A GELLAN WATT PUBLICATION

ONE BOLD MOVE.

Ten short case studies on how smart brands used a **Bold Move™** to break free from friction, fear, and flat growth.

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Brands do not change their destiny by doing *more.*

They do so when they finally see what is holding them back. They make one decisive Bold Move™.

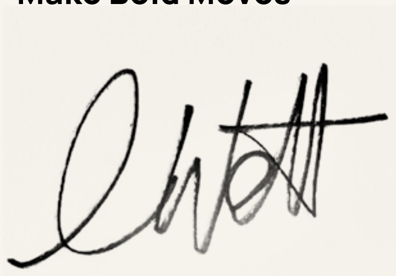
It changes how the market thinks, feels and behaves. It unlocks the future.

These cases are not picked at random. They are those that represent world-class thinking. In a variety of difficult moments and industries.

They are brands that were brave enough to admit that something needed to shift. And bold enough to do something about it. The latter is essential.

Four of the ten, I led the work with my teams personally. I hope you find this publication useful.

Make Bold Moves™



Most brands do not lose value, fail or falter because they have nothing to say.

It's usually because what they say no longer lands with enough force. They lose step with their customers. They lose meaning. And connection.

Growth slows. Sales become soft. The business leans too hard on price or promotion. Margins suffer. Customers understand the product but can't see the value.

The usual response is nearly always wrong. More campaigns. More launches. More messages. More activity. More spend. Stop!

It's just motion instead of progress. The brands in this book did something else. They found the real blockage and removed it.

Hyundai saw fear. uSwitch saw effort. OVO saw distrust. Wyke Farms saw commodity pressure. Marshall saw category confinement. Skoda saw prejudice. Aldi saw a narrow reading of value. Johnnie Walker saw the need for a larger idea. Domino's saw a credibility gap. Old Spice saw generational drift.

Different sectors. Same rescue discipline. Precision thinking.

One Bold Move™ that changed everything.

CONTENTS

Ten brands. Ten Bold Moves™

01

Marshall

FROM STAGE ICON TO
MUSIC LIFESTYLE GIANT.

Marshall took their brand to the moon by realising the real asset was never just the amplifier.
It was what the amplifier meant.
Where it was seen.

RESULTS

£304m

REVENUE (2023)

Marshall Group reported record net sales of SEK 4.01 billion, p 29% year on year, with an a djusted operating margin of 18.9%. Marshall merged with Zound (maker of the speakers, headphones etc. in 2023).
In 2011/12, Marshall was close to collapse.

THE STORY

The logo, the stacked cabinets and the live music association were powerful assets, but also restrictive ones.

If Marshall had remained tied mainly to amplifiers, it would have stayed influential but narrow.
The business was under pressure. Young guitarists rejected the brand as they entered the category.

The move that got the brand into high growth was disciplined translation. Marshall boldly repositioned from Amp maker to music giant.

Dropping their old idea of Jim Marshall being the Father of Loud. A dim light for attracting new audiences.

They wanted more. Using a new proposition, 'Live for music' - they took what made it distinctive on stage and carried that world into everyday consumer audio.

Headphones, speakers, portable products, home audio products.

The portfolio changed, but the symbolic role remained coherent. It still stood for taste, edge and music culture. That is why the move worked.

THE BOLD MOVE

Brand stretch rooted in authentic equity.
Not an amp brand.
A music icon.

THE STORY

People did not buy Marshall headphones because they needed another electronics device. They bought a piece of a world they wanted to belong to.

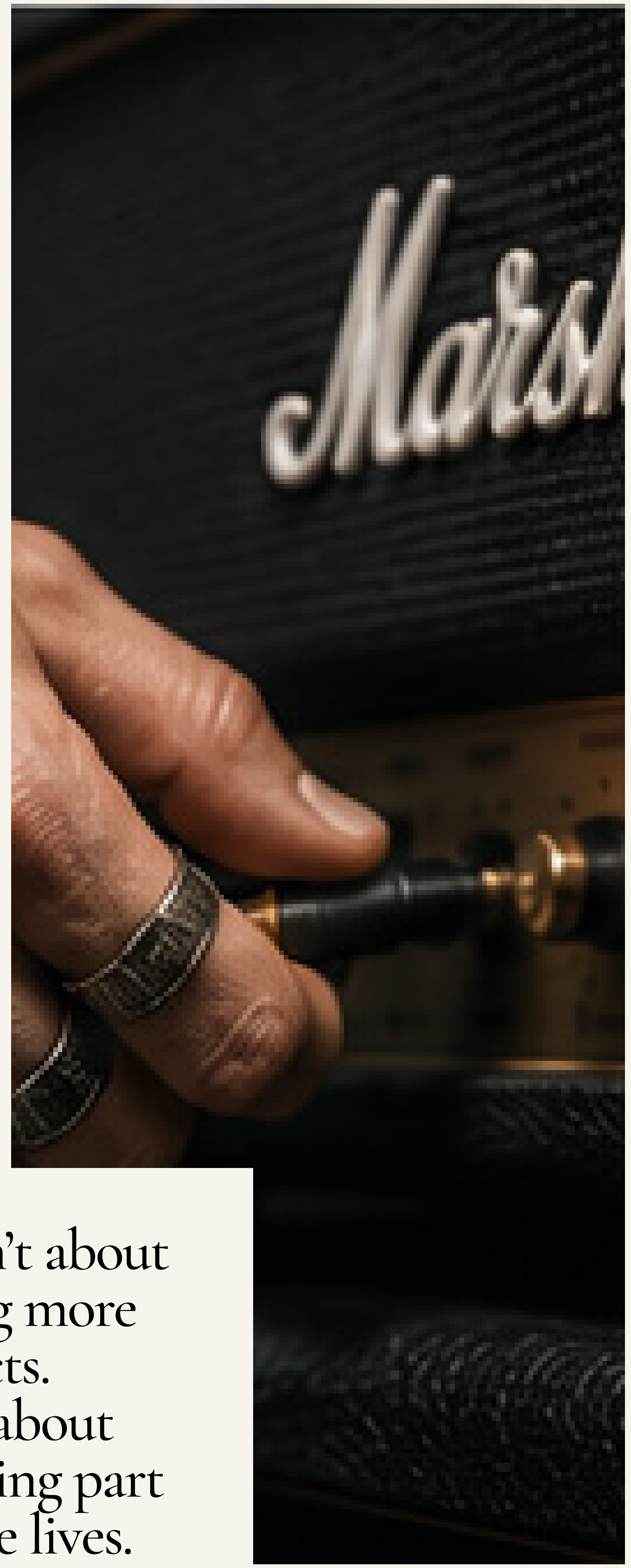
One gives you another thing to sell. The other gives you another way to matter.

New meaning.

The result was scale.
New customers.
New distribution and reach.

Consumer audio became the growth engine and Marshall evolved from a specialist maker into a much broader premium audio business.

Marshall unlocked a new future because it stopped mistaking its roots for its limits.



> “It wasn’t about making more products.
> It was about becoming part of more lives.

WHAT BRADS CAN LEARN

If your brand has genuine heritage, do not ask only what you used to make. Ask what it is that you really mean to people.

uSwitch

THE CATEGORY WAS COMPARISON.
THE UNLOCK WAS SIMPLICITY.

uSwitch unlocked growth by understanding that people did not need more information. That knew they should switch. They just wanted less effort.

RESULTS

2014. 50.3 million visits. £62.9 million revenue. £16.2 million adjusted EBITDA. They saved UK consumers £112 million that year, and were acquired by Zoopla in 2015.

THE STORY

Most consumers know switching can save money. They still do not do it because the task feels tedious. That was the real enemy. Not ignorance. Effort.

The brand identified a powerful opportunity - the 'curious'. A term I now use regularly. It's the customer that should uby from you. In fact, they know they should.

They see the value - but the idea of work to switch is a perceived as too much lifting.

A new concept was born and customer experience designed. Simplicity. It spoke to the comparison curious. Lighter lifting. Okay, I'm in.

Those that knew they should switch, but didn't act, did. The big win, once they had, as natural non-switchers they didn't switch again.

That's serious lock in.

THE BOLD MOVE

Radical simplification of the process, proposition and story. Get on with it, it's simple.

If customers keep delaying the obvious choice, the problem may not be price or awareness. It may be the weight of the task itself.

“The simple way to switch” worked because it named the friction cleanly and reduced the weight of the decision.

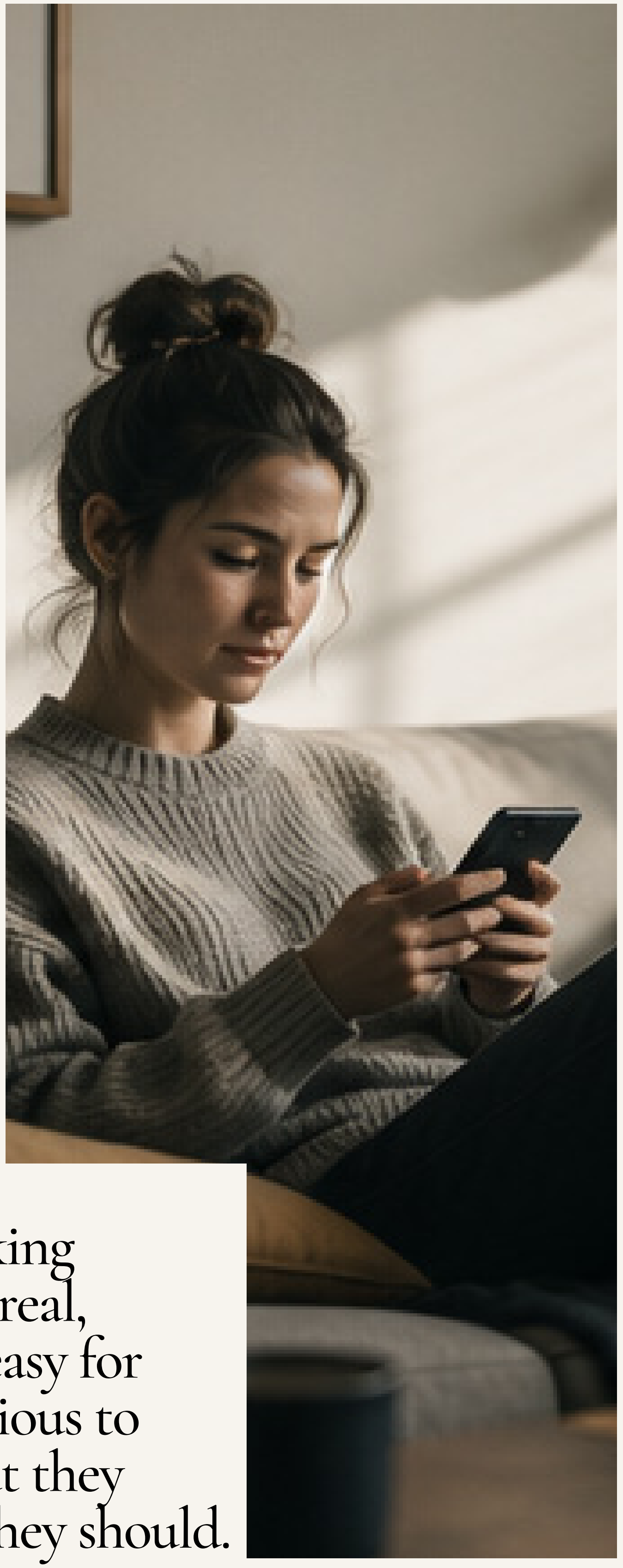
The story was told using trusted talent, and on screen straight-talker, actor Phil Glennister – to agitate the behavioural change – basically asking consumer why they haven't done it yet.

Good point.

Great propositions often win by lowering perceived effort. Changes were made to the process, website and customer experience.

uSwitch acted less like a complex marketplace and more like a practical short-cut.

In low interest categories, relief beats theatre.



> “By making simple real, it was easy for the curious to do what they knew they should.

03

Hyundai

WHEN THE MARKET FROZE,
HYUNDAI REMOVED THE FEAR.

Hyundai changed the game by solving the thing people were really scared of. Getting financially trapped.

RESULTS

January 2009: the wider United States auto market fell 37 percent. Hyundai sales rose 14 percent.

2009

THE STORY

A global financial crisis. Jobs at threat. Consumer confidence in free-fall. Car buyers were not only asking whether they could afford a car. They were asking what would happen if they lost their income after signing up to one.

In every problem, there is opportunity if you're willing to look for it. And act on it, boldly.

Hyundai Assurance answered that fear directly.

During the 08/09 global financial crisis, if a new car buyer lost their job or income within the agreed purchase period, they could return the car – simply handing back the keys. No risk.

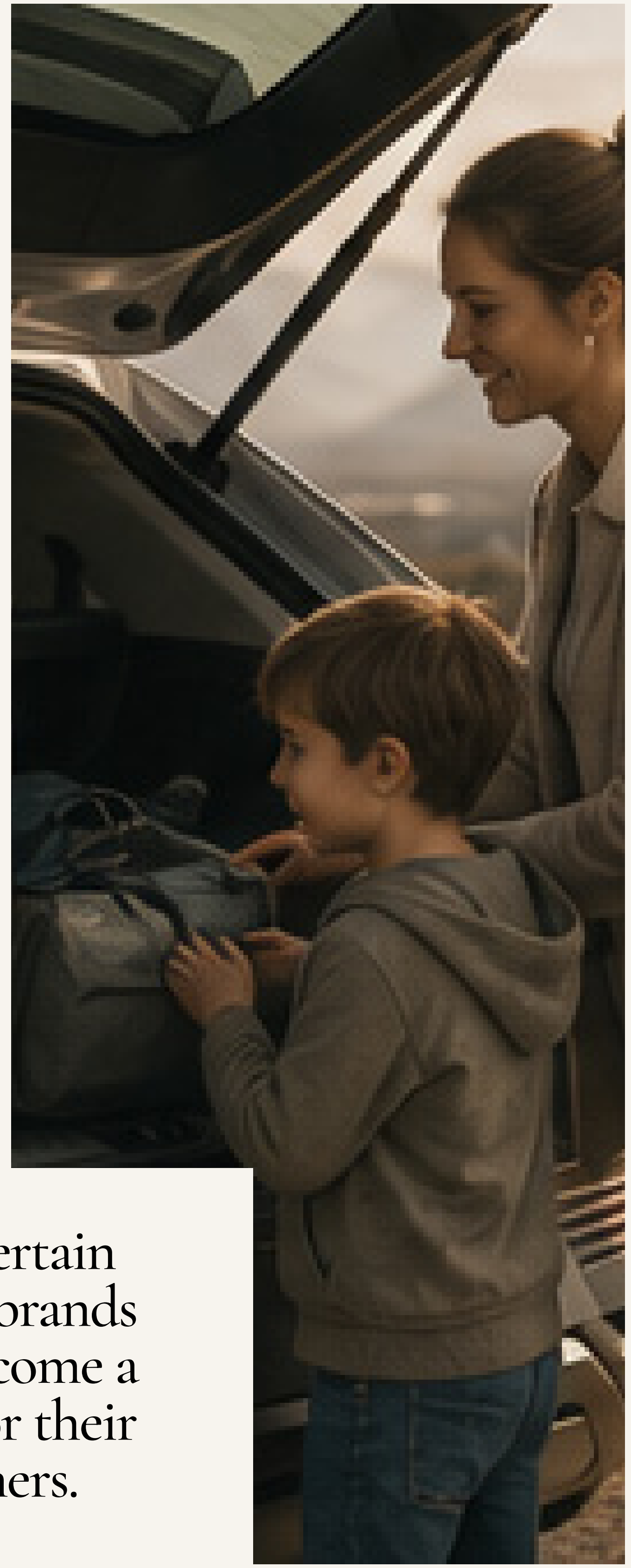
Avoiding much of the usual financial pain and fear.

THE BOLD MOVE

Risk reversal through a pricing and finance idea.

THE STORY

This was not just a finance offer. It was a brand idea expressed commercially. It unfroze car sales.



Typically, a car retailer would have trusted discounts.

They would still have lost - the market contracted by over 30%.

Discounts would have made the car feel cheaper.

Hyundai made the decision feel safer. That is why it worked. They understood the customer's life. And responded.

> “In uncertain times, brands can become a rock for their customers.

WHAT BRADS CAN LEARN

When buyers are frozen, work out whether the real problem is price or fear. The second is often harder to spot and more powerful to solve.

Ovo

IN A MISTRUSTED CATEGORY, OVO MADE FAIRNESS FEEL POSSIBLE AGAIN.

OVO unlocked the category by recognising that in energy, simplicity was not a nice extra. It was proof of intent.

RESULTS

Founded in 2009 OVO said it served more than 1.5 million customers in 2019. Today, they have 4 million customers

THE STORY

Energy had become a category full of confusion, suspicion and low trust. Bills were hard to parse. Tariffs were messy. Incumbents felt remote.

OVO grew by offering a simpler, fairer relationship with the category itself - launching with just two products. And a consumer promise. Not just a proposition.

Ovo. **Cheaper. Greener. Simpler.**

That is what made the brand feel different. Simplicity signalled honesty. A stripped back offer, clearer choices and a more human tone all pointed the same way.

Customers did not only want savings. They wanted relief from distrust. Clarity instead of confusion.

Ovo flipped the offering. Two tariffs. Choose if you want green or greener. They even paid interest on customers accounts if they had a positive balance. Brilliant.

THE BOLD MOVE

The “we are not the same strategy”. Trust building through stripped back (real) proposition design.

If your category is distrusted, do not treat trust as a communications problem. Build it into the structure of the offer. Do business better to build a better business.

Cheaper. Greener. Simpler.

OVO smashed category norms, because it did not simply sell energy.

It sold release from the old energy experience.

It's the the same way the likes of Revolut, Monzo and Starling broke through the mainstream banking brands.

They focused on the legacy of dislike and distrust.

They flipped the story.

And they changed the category forever.

> “Exponential growth rarely comes from a new campaign. But from being absolutely singular, in a market of me-toos.

06

Wyke Farms

FAMILY HERITAGE STOPPED BEING BACKGROUND DETAIL AND BECAME THE GROWTH ENGINE.

Wyke Farms changed their destiny, when it stopped acting like a commodity cheese business and started commercialising its difference: their incredible family story, Somerset provenance and craft.

RESULTS

2004 to 2025: in 2008 Wyke Farms was reported as the fastest growing cheddar brand in the UK. By 2025, Wyke Farms was turning over approximately £175 million, producing around 20,000 tonnes of cheddar annually, exporting worldwide.

THE STORY

In cheddar, it is easy to be flattened into shelf mechanics, promotions and price. It was a fixture known aa the yellow brick wall. Slow moving. No innovation. Nothing new.

Wyke had something stronger.
The opposite of something new.
Something old.

Tradition.
Real roots.
Real place.
Real continuity.

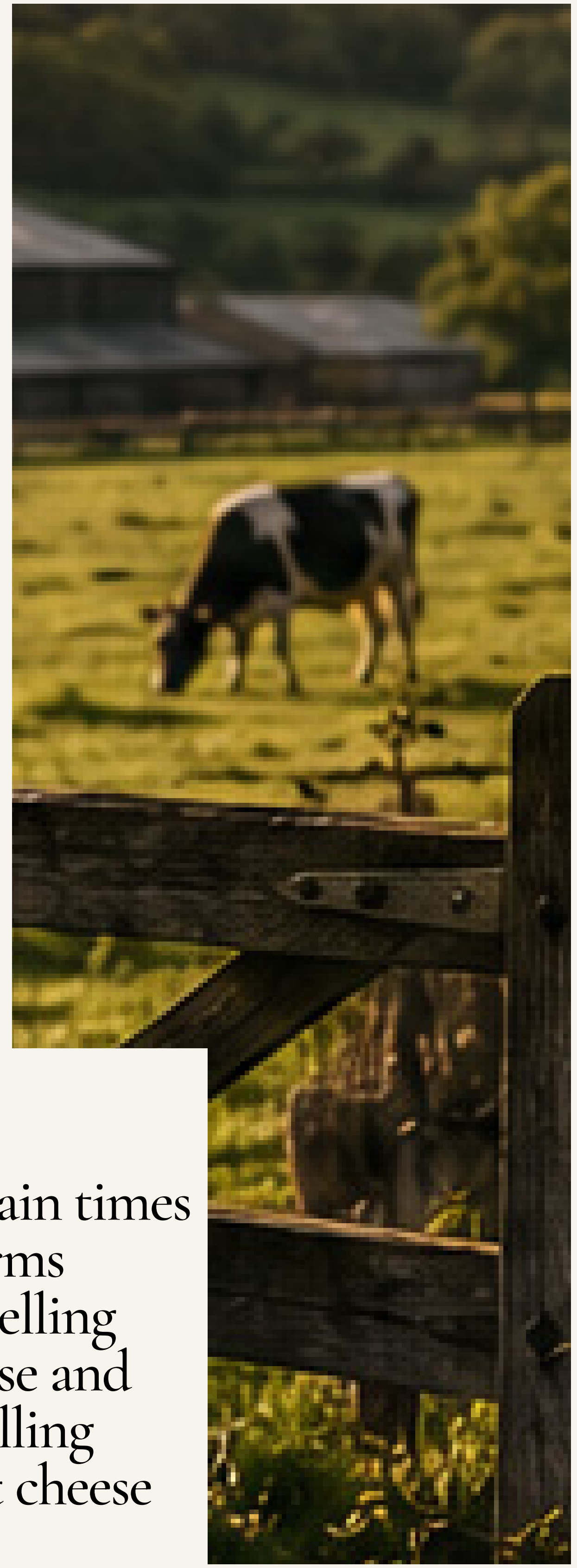
None of it needed inventing. It needed valuing. A story, worth telling. About a family that had farmed in the same location for over 100 years.

Using the current Managing Director's Grandmother's original recipe.

THE BOLD MOVE

Commercialising heritage. When you have a story to tell, do so. It can't challenged.

The recipe was kept in a safe. In the boardroom. Breeding myth and magic with trade buyers alongside new storytelling to end customers.



Once those truths moved from the margins to the centre, buyers were no longer only choosing cheddar.

They were choosing place, care and confidence.

That is the route out of commodity thinking.

In the hunt for growth, new isn't always the way.

> “
> In uncertain times Wyke Farms stopped selling only cheese and started selling what that cheese stood for.

If your origin story is real, do not let it sit quietly in the corporate history. Turn it into an active reason to choose you today.

06

Skoda

THE SMARTEST MOVE
WAS TO SAY WHAT EVERYONE
WAS ALREADY THINKING.

Skoda made one of the boldest reinventions of a brand ever, by confronting prejudice head on instead of pretending it did not exist.

RESULTS

Following the UK repositioning launched with the Fabia in March 2000, marque rejection fell from 60% to 42%, while UK sales subsequently grew 64%.

THE STORY

In Britain the problem was not awareness. It was baggage. The cars had improved, but the old jokes still hung over the brand. People were rejecting Skoda reflexively, before evidence had a chance to work.

A genius campaign was born.

“It’s a Skoda. Honest.”

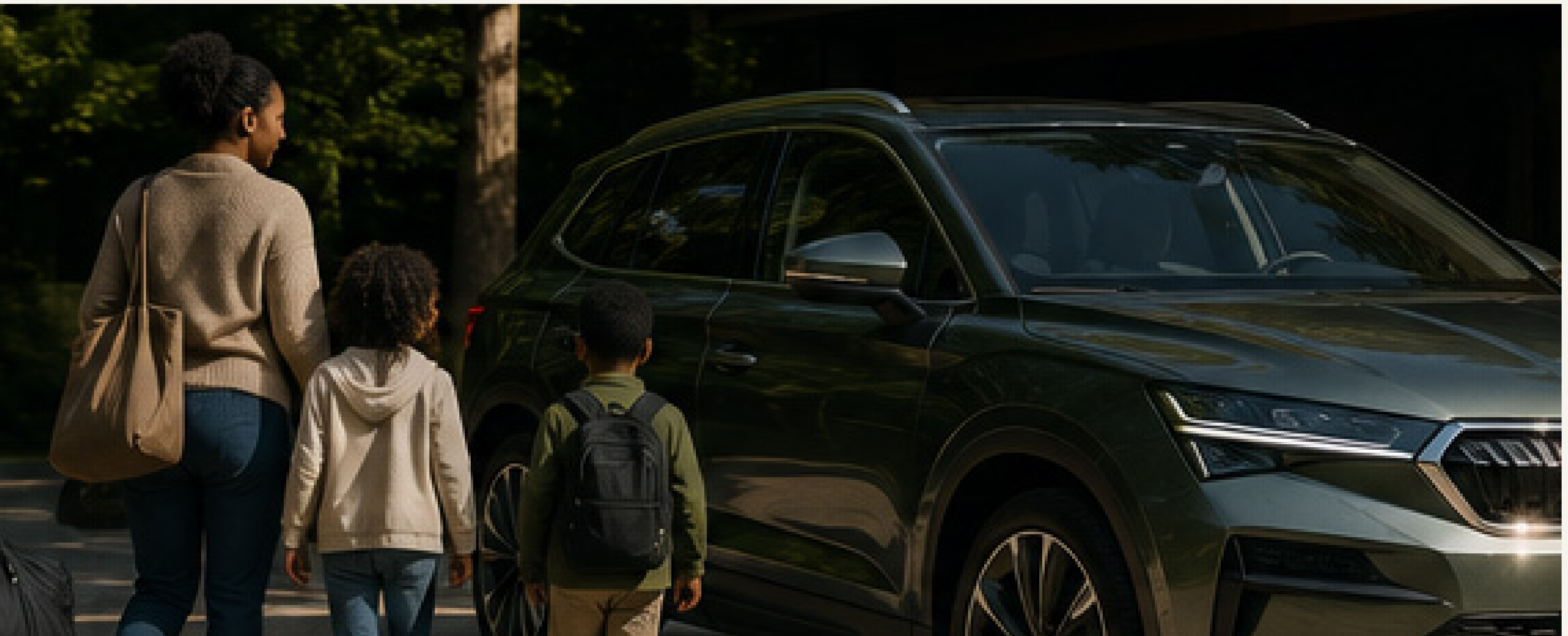
It worked because it surfaced the objection rather than dodging it.

It acknowledged the problem, signalled confidence and invited reassessment all at once.

THE BOLD MOVE

Owning the objection. A tactic I call flipping the coin. Don’t ignore reality. Make it your start point.

If the market has a fixed negative story about you, surface it. The objection you own becomes easier to disarm.



Flip the story. Own the narrative.

By presenting new products, styled and made brilliantly to the highest quality, with a level of honesty and humility, Skoda changed everything.

That is the power of owning an objection.

Skoda stopped trying to outrun the old story and instead used it as the raw material for the new one.

A brilliant move.

> “Don’t ignore reality. Good or bad. When owned, it’s one of the most powerful starting points for any brand.

Aldi

ALDI GREW AGAIN WHEN ‘CHEAP’ BECAME SMART.

Aldi reversed a terrifying trend by making value feel less like compromise and more like judgement.

RESULTS

Aldi’s sales growth slowed from 19.3% in 2015 to 12.3% in 2016, representing a calculated £347 million revenue opportunity. Following its repositioning, sales growth recovered to 19.1%, delivering £1 billion in incremental revenue and a 6.1% value share.

Low prices had made the brand famous, but they also risked trapping it in a narrow role.

The question was no longer whether shoppers knew Aldi was cheaper. It was whether they saw it as right for enough occasions.

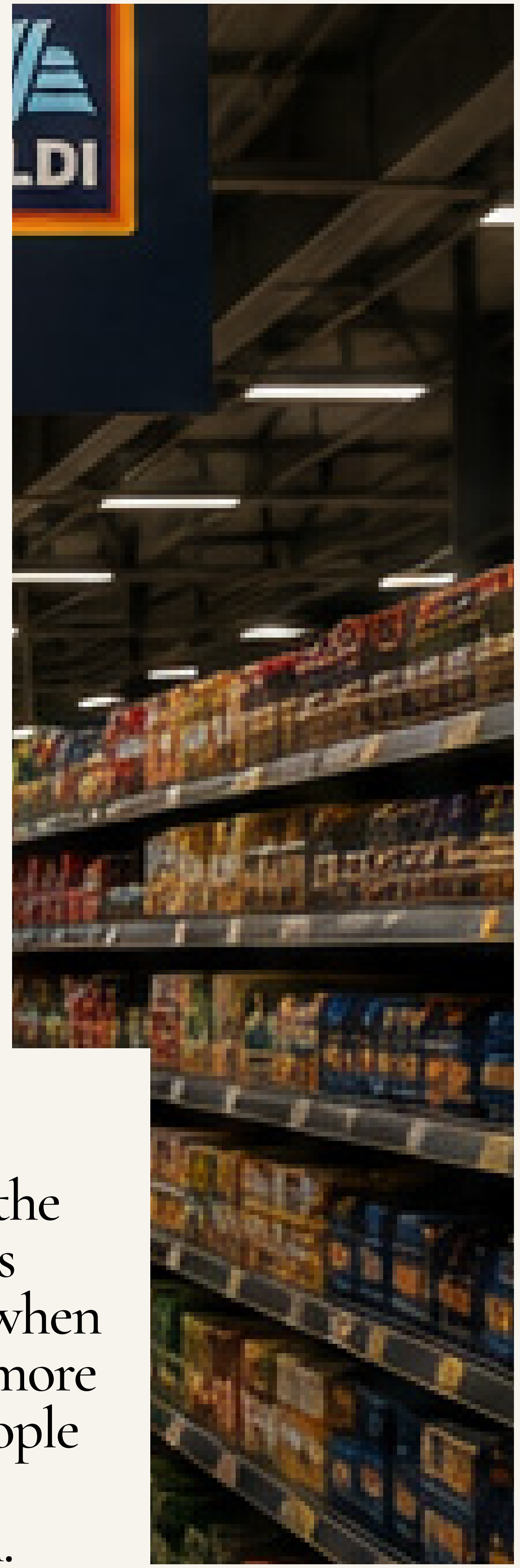
The answer was not to abandon value, but to enrich what value meant.

Aldi worked to shift perception from a cheap place to stock up to a smart place to shop.

THE BOLD MOVE

Reframing value. Cheaper is no longer a negative statement of identity.
It’s savvy.
Why pay more?

Cheap is narrow. Smart value gives customers social permission.



It says the choice reflects competence, not constraint.

Aldi got stopped letting low price be read as low ambition.

A winning strategy.

> “Price is not the story. Brands always win when they create more value for people than the competition.

When your strongest asset starts limiting how people use you, reframe the meaning of that asset before you try to replace it.

Johnnie Walker

THE BRAND STOPPED TALKING LIKE WHISKY AND STARTED SPEAKING LIKE PROGRESS.

Johnnie Walker got turned a product into a philosophy people could carry with them.

RESULTS

During the first eight years of Keep Walking, Johnnie Walker recorded approximately 48% sales growth and US$2.21 billion in incremental sales. The platform ran in more than 120 markets.

THE STORY

The brand had awareness, heritage a nd distribution, but those strengths can create complacency if the brand no longer stands for something alive.

Keep Walking was a masterpiece.

A brilliant lesson is creating a myth and belief system above and beyond an already brilliant product.

An idea that elevated the Striding Man into a larger idea about personal progress.

The shift mattered because it moved the brand from category language to life language.

THE BOLD MOVE

Meaning shift from a product to belief system.

If your product is respected but growth is flat, ask whether the brand stands for anything large enough to move with culture.

Keep walking. A story of what's coming, not what was.

Once a brand stands for an attitude rather than only a product, its usefulness expands dramatically.

Johnnie Walker got moving again because it turned the act of choosing a drink into a small expression of 'self'.

That I choose momentum. Progress. And the new.

> "Tapping into people's deep set desires, drove interest and adoption. This is now a brand that means momentum.

09

Domino's

THE BRAND RESTARTED GROWTH BY ADMITTING THE CRITICISM WAS RIGHT.

Domino's got changed their fortunes because it understood that honesty can be more persuasive than polish when the market already knows the truth.

RESULTS

2010: Domino's US same-store sales grew 9.9% for the full year, which the company attributed to increased traffic, positive response to its improved pizza and the effectiveness of its advertising.

THE STORY

And old one - but a good one. Once upon a time, Domino's were, umm. A bit shit.

The business had distribution and convenience, but many people openly questioned the quality of the pizza. Domino's could have ignored the feedback.

They chose a harder and smarter path. It improved the product, then went public with the criticism and the change.

That honesty worked because it was attached to action.

THE BOLD MOVE

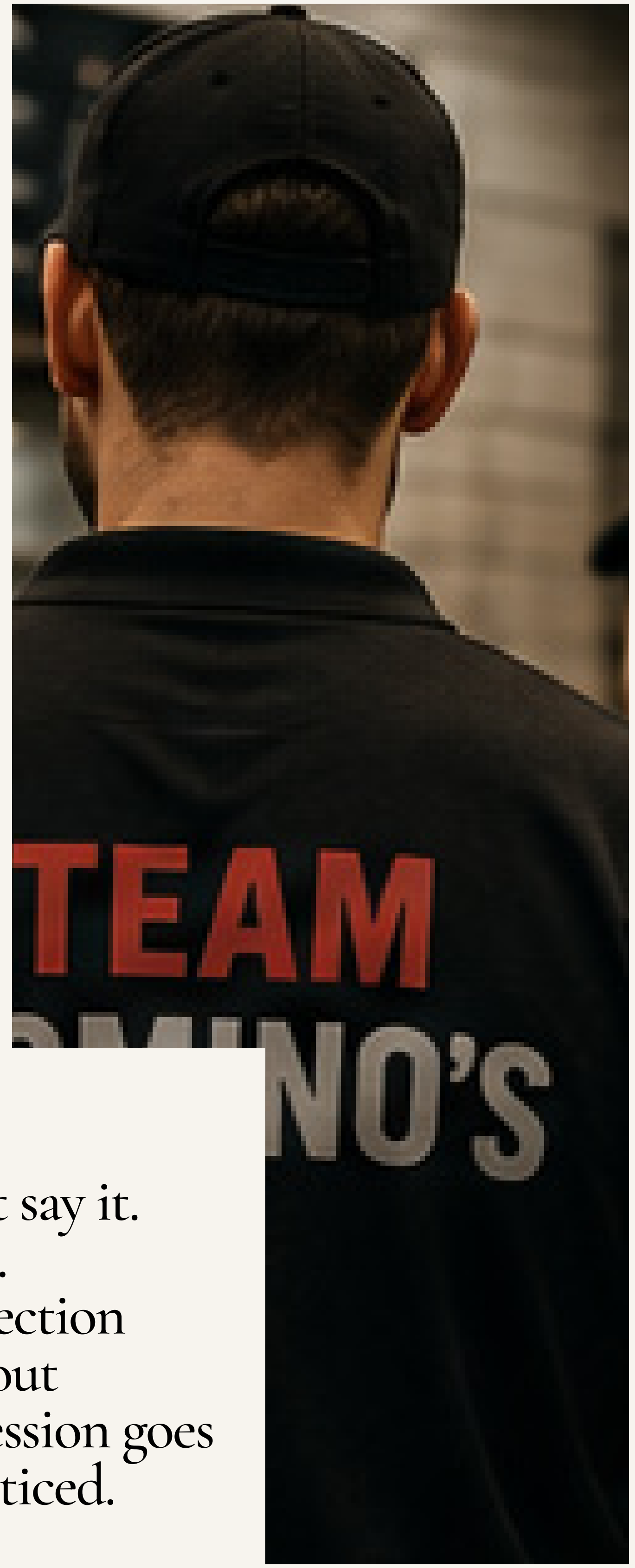
Radical honesty combined with product improvement.

Confession without correction is theatre.

Abbey National tried to turn banking on it head following similar criticism – and the reposition was a total car crash.

Investing more money on the advertising and an insane upside down logo, instead of making changes that would have made their story real.

Or its punished. Domino's paired both. It made the brand feel dynamic again and closed the gap between what the company said and what people experienced.



> "Don't say it. Do it. Correction without confession goes unnoticed.

If customers are right about your weakness, fix it first and then talk with enough candour for them to believe you.

Old Spice

A LEGACY BRAND DOUBLED SALES BY CHANGING WHO IT LOOKED LIKE IT WAS FOR.

Old Spice was a reboot no one was expecting, rewriting the cultural meaning of the brand faster than the market thought possible.

RESULTS

By May 2010, sales of Old Spice Red Zone Body Wash were 60% higher than a year earlier. By July, sales had doubled year on year.

The problem was not low awareness. It was over familiarity. An idea anchored in the past.

The brand felt inherited,not chosen.

“The Man Your Man Could Smell Like” did not gently refresh that old reading. It replaced it.

Fast, strange, funny and highly shareable, the work made Old Spice feel culturally alive.

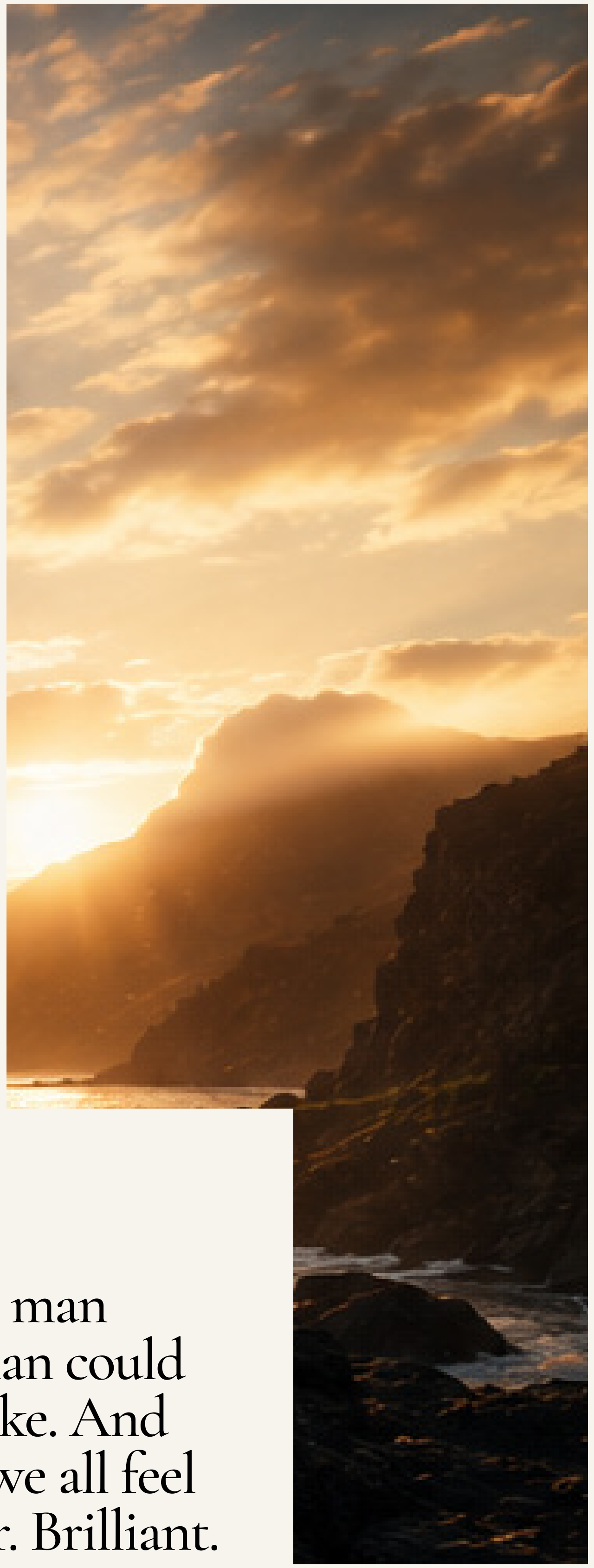
More importantly, it reassigned the audience. Suddenly the brand was no longer something associated with older male grooming habits.

THE BOLD MOVE

Cultural recoding for a new audience.

If your brand is trapped by old associations, ask whether the real problem is the product or the cultural reading of the product.

One big bold move changed everything.



It became something younger consumers could enjoy, repeat and buy without inheriting the old baggage.

Old Spice soared because it changed the reading of the brand, not just the message.

A wonderful move. Bold doesn't do it justice. It's a campaign imprinted in our collective psyche, forever.

> "I'm the man your man could smell like. And didn't we all feel inferior. Brilliant.

What these ten cases have in common.

The brands that outperform themselves and their category do not start by asking how to say more. It's not about a campaign. It's about understanding. And meaning.
A Bold Move™

They start by asking what exactly is stopping movement. For Hyundai it was fear. For uSwitch it was effort. For OVO it was distrust. For Wyke Farms it was commoditisation.
For Marshall it was category confinement.
For Skoda it was prejudice.
For Aldi it was a limiting interpretation of value.
For Johnnie Walker it was the need for a larger meaning.
For Domino's it was a credibility gap. For Old Spice it was generational irrelevance.

Different categories.
Same principle.
The breakthrough comes when the brand identifies the real blockage and makes a move sharp enough to remove it.

That is the work.
That is always the best work.
It's bold. It's a move.
Not a campaign.
Not at first.

Success comes from meaning.
Not message.

Be bold.

FROM THE AUTHOR

Five questions to work out what your Bold Move™ could be.

01. What is the real blockage, not the visible symptom?

02. What hesitation exists in the customer's mind just before they choose or reject you?

03. Which genuine asset are you under using?

04. Are you trying to out-spend a problem that really needs reframing?

05. If you could only make one decisive move in the next six months, what would it be?

Need a chat?
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A GELLAN WATT PUBLICATION

ONE BOLD MOVE™

Gellan Watt is a brand strategist, creative director, entrepreneur and investor with more than 20 years' experience helping some of the world's best-known brands unlock growth through positioning, creativity and bold commercial thinking.

Founder of multiple award-winning agencies and advisor to founders and leadership teams, he believes every business is just one **Bold Move™** away from everything changing.

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