

EPISODE 015

CITRIX

IN CONVERSATION WITH

Malcolm Buick, Creative Director at Athletics,
Kristen Ord, Director of Accounts at Athletics,
Paul Worthington, President of Invencion,

AND

David Holt Senior Director, Brand Expression at Citrix.

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to The Follow-up, a weekly podcast that goes in depth into projects recently reviewed on Brand New featuring conversations with the designers, and sometimes their clients, uncovering the context, background and design decisions behind the work.

BRYONY GOMEZ-PALACIO

Hi, this is Bryony Gomez-Palacio and welcome to episode 15 of The Follow-up.

This week we are following up on Citrix, a software company that builds secure, unified digital workspace technology that allows organizations to deliver a consistent workspace experience wherever work needs to get done, whether in the office, a network of offices, or remotely.

The project, designed by Brooklyn, NY-based Athletics with strategy by New York, NY-based Invencion was posted on Brand New on September 21. You can pull it up on your browser at bit.ly/bnpodcast015 that is B I T dot L Y slash bnpodcast015, all in lowercase.

This week we are joined by Malcolm Buick Creative Director at Athletics, Kristen Ord, Director of Accounts at Athletics, Paul Worthington, President of Invencion, and David Holt Senior Director, Brand Expression at Citrix.

In this conversation we hear about the importance of strategy and how a strong strategic phase informed many of the decisions throughout this particular project. We also get some insight into how important it was to redesign the logo not just for the sake of renewal but as a way to honor the significant internal change the company had been going through. Finally, the large group of people on this podcast — a whopping four! — is a great reflection of the multi-team effort it took to create the comprehensive new identity for Citrix.

Now, let's listen in as Armin follows up with Malcolm, Kristen, Paul, and David.

ARMIN VIT Welcome to today's show. This is being recorded on a beautiful sunny Friday morning here in Bloomington Indiana. And we have a full house of people here ready to talk about Citrix. Welcome everyone to The Follow-Up.

KRISTEN ORD Hello. Thank you.

MALCOLM BUICK Hi, thank you for having us.

PAUL WORTHINGTON Hello.

DAVID HOLT Hi everybody. Thanks for having us.

ARMIN So quick disclaimer, for our listeners and guests, we have four people on the podcast today, and I want to make sure I include everyone in the conversation, but that means that at some point for a large period of time, each of you, our guests will be silent and it might be awkward, but we'll circle through everyone at least twice. So let's start with a quick round of introductions with your name and title so that our listeners can know who's who, uh, let's start off at the top of my Zoom window with Malcolm.

- MALCOLM** Hey, good morning, everyone. My name is Malcolm Buick. I'm the Creative Director and Partner at Athletics right here in Williamsburg, Brooklyn.
- PAUL** Hey, Paul Worthington. I'm the President of Invention, which is a kind of a brand strategy consultancy. And so my responsibility was to work with the team on the strategy side. I'm in sunny, Darien, Connecticut right now.
- KRISTEN** Hi, I'm Kristen Ord, Account Director Athletic here in sunny, Brooklyn.
- DAVID** Hi everyone. I'm David Holt and I am the Senior Creative Director here at Citrix. And I'm based out of the Raleigh, North Carolina office.
- ARMIN** Is it sunny there?
- DAVID** It is not sunny here right now, actually. Yes, unfortunately.
- ARMIN** Well, to brighten up your morning, we're going to start with you. So this is the first major redesign of the Citrix logo since it was established 31 years ago. And I feel like you could have stayed with that logo for another 31 years and it would have served you well, which is not to take away from the improvement of the redesign, but to say that the old logo was pretty solid. So after that semi-long preamble, what led Citrix to choose to rebrand now?
- DAVID** Yeah, that's a good question Armin, we were chatting about this a bit yesterday and the thing to keep in mind here is that you're right. We could have definitely stayed with it for as long as we needed. Right? I think that as we did a lot of the research, you know, around how we were perceived, what we needed to change, what we needed amplify, right? One thing to keep in mind is that the change that we've been going through at Citrix has been occurring for a couple of years now, right? So we've been looking at this kind of emerging space of employee experience and while a lot of our technologies that we've had for years and, you know, the kind of work from anywhere mantra and that kind of thing have play well into that space. There's

a lot we've been changing internally and with the products that you know, needed to be, I guess, for lack of a better term amplified, right? Like people weren't really catching on that we were making that big of a pivot internally. And so for us, a lot of the change was around amplifying and signaling something that was already occurring that we just didn't feel like we were getting the right kind of voice out there, right? People weren't seeing that and people weren't quite understanding it. And so that's what we, uh, was we did a lot of the research. We discovered that we actually went into this, this is something Paul and I were talking about yesterday. We went into this with the logo redesign off the table. Like it wasn't even something we were going to consider. And so as we got into it and we talked to more people, we realized like it was needed to like kind of drive the point home. So it's, it's actually in this scenario, not a, um, you know, hey, let's, let's do something so we look more fresh or let's do something so, you know, it's more modern or whatever, right? This was truly a, a need to kind of like put the dot on the "i's", so to speak.

ARMIN Yes, we know that often we, the science are used to signal change that is happening inside. So it's nice to have that reiteration that this is what happened here. And just for reference, when did the project, when did you start thinking about that?

DAVID I came in kind of at the tail end of a lot of the research was happening, so Paul, Malcolm, keep me honest on this. I believe that the research for this started in early 2019, if I remember right? So yeah. I mean, it's been, it's been in the works for almost two years now, so...

ARMIN Yeah. And a lot has changed since then. Paul, you have something to add to that for the confirmation of the time frame?

PAUL Yeah. We started discussions with Citrix in probably February,–March time, 2019. And I think we started working in April–May time. And originally the launch date for everything was, was much more aggressive into the early part of 2020, but obviously the world changed pretty radically in March. And so the decision was made to push it

out, which was actually pretty good. And made me talk about that later, but it meant there's a lot more we could do to prepare the organization for the change, uh, which meant that it wasn't from an internal perspective, it wasn't like a jarring shift. It was actually kind of a logical progression into the changeover, which happened in September.

ARMIN Did you and Malcolm come in at the same time? Or did you come in first into the project? How did that work?

DAVID Yeah, it was, it was very much an organic introduction to be honest. Paul and I have a mutual ex-colleague in common from our Wolff Olins days who connected us if you will, with hope version one point oh, if director three hole coming into play and you know, Paul and I have worked in partnership going on for a decade now. So this job really demanded that partnership. I think playing to both our strengths to come in and we both started pretty much at the same time. I mean, I think that's very much a belief of ours is strategic and creative sort of tumbling together on any one solution. So it was very much a team charge.

ARMIN And that introduction was it specific to this project that someone said like, oh, Citrix needs this. And they know Athletics and Invention, let's bring them together.

PAUL Yeah. Holt's predecessor at Citrix reached out because they knew our former colleague because I think they'd worked together previously, I think at Landor maybe and said, you know, who should we be talking to or looking at doing a branding program. And I think that the original brief was not to Holt's point. It wasn't to change the logo. The original brief was our company is undergoing a fairly transformational period. The market is changing quite significantly. We need to think about our brand. And the question then is what should our brand be doing? Does it need to reposition itself if it does need to reposition itself to what? And why? And then how does that impact the go to market in terms of visual identity and all design work that we see today. And so

that person had reached out saying, you know, who do you know? And he'd made the recommendation, you should speak to us. And, uh, and so that's how we got on the pitch list. It's just one of those things that happens sometimes.

ARMIN That was going to be my next question. If he was a sort of a pitch, not in terms of whether you presented work or not, I'm guessing not since that wasn't part of the original brief, but was there a lot of competition, quote unquote, in terms of how many other firms were considered for the job?

PAUL It was a competitive pitch. I don't know how many, uh, companies were asked to respond to the RFP, but I know that there were three that pitched in person and with the team, you know, and our approach—I can't speak to anybody else's was primarily to a) respond to a brief and, and b) kind of diagnose the problems as we saw them from the outside and start talking about where perhaps this brand was challenged and where it did have some strengths and, and where that fit relative to what we know about the shift we've seen in the technology space and what we know that Citrix we're trying to do. And, you know, pitches are better if they're, if they feel like a working session, because you're going to be working with those people. Everybody wants to feel comfortable with that. And that's very much the way we had the, it was less about dog and pony show, more about, you know, here's what we're seeing, let's talk about it. Does this stuff resonate with you and, and what are you trying to do as a company? And, you know, what are the things that are keeping you awake at night? And, and that's really the conversation we had. And it obviously... the engage with that conversation is the hardest.

MALCOLM I think that idea of conversation as well, Armin has been true to the process throughout. It's been a conversation. You know, it's been an amazing engagement working with a great team and every point that we had to solve within the system and strategically, has been an awesome conversation. And been very open that way. So that has been super important to the solutions that we ended up with.

DAVID I would add too, like, like I'm just one component of the Citrix side, right? And we have a strategy team internally that led by Kathleen Lao. And when Athletics gave their pitch there were a few different folks, right? And I was actually just getting engaged by Barry, who is our VP of Brand Experience and I was still not in the company again yet. I had been at the company and left and we were kind of talking about the project 'cause I was coming in, I remember specifically thinking, oh, I knew it was going to be like a Landor or something, right? And so the Athletics thing was a real surprise. And I think it actually, from Kathleen's perspective, our story internally is that she, after she heard the Athletics pitch, it was, no, we have to—these are the people we have to work with. And I think a lot of that came down to alignment on approach, personality, values, all of that. We were kind of unpacking this a bit yesterday as we were chatting about it, but it just made sense. And to Malcolm's point, it's been, I've never quite worked with an agency in this way. Like we are, I don't even consider them not, in-house like not part of the team. Like we all really operate in a very organic and close way. So...

ARMIN Yeah, that's something interesting that I have been hearing a lot during this podcast, having a designer and someone from the client's side about how important those relationships are in terms of going back and forth. And it's not just one sided where I think maybe 20 years ago it was much more of a one-sided conversation. Not one-sided conversation, but it was like, you do your thing, we'll do our thing. And then we'll exchange checks and bank accounts, whatever it is. But I think nowadays the best results come when client and designer are in perfect synergy.

DAVID That it's something on my head. Right. Like that's the expectation I kind of had to, like, I remember even telling Barry, I was like, dude, if I'm not gonna be able to have any impact, right? Like I don't want to do this, toss it over the wall thing. It's something that I was really concerned about coming in. I wouldn't say concern, but then I was top of mind. Right. I wanted a partner. As I came into it, like I was joking with the

Athletics team a couple of times, but like, I really did just expect to come in and hate everything that they were doing. And like, you know, like it's just like that difficult, like design leadership attitude. Right. I was like, oh God, what am I going to have to clean up? Right. And, um, as I came in, it was very starkly the opposite. And it's been like really amazing and we've had a lot of fun and I think I would speak for everyone internally. Right? Kathleen's team strategy. Even our content group. There's been a lot of touch points internally and no one, like everyone's had good things to say as we've worked together. So, and that's been refreshing. Kind of to your point, it's been very refreshing. And it's interesting you say that you're hearing that a lot because I have thought about how much that seems exceedingly rare to me right? In the business and throughout my career.

ARMIN Yeah. And maybe we have Kristen to thank for this great synergy. So Kristen, I first have to mention that you get bragging rights for being the first Director of Accounts to join us on the podcast. So a big project like this comes into the office, what are some of the initial steps you take to get the project rolling?

KRISTEN Well, first thank you. That's very exciting. Um, although I do feel like a bit of a fraud because I did study design, but you know, things evolve, but yeah, I mean, this is a huge, huge project for us. And I think keeping it real after making everyone a few cups of tea, we really just get stuck into discussing as a leadership group what's going to set up the project for success. And, you know, I think ensuring we have the right people involved and ensuring that we're able to create both kinds of consistency at that leadership level, but also ensuring that there's fluidity across the different disciplines that are going to need to be involved and just making sure we have the bandwidth and the team to set things up for success. I think a big thing as well is really understanding the dynamics of the client team and getting to know everyone as quickly as we can and understand how they are going to work and kind of tailor our processes towards them. And I think just how do we make it fun? How are we going to work together as a team?

I think that's aside from all the standard process, we want to engage as partners and, and be the best we can be.

ARMIN But one question that I do have its, so you started the project in 2019 and then I'm guessing a lot of the projects still happened in 2020 as your teams diss-assembled from the office. How did you manage that shift in switching from everybody being in the office together to all of a sudden you have to finish the project, put out a case study, and release it to the world separately, everybody, you know, on their own?

KRISTEN That was a huge challenge for us being so used to collaborating in person, having clients come and visit us and spend full days as teams workshopping together. I think that shift was a big challenge and I think something that everyone rose to the occasion with we're exploring new tools, new technologies, ways of white boarding remotely, the whole world has really embraced the challenge. And I think despite the back-to-back Zoom meetings for what feels like an eternity now, we're really able to kind of find different ways to work, to create both flow state for designing teams, as well as great collaborations still with stakeholders involved. I think one thing with Citrix being so global and even within America, everyone's working from different offices. The fact that we could still work with pace remotely, I think actually helped foster probably more collaboration that may have happened if we were having to meet in person. So I think that brought a good, a good opportunity for the project.

ARMIN And Malcolm, on your end, how do you create in this mode of working remotely?

MALCOLM From a design studio standpoint, Athletics is kind of always been born somewhat of a digital practice. So this idea of working virtually or working remotely or working with somewhat decentralized teams has been part of our DNA. So whilst it's a challenge to make that move, you know, the tools and some of the workflow and practice were still there. Um, interestingly, just to reflect on the previous question, we've really only met Citrix in real life, two or three times, pretty much, right from

the beginning, it was about screen kind of creativity. So you know, that that sound like, cause it's a leg up, if you will. And to kind of have a work with the client themselves, as far as the team, you know, chance conversations by the water cooler are now Zoom calls or phone calls, it requires a lot more energy. It requires a lot more focus. The modern tools of today also allow for that flexibility to allow for us to kind of be creative and keep the flow going. And Kris is really underselling our role here because she was suddenly in the linchpin and all of this, because if it wasn't for her drive, keeping the teams together in check, conversations, whether it's late night whiskies on a Friday with Holt or, you know, speaking to the design team on a Monday morning, hang out with everyone all up. It wouldn't have been a success. So I think we're past that knee jerk kind of moment now, and we're in the groove, you know, we're really kind of driving our design and creativity and it seems like a seamless kind of experience just because we're in step. Yes. I would much rather be in person just because we liked human contact, but you know, I think it, it hasn't hindered the creative process. Yes. We probably worked three more hours every day and there's a lot more efficiency probably from working in your shorts and um, than than previously, but I think it's been, you know, we're past that honeymoon period and now we're into like, this is how we work. This is just how we do it.

DAVID Yeah. And, and I would even, I would reinforce that even more too, because in the situation right in 2020, like with everything going on that is the other thing that just consistently amazes me is we've managed to connect and work so well together in spite of like all of that, right? To Malcolm's point we've only met in real life and only a few of us too. Right. The whole team has been able to get together any of that, like a couple of times. And it's been just constantly with the backdrop of the pandemic. That's another really amazing thing to me is that we've managed to do this the way out. And again, it speaks to the kind of agility and creative mindset and just being able to truly work outside of the box. The way both teams have come at it and that's been again refreshing, like it's not what I expected at all.

ARMIN My guess is that having that ability to run with it as things have progressed means that there was a really strong foundation to begin with. Now we turn to Paul. So you led kind of like a year long strategic process. Can you tell us a little bit about what were the key insights and if possible, how are you able to extract those from the Citrix team?

PAUL Sure. A year? It wasn't a year where I wish it was, you know, nobody gives you a year of these days. The core underlying strategy we defined in about three months. I think that we then started to really look at how does that impact the business? How do we design off that? What are the different implications? And then take that into, you know, make the case to more senior executives in the company. It was probably more like six, seven months. So I think we are pretty much clear directionally on both strategic and then the application into the visual identity design, logo, etcetera, with probably in six, seven months.

There's a lot of work that you do in a job like this. And in hindsight, you can actually make it sound incredibly simple, but in the moment it's all very messy, and ambiguous, and complicated, but I think there's some key things that we saw pretty quickly. I think that the first thing is the scale of the business transformation that Citrix is on then was very significant. They've made some big strategic bets in the previous five years. First shifting everything to the cloud, uh, which they were not previously, uh, because you know, the history of Citrix is, was, you know, how do you access on premise software? So the first thing is that shift to the cloud. The second shift then is the shift to workspace and the workspace product category, which then puts you in this different position again, which is the, a) your competitors are different, but also b) you're no longer servicing people like IT Administrators, you actually have to really consider user experience, like end users suddenly become critical to what you're doing. And so we were very conscious that there was this very significant business transformation, that there was a lot of ambition going on in this business.

PAUL Then, very important for us to reflect that level of ambition in the work that we did. Right. So you said the worst thing we could possibly have done is take there's very transformational moment in time for this business and then give them a very incremental shift in the brand because it would have undersold what was happening. So I think that's the first thing, right? How do we match the level of ambition for the brand to the level of ambition to the business? I think the second thing is you're looking for that core kind of underlying DNA, right? What is it that drives this company that we need to be able to reflect? That's useful for them relative to the market? I think that the thing that we very quickly caught onto with Citrix is that there are very fundamentally decent group of people. Like this is a, this is not a group of people overall that you would put down and say, you know, it's the classic corporate, you know, very difficult to deal with situation.

PAUL These people, they care about each other and they have a real culture. They understand distributed work because they've been distributed for a long time. And then they work extra hard to look after people in that context. Uh, they have very human relationships with their customers who've been with them for a very long time often. A lot of their people stay for a long time because it's a really good environment to be in. And so we needed to, it's not, not that we needed to... we had an excellent opportunity to say, you know what? There is a humanity to who you are as a company and a culture that is not currently being reflected. And that humanity mirrors very much what you need to put into the marketplace in order to be effective in this new space you're playing in around, employee experience, and especially where you're dealing with the user needs, and the empathy to the individual, which is critical.

And then I think the third thing was, there is a trope within this category, which is all about productivity, right? It's very functionally driven. If you look at everybody it plays in software for work. Which is a huge broad swath of people, right? But what they all focus on is productivity. You know, more output for less time. And if you

believed all the productivity promises, we probably only have one employee in the world doing everything it was nonsensical. And so what's interesting is if you look at research and you look at it blindly, everybody says they want more productivity. But if you scratch into that surface, you realize that it's become wallpaper, it's table stakes. Everybody promises it. Every client on the receiving end is kind of going, yeah, yeah, whatever. And so the realization we had was is the, actually it's not productivity that matters in the current moment, it's progress. I don't mean that as a shallow insight. I mean that in the sense that we don't just need to look at how do we do the same thing in less time, what we have to look at increasingly in this world where there's so much change and disruption is, how do we do fundamentally different things that create value? How do we achieve a sense of progress? So, what are the barriers to people being creative and innovative at work? Because those things are how you unlock value and how do we help to realize that potential of people, which is really what Citrix is trying to do. I think those insights were, again, just, it was very complex, but when you come down to it, it's just, how do we make this as ambitious and as transformative as the business? How do we reflect that fundamental humanity of the company and how do we orient this whole thing towards the sense of progress, as opposed to this very, which is very emotional, as opposed to as very dry, functional productivity, which nobody's paying attention to anyway.

DAVID I would... like Paul, you said something around it, not portraying as a shallow insight. Right? And I think a key thing around that is, it comes back to what a lot of people say. When you say it out loud, it feels like a well, no, duh, right? But to actually operate that way and have that be an authentic kind of driver to the conversation is a whole other ball game. You know, our CEO, David Henshall has said multiple times, this is a culture change. Back to the original question, right? It's all about a signal that this is like genuine change, you know? And I think that for people inside the company, especially to your original question, Armin, like it's a 31-year-old logo, right? It's a 31-year-old brand. And

I think that this has been a really big deal. And we wanted people to understand that the leadership are taking it serious. This is not a small investment, as anyone knows if it's done this for a fortune 500 company. And so I think that every day you will hear conversations between the Citrix team and the Athletics team and even our other partners, Huge, etcetera. Right. You hear these conversations around authenticity. That's something that is so easily said and so rarely adhered to, but it is something we're taking very serious. So sorry, Paul didn't mean to budge coattails there.

PAUL [Laughter] Not at all. Quite happy to have you talk.

ARMIN Yeah. And I think, uh, you know, after those two explanations that you've made me a Citrix believer, none that I didn't belief, but I get a real sense of what was going on while the company is like, and where you're trying to achieve. So Malcolm with all this sort of pressure and ambition to signal that change, how do you start that project? What happens in the first round of design explorations at Athletics?

MALCOLM Yeah, no pressure indeed. But you know, it's always a wonderfully messy experiment or creative process when you start out in any endeavor and any design project, but given the shift, you know, from productivity to this idea of human potential, that was pretty much spearhead for the majority of the work. We had such a great foundation for where we were going to start as Holt said, the logomark wasn't even up for discussion at that point. You know, we were not allowed to do that, but I think one, yeah, the emerging of our positioning allowed us to kind of prototype what that future could look like. So we were given permission to do that. And we went down in two very different tasks. One of, can we take the old identity and bring it along with us for the ride? Under this new narrative? Or can we develop a completely new system that defined the future of work and what that could look like?

MALCOLM And it wasn't really until we showed that all up. And when we do design systems, certainly within Athletics, it's certainly high fidelity or you

get a really good sense of what you're stepping into, what it sounds like, what it feels like. You know, it involves motion, it involves sound, it involves photography, art direction, and product in this case, you know. Citrix is a complex, very complex organization and their identity needed to be able to ladder up to that. So with two very clear paths, one, hey, this is our current mark, let's bring it along for the ride more and make it feel like, kind of fit into this new charge, or design very future forward, fresh system that, you know, laddered up to the ambition and had the dexterity I would say as a design system to carry-out this, you know, the new ambition. So it wasn't until we shared both of those. And we had multiple directions, I think we had five directions for, hey, here's the future. And then here's kind of what you could do with the existing one. It was quite clear that we needed to go down this path of let's take this identity system forward. Let's really explore what it could be. So going back to that strategy and that narrative, you know, without that human potential kind of idea and concept, we wouldn't have gotten to the compact mark or shifting the dots from the wordmark to the X itself and, you know, really unpacking that human potential through the lines of provisional systems. So that's kind of where we netted out.

DAVID Around the logomark itself to Malcolm's point, it was off the table, right? When I came in, we were literally still having discussions around there'd be iterations, right? You'd see the current mark, which at that point it would have felt more like an expression change, right? We would have had new photography, new fonts, et cetera, so on, right? But we've come at this very much from a, again, rooted in the strategy. And the more we looked at it, it just, there was a different conversation that need to be had. And you, you know, you can even notice it, this gets into the design nerd stuff, right? But like is you could dig into something as singular as the mark, right? And even see that there was a ton of conversation around respecting what we had been—that's why we're still being playful with the dot—there was a huge focus on individuals internally, externally, at our customer's companies, right? We were doing this fully knowing the risk of changing that mark. And

the reason I bring that up is I feel like that is the thing that the minute you launch everyone's on that logo. And we've seen a lot of companies recently and over the years, I think back to the UPS web 2.0 look, right? When they, they made that flip, right? And we, you know, we've seen Intel recently make a shift and a lot of this is done in the service of like refresh and that's kind of the thing that's interesting about the opportunity to talk about this externally is that it's so not that, right? And Malcolm and team and myself and my team and all of our other teams have had a huge charge in understanding, again, those cultural changes internally that have to happen as well, right? And so when you look at the system from a thousand foot, if you're just seeing it all laid out on a one sheet, it's like, oh, that's a lot to put together. But when you really look at the subtleties and the layers and the way we have to work internally and the teams and the products and what it's really done is given us an amazing baseline to start from, right? And what's really cool is I think that this is just the shot across the bow, right? We're working on a lot of things that no one's seen yet, right? It's like still coming end-of-year, early next year. And it's very, there's a lot of unexpected stuff in here, right? And it's, it's something that kind of, to your point, we could have just kept going with that brand, right? And this is definitely, you're going to see a lot more. That is that change signal, right?

ARMIN Can't wait to see, uh, some more of it coming to the world. Now, one of the cool things about this project is a little bit of the dream team that you assembled Malcolm, around all the different assets. How did you choose who to bring in?

MALCOLM Well, they all pay me handsomely every month. Percentages based off of how much work I give them. No really. I mean, I think this project, again, hats off to Holt and team for allowing us to do that. You know, we, our model within our studio is really a network model. We have a core base of design and technologists, but we do look outside our own walls at times to work with the best. And we work with people too that do have a sense of kind of humanity and are great to work with. And

there's mutual respect on both sides. So when it came to building the identity system for Citrix, you know, if we think about building a digital forward modern brand system that requires dimensionality, it requires sound, we work with Simon Pike. We wanted to work with him on developing the sound and the Sonic capabilities. Yes, we could have done that potentially ourselves, but it wouldn't have had the depths wouldn't have had the story. It wouldn't have had kind of his expertise in it. So Simon became part of that buck. We've always admired, they did great work, they're wonderful to work with. It was an amazing exchange of ideas and thoughts. Yes. You know, you let go large parts of the budget, but you also get great results too. It tells a deeper, richer story. Coloring the Kids, we have a relationship with them going on several years now and I've seen them grow and they work like us—they're creative, they're messy, they're exploratory. They're up for, you know, looking at different ways to tackle complex tasks. And there's many other partners as well that we worked with along the way, Matt Blee, the reason we chose him, when you think about Citrix, there can often, it's not all about, you know, the joy and optimism, there's complex stories it's to tell.

And I think you need a very whimsical point of view on that. Matt Blease brings that, you know, that's very much the DNA of his work. He offers a very kind of human point of view on the world today. And that very much aligns with the strategic promise, the ambition of Citrix. So that team and that network is a dream team for sure Armin, everyone worked amazingly hard. And I think the results of it really speak for themselves. You know, it's a cohesive system that really kind of hangs together. We always think about systems as volume controls. You know, you can turn them up and turn them down. Not everything is kind of, you know, the protagonist and the story has its moment. It has its place. So it's complex working with a large group like that. But when you work with partners who are up for it in its most simplest term and can roll with the punches a little bit, it makes your life so much easier. And those guys that I mentioned are very much that.

KRISTEN I think what was really nice as well is that there was such a big part of this project was kind of building and driving this community for Citrix and having the project work in a way that became collaborative in itself was, was a really nice kind of part of that process. I think it helped to foster that drive internally as well. And I think going back to the role of strategy, I think when we're onboarding all of these partners, having them really grounded in that strategy and believing in it and having kind of consistency across our team and driving all of these work streams forward. The partners believed in it, we're all kind of, everyone's working on it separately, but together, and that's kind of the charge going forward. And of course, huge shout out to all of the project managers and the team, um, who helped keep us all on the rails because it was, it was definitely a dance.

ARMIN There should be a podcast for design firm Project Managers and Account Directors. Because I think as designers, we gave you a lot of flag, but I think we underestimate and then they appreciate how you're able to control and temper or silly impulses. And, you know, creativity comes when it comes. You can't push me into it, man. Like, no, we have to deliver, there's a deadline. Get to it. Uh, so yeah, thanks for that insight. All right. uh, let's try to sum up since we're going on 40 minutes here, it's been a lovely conversation, but uh, not everyone has the attention span to listen to a one-hour podcast, so I want to go with what is one of my favorite questions to ask, which is what is the most exciting aspect of this identity moving forward for you, David, and then for you, Paul, Kristin and Malcolm, um, what was the most exciting part of this identity in terms of the process and what you arrived at? So we'll start with you, David, then Paul, then Malcolm, and then Kristen.

DAVID My last 10, 15 years have actually kind of pivoted away from the field for a while. And I had been doing a lot of user experience and product design as I've come back in, I've tried to bring a lot of that mindset around like rapid iteration and, you know, data-driven and all of these things, right? And I think that for me, the, one of the big things on my end was that the brand has not only us in that view of us, right.

In that understanding of who we are, but it is also a tool for all of the employees. And so as we've approached this, there's the storytelling that's happening. And then there's also the education and the tool sets that we're creating, right? And there's a lot that is really doubling down on the narrative and the research internally and externally, that's going to be revealed over the next six months to a year, right? And so for me, again, kind of shot across the bow with the launch, but there's a lot that we're doing that this is just this onion that you're going to keep seeing layers peel back, right? And ideally it results in a really fresh take on what a brand can be, especially at a company, the size of Citrix. And hopefully it's to kind of the we've touched on this a lot throughout the conversations, but that this happened in the midst of something as insane as the year 2020, you will just frame it that way, right? Like it's been a challenge and it's been interesting and there was a lot of risk, right. There's one of those, you could have a bunch of people that were like, oh yeah., everybody's doing something new because of the pandemic, right. This had nothing to do with the pandemic and then here we were facing it, you know, so what's really cool is I think as we get into 2021, it's all the stuff I can't talk about yet that I'm most excited about. And so what's, this has been a wild ride and like, I love all of the teams involved and I'm just excited to keep going. 'Cause we've got several things in the works it's like, as Malcolm was listing off the dream team, I was like, oh, don't forget... But then I was like, oh yeah, we can't talk about that yet. So there's a lot of really cool stuff that's to come.

ARMIN Yeah. Again, I can't wait to see what else comes out. Paul?

PAUL Yeah. I mean, I think there's a couple of things, you know, the first thing is that, you know, Malcolm and I both worked at Wolff Olins for quite a long time. And that's a very interesting culture because it really smashes the barriers between strategy and design and, and does so on purpose. Uh, and it creates a way of working, which I think is very different from most places. And so it's really nice for us to work together again in that way where we're both in every meeting where,

you know, with Kristen and, and really connecting the dots right from day one across the whole thing. I think that the second thing that's really a big deal in this, if I may talk about design for a second as the strategy guy, we've seen a world that's moved heavily digital. And the way that designers have often treated that shift is to go more minimal, go simpler, go more reduced, right? Because you're dealing with many more complex channels, screen sizes, you name it, right? It's way more complex. So this being this drive towards reductionism, but it's really stripped a shitload of personality out of so many brands. And it's made this incredible commodification across the brand landscape everywhere—everything just feels the same. And I think there's a richness to the way Malcolm and the team at Athletics are approaching the digital world, which is so much more interesting, which is not to try to minimize and reduce everything, it's to embrace the fact that it is a complex environment and to add layers of richness, illustrations, 3D, motion, sound, the way the compact mark works, the way it shifts into product, music. There is a richness to what we should be doing, which I think this is kind of an opening salvo towards I hope and gets us away from that frankly, boring reductionism that we've seen in the last five years.

ARMIN That was sort of my impression when I saw work like this is so diverse and so rich. And one of the recurring concerns with like, is it too much, but no, I think, uh, when you have a company this size that has to communicate across so many channels, like why not take advantage that you can shift those, those ways of communicating as you move along as you, as you need. So, Malcolm?

MALCOLM I think it's easy for me to list them out. You know, it's almost like the Oscar awards, but, you know, I think I'm very glad that they picked that solution because I think it was the right one, I think very much collectively Citrix were up for exploring with us. And I loved that. And it's still continuing on top of that. The trust that we were given, because some of the solutions that, you know, Paul mentioned that we can't really talk about it, just now for radical thoughts and, you

know, far as the brand identity for a large enterprise business putting out there in the world. So again, that trust is huge. The amazing group of people that you work with at Citrix. Again, it's just been this great conversation, super rich conversation from beginning to end, and the energy that everyone's really thrown into it, it's never waned. And, you know, I think it's only accelerated and I think the world's getting better and better. So like, those are the less like results of what, you know, may be coming. But more of the individual elements of what's really been exciting about this project. And, you know, as a designer, who's worked on many things from snowboards to music, to what... you name it. I'm still feeling challenged by the center. It's exciting. I'm really excited to like, what can we do next? And I haven't felt like that in a long time. So that's super exciting.

ARMIN It does sound exciting. Kristen?

KRISTEN For me, it's kind of all of those things together. It's like, and how well it's been received. I think within Citrix as a, as a business at large, I think everyone always says they can really see themselves in it. And I think the hungry to use it and get stuck in. And I think that's when, you know, you know, you've done the right job. Like people are desperate to to use it and desperate for more. And I think that's been great to see.

DAVID I would add Armin just real quick, I was thinking to myself, like, do I do this? Is it going to feel obligatory? Is it genuine? But it is definitely genuine. I have to give the shout out to David Hinshaw and 10 minute Han and like the entire exec team that have like empowers to do this right? Because this is not what we're doing and the way we're doing it—I never imagined that we'd get sign off right. To see David light up when we were given the presentation and the pitch and Tim is constantly just let Barry and myself and Kathleen and Susie and the team internally like really run. And I don't think they've ever, like, I mean, I'm trying to think through it, Chris and I don't think they've ever put a hand up to stop. They've just really let us do this. And I

think that goes back to Paul and Kathleen's work on the strategy. It is never been this tied to a strategic vision in a, in a, in a company vision before.

ARMIN Yeah. That's wonderful to hear. And I think one of the, maybe it's not a big secret, but one of the things that we all sort of know about what makes a successful rebranding is a committed leadership that believes in change, that believes in letting the people assigned to do that job, to do it right. And to have the freedom and the permission and their trust to do it, right. And I think the result here demonstrates how true that is. Given that I see so much work on Brand New, something that comes along like Citrix, where my expectations weren't too high. And not because I have anything against Citrix, I wasn't even that familiar with Citrix, but I wasn't expecting to be blown away in the way that I was. I don't even know again, like I don't know what I was expecting, but everything felt fresh, it felt lively, it felt like they had, there was intention behind every single brand manifestation and like the sheer size of the company to be able to do something like this. It's pretty commendable. So I want to thank all four of you for being on the show today for waiting patiently for a turn to speak. And I'm glad that we were able to bring all these different voices into the conversation because I think it made for a great episode. So thank you once again for being on the show and I hope you enjoy the rest of your day.

MALCOLM Thank you very much for having us great to chat.

DAVID Thanks Armin.

KRISTEN Thank you.

PAUL Thank you.

BRYONY It may be cliché but what clearly made this project successful was collaboration. Collaboration between Citrix and Athletics... between Athletics and Invencion... between Invencion and Citrix... and THEN between Athletics and Buck and "Colors and the Kids" and Simon

Pyke and Matt Blease and... well, you get the point, which is to trust your partners, your clients, and your colleagues and make sure you establish a strategic groundwork that keeps you all on the same path.

Today, thanks for listening. Until next time, we'll be here, we hope you'll be there.