



US-based skincare brand, [Starface](#), raised USD 2 million this quarter for its line of bright, star-shaped acne stickers. The product is unlike most hydrocolloid pimple stickers, which are designed to blend in with the wearer's skin and cover up acne. The vegan, cruelty-free treatment absorbs fluid from pimples, discourages users from touching their acne, and protects pimples from bacteria. Designed with Gen Z in mind, the star patches are Starface's only product so far; the brand plans to release six additional products this year.

This may be only a humble acne sticker. But look closely and there's a powerful underlying message about the changing attitudes of consumers.

Brands have long treated pimples as something to be ashamed of. Sure, Kendall Jenner was mocked last year for the overhyped reveal of her 'struggle' with acne (aka Proactiv sponsorship). But the stigma around acne persists, and the lengths consumers will go to battle blemishes have only increased. Thanks to the K-Beauty boom, consumers globally are extending their daily skin routines to include at least 10 steps.

K-Beauty also introduced the world to hydrocolloid stickers. But what's new about Starface's product is the way it encourages users to totally reject shame when it comes to their acne. Rather than concealing their zits, Starface's young customers are literally putting a star on them. In public. In daylight! The company is extracting pimples and the shame of having them.

But the stigmas to be tackled extend beyond acne. Plenty of brands are responsible for creating or perpetuating shame around a common struggle, in order to swoop in with a fix. Genital herpes, extraordinarily common and typically harmless, has nonetheless been sensationalized by drug companies and the media for decades. Menstruation companies have long encouraged women to be 'discreet' about their periods.

Luckily, plenty of brands and initiatives are taking the opposite approach today, rebranding once-shameful bodily needs in a more positive light. Admitting you need Viagra is considered embarrassing, but companies like Hims are now plastering subways with sleek ads. Brands like Thinx and Billie have fought taboos by putting period blood and women with body hair, respectively, on full display. The key challenge for you in all this. What do your customers currently (and unnecessarily!) feel ashamed of? It's not just about their bodies: think relationships, finances, career, education and more. Are you in a position to help? How can you help them by changing expectations and public perception for the better?