EPISODE 038

SEATGEEK

IN CONVERSATION WITH

Jen Hood, Hoodzpah

Mickey Duzyj

AND

Tim McCarthy, SeatGeek

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.

ARMIN VIT Hi, this is Armin Vit and welcome to episode 38 of The Follow-up.

This week we are following up on SeatGeek, an online ticket platform that enables people to buy and sell tickets for sports, concert, and theater events. Through an increasingly powerful mobile app and its website, SeatGeek searches dozens of the biggest ticket sites to present the results all in one place and allow people to find the best deals. On the flip side, it makes it super easy for people to resell their tickets. Over the years, SeatGeek has slowly increased its number of agreements with professional sports teams, venues, and, most recently, Broadway theaters to become their official ticketing partner.

The project, spearheaded by SeatGeek's in-house design team with strategy by New York, NY-based Mother Design; logo design by Orange County, CA-based Hoodzpah; and illustrations by New York-based Mickey Duzyj, was posted on Brand New on July 22, 2021. You can pull it up on your browser at bit.ly/bnpodcast038 that is B I T dot L Y slash bnpodcast038, all in lowercase.

This week we are joined by Tim McCarthy, Creative Director at SeatGeek; Mickey Duzyj, Director and Animator; and Jen Hood, Co-founder, brand designer, and cleaning staff at Hoodzpah.

In this conversation we get to hear about a great example of separate creative enterprises coming together to offer their own expertise and create a cohesive whole, starting with SeatGeek's own in-house team lead by Tim's quote unquote irrational confidence as he, also quote unquote, drove the bus that took everyone to their final destination. There was Mother Design's strategy phase that uncovered helpful insights that drove the creative. Then there was Hoodzpah's masterful wordmark that evoked a retro sensibility through a contemporary lens. Finally, there was Mickey, whose illustrations gave SeatGeek an ownable visual language that manages to convey the fun and electricity of being in a live event.

Now let's listen in as Bryony follows up with Tim, Mickey, and Jen.

BRYONY GOMEZ-PALACIO Personally, I have always been a fan of consolidated information, and this is exactly what SeatGeek is all about. Bringing together my options, no matter what the source of my future entertainment might be. Sports, music, dance, I name it. As we begin to emerge from our homes and venture out into venues, one online ticket sale at a time, SeatGeek is here to show us the way. I'm going to go ahead here and start with you, Tim. And I'm going to go on a limb and assume business came to a screeching halt last spring. Were you already thinking about a rebrand at that time? Or did the conversation start as a pandemic induced project?

TIM MCCARTHY COVID was awful for multiple reasons, but it hit our industry especially hard. But if there was one positive that really came out of it, it presented us with an opportunity. No one had thought of buying a ticket for over a year, and we knew that when live events would eventually come back, there was an opportunity for us to come back stronger than ever. It also reset the industry and leveled the playing

field amongst our competition. So we were able to build kind of an awareness and affinity all in one. We really thought a rebrand could contribute to that and be top of mind, the new found brand that people love.

BRYONY And what was the first step that you took in order to consider the rebrand?

TIM It all starts with the brief, and we wanted to make a low awareness challenger brand more distinctive. We have to appeal to consumers of ticket buyers, but also potential business partners on the business side. We also want to stand out in marketing, but feel seamless in our product. So there's a really challenging brief that we wanted to get right. And so we started working with Mother because they had a great strategy arm and a reputation for creating unique looks that felt authentic. Once we kind of knew the direction, Hoodzpah felt like the right partner to create a nostalgic, but timeless look for our wordmark. And then, one of our creative challenges is that lack of intellectual property—we can only use certain imagery, or can't use brands, team logos. So we knew illustration would be important to help visualize our brand. That's where Mickey came in. And then our in-house was kind of there to test and implement, making sure that it was a bulletproof design system that could work across the board in all applications.

BRYONY So without a doubt the outcome of the rebrand is a wonderful example of collaboration across various creatives that you brought together. So let's start at the beginning. You worked on the strategy with Mother Design. Can you walk us through that process a little bit more in depth? You posed a challenge to them. What do they come back with?

TIM Are challenge too is that ticketing is a commoditized business. People seek out the lowest price. And so it's hard to differentiate on that factor when all prices are similar. And we knew that brand is something that could really set you apart. But first we had to figure out why people would love us. And that starts with a great strong

strategy. Mother really held all these stakeholder interviews, asked tough questions, and kind of pushed us out of our comfort zone that we were used to. And they challenged us the best way possible. And one of the favorite things along the process was making us fall in love with our name again. When we looked at this project, we called it a berand re-imagination, we didn't want just a rebrand—it was like rethink everything. And the name was on the table truthfully, and they just made us fall in love with it. The geek has this stigma of being dorky and that's not really what it means today anymore. Geek means like you're enthusiastic and passionate about something, and that embodies us truly as a company, we really care about ticketing and live event process. We fell in love with that again too, and kept that, but challenged everything else.

BRYONY   About how long did that process take?

TIM   It was probably a good three months where we dug into strategy, but our objective, like I said, there's two sides of the business, Consumer and the B2B side too. And so we had to solve for that. And the outcome was a strategy that was simple, but actionable for anyone within the company that could apply it. And it was this idea of just expect more, and it was built out as insight that ticketing sucks, no one loves the process, both in the industry or just a casual fan that's buying. So we really thought there was an opportunity to rethink the possibility of ticketing and apply that. From there, we started setting up the design foundation, this insight that we want to remind people why they love live events. And some early inspiration that Mother showed was concert posters, ticket stubs, all these things that kind of have gotten lost in the world of digital ticketing right now. And we really felt like it was differentiated and ownable, that no one else in our space was doing that. So we wanted to figure out ways to inject that. And this is where illustration and wordmark was touchpoints that start to bring that through.

BRYONY First, I'm going to say that three months for the strategy sounds like the perfect amount of time. It allows you to go in depth enough, but not start to spin your wheels over and over again, and try to question what you've already formulated. So let's start with the wordmark, why Jen from Hoodzpah?

TIM When they showed that early inspiration, I think there was this nostalgic retro-y look, and… funny enough, I found out about Hoodzpah through a Brand New Conference back in Vegas. My team and I, we really loved them. And so I approached them—I felt like they had the right vibe, knew what we were kind of going for. And the rest is history.

BRYONY Jen, let's get your insight here a little bit. What were your initial key takeaways that you took back to the office as you embarked on the wordmark and the creative part that you were working on?

JEN HOOD Lucky for us we came in after all the strategy was done. I mean, we had the perfect layout and a lot of times we're doing that ourselves for our clients. I mean, almost always, really. But it was really interesting to come in and know exactly what they wanted, and us not having to do kind of that legwork. The mood board, which you can see on the Brand New, UnderConsideration posts, you can see that kind of one shot with all of the retro posters and it's a mix of sports events posters, and then old posters of the planters and, you know, kind of fifties, even a little bit of forties, kind of style type. And a lot of that type, it has a lot of movement to it, even though it's static. So that's what we were going for is, not leaning too much into the retro, to where it feels old, kind of giving it some sort of a modern take, which how many times have we heard we want it retro but modern? But we did.

We wanted it retro, but modern. We did want to play with movement. And then we also wanted to see if we could maybe play on some themes of kind of that old letterpress look, which is so iconic to old show and gig posters. It was definitely that feeling of, you know, when you go to an event, it kind of seals this memory in your mind. So we did think like nostalgia is the perfect kind of feeling we want

to capture, you know? Without it being very distinct to a certain era, we didn't want people to just be like, oh, that just looks like the Bewitched logo or something. It shouldn't feel like cheesy, or like a gimmick. So that was our goal. And we knew that there wasn't going to be an icon anymore, which was interesting. So everything we had to do was playing with the type, which was our dream because we really love doing custom type. I mean, we built a few kind of rough comps in Illustrator, but we mostly used Glyphs App, which is a type design software. Because it can really give you so much more control. So that was really fun to be able to do, almost all just like completely custom type solutions, a few scripts, a few sans, a few… I don't know if we tried any serifs. But yeah, that was kind of the goal.

TIM Jen and the team heard the brief loud and clear, they kind of came back, played us back some of our inspiration. Kind of the brief too, was just like, we needed something that was going to look small and an app icon, but also we have a lot of sponsorship ads. So this logo could be massive on a jumbotron. It really had to range from size legibility, but also wanting to have some personality as well.

BRYONY I think the use of the type software shined through, you can tell just in the nuances of some of the details and the curves, when you have the horizontal and when you have the stacked version. The little nuances, it really goes beyond Illustrator, as you mentioned.

JEN Oh my gosh, I highly recommend if any brand designer out there loves doing custom type and you're still on Illustrator try Glyphs App. It is game changer. Like I do all of my custom wordmarks in there now. And sometimes even icon design. The amount of precision you get, and I'm not getting paid by them, but it's totally worth it to try out.

BRYONY Tim, in terms of the imagery, it is my understanding that you—once more—knew exactly what you wanted from the start. How did you end up reaching out to Mickey?

TIM   We knew that brand illustrations were starting to look the same, especially in tech. And we knew that we did not want to go down that route. We wanted something unique, but not just different for different sake. We want it to be relatable, and capture the essence of live events. I'm a big fan of sports and design, and follow a lot of work. I came across at ESPN "30 for 30" documentary about Bo Jackson a while ago, which featured Mickey's work and always been a fan since. I knew Mickey was a great illustrator, but he's an amazing visual storyteller, and that's really what we wanted to capture in our brand illustration. And I think there was a real big "aha" moment where I took one of his projects, and I mocked it up in a screen, and there was a jumbotron, and I took Jen's wordmark at the time, and put it on there. And there was like this subtle animation, and I showed it in a stakeholder interview… Everyone went nuts, and was like, that's our guy, that's what we have to go with.

BRYONY   Mickey, what kind of groundwork directions or parameters did you receive in the beginning in order to get started?

MICKEY DUZYJ   Tim did send me the brand reimagination deck, and we had a conversation that was honestly really refreshing. I don't do a ton of design work, or rebranding work, but I felt that he was really, really open to solutions that could make the identity feel really warm, and handmade in a way that was different. Like Tim said, a lot of tech illustration looks, I was initially really excited about the challenge of building a visual universe in this way that did feel handmade, but also kind of, as we've been talking about, kind of referenced these traditional graphics from concerts and performances—that stuff has always inspired my work generally. Anyways, I felt like in the deck where there were all these references to posters, but also vintage matchbooks, and things like that, I felt like I was really home. I felt on the same page with Tim from the jump and I loved the new wordmark that Jen put together. I thought it was really cool. Tim even had some colors that he felt that popped, but also worked well together for an identity. There was a lot to work with. It always helps when a client

sends you a deck that is populated with a lot of your own imagery, you know? So I didn't feel like I needed to contort myself in a way where I couldn't follow my own instincts. I have to say, the process of initially putting sketches together, and testing things with Tim and his team, it was really, really productive from the jump. And I feel like it's been a great collaboration.

BRYONY We're going to go into more detail in terms of the illustration and some of the choices that you made, but first, I just want to touch base with the role that the in-house team played. Can you tell us a little bit more?

TIM We had the Brand creative team and the Product design team heavily involved from the start. We knew that we want to avoid having a PDF of brand guidelines and then applying it. We wanted it to be live work. And so we're stress testing everything across both applications, from marketing to product. And I think with marketing and product, we don't always have the same goals of what we're trying to achieve with our design, but brand is this great cohesive system that applies to both teams. And so we were just stress testing it from accessibility and colors, to making sure type was legible. Where are these illustrations can start living? We're continuing to do it. We feel like we're just starting to scratch the surface of it too, but we feel like we're heavily invested. And I find that getting these teams invested early on, makes them more engaged and willing to kind of go the extra mile. So we launched end of June, and a lot of that too, was very selective of what we did with the launch, but people really pushing themselves to apply the brand wherever they could. Having involvement, engagement, was really helpful with in-house teams.

BRYONY Jen, were you privy to this back and forth with the in-house team as well, while you were working on the wordmark?

JEN We could tell there was a lot going on because we would deliver the round one proof. And then the next time I would get on the Zoom call with Tim, it would be applied to a million scenarios and he'd be like, okay, you know, this one works! And we do a little of that in our decks

anyways. We always like to show application examples. And that was what was great. Tim had those application examples ready for me to say, this is kind of like some key scenarios we would want to make sure it looks right in. I didn't have to make those up to show them that it would work. I just took those assets and then pop the logo in just a few limited ones. And then Tim and his internal team would just take it even further to make sure that it was really stress tested, and it would really work and go the distance.

Yeah, we could tell, I think the crazy thing about this project is how concise the feedback was when Tim would come back. Because to be honest, it didn't feel like there was a giant internal team, or tons of stakeholders that were all weighing in. It felt like you were just dealing with one or two people, which is really what you hope for ideally, when you're doing brand—is that one person has been trusted to own it, so that they can make clear and decisive feedback. The worst thing you get is when it's like, okay, Tim says this, but Bob says that… Sherry wants that, and 10 other people, here's all the feedback. Good luck go figure it out. And it wasn't like that at all. I don't know what happened in the strategy, but it really does seem like they were all galvanized on the same page, and that the needed trust was given to Tim to just like, Hey, take this through to the finish line. Because it did feel so seamless.

BRYONY   So Tim, how did you make that happen?

TIM   I'm glad that was what you felt on the outside looking in. Anyone who's gone through a rebrand knows it's never easy. You're juggling a lot of different things, timelines, budgets, et cetera. But the hardest part is stakeholder opinions, and I think what I try to do is take input from all these things. I mean, that's what stress testing is. You take the subjectivity out of it, and you make it really objective of what is this not doing well. Is it not legible? Is it not clear? Is the contrast not right? And being able to give that feedback back to both Jen and Mickey, and keep all the other stuff out so they can focus. And same thing internally,

allowing our team to focus on their specialty. Try to do all this, and maybe my confidence was a bit irrational, but I knew in my heart that all these things could kind of come together. If people were just able to focus and do the things that they did well, and come together.

JEN I can't tell you how many times though blind optimism has helped me get across the finish line on things that if I had known the whole scope going in, I would never have undertaken. So there's a lot to be said for, you know, naive confidence [laughter].

BRYONY I agree with that. Jen has mentioned that there was different iterations of the wordmark. Serif, sans serif, all of these things… for you, Tim and the team, did you know which direction you wanted to go, as soon as you saw it? Was it more of a rework, rework, rework, until you get there?

TIM The brief was pretty clear. We knew we wanted a wordmark and it had to apply to both a stacked version that we wanted to kind of lean heavily into, but also have an inline horizontal version as well. We have a lot of sponsorship assets that needed a horizontal format. That was something we briefed Jen on. Beyond that, she kind of shared a full range of things, but the team of stakeholders really focused in on one, which was where we ended up landing, because it has that right bit of legibility, but also personality across it.

BRYONY One last question about the wordmark for you, Jen. In terms of the curvature that you created for both the stacked and the horizontal version, how hard or easy was that? That was a big topic on the comments on Brand New.

JEN At that point, I had made the straight version of the type in glyphs and then I was taking it into Illustrator, trying different warp techniques. Your first instinct is always to go to that Illustrator stylized warp, you know, and you just curve the top curve the bottom. But it just really can distort things in a weird way. So I knew that wasn't gonna work. So it wasn't gonna be easy. So pretty much I just made guidelines along

a curve. I set the curve and then just kinda like stacked it all the way down through the fan kind of effect. And then manually adjusted the type across the curves. The hard part is, is that you want it to look even, even though the wide version, the skinniest part of the wide version, is different letters than the skinniest part of the stacked version.

If you're listening to this and you haven't seen it, you should go look at it because you won't know what anyone of us are talking about. Trying to get all of the letters to feel even, even on the stacked one and the wide one, was just… you just have to look at it and do it optically. And if there's anything that I've learned, that's been the most important after kind of figuring out more of this custom type work, is that exact doesn't always look right. In fact, exact usually looks really weird. We made it perfect. And then we made it optically look perfect. I think you have to kind of trust your eye at the end more than the guidelines and the metrics, I guess.

BRYONY Definitely handmade. Huh?

JEN Yeah [laughter].

TIM Yeah. And that's how I kind of presented to the stakeholders too. Is just that first we were trying to get the science right. And then the second part was the art. So, the process was tweaking and feeling what's right, and adjusting it, and stress testing it in multiple sizes to make sure it ultimately felt right.

BRYONY So now Mickey, let's dive into the details of the illustrations. There's a lot of nuances and details that bridge all of the different illustrations together. Can you walk us through how you ended up making those decisions? Like the night mode to inform all of the work.

MICKEY I went through the pandemic as much as everyone too. Tim and I, our first conversations were about, well, what's so uniquely exciting about live events that all of us have been missing so much, you know? And for me, I'm a big sports fan. A lot of my work is about sports. I've been watching a lot of sports on TV. But kind of the experience of being at

an event is so much more cinematic, and theatrical, and immersive. Tim and I were talking about using a poppy contrast-y visual language to bring that to life. I should mention also that the first assets that we did together were these onboarding images for the app that Tim was excited to bring some motion to, as well. As he mentioned, a lot of my work is in animation. So, aside from just using this contrasty look, bringing some motion to the graphics as well was a way of bringing life and excitement to it.

I felt like this is how the conversation began. Some of the images that Tim picked out of my work were these night stadium images that I had done previously. And those were things that, aside from Tim liking them and feeling like they used a limited palette in a way that he was interested in having the SeatGeek graphics look, some of them floated in space where there was darkness all around them. And that was something that gave his design team a lot of flexibility in how they were using them, both in square formats, or landscape. It made the graphics much more versatile. You know, I know a lot of people have commented that it was a big creative choice to do the night look for the graphics. That was something that had a lot of practical reasons why we did that as well. I suppose I could have designed many of the graphics to have a white background that could have floated similarly, but I feel like this kind of real cinematic, again, I keep using the word theatrical because in a way, these floating stadiums feel like they have a spotlight on them. I felt like that was really something that we were all on the same page as working well, and being something that the design team and their needs for all of the uses of the graphics, that was something that really checked a lot of boxes. So we started there.

BRYONY Tim, I see you nodding your head a lot. Do you want to add anything?

TIM Mickey was just very collaborative throughout the process. I think early on, I sketched a bunch of ideas on a whiteboard and I wanted to incorporate the wordmark as well, so I drew it on a jumbotron, I drew it on a hand foam waving, on a marquee sign, and like really bad

sketches. And I sent it to Mickey and he's like, I get it. And he came back with just amazing stuff. The tweaks that we had back and forth were just very light, but he nailed it out of the park right away, and just instantly got the vibe we were going for. So it was very easy to defer to Mickey and just setting the ground foundation. And like you said, floating. It just gives you a lot of flexibility of where it's going and product, it can go into an email, it can go into all these different applications really easy. Mickey was great at taking that feedback and considering that.

BRYONY And Mickey what was your timeline across all of this?

MICKEY I can't even remember 'cause actually so much of it happened very quickly. I mean, I like to work pretty quick. I feel like the beginning… I just wanted to make sure that the things that I was creating worked well for the applications that Tim and his team needed, both for the website and for the app. I remember in the early going, we were trading a lot of sketches .at that point., my main concern, that was before I was even doing any finished artwork was that, you know, legally we were going to be in the clear because one of my big challenges—and I've done ad work before I kind of get that, you know—if I'm drawing a stadium, I can't have it look exactly like Fenway Park, or Yankee Stadium, or something. So, given that we were trying to do this timeless, classic, performance look, I really wanted to make things that felt legally clear, but not overly generic, where it didn't feel like something you could, well, I didn't want it to feel too kind of cartoony, or design-y, like spare design-y that it didn't really have that kind of warmth to it that I feel like you want with something like this that you feel like, oh, this is a, I don't know…

So much of this stuff is hard to put in words, but I was hoping to find kind of a nice middle ground where these felt like immersive environments that didn't feel specifically referencing actual places, that also, like we were talking about, just in the floating aspects and everything that also worked for all of their applications. That was

really the phase one and how we were collaborating. And I was really, really grateful that Tim and his team, all of the stakeholders, they were very, very supportive of the way that I was interpreting their ideas, the way that sketches were looking… I tend to do pretty tight sketches too, just because of all of my paranoia. I feel like from the sketch phase to the finish, I already felt like we had a good foundation to stand on. I mean, I'm still making like a hundred more images for the site and app right now. So, actually that phase one really set the table for us to collaborate on many, many more assets going forward.

BRYONY Yeah. Actually one of my questions was how many illustrations have you done, and still need to do?

MICKEY I'll just say a lot. [Laughter] This was something that, I mean I signed up for. I actually knew Tim before he was at SeatGeek. If nobody knows, he ran for a long time, possibly still runs, a great sports design blog called Hey Sport. And he was nice enough to feature my films and my work over the years. He got what I did well, but we're all doing brand reimagination. Obviously there are different goalposts, different parameters that we needed to fit in. I've been grateful that the process has been very smooth, credit to Tim and his team as well. Like Jen was saying the communication has been excellent. I can only assume he has protected me from some of, you know, weird internal feedback. I feel like we've been on a great track and moving forward into these giant sea of assets that we're putting together now. It's been as seamless as like a corporate gig has ever been for me, for that reason I'm grateful [laughter].

BRYONY And did the energy from the illustrations, as they came in, did that match the energy of the team? As they got excited about what was coming to be?

TIM It is constantly something that people keep calling out. Like, these illustrations are amazing. It was just wow moments across the board. There was wild moments for Jen as well, but the illustration was just something that we knew it's really hard in our brand because we don't

have physical, tangible, products. And I think that's why illustration, when you start to inject that into these moments like onboarding, can we create these wow moments? And I think one of our product design principles is "Excite the eyes, don't distract the mind", and I think Mickey's work does that to a T, where it's just so enticing. But it's subtle animation brings it a little bit more to life, but without getting in the way of flow and buying tickets.

BRYONY So Tim, at this point I can picture you pretty much like a flagger at the airport, you know, managing all of the different parts of the rebrand. You've got your in-house, you've got Jen, you got Mickey, you got Mother Design, everybody working at various stages towards the collective goal. What is happening there as it all comes together with your stakeholders? How are they reacting to the process?

TIM You know, our CEO is heavily involved. This is his baby. His company's 10 years old plus, wanting to get it right. And I just find as a creative person, like "show don't tell". So I think all these pieces and parts coming together, and how excited are we, you know, is a good barometer for that too. And when we found that both the marketing and product design collectively, were excited about this, this was a time to relaunch and rebrand.

BRYONY And I have to say, it's not every day that you see both sides of a business, like you've mentioned earlier, the customer facing and the business-to-business facing, to share their visual language. I think it's a great feat that you managed to use the same assets to communicate with two very distinct groups.

TIM That was another thing to juggle. It was just the audiences, right? Making sure it feels professional, but also approachable, and all that stuff… is considered. And that's what all stakeholder, you know, opinions are tough, but it really helps make it stronger, and poke holes. I truly believe there's no perfect solution for anything, it's really just which things have the lightest amount of trade-off. And so, where we found that the little things we were picking apart, we were just picking apart

at that point, and it was really strong and airtight across business and consumer. So we felt really confident with it.

BRYONY Now there's one aspect of the design that I would love to hear back from, actually from all three of you, and that is the color palette. How did that affect your process? Was it a good thing, a bad thing? And do you enjoy the color palette? Do you think it's something that SeatGeek is going to completely own in the next couple of years? Or it will fade away? What are your thoughts?

TIM Mother helped with this process too. And part of our strategy too, is going from like a cold company to a warm, and then the literal sense that like we were in this blue, if you look at our competitors they are on these cool blues, and what's the exact opposite of that? Was like this orange-red. People were commenting on like, why do we call it Gatorade? But it was just a name that stuck because, and that's what I love about it, is this uniqueness. Captures that electricity and warmth that we really wanted. So it allowed us to be that highlight color and be differentiated, but really be unique. From that we introduced a little bit more black, and I think that's where Mickey's illustration kind of create that dark mode, a little heavier. And something Mother too is just that warmth, like not all these like stark whites and grays, and adding this little bit of gold really helped doing that too. And just round it off with a secondary palette that we can kind of flex across the board.

MICKEY I thought the palette was really thoughtfully, and smartly put together. I really liked this Gatorade color as kind of the primary popping color, because like Tim said so many tech companies do with the blue thing. I heard that, you know, a color theorists said that blue is a color that makes us all feel productive. And that's why so many of these apps and things have blue. So, I felt like this real popping Gatorade color, this, whatever you want to call it, orangy-reddy-pinky thing. I just felt like it was very different and it popped really, really well. It has been fun to play with. In the onboarding images we figured out that we were going to use this monochromatic gold thing as kind of a base for

adding that Gatorade on top, in kind of a spot color kind of way. That felt like it was reminiscent of these limited palette graphics that were in the deck that really inspired the identity as well, because many of those were screen-printed illustrations that only had a few colors.

And then as we got into the other category images, and worked in some of the greens and the blues, I've still been using those in a very similar way. Where instead of bringing three big colors in, or four big colors, I've been trying to only use one or two of those colors, and then hues and shades of them—almost in a way that feels like what a silkscreen graphic might look like. I've been doing it that way, and I feel like we've been trying to put words to it, but it has that kind of timeless, but also contemporary, and fun, and popping, kind of look to it. That's also kind of fun. We haven't really used that word here, but I feel like one of the things that I'm always thinking about is for things not to just feel like cinematic and theatrical, but like fun too, and accessible. And I feel like these bright colors really help do that. I I've really enjoyed the palette.

JEN Yeah, same. They pretty much had the palette dialed when we were brought on board. So, we knew what it had to play well within, with that Gatorade being the main color. For lack of a better word, it's delicious. And you know, if you think about like it, McDonald's, we're actually working on, I don't know if we're allowed to say this Tim, you tell me—we're working on a brand font for SeatGeek. There's a lot of food and beverage brands that have done their own brand fonts, that are actually like really interesting brand fonts. I shouldn't say this, but not just another sans serif, you know? I looked at a lot of that and I'm like, you know, the red just feels exciting, athletics use a lot of red and blue, and there's the red, the blue, the purple, the green, there's a lot of core athletic colors, but that red has been muted down. More exciting and fun, and kind of just like positive, not just like that aggressive, darker reds, more of that like orangy… and it's digital first, like you think about it, it's like that's the glory of being in the app and on this

web app, that being the platform is that we can use those more vivid colors and not worry about, is it going to translate to print? You know?

BRYONY   I like the fact that nobody can agree on what it is. It's not red, it's not orange, it's not pink. [Laughter] Nobody seems to be able to agree. And that's great because then you have a whole topic of conversation, and you have all of these designers obsessing over what exactly this color is. So Tim, earlier you said, you know, you didn't want just a set of guidelines to give to your in-house department and be like, okay, here are your rules, this is what you need to do, chug along. But in order to collect all of the assets, and launch back in June, did your in-house department create their own guidelines? Or is this something that they're working on? Or guidelines are out the window, nobody's ever going to see them?

TIM   We have some light guidelines for the non-designers, but we all know that those people don't read PDFs and they don't look at it as extensively as designers do, as much as we'd like them to. So we have really been challenging ourselves to make that live asset that people can tap into, and understand fully. So it's fully digestive, easy to understand, easy to apply, giving some ground rules too, to our different teams. So I don't have to play brand police on every little thing, that they can kind of take it and run with it.

BRYONY   A little bit of guidance seems to help. Jen, in speaking of your relationship with SeatGeek, not only with the logo, but the work that you're doing with them again. So far, what has been the most gratifying aspect of working on this?

JEN   Just the way they approach it has been so positive. There's a lot of stress involved in something this large. It's a large company, there's a lot on the line. With the bigger the client usually you go in knowing like, there's going to be a lot more stress usually, but this was literally the most stress-less project, I feel. And that speaks to just how Tim, Scott, and the whole team approached it. And they made sure that you always felt thanked for what you had done so far. The feedback

was always very understandable. I know we've already said that, but you just can't speak enough to the tone that the client sets, you know, so that it feels collaborative and positive and you're moving forward. And even when it's like, can we explore this more? I think it's about how you frame it. There's a lot about the soft skills that go into a great working relationship, that keeps people motivated, and passionate to keep going. And it doesn't just feel like drudgery. And the other cool thing was just, a lot of times the bigger the client, you just wonder how much will see the light of day. Or you wonder, how long will it take to see the light of day? It was kind of neat to be brought on when it was about to need to be going live, and everything, you kind of do it, and then in a matter of a month, or a few weeks, it was just there—and you could brag about it to all your friends, because sometimes, you know, you had to wait a few years, even sometimes for these things to launch. It was just a really great collaborative environment and just, it came to life so amazingly, and then seeing our stuff with Mickey's stuff, we hadn't seen any of his work. So just seeing how it all came together so seamlessly, which really, again, speaks to Tim's vision and ability to delegate and all that, and get it all tied in together, it was just incredible.

BRYONY   Sounds like an experiential environment, very much like the ones that you find at life events, you know? It's not only about what's on the stage, but how you experience the whole night. Mickey, what part of the process was the most exciting for you?

MICKEY   I said this before, but I haven't really been brought in to do something quite like this before. So there was some trepidation that I felt going in as an artist, even knowing Tim, because I know that doing something like this, it's really a team sport. You know, Tim is driving the bus here, but there's a crew of people behind him. There is Jen, and the work that she has done. And there are just a lot of people involved, a lot of moving pieces. So you just hope that Tim in driving the bus, is [laughter] you know, going to drive us to a place that we all feel like our work is valued, and that we're all collaborating on something

that's more than the sum of its parts. You know? Sometimes when corporate clients reach out to me also, they do use these kind of buzzwords saying, oh, we do want something warm, and accessible, and handmade. But actually, you know, a lot of times the design language in those spaces is the opposite of that. It's very clinical, and cold, and very restricted. And you feel really, really boxed in where, uh, the solutions often end up feeling super, super compromised. This process was really the opposite of that. I feel like Tim, and Scott, and their team, really empowered us to follow our instincts. I have to say it's really been great. You know, whenever I've wanted to, well, there are a lot of things still coming, a lot of drawings still coming that really have a little bit more of a fun attitude about them. They have a sense of humor to them. And I feel like those are things that, for me, really stick out as being the most exciting things about a live experience. It's fun in ways that aren't really obvious on TV.

I feel like bringing ideas to the table, Tim and Scott have accepted them, have been great collaborators to say like, yes, and… or what if we do an iteration of that? In this other kind of fun way? All of that feels different from what I feared would be the case, which was that they would say, yeah, you know, those ideas are kind of like cool and different, but like different is bad. [Laughter] I think that there's a reason why a lot of these corporate, illustrated apps and websites, look the same. Where companies are afraid of taking a creative chance to look different. For Tim, and Scott, and all the team at SeatGeeek, the contrast for this project, contrast is good. Different is good. And they've embraced that every single day. I feel like, for Jen and myself, we've been in really, really, really good hands to be able to explore things that we haven't seen before for a website or an app like this. These are the dream gigs that you hope that you can find in your working life.

BRYONY   In summary, you could say that this was the most anti-corporate, corporate job.

MICKEY I would say that. Yeah.

BRYONY And it sounds like the process was exactly the opposite of what we all fear a big corporate job is going to be. Those little things that are in the back of your mind, that give you hesitation as to, should I take on this client right now? You know, give it my bandwidth? Given what I experienced before? It all dissipated very quickly. Tim final question for you, as you take into account where SeatGeek was pre-COVID, and your decision to rebrand—with the involvement of all of these various creatives—and life today, as close to post-COVID as we can envision it, what are you looking forward to? Both from a personal point of view, and as a business that has been heavily impacted by the last year and a half?

TIM COVID was this like self isolating event. There is lack of connection. Lack of entertainment. Live events are the exact opposite. Our company mission has helped the world experience more live. And so, I think COVID has taught every one of us life lessons, but as a business, we just don't want to take live events for granted. There's such a special part of our lives, and they create once in a lifetime moments, and we want that to be carried through in our brand. People don't get excited about technology. People get excited about live events. I think we don't want to lose sight of that. The strategy helps with that. The wordmark helps with that. Illustration helps with that. And I think as live events come back safely, we're just excited to bring more of the brand to more people. And there's just more and more ways that, how can this flex across the business in many ways possible. So that's what keeps me engaged and excited for the future.

BRYONY So earlier I heard the two words, visual storyteller and visual storytelling. And, in retrospect, that's exactly kind of where I was the moment I started to review all of the images for Brand New. I got excited about this idea of life events again, which I had been dreading, like many of us. Just by looking at those images, it sent me back. Yes! That's exactly what I'm missing of the live events. It's not so much that I'm missing theater, or that I'm missing concerts… it's not, what's on the stage, it's

that energy, it's what surrounds you. And you do get that across in a way that competitors don't manage. You know, it's all just about the user interface and getting as many ticket sales as possible. And here are the changes and choose your seat, maybe… if you can. Feels very transactional, which is fine, you know, shopping is transactional, but if you can add an experience to it, there is an added value and you start to involve the emotional side—.

TIM   Yeah.

BRYONY   —into it. And I think that's a wonderful thing.

TIM   Yeah, totally agree. And I think that's what we didn't want to lose emotion. And that was going to be the grounding for us. So a lot of our design principles is like, bring that energy—we're not insurance, we are live event tickets. So, make sure that… be enticing. And I think grab people's attention, but don't distract them, and get them ready for their live events. We want to emphasize our expertise. We are geeks at heart, and we think we're really good at ticketing. And we want to bring that to everyone involved in the ticketing process. And lastly, there's this "restore humanity", which seems like a really bold claim, but that's what live events are, it's like a human touch and atmospheric, that word gets thrown a lot in branding. How do we bring back the humanity into this process? And not make it a cold, transactional process?

BRYONY   I can completely relate to that. And that's why you haven't seen the virtual Brand New Conference come near you in the last year and a half, nor will you, as far as we are concerned. We need that personal energy, we like the vibrancy that comes from bringing people together. I want to thank you all for joining me today for The Follow-Up. It has been greatly insightful. And, I love hearing all of the details that come to the nuances. And Tim, hats off to you for managing all of these different creatives, and making them feel so good about their work and their process. That is not an easy thing to do. Listening to Jen

and Mickey, I can see that you put a lot of effort into it, and a lot of thought, and it makes everything shine.

TIM Thank you. And thanks so much for having us. This is a lot of fun.

MICKEY Thanks, Bryony.

BRYONY Thanks Bryony. And P.S., thanks for connecting me and Tim.

ARMIN The one thing that was evidently clear in this conversation was how important Tim's management of both stakeholders and creative partners helped steer this project not just in the right direction but in a way that was constructive, enjoyable, and mutually beneficial. We almost had to pause the podcast recording and ask our guests to stop talking so nicely about each other because it goes against the myth that clients and creatives must argue with each other all the time. Side note: as we have learned over the course of more than 30 episodes of this podcast, this is the new reality: clients and creatives working almost blissfully together. But I digress at the same time that I pull up SeatGeek simply to enjoy the new wordmark, color palette, illustrations, and consider attending a live event… with people… out in the world…

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