

OGILVY—JANUARY 2019

# Insta- branding

*The impact of Instagram  
on the orthodoxies of  
traditional branding*

Ogilvy

By Antonis Kocheilas

*Are the most  
popular brands  
different than  
before?*

*Is that causing  
us to question the  
traditional rules  
of branding?*

# What we know ...

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**The goal:** We sell, or else.

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**Define your positioning:** The most important decision is how to position your product.

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**Know your consumer:** The consumer is not a moron. It is your wife.

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**Brand image:** Every advertisement must contribute to the complex symbol which is the brand image.

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**The product is hero:** Torture the product until it confesses all its virtues.

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**Tone of voice:** Most manufacturers want to be all things to all people, and they end up with a brand which has no personality.

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**Layout:** An ugly layout suggests an ugly product. There are few products which do not benefit from being given a first-class ticket.

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*“Insta-branding” refers less to how these brands become popular and more to why they became popular — their nature is determined by social forces that govern how people make decisions.*

# A BETTER MOUSE-TRAP, OR SIMPLY BETTER BAIT?

Today's most talked-about brands are redefining the traditional rules of marketing and advertising. In a world previously dominated by giants like P&G and Unilever, smaller brands are now being born and raised online, and they are taking on the big guys. With tools like Instagram at hand, brands are now able to connect directly with their consumers, leveling the playing field for all.

# BRANDS AND INSTAGRAM: BY THE NUMBERS\*

80% 

of Instagram users voluntarily connect with a brand on Instagram

71% 

of brands have accounts on Instagram

75% 

of Instagram users are more likely to take action when they follow a brand

72% 

of Instagram users have made a purchase after seeing an item featured on the platform

150m+ 

people per month have a conversation with a business through direct message

1/3 

of direct messages start through Instagram stories

10x 

the number of people engage with brands on Instagram than on Facebook

54x 

the number of people engage with brands on Instagram than on Pinterest

84x 

the number of people engage with brands on Instagram than on Twitter

\*References: Adweek, Brandwatch, Instagram.

# CONTENTS

Case Studies	19-71
<i>Glossier</i>	19-23
<i>Kylie</i>	25-29
<i>Lush</i>	31-35
<i>goop</i>	37-41
<i>Fashion Nova</i>	43-47
<i>GoPro</i>	49-53
<i>Outdoor Voices</i>	55-59
<i>SoulCycle</i>	61-65
<i>Tasty</i>	67-71
Takeaways	73-83

# CASE STUDIES

Case Studies  
*Glossier*



Case Studies  
Glossier

Glossier is the brand that all the other beauty and skincare brands are watching. That was always founder and CEO Emily Weiss's plan. Weiss converted her blog, Into the Gloss, into a brand, Glossier, in 2014. Glossier didn't have a marketing team until a year into its existence. It was Instagram—and the brand's engaged followers—that made it such a success. Weiss was able to turn her readers into followers and followers into Glossier brand evangelists. The two main things that set Glossier apart are its brand identity and its control of the digital community. This has led to the rapid growth of its products. The Glossier team insist that this is mostly organic. Customers sharing with other customers is a key part of the business model. The brand expertly took advantage of this, using Instagram as a primary communication tool with customers and as a platform for product launches.



*“What we’re seeing through social media is the democratization of the beauty industry. The customer is becoming the marketer. She’s electing which brands win by posting what she’s using on social media – whether she has 200 followers, 2,000 or 2 million. Your opinion as a woman in beauty has never been more valuable.”*

–Emily Weiss, Glossier CEO and Founder

01—Glossier’s positioning statement is “Skin First. Makeup Second. Smile Always.”

02—Glossier founder and CEO Emily Weiss blogged before she went to work at *Vogue*, where she was a fashion assistant. Within a year, ad sales generated by her website allowed her to quit her day job.

03—Glossier has a “two-way conversation” with the user community. Glossier invited about 100 of its top customers to be part of a group Slack channel. They exchange over 1,100 messages every week.

04—The US flagship, a penthouse in New York, generates more sales per square foot than the average Apple store.

### **Similarities**

- Both brands are selling their idea of beauty.
- Both brands carry skincare and makeup products.
- Both brands have influential businesswoman founders.

## FROM ASPIRATIONAL BEAUTY TO PURSUIT OF BEST SELF

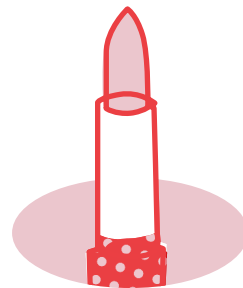
### **Differences**

- Glossier is catering to millennial buyers. Anti-wrinkle creams are out, highlighters and contouring products are in.
- Glossier sells a small line of products that are released slowly and sell out quickly.
- Glossier campaigns include photos that look like ones your friends would take (usually shot with an iPhone).
- Glossier’s campaign images feature genuine fans of all shapes, sizes, races and ages.

Case Studies  
*Kylie*

Case Studies  
*Kylie*

Growing up on a reality TV show, and as part of one of the most widely recognized families in the world, Kylie Jenner was already positioned to have eyes on her every move. Leveraging her massive following on social media, Kylie had a well-defined target market before she even started her cosmetics line. Her loyal audience is a part of her continued success. She regularly posts content on her social channels, sharing which shades of lipstick she is wearing and which new products she is releasing, generating demand without traditional advertising.



*“Let’s be real: Despite the democratic nature of social media, it’s unlikely for a designer to go from total obscurity to Instagram success overnight. A common thread for many of the ‘Instagram brand’ founders I spoke with was that they already had strong personal followings, and/or friends with large followings.”*

—Dhani Mau, *Fashionista* Editor

01—Kylie started her company after tabloids outed her for getting lip injections. She took advantage of the PR to release her lip liners and glosses, claiming that they were what made her lips look bigger.

02—Kylie recognized the younger demographic that followed her compared to her older sisters like Kim. She leveraged her massive social following to identify exactly who her target audience was.

03—Kylie started and grew the company through her preexisting social media presence. She could drive sales or release a product simply by posting an Instagram story, which averaged 10 million views.

04—With success from Kylie Cosmetics, along with other partnerships, Kylie is set to be the youngest self-made billionaire by age 21.

## FROM DRUGSTORE BEAUTY FOR THE EVERYDAY GIRL TO CELEBRITY STATUS AND SOLD OUT IN SECONDS

### Similarities

- Both leverage celebrities as the famous faces of their brands.
- Both are somewhat aspirational and position their products as a way for women to look better.

### Differences

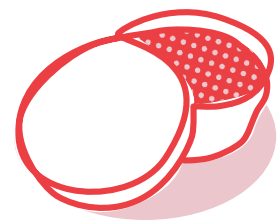
- While Covergirl and other cosmetics lines feature campaigns with celebrity spokespeople, Kylie is the main face of the brand *and* the founder.
- Kylie leverages her Instagram following as the main source of attention.
- Kylie has a more streamlined product line.
- The scarcity and aspirational nature of Kylie Cosmetics make it a more premium brand.

Case Studies  
*Lush*

## Case Studies

### Lush

Since its inception, Lush has prided itself on ethical principles, organic ingredients and charitable endeavors. This has allowed the company to build a loyal following and not rely on traditional media advertising. Lush's internal growth strategy starts by creating brand advocates with its in-store staff. The staff is extremely knowledgeable and strongly encourages trial with sampling. However, Lush doesn't just rely on foot traffic to grow its strategically-located stores. It engages heavily outside the store. A big reason behind its success is a focus on building relationships with its audience. By talking to customers on Twitter, Instagram and Facebook, Lush maintains a continual cycle of conversation and engagement.



*“We don’t advertise above or below the line. We don’t spend money on TV campaigns, on celebrity endorsements. We don’t promote social media posts. So everything we do is organic. Every Facebook post is organic. We have no budget to push behind it. People like to take pictures of [our products] in their shower. We get lots of nude butts... shared. People love it. Bums make impact. It creates an opportunity for creativity. And it means that we invest in things that are more important, like our ingredients and our supply chain and where we source things from. And our people.”*

—Natasha Ritz, Brand Communications Manager at Lush

01—YouTube has become one of Lush’s most effective marketing channels. There are over a thousand unboxing videos of Lush products on YouTube.

02— Lush relies on user-generated content. Hashtags such as the popular #lushtime encourage customers to share their own personal Lush experiences.

03—Lush practices what it preaches, giving 100% of the proceeds from various products to multiple organizations.

04—Lush’s staff is highly-trained and informed. Lush staff receive competitive pay and a generous employee discount, which encourages trials and helps them become product experts.

# FROM DERMATOLOGIST APPROVED TO NATURE PROVIDED

## **Similarities**

- Both brands have the goal of improving skin.
- Both try to appeal to the everyday woman.
- Both highlight specific product benefits in their messaging.

## **Differences**

- Lush is based on all-natural ingredients.
- Neutrogena's claim is "dermatologist approved."
- Lush is dependent on Mother Nature.
- Neutrogena is accessible everywhere.
- Lush highlights that their products are handmade to uphold their mission and values.



## Case Studies

*goop*

Gwyneth Paltrow has created an empire of green juice-loving, chakra-balancing, designer-donning followers through her lifestyle brand, goop. The pinnacle of aspirational brands, goop grew organically (no pun intended) from a newsletter started in Paltrow's kitchen to a publishing house, advertising hub, summit organizer and much more. While the brand has received backlash for its massive price tags and wild products not grounded in science, its followers are incredibly loyal. It seems that the stranger goop gets, the more people get behind it.



*“G.P. didn’t want to go broad. She wanted you to have what she had: the \$795 G. Label trench coat and the \$1,505 Betony Vernon S&M chain set. Why mass-market a lifestyle that lives in definitional opposition to the mass market?”*

—Taffy Brodesser-Akner, *New York Times* Contributor

01—goop has grown from a newsletter to an advertising hub, publishing house, summit, clothing brand and more.

02—Gwyneth Paltrow leveraged her audience to sell her rarefied lifestyle: “She wanted you to have what she had.”

03—goop is known for its outlandish products (vampire repellent and bee-sting therapy, to name a few), which draw more attention to the brand.

04—Gwyneth Paltrow became a martyr as the company started to receive backlash. People defended her, and thus goop’s popularity grew. The weirder it got, the more people loved it.

## FROM A TRADITIONAL LIFESTYLE BRAND TO BUZZWORTHY WELLNESS EMPIRE

### Similarities

- Both expanded to be omnichannel.
- Both are lifestyle brands that are aspirational in nature.
- Both give advice and recommendations for women.

### Differences

- goop is less attainable, whereas Martha Stewart has her products in stores like Kmart.
- goop recommends more-outlandish products, garnering more buzz and attention.

Case Studies  
*Fashion Nova*

Case Studies  
*Fashion Nova*

Fashion Nova is a popular e-retailer known for clothes that are sexy, affordable and (most importantly) worn by celebrities. Though he opened his first store at the Panorama Mall in 2006, CEO Richard Saghian says it wasn't until Instagram exploded a few years later that the brand's reach began to grow exponentially. Fashion Nova was able to leverage their Instagram page without the aid of traditional advertising, runway shows, traditional campaigns or SEO tactics. The brand built a strong following by having both mega- and micro-influencers post and praise their hero product (\$35 denim jeans). Fashion Nova has been incredibly successful at tapping into millennial neurosis: the obsession with seeing and being seen.



*“All the knowledge I gained from having brick-and-mortar stores, I utilized for the website. Being able to listen firsthand to my customers gave me information on what women wanted, what was missing, and what was needed. I realized early on that getting into the minds of my customers is what helped me grow. I don’t think I would’ve been able to do it without all my retail experience from the brick-and-mortar days to the e-comm days.”*

- Richard Saghian, Fashion Nova CEO

01—Fashion Nova currently works with a network of over 3,000 influencers. One of their most notable influencers is reality star turned rapper Cardi B.

02—Fashion Nova's owner reports that the brand grew 600% in 2017. The brand expanded into the menswear and plus-size categories.

03—Fashion Nova was the fourth most Googled fashion brand in 2017, right in line with brands like Gucci, Louis Vuitton, Supreme and Chanel.

04—Fashion Nova's marketing strategy is largely tied to Instagram. The brand posts on Instagram every 30 minutes.

## FROM MALL BRAND TO INSTAGRAM BRAND

### **Similarities**

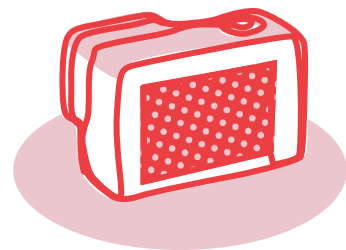
- Both brands target the same demographic.
- Both brands have a fast fashion concept.
- Both brands make clothes that are not meant for multiple wearings.

### **Differences**

- bebe relies on traditional advertising.
- bebe relies on mall traffic.
- Fashion Nova has a very rapid production speed.
- Fashion Nova leverages Instagram culture to replicate celebrity outfits.

Case Studies  
*GoPro*

GoPro has mastered the game of content marketing. They leveraged their audience's concentrated presence on YouTube, Instagram and other social media sites to share original content that made people aspire to the GoPro lifestyle. GoPros are used to capture photogenic moments, which the brand capitalized on to promote the GoPro Movement, using hashtags like #GoProFamily. Through this strategy, they were able to create a sense of belonging for consumers, putting the brand's focus on the lifestyle instead of solely on the product.



*“GoPro, specializing in tough professional video cameras and software, shares customer content to show just how you can put these cameras to good use—from skydiving and mountain climbing to filming the flight of huge birds and rescuing sea turtles.”*

—Pius Boachie, *Adweek* Contributor



01—GoPro has become a lifestyle brand, as ownership brings the promise of a more adventurous and photogenic lifestyle.

02—With a heavy focus on user-generated content, GoPro was able to leverage their users to become ambassadors for the brand.

03—GoPro targeted a clearly defined audience: extreme athletes and adrenaline seekers—people who did not fit into the typical demographic of camera consumers.

04—GoPro had a marketing budget of \$41,000 in 2013, yet doubled sales that same year. Instead of traditional channels, they rely on their social media following.

### **Similarities**

- Camera brands share the promise of capturing meaningful moments in your life.
- Both sell the technical capabilities of the product.

## FROM ART TO ADVENTURE

### **Differences**

- GoPro was the first camera brand to dramatically differentiate itself on the basis of adventure.
- GoPro relies heavily on user-generated content to spread brand awareness.

Case Studies  
*Outdoor Voices*

Case Studies  
*Outdoor Voices*

Outdoor Voices was started to provide people with comfortable clothes to sweat in. It took a more laid-back approach to working out, creating a mass following of fans on social media who bought into the OV lifestyle. Born online, they are a digital-first brand, which uses social media to amplify its community building efforts. Through all of its branding, OV places an intense focus on customers, involving them in the product development process, as well as leveraging their influence over friends and family.



*“The brand and their relaxed mission is expanding even further than influencers, and it’s because of their founder’s unique philosophy. ‘That moment I woke up and said, wouldn’t it be amazing to build the next great activewear brand that approached activity differently, with moderation, and ease, and delight rather than pressure to perform’ [Haney] says.”*

—Shea Simmons, Contributor, *Bustle*

## Case Studies *Outdoor Voices*

01—OV was born online, making it a digital native brand, but they seek to “drive engagement offline and then amplify it through social and digital channels.” They show up where their consumers are to make the relationship even more direct.

02—“Every customer is an influencer.” OV realized that many people wanted to be active yet felt intimidated by the typical image of athletic brands. They created a brand in which people could see themselves.

03—OV founder Tyler Haney has publicly committed herself to raising other women up, especially in the male-dominated business world. She even modeled in a campaign for gGossier, showing that she was not cutthroat toward other CEOs.

04—OV has inserted its brand into many aspects of the consumer’s lifestyle. Instead of thinking of the product only when using it, customers interact with it via social media channels, making it more intimately involved in their lives.

## Case Studies *Outdoor Voices vs. Lululemon*

### **Similarities**

- Both feature products designed to help boost athletic performance.
- Both grew without the use of traditional advertising. (Lululemon released their first campaign in 2017.)
- Both capitalized on the rise of athleisure.
- Both brands have extended beyond digital to show up in real-life moments.

# FROM INTIMIDATING ATHLETICS TO ACCESSIBLE ACTIVWEAR

### **Differences**

- Outdoor Voices positions itself as a more laid-back activewear brand, eliminating the pressure to perform.
- OV brick-and-mortar stores are focused less on driving sales and more on building a community.
- Consumers share more user-generated content for OV.

Case Studies  
*SoulCycle*

Case Studies  
*SoulCycle*

For more than a decade, SoulCycle has relied on the power of its passionate, loyal riders to drive brand awareness and expansion. The brand's community atmosphere and inspirational messages give riders something to believe in. Part of SoulCycle's appeal is their celebrity-like instructors. Instructors use their social media accounts to update people on schedules and classes, to post behind the scenes from the studio, or just to share bits of their lives with them. This is part of SoulCycle's larger marketing strategy, which has relied almost entirely on word of mouth. Yet, with rising competition, the fitness chain has created its first branding campaign to highlight the SoulCycle name and ethos.



*“Since our launch, it’s all been about how do we build a community and how do we cultivate a community. And we want to make people feel that community digitally.”*

—Gabby Etrog Cohen, former VP,  
PR and Brand Strategy at SoulCycle

01—SoulCycle offers “Soul- U” courses. This is an in-house university that offers staff over 100 modules to aid their learning and development. Classes include how to teach on the floor if you’re injured, how to build your own media channels, and what’s new on Snapchat.

02—“Soul Destinations” are pop-up studios that feature the most-beloved instructors in the company in popular vacation cities.

03—SoulCycle boasts over 10,000 rides a day, 11 million visitors to its website, aggressive expansion plans, and an average profit of \$4 million a year per studio.

04— SoulCycle launched its first branding campaign in 2017.

## FROM ONE-SIZE-FITS-ALL FITNESS TO BOUTIQUE COMMUNITY

### Similarities

- Both are centered around fitness.
- Both offer group fitness classes.
- Both are accessible to anyone willing to sign up.

### Differences

- SoulCycle specializes in one area: cycling.
- SoulCycle has been able to build a community without a membership pay model.
- SoulCycle offers drop-in classes for people wanting to sample the environment.
- SoulCycle requires additional equipment at an additional charge.

Case Studies  
*Tasty*



## Case Studies

### Tasty

It's nearly impossible to log on to Facebook without seeing a Tasty video shared on your newsfeed. The online food network has flipped the industry upside down with their 40-second, overhead-filmed cooking tutorials. Tasty has over 94 million likes on Facebook and over 2.2 billion views on YouTube. Tasty, which is owned by BuzzFeed, features short, fast-motion videos that pull the viewer in. The quick tutorial videos regularly get tens of millions of views within 24 hours of posting. And that isn't just because of the delicious food being cooked. The team at Tasty is obsessed about learning from past successes and failures. Tasty uses BuzzFeed's strategy of publishing content directly to social media outlets rather than posting links to stories on their website. Tasty is less concerned about driving traffic back to its website and more about engagement and shareability.



*“Really what we’re seeing is how to make a business out of massive intellectual property that was built digital-first. It’s the same model as old-media networks—you make a movie that people love, and then you build a theme park and extend that to products and everything else.”*

- Ashley McCollum, Tasty General Manager

01—Known for their widely popular overhead food videos—a format whose origin no one seems to be able to pinpoint—Tasty has reimagined the recipe format as a visual, shareable and interactive medium.

02—Tasty has expanded into strategic partnerships and product launches like a branded line of cookware, induction cooktops and cookbooks.

03—The lesson from the launch and fast growth of Proper Tasty is that BuzzFeed plans to go deeper and deeper into specialized niches.

04—The biggest advantage BuzzFeed has, for now, is that it can still make money on these other platforms with its native ads.

## FROM ELABORATE CHEF-INSPIRED MEALS TO USER- FRIENDLY MEALS

### **Differences**

- Cooking shows rely on celebrity chefs and their personalities.
- Tasty is focused on showcasing food above all else
- Tasty videos are very fast, so viewers can binge-watch them

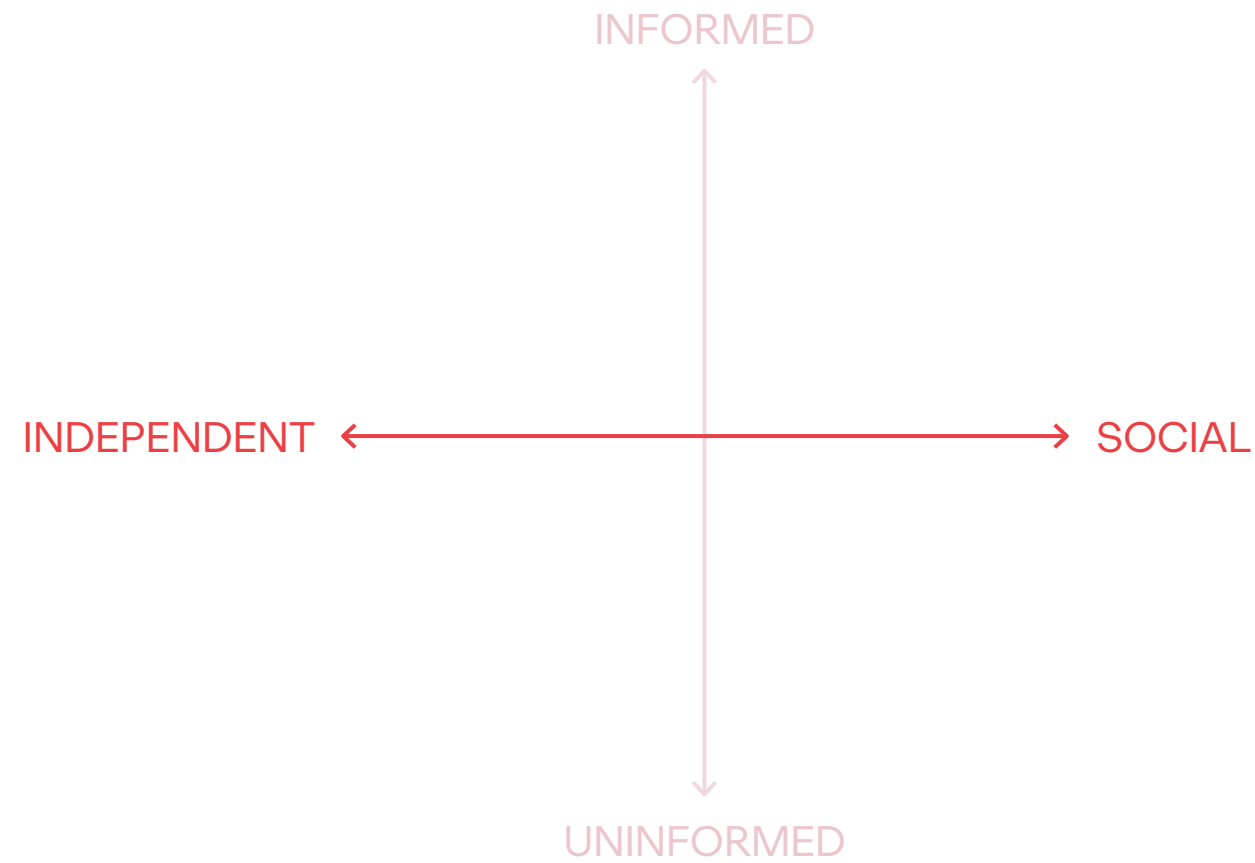
### **Similarities**

- Both are centered around the home chef
- Both are educational and tutorial based
- Both focus on techniques and share new recipes

# TAKEAWAYS

## Takeaways

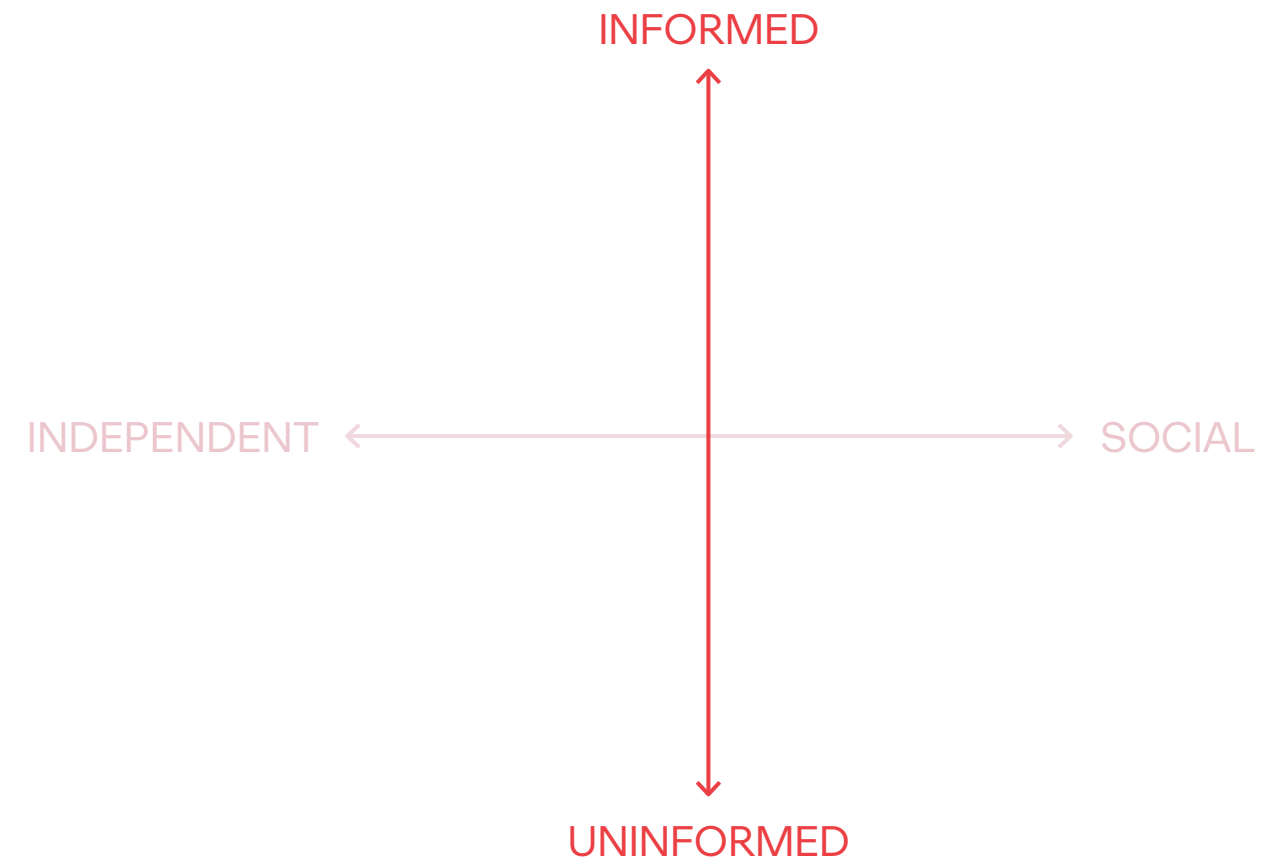
# CHOICE MAPPING\*



The horizontal axis represents the degree to which a choice is shaped by independent decision making and to what extent that choice is shaped by the choices of others or their recommendations.

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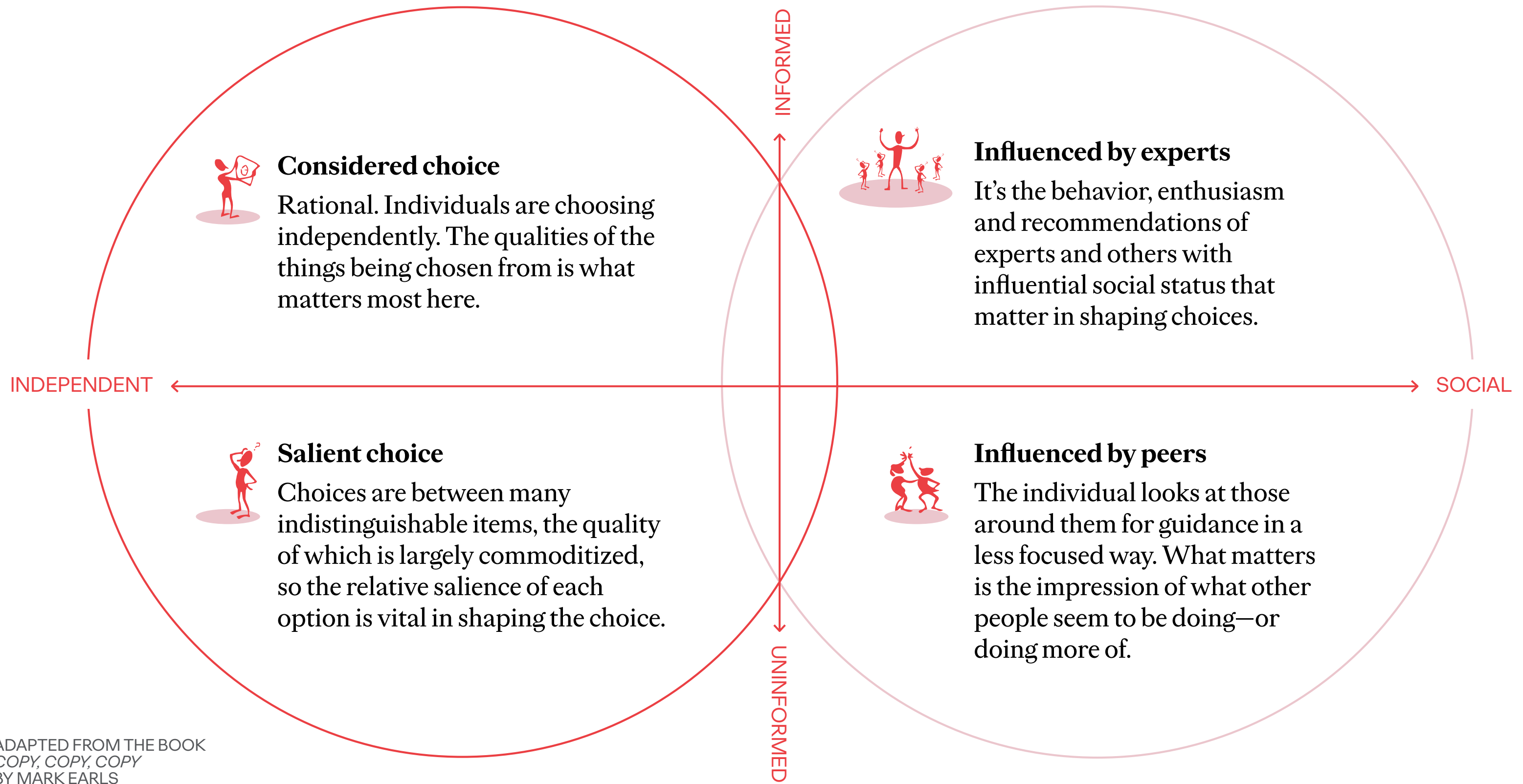
## Takeaways



The vertical axis represents the degree to which a choice is based on available information or On any kind of intuition or appeal.

# FOUR DIFFERENT CHOICE STYLES

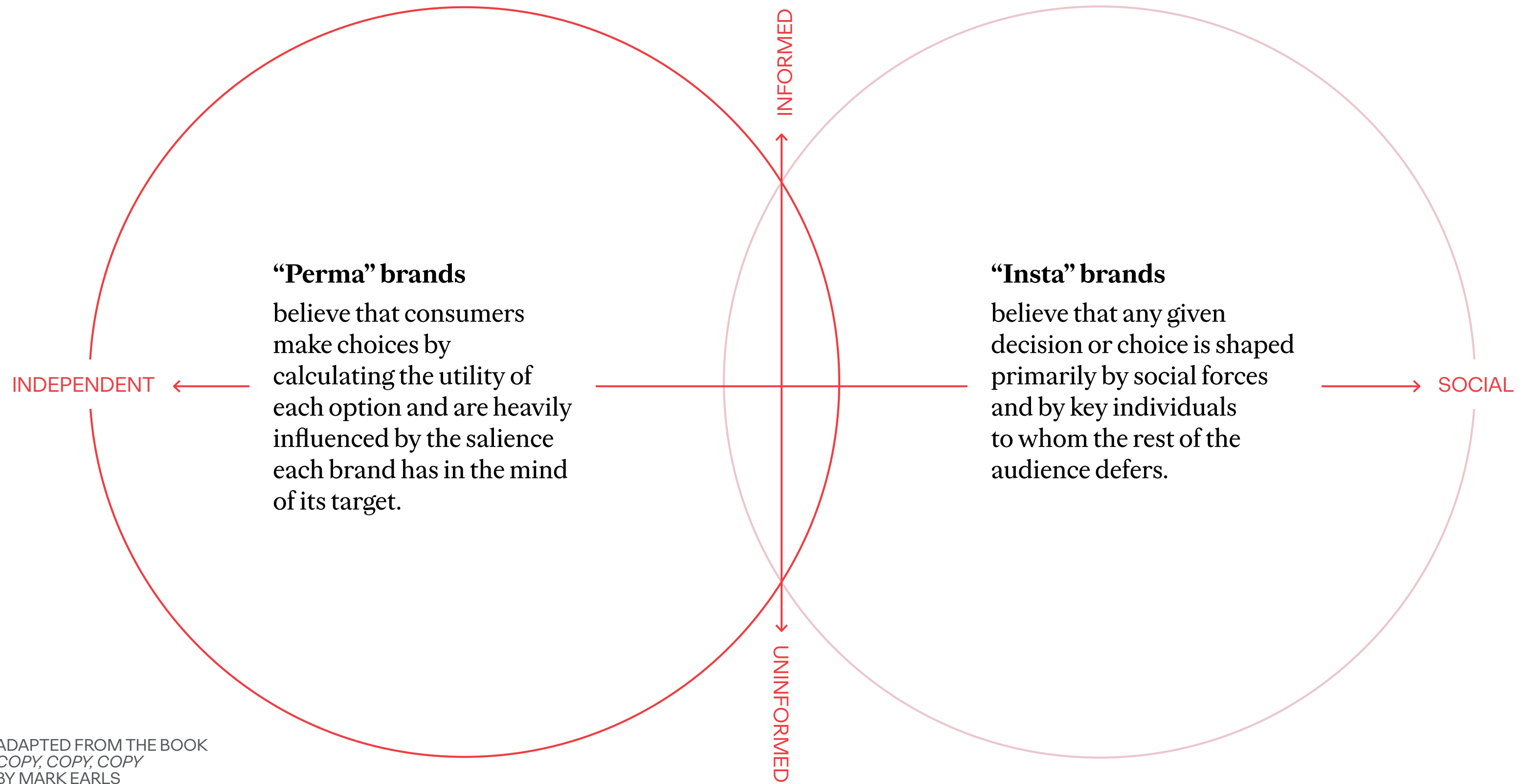
## Takeaways



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# THE DIFFERENCE

Takeaways



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BY MARK EARLS

*The main difference between Insta and Perma branding can be traced to the assumption about how people make choices.*

## Takeaways

# THE BEAUTY ALWAYS LIES IN THE MIDDLE

The distinction between Insta and Perma branding is, of course, artificial. It serves as a provocation to help us think more deeply about the dynamic nature of branding in today's marketplace. The examples in this presentation show how brands found innovative ways to exploit the social forces that govern consumer decision making. These brands managed to use earned influence to their advantage by generating meaningful "pulses" that made them relevant and distinctive in people's minds.

# What we learned ...

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**The goal:** We share (in order to sell) or else.

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**Define your positioning:** The most important decision is which platform you are going to use.

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**Know your consumer:** The consumer is not a moron. It is an influencer.

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**Brand image:** Every post must contribute to the complex symbol which is the brand image.

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**The founder is hero:** Clients can be projected as human symbols of their own products.

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**Tone of voice:** It takes guts to stick to one style in the face of pressure to “come up with something new” every six minutes.

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**Layout:** What really convinces your consumers to share or not to share is the content of your posts, not the form of your posts.

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