet, calves and thighs. In total, the system has 72 unique sizing variables.

Insights

The key to creating successful inclusive retail categories is listening to what customers want and testing to ensure new products cater to industry shortcomings. One reason Good American launched a swim collection is because swimwear became the brand's most requested category by users. And to ensure a footwear line that catered to all, the brand dedicated more than a year to researching and fit testing.

Best Sustainability Initiative

Advene

advene

Program

Accessories brand Advene spent a year designing its first handbag project, the Age bag, which prioritized transparent construction by using natural, traceable materials. To remain sustainable, the project involved three primary components: sourcing 100% traceable cow leathers from food byproducts, produced in a gold-standard tannery; constructing the bags without using unnecessary plastic fillers and inviting customers to opt for minimal packaging with a discount. Overall, Advene's package design includes FSC-certified greyboard boxes and dustcloths made with deadstock fabric.

Insights

Developing close relationships with production partners is key for brands seeking to create an impactful sustainability program. By engaging with producers during every step of the project, Advene was able to track and monitor the social, environmental and human impact of each bag. The program also challenged traditional methods of handbag material sourcing and construction, demonstrating how to sustainably design and produce modern handbags.

Best CSR Initiative

ThirdLove - TL Effect

Program

Lingerie company ThirdLove, which specializes in size-inclusive bras, launched the TL Effect program to support early-stage companies run by women entrepreneurs of color. The bi-annual program, a brainchild of ThirdLove CEO and co-founder Heidi Zak, chooses a company and supports its overall business strategy, from product development and supply chain to marketing and creative. The brand selected Arah Sims, founder of online nail-glam store Kyütee Beauty, as its inaugural winner. The second iteration of the program is mentoring Tiffany M. Griffin, co-founder of candle brand Bright Black, which uses scent as an artistic medium to share positive stories about Blackness.

Insights

A successful CSR initiative includes a plan that considers all the needs of its recipients, be it physical or financial. The TL Effect is committed to stimulating the winning company's growth with a $20,000 grant, in partnership with Felicis Ventures, while assisting to raise capital. ThirdLove is also offering a section of its office space for the recipient to use for workspace, meetings and photoshoots. Additionally, the company amplify's the recipient's brand on its social platforms.

THIRDLOVE

Best Fashion Marketplace

Faire - Preorder Marketplace

Program

Faire is a curated wholesale marketplace that connects 150,000 independent retailers with 15,000 emerging and established brands across categories such as apparel, food, beverage and home decor. Faire's digital approach to wholesale lets retailers try before they buy, and the brand also eliminates inventory risk and provides users with access to capital to make it easier for small businesses to compete against large e-commerce companies.

Insights

During the pandemic, Faire implemented two programs that helped its customers operate successfully in the e-commerce space. Firstly, the company launched an online trade show event, anchored by technology that allowed brands to demo products, share merchandising ideas and answer live questions from retailers. Secondly, the company offered a preorder marketplace to solve a specific apparel category need; fashion brands use the platform to conduct existing business and also expand their wholesale network beyond apparel retailers.

FAIRE

Best Breakthrough Startup

HILOS

HILOS

Program

HILOS is a zero-waste, additive footwear brand that specializes in 3D printed shoes. Most notably, the brand debuted the Georgia, a heeled mule constructed in 72 hours from purchase to shipping, and tailored to each foot from 63 available sizes. The shoe style is made from the same material as running shoes, plus a leather upper and liner that is engineered for ease of disassembly and recyclability. Each pair saves more than 1,700 gallons of water compared to the industry average, while eliminating overproduction.

Insights

Investing in 3D printed technology can improve shoe craftsmanship and product circularity, which in turn leads to a more sustainable brand. While the Georgia heel took more than a year to develop, the 3D printed construction will also serve as a foundation for multiple styles and product lines in the future.

Founder of the Year

Charles Gorra, founder, Rebag

Program

Charles Gorra founded luxury handbag resale site Rebag in 2014. The brand stands out in the resale market because it gives customers the ability to sell designer goods and receive upfront payment instantly. Gorra's company caters to a growing group of consumers who want to own luxury goods at an affordable price, in a sustainable way. Before launching Rebag, Gorra worked at Rent the Runway, which led him on a journey of making secondary behavior the standard for luxury goods.

Insights

Gorra has been able to sustain the business during the pandemic by expanding Rebag's business model in 2020. The expansion has included new categories such as accessories, watches and fine jewelry, as well as Clair AI, an image recognition technology that allows consumers to discover the value of their luxury handbag in seconds.

REBAG

Fashion Retailer of the Year

Rebag

Program

Rebag, the resale site that launched in 2014, is the prime example of a retail leader that makes luxury handbags and accessories more accessible to consumers. The brand caters to fashion lovers who have years of experience collecting luxury pieces, as well as casual shoppers who want to wade into the luxury market for the first time. In 2020, the brand expanded its business model with new categories and an AI tool that helps consumers easily identify the value of their items. Additionally, Rebag raised $15 million in Series D funding, increasing its total funding to $68 million.

Insights

Rebag has succeeded in the resale industry by honing in on a business strategy defined by product expansion, accessibility and technology. In the past year, the brand has added watches and fine jewelry to its catalogue, while also investing in Clair AI, an image recognition platform that allows customers to easily reveal how much a product they want to sell is worth. The ultimate goal for Rebag is to use these accessible resale data points to redefine customer behaviors, moving the luxury market from a consumption mindset toward an investment mindset.

REBAG

Fashion Brand of the Year | Crocs

Program

Crocs, the casual footwear company famous for its brand of foam clogs, saw a year of significant growth for two reasons: a year of COVID-19 lockdowns drove people to budget more for comfort items, while the brand also launched an inclusive campaign, titled “Come As You Are,” celebrating individuality, uniqueness and self-expression. At the beginning of the pandemic, Crocs also listened to customer requests and donated its footwear to frontline healthcare workers, an initiative that became known as Free Pair for Healthcare.

Insights

Crocs grew as a company in 2020 by building on its consumer engagement strategies and doubling down on charity initiatives to help those in need during the pandemic. Listening to fans has powered the brand’s marketing strategy in recent years, and listening to requests to support healthcare workers took that strategy to a new and important level with the debut of Free Pair for Healthcare. Through the program, the brand shipped 10,000 pairs of shoes daily. Crocs followed up this CSR initiative by partnering with Feeding America to support underserved communities. The brand has provided more than $1 million through consumer and corporate donations, producing more than 10 million meals for those in need.