EPISODE 028

PIRATE

IN CONVERSATION WITH

Matthew Tweddle and Daniel Tweddle, Only

AND

Christopher Ulyatt, Pirate

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 28 of The Follow-up.

This week we are following up on Pirate, a global network of of DJ, recording, rehearsal, podcast, and dance studios for musicians, producers, podcasters, and dancers, offering fully equipped professional spaces at the most affordable price point. Pirate now has 700 studios worldwide. The majority are in the UK but there are studios in Germany, Ireland, and in Chicago, LA, and New York in the U.S..

The project, designed by Manchester, UK-based Only was posted on Brand New on February 18, 2021. You can pull it up on your browser at bit.ly/bnpodcast028 that is B I T dot L Y slash bnpodcast028, all in lowercase.

This week we are joined by Matthew Tweddle, Creative Director at Only; Daniel Tweddle, Strategy Director at Only; and Christopher Ulyatt, Head of Brand at Pirate.

In this conversation we hear about the importance of understanding the context of where a client does its business. In the case of

Pirate, where they repurpose industrial buildings in ungentrified communities it was important to respect those communities and not impose something that was over-designed or that felt invasive. We also ask the tough — okay, not so tough — questions about the choice of Arial as the single typeface for the identity and we learn that, well, it's not really a big deal. It was also great to hear the detailed strategic approach that Only undertook for this project and how helpful that was in directing the work.

Now, let's listen in as Armin follows up with Matt, Dan, and Chris.

ARMIN VIT Hello, everyone today we're here to talk about Pirate and I thought I would try to work in some kind of pirate pun or sound in this mini-introduction, but I will spare everyone my own embarrassment and just get right to it. Matthew, Daniel, Chris, welcome to The Follow-Up.

DANIEL TWEDDLE Thanks for having us.

MATTHEW TWEDDLE Hi Armin, thanks very much for having us.

CHRISTOPHER ULYATT Hey Armin.

ARMIN Because we have three gentlemen on the call and they all sound very similar. Could you please state your name and title so that our listeners can recognize who's who.

CHRISTOPHER Chris from Pirate, Head of Brand.

DANIEL Dan, I'm the Co-founder and Strategy Director at Only.

MATTHEW I'm the Co-founder and Creative Director at Only.

ARMIN Perfect. Chris, we're going to start with you. So, we all have a sense of what the role of a Head of Brand inside a company is, but can you expand on what your role entails specifically at Pirate? Like what are some of the kind of day-to-day projects you work on? Or what are the brand needs of the company?

CHRISTOPHER I mean the first brand need was to take the company through the rebranding process. So I joined Pirate probably like two months before we started working with Only. So it was really to shepherd the company through that process, and bring on board the studio that I thought was going to work best for Pirate. And then following that, just manage the brand standards with the visual and verbal identity. Day-to-day that is working, I mean pretty much with every department within the company, across marketing, creative and content, and the external parties that we also work with generating content, product teams… a lot of time, as well as spent dealing with the rollout departments, internal and external—be that architects, signage vendor. Lot of time dealing with planners for signage on our buildings. It's a very day-to-day in terms of the tasks that I currently take up.

ARMIN How did you end up in this role, or in this position with Pirate?

CHRISTOPHER Well, interestingly enough, I met the founder. He'd approached me for something separate when I was working for another company. I can't remember what the idea was that we were talking about at the time. I remember thinking what he was talking about kind of made sense, but I just raised concerns I had about current Pirate brand. He kind of nodded and recognized my concerns. And I was just saying that you kind of want to sort that out, before going on to these other ideas that you have. It was the first time I was being introduced to the company and he was talking about them transitioning from a startup to a scaleup and going global. And I was like, you really need to sort this out before that happens because that's a lot of work to undo. Pirate's already kind of grown across the UK and we did have sites in Germany and the U.S. but that was going to really ramp up in 2021. I think I just planted that seed firmly in his head. And I think they started looking for people to take on this particular role, and eventually he just came back to me and said, you know, you said it, would you be interested in coming on board to help us with this?

ARMIN And that seemed like an interesting challenge to take on for you.

CHRISTOPHER Yeah, I mean, I just instantly thought what Pirate was doing was great. And I also just thought what Pirate was doing was cool. Like, once I spoke to him and I'd spoke the other founder, Mike, as soon as I spoke to them, got their take on what they were doing. I mean, at the time I think I thought they were almost like getting access to these creative spaces where the price point and the barrier to entry being so low. So everyone could pretty much get in and use this gear. I remember just thinking it was almost charitable. So then when I was looking at the current brand, I was thinking that's just not coming across here at all. It was just a really exciting opportunity. There was a bit of a no brainer.

ARMIN And what led the founders to want to redesign at this point?

CHRISTOPHER As I say, the timing was kind of crucial because they'd raised capital and they were transitioning from startup to scaleup and the company was going to obviously expand globally, but the company itself in terms of staff and so on, that was going to increase significantly over the next couple of years. So figuring out what this purpose was, was crucial. It was the time that they had to do it. Lots of other things were happening within the company as well. In terms of structure change. Obviously little did we know that the pandemic was going to come in and put the brakes on that 2021 rollout, but at the time it was crucial that we got it done then.

ARMIN Matt and Dan, how do you come in into this story?

DANIEL Well, I think Chris found us off the back of the brand that we created for Printworks, which has gone on to become quite a prominent venue in the live music in London. So he got in touch and just asked to meet up for an initial conversation, really. We were familiar with Pirate, Matt and I by no means musicians, but we try to create music from time to time. And certainly some of the other team members had used a number of the studios across the north of England. We were kind of familiar with the basic proposition, but nothing really at all about the business itself. We met up with Chris, had some of those kind of initial

conversations and understood I suppose, the position that they found themselves in with this incredible product that was kind of totally unique offering 24 hour access to professional standard creative space, at really affordable price point across so many locations, that really wherever they put it was enjoying certainly a level of success.

We talked about the brand, we talked about the perception of the brand, certainly from the outside, as well as some of the challenges of rolling out a new identity for Pirate, you know, alongside these kind of enormously ambitious growth plans. And I think what we really took away from that meeting, and from those initial meetings with Pirate, was just an understanding that Pirate really had been founded to do something positive for the creative community. The drive behind it all was pure, and that we could see that that passion and that sense of purpose really wasn't coming through in the presentation of the identity. We talked about what kind of an approach we would take to figure out together how to fix that for Pirate and things really got going from there.

ARMIN   And Chris did you interview or consider other firms?

CHRISTOPHER   Yeah, there was a long list, and then a short list and many conversations were had. I think Dan's right, I was aware of only through Printworks and then also the British Academy. And I think it was just around the time that I was making decisions on it. And ultimately I was kind of left to make that decision within the company. I'd spoken to the wider stakeholders in the company, but they were like, you know, we brought you on board to make this decision and you guys then did the Round House Project. The three projects were so different, but I just felt that there was a way that they were tackling projects where I wanted to see what they would do with Pirate. And I think actually, ultimately, I then spoke to the Communications Director at the British Academy, and I spoke to some of your other clients as well. And she just spoke of how Only had navigated their diverse team, be it the academicians, or the kind of younger staff, who come from very

different places and the way that you guys had managed that. So, yeah, ultimately that's what kind of clenched it for these guys.

ARMIN   Nice. It's always interesting to hear what kind of older projects catch people's attention. And I do remember posting Printworks on Brand New seems years ago, maybe five or six years ago. I don't know if it's that old.

MATTHEW   2016. I think we did the identity, yeah it's as long time ago now.

ARMIN   Five years ago. It stands out, and it stands the test of time, just because it's so unique and so relevant to the venue. So Matt and Daniel, back to you, now that you're into the project, how do you get started before the design phase?

DANIEL   Yeah, so I think the research phase for this project was always going to be fun. We obviously started off by visiting various studios across the UK and in Europe to see kind of not only the different contexts in which they're located with so many really quite diverse settings, often quite an industrial settings, but also to get a much better sense of the culture of Pirate really. And I think what we saw was really an enormously varied picture from studio to studio. With each one, almost having its own kind of subculture. With each different kind of musical interests, creative interest reflected in the communities that we use in those studios. Obviously as well, we spoke to the founders as well as staff kind of throughout Pirate, really. I think one of the things that is really interesting about Pirate, which perhaps doesn't always come through is that they have this huge factory where they create and manufacture all of the studios that they then embed into all these different sites around the world.

What was really interesting about speaking to staff at all levels kind of throughout the business, was just how bought into the founder's vision that those people were. You know, they really were there because they felt like they were creating something good and creating something for the creative community. And also I think what came

through those conversations was how clear people were that Pirate should never be presented as anything other than an organization that was acting kind of in full service of that creative community. So, there really was a clear message that came through about why Pirate existed and around this kind of collective drive to make creative space accessible for as many people as possible. The brand audit then, I think really highlighted the need for someone like Chris. In coming in and really taking control of a brand that at times presented differently—not only visually—but also tonally, and in terms of the messages that it was putting out that at times, I think, appeared like perhaps it was going in a direction that didn't entirely tally with what we hearing and the reasons people were so passionate about Pirate and what made it so special.

So, one of the things we then did with senior management and with Chris was this exercise around brand archetypes for Pirate. Which, I think at one time or other, you could perhaps see reflected in some of the communications that Pirate were putting out. So we did things like we looked at Pirate as if it was a kind of a platform for creative entrepreneurs, for instance. A place that kind of valued ambition, and aspiration, and hard work, that almost served and tried to, you know, attempt to launch new artists and support people to become big in the industry. Through to different ideas where Pirate was presented almost as this kind of subversive voice for the underground who kind of celebrated experimental music, and boundary person creativity, and put Pirate in different territories and asked and sort of explored what that would mean for the business and how well that kind of world represented what Pirate was all about.

And I think through that exercise, we were really able to explore what it was that was important to Pirate and what it was that was going to set them up for the future. I think that whole kind of process really helped to hone this kind of really honest and authentic representation of what Pirate really were all about. Breaking down barriers to creativity, empowering artists, democratizing creative space. And that whole

kind of exercise, it gave us a really clear picture, which I think then helped shape quite a concise creative brief, and really got us into a territory where we knew Pirate wanted to be.

ARMIN And before we get into how that definition of the territory shaped into the design, Chris, I just want to hear from you, was there any particular visual direction you gave Only? Or any specific goals you wanted to achieve with the new design?

CHRISTOPHER We didn't really speak visually, or like reference any kind of other brands. I don't think the guys at Only knew what my tastes were or what I thought would potentially be right for Pirate. I kept on banging on with this idea about like neutrality. Like we had to be open to all because the artists that use our studios are so varied and we want to be open to absolutely everyone. We needed something which would kind of default and for everyone. And also like get into the studios, understand the reality of where this brand is going to live. And I guess that in itself was a pretty big visual brief in itself, because as Dan's already mentioned, we don't really have a set building type, but they do tend to be in certain types of areas. So we didn't want an identity that just wasn't going to marry with that.

ARMIN That makes sense. Matt, with that openness and freedom, what was the initial round of design,like? With a brand name like Pirate and all that freedom? Again, I would imagine there were a number of exciting visual directions you could go in. So what was that like at the beginning?

MATTHEW Pirate is a brilliant name. It's a very evocative name. So yeah, on paper you could certainly imagine being able to take it in lots of different visual directions. But I think, like having been through that process that Dan described with Chris and the wider team at Pirate that certainly kind of narrowed the parameters. I think as well, like we knew fairly early on that we wanted to steer well clear of any kind of overtly obvious pirate references. So, no hooks, or eye patches or, any kind of other visual cliches. I think that that would have probably just felt like

too whimsical and lighthearted and, you know, not appropriate as a tone. But I think like conversely, like you could imagine like presenting Pirate as, you know, almost quite confrontational and aggressive, and that similie wouldn't have been appropriate either. I think like one of the things that came out of the conversations with, I think it was Borrie, one of the founders was just that like as a business, like their role was really not to kind of give two fingers to the corporate world, you know, like almost more importantly, like their role was definitely not to sort of bulldoze their way into these local communities and like hoover up all of that local business.

So, I think presenting them as like an overly slick corporate multinational would have also been wrong. You can see that the parameters kind of just like narrowed and narrowed. And I think as Chris alluded to, in his previous answer, like I think the thing that probably steered the aesthetic more than anything else was like going and seeing the studios and the locations where those studios were. We were really conscious that like anything we created needed to sit comfortably alongside like the fabric of those buildings and the surrounding areas. And one thing we definitely didn't want to do was go into those places and just try and impose something, or gentrify those areas. We wanted to just do something that celebrated and acknowledged what existed already. I think on paper, you could imagine taking it in lots of different directions, but in reality, I think we probably honed in on a territory quite early on and didn't really deviate too much from that throughout the process really.

ARMIN And with that framework, or frame of mind, about sadly not including eye patches or hooks, which good call good call, but still every now and then I think we're missing some eye patches in the world of identity design. So with that in mind, what did you present to Chris and team the first time around? Was it just the one solution or did you have multiple ideas that you went in with?

MATTHEW   I think as a studio, like we don't really have like a hard line on the number, and we don't insist that we're only going to present one route, or we'll always present three—I think it depends on the project. And in this case with Pirate, we presented two options, but there was a lot of like aesthetic overlap between those two routes. I think both options felt fairly stripped back and lo-fi and raw. There was lots of like use of black and white. And really we were interested in trying to let like the vibrancy of the community come to the fore. I think another thing that we were really conscious of when we, when we got into the design was like trying to avoid some of those conventional visual identity techniques and models. One thing that really jarred with us from the previous identity, the use of this like PS monogram, and it was deployed across all of the studio walls, like pretty large.

DANIEL   So, you saw anyone's images or videos of people that are taken using the spaces, that.PS monogram just kept cropping up on all the shots. And I think we just felt that that was just too imposing as an approach. Yeah, keen to kind of avoid lots of those classic identity models for Pirate. I think specifically on the first route we were exploring the use of lots of old typefaces. We were looking at those old faces because we were interested in the stuff that was kind of riddled with imperfection, like those bad kerning pairs and that kind of thing. We wanted that ruggedness to come through, and that would give us that kind of feel of, you know, being raw and imperfect that we were looking for. I think in the end that first route, the whole thing was set in Akzidenz, and we did have like a monogram that was this flexible "P" device that was referencing the floor plans of the studios and the different configurations of the studio. So, we did have a monogram and it appeared on all of the communications that we were putting together, but it was always quite a secondary element. And again, it was really just acting as like a bit of a framing device for the content to kind of like do all the talking. That was kind of roughly what we did with the first route. The second route, we went a step further and kind of completely deprioritized the role of the logo. And instead opted to try

and build up the identity around this type-driven solution using Arial, which is a version of the final work that you see now.

ARMIN And Chris, what was your reaction like to these two routes?

CHRISTOPHER Well, I went up to Manchester maybe a week before we shared it with the wider stakeholders and the founders. The first route, there was lots in it that I thought was really exciting and Matt's right—visually there was a lot in line with what we had in the second, but I remember getting to the end of that first presentation, I felt like it would go down well, there'd be no problems with it. I felt like it would also… people in the company were probably going to enjoy it. But for me, it felt like something potentially was missing. I just wanted something to answer shorthand what Pirate was. And I remember then asking the guys before you show me the second one, which one do you prefer? Which is probably like the stupidest thing to do. Let them present both things before you ask. I think at the time Matt just said, I think we might have something in the second one.

And then like the first page… I was like, it's changed so much to what you guys now see as our brand, but the concept was there and the word mark was slightly different. Instantly, I got it. It was just like, yeah, there we go. That's absolutely something Pirate should be doing because no one else could do that. And that's honestly what I thought straight away. I was just like, I don't think anyone else could do this of our size. And especially someone who's going to grow like this. I also thought it's going to piss people off, potentially. Some people in the company will go, why would we do this when I could just type it out on my laptop? But I also knew that the founders, like I just had a feeling, I was like, the founders are going to get this. And luckily they did.

ARMIN Speaking of pissing people off, I think Ariel, just the mention of Ariel does that to both designers and non-designers. I think non-designers really… they recognize Arial and that it's a lesser font, even if they don't know why, I think they just understand there's something about Ariel., that's not right. This might be a question for all three: was there

any internal discussion about the rightness or wrongness of Ariel for deploying it at a larger scale for a larger audience? Did you at any point ask should we use another font? I'm guessing like there was an appeal to using such a controversial quote-unquote typeface.

MATTHEW I think Pirate's business model is all about democratizing creative space and like lowering the barrier to entry to creativity. So I think that the selection of a system-based font that everyone had access to just like reflected that really well. I think we just want it to make the act of making something for Pirate, as frictionless as possible. We didn't want to insist that in order to be able to make anything you needed to have these corporate typefaces downloaded, and installed, and licensed, in order to get going and making stuff. So Ariel is obviously installed on all Mac and Windows machines, so anyone with some basic design software could jump in and just make any of the examples from the case study that we produced. From a conceptual point of view, we really liked it, and that appealed to us. The other thing that informed the choice was just that a theme that like crops up elsewhere in the identity that we were really interested in this idea of taking something that exists already and then repurposing it or pirating it. We liked the idea of taking something that was on everybody's computer and then just doing something different with it. It just seemed to fit the business.

ARMIN Dan, I'm guessing strategy-wise, everything lined up perfectly for this solution. But, was there a moment where you were like, yes, this is it! There's no other answer to the strategy that we laid out at the beginning.

DANIEL I don't think so. I think for me specifically point about Ariel, I think where we were… and where Pirate recognized they were, was that across different channels and different platforms, depending on who was taking charge of the brand previously, it was almost presenting a different personality, and a different side, and a different set of priorities. And I think the whole aim of the rebrand really was to

try and unify the whole organization behind this idea that we are here fundamentally to democratize creative space. And there was something inherently really clear and simple about a typeface, which could be interpreted, and could be understood to be the the foundation of the new visual identity. It's a typographic identity. We've identified something which really sort of simplifies and captures that sense that this is what we care about. We care about democratizing space. We care about making the most of what assets and what resources we have available.

And it was there as a shorthand for the mission almost, it was almost this kind of visual representation in all assets that this is what we really care about. And for that reason, it felt, I think so appropriate. It wasn't necessarily a visual sign for me. For me it fit because it really just captured what Pirate were telling us. They really cared about. I think that that's what resonated with Barrie to a certain extent as well was there, it was playing to see, and it was really succinct in the way that it was able to kind of announce that to everyone.

ARMIN Chris, did you have any reservations about committing to Ariel for the foreseeable future?

CHRISTOPHER Not for a second. It just felt so right for Pirate. And when it was presented to the founders and the wider stakeholders, there was pretty much unanimous agreement. And ultimately we're excited to get bigger and bigger as a company and have a wordmark created out of Arie— we absolutely love it. And it also, I mean, you mentioned about the controversy… like within the design world yeah, in terms of our users, and the artists, and people that use our studios, it's really about— like when we launched the brand, and we did it pretty soft, like with everything we do with Pirate, we weren't making a big song and dance about it. The whole rebrand was about this repositioning of what we are, and our focus, and our commitment to the community. In terms of the visual identity, it's not really that radical or controversial. No one's gone, how dare you? How dare you do this? They don't mind at all. So

I didn't think there was any risk that we'd been so controversial that actually we were going to just have a massive drop in revenue because of this decision.

ARMIN It's funny because designers are known for being creative and boundary pushing, but they're the ones getting all like, oh my God, it's Arial, this is so controversial! But it's the regular users, they're like, oh, this is cool. Let's just move along and let us in the studio and let us get our stuff done. Dan, how did the overall tone of voice from copywriting to photography start to take shape once the design premise was established beyond Arial?

DANIEL It's interesting. I think both evolved as we progressed through the creative process. I think as we really came to realize how best to represent Pirate. I mean, in terms of photography, I think we were always really clear that we wanted as far as possible to capture real moments from the studios. We knew really that anything heavily posed, or stylized, or kind of for the 'gram just wasn't going to work. And instead photography that was just authentic, kind of really engaging moments of real people just lost and immersed in their kind of creative flow, would just be so much more inviting. That led us initially to really try to embrace user generated content. So essentially anything, any kind of photography that could be shot on iPhone, you know, working on this kind of idea that Pirate really was there with you as part of your creative process.

Whilst that was kind of a nice idea, I think aesthetically, it just wasn't quite creating the feeling that we wanted. So over time that shifted more towards photography that was shot on film, which really just a, kind of a rawness and something kind of analog, which really just better suited the audience, and the types of musicians that were using the studios. And also what we were trying to say that was really important. I should say as well that Pirate have got a really great photographer as part of their team who shoots on film. And a lot of the work that he was doing was really just slotting into our design

work and kind of elevating it. That certainly as well contributed to that development. There was certainly a shift there in terms of the type of imagery that we were using and similarly for tone of voice.

I think, again, it was kind of an evolution really from those initial routes, certainly for public facing communications. Increasingly we just moved away from any kind of broadcast rhetoric, anything where we were kind of talking at the audience, or tempted to kind of hard-sell the studios. And really just trying to evolve that towards a voice, which either just spoke plainly and quite directly to people in conversation, or that just serve to celebrate the community, celebrate the Pirate community. There was definitely a shift there in public facing communications and a lot of that work was done together with Pirate, and together with the marketing and content teams, to try and find ways to inform, and to empower, and connect with audiences, as opposed to trying to find new ways to kind of entertain, or amuse, or just sell at them.

I think actually, perhaps one of the more interesting aspects of that work that we did on voice was really in other areas of the business, like in customer service and with the help center, where again, like we want it to kind of move away from efforts to have this uniform corporate voice, which responds to people when you call them up with a problem about, you know, sort equipment or whatever, and actually just encourage people to try and be themselves, and to be human. And I think that work mapped on to that kind of wider brand strategy work that we'd done that was now kind of emanating through the business. That's really helped to create a more consistent and coherent impression when you do interact with Pirate.

ARMIN It's interesting how all that does come across in the case study that you shared and that we published. It's just people, talking like normal people, and without trying to impose any specific style, or agenda, or whatever else Pirate was to drive through. Before we start summing up, I do have one more question regarding Ariel—I can't just fully let

go of Ariel. So Matt, one of the things that I loved about the identity is how specific it was in the percentage values Ariel could be stretched in. 50%, 100%, and 300%. Was this is a way to bring in some order to the possible chaos? Did you consider any other percentage values at any point?

MATTHEW Definitely. Yeah. I think we certainly don't see ourselves as artists. Like we're definitely designers and like we're making a system that's going to be implemented by the client. So I really believe a brand is only as good as the people that are using it day in day out can like make it look. It was really important to put some rigor and some order around the use of Ariel. Just from a practical standpoint, I think it helps with just that decision-making process. You know your headings are going to be 50%, and the body copy is going to be a hundred, and maybe like your CTA's are going to be 300. So, it just helps to ensure a good hierarchy and the presentation of the content. There's obvious practical benefits there. The thing that it does though, is that over time Pirate will start to be able to build brand recognition around those fixed levels of stretch, you know, just with other identities, like how they build recognition around successful font pairings. I think Pirate, over time, will become known for those fixed levels of stretch and the relationship between them.

So yeah, really important. And we did sort of experiment with the settings and what they should be. But obviously we were just looking for like the right level of contrast between those different fixed levels. I think there are some exceptions to the rule. I know that like when we presented it initially, there was excitement around the ability to be able to like completely free stretch Ariel. We wanted Pirate to be able to do that in certain instances—it's normally limited to single words, place names, or artists names, but again, from a practical point of view, I think for Chris and the team and everyone implementing it, being able to free stretch the name of a place to fit the format that's available has a real practical benefit, which is cool. But I think it's good for all the other signage and the stuff that kind of sits alongside that

for it to use those fixed levels of stretch 'cause it just sort of tempers the irreverence and the craziness of free stretching Arial. It was kind of essential for the identity to work, I think from both a practical point of view, but also just ability and brand recognition point of view, to have those fixed levels of stretch.

ARMIN That's definitely an interesting way of seeing it about building brand recognition through specific amounts of stretching. Chris, you have a typeface, you have levels of stretching, you have photography, you have a tone of voice, what has been your experience so far in implementing the identity?

CHRISTOPHER It's been working really well. It's been a simple identity to work with. It was designed with our capabilities in mind. I think that was the most important thing. In all honesty, obviously, since we've gone live, the majority of our studios have been closed and the world closed down. We haven't really been able to put it through its paces as much as we would like to, but so far so good. I'm just really excited for when we can really put it through its paces.

ARMIN Is the implementation something that you're doing on your own? Do you have a team of designers? Or does each location get some standards and then they have to implement it? How does that aspect work?

CHRISTOPHER We have a central team… there aren't people… although we are kind of spread out globally now… there is still a central team that's working on these things. But ultimately it's so simple to put together in some instances—not for everything—but for some instances, that we allow people to just work on it themselves. I Just generally oversee that kind of output.

ARMIN The power of simplicity is good, especially when you have so many locations and each location has so many touch points. Or at least based on what I saw in the picture, there's plenty of opportunity to deploy the system. So it's nice to be able to not… not that you don't have to think about it, but the premises are just there, and they're

flexible, but with some restraint as well. So Matt and Daniel, what was the most exciting aspect of working on this project for you?

DANIEL For me, I mean, I fully bought into what Pirate we're trying to do. So really, I suppose it's the idea that we could be part of this kind of growth story that really was acting in support of creative communities, not just in the UK, but increasingly around the world. And I think Pirate fulfills its potential. Then it could really influence and play an important role for what is often kind of underserved creative communities in towns and cities all over the place. And I think that's a really nice thing to be a part of and potentially, you know, a really important thing to be a part of as well. It's the promise of Pirate really, which was the kind of the most exciting thing about this project.

MATTHEW From a design point of view, I'm just really excited as, you know, as Chris of suggested to see how the system gets used. I spoke a little bit about the rigor that we put in place, but I think there's still a huge amount of potential for a creative expression within the system. So I'm just excited to see how far it gets pushed and how it sort of plays out in different cultures around the world.

ARMIN Chris, to sum up with one final answer, or final question. You know, assuming that eventually we can get to opening up the world again, and the studios started rolling out, and you have more opportunity to deploy this, what is the most exciting aspect of having this in place moving forward?

CHRISTOPHER I guess it's a continuation of what Matt just alluded to. Pirate is a global proposition and like this brand is going to just elevate and elevate and elevate as we go to different territories with different stories. And it's about that kind of global creativity. So I think it's just going to get stronger and stronger as we get bigger as a company. So I'm just excited to see that happen.

ARMIN Well, I hope it does happen for you and Pirate in the future because I think it is a great system that deserves to be explored and expanded.

I for one I'm happy that it's Arial and not Papyrus— I think we would be having a very different conversation here [laughter from all]. Thank you all for sharing your time, experience, the stories behind the scenes, and how it all came to be. So thank you for being on The Follow-Up.

MATTHEW Thanks for having us. Thanks very much.

DANIEL Yeah, thanks. Much appreciated.

CHRISTOPHER Cheers Armin.

BRYONY There you have it: It's okay to use Arial. However, please don't. Or at least not without such a strong case to use it as Pirate had. As a non-design-related takeaway from this conversation we loved hearing how Chris got his job as head of brand at Pirate: basically by networking and being true to his opinions, which made an impression with one of the company's founders who then came back to him with the job offer. And on a design-related takeaway it was interesting to hear from Only how a specific project — Printworks — made an impression and is part of what got them the project. I guess the lesson is: never underestimate the past. Always be nice. Always try do your best work. And if all that fails, use Arial.

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