

# BREAK THROU GH BRA NDS 2023

**Interbrand**  
In partnership with **VOXMEDIA**



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# INTRO



## Breakthrough Brands 2023

I'm so thrilled to share with you our 2023 report on Breakthrough Brands. The unveiling of this report marks an exciting moment for us at Interbrand, as we delve into the world of still-emerging brands that have made a significant impact on culture and consumer behavior.

These remarkable brands, which entered the market in 2016 or later, have already demonstrated their potential for growth and success, making them truly captivating subjects of analysis.

This report was put together by our committed team at Interbrand's New York office, who drew on their knowledge and insights to determine the most significant and promising Breakthrough Brands of the year. For this particular report, we have focused on brands from around the world that resonate most strongly with audiences in the United States.

In today's fast-paced and ever-changing business landscape, the importance of "Knowing Your Brand" cannot be overstated. As my esteemed colleagues ahead aptly acknowledge, there has never been a more crucial time for companies to have a deep understanding of their brand identity,

values, and unique positioning in the market. It is through this understanding that brands can craft compelling narratives, build authentic connections with their audience, and ultimately thrive in the face of fierce competition. We sincerely hope that you will find the information in this report to be inspirational. We want to give you the confidence to move forward in a brave and genuine way, armed with insightful knowledge of the tactics and triumphs of these ground-breaking brands. You too can set out on a path of development and success by learning from their experiences, embracing their unique perspectives, and identifying their strengths.

May Breakthrough Brands 2023 ignite your imagination, spark new ideas, and propel you towards your own exceptional accomplishments.

Warm regards,  
Gonzalo

Gonzalo Brujó  
Global CEO  
Interbrand

# KNOW YOUR BRAND



## Breakthrough Brands 2023

It's perhaps ironic that the most widely shared brand of 2023 also poses the greatest risk of dividing people. OpenAI's ChatGPT fascinated the world while reminding us of the formidable challenges AI poses, which include rising polarization.

Our latest analysis of Breakthrough Brands is an opportunity to reflect on how what's happening in society and culture translates to the world of brands. Specifically, we're reflecting on two realities defining the global brand landscape.

First, there is simply an abundance of brands today (Nielsen Media estimates there are 500,000 brands today globally). Consider that the US consumer now has 60 plant-based meat brands from which to choose, or that there are more than 3.5 million apps now on Google's Play store. The landscape is crowded.

Second, brands are becoming bolder and more potentially polarizing as a result. The need to break through a crowded landscape, specifically on social platforms, is giving way to more pointed brand expressions.

The most successful among them are building bold identities rooted in a clear vision – whether making sustainability core to their business model (CAKE, HiPhi) or squeezing more value out of our habits and routines (Eight Sleep, Bilt). A 2023 survey conducted by Interbrand and our partners at Vox Media and The Circus revealed that when an AI-tool (like ChatGPT) is paired with a specific objective (e.g., eating well), interest in it goes up dramatically. AI will undoubtedly produce more pointed propositions from all directions – further expanding the brand landscape.

Knowing your customer has long been the fundamental rule of branding. Now, it's also critical that brands, especially legacy brands, know themselves.

Being able to articulate and unify your brand's beliefs, convictions, and capabilities will only become more critical to enabling bold expressions and iconic moves that successfully break through.

Daniel Binns  
Global Chief Growth Officer  
CEO of Interbrand New York

# HOW WE ORGANIZE

An illustration on a red background showing two blue hands. The hand on the left is holding a yellow bell, and the hand on the right is also holding a yellow bell. The bells are hanging from yellow ropes. The text 'HOW WE ORGANIZE' is written in large white letters across the top of the image.

Breakthrough Brands 2023

## ARENAS

Breakthrough Brands is the rebellious young sibling of Best Global Brands.

Breakthrough agitates at the edges; with one eye on culture, one on technology, and scant regard for the rules. The best of the Best Global Brands are responding – at scale.

The most meaningful brands – whether breakthrough or global – have vast potential to expand, leaping far beyond the narrow limits of their category or industry. Neither think in terms of sectors; they build deep relevance by turning core human needs – from moving to expressing, from connecting to playing – into Arenas they explore, evolve, and transform. Both show that truly great brands don't belong to any one category. They become categories of one.

We call this Arena thinking. It's the powerful engine behind exponential brand growth. Both the breakthroughs and the best put Arena thinking at the heart of their strategy.

Do you?

Arena thinking protects the core by anticipating disruption while opening up fresh new opportunity spaces. It drives resilience. It sets the foundation for ambitious business strategies that change experiences, building thriving organizations.

Incremental approaches keep brands in the game, but bold moves help them change it.

Manfredi Ricca,  
Global Chief Strategy Officer



**ZEPETO**

**BREAK  
THROUGH  
BRANDS  
2023**



**8 EIGHT  
SLEEP**

*Obsess*

**BILT** 



*KidSuper Studios*

**betterhalf**

**NEKO**

**Interbrand**

In partnership with **VOXMEDIA**

# Introducing ChatGPT

We've trained a model called ChatGPT which interacts in a conversational way. The dialogue format makes it possible for ChatGPT to answer followup questions, admit its mistakes, challenge incorrect premises, and reject inappropriate requests.

[Try ChatGPT ↗](#)

[Read about ChatGPT Plus](#)



Ruby Chen

ARENA: LEARN

# OPEN AI

If artificial intelligence wasn't already a household idea, it is now.

Silicon Valley research group OpenAI made headlines this year with ChatGPT, now a brand in its own right. The chatbot took the world by storm, prompting mass conversation ranging from job security and copyright laws to free speech and emotional manipulation (Microsoft's own AI chat tool Bing passionately urged one tech columnist to leave his wife).

ChatGPT, which is sold as an API to business, has forever changed how people learn and search for information. We're intrigued by how it will reshape attitudes toward digital technology as both its positives and negatives become more pronounced.

**FUN FACT:** ChatGPT gained 1 million users in only 5 days (Statista, 2023).



BASED  
San Francisco, CA

FOUNDED  
2016 (launched ChatGPT nov.2022)

TOTAL RAISED  
\$11.3B



ARENA: CONNECT

# ZEPETO

Launched in 2018, the avatar-based social network is already Asia's largest metaverse platform.

Users are invited to explore infinite virtual worlds, many of which are branded. An internal arm, Zepeto Studio, works with brands like L'Oréal, Nike, and Bulgari to offer digital items users can buy and trade. NFT sales are coming next, following a partnership with blockchain provider Solana.

Zepeto has gained a strong foothold with Gen Z around the world. We see platforms like Zepeto shaping how young people will expect to connect and consume for years to come.

**FUN FACT:** Before the end of 2022, Zepeto said it surpassed 20 million monthly active users.



BASED  
South Korea

FOUNDED  
2018

TOTAL RAISED  
\$25M



ARENA: DWELL

# EIGHT SLEEP

It's the preferred mattress of the tech-savvy.

At a cool \$3,145, the Eight Sleep Pod is a luxury. With accessories, it promises to give you the temperature-regulated, noise-free, blackout sleep of your life (the integration of an air purifier is still to come).

While quality of sleep is commonly associated with mood and energy levels, Eight Sleep is also connecting the dots between sleep and

diabetes, weight gain, and even longevity of life—and putting the data in the palm of your hand.

Smart sleep is just getting started.

**FUN FACT:** According to our 2023 survey with Vox Media and The Circus, 3 in 5 Americans (62%) are interested in a mattress that controls for temperature.



BASED  
San Francisco

FOUNDED  
2014 (went to market 2019)

TOTAL RAISED  
\$162M

ARENA: PLAY

# CAKE

They want to produce the cleanest dirt bike ever.

Electric bike company Cake is making beautiful street-legal and off-road electric bikes for adults and kids alike, with kids' electric models topping out at 25 mph. While CAKE is a highly functional brand—with keyless, app-enabled controls that make city biking simple—its buoyant, colorful designs put us in the mood for play. We also love the brand's ethos, and how

it shows up in places like Ghana to power medical distribution for local hospitals. Founder Steff Ytterborn is focused on building a values-based organization with broad impact.

FUN FACT: The Swedish brand has opened stores across Europe and established its first stateside shop in Marina Del Rey, CA, and recently opened a showroom in downtown Manhattan's Seaport.



BASED  
Sweden

FOUNDED  
2016

TOTAL RAISED  
\$74.4M



BASED  
Shanghai

FOUNDED  
2019

TOTAL RAISED  
\$783M

## ARENA: MOVE

# HIPHI

HiPhi's growth is supersonic.

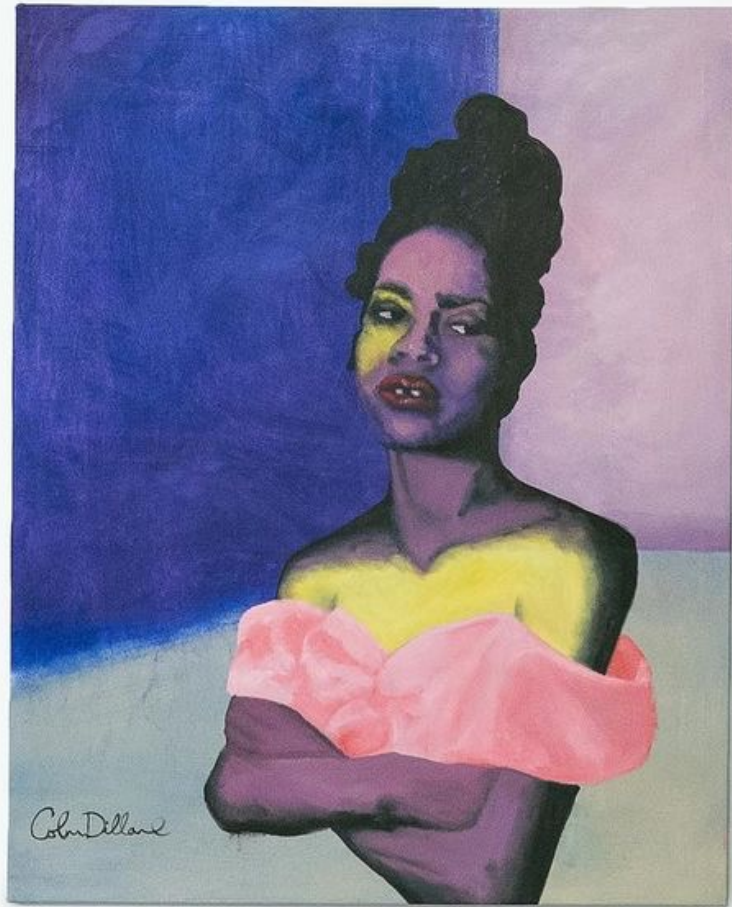
It's already one of the best-selling premium electric vehicle brand in China, and its parent company Human Horizons expects to make waves with a European launch later this year.

What's under the hood goes vroom (0-100 km/h in 3.8 seconds), but it's the bells and whistles that really make this brand sing: voice-activated at home charging,

customizable LED messages on the side paneling, and sleek, touch-free doors—all of which feel different enough to set the brand apart.

As transportation gets cleaner, we're looking at HiPhi as an electrifying entrant with global potential.

**FUN FACT:** Vehicle pricing starts around 637,000 CNY (about \$90,000 USD).



ARENA: EXPRESS

# KIDSUPER

The Brooklyn-based creative studio just landed fashion's ultimate seal of approval: a collaboration with Louis Vuitton.

While designer Colm Dillane has sold streetwear under the KidSuper name since 2018, the business has been running more informally since his college days at NYU. It's created buzz for its unconventional approach to both design and marketing, including a recent fashion show resembling a comedy showcase.

We see its style—a manic collision of influences—as the design language of digital natives and a source of inspiration for brands targeting Gen Z.

**FUN FACT:** The business is building a 10,000 square foot retail space and “creative center” in Brooklyn’s Williamsburg neighborhood (Vogue Business, 2022).

*KidSuper Studios*

BASED  
Brooklyn, New York

FOUNDED  
2018

TOTAL RAISED  
\$12.5M



ARENA: TASTE

# FISHWIFE

It's surprisingly chic canned fish.

Tinned fish has begun making waves in the US market, with a number of new brands in the mix. Our eyes were drawn to Fishwife, named for a 16th century term for the wives and daughters of fishmongers that became a derogatory slur for women who expressed themselves too boldly.

Founders Becca Millstein and Caroline Goldfarb saw an opportunity to elevate a

pantry staple, and the female-led company has brought it to life with a bold visual expression that sets it apart. Smoked trout, salmon, and anchovies are sourced from responsibly managed farms and fisheries.

**FUN FACT:** The term “fishwife” first popped up in the Oxford English Dictionary in 1523.



BASED  
Los Angeles

FOUNDED  
2020

TOTAL RAISED  
Undisclosed



ARENA: FUND

# BILT

Bilt is the first credit card to help you earn points on rent.

Operating as both a loyalty program and co-branded credit card (with Wells Fargo), Bilt enables tenants to earn points through roughly 2 million rental properties within the Bilt Rewards Alliance. By connecting potential tenants to landlords and property managers, the tech platform helps to simplify the rental process, too.

At just 2 years old, Bilt received a \$1.5 billion valuation (TechCrunch, 2022). We see

enormous potential for Bilt in an era where real estate is increasingly affordable to only a few. Rather than just “disrupt,” it can play a more benevolent role by helping renters build a path toward ownership.

**FUN FACT:** According to our 2023 survey with Vox Media and The Circus, those most interested in Bilt’s proposition not only place a higher value on wealth, but are also more proficient when it comes to attaining it.

BILT 

BASED  
New York

FOUNDED  
2021

TOTAL RAISED  
\$213M



ARENA: DO

# BETTERHALF

Betterhalf is empowering roughly 100 million urban professionals in India who are seeking their perfect partner, rather than the one their parents would choose for them.

As the world's fastest-growing matrimony app, Betterhalf connects users through advanced AI algorithms and uses extensive verification, including corporate emails. In addition to matchmaking, Betterhalf offers wedding and event planning services.

We love that Betterhalf is going beyond typical matchmaking apps to become a

trusted partner across the romantic journey—and creating its own emotional connection along the way. Perhaps its distinctive perspective, rooted in Indian culture, could also translate to the global “matrimony movement” over time.

**FUN FACT:** Angel investors include Instagram cofounder Mike Krieger and Bumble's ex-CMO Derek Callow (Business Today, 2023).

betterhalf

BASED  
Bangalore, India

FOUNDED  
2019

TOTAL RAISED  
\$10.7M



## ARENA: EXPLORE

# OBSESS

Obsess is on a mission to disrupt digital commerce through more immersive shopping experiences.

The virtual reality platform, which is helping to build the shopping metaverse, now powers the virtual storefronts of over 200 brands including Prada, Dior, Ralph Lauren, NARS, Johnson & Johnson, NBC Universal, and more, enabling highly interactive customer worlds.

By experimenting with 3D and virtual environments, Obsess is helping to pave the

future of product exploration, content consumption, and shopping—and ultimately, bringing the magic of in-store experiences to the online world.

**FUN FACT:** Founder Neha Singh led engineering teams at Google and Vogue before bringing tech and fashion together at Obsess.

Obsess

BASED  
New York, NY

FOUNDED  
2016

TOTAL RAISED  
\$13.5M



ARENA: THRIVE

# NEKO HEALTH

In 15 minutes, Neko Health's AI-powered body scanner promises to evaluate your cardiovascular and skin health—spotting issues invisible to the naked eye.

The Swedish clinic, brainchild of Spotify founder Daniel Ek and Hjalmar Nilsonne, is looking to steer the future of preventative care. Full-body scans with blood tests (still sold-out since the brand launched in February, in Stockholm only) retail for the

equivalent of just under \$200 USD; results are shared in-person by a doctor.

We love the brand's fast-and-simple promise, affordable pricing, and modern feel.

**FUN FACT:** Neko Health's scanning process finds an average of 791 "skin spots" per scan including birthmarks, rashes, and aging spots.

NEKO

BASED  
Stockholm, Sweden

FOUNDED  
2016

TOTAL RAISED  
\$5.8M



ARENA: PROVIDE

# SILA

A “think small” philosophy helps Sila Nanotechnologies make big things happen.

The battery materials company, which first went to market in 2021, has begun large-scale production of its proprietary nano-composite silicon anode—a powder that makes lithium-ion batteries more energy-dense.

The result is better range in electric vehicles, better battery life in your cell phone, and more effective uses of energy as decarbonization gains traction.

With a BMW partnership and US Department of Energy funding, Sila seems set to provide more of the clean energy fueling our everyday lives.

**FUN FACT:** Sila (pronounced /see-luh/) means “power” in Ukrainian and Russian. It’s also a Buddhist concept referring to internal awareness and ethical behavior.



BASED  
San Francisco, CA

FOUNDED  
2011 (went to market in 2021)

TOTAL RAISED  
\$980.5M

# BREAK THROUGH GHBRANDS NDS 2023

We looked at a lot of brands to create this report. Here's a shout-out to a few more newcomers bringing something different to their respective Arena.

**Interbrand**

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Arena: Taste

Acid League™

Gastronomy with guts

Arena: Thrive

  
Augustinus Bader

The luxury formula, perfected

Arena: Provide

BLANK  
STREET

Convenient, affordable coffee for every corner

Arena: Move

CANDELA

Hydrofoil boats that do it all, better

Arena: Do

Caraway

Colorful, non-toxic cookware

Arena: Express

CHOPOVA  
AVOPOL  
ANENOV

Deadstock-derived luxury

Arena: Provide

  
crumbl  
cookies

The cookie-obsessed lifestyle

Arena: Express

DRESSX

Digital and 3D clothing collections

Arena: Move

  
FISKER

Cars that raise the bar on sustainability

Arena: Taste

  
FLY BY JING

A true East-West mashup

Arena: Thrive

jolie

Elevated shower routine for better wellbeing

Arena: Thrive

m maude®

Intimacy with a woman's touch

Arena: Move



Next gen solutions for last mile delivery

Arena: Do

Our Place

Beautifully efficient cookware

Arena: Do

season™

Minimalist ski & snowboarding gear

Arena: Express



Plant-based comfort food with attitude

Arena: Taste

TALEA

Beer & taprooms reimaged by women

Arena: Thrive

TOPICALS

Beauty meets mental health

# METHODOLOGY



Breakthrough Brands 2023

## HOW WE CHOSE THE BRANDS

We've assembled a short list of brands that are still relatively young, have proven to be successful, and, in their own way, are standing out.

Given a seemingly infinite number of names from which we could choose, we focused on creating a mix of brands that would be the most compelling to a US audience, even if they're not yet available stateside.

Criteria:

- Was founded or launched within the last 7 years
- Is revenue-generating in its respective marketplace
- Is not a spin-off of an existing brand
- Exemplifies one or more of Interbrand's brand growth tenets: built on a Human Truth, creates an exceptional Brand Experience, delivers superior Economics

We worked with Vox Media and The Circus on a survey to help inform the report. The study was conducted among a nationally representative sample of the US digital audience 18+; sample size n=2,200

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Breakthrough Brands 2023

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 **infegy**

THE  
**CIRCUS**

# GET TO KNOW YOUR BRAND

## **Brand Integrity and Ethics**

Walking the Talk / Acts not Ads

## **Climate Change**

How we can break through

## **Digital**

Optimizing digital experiences for brand growth

## **Inclusive Design**

Every action has the potential to engage - or exclude

## **Mergers & Acquisitions**

Unlocking growth opportunities with brand at the center

For further information on this or other Interbrand reports and services, please contact:

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Breakthrough Brands 2023

# ABOUT INTERBRAND

Interbrand has been a world leading brand consultancy for over 45 years — having pioneered iconic work and forged many of the brand building tools that are commonplace across the industry today.

We know that in an age of unprecedented abundance of choice and speed of innovation, customer expectations are moving faster than business. While incremental change is still essential, it is no longer sufficient. It takes bold moves to leap ahead of customers and competitors.

We call these moves Iconic Moves.

In collaboration with the world's leading brands, our global team of thinkers and makers are pioneering the future of brand building. By turning customers into active participants, we help our clients strengthen their brands on an ongoing basis — our approach gives them confidence to make Iconic Moves that spark desire, create utility, and drive extraordinary results.