

MARKETING DURING AN ECONOMIC DOWNTURN

How to Engage and Retain Customers During Economic Turbulence



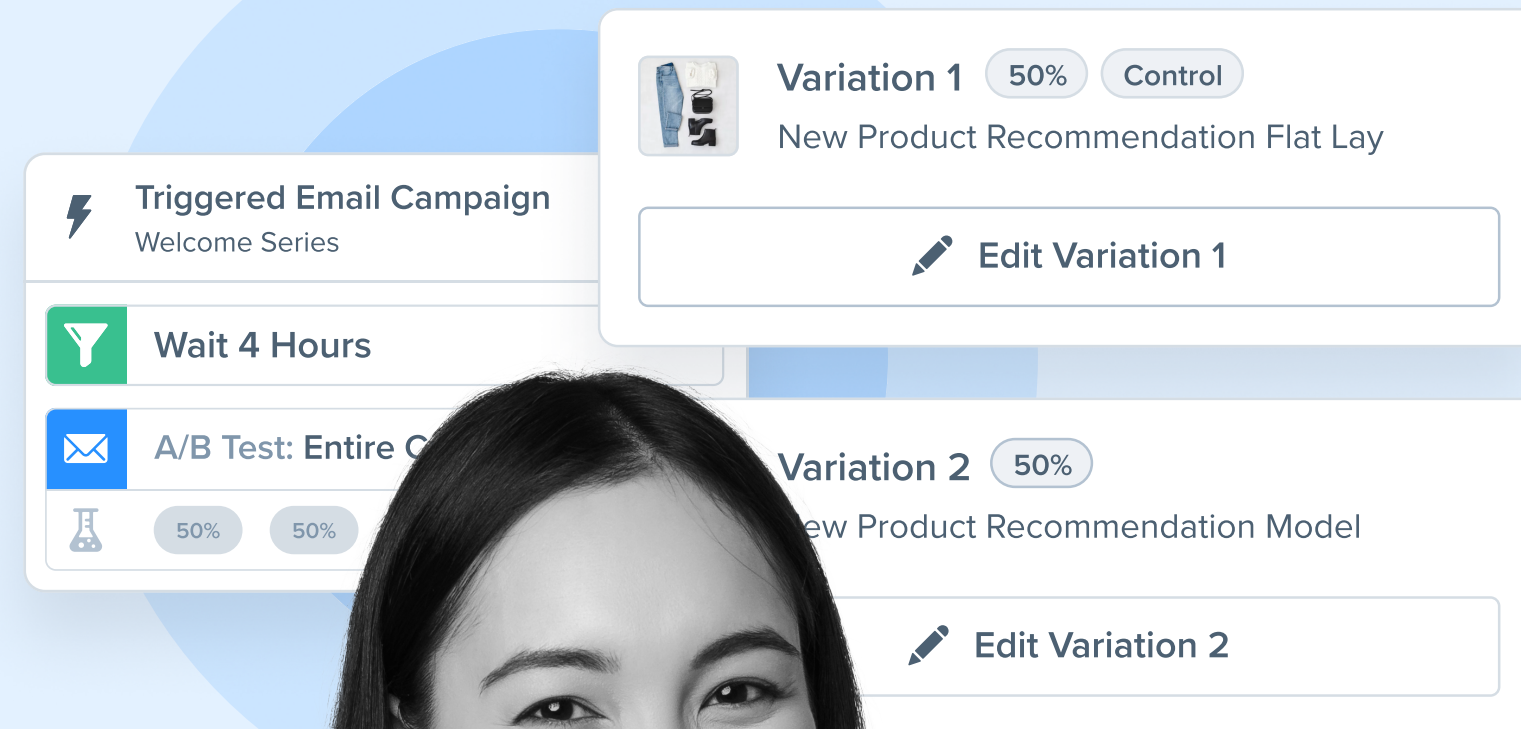
INTRODUCTION

5 Actions To Take While Marketing During An Economic Downturn

It doesn't matter which industry you're in, your customers will be affected in some way by the current economic downturn. Consumers are looking to spend more wisely and are reviewing their finances to maximize savings. Workers who've been laid off are looking to reskill through virtual learning. Customers want the comfort of knowing that they're getting value for money. Above all, they want to feel that they can trust the brands that they're doing business with. As a marketer, your role is to seize this opportunity to build closer connections with your customers. And AI is key to doing this effectively.

Now is not the time to halt or slow your technology investments. Your customers need you now more than ever, and the best way to support their needs is to listen very carefully to their actions, intentions, and behaviors, and to act quickly to better connect with them, where and when they want to hear from you.

Does your marketing tech stack have what it takes to help you stay in the game during a downturn and cement your leadership position for when the economy bounces back? In this report, we delve into the five actions you can take during an economic downturn to put your brand in a better position to meet your customers' needs now and grow for the future.

**AI is Key**

to building closer connections with your customers.

ACTION ONE

Be Ruthless with ROI: Invest for the Future

It's rare for a marketing leader not to make a business case to invest in new or additional technology – even during booming times. But during an economic downturn there is increased pressure to prove out the impact of investments. You and your finance leaders will need to continue to make very strategic investments that will lead to efficiency, growth, and revenue. It's not a time to cut spending but you'll want to be sure what you're investing in will help you, not only in the short term, but also in the long run. Where is your market headed and where do you want to be?

Brands That Invested in Transformation During the Pandemic Are Winning

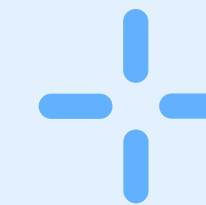
A great example of wise investments choices during challenging times is the acceleration of digital transformation within a number of industries, including retail and ecommerce, during the start of the pandemic. During that period, brands accelerated such customer conveniences as curbside pickup and buy online, pickup in-store (BOPIS). Consumers continue to enjoy these conveniences and many retailers are keeping them and using them as a draw for customers to shop during an economic downturn.

So by investing in technology that enables curbside pickup and BOPIS during challenging times, these brands were not only able to reap the rewards through sustained business during the height of the pandemic, they are able to leverage this investment in any upcoming downturn.

For example, the marriage of digital and physical gives marketers much more opportunities to personalize campaigns to customers. By using rich customer data that's up-to-date and easily accessible to marketers, brands can segment customers to those using BOPIS, for example, and send them coupons for additional purchases on their smartphones ready for use when they arrive at the store.

Good news, Tashia! Your order is complete and is ready for curbside pickup. Click here to let us know you're on your way 🚗 See you soon!
<https://stylish2go.com/>

Message



ACTION TWO

Keep Your Friends Close With First-Party Data

To market both effectively and efficiently, there is nothing better than to drive your activities based on first-party data. During an economic downturn, customers most want to do business with brands they trust. The idea of first-party data that's collected through trust and consent with the brands that customers love has become more important. Even before the economic downturn, [Gartner advised marketing leaders to effectively manage first party data.](#)

Marketing with first-party data is an incredibly effective strategy for brands across industries during an economic downturn (and beyond, too). For example, customers might turn to elearning providers during an economic downturn to upskill for better job or career opportunities. Are customers spending more time on your site or in the app than usual (for example, if they've been affected by a layoff and are spending more time seeking new courses to advance their knowledge)? Did they provide valuable information in surveys and quizzes on your properties? This is all first-party data about what they'd like to learn. Elearning marketers could use this information to upsell or cross-sell different courses.

For marketers across all industries, be sure to listen to these signals and combine that with what you already know about your customers through AI marketing, such as when and where customers are likely to respond to your marketing messages. Use that to create personalized journeys that lead them to content and products they may not be aware of.

Marketer Spotlight



Lauren Reiterman
CRM Manager, Udacity

How Udacity Uses First-Party Data to Deliver Relevant Customer Experiences

Udacity upskills the world's workforce, helping people stay relevant, secure, and create better lives for themselves and their future through the power of knowledge. It delivers personalized marketing experiences for its customers by using first-party data to deliver relevant and timely learning experiences. It saw an engagement increase of between 19% and 41% when testing campaigns with personalized product recommendations.

As Udacity CRM Manager Lauren Reiterman explained: "Blueshift enables Udacity to deliver smoother, faster learning experiences, from helping people find the right program to building learning momentum and helping students achieve their goals sooner."

[Read the Udacity case study to learn more.](#)



ACTION THREE

Create Wow Moments Using AI

The role of AI for marketers is helping you create and deliver a very personalized customer experience for all your customers. Think of it in terms of who, what, when, and where of marketing.

The *Who*

is all about who to target: how do you segment customers with precision, how do you know their lifecycle stage, and how do you know where they are in their self-directed customer journey?

The *What*

is what to recommend based on what you understand about where the customer is in their journey. It's what you say in your message back to them. Should you put an offer in front of them, or give them another piece of content? Do you try to sell them a product, or advance their customer journey in some form?

The *When and Where*

are when to engage, and where best to connect with your customers. Do they prefer to hear from your brand via email, SMS, push notifications, in-app messages, web content, paid media, direct mail, or something else? It could be all of the above, but only at specific times of the day.

How you connect with the customers on this cross-channel engagement cycle is critically important, especially as customers value the personal assurance of high-touch marketing during an economic downturn. The role of AI is to help you know which channels to use and when for optimal engagement.

Create High-Touch Marketing

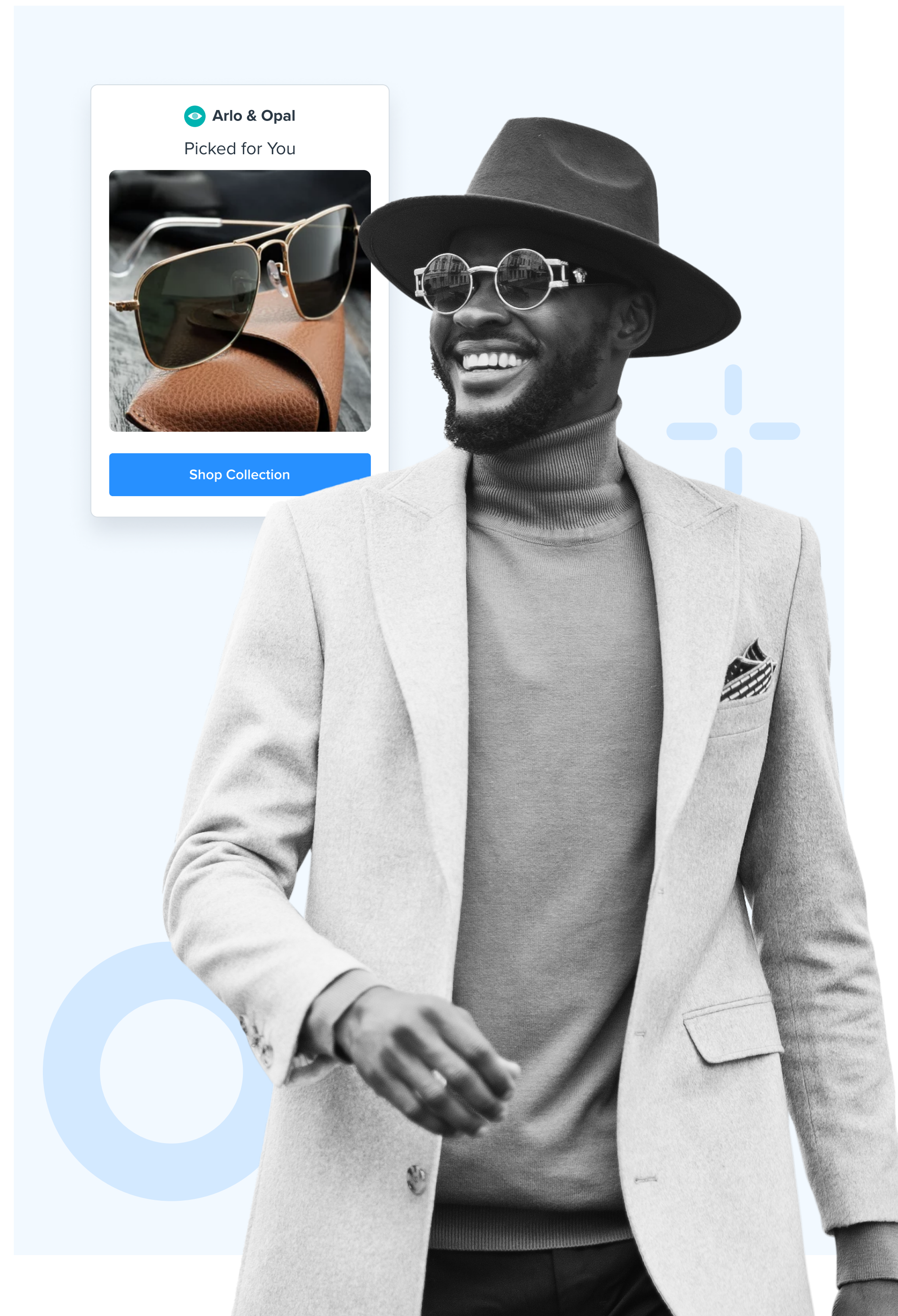
The high-end retail industry is one of many industries that use AI marketing to market with digital efficiency but still maintain that high-touch of human interaction. According to Insider Intelligence/eMarketer's [Luxury Goods 2022 report](#), that sector has repeatedly bounced back from pandemic-related declines due to resilient customer demand and savvy digital strategies. Middle classes will curb luxury spend, so high-end retailers will need to double down on keeping their wealthier and higher spending clientele, according to the report.

Ecommerce came to the fore in the luxury goods sector during the early days of COVID as a way for clients to shop within the safety of their own homes. High-end retailers have kept this convenience and are taking digital marketing one step further by experimenting with emerging trends, such as offering NFTs and using gaming or social media to market goods (examples include [Burberry on Roblox](#) and [Gucci on Roblox](#)).

An economic downturn may also spur on resale of high-end fashion. According to Insider Intelligence, three-quarters of luxury consumers view brand participation in resale as a positive development. Online luxury goods marketplaces such as The RealReal and Vestiaire Collective are prime examples.

Market With a Richer Understanding of Customers

Now is the time for marketers in the luxury goods space to focus on their higher-spending clients and AI marketing is the best tool to help you do this. AI marketing enables you to gather a much richer understanding of your customers so that you can create the same level of hyper-personalization in a digital setting as you provide in-store. [Learn more using AI marketing to drive omnichannel campaigns in our smart guide.](#)



ACTION FOUR

Keep It Simple By Choosing An Integrated Platform Approach

For the [2022 marketing technology landscape](#), Chiefmartec’s Scott Brinker and team reported 9,932 martech solutions available to marketers. In 2011, there were around 150. With this many choices, it’s important to be smart about your selection. Choose a technology that does more than one thing and not tons of point solutions. The more technologies you have, the more complex your martech stack becomes.

With a platform approach, you gain agility, scale, and reduce costs. This becomes an easier conversation with your CFO because the ROI on a platform can save on integration costs, resources, and more. It’s also an easier conversation with your IT team because an integrated platform works seamlessly – you have fewer solutions to manage and you can scale.

A platform approach is a smarter one because it will enable your business to market more efficiently in a highly competitive and volatile marketplace.

Marketer Spotlight



Kristina Paulos
Sr. Director, Marketing CRM, SlickDeals

How Slickdeals Grew Revenue With an Integrated AI Platform

Slickdeals is the largest deal-sharing platform on the Internet and uses Blueshift to engage its customers. The company created a rewards program aimed at power users, and then worked to identify these individuals and invite them into the program. And not only that, the Slickdeals marketing team created lookalike models so that they could identify new users with similar traits and grow its community of power users.

As Slickdeals’s Director of Marketing CRM, Kristina Paulos explained: “We wanted to find the people who wanted [a rewards program] and reach out to them, and not bother the people who didn’t. And so we used those insights that we had within Blueshift and the platform’s segmentation tools to find that audience and build a lookalike.”

The effort paid off: “We saw a really strong response. Our deal postings went up almost 70%, which in turn boosted our revenue by 75% from that power group,” said Paulos.

[Read more about Slickdeals.](#)



ACTION FIVE

Stay Human With Your Customer Interactions Across Channels

During an economic downturn it's really important to listen carefully to customers and respond in thoughtful ways in the channels where they like to interact with your business. As you use rich data to understand your customers, use AI to deliver meaningful engagement, and meet your customers where they want to hear from you. Connecting with customers on a human level might include sharing educational content, social value content, employee community information, customer stories, and more. You also want to create a forum where your customers can connect with each other and build a strong community.

This approach is important for businesses that care about customer centricity and brand values. For example, consumer finance institutions have a huge responsibility and opportunity to educate customers during a downturn and beyond on ways to improve their financial wellbeing. In fact, [60% of Gen Z customers](#) said they'd like their banks to give them financial education.

Consumer finance marketers can deliver educational content to the channels where customers are most likely to consume them. Different audiences like to consume content on different platforms, so use AI marketing to learn about your customers and where and when they like to interact with your brand. Do they like to consume content via educational email newsletters, or as in-app pop-up alerts? Use that knowledge to give you an edge so that you can market more efficiently and target audiences at the precise time when they're ready to consume your content.

Marketer Spotlight



Joyce Poole

Sr. Director, Marketing CRM, LendingTree

How LendingTree Provides Education And Value To Its Customers

LendingTree uses AI marketing from Blueshift to create intentional customer journeys that provide education and value beyond the transactional. With the visibility that the Blueshift platform provides into each stage of the customer journey, LendingTree can get closer to the customer by understanding the distinct behaviors of their numerous segments. LendingTree uses this insight to create intentional, connected journeys and target its campaigns more effectively — ultimately allowing the brand to better serve its customers.

Joyce Poole, senior director of Marketing CRM at LendingTree explained: “Our new journey approach has brought us closer to our customers. We have truly learned a lot about our customer segments, which at times were counter to what our perception was. Only by watching their behavior throughout the journeys in Blueshift were we really able to see that.”

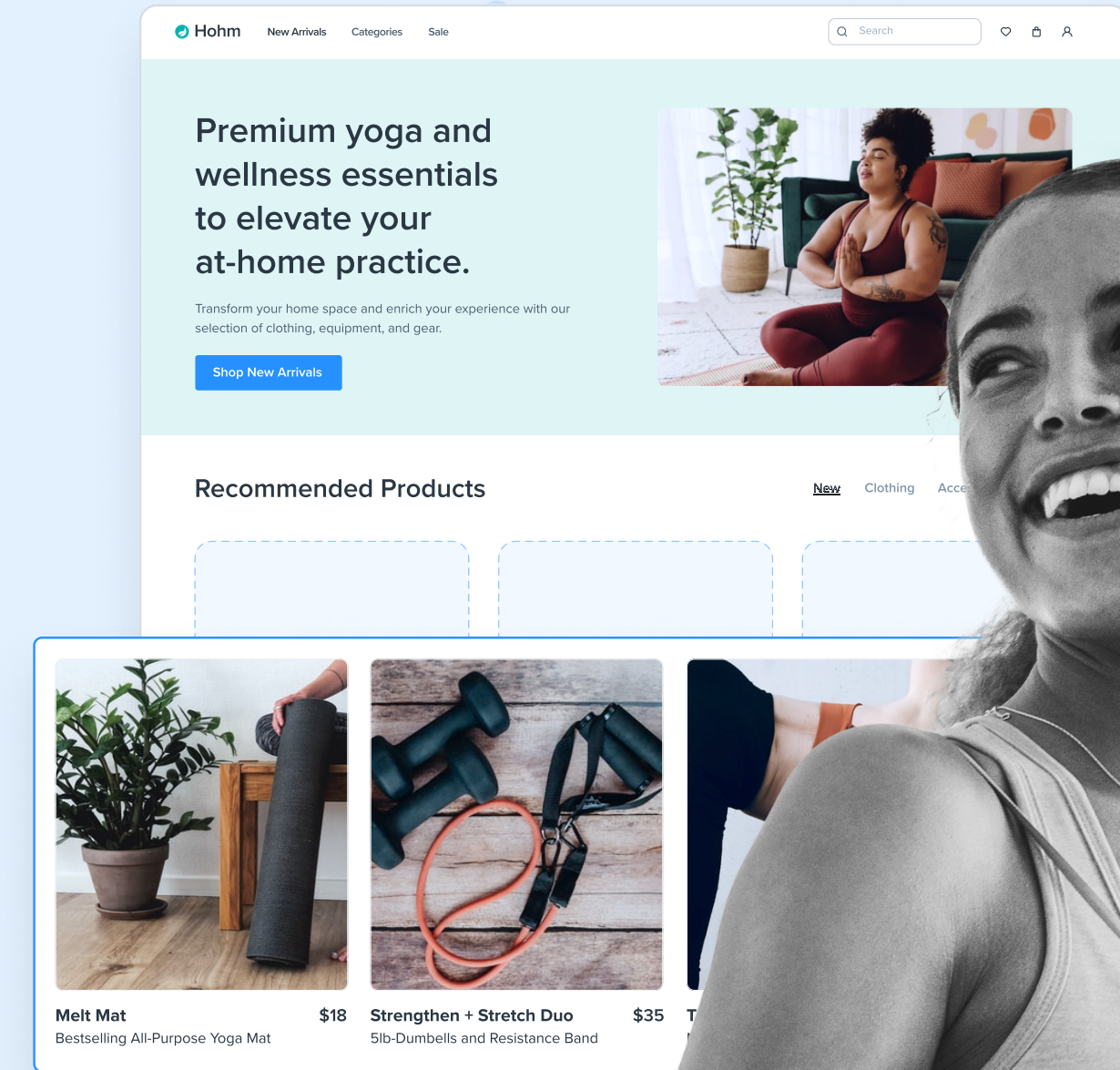
[Read the LendingTree case study to learn more.](#)



Nurture Your Customer's Need to Take Care of Their Whole Self

Another industry that has a golden opportunity to use AI marketing during an economic downturn is the health and wellness sector. Marketers there can use AI to provide personalized educational and product information to customers across channels. For example, providers of wellness services and products could segment customers and offer them special occasion gifts or discounts on services – touches that elevate your brand as caring and compassionate. Healthcare providers could segment customers and send them educational content specific to their situations.

During an economic downturn it's really important to listen carefully to customers and respond in thoughtful ways in the channels where they like to interact with your business.



PREPARE FOR THE FUTURE

The Final Takeaway

Now is the time to review what you know about your customers and assess where there are gaps. AI marketing can help accelerate this process and make it more efficient and cost-effective for you to reach your customers with highly personalized messages delivered to the channels where they like to interact with your brand.

The Blueshift intelligent customer engagement platform infuses your martech stack with rich AI-powered customer data so that you can segment your audiences and better deliver relevant and engaging messages to them – without having to wait for the data from your IT or data science teams. Through the Blueshift platform, this rich data is available to marketers immediately so that you can quickly build personalized campaigns and convert customers. These messages can be coordinated and automatically delivered to customers on the channels where they prefer to engage with your brand, and sent at the time when they are most likely to see them. Your existing martech investments are secure because Blueshift integrates with the marketing tools that you love.

Make your martech work harder and enrich your marketing with intelligent customer data.

Explore the power of Blueshift today with our free interactive demo and see how you can maximize marketing ROI with AI marketing.

FREE INTERACTIVE DEMO

