



GutCheck Agile Creative Think Tank

Agile co-creation built for scale

GutCheck's Agile Creative Think Tank is a multi-day, iterative, qualitative collaboration with curated, highly creative participants who engage in activities and discussions to co-create new ideas or optimize and amplify existing ones.

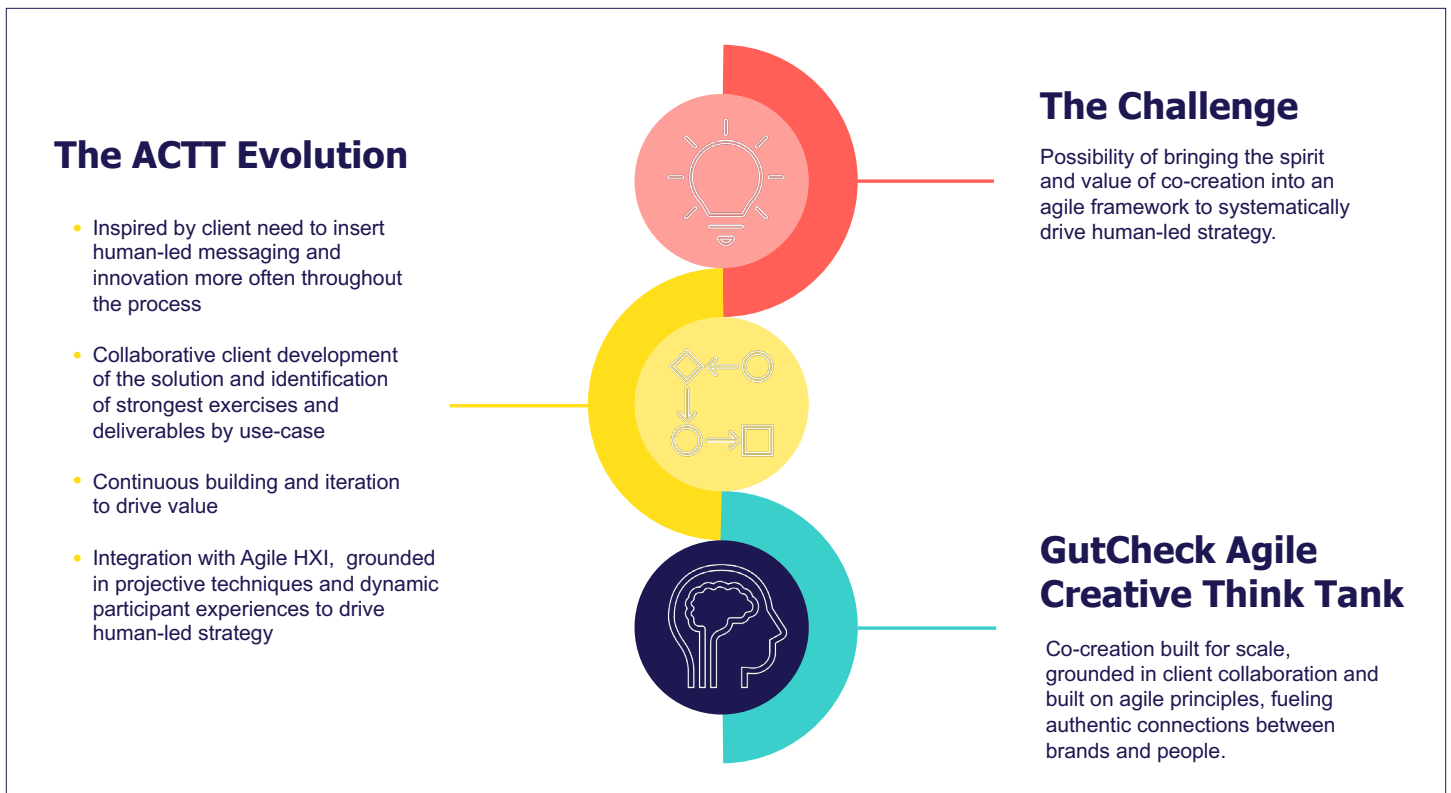
By deep-diving into pain points, exploring behaviors, and honing areas of focus, we build a rich and refined analysis to help fuel a human-led strategy, whether product, service, or messaging.

GutCheck is the **Agile Human Experience Intelligence™** company, leveraging innovative technologies and human expertise to bring you closer to authentic, contextualized human experiences. Understanding human dimensions, emotions, and experiences helps to build products and services that truly “get” the people who use them. The best way to achieve that understanding and ensure research remains human-centric is to incorporate the people who use products and services as key stakeholders and collaboratively ideate throughout the research process.



Co-creation research is designed to solve key issues and generate ideas to ensure the unique perspectives of consumers and users are incorporated; however, traditional methods have limitations when it comes to time and money, which can discourage rapid cycle ideation.

GutCheck and one of our integral clients wanted to explore a solution that would allow collaborative ideation within an agile framework, so we could incorporate people earlier and more often. Together we developed **Agile Creative Think Tank (ACTT)**, a solution that **leverages co-creation and remains agile**, allowing you to collaboratively ideate and evaluate with the people who use your product or service.



Product Overview

Agile Creative Think Tank dives deeply into the experiences, perceptions, and ideas that customers can share to help explore categories and opportunity areas, innovate a new product or service, and align messaging. GutCheck selects highly creative participants to engage in a multi-day online exercise that is designed to understand the “how” and “why” behind behavior and elicit creativity to fuel ideation. Using a variety of fun activities and projective exercises developed to help collaboratively ideate, we gain deep and impactful insights to help make human-centric business decisions.

The benefits of co-creating with your audience using Agile Creative Think Tank are vast.

Co-creation helps to mitigate risk by generating and evaluating innovation ideas early in the process, it helps you ground your innovation or messaging strategy in true human experiences, and it ensures you are aligning the right messaging with your consumers and users, as well as developing products and services that are solving the right problems for them. Agile Creative Think Tank brings the benefits of co-creation into an online experience, making it easier to connect with people so you never have to choose between speed and a human-centric strategy.

By leveraging GutCheck's Agile Creative Think Tank, you can be confident that your brainstorming goes beyond the walls of your company and involves the people who use your products and services, resulting in more meaningful products and services, and a stronger, more authentic connection with your brand.

Common Applications



Category Exploration & Co-Creation

By talking with a group of hand-selected users or consumers, Category Exploration and Co-Creation brings to life how a brand could play in a new or adjacent category by exploring existing perceptions, understanding tensions and motivations, and interpreting the right to play in the category or opportunity area by bridging functional and emotional benefits.



Innovation Co-Creation

Innovation Co-Creation focuses on collaboratively innovating new product or service ideas, identifying potential opportunities to resolve tensions, and optimize and amplify existing ideas. This solution helps to uncover partnership opportunities, benefit and innovation platform development, as well as generate new ideas and build upon existing ideas.



Communication Co-Creation

Through discussion and projective activities, Communication Co-Creation gathers unaided, robust feedback from key consumers and users to ensure claims creation and communication platforms align with what is most impactful for consumers. This can be used to explore claims, positioning statements and communication platforms, product features and attributes, benefits messaging and reasons to believe, as well as packaging and labeling.

Use Case Examples & Key Deliverables

Category Exploration & Co-Creation

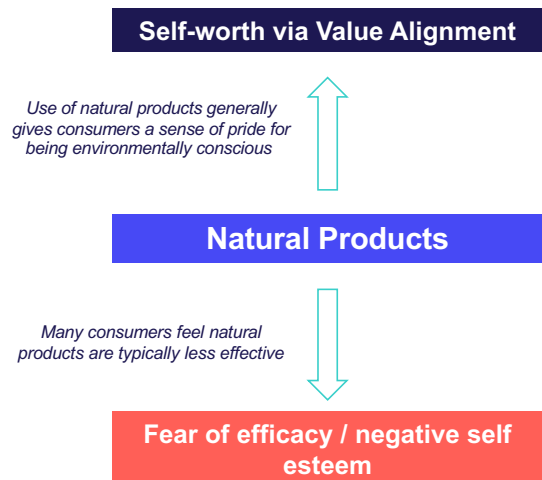
A personal care brand prominent in the acne solutions space was looking to see if they could extend their brand equity into the natural space. The team worked closely with GutCheck to understand current perceptions and unmet needs in the natural space specific to acne and skincare, gauge right to play via a benefit ladder bridging functional and emotional paths, and co-create against the consumer-led positioning to enter the new space focused on resonating with the new natural target without alienating current product users.

Visual articulation of perceptions and unmet needs in the new territory / space / category

Detailed Findings – Current perceptions and unmet needs

Consumers are skeptical that natural products have the efficacy of non-natural products.

While consumers generally look favorably on natural products, there is skepticism that natural acne wash solutions are as effective as conventional solutions.



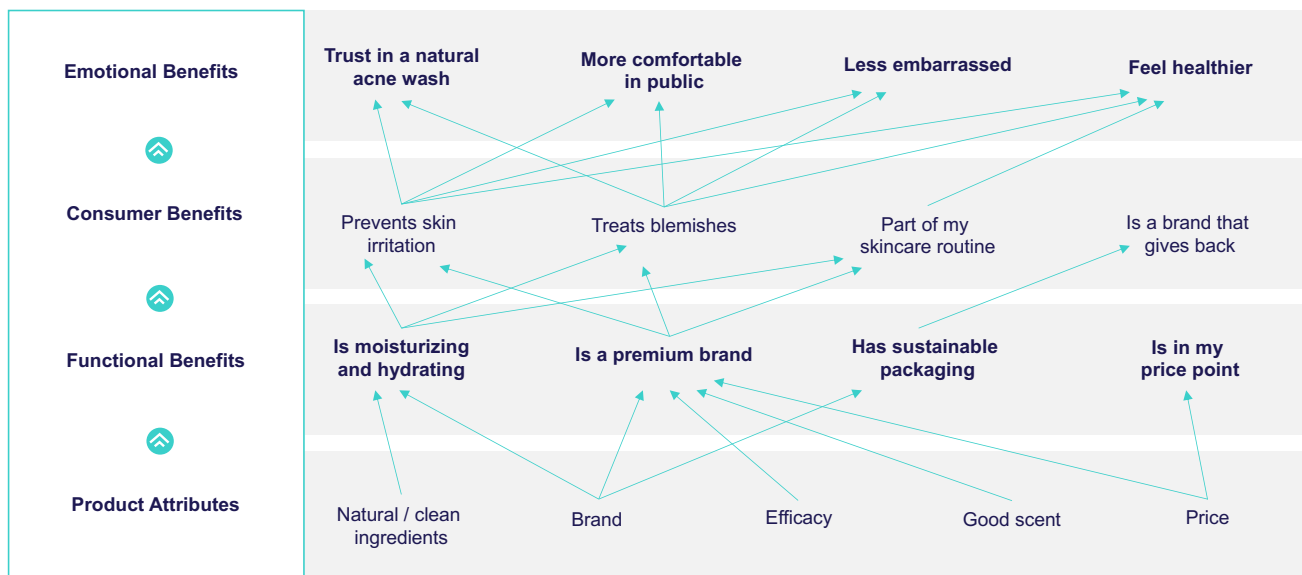
Tensions around acne wash

- Effectiveness
- Overwhelming scent
- Dry / irritated skin
- Price
- Cruelty-free
- Sustainability

Benefit ladder to outline connection paths between functional and emotional / social outcomes

Detailed Findings

Natural Acne Skin Wash Benefits Laddering



Analysis and key recommendations of how to break into the new space

Detailed Findings

Proof of efficacy around clear skin is key to driving consumer adoption of a natural acne wash.

The main drivers for acne wash products are effectiveness and speed of clearing up acne.

Natural treatments should be at least as effective in these attributes as conventional acne wash solutions.

Natural acne wash packaging should prioritize these claims if possible. If not, consumers will likely choose a non-natural treatment.

Other attributes which may compel consumers to trial a natural acne wash include:

- Safe for sensitive skin
- Hypoallergenic ingredients
- Environmentally friendly
- Comparable cost to conventional

These attributes can differentiate a natural acne wash from conventional ones. Environmentally conscious consumers would be more open to trying a natural treatment.

“ I love the idea of a natural product because I care about **sustainability**. I'm hesitant to try many natural acne solutions because I haven't found one that **truly clears up my acne**. I need to know that natural a product **really works**.
- Male, 32

“ Most of the products I use are **cruelty free** and **natural**. I usually choose natural products even if they **aren't as effective** as some of the harsher products because I feel better about myself when I do, but it would be nice if I could find a natural product that would knock out my stubborn bacne.
- 24, Male



Innovation Co-Creation

A quickly expanding non-alcoholic beverage company was looking to innovate against key consumer tensions and unmet needs in the low ABV / NA space including premium perception, seamless lifestyle fit, and flavor perceptions. To drive a human-centric strategy, the team worked with GutCheck to explore the ideal non-alcoholic experience for this brand amongst target consumers, co-create new product offerings against unmet needs, and optimize and amplify existing product ideas.

Executive summary outlining key themes and trends driving co-creation

Detailed Findings – Create a Mood Board

Users see non-alcoholic spirits and mixers as a way to connect with others and uphold personal health goals.



“ I want to participate in the fun of happy hour with colleagues and friends no matter what I drink. ”

- Female, 39

“ Much of the reason I choose non-alcoholic drinks is for my health, but I love the fun of mixing drinks together, that's why I like non-alcoholic spirits. ”

- Female, 25

“ It's incredibly frustrating the number of people who ask why I'm drinking water or not having what everyone else is. Sometimes I order a mocktail just so it looks like what everyone else is drinking. ”

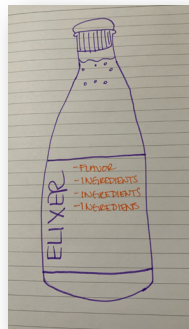
- Female, 37



Unaided innovation ideas fueled by creative consumers

Detailed Findings – Draw your ideal non-alcoholic spirit, beverage, or mixer

Users would like products that make them feel elevated and artisanal, with bold flavors, quality packaging, and a unique experience.



“

I like the idea of an **all-in-one product**, so that I can easily buy and take to a social gathering. I expect that the bottle be **quality, sleek looking, glass**, with a unique closure – maybe a reusable flip top/cork top. I'd want a trendy label that **clearly shows me the ingredients and flavors**.

- Female, 35

“

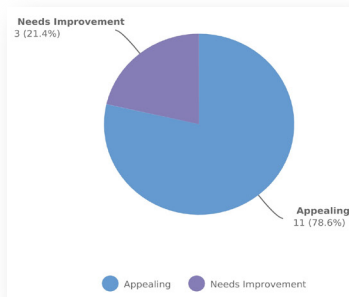
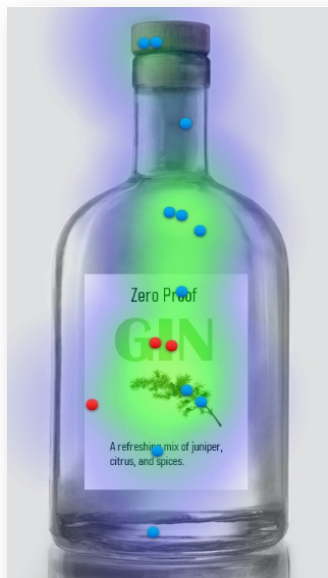
I would like to be able to make a **mixed drink with fun flavors**. I would buy a package of different components to **build my own drink**. It could have **bold flavors** and a recipe for me to add to my favorite sparkling water. This not only gives me a tasty product, but a **fun experience!** Perfect for date night or a night with the girls.

- Female, 25

Optimization & amplification of existing innovation ideas / concepts

Detailed Findings – Non-Alcoholic Spirit Concept Mark-up

Overall, most users found the concept appealing due to the bottle quality, however, most felt that the label could be improved.



“ The bottle is very traditional and expensive looking so I'm surprised the label is very plain. I like the touch of the juniper image, but it would benefit from a more exciting label – perhaps gold embossed font. I want my non-alcoholic spirit to feel more unique and expensive.

- Female, 27



Bottle looks quality and expensive

Most users commented that the bottle shape and quality looks appealing. The class gives the impression that the product is expensive. Several participants also commented that the cap looked secure and sleek.



Label is too plain

Of the 100% of “needs improvement” pins marked on the image were focused on the label. The label appears too plain, particularly in comparison to the bottle. Most participants felt that by adding graphics, or bolder font, the label would be improved.



Communication Co-Creation

Coming out of the pandemic, a tech company was working to shift its positioning to fit the evolving blend between work and life. For key software, the team partnered closely with GutCheck to drive human-centric communication by exploring how the technology bridged work and life in an unaided fashion to gather organic consumer language, co-creating positioning including claims, benefit statement, and imagery, as well as optimizing and amplifying existing ways in.

Consolidation of language, themes, and imagery via projective techniques such as mad libs and mood board exercises

Detailed Findings – Headphones Mad Libs

Many consumers are feature-driven when selecting headphones, most gravitating towards wireless options so that they aren't limited by movement.

When selecting headphones _____ is most important to me because _____.

- **Noise cancellation**...I don't like to be distracted by outside noises when I'm working or listening to podcasts."
- **Wireless**...I am often walking around when taking calls, moving my desk from sitting to standing, and wearing them on my bus ride home, wires just get in the way."
- **Comfort** ... though it may sound silly, I have small ears and many types of headphones are uncomfortable and even painful to wear."
- **Quality**...I listen to a lot of music, podcasts, and audiobooks and I like to have the best sound available at my price point."
- **Durability**...my headphones will likely see a lot of wear and tear. I am often outdoors running and cycling, and I need to know my headphones can endure a lot of sweat, dirt, and hours of use."

“ Since the pandemic, I now work from home, and it can be much noisier. Without wireless noise cancelling earbuds, I would have to toggle between headphones for work and gym which is annoying.
 - Male, 40

I would never use headphones that _____ because _____.

- “Are **cheap** ... you get what you pay for, and I know that when I pay a little bit extra, I'm going to get all the features I need.”
- “Are **wired**... I've grown accustomed to wearing my headphones everywhere, and I don't want to have to reposition my headphones just because I'm taking a jacket on or off or participating in sports.”
- “That have a **short battery life**... I typically need 8-10 hours of use out of my headphones each day and I don't want to have to charge them midway.”

“ I guess you could consider me very picky when it comes to headphones. Here are my must haves: wireless, comfortable, one-piece ear buds (like Apple). If headphones don't have these features, I will absolutely not be using or buying them.
 - Female, 38



Unaided consumer language to fuel empathic messaging and communication development & develop pipeline of claims, benefits, positioning, etc.

Detailed Findings

Ultimately, features and comfort are the strongest drivers of headphone purchase intent.

Consumers want to purchase wireless headphones with extended battery life

- Extended battery life appeals to consumers as they are wearing headphones for extended periods of time and do not want to have to recharge.
- Wireless headphones appeal to consumers as they are often moving and don't want to be limited by wires.

Consumers seek comfort in their headphone purchase

- As many consumers cited that they wear headphones for extended periods of time, comfort is desirable.
- The majority of users who seek extended battery life were also interested in comfort.

Claims	Purchase Intent
Wireless headphones with 35 hours of battery life.	15
Comfortable headphones designed for hours of wear.	8
High quality headphones designed for optimal sound.	5
100% waterproof headphones.	2

“ When I'm looking to purchase a new pair of wireless headphones, one of the features I consider the most is he battery life. Products can range significantly, and I try to get the **longest battery life** for the best value.

- Male, 42

“ I see people use over-ear cushion headphones, but I don't find them as comfortable as ear buds - the headband is always too tight. I wear earbuds over 6 hours a day at work, and I hardly notice I'm wearing anything they're so **comfortable!**

- Female, 23

Q: Which of the following statements is most motivating to you to purchase headphones? N=30

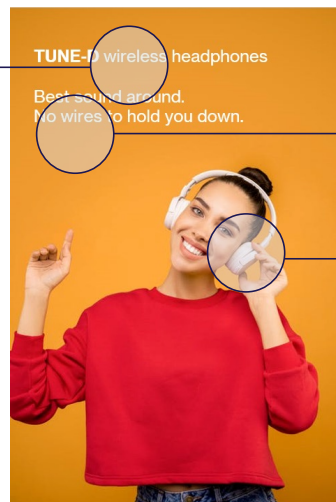
Key recommendations around areas of optimization and areas of improvement grounded in human-led feedback for existing ideas

Detailed Findings

TUNE-D headphone ad is appealing to consumers, but many feel additional feature detail is needed.

Most consumers felt positive about the main headphone feature “wireless”.

As this feature was called out continuously as an appealing and, to most, a required feature, messaging should continue to promote this feature.



While most found the ad appealing, there were several consumers who think the ad could benefit from listing additional features such as battery life, headband comfort, noise cancelling, etc.

Some consumers prefer ear buds over over-ear cushions and suggest that an alternative ad show ear bud option if available.

“ I love an ad that is short and to the point – my takeaway here is I can use these headphones on the go. What I don't know is if there are multiple options available, is it just over-the-ear, or are there ear bud versions?

- Female, 30



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We are the Agile Human Experience Intelligence company. Building on our agile principles of speed and cost-efficiency, we leverage innovative technologies and human expertise to bring brands closer to authentic, contextualized human experiences, so they can confidently make the key decisions to drive growth through better innovation and brand building.

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