

GENUINE BOLD

by Will Marré

Behaviors and motivations shared by the successfully daring.

The term *bold moves* has become synonymous with performing radical strategic surgery to create new ways of making money, developing innovative products, attracting new customers and boosting brand energy.

Bold moves are exciting, and seemingly risky. When they work, we deeply admire them. GE's commitment to eco-magination was a bold move. So was Nike's commitment to integrating iPods into their shoes. Zappos' commitment to creating happiness; IBM's focus on a smarter planet; Campbell's Soup nourishing the world; virtually every product Apple has invented: all bold moves.

A few months, ago a client asked me to research the factors that drive successful bold moves. So, together with our Apple to Zappos' research team, I studied and interviewed leaders who are brilliantly successful at creating organizations that consistently create game-changing value.

It may not surprise you that the leaders who bravely pursue and implement adventurous ideas tend to focus on a common set of principles. However, what caught my attention was not just what they did, but also that they had one big intangible quality in common. It's simply this: Each of them was up to something more than just making money.

Driven by values

Granted, all the bold-moves leaders I researched have produced stunning financial growth and profits for their companies, but that was the result of a goal far deeper than financial return. They each had a primary vision of doing something that had never been done before to create bold new value for people and society.

From Campbell's Soup's new recipes for healthy children, to Nike's commitment to using sports to help girls in poor nations develop self-confidence, to IBM's focus on harnessing technology for sustainability, all of the leaders behind these campaigns were burning with values-drenched vision.



There are six core practices I found that drive successful bold moves when they are fueled by leadership passion.

1. *Cut to grow.* Not all revenue is good revenue. Creating new value requires unreasonable investments of talent and money. That comes from refocusing the organization in the few new things that matter. Steve Jobs cut Apple's 40 "me-too" products down to four original ones and reduced \$7 billion in revenue to \$5.7. Starbucks closed 600 stores. Ford killed 40 car models. Aggressive pruning makes for healthy growth.
2. *Assault the status quo.* Being bold means standing at the intersection of unsolvable problems and customer desires — to be willing to operate from the edge of your industry and become the new authority. This takes a wholesale refusal to settle for the old ways of doing things. So throw away benchmarks. Breakthroughs come from reframing established ideas and sticking your thumb in the eye of convention.
3. *Be today's best version of yourself.* Great brands keep growing. They rewrite their stories by standing on the shoulders

of their heritage. Old brand promises have to be reimagined to stay relevant and find allegiance with new customers.

4. *Do what others are afraid to do.* Great leaders are willing to create overwhelming focus and frightening force to obliterate competitors. Apple invested \$193 million in advertising the iPod in the first 12 months of its release. The closest competitor invested \$10 million on its MP3 player. Having the courage to redefine a category and create enthusiastic customers is essential for a daring concept to have impact.
5. *Strive for benefiting humanity.* According to today's consumer, if you are not up to something bigger than making money, you are up to no good. Customers are activists who demonstrate their values with their wallets. In a recent survey, 86% of consumers agreed that business has a direct responsibility to solve social problems and heal the environment. Such issues impact all of us. Being committed to them as an organization is what drives innovation, attracts talent, engages employees and impresses customers.
6. *Change fast.* Bold moves are nearly always revolutionary. Making them requires simultaneous realignment of

strategy, talent, brand and internal systems. Fast change is more successful than slow change, because it creates focused energy. It also produces results that sustain the change. The real world demands we constantly adapt. You will always need new products, new channels and new customers. Position yourself to do these things swiftly.

As you see, these six drivers of successful bold moves are pretty scary. They are definitely not business as usual — or even business a little better.

Bold leadership requires so much courage that the motivation to change must come directly from your deepest values. Genuine bold moves originate in the bone-deep inner convictions of courageous leaders who are willing to make their difference.

Do you have a vision that is vitally important to you? Are you unwilling to accept defeat in its pursuit? To be genuinely bold, nothing less will do.



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