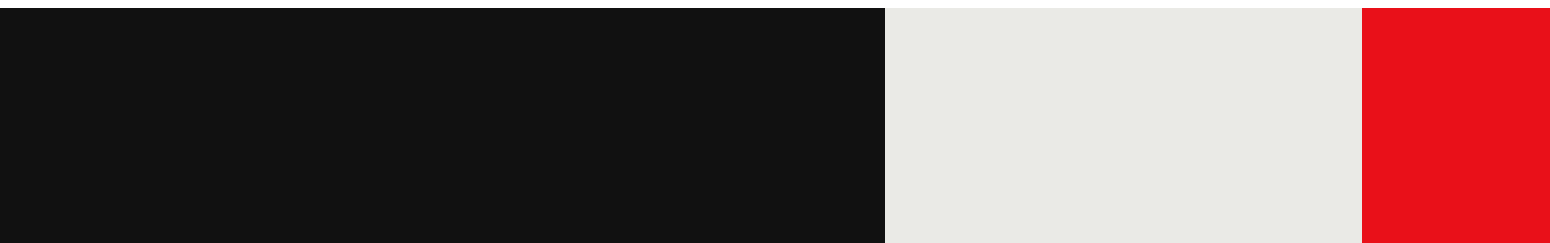



5 partnerships that caught marketers' eyes in 2023

Article



It's been a complicated year for advertising, punctuated by a slow first half of the year followed by **better growth in the back half**. Limited budgets mean brands have had to get creative. One form of creativity has been partnerships from names both big and small. Here are five that caught our eye.

1. McDonald's and Crocs

Stepping in after the **TikTok success of the Grimace Shake** over the summer, Crocs teamed up with McDonald's earlier this month to make shoes dedicated to Grimace, as well as the Hamburglar, Birdie the Early Bird, and the red and yellow motif the fast-food franchise is known for.

Why it works: Kitschy collabs are in.

- Neither company is new to collabs, and Crocs has remained relevant through high-profile partnerships with the likes of luxury brand **Balenciaga** and art collective **MSCHF**.
- **McDonald's is Gen Z's No. 3 favorite restaurant brand**, according to Piper Sandler data from fall 2023.
- US footwear ecommerce sales growth is speeding up. The category will grow by 7.0% in 2024 to cross the \$30 billion mark, per our forecast.



Source: McDonald's

2. Airbnb and Barbie

Airbnb offered a free stay hosted by Ken (Hi, Ken!) at Barbie's Malibu Dreamhouse. The move built buzz for both the "Barbie" movie and the booking platform.

Why it works: It was a Barbie girl summer.

- The list of Barbie collaborations from this summer is long. Everyone from **Gap Inc. to Revlon to Build-A-Bear to Xbox** found a retail partnership with Mattel's famous doll. Even Crocs had a collab.
- US travel industry digital ad spend was up 14.3% this year, according to our August 2023 forecast.



Source: Airbnb

3. The Trade Desk and Instacart

Ad tech company The Trade Desk and grocery intermediary Instacart teamed up in October to improve the latter's retail media offerings through improved metrics.

Why it works: Retail media data is in demand.

- Instacart will generate \$1.18 billion in US retail media ad revenues next year, making it the fourth-largest retail media network we track in terms of revenues, according to our forecast. That's a growth of 25.5%.
- But retail media growth is limited by the measurement capabilities each network can deliver, as well as the lack of standardization across networks. Ad tech partnerships can serve to remedy these issues.

4. Amazon and Meta

Meta is **allowing Amazon shoppers to buy products** on Facebook and Instagram without leaving the platforms.

Why it works: Both brands are massive.

- The partnership offers a massive audience of potential customers for Amazon and its advertisers. Next year, Amazon will have 181.4 million Prime users in the US, according to our forecast. Facebook will have 177.6 million users and Instagram will have 140.3 million users (many of whom will overlap with Facebook).
- Meta will have a chance to boost its projected \$62.70 billion in 2024 ad revenues.
- But Meta is effectively handing some revenues to its competitor, Amazon. Meta has been somewhat strong-armed into this partnership by the potential success of **TikTok Shop over Facebook and Instagram**.

5. Taylor and Travis

Superstar Taylor Swift's romantic partnership with NFL player Travis Kelce isn't exactly a brand collab, but marketers have certainly been viewing it that way. Brands like **State Farm** and Arby's have built campaigns around the couple's publicity.

Why it works: It's a love story, baby.

- It may have been a Barbie girl summer, but it was also a Taylor Swift summer. The singer ranked as Gen Z's favorite celebrity, according to Piper Sandler.
- And it's arguably always NFL autumn. This Thanksgiving, viewership broke records, averaging 34.1 million viewers across three games, **according to the league**.

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