GutCheck

It Takes Guts

To Win By Taking a 'Human First' Approach

GUTSIEST BRANDS

1

As humans, our most vivid memories come from times of heightened emotions. When we really 'feel' something, we tend to remember the circumstance.

2

Most successful brands did something at a point in their history which, while it may now seem perfectly normal, at the time was something that took guts.

3

They went beyond the superficial and the comfortable to look deep inside and understand people – employees, users, customers, and consumers – at new, multi-dimensional levels to fuel their direction and their innovation or marketing strategies.

4

Armed with empathy, insight and conviction, they dared to be different, take a stand, do something unexpected. They refused to be a copycat and simply go with the flow. They sought to make people's lives better.

5

Not all brands saw the results they hoped for, but few regret taking the path they did. So what makes a brand 'gutsy' and why is it such a valuable proposition?

What Makes a Brand Gutsy?

We believe there are four key traits:

- Having empathy at their core.
- Demonstrating a pioneering spirit.
- Standing behind bold ideas.
- Seizing opportunities where others see trade-offs.

SOMETHING ELSE WE'VE LEARNED AT GUTCHECK

Pioneering
Empathetic
Bold
Power of AND

The Gutsiest Brands

The gutsiest brands blend these together to create exceptional experiences for people. Discover what each component means and see how four companies, while demonstrating multiple gutsy traits, leaned into one in particular to build closer connections between their brands and the people they serve.

1. Empathetic

Putting themselves firmly in the shoes of other people, companies that lead with empathy go the extra mile and have the courage to look deep inside. They innovate to create hyper-relevant products, services and initiatives that connect at deeper, more human dimensions, recognizing real people, with real emotions, going through real experiences.

EXAMPLE

zoom

Zoom set out with an incredibly simple customer-centric mission: Make video communications frictionless. Starting by deeply understanding the tensions and frustrations that existed, this highly actionable statement enabled employees in every part of the organization to recognize the impact they were having on making customers' lives better. The results of this empathetic focus – from the interface to the freemium model, to their philanthropic efforts during Covid-19 – have taken them from a start-up to the undisputed leader in B2B and B2C video conferencing in less than a decade.

Source: Forbes

2. Pioneering

Some brands are happy to be followers, safely treading the well-trodden paths laid by others. Some are happy to be challengers, evaluating existing offerings and finding ways to improve them. Pioneering brands refuse to be limited by what is. They identify new problems to be solved or take industries in totally new directions.

EXAMPLE

SEEDLIP

Solving the problem of 'what to drink when you're not drinking', Seedlip has been a major driver of the 100% growth in the no- and lo-ABV category since 2015. Recognizing trends in people consuming less alcohol and awareness in people not drinking at all, they have brought class, sophistication and quality to pioneer the category.

Source: Forbes

3. Bold

Gutsy brands stand behind bold ideas. They make decisions that may not always be popular, but are distinct and may lead to bigger wins. Maybe they're the company that places their entire annual marketing budget on a Superbowl ad. Maybe they rally behind a social cause, incur cost for more ethical supply or distribution, push through adversity to stay true to their beliefs, or go out on a limb for their employees. No matter how they do it, these companies step outside of their comfort zone to be meaningful, connect in surprising new ways, and really stand out from the crowd.

EXAMPLE

BURGER KING

At the peak of the pandemic in 2020, Burger King UK took the bold, unprecedented step of encouraging people to buy a burger from their fiercest competitor, McDonalds, arguing that the restaurant industry at large needed people to keep purchasing during lockdown.

Source: Medium

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4. Power of AND

When other brands are compromising and making tradeoffs, how do Gutsy Brands stand out? By looking at people's needs and the competitive landscape, and saying 'Yes, AND...' These brands lean into the opportunity to add more, not to ask people to choose.

EXAMPLE

airbnb

At a time when people were unable to or chose not to travel, the travel and hospitality sector was hurting. Where so many companies closed or reduced services, Airbnb found a way to continue to bring revenue to their hosts, and experiences with authentic human connection to their guests. The concept of 'Airbnb Online Experiences' was built and launched in 14 days. A massive success, Airbnb is now a leading global online market place for vacations, AND a leading destination for virtual experiences that promote fun, learning, and togetherness.

Source: Medium

Why It's Compelling to Be a Gutsy Brand...

Impact on Consumers

Demonstrating empathy and standing behind a cause can be risky, but it's also rewarding as 62% of consumers want companies to take a stand on current and broadly relevant issues. [1] This is even more important among millennials, where 83% want brands to align with them on values. [2]

62%

Sources: [1] Accenture, [2] IMRR

Impact on Employees

47% of Gen Xers and 42% of millennials say they would leave their current job for a more innovative environment.

47%

Source: HR One

71% say they would leave a company whose values don't align with their own.

71%

Source: Robert Half

Impact on Bottom Line

Brands who take an empathetic approach to people's experiences bring in 5.7X more revenue than their competitors.

5.7X

Source: Forbes

Impact on Raising Capital

Pitching a disruptive vision makes start-up founders 22% more likely to get funding (albeit at 24% lower level to account for risk).

22%

Source: Effectory

Does your brand have guts? We'd love to hear from you.

You may have an opportunity to be featured in an upcoming article or as a guest on our new Gutsiest Brands podcast.

If you'd like to know more about how GutCheck uses Agile Human Experience Intelligence™ to empower the world's most innovative brands to connect more authentically with the people that matter most to them, we'd love to hear from you.

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We are the Agile Human Experience Intelligence company. Building on our agile principles of speed and cost-efficiency, we leverage innovative technologies and human expertise to bring brands closer to authentic, contextualized human experiences, so they can confidently make the key decisions to drive growth through better innovation and brand building.

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