



# 5 Marketing Strategies to Accelerate Your D2C Efforts

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COVID-19 has disrupted traditional channels and fundamentally changed shopper behavior, putting ecommerce front and center. Consumers have moved online and that's where they'll stay.

If you've shifted customers into your ecommerce channel, that's a good start. But it's not the end game. Now you need to earn their loyalty by building a direct relationship and owning the customer experience.

These five strategies will help you accelerate your direct-to-consumer (D2C) efforts and spark loyalty that outlasts the pandemic.

# 01

## Tell Consumers What You Stand For

Now more than ever, shoppers are voting with their wallets. And to get and keep their business, you need to communicate what your brand stands for. When values align, loyalty follows.

Do you support frontline medical workers? Appreciate nurses? Are you committed to serving teachers and educators?

**65%**  
**of consumers**

said that a brand's response in the crisis will have a huge impact on their likelihood of shopping with them in the future.

When you build marketing efforts on top of a strong foundation of values and support them with socially responsible initiatives, you'll create online communities that feel a genuine commitment to the brand.

In this environment, don't just sell. Serve. Tableau, for example, provides a community forum where teachers can exchange ideas and resources for using its software in the classroom.



*Our commitment to sustainability spans the entire product journey, which has fostered an incredibly loyal customer base of well over one million customers.*

**Matt Gehring, SVP of Growth**

 **ROTHY'S**

### Brands connect with consumer tribes based on shared values:

**T-Mobile**

supports the military by providing career assistance to veterans and donating to organizations dedicated to serving the military community worldwide

 **HEADSPACE**

gives teachers and healthcare workers free access to its meditation app to help them manage stress during the pandemic

**L.L.Bean**

gives nurses 15% off full-price and sale items

**TUFT & NEEDLE**

donated mattresses to local firehouses, then expanded with a 15% discount to first responders

# 02

## Refine Your Promotion Strategy

With the increased push to ecommerce, marketers are leaning heavily on promotions—too heavily. Non-stop promotions and price cuts set customer expectations beyond the crisis and dilute your brand. And that’s difficult to recoup.

Don’t stop running promotions. Just be smarter about how and when you do it.

Instead of blasting out a discount to everyone in your database, target your most loyal customers with a VIP offer or personalize a promotion to one of your consumer tribes in your high-performing channels.

The pandemic is disrupting shopping holidays like Amazon Prime Day and will likely impact Black Friday and Cyber Monday. Consider creating your own “brand day” that recognizes your consumer tribes and keeps them engaged.

 HEADSPACE

teacher offer in May 2020 led to a

**163%**

**increase**

in new teacher subscriptions.

Back-to-school shopping is a great example of a shifting schedule. Instead of a single campaign in August/September, consider creating mini events throughout the school year to honor teachers who are in a particularly difficult situation right now. What can you offer that supports their mental health, bolsters remote teaching, or gives them a reason to treat themselves?

# 03

## Own Richer, First-Party Customer Data

With all the major search sites changing their cookies policy and privacy regulations like CCPA and GDPR taking root globally, brands know they need to own first-party customer data to create better, more personalized customer experiences.

But all first-party data isn't created equal. Paid social data, for instance, is digital exhaust—liking a page isn't an accurate indication of intent.

### The most meaningful first-party data has three characteristics:

01

#### Self-disclosed:

provided by consumers who opt in to an offer in a privacy-friendly way



kicks off brand-consumer relationship based on consent

02

#### Validated:

to ensure accuracy of data provided



protects the integrity of the offer

03

#### Identity-related:

connected with deep-seated attributes that consumers identify with, such as being a nurse, a teacher, or a member of the military



creates an emotional connection that drives loyalty

One way to access richer, first-party data is through personalized, post-purchase rebates. For example, you could offer \$200 cash back to anyone in the military who buys a large appliance during the Veterans Day holiday. Your customers can still shop with your channel partners, and you can launch a D2C relationship when you verify a customer's eligibility for the rebate.

# 04

## Use That Rich Data to Revamp Your Loyalty Program

It can be difficult to re-engage customers who sign up for your loyalty program, then go dark. Once you own that richer, first-party data, you can use it to jump-start your loyalty program outreach.

If you know your customer's address, their recent purchase, and their rough income, there's only so much you can do to personalize an offer. But when you know someone's identity, like being a nurse or first responder, it's a game changer: you can segment your loyalty members into different cohorts and personalize offers that lead to richer engagement.

### USE CASE



### How Lowe's Engages Military Customers through its Loyalty Program

#### ASK

When a consumer signs up for the myLowe's loyalty program, Lowe's asks if they are part of the military community.

#### VERIFY

Lowe's digitally verifies the consumer's military status and ties it to their user account, giving military customers 10% off online and in-store purchases.

#### ENGAGE

Lowe's uses the data they collect to further engage those customers with exclusive monthly promotions for the military community.

### RESULTS

**2-3x**  
the engagement  
of their next best program

**2x**  
increase  
in transactions/store visits

**20%**  
increase in ATV  
(average transaction value)



PRO-TIP

*Make it easy on your team to leverage first-party data by creating a seamless integration process between your digital verification platform and your CRM system.*

# 05

## Be Willing to Experiment

The world is changing quickly and so are consumers' fears, expectations, and needs. They are gravitating to brands who understand them on a deeper level and are willing to reward them during these anxious and uncertain times.

**89%**  
**of consumers**

want brands to offer free or lower-priced products to health workers, people at high risk, and those whose jobs have been affected.

**89%**  
**of consumers**

most impacted by the pandemic would take advantage of a personalized offer.

This is an important time to show up with a new kind of campaign.

- To respond to the COVID-19 crisis, FabFitFun gave doctors and nurses a free bundle to thank them for their work. The offer was so popular, the company ran out in one day.
- Chipotle also experimented with an offer to serve those on the front lines of the pandemic. Its 4HEROES campaign gave medical workers a free burrito for every burrito purchased. The company gave away more than 100,000 burritos in two hours, and the campaign generated an unprecedented 100% positive net sentiment.

Especially now, when we don't know what the future holds, brands need to be nimble, move quickly, and experiment.

**What do consumer tribes hit hardest by the pandemic want? How can you deliver it? Are you aligning your brand values with consumer values?**

These are the questions smart brands will continue to ask as they work to drive loyalty that outlasts this current crisis.

Feel free to [reach out to me on LinkedIn](#) to discuss these strategies further to learn how you can build a Hero Campaign of your own. Or get started sparking brand loyalty right now by using our [D2C Toolkit](#) to identify your most lucrative customers and keep them coming back.

GET YOUR D2C TOOLKIT