EPISODE 017

JUSTWORKS

IN CONVERSATION WITH

Hamish Smyth, Partner at Order
Garrett Corcoran, Senior Designer at Order
AND
Chris Carbo, Senior Product Designer at Justworks

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 17 of The Follow-up.

This week we are following up on Justworks, a human resources technology company that provides a platform that helps employers manage payroll, benefits, employee information, and more, with the goal of making it easier to start, run, and grow a business.

The project, designed by Brooklyn, NY-based Order was posted on Brand New on October 28, 2020. You can pull it up on your browser at bit.ly/bnpodcast017 that is B I T dot L Y slash bnpodcast017, all in lowercase.

This week we are joined by Hamish Smyth, Partner at Order; Garrett Corcoran, Senior Designer at Order; and Chris Carbo, Senior Product Designer at Justworks.

In this conversation we go in-depth into the design of the custom type family commissioned from Colophon and the implications it had during the design exploration phase and how it was then tested and

implemented by both Order and Justworks. We also get to hear a fun story of how a design idea Order thought was *the one* didn't quite land but also how it informed the actual design approach.

Now, let's listen in as Armin follows up with Hamish, Garrett, and Chris.

ARMIN VIT Hello, everyone. It is Friday morning, and I hope you are all as excited as I am today to talk about payroll software and type with Hamish, Garrett and Chris. Welcome to The Follow-Up everyone.

HAMISH SMYTH Thanks Armin great to be here.

GARRETT CORCORAN Thanks for having us.

CHRIS CARBO Yeah, thanks for having us, super excited to be here.

ARMIN So for our listeners benefit, to be able to tell who's who, could you introduce yourselves with your name and title?

HAMISH I'm Hamish Smith partner at the design firm Order in New York.

GARRETT And I'm Garrett Corcoran, Senior Designer at Order.

CHRIS I'm Chris Carbo, Senior Product Designer at Justworks.

ARMIN Perfect. And Chris, we're going to start with you. I imagine that part of the answer to this involves how competitive and more consumer facing the market for payroll benefits and HR management software has gotten, but setting my assumptions aside what prompted Justworks to embark on a rebranding now.

CHRIS Sure, so really going into it, Justworks has been around since 2012 and we've been growing a lot since then, and evolving as a brand and a company. Around this time last year, we really wanted to dive in to the fact that we wanted to catch our brand up with where our company was at. And we were starting to notice that we were falling into that category of typical start-up visual identity. And we wanted a chance to stand out and be seen as an industry leader, as well as also bring

together our brand language with our company core values. And we just wanted to pair up with a design studio who could bring that to life and really take us to the next level as we grow.

ARMIN And the logo that you had is that this one that you've had as soon as the beginning in 2012?

CHRIS I think really, if you go back to 2012, there are some random asset files that still exist, but they're hard to dig up. And I believe the logo used to be completely different than what it was previously set in Gotham. So it's like kind of this treasure hunt to go through and find any type of instance like that. But the majority of the time has been Gotham, all caps and that certainly in blue, which has being our primary logo since.

ARMIN Okay. Just wanted to make sure that when we talk about the logo people know that if there was something before to what we had, just because, you know, eight years is relatively young, but you know, 2000—early, two thousands in 2010 logos for web companies and start-ups were sort of a Wild West of logo design. So Hamish, how did Order get involved in the project?

HAMISH We actually got involved with Justworks well, first of all, I should say that we've, we've actually been a customer of Justworks since we founded Order, which was January 1, 2017. So not that long ago, but we'd been a customer from day one for our company and my partner, Alex, her company has been a customer since a couple years before that. And I remember seeing the ads for Justworks on the subway in New York, I think 2013 or 2014 was there sort of, you know, debut, big ad push and they did—and then I remember I had these really handsome ads, all type, left aligned Gotham. Say what you will about Gotham, but it does the job. And they were really smart and clever copywriting. And I remember those and when my partner Alex started a company, I said, check out, Justworks looks like they get it, right? So fast forward, we became a customer, love the product. And then in 2018, we're invited for an RFP. The connection, I don't know, but we were invited

to submit a proposal for an ad campaign that they wanted to do. And we went through the process, but it was, you know, we're not an ad agency where a design studio and it was pretty clear that we probably could have done the project, but it wasn't our bread and butter. They gave that project to somebody else. But during that process, they mentioned that they were looking to start a rebrand process next year. So that would be in 2019. When that happened, they invited us back into, to chat. We ended up winning the project in probably late 2018, early 2019. And so that's how we got involved. Being a customer, I think really well, Chris, you tell me, but I think that was a big part of us winning the project, was us sort of knowing the brand so well.

ARMIN So Chris, aside from having a built-in customer here, what attracted you to working with Order?

CHRIS Well, one being obsessed with Order as their work and quality is amazing. The fact that they were a customer, they really understood and were able to relate to the product and what we were trying to do and connect with the brand. But I think when we first started having conversations with Order, we were able to see how passionate they were not only for design, but for the company itself and what we offered. So there was just that really great connection that we have with Order from get-go.

HAMISH I could add my partner Jesse Reed and I, you know, we're sort of a little bit entrepreneurial and we have some other companies and I would classify myself as a business nerd. I'm really into companies and running businesses and growing businesses and things like that, and Justworks helps companies do that. And so just from the get-go, we sort of interested in what they do. And I'm not kidding, it's excellent, excellent product, and has saved us countless hours of waiting through compliance documentation and things that they kind of handle for you. This is not an ad for Justworks, but use it.

ARMIN So, Chris, usually when we have a guest from the client side on the podcast, it has been a Marketing or Brand Manager or an internal

Creative Director. And this is the first time we hear from someone on the product side. So the question is, what role did your, you know, your own role play in defining the brief for the project and its development?

CHRIS I guess going back to when I first joined Justworks in 2017, our team was a lot smaller and we worked really close with brand as well. And at the time we only had a Creative Director and one Brand Designer, we tackled design as… this like unit and not so much just brand and just product. And from there, we were able to really start to see these holes, I guess, in our brand system and as well as our visual system. So being on the product side, we were just constantly bringing up these holes and saying, okay, this doesn't make sense. How do we make this experience more uniform for our customer? Because at the end of the day, they're the ones traveling through this journey, I guess from marketing side, all the way into the product. And from there, we just started having more and more conversations around what those holes were pretty much being like the foundational elements of color, type, and logo.

And so from there, it started more as a conversation between the design team and then it just kept unraveling into higher levels with our stakeholders. I guess, jumping back a little bit into your question is the fact that we were able to start to look at how to evolve this brand, not just from a product side or marketing side, but as a whole unity, I guess, is the best way to put it. Basically I wanted to focus on how could we also bring those design elements that are typically seen from a visual marketing side into the product and make sure that there's no disconnect. And really, I also just wanted to make sure that that experience was more unified, I guess.

ARMIN Yeah. I think it's not uncommon to find products or services or platforms where the marketing side looks like one thing, and you were like, oh, I'm interested in this. I'm going to use it. And then you get to the product experience, and it's a whole other thing, like there's a big

disconnect. So it makes sense here that the two are aligned. And as a follow up question, for context for our listeners, on the day-to-day, month-to-month, were you the one only leading the project or while you were there other people involved as well?

CHRIS Uh, when we first kicked off the project, I paired up with our Design Manager, Katherine Crowell, and we worked together to really tackle the project. Our marketing team actually had a really good strategy guide already put together in terms of like our voice, and our tone, and where we want to move the brand. So that was a huge jump-off point for us. And then between myself and Katherine and the rest of the design team, we were able to put together a, I guess like RFP or a little bit more of an expectation in terms of what we were looking for for this whole refresh rebrand.

ARMIN And what were those expectations?

CHRIS We really want to get to a place that we could set ourselves up to still have a brand that felt new and fresh in, I don't know, five to seven years. Um, we knew that we were growing our brand into sub-brands and that we would need to be able to have that work as a whole. And then also we just wanted to empower our designers to be able to design with our new system and really have that brand showcased.

ARMIN Got it. Now, Garrett, when you first heard stuff like this, or this direction and expectations, did you have any immediate reactions to the brief and the challenges that you thought would be appropriate for the project?

GARRETT Yeah, I think wrapping my head around it was definitely a process sort of in its own, right? And you know, like Chris is saying, and that Hamish has touched on, we, you know, we knew the product so intimately, we use it every day and, you know, we're Justworks customers, so it's thinking about designing for a brand that, you know, I check in on for my health care had a little bit of extra weight to it and, you know, from a more logistical design perspective, you know, we needed something

that was flexible. You know, so it needed to work in product, but it also needed to translate well to their social media presence or a marketing campaign. So as we started to wrap our heads around the brief we knew that it needed to be simple and flexible and have a point of view. So I think trying to find the right balance to all those different angles was intimidating at first, maybe, but also very exciting.

ARMIN Yeah. Especially the best combination. Whenever you get a brief, both, uh, being intimidated and excited about having to work on it. So a question to both you, and Hamish. What was your approach to the first round of designs presented? Did you go in with a single idea, multiple ideas? What does that look like on your end?

HAMISH The way we approached this was a little different because we'd established, I think early on sort of before we even signed the project that we'd like to do a custom typeface for Justworks. That meant that we sort of had to adjust our process. And instead of—we always start with the discovery and audit phase where we interviewed them and, you know, spend a couple of days at the office at Justworks talking to a bunch of people and reviewing kind of everything they had. Sort of a typical research phase. But then instead of going straight into design, we started working with Colophon Foundry in London to begin this custom typeface. And so we were sort of, we had a bit of a chicken and the egg problem because we were trying to design… the identity was going to be typ-based. We knew that because we were doing custom typeface, we'd want to make that fairly prominent, but we didn't have the typeface yet. And so we were sort of in this limbo where we kind of knew what we wanted the typeface to look like. Colophon had started work on it, but we had to sort of go in with dummy typefaces in the first round. And I think in hindsight, to answer your question specifically, I think we had three directions in the first round. All of them used placeholder typeface. We knew what we were designing and we had drafts that were coming along, but we use Product Grotesque as a substitute, which worked out great. So we went in with three ideas and I think that we, I was very excited about

one of these directions. And I remember coming in one morning, I was like sweating. I was like, Garrett, crack the code here, like review these sketches…

And I had it all figured out. And so we sort of like put a lot of effort into one of these directions. And I think then what happened, I remember the presentation at Justworks. We made the mistake of presenting the typeface and the branding directions one after the other. And presenting a typeface, you can't really do it in 20 minutes. It took, you know, it took an hour and we had an hour and 15 minutes scheduled. And so I'm kind of sitting in the meeting room, watching the clock tick and the Colophon guys are presenting the typeface and I'm like, oh, I have 15 minutes to go through 200 slides. And so we ended up having to race through it all. And that I think kind of derailed the first part of the process for us. We unfortunately had to sort of show these really quick ideas and then say, okay, you know, they all had hard stops. We're like, all right, well, we'll leave you with a PDF see in a week. And I think that might have sort of hamstrung us a little bit. However, we came out of that with glowing approval for the typeface. So once we had that, we sort of recalibrated and went into a second design phase and, and that's sort of where, when we started to, I think, narrow in, on what we ended up with. Sorry, that was a long answer.

ARMIN   It was long, but it was highly entertaining. It's dramatic.

HAMISH   Ok, good, good, good.

ARMIN   So it's interesting that before you presented designs, you had all already pitched the idea for a custom typeface. So Chris, how did you receive this? I mean, it's hard enough to pitch a new identity, but to pitch a new typeface around which this identity will revolve seems even harder. So how was that received on your end, and by the rest of your team?

CHRIS   I was super excited for the typeface exploration and the fact that we were going to take that route. But once we were all aligned on the

idea that we wanted a way to stand out and have our own identity and being able to really own that, the conversations around having our own typeface really just fell right into place. And once everyone starts to see the difference in what typefaces could do, especially stepping away from Gotham, because we were using a combination of Gotham and Gotham Narrow and Lava, it wasn't as clear as to like where we fell in. And like I said, we were blending in with everyone else who's using Gotham. So having that type of outlook and perspective on this new, unique, cool typeface just got everybody excited. And then for the design team, we're all pretty much nerding out over, you know, like what it could be, what are the details and like, what are the specific characters, and how that could impact how type is seen in the product too—especially because our product is so copy heavy, it was really easy to emphasize the importance of having good typography, whether it's on the website, or in the product itself.

And that impact, that really goes a long way with legibility and readability.

HAMISH   If I could add, I think that was our main kind of pitch about the custom type was that, you know, Justworks is not a company that produces a lot of imagery. They don't deal with, you know, gadgets. They really deal in policy and numbers, finance, company, written stuff like numbers and letters. And so maybe that's like a bit of a simplistic view of it, but, that's kind of what we said. You know, you guys deal with characters constantly and you should…one way for you guys to stand out might be to use a custom typeface. And, you know, custom typefaces these days are very much in Vogue of course, but I still stand by that reasoning. And I think it's now being used on their product, you know, successfully.

ARMIN   I am usually the first one to say that whenever a company has a custom typeface, that looks like a dozen other typefaces available already by retail. It's like, what is the point? But I thought the Justworks typeface, Oatley, is really, really unique. It has very peculiar elements that stand

out, that are unlike anything you see out there, like it reminds you of a certain—a number of typefaces with a combination of things, it is just really, really interesting and it stands out. So I'm curious, what was some of the direction that you gave Colophon and then maybe we'll bring in Garrett into this answer?

GARRETT Yeah. I mean, there were a lot of different things to consider and like Hamish was saying, you know, we were looking at all the different places this typeface needed to show up. So, I think our brief was a little bit, two parts. The first half was very utilitarian, you know, we needed this typeface to work well on screen and handle a lot of figures and a lot of information. So we had, you know, taken into consideration the width of the drawing, you know, if it needs to be a little bit narrower to maybe accommodate a lot of different texts in a smaller size. And then the second half, I think was a little bit more expressive, with a lot of this information and things that are very type heavy we need a little bit of character to give people a guide through it and make sure they can, you know, stay interested as they're reading, maybe 30 pages of healthcare specifics.

So, you know, when it came time to talk to Colophon, we passed off a lot of these technical requirements. And then yeah, that second half was a little bit more into the design concept phase. Cause we needed something that would really balance the utilitarian side and the expressive side. And, you know, as Hamish mentioned before, we had this sort of aha moment on one of the concepts. And I think that was a little bit of our way into where the typeface could go. I mean, the, the timeline of that is sort of a little up in the air. Like, like you said, the chicken or the egg, but we were really drawn to this idea of, of machines and how things work in catalogs. And that's where our head was at for what this typeface would look like, andwe had some of those references in mind that we passed on to Colophon and they sort of took it and ran with it. And by the time they came back to us, they had, you know, a library that was much larger than our own. And we knew that they really understood what we were going for.

HAMISH   That was spot-on. Well, one of the concepts we had for the type was, that Justworks found out that their original name, which I don't think lasted for a long bit, their original name was Clockwork, or was going to be Clockwork. And because, you know, it's all about like timing and HR and stuff like that. And we kind of ran with that and had found a manual of 19th-century clock and watch maker's parts. It was like a catalog and it was one of those really amazing old catalogs with illustrations, just filling the page with little figures and type, and then like price lists on the other page.

And in catalogs like that, there was often, you know, very utilitarian sans serif typefaces being used as like headers and things like that, which I presume was sort of like a modest kind of non-flourishing way at the time to sort of display a heading. And you know, probably seemed quite modern as well. And so we kind of ran with that and looked back at sort of late 19th-century Germans sans serif and things like that, which still had some of these flourishes and things. And thank you Armin for the compliment, but I can confidently say that we ripped off most of those little flourishes from—like all good type designers do from those old specimens. But my hats off to Colophon, they really did the hard work on that one. And it did an amazing job.

ARMIN   This is one of the first times—it is the first time that we talk about custom typefaces. So I want to spend a little bit more time, more than we have already spent on the process about how it gets decided. So, you know, as an example, you already mentioned that during the design presentation, Colophon spent an hour presenting it. So, a little bit of what happened before that, what happened after that? How does the typeface get tested by you at Order, by you Chris at Justworks… So maybe we'll just take turns a little bit about going into how from start to finish a little bit on how that custom job works.

GARRETT   Yeah. So we, like I was saying before, I had talked about a lot of the requirements that we wanted the typeface to hit, you know, as Colophon sketched, you know, began their process, they were sending

over beta files and testing out different characters. And we took those on our end and started applying them to some of that branding work that we were doing. Yeah, Hamish mentioned before we had kind of a dummy typeface. So there was a little bit of a phase of just swapping those things out and seeing what that looked like and what that felt like. And then from there at least, you know, on our end, we sort of did a pretty rigorous test of scalability, what it looks like on different colors and how it starting to mesh with all the illustration aspects that we were using at the time. The brand had since transitioned away from a lot of that work. But I think, yeah, it was, it was really just a trial and error seeing how it matched up with the branding work that we were already doing.

CHRIS And then once we had like the beta files for type in our product, like we were able to start using them in our design tools to get a sense of how we could see that difference between Gotham and this new typeface. And I think that was also one of the super awesome things Colophon did in their presentation. They did a great job of showcasing, like the difference between Gotham and Gotham Narrow to this new typeface and those slight nuances with changes definitely went a long way. And once we had it in the design tool, we were able then to start implementing it on the product in our staging site to get a sense of how much of an impact can this have, how does legibility work? Again, it was one of those selling points too, for everyone else to see. Like, oh wow, this is making a huge difference. This is definitely the right decision. And it was great because then we're also able to dive a little bit deeper with, maybe more of a magnifying glass over certain letter forms, but also that general sense of the flow and the dynamic of what's happening now between the type is super evident and clear to everyone. And we were just super excited to see how it continued to progress. Overall, we were just testing it through our tools and seeing it in staging sites.

ARMIN Now, I can't remember exactly how many styles or weights there are in the type family, but did you have weights and styles that were specific

to mobile use, than to desktop, than to print, or was the whole thing designed to work seamlessly across all three? Which, you know, nowadays it's a little bit easier to have three different things—font files for the different mediums. What is the actual tool kit look like?

GARRETT Yeah. Uh, so there, there are three weights of the typeface. There's a bold, a regular and a display face, and you're right in that we tried to make the core family being the bold and the regular do a lot of the heavy lifting across all the platforms. You know, we had briefly talked about doing maybe a micro cut, but I think the regular was something that worked well at all the different sizes it would need to. And, you know, I think that's a testament to the great work that Colophon did as they really understood the brief. So yeah, the, the bold and regular do do most of the heavy lifting, but we do have the display cut that has a little bit more of that expressive quality to it. And that's usually just reserved for, you know, maybe bigger use cases like out of home ads or, you know, big, larger headlines on the, on the website.

ARMIN That's what I was trying to get at the micro cut that maybe was designed for mobile use, and for all those figures that are deployed across the Justworks environment.

HAMISH We definitely worked at a screen size for that regular weight and, and the bold as well, and made sure it was going to work, you know, it performed best in our opinion when it was, um, you know, on a phone screen or on a, on a desktop screen. But the display weight was the one that's supposed to be blown up and, and used for headlines and things like that.

ARMIN So, going back to the design presentation, and that breakthrough that you had… was that breakthrough that coming in, sweating into the office, did that make it into the final design approach or was that just a fleeting moment of creative genius that didn't happen?

HAMISH Well, I, uh, I don't know why I was sweating. I don't know why I added that, but—

ARMIN   [laughter] It makes it more dramatic. So it's fine, we will allow the creative expression, it's fine.

HAMISH   I came in, I was, I was breathless. No. So that direction, that breakthrough direction did not make it to the final cut. And if I can describe it briefly, it was those watch pods that I mentioned before, I'll send it to you Armin, it was cool. We thought it was, uh, all of those watch pods from that catalo, we kind of cut them out and then collaged them into sort of Monty Pythonesque illustrations of like weird things. Um, so we had these like cogs moving with gears and things, and then we would bring in all the photos and kind of arrange these elaborate scenes and then, you know, had some type coming in and we animated them and went all out. So that did not make it to the final. Maybe we can do a behind the scenes, um, if Chris allows, but what happened was after that presentation, where we had to rush things through, we went back to the drawing board and I think Justworks asked us that what they weren't getting was there sort of strategy pillars that they'd been working on, they weren't coming across, and those were confidence, support, and growth.

So, you know, the confidence to build your business, the support, 24/7 support is their big thing. And they actually have 24/7 support—it's amazing—and growth, you know, helping you grow your business. They said that those three things weren't coming across. And so that was sort of our little brief off to the first presentation. And so we went back, came up with some new ideas and one of those ideas sort of had that on the line feature in it, which is a very simple, I think, in your write-up Armin you, unprompted sort of said, I guess this means support. And that's right. That's exactly right. So I'm glad that, you know, that comes across. It's just a very simple, thick line underneath the word Justworks if you haven't seen it, uh, to convey that Justworks is there to support you. But also the underlying for us was this idea of like, when you're confident about something you underline it. In writing, if you want to emphasize something, you want to align it. And then to sort of convey growth, the third thing, we came up with

the way of taking that underline and expanding it out and framing words in it, and doing a few other moves like that. So we tried to sort of visually take those three things and have some fun with them and build a system around that. I forgot the question. I think I started rambling there…

ARMIN   [laughter] You started off right by answering the sweating dramatic, idea… that moment of creative genius and segwaying into what was actually going to be my follow up question. So you made it all seamless, so well done. Uh, Garrett

GARRETT   Yeah. I just wanted to jump in and reinforce that dramatic moment that Hamish ran into the office. It was maybe not as dramatic as we're putting it, but I think you could see a little bit of the excitement and the idea and that it was really resonating with us. And yeah, though a lot of it kind of wasn't really hitting the mark in the way that we wanted, I think there was something there that did carry through to the end result. And, you know, in the first draft we were maybe making these collages and collections of illustrations. And in the end, you know, we tried to do maybe a similar move with the typeface. So I think, you know, in a way we almost swapped one out for the other to reinforce, like Hamish is saying that support and that growth that Justworks really wanted to see in the brand.

ARMIN   I was actually going to say, when you started mentioning about those Monty Pythonesque collages, is that the end result, even though it's purely topography and purely solid blocks of color, they are very textual. They're very rich. They feel… it doesn't feel like, oh, it's just type. Like, it really feels like a visual language that is rich, and colorful, and vibrant, and dynamic. So with that said, Chris, was there any point or anyone say, why is it just type? Couldn't there be more? Couldn't we use photography or illustration or 3D stuff? Or were you just pleased from the beginning that it was so simple?

CHRIS   No, I definitely—probably from the beginning we were amazed at how, how much type and that color block visual system could go a long

way. And we felt like we almost didn't need to rely that much into photography and illustration styles to do that heavy lifting. But also one awesome thing that came out of the typeface was some of the glyphs and how impactful those elements and styles could be. So, it was like maybe a two for one deal, I guess, with the type and pulling in those elements to help create that type of visual language. But again, kind of going back to another way of standing out against our competition, a lot of those brands are using photography and illustrations in certain ways. So it was another way to differentiate ourselves by just going all in on type.

HAMISH Yeah. And I think also in technology companies recently, there've been certain illustration styles that have become, you know, a trope to be frank. And I think people know what I'm talking about and I've absolutely been a part of that thing. I'm not saying I'm above that, we really wanted to, you know, we gave them some guidance around photography and illustration, but we wanted to sort of see how far the type could run for it. And the glyphs that Chris mentioned, you know. Armin, I think, our shared mutual ex-boss kind of was a fan of the big arrow movement. So that's a trick that I like to deploy as well. I think the problem with photography with these types of companies is that they… like taking photos of a workplace is always cheesy. I mean, it may be if you get a really good photographer to come in and do that, but photography, I think for these types of businesses can be tricky where you've got, you know, a tendency to use stock imagery a lot, and, you know, stock photography in an office is like the cliché stock photo. So you don't want to use that, but it's not to say that Justworks can't use photography and we did give them some guidance around how to do that if they need to. Cause you know, this is the real world and photos are going to happen.

ARMIN I had a question that I should have asked earlier about the name of the typease, which is named after the founder. How was that received? Because I've heard stories of founders hating that a font was named

after them, or a product was named after them, what was that reaction like?

HAMISH Well, [laughter] the naming of the typeface was actually from the client's side. Garrett and I came in with the brilliant, uh, name, I believe of Justworks Sans—we thought it was one of our best, but probably wisely Justworks wanted to come up with their our name. The Isaac Oats, the CEO sort of got that responsibility to have it named after him, I guess, or that honor. And so Oatley was born. I think it's a great choice, it's cute.

ARMIN Definitely better than Justworks Sans, but uh, you know, it would have been functional. So, going back to the original idea that you had, that we're going to make this custom type family is going to be great, did it live up to your expectations of what you wanted from the beginning?

HAMISH We were, I think can't really act shocked that, you know, your own work turned out good cause you know, that's the goal, but I was shocked that this type came out so well and had that—I was worried that it wouldn't have that uniqueness that you spoke about Armin,and I'm so glad that Colophon, that we got to work with Colophon and they got that uniqueness baked into it. I also have to give all of the credit here to Garrett. Once we had that idea, Garrett really championed this idea and was the main driving force behind everything that you see.

GARRETT I appreciate that. Um, I'll maintain that it was a collaborative effort for sure. I think in terms of our original vision for all the aspects of the project, I think for me, the answer is a little bit of yes and no. And I think the typeface like Amish is saying is beyond our expectations. You know, we're just really happy with how it came out now it's working and you know, that we get to see it in the product. That's been really great to see. And again, a testament to Colophon. The actual brand itself, I think took a little bit of a journey and a process like we've talked about and you know, maybe doesn't exactly align with where our heads were at at the beginning. And I think that's for the better, I think that was like in a really good way. You know, we had worked

with Justworks a lot. And Chris, if you remember one of the early workshops where we talked to your design team, very one-on-one to really understand a lot of the problems that they're facing and you know, what this brand needed to hit. And it evolved a lot throughout the process, but I think it was all for the better.

ARMIN Okay. I do have a follow-up question. Did you know that you wanted to work with Colophon from the beginning? Or did you do a whole exploration about who to work with, did you put out an RFP of your own, how that that work?

HAMISH I did want to work with Colophon and hadn't done a project with them before, but we'd invited them to speak at our office. We also run Standards Manual, the publishing company and we have Order and Standards Manual share an office in Brooklyn. And when we could do events and stuff in that other life, I think it was maybe two summers ago, we had Colophon in town and we invited them to speak at Standards Manual, talk about what they're up to. And we really loved their approach to type work. It was very research-based and sort of, we thought it aligned very closely to how we work. And so they were, you know, top of our list and I sometimes visit London and have a beer with them. So they were top of our list. We love their work and there was no RFP process. It was sort of contact Colophon, see if it's within the budget. And that was that.

ARMIN Chris, what is the most exciting part of this new identity and new typeface now that you've been working with it for a few months?

CHRIS I think definitely, I am most excited by the versatility of it, even though how simple it can be, meaning like the visual system is, like we said before, that support underlying that focus blocking, it just offers so many fun and bold ways of calling attention to certain things in the product or in marketing. And bringing that to life has been so much fun to design with, but I think the best part is showcasing that work in the office to not only the design team, but everyone else around it. Like a couple of weeks ago, we had an all hands presentation and

Order joined us, and we showcased the work and it was just great to see the response of everybody and the excitement of this new system and how easily it could be used. Just one, being able to use it, and two, the reaction of everybody who's seeing it, it has been super awesome.

ARMIN I think sometimes it's easy to forget that a lot of the identities we see, we think that they're meant for the consumer, but they play a really important role on the internal culture and how that manifests inside—I think it's also important. It's really nice to hear how well it's being received on the inside.

HAMISH Yeah. I think that's a good point about the internal use. And that was one of our other main reasons for proposing the custom type was that we wanted to empower everyone within Justworks to be able to produce branded materials. And so, if your day is spent in Word documents and maybe you don't ever get to do any sort of branded things, having a custom typeface called Oatley, that means that you can kind of be a designer as well and produce branded stuff, even if you're only dealing with figures and words. So that was another big driving factor behind it. And it's great to hear that it's playing out internally.

CHRIS I think it was also a great indicator that after we shared everything, a lot of people were reaching out to us. How do we get this new logo and lock-up in our email signature? How do we start to use it? So, that was just another great response to see and hear.

ARMIN I think just people wanting to use it as a good sign. And you know, when you mentioned the good type on Microsoft Word, it's just like, ahhh, it does not compute, but it's great that, you know, that's an expression of a brand that we often forget about or don't even think about. It's something that maybe we all as a design community can strive to have a nice type on Microsoft Word, which I know it's not easy to put it across so many computers like licensing, but that's what a custom typeface does. I want to thank you all for your time today. It was great to get really into the details about how to design a custom typeface,

how the process works, how that can be applied internally. And it's a lovely piece of design, not just the typeface, but also the system around it. And I guess you hear this a lot, but it really does just work. It works really well. So thank you, Chris, Hamish, and Garrett for joining me today.

CHRIS Thank you, Armin. Really appreciate you having us on and want to say thank you for the work that you know that you do for the industry. We're big fans.

ARMIN Thank you.

GARRETT Yeah. Thanks so much for having us on and just reinforce what Hamish just said—we are very big fans of Brand New.

CHRIS Thanks again, everyone for joining. I think the coolest thing is I got to work with Order. I got to work with Colophon, and now I get to work with you Armin on this. So my bucket list has been checked. [laughter] So, thanks.

ARMIN I love this ending where people praise me and Brand New. I'm going to start to make it an obligation that at the end, people have to say this now, now I appreciate it. So thank you again. And I'll see you around.

BRYONY When you can get an office full of non-designers excited about type, as was the case with the Justworks staff, you know you have done something right. It probably helped to have named the typeface after the company's founder but, kidding aside, it was wonderful to hear the work that went behind the type family, the cleverness and appropriateness of its application, and how it was all embraced internally across product, marketing, and day-to-day operations.

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