

# The lessons behind 2023's 5 fastest-growing brands, including ChatGPT and Shein

Article

When we think about the brands that skyrocketed this year, some, like ChatGPT and Shein, immediately come to mind. Some of the other names, however, might surprise you.

Here are the top five brands that had the biggest rise in purchasing consideration this year, according to Morning Consult's **Fastest Growing Brands 2023** report, and what brands can learn from their ascent.

## 1. ChatGPT

In a year defined by generative AI, ChatGPT takes the No. 1 spot. After it debuted in **November 2022**, ChatGPT took the world by storm with its ability to answer user queries in a conversational manner, write code, or generate poems in the style of a certain author.

By January, **ChatGPT reached 100 million monthly active users**, and by February, Google **announced it had begun testing its own generative AI chatbot, Bard**. Since then, brands and retailers have been scrambling to incorporate generative AI into their operations.

For most users, ChatGPT and other generative AI models have **emerged as a productivity tool**, enabling them to ideate faster, create multiple versions of campaign copy, and analyze data in a fraction of the time it would take a human.

Retail marketplaces like **Amazon, Walmart, and Shopify** have incorporated generative AI into their platforms to help merchants and consumers alike, while companies like **The Coca-Cola Co.** and **Abercrombie & Fitch** are even using it to develop new products.

**The lesson:** ChatGPT introduced the world to generative AI, and the explosion it set off will have rippling effects for years to come. Next year, expect to see marketers and retailers refine their AI strategies and explore new use cases as the technology evolves.

## 2. Starry

Starry, a lemon-lime-flavored soda by PepsiCo, **first hit shelves in January**. With the exception of a few headlines, we didn't really hear much more about it.

It must have made a splash among consumers, however, because it took the second spot on Morning Consult's list. (For the Morning Consult rankings, a brand that didn't exist last year could only grow in purchase consideration this year.)

PepsiCo's Starry marketing strategy focused on Gen Zers, using their slang ("hits different"), a **strong social presence**, and **partnerships with Gen Z faves like Keke Palmer**.

Whether Starry's growth in purchase consideration gave way to actual purchases is up for debate.

- PepsiCo Beverages North America increased its net revenues 8.9% YoY in the 36 weeks ending September 9, 2023.
- It's unclear what contribution, if any, Starry made, and since its introduction earlier this year, the hype seems to have mainly died down.

**The lesson:** Know the audience you want to target and speak their language. Just because you're not making headlines doesn't mean your campaigns aren't working.

### 3. Zelle

US mobile peer-to-peer (P2P) payments transaction value will grow 11.3% by the end of 2023 to reach \$993.28 billion, per our April 2023 forecast. Zelle, with \$485.32 billion in P2P transaction value, makes up nearly half (48.9%) of that number.

Though Zelle has some **reputational issues associated with fraud**, it's still the market leader in P2P payments. A new digital wallet from parent company Early Warning could also drive more growth if it's integrated, according to our **US Mobile P2P Payments Forecast 2023**.

**The lesson:** Gen Z consumers, in particular, are increasingly adopting mobile P2P payment services, totaling 35.2 million users in 2024, per our forecast. As Gen Zers' purchasing power grows, so will their use of P2P payment services, and brands that don't offer it will get left behind.

### 4. Shein

Shein is **another brand with reputational issues**, but that doesn't seem to be stopping its transformation from a TikTok darling into a marketplace competitor.

**2023 was a big year for Shein.** It continued its **US expansion by shipping more apparel and home goods items to US warehouses** from China to speed up delivery times, partnered with fellow fast-fashion brand Forever 21 on a co-branded clothing line and a physical pop-up store, and filed for an IPO.

It also faced multiple **lawsuits from rival Temu (some of which were dropped)** and public backlash after an influencer trip to its manufacturing facilities was deemed **“propaganda” to mislead customers**, according to NPR.

Shein, and other apps like TikTok and Temu, have changed the online shopping landscape and will continue to do so in the new year, according to our **Top Trends to Watch in 2024** report.

**The lesson:** A bad reputation isn't a death sentence. But it may present extra hurdles for brands to clear when it comes to winning consumers' trust.

## 5. Twisted Tea

Though not new or controversial, two-decade-old alcohol brand Twisted Tea felt the love this year.

The brand grew its dollar sales 34% in Q1, according to parent company Boston Beer Company **as reported by Retail Brew**.

- Twisted Tea has grown by double digits every year since 2001, said Boston Beer founder and chairman Jim Koch.
- Koch said that although the company considered selling the brand, it has endured due to its “hard-to-replicate” flavor profile.

When many alcohol brands **invested in low- or no-alcohol products**, Twisted Tea introduced **Twisted Tea Extreme**, which has a higher percentage of alcohol by volume than its predecessor.

**The lesson:** Brands don't always have to be buzzy to be relevant to consumers. There's a lot of value in providing a consistently good product and experience.

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