



# ModernRetail

## **Awards 2020**



The Modern Retail Awards are pleased to honor the following brands, agencies, retailers and platforms that responded to the most challenging and unusual year for consumers and shopping many of us have ever encountered. Our honorees, including Brooklinen, 1-800-Contacts and Imperfect foods drove innovation, sustainability and the overarching concept of doing good while doing business to new heights across 2020.

In this year's awards, we saw online grocery take a win, solving for the very real — and very new — reality of how consumers got the food and drink they need and love into their kitchens during a pandemic-driven quarantine. Greenwashing took a backseat

to authentic sustainable practices. And personalization, always a buzzy word in the world of marketing and retail, continued to work for these winning brands. Virtually every recipient of the Modern Retail Awards in this guide highlighted the significance of making their messages relevant and tightly aligned with consumer's data-illuminated preferences and behaviors.

So, read on for a dive into each winner in each category — what they did and how they achieved success in 2020. In so many of their stories can be found lessons that will inform our strategies and tactics in 2021 — and beyond.

# Best Use of Social Media for Commerce

## Ring Concierge

RING CONCIERGE

### Campaign/Program

After struggling with her own engagement ring shopping experience, Nicole Wegmen founded Ring Concierge in 2013 to bring a younger, more authentic and decidedly female-focused approach to the venerable jewelry industry. Since then, scaling from a luxury private approach to full-on e-commerce reach, Ring Concierge has built its marketing identity around social media and engaging directly with loyal customers. Across its channels, Ring Concierge tackles topics such as design, product development, how-to sessions, specialized subjects such as diamond education — and, of course, the promise of that next Instagram flash sale.

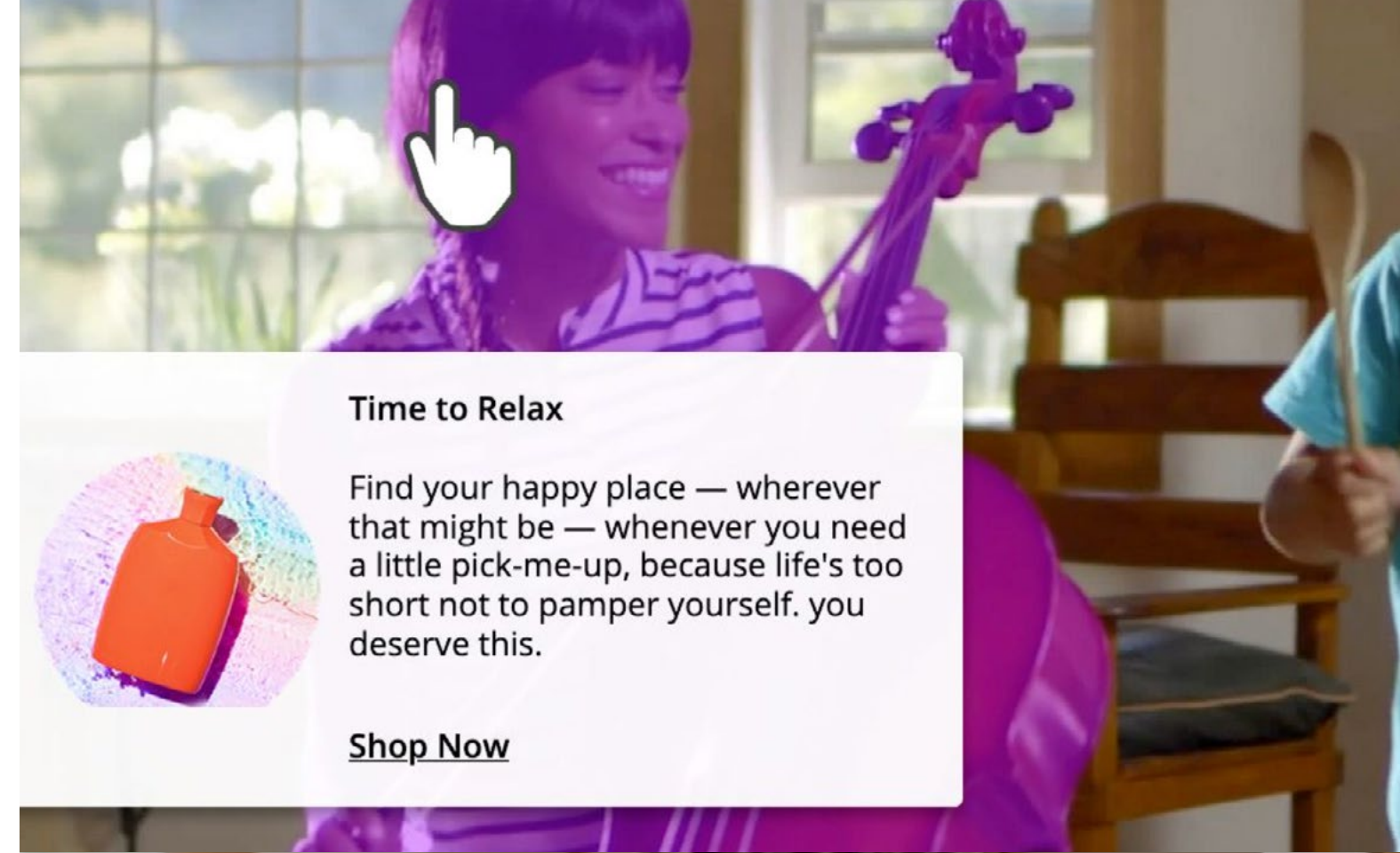
### Insights

Nobody wants to be told what ring or jewelry to buy; they want to be empowered to make their own choices. Ring Concierge's campaign uses the platforms that its younger, independent shoppers populate — social media — to bring authenticity, feedback and messaging together in a two-way conversation. With an emphasis on transparency, trust and real-time engagement, Ring Concierge showed the jewelry industry that consumers were ready for a fresh take on a legacy experience.



## Best Use of Video

## KERV Interactive and Zulily



### Campaign/Program

Zulily reached for new levels of video engagement and accountability in its 'Joy of Shopping' campaign in 2020. Using Kerv's object-level approach to interactivity within video content, Zulily shoppers were able to click on 28 different items — from clothing to toys and home products — as the video played. Each tap or click opened description layers and link-outs to purchase, providing an in-video shoppable experience for targeted consumers.

### Insights

Inspiration works best for shoppers when there are zero obstacles between the moment it occurs and the ability to act. Zulily energized its video creative with a brand new way to see, click and convert — dramatically shortening the space between steps in the shopper journey and bringing lean-in moment of inspirations to life for video viewers.

## Best New Product or Launch Campaign

### Allbirds - Carbon Footprint label

*allbirds*

#### Campaign/Program

With a new carbon-emission scoring system for all its apparel, Allbirds dove into social good and sustainability with an eye on objectivity. With the Carbon Footprint label now in place, the Allbirds customer can easily evaluate the environmental impact of every shoe, every item and every choice across the Allbirds line. And the brand has called on its competitors to do the same.

#### Insights

Allbirds made a vital contribution to the industry, and it took a risk. While another brand might similarly score their own products, and even score them lower than Allbirds, the brand took a stand: Allbirds would rather discover opportunities to improve its own approaches than let greenwashing and the need for a quantified sustainability strategy to go unaddressed. For consumers, Allbird scored a victory for the planet.



## Best Socially Distant Campaign

## Carter's - 'ShowHER Love' Virtual Baby Shower

carter's

### Campaign/Program

It was a tough year for moms and moms-to-be (and everyone else). When it came to the big moments for this demographic, baby showers became socially distanced events — often entirely virtual. Carter's stepped in with a campaign that offered new and expecting mothers some relief: a virtual baby shower for 100 deserving mamas. With an online contest via the 'ShowHER Love' microsite, the winners joined Kelly Clarkson for an hour online. Carter's and its partners showered them with diapers from Huggies, a six-month smart sleeper rental from SNOO, a nursery makeover from buybuy BABY and Carter's baby clothing for a year.

### Insights

If a crisis can be an opportunity, Carter's took a time of quarantine and softened the impact for moms and expecting moms. The outcome was both material and emotional: A chance for consumers to engage with products and a series of moments that tied those items to meaningful, positive experiences. 'ShowHER Love' was a textbook moment, in 2020, of a brand doing good while doing business.



#SHOWHERLOVE



## Best In-Person Experiential Marketing Campaign

## Cooler Screens and Dr Pepper



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### Campaign/Program

Taking digital out of home to the in-store cooler, Dr Pepper teamed up with Cooler Screens to add dynamic smart screens to the doors that shoppers open when selecting their next beverage. At the very moment when purchase sentiment is clear, the campaign's message of "Treat You" put Dr Pepper at front of mind for both loyal customers and lapsed buyers alike.

### Insights

When it comes to capturing shoppers making point-of-sale decisions, timing is everything, and Cooler Screens wrapped the environment in which final buying decisions are often made with Dr Pepper's reward-yourself message. It's the kind of experience that consumers are bound to share as well, adding a memorable brand awareness play to the conversion-driving tactic.



**Cooler  
Screens**

## Best Email Campaign

## Brooklinen - Birthday Sale



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### Campaign/Program

Brooklinen turned six years old in 2020 and it threw itself a birthday party by inviting loyal customers to look back on their experiences with the brand's soft and comfy products. Starting with a teaser email that allowed recipients to virtually scratch-off a coupon discount, Brooklinen followed with a relationship recap that highlighted the shopper's purchase history in a warm and grateful note. If consumers visited but didn't purchase, during the campaign, AI recommended some data-driven items in a follow-up email. And Brooklinen also took a proactive approach to an unusual year for shipping, sending delay notifications based on the pandemic's impact.

### Insights

Featuring interactive beats, data-fueled personalization, algorithm-supported recommendations and a strategy designed to get ahead of the worry and discomfort — and any slowdowns in delivery — that days of quarantine and lockdowns created in 2020, Brooklinen wrapped its loyal customers in a friendly, tailor-made message. Blanketing the campaign with all the essential steps that technology and data provide, Brooklinen gave its audience — and itself — the gift of a meaningful marketing experience.

**brooklinen**<sup>™</sup>

## Best Retailer/ Agency Collaboration

## Touch of Modern and Marketing Architects - What We Can Do



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### Campaign/Program

In a year of sheltering at home, Touch of Modern led with the idea that a quarantined shopper needs some cutting-edge gear. As such, in collaboration with Marketing Architects, the Touch of Modern campaign sourced practical products its 80-percent male customer base was likely to want — workout equipment, masks, work essentials and home entertainment items. With messaging that foregrounds the hard-to-find nature of products such as dumbbells and other gear, the Shelter at Home section of Touch of Modern's website became a go-to destination for improving a tough situation.

### Insights

Fast-growing e-commerce players know that when online shoppers — especially those stuck at home — are competing for high-demand inventory, having the right products at the right time is a conversion driver like no other. Responding to the times, Marketing Architects helped Touch of Modern keep itself on the cutting edge of demand, in 2020, by curating the specific gear that quarantined customers were looking for as the lockdowns took hold.



**TOUCH OF MODERN**

# Best Personalization Strategy

## Thrive Market and Y Media Labs

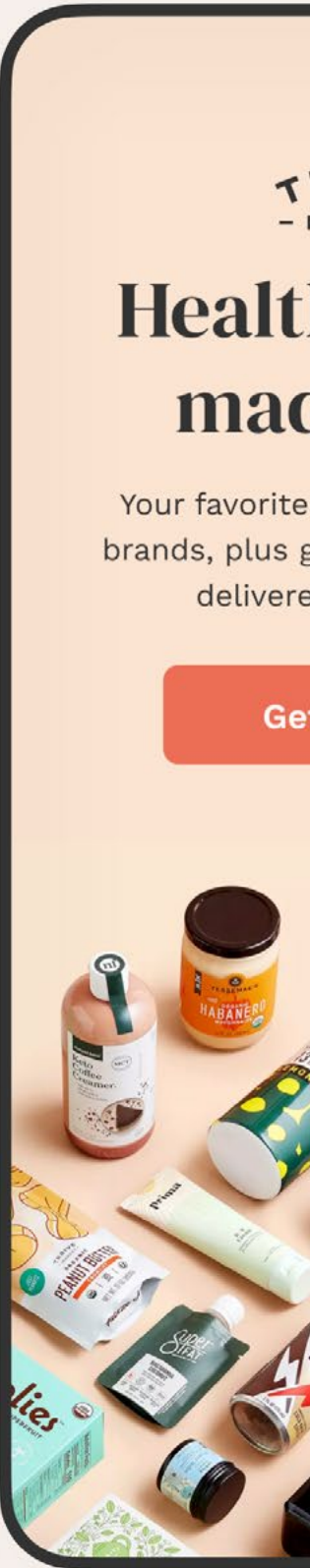
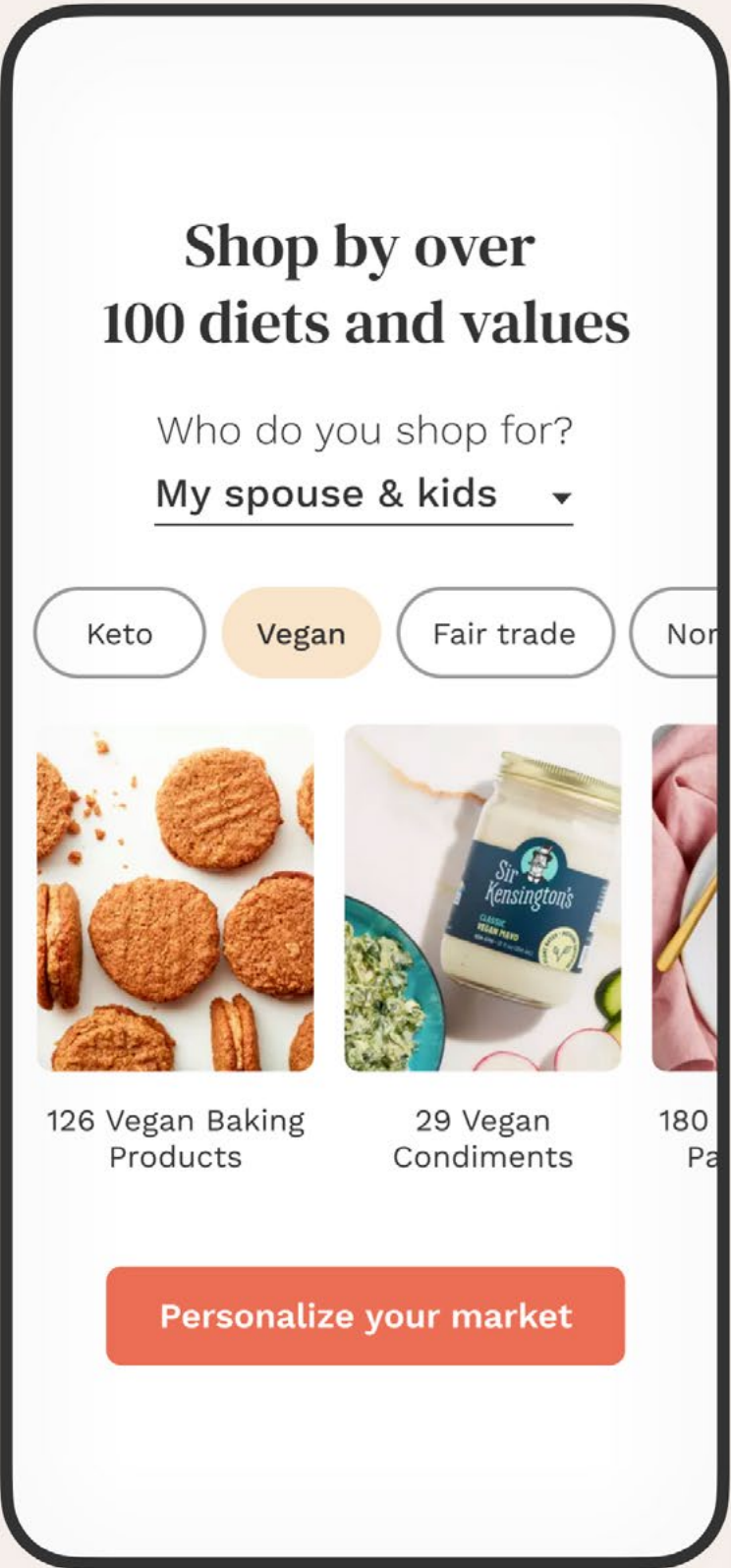
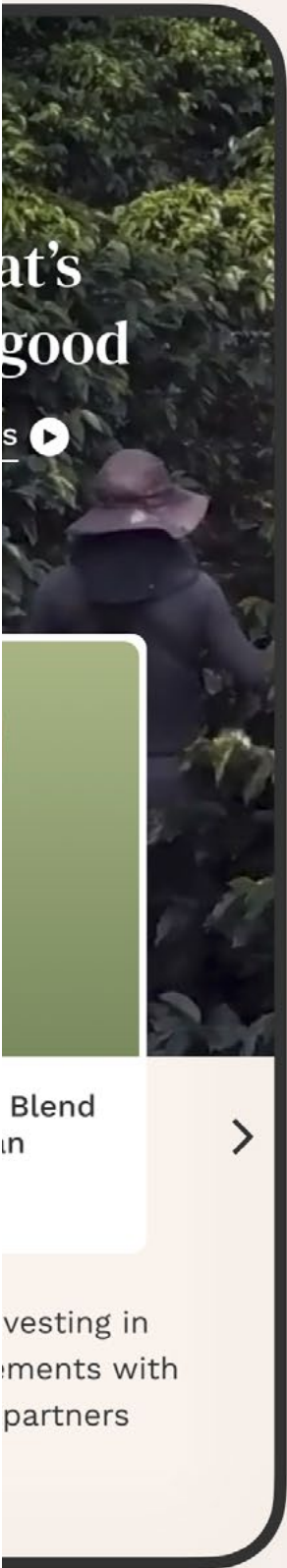


### Campaign/Program

Thrive drives its grocery shopper’s e-commerce experience with data, collecting consented information with the help of streamlined quizzes and shopping histories. The outcome is that customers find themselves matched with tightly aligned recommendations no matter what their palate and diets dictate. Looking at the whole customer, Thrive can see, for example, that a shopper is a mother of two, married to someone with a peanut allergy and then offer them meal suggestions, put together thoughtful shopping lists and introduce recipes that inspire further discovery in the kitchen.

### Insights

Strong sellers get to know their customers, and that’s always been the case. Thrive approaches its e-commerce experience like a friendly neighborhood grocer — asking shoppers what they like, getting to know their tastes and preferences and then prompting them with new items that stand to surprise and delight. The strategy represents personalization at its finest, and Thrive has put in the time to make it an efficient process on all sides, driving adoption and capturing customer loyalty for the long term.



## Best Omnichannel Strategy

## January Digital and Honest Company - Honest Beauty



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### Campaign/Program

Honest's clean beauty products already cover a lot of territory across digital and brick-and-mortar channels, available at more than 32,000 retail locations and online platform giants such as Amazon. In 2020, as shopping shifted to e-commerce, the company teamed up with January Digital to make sure its messaging covered the spread as well — adding new campaigns to Pinterest, Instagram, Google, Facebook and YouTube.

### Insights

If a central truth of successful marketing is “be present where the people are,” then Honest's attention to the scale and reach of the powerful social media platforms it picked to build awareness are a textbook illustration of the strategy. The full-funnel approach captured the influx of online shoppers and put its beauty products front of mind within the category.



## Best Customer Insight Strategy

## Superdrug & TokyWoky



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### Campaign/Program

Faced with surging online business during the European lockdowns, Superdrug, a giant of the beauty, health and skincare sector in the U.K. and Ireland, turned to its engaged customers to learn what it should do in light of the crisis. Polling its customer community directly, Superdrug learned it should focus on mental health, skincare, at-home routines and shipping information. The retailer also introduced a new Online Doctor service to provide non-emergency advice on topics like acne and stress management.

### Insights

“Know your audience” took on a deeper meaning for Superdrug in its campaign with TokyWoky, in 2020. One thing health and wellness shoppers wanted the most during quarantine was information and updates about the products, routines and deliveries they needed throughout their lockdowns. Superdrug became a true resource for its loyal customers, who’ll likely remember the retailer’s role in a time of crisis for many years to come.



## Best Customer Service Experience

## Carewell



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### Campaign/Program

Home healthcare caregivers faced a year unlike any before, and so Carewell's highly trained staff leaned in throughout 2020 to ensure their customers were connected to vital information via one-to-one consultations, customized advice and product recommendations. And the company took a decidedly multi-channel approach, empowering caregivers to access needed resources on the phone, through email and on social media platforms such as Facebook.

### Insights

Home caregivers frequently lack necessary resources, so Carewell's Care Team doubled down in 2020 to alleviate some of the stress caregivers they would have faced on their own. As care challenges evolved, the Carewell team evolved its approaches to meet them, offering an exemplary customer service success story in an extraordinary time.



## Best E-Commerce Experience

## eBay - Dark Mode



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### Campaign/Program

eBay launched support for a new light-on-dark user interface color scheme, in 2020, calling it Dark Mode on iOS and Dark Theme on Android. The goal was to ease the e-commerce shopper's on-screen experience and dovetail with the popular color choice already prevalent across many users' devices.

### Insights

Control over the details is critical to comfortable viewing experiences, especially in a time when so many eyes are spending so many minutes on digital screens. eBay understood that best-in-class mobile app experiences start with the settings that shoppers prefer, and it kept its platform ahead of the curve by matching the kind of text, icon and background presentations that the big operating systems introduced in recent updates.



## Best Use of Technology

## 1-800 Contacts - ExpressExam

1800 contacts®

### Campaign/Program

Launching a first-of-its-kind app, 1-800-Contacts took a new step forward in its 25-year history by empowering consumers to take an eye exam and renew their prescriptions, all from their devices at home. The exam takes 10 minutes, results are reviewed by a board-certified eye doctor within 24 hours and orders are shipped in a few days or less.

### Insights

From a company that started in a dorm room to a customer that can now manage exams, prescriptions and contacts purchases from home, in a sense the story of 1-800-Contacts has come full circle. In a year when simple eye doctor visits represented a health risk, the new ExpressExam program provided a safe alternative at just the right time.



## Best In-House Innovation Team

## Sheertex sheertex

### Campaign/Program

In what seemed an against-the-odds proposition, Sheertex knuckled down for 18 months of intensive in-house R&D and emerged with the world's first sheer pantyhose that are unbreakable in human hands. The formula turns on polymers typically used to fabricate bulletproof vests. Sheertex's innovative new hose are 10-times stronger than any other sheer knit on the market.

### Insights

The power of a vision drove Sheertex's tear-proof innovation. While industry professionals advised the R&D team that it's goal was akin to "turning peanuts into lemonade," Sheertex never gave up. And, in the outcome, Sheertex can also claim a victory for the environment, helping to cut back on the 2 billion hosiery products that end up in landfills each year.



## Most Innovative Retail Model

## Wine Insiders



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### Campaign/Program

In a time of quarantine, keeping the wine rack full required new approaches to shopping, selecting and bringing home a case of favorite juice. With decades of DTC experience, Wine Insiders turned its data-driven insights into a giant sales advantage. Its proprietary PAIR engine was able to collect and analyze consumer data such as demographics, behavior and historical transactions, as well as product attributes like varietal, vintage and branding. From there, Wine Insider helped its at-home shoppers identify elements most likely to resonate with what they already love to drink.

### Insights

The DTC approach has been around for a long time, and Wine Insider has been getting bottles to front doors since 1982. Placing discovery at the forefront of its value proposition, mid-pandemic consumers came to count on its recommendations to keep the vinum flowing despite the challenges around visiting the wine shop in person last year.



## Best Digital Transformation

## Apply Digital & Arc'teryx Equipment



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### Campaign/Program

Seeing the imperative to shift to e-commerce writ large, in 2020, Arc'teryx reinvented its sales approach to a technology supported, data-driven digital experience that put customer data to work. With a smart tech layer in place, Arc'teryx was able to make informed choices about inventory and promotion decisions, taking a lead in the high-performance apparel space.

### Insights

Not all products, particularly apparel, are shopped the same way. For Arc'teryx, the recipe for e-commerce success was to transform into a brand that could intuit what their customers were looking for and how they'd respond to promotions for those items. In its shift to e-commerce, they knew the critical element would be technology that could capture those sentiments — and they deployed just the layer they needed.



**APPLY**



**ARC'TERYX**

# Most Responsible Retailer



## Campaign/Program

For frontline workers in the pandemic, personal protective equipment (PPE) was among the most critical of resources in 2020. In the U.K., to help them acquire what they needed, a global eBay team repurposed its Catch platform and its Buy APIs platform to create a secure portal that curated and offered PPE to healthcare providers. Built into the new portal, a specialized system maintained control over order quantity, velocity and other constraints, ensuring that workers in the greatest need got their protective gear first.

## Insights

Supply chain management in a crisis was eBay’s opportunity during the pandemic, and its teams knew they could play a vital role in saving lives by leveraging its technology platforms, inventory providers and eBay sellers to move PPE into struggling healthcare workers’ hands. As with so many of the programs that award winners created in 2020, doing good while doing business was at the heart of eBay’s PPE portal plan.



## Best Digitally-Native Brand

## Brooklinen



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### Campaign/Program

Along with so many e-commerce leaders in 2020, Brooklinen faced a global supply chain challenge as quarantines shut down stores and disrupted the normal course of business for suppliers and shippers alike. To keep revenue from lagging when warehouse-to-door processes sagged under the strain of unprecedented volume, Brooklinen creatively reallocated existing resources to maintain best-in-class customer service and experience. The brand modified its launch schedule, events calendar and communications strategy to reflect the uncertainty of the day and preserved profitability by matching its customer base's heightened demand for luxury sheets and home goods.

### Insights

Logistics wait for no seller, and Brooklinen took advantage of its deep e-commerce experience to strengthen relationships with customers by meeting their needs for stress-free and seamless experiences during an anxiety-ridden moment. Brooklinen showed its commitment to a customer-obsessed strategy while driving sales in the face of crisis.

**brooklinen**<sup>™</sup>

## Best Established Retailer

## Imperfect Foods



### Campaign/Program

With a long established reputation for eliminating food waste and building a better food system for everyone, “ugly produce” purveyor Imperfect Foods worked with Kroger through the Zero Hunger | Zero Waste Foundation to implement an emergency response during the pandemic. Imperfect Foods focused on those who qualified for SNAP benefits, and programs included a Senior Discount COVID-19 response fund, which waived delivery fees for customers over the age of 65 and also a pilot test in Chicago offered 50 percent off per produce box.

### Insights

Proving itself to be more than just a food subscription service, Imperfect Foods took on the mantle of emergency response for people most in need of its programs. At the same time, they expanded their infrastructure toward 34 new markets and rescued more than 80 percent more food as massive sources such as the hospitality industry closed down mid-quarantine. The pandemic can’t be thought of as a win for anyone, but the ways Imperfect Foods responded were a victory for the brand and everyone it serves.





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