

EPIISODE 018

CASEY'S GENERAL STORE

IN CONVERSATION WITH

Oliver Maltby, Interbrand

AND

Megan Elfers, Casey's General Stores

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 18 of The Follow-up.

This week we are following up on Casey's General Stores, the fourth-largest convenience store retailer in the United States. Offering self-service gasoline, grocery items, and freshly prepared food items it operates over 2,200 convenience stores in 16 states, with a significant presence in mid-size and rural communities across the Midwest. Additionally, it is also the fifth-largest pizza chain in the U.S. and we will definitely be talking about that today.

The project, designed by the New York, NY office of Interbrand was posted on Brand New on October 12, 2020. You can pull it up on your browser at bit.ly/bnpodcast018 that is B I T dot L Y slash bnpodcast018, all in lowercase.

This week we are joined by Oliver Maltby, Executive Creative Director at Interbrand and Megan Elfers, VP, Marketing & Advertising at Casey's General Stores.

In this conversation we learn how a big New York firm got its feet wet — and boots snowed — in Des Moines, Iowa, to get a first-hand account on the Casey's experience. As with most large projects we know there is always a degree of research and strategy to uncover insights. In this case in particular we get more in detail about how that informed every step of the process and how it informed and empowered both Casey's and Interbrand to go in the appropriate direction.

Now, let's listen in as Armin follows up with Oliver and Megan.

ARMIN VIT Hello, everyone. It is a lovely Friday afternoon out here in the Midwest, or at least in my part of the Midwest. So it's fitting that we will be chatting about a fixture of road trips around these parts, Casey's General Store. Megan, Oliver, welcome to The Follow-Up.

MEGAN ELFERS Thank you.

OLIVER MALTBY Thank you for inviting us.

ARMIN Wonderful. Megan, let's start with you. Given the business success of Casey's over the years with the existing logo and identity, I would imagine you could have kept going with it for another 50 years. So what prompted the company to embark on a redesign now?

MEGAN Absolutely. It is a great question because certainly Casey's has had a tremendous amount of success with its business for over 50 years now. But I think that Casey's has really embarked on a lot of change and modernization, whether that is from launching a digital platform or enhancing the merchandising in our stores, we are really changing a lot at Casey's and we felt like this is the time that we also need to signal that to our guests and updating the brand logo was an excellent opportunity to do so. I will tell you as well, it didn't hurt the fact that this logo is really outdated, it's inflexible, it's hard to use. And I think because it is hard to use, we had really inconsistent usage. And I think as we try to strengthen our brand, we saw that the only way we were

going to get back to consistent usage is to have a brand that was more usable and effective forward.

ARMIN Correct me if I'm wrong. But the logo is basically the same as it was when the company started. Right?

MEGAN It is, you would be surprised all the different iterations that are out there actually, but yes, it's the same five color with the general store, a couple of different fonts that it has been for 50 years. But I think in the last couple of years, even before we embarked on this bigger logo change, if you went to our website, you actually wouldn't see that barn shape logo there. You know, they were just using the Casey's wordmark because they felt like when they put that barn on it, it immediately kind of said, this isn't modern. How could this be a digital experience? That's what I mean in terms of inconsistent application, but you're right. There was a different barn out there.

ARMIN It's also a little bit mind blowing if you think about all the technological changes that that logo has seen in terms of how it's applied from mechanicals back in the sixties and seventies, to then, you know, a little bit more actual printing to digital applications. And I think the fact that it's survived this long is quite interesting. So as a follow-up question, did the initiative come from the top down, meaning was the concept of a rebranding brought up by the executive level or was it something that bubbled off from the people and teams managing the brand on the ground?

MEGAN Well, when I say that Casey's is going through a great deal of change, that does involve the leadership as well. And so a year and a half ago, we had a new CEO that I think was more aligned to signaling to guests that we are making these changes. I think part of it too, was this will be a massive investment that is required to update all of our stores. And so while others saw the opportunity to update the logo, it didn't feel like the right time or they didn't feel like they were ready to make that investment in the change. I would say a little bit of both. Little bit of us constantly hearing from consumers: you guys are outdated old

fashioned. Which we did, but also having the leadership to say: this is the time we're ready to make this investment. Brand is important.

ARMIN Got it. Yeah, I think when there are so many physical locations to a brand, I think, you know, that consideration of the expense of changing is super important. Just thinking about Best Buy, you know, they changed their logo, but they haven't made the investment of changing all those stores all around the country that... it isn't just changing the logo, and the stores, they had these giant Best Buy thing across... that you can see from the highways. It is important to have that commitment to make the investment.

MEGAN And it will be a journey for us. I mean, this won't all happen overnight, as much as I might wish that it would, this is years and years, but it's still, we know that we want to make that investment. And that's important.

ARMIN Right. Now, Oliver, how did Interbrand get involved in the project?

OLIVER The boring answer is it was pretty—probably—traditional, like there was an RFP that we responded to and then we got a chance to meet Megan and the wider team. It was really through a series of conversations where we shared cases, we talked about our approach, and our capabilities. And then we also did a relatively short but detailed point of view in terms of what we were thinking about the initial problem that we're trying to solve from—not only a design perspective but also a business perspective. So it was really a kind of a combination of those things really that came together. I mean, hopefully [intelligible] as well [intelligible] convincing them that we were the right team to work with.

ARMIN Yeah. I think that always plays a role. So Megan, what attracted you to working with Interbrand?

MEGAN There were two big things that really led us to Interbrand. One, led a conversation, and I think what we immediately gravitated towards what's their collaborative approach. You know, we wanted to be involved in all of the steps and see the evolution of the design and be

a part of that. And I felt like the process that Interbrand laid out was really that collaborative process we were looking for. I think the other piece of it was, you know, this is a big change and a big evolution for us. And so we wanted to make sure that we were checking in with our guests or consumers along the way, and immediately felt Interbrand saw the importance of that too. And the insights were embedded within their process throughout, you know, we didn't have to go bring in another insights agency to help us with that. Interbrand was going to lead that and their expertise would be a part of it along the way.

ARMIN Let's talk a little bit about that insights process. Oliver, can you talk a little bit about how that works with Interbrand and I'm assuming perhaps very correctly that this obviously comes before the design phase, but how much has to be done before you can actually start even thinking about design?

OLIVER The answer again is quite complicated, by quite a lot. Like we had insights and research going all the way through this project. So from the very start we spoke to lots of different customers. We had three different sites going when we were allowed to meet in physical locations at once to get insight from around the locations where Casey's found themselves. And then a lot of that kind of initial ideas and thoughts that our consumers are telling us were fed into essentially the brief that would start to be validated. And then that really gave us a sense of how far we could and couldn't push the brand, because we're obviously conscious of... if a company comes to us and said, we want a completely new logo and therefore brand, you know, it's probably the designer's recommendation to push that as far as they can. And the reality is like, that's not always the best case and we have to really manage that equity that's built up over those 50 years. And it's really our job to be responsible with the changes that we are suggesting and recommending. So obviously the research part that is really important, it really kind of validates and pushes out initial theories. And then as a team, we can discuss how far we should be pushing. It still doesn't give us all the answers because then

through the design phase, we have to then give a broad breadth of where we could be pushing the brand forward in terms of, you know, slight nudges to more radical shifts. And then again, after those design phases and activists, after those have been selected by the working team, along with Interbrand, then they would go back into research to get validated as well. So there was almost two phases, one kind of qualitative and quantitative as well from them. And then we went back into quant as well. So there was lots of research to validate and really define any of the decisions we were making. So nothing was done in a vacuum. It was all completely tested with consumers along the way.

ARMIN And obviously, you know, the result shows that you did change the logo. Was there any point in the process where you were like, oh, we shouldn't change the logo at all? Whether an indication that that will could be detrimental?

OLIVER Yeah, no, I mean, that's a great question. I wish you didn't ask it, but it's a perfect question, because there wasn't, there was definitely a point in the process where in through the research, there were definitely challenges because you've got to imagine this is a much loved brand that has been around for 50+ years. It is a part of people's lives in the area it serves. Any changes to any existing brand and this plays out in research time and time, again, people and existing density against something that new it's very hard for that new one to win. In an out drag race if that makes sense, like you really have to look for the nuance in the research to understand the ramifications and what you're really finding out in the research in terms of those insights. So in terms of like, favorability, I think the original logo was liked more than the new logos, but what the research showed us is there wouldn't be a drop-off in customers visiting stores, and there was acceptance to change and actually the new logos appeal to the younger audiences. So you could see almost generations switch-out happening in terms of the decades that are going to come up for Casey's. So you have

use research, not to necessarily give you the answer, but to push you in the right direction. And then you have to take confident strategic decisions, make those choices going forward.

ARMIN That sounds fascinating. Megan, I'm seeing this from your end on the inside and also the executive team and other people in the company... did at any point were like, yeah, let's not?

MEGAN I don't think we ever got to a point that we were saying let's not, but I do think it gave us pause to say, how do we do this? Is this the right time? And how do we make sure we do it right? And so I think we really went back to our marketing plans and looked at making sure, because people are probably most concerned about it. Oh, you're changing. You're not going to change my pizza, right? And so we have specific messaging out there that's like, hey, it's the same made from scratch dough. It's the same fresh ingredients that you love. It's the same pizza. We're just giving you a new look and a new way to order it. And so we've been really careful in how we message the change and giving them comfort in what won't be changing too.

ARMIN I think that's usually where big brands or big brand changes really trip people up when there's not enough... or the correct communication about what is happening. Because a lot of the general audience, can sometimes see a logo change and be like, oh, everything is changing. Like, no, there might be some changes, but not everything that you love is going away. Especially in this case, pizza seems like a big deal. I will get back to the pizza, but not yet.

MEGAN [Laughter] We love to talk pizza.

ARMIN With the, kind of like the research phase in place, Megan, was there a specific creative direction that you wanted to go in or was that just completely left—not completely, but more given to Interbrand like, you figure out what the visual territory is, what the kind of emotions that we want to convey are, or that you have something in mind?

MEGAN We had something specific in mind. I think the research phase led us to, these are the important equities to hold on to. There's this barn shape, that's important to our consumers. The red color of friendliness that we want to continue to convey. And then I really think, and Oli may disagree, but we said, okay, go do and give us some really great breadth and variety of how we can push on those different cues.

ARMIN So that's a perfect segue and cue for you Oliver, after getting that direction, what was the initial design exploration phase like?

OLIVER Well, I mean, even with all the research, I think one of the key points in the whole process for us was—we actually went—this sounds like a big aha moment, it shouldn't be, we should do it with every project, we went to Des Moines and we actually traveled around different Casey's stores, because our in going thoughts being, you know, a new York-based team is... the barn has to go, it doesn't work in digital environments... there are ways that we can simplify this and make it feel more unified both physically and digitally. And what was really important is that when we turned up in Des Moines we started driving towards the first store, I think we saw about six or ten on the first day, as well as the competitors, which is really important. And the thing that is just burned in my brain forever is that you could see this 50-foot monument sign, like the black silhouette from miles away, and you couldn't see any color. You couldn't see any typography, but you knew straight away that was a Casey's store because of that shape. So it just really kind of dawned on us how important that shape is. Not just for the sake of continuity, but also like how original and unique is. I mean, I think if you were going to design it from scratch today, it might be something that you wouldn't do because it is a difficult to shape the work with, but... that visit just proved to us the importance of going there, being on the ground, getting that different feel that you just wouldn't have ever got from kind of desk research.

So that was one thing. So we kind of blew out our own hypothesis straight away. And then through the research, as Megan said, it was definitely those three things that came back from the first wave of

research. So retaining reds... red was definitely a consideration going into the project because if you look at all of the competitors, it's quite rare that every single Casey's competitor is red, or red and black. So naturally as a designer, you'd think, oh, the easy way to stand out to change the color. But when you actually look at the categories they serve and the semiotics behind those colors, it actually makes sense that you are almost fitting in with that category because you're by the road side and you need to be the same option and feel similar and accessible, not just the food, like the pizza that we just talked about, but also, you know, gasoline as well.

OLIVER So having that breadth and, and keeping that as red was really important. And then the other two things are the barn as we mentioned before, and how we could then build that into the system—I think that was really important. So it wasn't just a standalone logo that kind of dropped off as soon as anyone wanted to. And then the last thing was that friendliness, which... that was probably one of the hardest things to capture because we're still trying to make it feel like a very trusted, you know, formal gas station at the same time as feeling like this local convenience store as well. So having those challenges I think was unique to us, but I think any unique challenge in the project is the thing that fundamentally ends up making the solution, the right solution as well.

ARMIN And knowing that you had to keep the barn, did that just drive the exploration phase in the sense that let's just show a hundred different barns? I don't know how many, but was it helpful in narrowing down which visual directions to go in?

OLIVER Yeah, it was great actually. I mean, so what we did, we set up a workshop in Des Moines and we really produced these like big scrolls that filled the room. And then the first scroll was really talking about the sandbox we were playing in and all the assets we had. So what we really did was take the original barn logo and then dissect it into all of its elements. And then we talked through each element independently

and the alterations and variations we could achieve. They weren't necessarily logos specifically. It was really like looking at typography and what typography says to us and whether we keep, you know, the Western typeface or whether we move to, you know, a sans serif, and the implications of that... and semiotics again. Or do we move for a serif and what does that mean? So we were kind of talking through with the team, all of the options that we have available to us, if we're trying to manage that equity and build forward. And then from there, we did essentially steps out between being very close in the modernization of Casey's, not just logo but also how that logo would be applied to all the main elements. So after we went through looking at those specific elements and really dissecting them with the team and talking about the meaning, and the semiotics and what the implications of making some of the decisions would be, then we shared roughly, I think it was nine different territories that went from close-in to much more farther out where we would start to get rid of some of the assets like the barn, for instance. So the far end of the spectrum, there probably wasn't that much recognition to the original Casey's logo. And this was really to make sure that we're in the right ballpark because Darren who's the CEO actually in one of the interviews said in a scale of one to 10, the rate of change would be something like seven or eight. And obviously the reality is you have to tend to that level of ambition with also customer expectations as well. Finding that right balance and then going back into research is really important. But I think you can definitely see even from that first workshop and you can see the DNA and the starting point where we ended up.

ARMIN Megan, what was your, and your team's reaction to those first nine routes?

MEGAN Seeing nine different concept areas was really, honestly, it was fun and we fell appreciated the breadth of exploration. And I think it was necessary maybe on, at different points and where we thought that change should go. And so it was really helpful to align us and to have

nine different areas that we could pick from, sort of, and say, oh gosh, I keep seeing this element, I really like that. And so I think having that breadth of exploration was really helpful for us in identifying the things that we could gravitate towards consistently.

ARMIN From that first show of design, were you pretty excited about where you were headed or was there still some hesitation that, you know, like, eh, I don't know... and not to put you or on the spot or Oliver in a weird position, but it's always interesting to hear about how sometimes from the first meeting there's a clear winner, but sometimes there's still a lot more work that needs to happen before you arrive at the eventual design solution.

MEGAN I think we were excited because we were like, oh gosh, you know, we were in favor of big change and there were some really great different opportunities to modernize our brand. And so I think in that room, we were very excited about it. I think it's when we started to go back to, oh gosh, you know, are our consumers ready for this amount of change that we maybe got a little bit more nervous again. But in that room and that day, we were really excited about the possibilities for our brand and to move it forward.

ARMIN And then Oliver when you take that feedback back, how did that evolve from that first meeting into sort of the final design that we saw recently?

OLIVER Yeah. I mean, as Megan said before, we really try and be as collaborative as possible throughout the process on all of our, on all of the engagements that we have. And I think this again was an example where we used those nine routes really to start kind of... it's almost like as a visual brief to start moving towards a solution that we could quickly ascertain just from the feedback, like what things were working, what things weren't working. There was conversations about pushing the color red, and then whether we should go out of category and, you know, do we retain the yellow, that Casey's had in the original logo. So there was specific elements that were still on the

table. And I think as soon as you get to see those designs and it comes really apparently quickly, no, these are the things I liked and these are the things that need to progress. And then from there we actually did, I don't know how many iterations to get to the final logo. We definitely did quite a few different waves. And we tried to use, I mean, at this point we were definitely going through COVID locked down. So we were using all the new digital tools through that process. And we had huge Miro boards at the time where we could actually go through and have very interactive sessions with the working team to kind of nail down and get close two or three different logos that would then go back into research to be tested, to make sure that we were on the right track.

ARMIN And was there anything at any point that you were sad that they didn't make it through those phases?

OLIVER Uh, I mean, definitely when we first started, I think when you create any new potential brand territory, there are, you know, everyone has a personal feeling about what should be the right solution. And I always remember, I think it was, I dunno, route five or six, there was like this really strange—I think there's a lot of comments on UnderConsideration about like a Western typeface and you should have retained the Western typeface. We created this Western typeface, that was essentially a barn, like a really fat-stretched out Western typeface. I think if anything though, it probably looked to like someone from New York has created a brand for the Midwest rather than something that actually represents the Midwest. I still personally have a lot of look at that, but I can completely understand why it was not the right solution—but I think going into the final solution, I think we we're really happy with that.

If you look at the details of things like the weather vane it's really nice that something lasted for 50 years, but it was so crudely drawn and it was so hard to work with. A lot of it was about refining what was already there. And I think there is something useful in what we do

as an industry. Why, where we're looking for that nugget and we're looking for that thing that already exists that is authentic to the business and we can bring that out and refine it and polish it. And I think that's, well, you know, we kind of, as a team, ended up doing with Casey's.

ARMIN I think all the elements, especially in the logo, they all come together quite nicely, even though they are, you know, the sizing of the elements are strange, but everything fits in a way that it is again called like that silhouette that you were talking about, those monuments signs, that it might not be the perfect barn, or it might not be the perfect weather vane, which in this case, they, you know, they're pretty close to being really perfect. But I think it's more about capturing that instant sensation of what you're looking at. And I think research paid off in getting to the right shape. So now let's talk about pizza. So Megan, I was almost shocked to learn that Casey's is the fifth largest chain in the U.S. I'm guessing that's behind Domino's, Pizza Hut, Papa John's and Little Caesar's.

MEGAN I believe that's correct. Yes.

ARMIN All right. It's amazing that this pizza place that only exists in a segment of the U.S. is as big as one of those. So that aside, how much focus was placed on the design of the pizza boxes? Which really turned out amazing.

MEGAN When we saw the different concepts in the routes, there was always a pizza box concept within there. So it was, hey here's what the logo is, and then here's some different executions of it—very rough. And pizza box was one, I think there was a candy bag and a fuel truck, so some important pieces. And so it was always in our mind, how does this work on a pizza box? Interestingly, I think the concept that we selected, you know, then we went back once we landed the logo and redesigned a lot of those things, the pizza box really stayed the same. And I think that shows that that logo from the get-go, that design from

the get-go, immediately worked. And maybe that's part of the reason that we loved it because it worked so well.

OLIVER I would say from my perspective I think—I don't know if you feel it Armin—but I know in my industry, or my view of the industry, like the word iconic is bounced around a lot when we're thinking of design and I think this is actually one of those moments where we saw the logo on the pizza box and it just... everything fell into place. It's almost like the pizza box drove the final solution. I mean, it wasn't decided on that by any means, but it was so powerful and so strong. And I think that's where you can see the flexibility of the identity treading that very small, tightrope between convenience store, gasoline, and pizza, that you can have something work in all of those three areas. So that's what gave us a lot of confidence that is was the right thing to move forward with. Even though it sounds superficial because it's a pizza box, but it's such a key part of the brand. It became really, really important. And it's actually strange—I don't want to go to into it—but as well as designing the logo at the same time, even before the logo is approved, we were simultaneously designing the private label packaging which was a huge undertaking. And that almost became the proof point again of the flexibility of the system.

ARMIN For sure. This is a really good segue because I was going to ask about the private label. And now I just want to mention about the pizza box, because it's the kind of thing that you don't think about the impact that it has on brand awareness. It's just like, you know, you see people carrying Starbucks cups around or in New York, the Saks Fifth Avenue bags, like those things become walking billboards for the brand. So I think if you've pulled into a Casey's, just to get gas and you see someone pulling out with that big box of pizza you're like, I want that! The pizza box, it was just so bold and iconic. And you know, that big barn just, it's almost like an album cover in a way the album cover for pizza. So they have it. So in terms of the private label, this is a question for Megan, how many SKUs do you have under the private label?

MEGAN Well it's interesting for this new logo. We really only had some water SKUs as well as candy and auto products— windshield wipers and those types of things. And that was really the breadth of our private label. And I think that was one of the things that pushed us to do this new logo project is that we knew that there was a huge opportunity to do more private label in our stores. Certainly our guests appreciate our quality and the value, and they wanted to see that across more products. And so, whereas we really didn't have that many SKUs in packaged products before, we are moving into lots of new products. We just launched packaged beverages. Two liter and 20 ounce sodas, we are launching chips, we are launching beef jerky, we will be launching paper products. And so all of those things are now rolling out and it's been a really exciting way to see this brand have a huge presence. And the color red that's really driven the brand design as well as Oli said is that we knew this was coming and we wanted to make sure that the new logo could be a part of that offering.

ARMIN As I mentioned on my post, there's a couple of Casey's General Stores by where I live in Bloomington, Indiana. And like I had never thought about what's in it. Like I just, I always drove by, stopped at a Marathon gas station or whatever, but now whenever I get back on the road to traveling, because it's between here and the airport, uh, I'll make sure to stop by and try that pizza and see what else is in store.

MEGAN Well, there's a lot more coming in terms of private label. I myself have fallen in love with a raspberry danish, there's also a vanilla cookie, so lots of great things, but it's fun to see this factoring roll-out.

ARMIN So Oliver, what were some of the challenges and some of the fun aspects of designing for such a broad range of materials, and as you mentioned, kinda like working in unison as you were still developing the brand?

OLIVER I mean, it was definitely unusual, but it actually works out amazingly well that it was, we almost used the packaging system—I think there's something like 104 SKUs going through which is a lot—and I

think the interesting thing for us is if you think of all those different formats and shapes, there's a really good chance to pressure test how that identity would then be used in all those different formats. And I think one of the challenges from the original identity was it really couldn't easily be broken apart. And it wasn't very flexible in terms of its usage. And I think what we did with the packaging is really put it through the ringer, you know, like we really showed exactly how when you could apply it, what the flexibility was, and I think as you can see the ranges coming out, we can only send you a handful of visuals for the UnderConsideration post, but there's so much variety through that packaging. And I think that what I love about it is there is definitely continuity and consistency, so again you get that trust from being a Casey's product, but there's also kind of those little fun moments, flexible moments, things like the beef jerky for instance, with the silhouettes of the animals in, you know, that lovely cheese puffs chip package is one of my favorites and then lots of things that are coming down the line. And I think that really starts to set the tone for what can be achieved going forward as well. So, you know, it might feel like relatively locked in as a system right now, but that barn, and just the barn and the color red alone just gives us so much kind of continuity, but it gives us also another half of the canvas that can be totally flexible. So it was a great way of really kind of using those assets, pushing them in different directions. And again, we did the whole process, incredibly collaboratively with the team, everything was on Miro boards. They could use them whenever they wanted, like everyone can jump in and make comments. We were very comfortable with showing iterations and work in progress. And I've got to say as well, like no great design happens in isolation. The Casey's team were amazing through it. You know, there was no politics. Everyone was really positive. Everyone's really collaborative and just made the whole process achievable because it was an incredibly tight timeline, but everyone really was aligned to making this work and getting the best thing out possible. And I think that's what we were able to achieve.

ARMIN For context. What was the timeline?

OLIVER From memory? I mean, Megan might be able to go into detail, but we basically had to break all of those 104 SKUs into, I think it was three different packaging sprints. And we would literally have maybe I think it was, it was something like a week or eight days to get something like eight different packaging ranges completed. It was really quick. And then it started to cascade. I mean, the great thing was once we had the original idea for the packaging, a lot of the overview of what packaging should look like was kind of nailed in principle, but then working through each pack, you know, looking at the competitors on that specific range and where that sat in the store and the expectations, you know, in terms of, you know, if you're buying a bottle of water, you expect something very different than if you're buying beef jerky or something like that. There was a lot of kind of nuance and kind of alts depending on what the package was and where it needed to stay, and customer expectation as well.

ARMIN And the timeline before that, when did you first engage Interbrand and then what was the span of the full project?

MEGAN Oh my gosh, Oli, when did we do the RFP? Do you remember?

OLIVER So I believe the original RFP came out just before Christmas in 2019. And then I think we, you know, in negotiations and conversations, you know, in January, February, and then the project kind of kicked on from that. I mean, when, when we came to visit originally, we were deep in the snow, so I'm guessing that was March.

MEGAN I think you're correct. 'Cause we were in New York in January and then you guys came out to us.

ARMIN Yeah. It's almost like a year and a half from starting to completion. Yeah. Which seems both quick and slow too. So you have all these SKUs and all this packaging. How is the rollout being implemented? Megan? Do you have a design team in-house or are you using different vendors or how much is Interbrand still involved?

OLIVER Interbrand is absolutely still involved, still working through some of that private label packaging. And they've been such a good partner through the rollout. I think as Oli talked about, I'm so glad they were a part of it because there were questions about how much flexibility do we want to have in this logo and can we take apart the pieces? I was nervous to do that. Having experienced the Casey's where people had kind of Frankensteined our logo in lots of different ways. And so I wanted to be really cautious with that. So I'm so glad that Oli and team led us through that process. The rollout really started with opening a new store and having that brand come to life in a location. But then certainly we have worked with a number of different partners. We have an advertising partner that's been involved. We have a fantastic internal design team that they've been involved. So there've been a number of partners that have kind of taken this and run with it, a communications PR agency that has taken it. And so we've gotten all these different avenues involved in launching this in the way that felt right for our business, our brand, our guests, and our team members too.

ARMIN Speaking of team members, how was the final design received by the executive team?

MEGAN It was really positive. There's a mix of people at Casey's that have been here forever. And then some that have only been here for a short time. And I, although I had a couple folks from kind of the old guard, if you will, that were like, oh, are we, do we want to do this? This is a really big change! Overall, it's been so positive. And I think everybody just feels like, well, this is the company that I work for now. It is modern. We are moving forward. And now this logo sends that message. And I think for me, one of the most exciting things has been, you know, certainly I love seeing the big executions of our brand and a new store, but now I see it showing up in little places, you know, if that's the sign in at our security desk or something. And I know that's because those team members are proud of it and want to show it off and be a part of that change. Certainly our executive leaders have been supportive of

it, but so has every team member that approached me and said, I love this new logo. It feels right for our brand going forward.

ARMIN It's interesting because three hours ago I was recording another podcast with another design team and another client team. And the client side, he mentioned about how important it was to get positive feedback from his colleagues around in the office. And I think it's easy to forget how, you know, when we think of branding, we think about it as an exterior thing, about wanting the public to embrace it. But we sometimes forget that it's also the internal team and the internal culture that needs to embrace it. And because they're the ones that become the champions for it and it builds confidence in how you then deploy it to the world. So it's interesting that the subject has come up twice in the same day.

MEGAN I think when you work at a retailer, especially you quickly learn that nothing is successful if the team members in the stores don't get behind it and don't support it. It's one of the reasons I also love that we were able to maintain the weather vane because there was actually a great deal of kind of internal heart for the weather vane. And it was one of the most kind of widely used in different places. And so for me, being able to maintain that it wasn't necessarily a requirement from a consumer standpoint—that wasn't something that they connected with as much, but it was really great that we did hold onto it because I think it was important for our team members.

ARMIN Yeah. And it makes for a perfect accent and all those packages.

MEGAN [Laughter] Absolutely.

ARMIN So Oliver, what do you feel is the biggest contribution that this design makes to Casey's business? Which I know it's a loaded question, but I think you can handle it.

OLIVER I think it's a really great question because I think the most important thing throughout all this process is really the communities that Casey's serve. And I think what the new brand allows it to do is to really build

on that trust and competence that customers have for Casey's. So if you're thinking of a customer life cycle, or just an experience generally like the more continuity you can add in the more consistency, I think the more customers will fall in love and keep them loyal and connected to Casey's. And I think that's what the new system allows. It allows for that feeling of, we can go in lots of more places now than we could before. And, and again, just that connectivity between the digital environments and physical environments that are being created. That continuity and cohesiveness more importantly is so important. And I think that really is a huge asset to the business going forward because it already sets the DNA for how you can manage and just the environments we're in now, but also ones going forward. So although it's a design project, I think it's just a great way of gluing the DNA into Casey's in terms of every single experience.

ARMIN Well, I think, uh, you did a wonderful job. You and your team did a wonderful job in this redesign. It is one of my favorites of the year. I think it just really transformed and something that I've been seeing on the road that I hadn't thought about, you know, much, because it wasn't inviting, but now it's just like, it has a vibrancy and there's a friendliness... like that typeface, it really is inviting, like something fun is happening in here, whether it's pizza, whether it's just filling your car with gas, getting those Raspberry things that you mentioned—.

MEGAN Raspberry danish [laughter].

ARMIN —that sounds great. So yeah, I think that it's all very well encapsulated in the logo and the identity and the packaging. So I'm really excited to check it out when, uh, when I'm able to get back on the road and go places far and wide. So thank you, Megan and Oliver for spending time with me today talking about the project.

OLIVER Thank you, it was our pleasure.

MEGAN Totally. Loved to do it, thank you.

BRYONY GOMEZ-PALACIO

Who would have thought that a barn and a weathervane would survive as visual icons in the year 2020 but it's hard to argue against the research, against what the community of guests knows and loves, and against what has made Casey's unique over the years. Infused with a new sense of playfulness and a high degree of flexibility maybe this new logo — and identity — will last the same 50 years as the previous logo. It seems, however, that as long as the pizza remains everything will be okay.

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