

OUTSTANDING INNOVATION

Awards 2024

CELEBRATING INNOVATIVE BRANDS WORLDWIDE
...and how they Find New Space

INTRODUCTION

Innovation is crucial to driving sustained growth. For all brands, big or small, success depends on finding new ways to engage with people.

This can happen in many ways – not just through new products or services, but also in additional contexts, on different occasions, or with wider demographics, for instance. Kantar analysis has shown that brands that can identify and move into new space double their chances of growth. But getting it right isn’t easy. So, what makes the difference?

To help answer that question, last year we launched Kantar’s Outstanding Innovation Awards. We drew on our comprehensive research to **identify excellence in innovation** and share key insights on how brands were achieving it. From household names to emerging stars, the winners and the approaches they took were hugely diverse. What they had in common was an **ability to stretch in new directions while maintaining an authentic presence.**

For this year’s awards, we’re again showcasing the brands that have demonstrated the **vision and boldness necessary to step into new space.** As the winners make clear, there’s no one-size-fits-all answer – and the path to success is rarely straightforward. The rewards, though, are undoubtedly real.

CONTENTS

A STANDING OVATION FOR OUR WINNERS	4
CATEGORIES	
CONSISTENTLY INNOVATIVE BRANDS	6
RISING INNOVATIVE BRANDS	14
PIONEER	22
BRAND BLUEPRINT AWARD – INNOVATION	26
FIVE LESSONS LEARNED FROM SUCCESSFUL INNOVATORS	32
CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS	40



A STANDING OVATION FOR OUR WINNERS

We identified our winners using Kantar BrandZ data, Worldpanel data as well as assessment by our innovation experts.
We used three important criteria.

1 Being Meaningfully Different

Kantar BrandZ analysis consistently finds that the brands that people perceive to be meaningful (meeting people's emotional and functional needs) and different (offering something that others don't, and leading the way) consistently outperform the S&P 500. All our winners scored highly on being meaningful and different.

2 Demonstrating innovative behaviours

The winners also scored highly on one or more of the following innovation attributes: shaking things up, fitting well into everyday life, leading the way, offering a good range of products and services, making people's lives better, having well-designed products and services, and being committed to sustainability.

3 Sustained business impact

Meaningfully Different innovations should drive improved business performance. To assess the impact of innovation on business results, we looked at sales data (where available) and Kantar BrandZ scores including Demand Power, Future Power and Pricing Power.

We supplemented this analysis with a wide range of publicly available information sources, and interviews with some of the winning brands.

**Let's reveal the winners in each category,
and what makes them stand out.**

A person with curly hair, wearing a light blue long-sleeved shirt and light-colored pants, is captured in a dynamic, dance-like pose. They are leaning forward with one leg extended and arms outstretched. A bright yellow circle is superimposed over the text, and the background is a vibrant mix of purple and pink light gradients.

CONSISTENTLY INNOVATIVE BRANDS

The winners in this category have demonstrated **innovative activity** over a sustained period.

An analysis of Kantar BrandZ data from the last five years revealed how these businesses have successfully forged paths into **new space**.

Whether they're a new kid on the block or the proud owner of a distinguished heritage, the brands here are never content to rest on their laurels.

NUTELLA

Nutella’s **innovation journey** began in Piedmont, Italy, in 1964 – when the company Ferrero blended hazelnuts, sugar and cocoa into a smart (and sweet) solution.

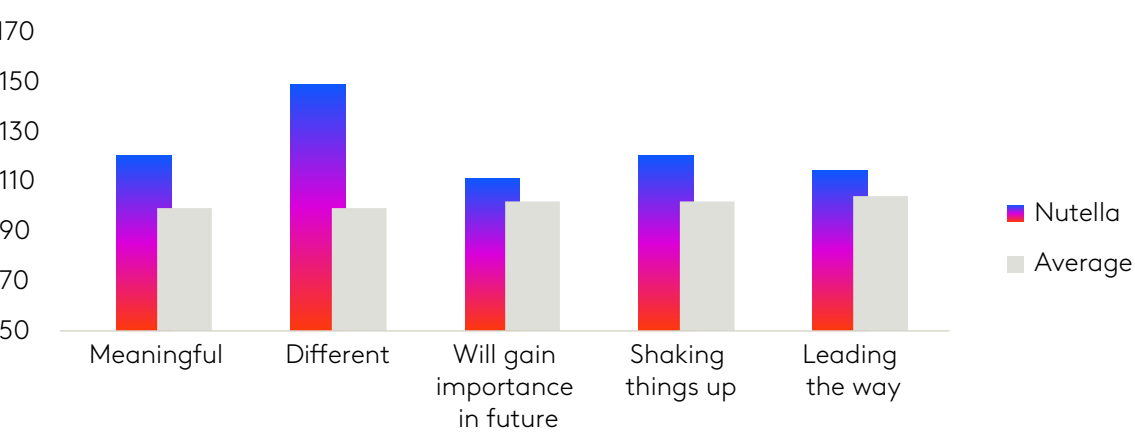
The much-loved brand’s distinctive identity is reflected in perceptions of it as being highly **meaningful** and **different**. Nutella is now building on this strong foundation to move into exciting new space. In Europe last year, it launched products targeting the out-of-home market. Spotting an opportunity in people’s changing attitudes towards desserts, the company worked with quick-service restaurants to offer Nutella pastries in McDonald’s and Nutella ice cream in KFC and Burger King.

The brand is also **investing significantly** in the US market. In 2023, it doubled its line-up there by bringing two spread-filled products to the country: its B-Ready wafer bars and heart-embossed Nutella Biscuits.

Genuinely bold moves in new directions create ideal opportunities for **imaginative advertising and marketing**. Nutella has seized this chance through playful campaigns that have reinforced its unique character. In 2022, the brand launched a collectible ‘Breakfast across America’ range of jars in the US. Intended to help people create “special breakfast memories”, these featured one of 16 landmark locations alongside a local recipe, from a New Orleans-inspired beignet to blueberry pancakes from Portland. Similar lines have followed in India and Canada. And to mark its 60th anniversary this year, Nutella launched 11 limited edition jars, featuring relatable personalities like ‘the superhero’, ‘the romantic’ and ‘the chef’.

The spirit seen in these initiatives comes through in the way people see Nutella as shaking things up and leading the way. In addition, the brand’s ongoing determination to stay on top of trends – it is launching a plant-based version this year – helps explain why it is expected to gain importance in future.

Nutella showing high meaningful and different scores



Source: Kantar BrandZ



“The change in the perception and consumption of desserts has led us to be present in the out-of-home market alongside other strategic and penetrating partners who can cover the different consumption modes required today: on-premise, on-the-go, take-away, and home delivery. Nutella is confirmed as the most suitable product to become part of the channel’s offer, thanks to its versatility.”

Gabriele Primavera,
Out-of-Home Sales Director,
Ferrero

A telecommunications operator since 2016, the Indian brand Jio has shown courage and vision to expand into a wide variety of other sectors, driving rapid growth. Jio's top BrandZ scores for **Demand Power** and **Pricing Power** attest to its consistent disruption of new markets. The free daily mobile data it offered at its launch proved massively popular, catapulting India to the top spot in global usage. Since then, Jio's affordable prices and eye-catching offers (such as free TVs) have continued to see huge uptake, forcing other providers to adapt.

The brand's growing consumer base has allowed it to build a comprehensive digital ecosystem, ranging from music and video streaming to financial services and online groceries.

Jio's nationwide, low-cost 4G network has empowered rural communities. Together with **innovative products** like the JioBharat, a budget feature phone, it is supporting economic growth and helping to bridge India's digital divide. (Jio added 2 million rural mobile users in July 2023, while its competitors lost ground.) Last year the brand broke the mould again, providing free streaming of live Indian Premier League matches to attract millions of cricket fans to its video platform. Analysts believe this **audacious move** could lead to around half of India's video on demand subscribers switching to JioCinema.

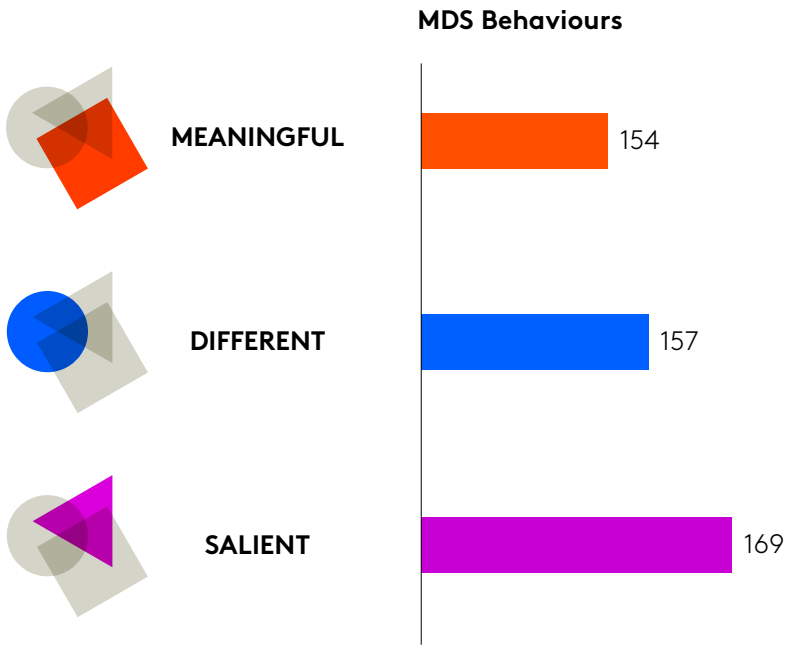
From connected cars to content, Jio's activities reach far and wide – but they are driven by a clear underlying purpose. This is reflected in Kantar data, which indicates that people see the brand as fitting well into their lives while making them better. The company's top **Future Power** score is backed up by products like its AirFiber service – providing fast speeds without a cable infrastructure – and its **pioneering research into 6G**, which it aims to take to the global stage.

“Jio Platforms is primed to take the lead on a global scale in advancing 6G capabilities, which would be the first company in the world to develop the next-generation network.”

Mukesh Ambani,
Chairman and
Managing Director,
Jio



Source: Kantar BrandZ



Innovative Behaviours

- | | |
|---|--|
| 126
Make people's lives better | 123
Will gain importance in the future |
| 125
Fit well into everyday life | 124
Offer a good range |
| 121
Stand for something unique | 122
Have well designed products and services |
| 124
Shaking things up | 121
Leading the way |

SAMSUNG

Samsung regained its **number one position in the global and European smartphone markets** in the first quarter of 2024. The popularity of its Galaxy S Series model contributed to the company selling 12.1m phones in Europe in the period, achieving a **37% market share**.

The brand does not only rely on the strength of its current offers to grow: it has shown **real confidence** in its willingness to stretch into fertile new space. Samsung offers a far more extensive range of smartphones than its rival Apple, from more affordable to high-end models, and leads the small but significant foldable phones market.

The company’s determination to continue innovating is seen in its cutting-edge research in screen technology. Last year it unveiled a new foldable phone concept that can bend 360 degrees both inwards and outwards – alongside other exciting prototypes like an OLED screen with a built-in fingerprint sensor to measure health data. The values that underpin such work are reflected in people’s strong impression that the brand is **leading the way** and stands for something **unique**.

Samsung also shows **genuine imagination** in its approach to **sustainability** – helping explain why it leads perceptions for this category for its sector. Since 2022, the company has partnered with scientists to **recycle discarded fishing nets in its products**. Recycled materials can now be found in all Samsung’s Galaxy mobile products – including tablets, PCs and wearables as well as smartphones. The Galaxy S24 series takes this approach a step further, incorporating recycled metals in key components. The battery in the Galaxy S24 Ultra contains a minimum of 50% recycled cobalt and 100% recycled rare earth elements.

Samsung’s groundbreaking sustainability initiatives contribute significantly to its high **Demand Power** score, where it comfortably outperforms its competitors.

“Samsung is responding to the threats of climate change with a comprehensive plan that includes reducing emissions, new sustainability practices and the development of innovative technologies and products that are better for our planet.”

Jong-Hee Han,
Vice Chairman and CEO
Samsung Electronics

MARKET LEADERSHIP

\$24B
revenue from mobile experience (MX)

12.1M
smartphones sold in Q1 2024

37%
market share in Europe

INNOVATIVE MATERIALS

Recycled Materials
Galaxy S24 series uses recycled fishing nets and other materials

Expansive Use
Found in phones, tablets, PCs and wearables




ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT

Implemented
new sustainability practices

Developed
eco-friendly products

Samsung has top scores versus competitors when looking at Demand Power, Future Power and its Sustainability Index

Have an impact on

Sustainability Index	Demand Power	Future Power
Samsung  125	Samsung  400	Samsung  139
Brand A 120	Brand A 277	Brand A 133
Brand B 118	Brand B 123	Brand B 133
Brand C 106	Brand C 113	Brand C 131
Brand D 104	Brand D 103	Brand D 129
Brand E 103	Brand E 87	Brand E 123
Brand F 101	Brand F 86	Brand F 112
Brand G 101	Brand G 73	Brand G 109
Brand H 100	Brand H 58	Brand H 104
Brand I 99	Brand I 45	Brand I 103

Source: Kantar BrandZ



RISING INNOVATIVE BRANDS

In today's connected society, consumers' expectations change fast. The winners in this category have in the last two years shown the capacity to meet this challenge: **evolving in line with rapidly changing trends** or generating new ones of their own. We analysed Kantar BrandZ data since 2022 to identify the **brands reinventing themselves in imaginative and exciting ways.**

CHASE PAYMENTS

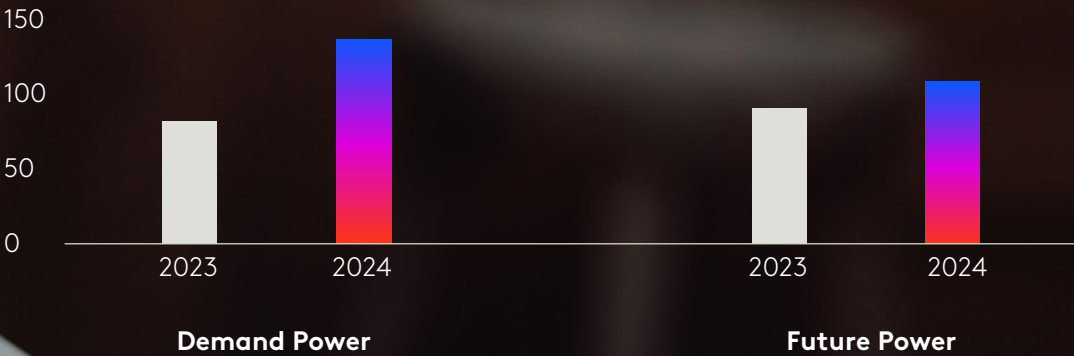
Through **Chase Payment Solutions**, the US bank JP Morgan Chase has stepped into a dynamic new space, offering a suite of products to help small businesses manage the payment process more efficiently. The arm of the business was rebranded in 2022, helping the bank secure a strong position in a **growing market** while building robust relationships with small enterprises.

As consumers increasingly shun cash to pay with cards and phones, Chase has adapted to meet this need, combining the trust it has earned as an established finance brand with the **agility of a fintech startup**. Its QuickAccept technology provides a fast, convenient way for merchants to receive credit card payments in person or online, and means they see funds in their account the same day. It can be used with tools including a point-of-sale terminal and app, card reader, and 'tap to pay' for iPhone.

Data from these transactions is brought together through **Chase Customer Insights** – a business intelligence platform that provides intuitive, actionable analytics, with no additional setup or fees. Supplementary offers such as this create a deeper engagement with small and medium businesses, opening up further opportunities through Chase's wider banking services.

A positive response to the service is evident in Chase Payment Solutions' rising scores for **Meaningfulness** and **Demand Power**, as well as its increase in **Future Power**. Perceptions of a range of relevant attributes have also risen, with the brand increasingly seen to be shaking things up, offering a good range and standing for something unique. Recent moves, such as its **expansion of 'tap to pay'** into Canada, indicate the brand's ongoing **drive to engage with new users**.

Chase Payment Solution's Demand Power and Future Power increasing versus 2023



Source: Kantar BrandZ

VIRGIN AUSTRALIA

In 2020, new challenges facing the aviation industry prompted Virgin Australia to completely re-imagine its business strategy, focusing on a **streamlined fleet** for domestic and short haul international travel, a revitalized customer value proposition.

This move was accompanied by **new sustainability measures**, and a commitment to reach net zero by 2050. The change of direction was reinforced through inspired creative content, emphasising the promise of “exceptional experiences at great value”.

The renewed sense of purpose brought authenticity to **Virgin Australia’s** marketing, allowing it to strike a chord with the public. A new brand campaign ‘Bring on Wonderful’, focusing on the airline’s staff, highlighted its customer service and ambition to “bring joy to your journey”. One popular experience was the **Middle Seat Lottery**, which gave customers who booked this - traditionally only 1% of customers - the chance to win thousands of dollars’ worth of prizes, such as flights, tickets, and holidays. The competition generated publicity across the world, and was extended for several months.

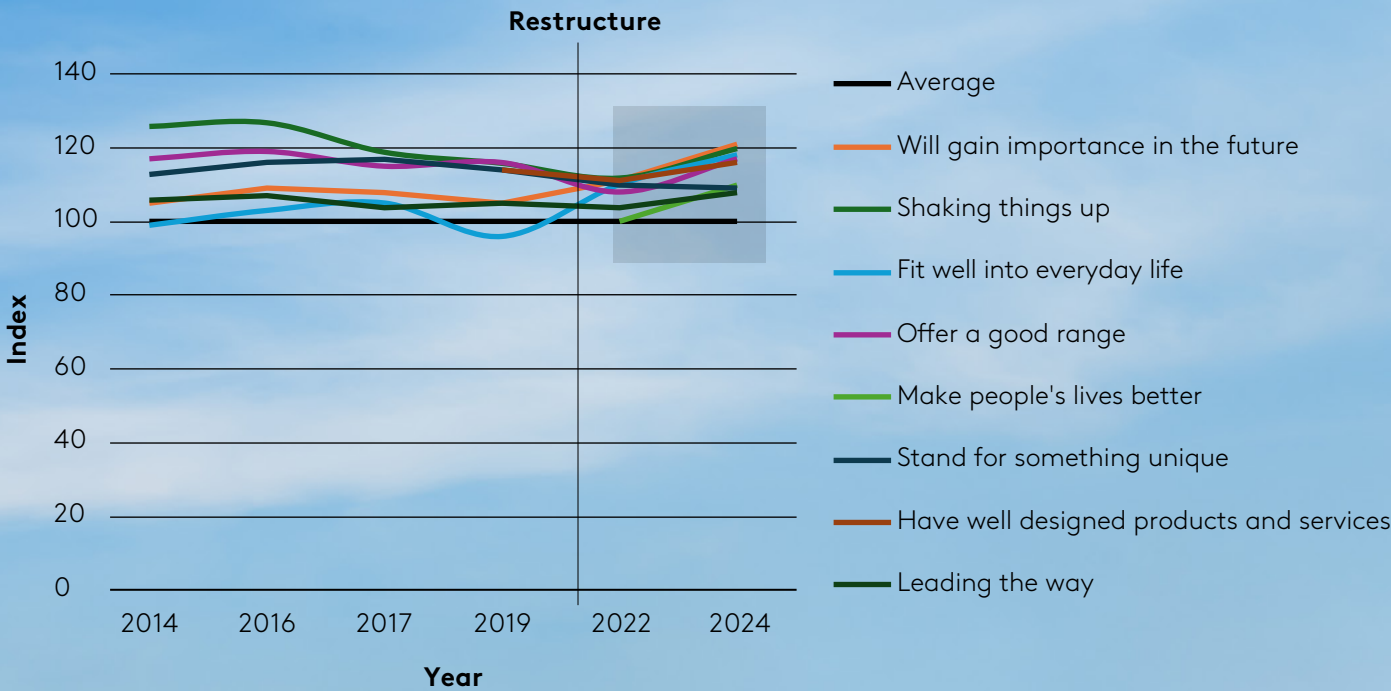
The changes helped the brand **find new space** in meeting demand for domestic and short haul travel following the COVID-19 pandemic. In 2023, Virgin Australia became profitable for the first time in nearly a decade. Its penetration, as well as its **Future Power** score, are also now both resurgent following post-pandemic dips. This turnaround vindicates the brand’s courage in rebuilding its strategy and its commitment to innovation continues to be seen in new offers such as **baggage tracking**, a **rebooking** tool, and plans to allow **pets in the cabin**. These efforts are clearly getting consumers’ attention.

Kantar data shows the airline is increasingly seen as gaining importance, shaking things up, and fitting well into people’s lives.

“These examples of our innovation all solve different problems – but what is consistent is the way we consider what the customer experience looks like, what the pain points are for customers, and how we think about innovating in those spaces to solve those problems.”

Libby Minogue,
Chief Marketing Officer,
Virgin Australia

Virgin Australia’s key Innovative Behaviours scores rising year on year from 2020



Source: Kantar BrandZ

BECK'S

A pioneer of developments such as green bottles, UV-protected bottles and the six-pack format, the German-founded beer Beck's is **"driven by innovation"**. The brand continues to build on this history, taking a series of **bold steps to open up exciting new space**.

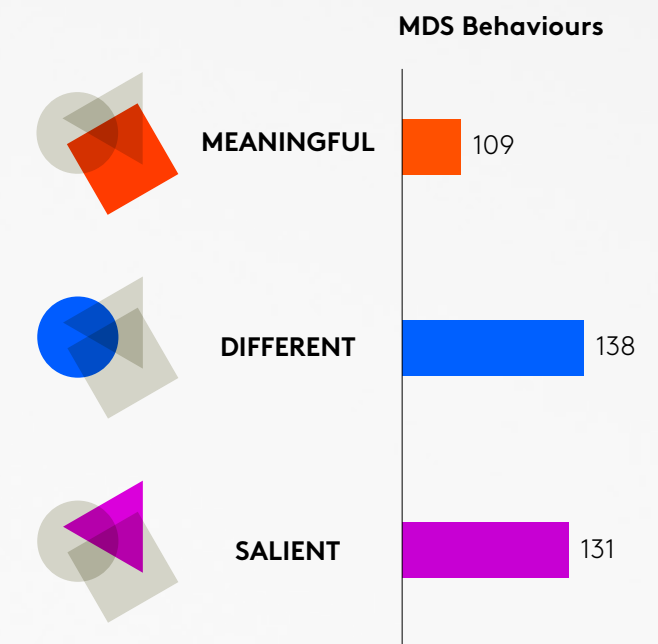
Imaginative launches, like 2018's special edition cans shaped like champagne glasses, have encouraged people to rethink their perceptions of the beer and consider it in new contexts. Beck's has also developed a succession of inventive products to respond to evolving needs. In 2019, it brought us Lemon Brew, the first 'naturradler' (natural shandy). Combining 50% Beck's beer with 50% brewed lemonade created this drink's "100% natural taste" – offering a less sweet flavour than typical shandies, with fermented notes. The move demonstrates how **Beck's never stands still** – not simply following trends, but redefining them.

The company continues to scan the horizon to identify new opportunities. In Brazil last year, the brand unveiled **Beck's 70+**, a limited-edition beer for more mature drinkers, working with AKQA on an accompanying advertising campaign. Featuring a more intensely bitter flavour to account for the reduced taste sensitivity that can sometimes come with age, the product allowed the brand to engage effectively with a sometimes-overlooked demographic. Beck's also recently underlined its disruptive spirit with Beck's Autonomous, a beer designed using AI for every step of the process, from recipe to advertising – including its tagline, "The beer that made itself". The 450 bottles produced sold out within hours.

The impact of initiatives like these is evident in the way people see the company. Within Germany, Beck's has been the most differentiated beer brand, and had the highest score for leading the way, since 2014. It also boasts the sector's strongest Pricing Power, and is **top-rated for shaking things up**.

"With new behaviors in everyday life, maturity takes on a different meaning in today's society... It is a dialogue with the pro-aging culture movement, which understands that age does not limit people's desires and aspirations."

Rodrigo Barbosa,
Creative Director,
AKQA



Source: Kantar BrandZ



PIONEER

This category recognises brands who **break new ground** in their sphere, developing unique approaches to enter new space. We used a qualitative analysis to assess the brand's **wide range of inspiring activity**.

FINI

Fini, a Spanish confectionery maker whose biggest market is Brazil, stands out as a business that has imaginatively found new space way beyond its home turf of confectionery. It consistently delights consumers, using its inimitable charm as a springboard for innovation that wins new fans and surprises old ones.

Fini's personality shines through in the adventurous partnerships it has developed with other brands in the Brazilian market. From shoes to lip balms, the brand's collabs make the most of its rich sensory appeal – from flavour and colour to texture and smell.

Not only has it joined forces with other food companies such as the **Go Coffee** chain, which offers a vibrant 'Candy Line' of Fini drinks. It has also used its joyful colours and scents to team up with a variety of fashion brands, including the flip-flop maker **Havaianas**, and **Colorama** nail polish. And with Carmed, a lip

balm from the pharmaceutical firm Cimed, Fini recently launched one of the most popular collabs in Brazil. In 2023, Carmed was produced in a range of Fini flavours. After engagement with social media influencers helped make the product a hit with young people, Cimed's earnings from the **Carmed** line soared from R\$ 24m in 2022 to R\$ 400m in 2023.

As it stretches into new sectors, Fini doesn't take its core market for granted. With special confectionery editions inspired by iconic movies such as Harry Potter, or linked to traditional Brazilian festivities, it always offers people something new – and suggests new occasions for enjoying the product. The brand thinks carefully about how best to serve people's needs – producing different sizes of packet to suit a range of situations, from 14g to 450g. Fini also creates new versions in line with **growing food trends** – recently launching **vegan and sugar free options**.

“With well-defined values, Fini knows exactly what experiences it wants to provide to its consumers, prioritizing quality and efficiency in everything it produces. The brand values the special and is dedicated to inventing and creating without worrying about barriers or judgments.”

Pablo Moreno,
Global Marketing Director,
Fini



SMELL

Havaianas
(fashion brand)



FLAVOR, TEXTURE AND SMELL

Carmed
(lip balm)



COLOURS AND SMELL

Colorama
(nail polish)



FLAVOUR

Go Coffee
(coffee shop)

Source: finicompany.com

A woman with dark hair is shown from the waist up, wearing a shimmering, fringed dress. She is looking upwards and to the right. A bright, glowing blue energy effect, resembling a lightning bolt or a powerful beam of light, emanates from her right arm and extends across the frame. The background is a gradient of dark blue and purple.

BRAND BLUEPRINT AWARD INNOVATION

These awards were given at the **Cannes Lions** festival of creativity and innovation in June 2024. They recognise brands that have **consistently demonstrated innovative behaviours** while moving into new space. Having worked closely with these brands, we recently had the chance to interview them in depth to understand how they've built on their **strong heritage to reinvent their offer.**

BAILEYS

Baileys has unlocked massive opportunities by **reimagining what it can offer to consumers**. The brand had seen many years of double-digit growth. Its performance dipped in about 2009, however, when it “started to lose relevance” and later lost around 11 million consumers, Sarah Gilligan, Global Innovation Marketing Manager for Baileys, told Kantar in an interview.

The brand has since turned around its fortunes by having the courage to fundamentally rethink **“what was great about Baileys”**, says Gilligan. Realising that the true product identity was in fact **“part cake, part booze”**, it decided to position the brand as an adult treat. This meant that from the small world of cream liqueurs, Baileys could move into the **“big, big, world of treating”**. Embracing the ‘five Cs’ of this new arena – cake, coffee, chocolate, ice cream and cocktails – “opened up massive versatility”, and injected a new playfulness into the brand’s communications.

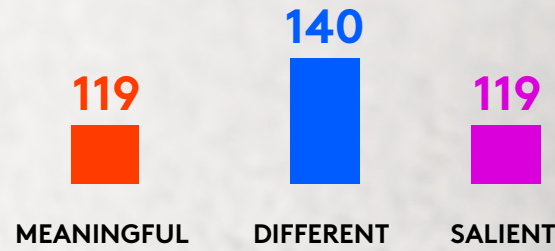
Innovations within this “rich territory” have allowed Baileys to reach into different space, which bring “new diverse

consumers and new occasions that can’t be accessed by the original Irish cream”, says Gilligan. Innovations like Baileys Strawberries and Cream, which was launched in the summer, have helped the brand “stretch into new seasons”, beyond its traditional strong period around Christmas, and recruit up to 25% more consumers. Mint Choc Shake and Baileys Colada are among the other drink flavours on offer, alongside **Baileys cakes, ice cream and chocolates**.

Gilligan says the key to successful innovation is to start with a **“really clear strategic intent”** for what it can deliver for consumers. She also advises brands to “stay curious” in seeking inspiration from diverse places such as “the dynamic world of coffee and cake”.

“The treating strategy has allowed to anchor ourselves in lots of different treats, and showcase how versatile the Baileys brand can be.”

Sarah Gilligan,
Global Innovation Marketing Manager,
Baileys



110
Shake things up

99
Fit well into everyday life

105
Offer a good range

108
Make people’s lives better

109
Leading the way

Source: Kantar BrandZ

GUINNESS

Guinness has recently launched **two highly successful innovations**. Its Guinness 0.0 non-alcoholic beer has gained huge popularity, with the brand owner Diageo announcing plans last year to almost triple production. 2023 also saw the introduction of the acclaimed Nitrosurge, a can-top device that gives people the “satisfyingly smooth” experience of draught Guinness at home.

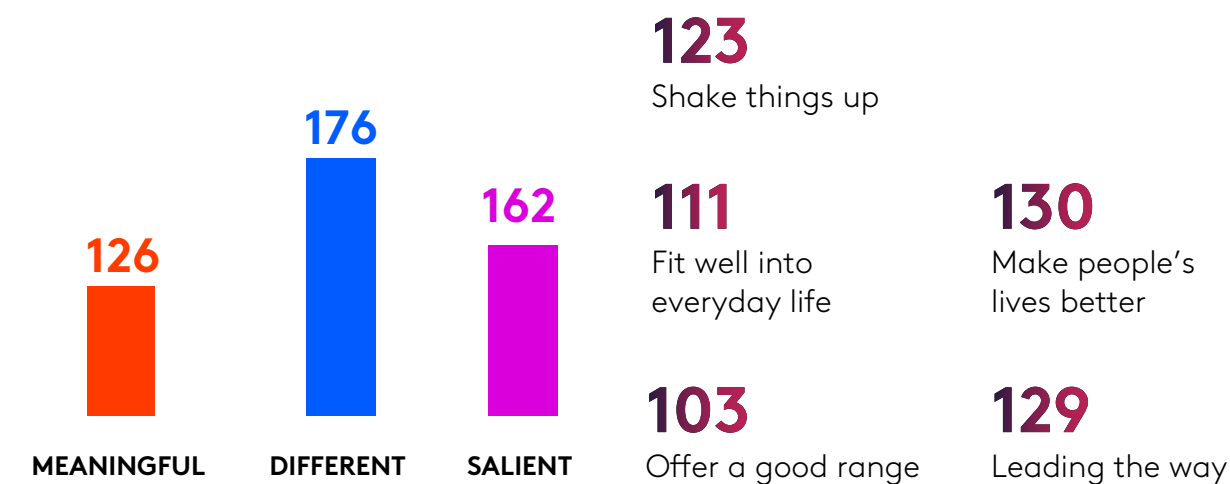
Anna MacDonald, Marketing Director for Guinness in Great Britain, told Kantar in an interview this year that all of the brand’s activity is ultimately rooted in its “timelessness and authenticity”, with its values of “power, goodness and communion” remaining “consistent for decades”. The philanthropic spirit of founder Arthur Guinness also contributes strongly to the brand’s Meaningful Difference.

The prospect of innovating from this enviable heritage might seem intimidating. But Guinness appreciates that its meaning for consumers comes from “quality, taste, and emotion”, says MacDonald. The brand “continues to invest in all of those things, and really think about how those things come to life in new ways”.

The assured way that Guinness has stretched in new directions is grounded in an understanding of long-term consumer patterns.

The “trend towards moderation” in alcohol drinking created a “strong and sizeable consumer opportunity” for Guinness 0.0, says MacDonald. Similarly, the Nitrosurge arose from spotting a clear chance to improve sales for drinking at home.

Identifying an opportunity is not enough in itself, though, says MacDonald, who also stresses the importance of a “commitment to quality”. With Guinness 0.0, this meant being patient enough to release a product that could meet the brand’s standards and overcome negative perceptions about non-alcoholic beers. Likewise, getting the Nitrosurge right depended on rigorous conversations with stakeholders and technology partners. A similarly exacting approach to the brand identity – from small touchpoints to iconic advertising campaigns – is also “key to the success”, says MacDonald.



Source: Kantar BrandZ

“The brewers that work on Guinness are immensely proud of what they do... They would not have been ready to go to market until we were absolutely sure that this was a product worthy of the Guinness brand name, worthy of Arthur Guinness’s legacy.”

Anna MacDonald,
Marketing Director for
Guinness in Great Britain

A man with a mustache is shown in profile, looking down at a smartphone held in his hand. The background is dark with out-of-focus red and blue lights, creating a bokeh effect. The title text is overlaid on the image, with a yellow circle highlighting the word 'LESSONS'.

FIVE LESSONS FROM SUCCESSFUL INNOVATORS

Each of our winners has a proven track record of using **innovation to drive sustained growth**. Here, we highlight five important lessons we can learn from them.

1. BE BOLD

“We partnered with Betty’s Burgers in Australia, and we did burgers in the lounge, which was fun. Having those surprise and delight moments for your customers is really important. Innovation doesn’t have to be big tech. It can be just creating a moment of joy for a customer.”

Libby Minogue,
Chief Marketing Officer,
Virgin Australia

Brands that innovate successfully must be thoughtful enough to develop new ideas, then bold enough to implement them. **Samsung’s** strength in the foldable phones market, for example, relies both on its pioneering research into this technology, and in having the confidence to make the unconventional concept accessible to consumers. Similarly, the vast strides that **Jio** has made into India’s internet provision have been based both on technological advances and strikingly affordable pricing that taps into unmet demand. Both of these brands did the work to identify new opportunities for innovation. Crucially, they then also showed the resolve to test their idea out in the real world.

Being bold doesn’t mean being reckless. Innovations should be supported by solid research and strategic thinking to build momentum behind them. But after planning a path into new space, innovative brands still need to find the courage to take the first step.

When they do, they often find it unleashes a new sense of **playfulness** – because businesses that are not afraid to do things differently are able to show their personality. Having fun in this way can not only drive further new offers, but also add **rocket boosters** to marketing campaigns.

2. QUESTION THE BUSINESS YOU THINK YOU ARE IN

“The big unlock for the [Baileys] brand came in 2015 when it was reframed to take on adult treats – this was really the catalyst for growth.”

Sarah Gilligan,
Global Innovation
Marketing Manager,
Baileys

The most innovative brands are often those that are confident enough to **fundamentally challenge** how they are meaningful and different. When they commit to thinking carefully about the value they offer, many realise it’s not quite what they had assumed.

One inspiring example is **Baileys**, which had enjoyed growth for decades as a **cream liqueur**. When its star began to fade, it took time to reflect. This led to the realisation that its true identity was an **adult treat** – opening up many new options for imaginative products. Through summer drinks, cakes, ice creams and more, the brand found exciting ways to reach new consumers and new occasions.

Similarly, the confectionery brand **Fini** realises it can offer consumers much more than sweets. This has opened the door to bringing its vibrant colours, textures, and flavours to inventive partnerships with other brands, resulting in products from lip balm to footwear. Moves like this may be unexpected – but they’re not wacky for the sake of it.

Having a deep understanding of a brand allows marketers to extend its strengths in new directions.

3. BE TRUE TO THE BRAND

Authenticity can make the difference between an innovation that works and one that doesn't.

When Virgin Australia reimagined its offer in 2020, it focused on its core purpose of providing **domestic flights** at great value. The brand was clear about the meaning it created, and how it was different. Building a coherent portfolio in this way led the company to return to **profit** while boosting its perceptions among consumers. It also allowed the brand to create marketing campaigns that resonated with people across the world.

Nutella has also used its **Meaningful Difference** as an effective foundation to innovate from. The brand has established a strong identity through its popular cocoa and hazelnut spread.

This means it can stretch into new space, like snacks and takeaway desserts, without diluting its distinctive appeal.

Alongside this, it deploys creative marketing to engage with and reinforce the emotional connection that people have with the brand. **Guinness** likewise uses its exceptionally strong heritage as a basis for powerful innovation in both products and advertising.

"We positioned ourselves as a value carrier providing great everyday low fares to our guests, for an experience that provides the things they want and nothing else."

Jane Hrdlicka,
Chief Executive,
Virgin Australia

4. STAY CURIOUS

Curiosity lies behind all successful innovation. It's an attribute that drives brands to try doing things differently and see where it takes them. Beck's demonstrates this mindset clearly in its bold initiatives like creating a beer using **AI**, or letting its customers design their own labels for its bottles.

Companies that are curious about the world around them are likely to better understand evolving markets and emerging consumer needs.

Truly innovative brands don't just follow trends, though: they take them in new directions.

An awareness of the growing importance of sustainability encourages Samsung to help reduce pressure on the Earth's resources. But it takes a genuinely inquiring spirit to develop the imaginative partnerships and processes that allow it to increasingly incorporate recycled plastic, glass and metals into its phones.

Whatever the industry, it's essential to be open-minded about where new space might be found. **Sarah Gilligan** of Baileys advises marketers to "look at what's happening in your category and adjacent categories". Her brand has learned a lot from other **adult treat products** – "but we can get inspiration from so many other spaces," she says.

"Innovative design brings valuable changes — not merely novelty — to our customers' lives."

TM Roh,
President and Head of
Corporate Design Center,
Samsung Electronics

A man with long dark hair and a goatee, wearing a black wetsuit, holds a surfboard under his left arm. He is looking off to the side with a slight smile. The background is a soft-focus sunset over the ocean, with warm orange and yellow light. The entire image has a semi-transparent purple overlay.

5. DON'T GIVE UP: LEARN, TEST AND LEARN

Trying new approaches doesn't always work – so successful innovation is likely to require persistence and flexibility. When **Guinness** was developing its Nitrosurge, it knew there was a clear opportunity to extend the market for its beer in homes. The company was also aware, though, that there was a “huge backlog of failed projects in that same space”, says **Anna MacDonald**.

Thankfully, this didn't stop the brand from trying. MacDonald stresses that “just because you've had a failed execution in a particular opportunity space, it doesn't mean that you should walk away from that opportunity altogether”. Instead, Guinness focused on getting the product right – as well as really understanding the practicalities of selling **technology**, a field “completely outside of business as usual”.

Brands should “test, learn and adapt quickly”, advises Baileys' Sarah Gilligan. “It is disappointing when innovation doesn't land as well as expected,” she says. “But there's always so many rich learnings you can take and apply to future innovation spaces.”

**“You have to be willing to fail,
and learn from that.”**

Libby Minogue,
Chief Marketing Officer,
Virgin Australia

**“Our main recommendation
is to adopt a mindset of
constant experimentation.
It's important not to be
afraid to test new ideas, even
if they initially seem risky.
Innovation often arises from
exploring unknown territories
and learning from the
outcomes, whether positive
or negative. Additionally, it's
essential to seek continuous
engagement, collaboration,
and feedback from different
stakeholders—consumers,
employees, partners, and
industry experts. Innovation
is a dynamic, continuous, and
collaborative process, and
embracing this approach can
lead to truly transformative
discoveries, like those we
have experienced at Fin”**

Pablo Moreno,
Global Marketing Director,
Fini

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

As this year's winners show, the rewards of effective innovation can be substantial. Finding new space is not easy, though – and many attempted innovations fail to ever gain a foothold. So, what can brands do to help them get it right?

Build confidence and momentum

It's human nature to fear change. Even the most successful innovations will at some point face resistance and scepticism. That's why it's essential to bring colleagues and stakeholders with you on the journey. This can be done effectively using **data** to bust myths, **research** to substantiate ideas and storytelling to build confidence in the potential of the innovation.

Anna Macdonald from Guinness says it has sometimes been necessary to provide data to combat doubts within her company and help build momentum behind innovation.

"Whatever your style is, it's finding what do you need to be confident to stand for this, and be brave and swing out big. If you need data, go and find the data. If you need to be able to paint a vision, find some people who can help you do that brilliantly and bring it to life."

Anna MacDonald,
Marketing Director for
Guinness in Great Britain

Think inside out and outside in

Unlocking new space is best approached from different directions. Firstly, brands need to take an **'inside-out' approach** to develop a close understanding of their current market – assessing the industry landscape closely, understanding what challenges exist for consumers, and analysing how those are being addressed. At Baileys, they "always start with the consumer", considering how an innovation "is going to delight them, showcase a new occasion that they can enjoy or [help them] really overcome a challenge", says Sarah Gilligan.

Alongside this, it's also important to gain an **'outside-in' perspective** – taking a much wider view to perceive how culture and trends are shaping the future. An effective strategy will combine insights from both points of view. This could involve analysing shopper data and competitor websites to understand current consumer behaviour, for example, while also using **social listening** and **reading trends reports** to assess emerging opportunities.

"We use the innovation tracker a lot to help us to focus on those new consumers, new occasions and new demographics and making sure that it is incremental."

Sarah Gilligan,
Global Innovation
Marketing Manager,
Baileys

Stay agile

Innovation is a process that requires informed and often rapid responses to unforeseen events. It's important for brands to have the insights they need to help them do this at every stage. As a new product or service is being designed, agile tools can help brands understand consumer needs and see new possibilities. Useful approaches at this point may include digital search, and **idea and concept testing** – all of which can benefit from incorporating AI.

Companies also need to stay close to their innovation once it's out in the world. Here, innovation guidance systems can help them track progress and make changes if needed. Guinness' Anna MacDonal emphasises that innovation is a **"long-term journey"** with **"different questions at different parts of that journey"**. Given this, monitoring how people respond to a new offering, and which elements resonate, helps brands have confidence in how their innovations are landing.

The path to new space is not always clear, and it will be different for every brand. As this year's winners show, though, it can be found. Applying the right mindset, approaches and insights can remove much of the guesswork, and guide you towards **lasting growth**.

We've been honoured to work with some of this year's award winners, and would love to talk to you about your innovation challenges, too.

**GET IN TOUCH
TO FIND OUT MORE**

INNOVATIONS THAT FUEL BRAND GROWTH

Screen, test and validate your innovations with a suite of agile market research solutions that deliver rapid insights at the speed of your business.

BOOK A DEMO



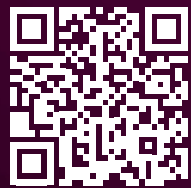
CREDITS

Authors

Louisa Croudace, Dr Nicki Morley, William Birtwhistle and Anita Watkins

Contributors

Alejandro Dueñas, Alina Evans, Anoushka Griggs, Antarip Biswas, Aurela Hajzeraj, Debora Mondella, Fabiola Nguembu, Heather Buys, Hemant Suthar, Hrishikesh Kar, Jacqi Levy, John Portsmouth, Kira Kolosova, Natalie Minella, Natasha Sue Yan Bong, Nathalia Martini, Nelson Foong, Pradnya Vhangade, Rudy Shi, Suéllenn Lopes, Valerie Zhang, Vanca (Wenjia) Jiang, Vesper Wang and Yasmeen Nawwar



www.kantar.com/outstanding-innovation

About Kantar

Kantar is the world’s leading marketing data and analytics business and an indispensable brand partner to the world’s top companies. We combine the most meaningful attitudinal and behavioural data with deep expertise and advanced analytics to uncover how people think and act. We help clients understand what has happened and why and how to shape the marketing strategies that shape their future.

www.kantar.com

[GET IN TOUCH](#)