

EPIISODE 057

TOBLERONE

IN CONVERSATION WITH

Nick Rees, Bulletproof

AND

Emanuel Gävert, Toblerone

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 number 57 of The Follow-up.

This week we are following up on Toblerone, one of the most well-known chocolates around the world thanks to its distinctive triangular shape and packaging and its strong presence in duty-free shops in airports all over the globe. Created by Theodor Tobler and his cousin Emil Baumann in Bern, Switzerland, Toblerone bars are unique in their combination of creamy chocolate with crunchy Italian torrone, which gave the brand its name as a portmanteau of Tobler and torrone. Toblerone was produced by Tobler & Co independently until 1970 and after that it went through a few mergers and acquisitions eventually landing at Kraft Foods Inc. (in 1990) which is now Mondelez International and where it netted a cool 400 million US dollars in revenues in 2018 alone.

The project, designed by London, UK-based Bulletproof was posted on Brand New on July 12, 2022. You can pull it up on your browser at bit.ly/bnpodcast057 that is B I T dot L Y slash bnpodcast057, all in lowercase.

This week we are joined by Nick Rees, Chief Creative Officer at Bulletproof and Emanuel Gävert, Global Brand Lead for Toblerone.

In this conversation we get to hear about how a brand that we all — or at least I — assumed had their act fully together given its global footprint was actually suffering from a small case of what Emanuel described as schizophrenia. This may be a slight exaggeration but it's easy to imagine a brand with more than 100 years of history having gone in directions it didn't intend simply as a reaction to distribution needs and market forces in the hundreds of different places where Toblerone is consumed. We then delve deeply into Bulletproof's core idea that led the project: Be more triangle and how that informed every decision, from logo to packaging to color palette as an ethos to embrace what made Toblerone unique and reimagine this iconic brand for the next 100 years. No easy task but, as we learn, all it took was a kick-off meeting over the internet with a glass of wine to get things going in the right direction.

Now let's listen in as Bryony follows up with Nick and Emanuel.

BRYONY Iconic in shape and name, this chocolate bar has been around for over a century and is easily spotted by most people around the world independent of the nuances of its design. So let's hear from the team behind the recent brand revamp to get all the crunchy nuggets of information. Nick and Emanuel, welcome to the follow up.

EMANUEL Hello.

NICK Hi, hello.

BRYONY So Em, let's go ahead and get started. Toblerone has been around for a bit over a century and I really don't think our audience needs an introduction to the product itself. Let's jump right in into the why a rebrand especially, why now?

EMANUEL Great question. So, I mean it wasn't starting with the answer, we need a rebrand, but it was really starting with, this is clearly a brand that's been around for a very long, long time and when we looked at it we felt it was in part schizophrenic so we could look decent in, you know, some places in the world, particularly at airports, but everywhere else it wasn't strategically, nor imaginatively activated anywhere. The starting point was not a rebrand. The starting point was: we have an icon in our hands, in whichever kind of design book or anywhere you look typically this sort of is the example of a truly iconic brand and we felt we hadn't done it justice for many, many years. So the starting point was, hey, we gotta do something with this icon. And I got appointed two and a half years ago with that sort of remit that no stones should be unturned.

What will it take to create a rebirth of this iconic brand in Toblerone? And clearly it was never gonna be a silver bullet that if we fix this one thing all problems would be solved. It really had to be quite a holistic end brand transformation. So that was the why we had to then get into what is really the story about this brand? Can we get to know our founder in new lights? When we looked at where we were and you know, it sort of happen in parallel the rebrand with getting to know our heritage and story. And I think we had lost some of the real truths about this brand along the way. And we had invented some new truths that we believed to be true, along the way. For example, that our founder was inspired by the Swiss Mountains and we created this mountain icon many, many years ago.

And it's probably the marketing lie of the century because anything that we have learned about the original vision of our founder was that he was inspired by creative communities around in Europe. there was a French dance formation Folies Bergère that formed a triangle at the end of their act and all the evidence that we have seen through the history books suggest that that was his inspiration to make a triangle. It would've been much easier to cast this in a plain shape, in a square

shape, and only have plain milk chocolate. But he injected texture inspired from his travels in Italy, Ferrero in the nugat. And he wanted to show and make a big statement being a triangle. And that's why we call him the original triangle. It is our differences that makes us special, is not always being the same that really counts.

When we looked at the personality of our founder, who was really an activist, I mean he fought for women's rights 120 years or so ago, 112 years ago. And he advocated state paid maternity leave in a country where they essentially gave women voting rights in 1971. So all of that personality, his travels, his inspiration from the creative communities... and then we looked at the packaging and how we brought this brand to life. It felt stiff, it felt, straightjacketed, it felt like we tried to bludge a lot of gold on top of it at airports, but it had lost that real personality and ethos of the original idea of bringing this triangle icon to life. So then that became obvious in discussions with the team, and obviously Bulletproof worked with us on that entire purpose, and entire discovery of our founder and where we came from. Then it became obvious that this is not gonna be an evolutionary tweaking the colors here and there, or moving around distinctive assets. We had to come at this completely fresh. And really do our original triangle justice as we gave rebirth to this brand.

BRYONY It seems like there was a lot of introspection internally before embarking on this journey.

EMANUEL For sure.

BRYONY And then as you were analyzing this and coming to the conclusions, what were you looking for in a design partner?

EMANUEL Without kind of sounding cliché, original thinkers, independent thinkers, and someone with a track record to coming a little bit more imaginative to the assignment. And some people that really would stick with their guns, and putting their hearts and soul behind whatever answer they would come to. So not seeking a

lowest common denominator on what stakeholders want, but really going on a journey. We didn't pick Bulletproof only because of their packaging design capability. We picked a brand development partner in Bulletproof because obviously design has always been so central to this design icon in Toblerone that we knew that we needed a partner that could help us really take that ethos, and the commitment to the craft, all the way through to all touchpoints of this brand. We did not come to Bulletproof, give us a new packaging design, we came to Bulletproof, help us reimagining this design icon to really start having a point of view holistically across everything that we do.

BRYONY Nick, how did you and Bulletproof get involved? Was there an RFQ? What was it that brought you in?

NICK I'm proud to say that we didn't have to do anything other than live our relationship that we'd already been working on for a long time with Mondelez [International]. You know, we're working on a few of the brands at a high level. My tenure at Bulletproof is a very long one and when we started out many, many years ago, we were really a packaging outfit. Over the years that developed much more into kind of cohesive branding agency with various tools that we've developed along the way. And that's developed alongside Mondelez as a key partner. Recently you've seen things like the Cadbury redesign, the whole brand world kind of global brand world look and feel and relationships that have moved on from that. I think a trusted partnership. Also known Em for a long time as well, you know, we'd cross paths and worked together before. It was a series of conversations, and idea sharing, and actually something that I haven't done before, which was getting on a Teams call and all having a glass of wine—or whatever drink that we fancied—and we had a really early, "what would you do?" conversation and kept it really open, and inspirational, and loose, and it was a lovely thing, it was really inspirational and it was a great way of other people in the team meeting for the first time. And just within a couple of hours quite a lot of really good stuff had come out.

Quite a lot of notes were taken and the ideas really kicked off there. A really lovely proces. But no long painstaking pitches or anything like that. <laugh> Glad to say.

EMANUEL It was only one call. I mean truth be told we had a couple of calls with another partner and we didn't feel it was essentially challenging us enough. So hence, the call went to Nick and team and said, Hey, should we have a glass of wine together and talk about Toblerone? It was a lovely couple of hours, but more importantly we covered both I think personal motivations that everybody had—it's a very small team in the end of the day—but very personal motivation. Why do we do this as people? I mean we can do lots of other different things, and then let's talk about the brand. And I think in that conversation to Nick's point, a lot of the relationship that then formed the trust we needed to move mountains together happened in that original connection, I think.

NICK Absolutely. Yeah. Yeah. As always, and I don't mean as always with Mondelez, but as always with any work stream or any client we work with is quite intense timings. We needed to get to solutions and various work streams, a lot of ambition behind it. So you know, we wanted to get in, kick it off and really start working on the core thinking really quickly. So we needed this team bonding exercise, and then after that it was literally every day pushing the thinking forward, really rapid process that we then eased into. But you know, that intensity I think is key in getting into some really good ideas.

EMANUEL I think the Mondelez organization as well was quite split on, should we go after Toblerone or should we not? The jury was out and hence we needed constantly to bring new pieces of confidence to help create that movement internally, to propel this through the organization. So the original sort of client team here was a bunch, they call it a triangle of three people with yeah, commitment, let's make sure this sees the day of light. But we didn't have the whole army behind us. It was

very small and then it sort of grew, let's not exaggerate, but more of a movement where everybody started to feel and touch the work and that was what built the confidence that this brand can really be something which many internally probably couldn't even imagine.

BRYONY And just to get some perspective, when did you start the project?

EMANUEL I have no idea. When did we start the project? Gosh.

BRYONY Yeah, give or take <laugh>.

NICK Uh,

EMANUEL Well maybe 18 months ago...

NICK I need Client Services in the room.

EMANUEL Yeah, 18.

NICK Yeah. This is why I do what I do and I need Client Services in the room for questions like that. It seems like only yesterday, but we were well and truly in the middle of lockdowns and so that kind of paints the picture of you know, this is why we are meeting on Teams and you know, the initial first stages of creative were all very much done online. You know, everyone's been through it, everyone knows that environment. So that's what we were working with.

EMANUEL I think it's about two years ago, but we got to the answer really quickly, and then it's taken a lot of time to actually then convince everybody else that that's the answer. The core answer, I think in the first presentation. So that took a couple of weeks from the wine, whatever virtual meeting we had and then we had a brand world which everybody had just felt so inspired by and uplifted by, which still is true today. And then a couple of weeks later we had a core expression that shocked everybody, but it made certainly me feel emotional in that first presentatio. And then I slept on it, and then I got to this point, which is the dream for any marketer that you wanna put your job on launching it. That happened really quickly.

BRYONY So I want more details on that core presentation.

NICK As an agency we work a kind of a set of tools for working into sensory brand world. A complete brand world, a creative palette, a suite of elements that work across all the senses. But all of that good stuff, all has to start with a single clear, clean idea. The more simple that is, the more effective it's gonna be, the easier it's gonna be to work with. It all actually started on the conversation over the glass of wine. Em was a young activist and continues to be an activist, and was very much in the model of Theodore Toblerone himself. Em kind of referred to a movement... in that conversation we started talking about triangular thinking, and being triangle. It was kind of a really small ember of an idea. We then looked into the history of the brand. There's an amazing hundred years book, you know, read that from back to front, really kind of got under the skin of it but actually came up with three core brand world ideas.

I still got the other two in my mind and I, I really like them, but the one it just jumped out all of us, it got us really excited and it was the idea of the fact that you can own a brand, right? You can distill it down to just a shape. And I think there's so many brands, not so many brands, it's to rarity. But brands that can own a color are amazing, but a brand that can own a shape and be so synonymous with the shape is really cool. So when we started thinking about that, it was like the triangular mindset, referring to Theodore Tobler as a triangle of his time, and then really if you're gonna stand out from your competition, which is what he wanted to do from day one and that still continues, right? To be unique in that landscape, in that product experience.

It's to be a triangle in a sea of square. And it's not to be anti-square, but to just be different, and to be proud of your differences, and the triangles are cool shape, right? The triangle has all the fun. So we really got into that idea and then how can we sum that up? We kicked around a few ways of saying it but ultimately ended up with this really lovely phrase of "Be more triangle" by the way, which happens to stack

really beautifully into a triangle itself, which we discovered later on. That idea of being more triangle really built the foundation of the idea and it became a mindset that we used ever since then. And we continue to use, to question, it's an anchor point for everything we do. We go back to, we kind of like okay are we being more triangle about this?

Are we kind of being progressive? And I think we talked about being disruptive but with meaning, right? Some meaningful disruption from the beginnings. Not just about being different for the sake of being different, actually doing things for purpose. That particular brand world, the way we present them first stage is, is a kind of a mood board, a collage of materials that paint the whole of the creative palette and it captured everybody's attention. And like Em said, there was kind of very visceral reactions in the room. We pride ourselves on getting to the idea first time, which is a very difficult standard to hold yourself to. We do it a good amount. But this was a really great example of a wonderful idea that everybody got behind. They felt it, you know, I think we all really felt it. And then the amazing thing is triangular in itself in the approach is that the brand purpose was still kind of being fine tuned. This was our sensory brand world idea, and it was so strong and we all felt it so much that it ended up becoming the brand purpose. So we now have this unbelievably, it's kind of a no-no, right? You don't do it, but we are triangles in our mindset. The brand purpose, which was the sensory brand word idea is also the strap line <laugh>. So it follows right at the way through. So it's super consistent, super pure, and it really works.

EMANUEL All of these different strands just to build, I don't wanna cloud any of what Nick just said, but all of these strands run in parallel. When this sensory brand world presentation happened, and the "Be more triangle"... just because I think the brand probably had been guilty of being a bit less, in the last few years instead of being proudly triangle, we sort of tried lots of different, quite random things as a company, right? But then this sort of anchored us to no, just to celebrate who we are, and be more of that, and really invite everybody to connect

with the things that makes you special. The difference that defines you. Nick always says it's "the edges that defines us" and that's also why you see the logo treatment on the pack in these things. And that's true. So let's, you know, create a much more interesting world. The thing we have in common is that we are different. So let's celebrate that as a uniting force as opposed to anything that we should hold up judgments against, et cetera. That anchored everything that followed, all of the strands that were sort of up in the air around brand you know, all of these frameworks you have to hold yourself to somethin. That all got anchored from that point. And since then we have been sticking with it.

BRYONY Did that that help ground the internal conversations that you were having outside of the three people that were on this on the day-to-day?

EMANUEL Yeah.

BRYONY Did you take that out and start to ground that as a brand was being developed?

EMANUEL It grounded everything and that became the first point of confidence that this has a purpose. We have looked at this brand as, oh I think we have tried lots of different positionings over time. Not really seriously, but I think where we got it wrong it was always like look how different we are with standing out as opposed to that we are all different. So it, it is more a WE experience than it is showing off differences in a purposeless sort of way. And what Nick said was, actually this can very much be something that unites us all and internally that purpose, you know when we talked to all of the brand managers to say to all of the market, everybody got behind it because it spoke to them as individuals. So they wanted to join this triangle tribe because it was just a much more interesting side of everybody's personality that they wanted to connect to themselves. So that became the anchor point and you know, I remember we had, we call it growth acceleration team meeting where we took this to them and unanimously everybody got

behind it the. In terms of the larger business units, we call them the different markets.

NICK I always feel like a brand purpose needs to be something you wanna get out of bed for, right? You wanna fight for a real cause you know, they seldom do. But this one really did. And also it became a very inspirational tool to adapt and build existing equities against, introduce new equities. Like I say, it's this kind of filter, you can then pass everything through. I do think every time Em was bringing new people into the team, or we were bringing new people into the team, I think people really wanted to just fit into this triangular mindset. It was a really nice way of talking about it as a movement and continues to be so.

BRYONY That's wonderful to hear. As you moved on from that first presentation, you had all of this energy going, now it's time to start doing those refinements. Can we start talking about the wordmark first? What were those changes? What did they mean? How did you go about that? And then we'll get into how that translates to the packaging and into the other elements.

NICK I'm not gonna be too cynical about it 'cuz I've done it and I've done it a lot, right? But you know, don't you hate design agencies that just raid the vault? You know, we get to work on these amazing brands and they have got these huge extensive histories and there's so much in this kind of movement of stripping out detail for a long time. And we are very much pro that as an agency, but there's so much beautiful detail and heritage that does get lost. But we don't wanna just raid the vault every time without any meaning and purpose. What we just talked to you about, about being more triangle, this mindset, getting into the founder story and understanding the kind of foundations in the way that we're working against, you know, this kind of square chocolate and being triangular, it really helped us unlock some things. And I think then when you start to look at the old designs and the old equities, it helps you put a sorting hat on and kind of go, well that's great but it's not gonna work for us.

One thing was the original type mark was just so powerful, and so quirky, and we started using this language about quirks. “Embrace your quirks.” One of our design principles is: we are defined by our edges. As people it’s your edges that make you interesting, right? It’s make your edges that make you stand out and your edges that people love you for. To find an old type mark that’s got some real, what I’ve been for a long time, no-nos, you know the Art Nouveau style, bottom heavy, fat type with either counter of the O sitting off center, you know like shock horror. But it looks beautiful. It’s beautiful because it’s so uniquely Toblerone. The way that the angle in the “B” works, the “R, I mean the creative director who works on this with myself is actually a massive type guru and awesome hand typography as well, and sort of styled that.

It is also very true to the original iteration. That was the first point where we were like, okay, this really works, we love that. And then start looking for other ways in, and the Tobler Script was part of that same story. You know, it needs to be something that we need, and we wanted to use. So something that adds that little touch of heritage that we can play out in a really contemporary way. Staying truthful to the memory structures. So the core color palettes. So the typography itself in the red, you know, the same outlines, the drop shadow, we’ve played around with that. But also cutting ourselves free of that so we can in certain touchpoints, we can use it without all of that baggage. It’s really exciting. And then actually cutting the font that sits with the wordmark, is inspired by it. It’s got slight quirks in it, it’s got the weight of the font... is very similar but it’s still different enough to stand aside, and not steal the thunder of the Toblerone wordmark and actually just be a headline font that can kind of sit with it.

BRYONY Em, on the receiving end, as you’re seeing the typeface being developed, and the script being introduced, what was the overall feeling?

EMANUEL Emotional I think is the only way to describe it. I mean all of the things that Nick talked to, some of it was discovered and some of it was just

baked into an experience as a recipient. So you know, having then learn more about this original triangle, the founder, and then seeing how that came to life in the wordmark was really exciting. But now you cover the wordmark, I think the whole experience of the wordmark and then allowing that to really be defined by the edges, in that it's tripping over the edges, so you cannot help but turning the pack. I think what also blew our mind was just being really proud about our triangle chocolate chunk, which subsequently then have grounded everything else that we've done. Because that's big work that made us unique. We created an impossible to eat triangle, you know, that you cannot eat without cracking up, and taking yourself a little bit lighter and fun, because you know it's a triangle that you put in his mouth.

And being so proud about putting that at the center, even across the wordmark just felt so bold. And that's why I needed to sleep on it for a night. I remember it, it really got to me in that presentation. But then the morning after we just woke up and thought okay, this is not about moving some equities around. This is a complete new interpretation of our entire brand. Yeah, rediscovering the truths that made it special from the beginning. Yeah, so that was the receiving end. And then of course as always we do the due diligence, we do a lot of different testing and all of that stuff. And the test results helped fuel the confidence. But I think even before we had test results, certainly the triangle community in Mondelez, the small group, and the agency, we were convinced that we've gotta push this through because it's one of those experiences that it will be before and after moment once this lands for the brand and it's history we felt. So that's how strongly we felt about it.

NICK I loved it. I loved that whole process honestly. We had such a strong bond and to have a team... like yeah it does, you know, thinking back on it, that kind of shared mindset. We were talking about it, the work was coming through, simple ideas started feeding into the work, everything we were doing was in the studio, we were just kind of like, oh this is exciting, this is amazing. And you knew you were breaking

the rules, and then we were putting in front of a client team that were excited by it. I felt like it was very intuitive and we were sharing designs and really kind of, yep, that's amazing. And we were like, whoa, okay, this is really bold!

EMANUEL I think we all said in that meeting that this is amazing. I think it was just me processing the longevity of that.

NICK Yeah, yeah, yeah.

EMANUEL Because the emotional reaction was so strong. So I had to kind of make sense of, you know, what is this? is this the most iconic, brilliant thing I've ever seen? or is it absolutely madness what we're doing here? <laugh>?

BRYONY That's a good question.

NICK I think one of the first things that got a really visceral reaction was the color palette because you know, this is really critical, but I mean to bro's amazing to Bron's got amazing equities, but Shamir, we call it the core color Shamir, but it's beige by definition and it looks amazing with the red, the gold as m said in Trevor retail, you know a lot of gold. But when you put it all together into a creative palette or brand, it needs something else and it's needed something else for quite a while. So we looked for a secondary palette and actually the answer was right there under our eyes. The brand has been developing variants like fruit and nut and mond. We've had these small sections of packaging that have come in with like a hot pink magenta, a teal, lovely secondary colors.

They're really complimentary but we're really underusing them and they're just there from a variant point of view. So we took that orange, the teal, the magenta, injected that and run it through everything in a really kind of considered way. And then it's those little color clashes that I think just add modernity and zing to it. And I think when we then presented that, we were just very much like, what do you think of this?

And it was just a whoa, there was a real feeling towards that, a real kind of visceral feeling about color. And color became a big unlock as well. That bold decision making mentality, I think even when we are talking about packaging and variance, it's done, just do a little section at the end of the pack. Let's be really bold here. We've got such a powerful format, such powerful equities on it. Let's go full bleed color and really own it. It looks so cool with these floods of color coming in on everything and I think even those are kind of seen the Valentine's work. That lovely kind of soft pink with the teal on it looks wicked, looks so cool, really stands out, really different.

You've made some references both of you to the packaging. So I wanna go a little bit deeper on some of the choices that you made from having the logo wrap around, from the demotion of the Matterhorn... What conscious changes do you see have had the most impact? Which ones were you most scared of Em? As the brand evolved?

NICK We were asked to excite and disrupt, and continue the journey, right? And so what we'd already done is identify the brand world idea, started locating what the primary assets were gonna be. Okay, the first touch point that we needed to get into is packaging. So the challenges live true to the principles. One of the design principles I already talked about was "defined by our edges," which really ties into the birth of the brand, the consumer. So how do you do that on a pack? So initially that sounds like how are we're gonna do that? It was a really simple move. We've been doing it in other touchpoints since the interesting part of the Toblerone is that it's triangular, so it's actually the corners that are really important and really stand out. So we wanted it to draw attention to the corners. How do you do that?

Well let's lay our equities over it. First time we did it we thought, that's crazy, that's not gonna work. <laugh> Did it on a 360 render, printed it out on a runout, folded it, had a little look at it, it's really interesting. Just gets you to kind of appraise the pack, turn it around. And that's

something that we thought was really interesting. And then also decision making about actually putting the chunk in the middle was just a visual on the very early kind of mood board that defines our creative palette that I talked about. Just an image on there that really excited everybody and it kind of captures the whole be more triangle mindset. It was just a bunch of squares with a triangle in the middle. Done in really nice kind of gold and finishes, et cetera, et cetera. But it's just how can you capture a whole brand idea in one image, and that did it.

You got this lovely, beautiful geometric shape, our product is that right? We need to show our product and if we're gonna show it, let's do it in a really bold, chunky way that represents the eat. And as Em said, like the awkwardness of the eat. And then we just love that boldness of slapping it over the top of our precious, we just crafted this precious wordmark, running over the edge of the pack. Now let's slap the chunk over top of it<laugh>. It is just exciting breaking the rules and seeing what happened, and then you know, obviously sharing that with them.

EMANUEL Yeah, and team and I think every step of the way has been really challenging to get people on board because we look at things very rationally and how many times haven't I heard? Why are you trying to hide my wordmark? or logo? Why is there a product in front of the brand? and all of these very rational reactions to something. So when you try and pull some of this apart, you can get to valid feedback that's perfectly [unintelligible] because it's the whole experience that's working beautifully together. Because now we've done lots of other touchpoints, executions, et cetera. When you can see one image, you can probably remove everything else. But still, if it's anchored around our core product expression, you instantly know that it's Toblerone. We have rested, even the full flood collar on the variant, it goes against owning a color and all of these kind of things.

But one of our design principle was also to be vibrantly positive, right? And color just does something to the mood of people and the

experience. So we fought really hard for that. We've used, you know, the conventional methods to help our arguments and convictions to get some critical stakeholders on board. Even till this day most of the things that we do shakes up the organization a little bit and if it doesn't, we actually haven't pushed it far enough. Every time, as frustrating as it's been sometimes to get some of these very strong pushes back from the organization. That for me has given me energy in the sense that that's probably why we're on the right track. Because unless we keep pushing this, it's not gonna move the needle enough. It's just gonna be exactly what's done in the past. And then of course we're gonna be responsible on not doing reckless things, and all of those things. But I feel that we have always had the brand's best interest at all points. We have pushed the boundaries at every single step of the way. So far I don't think we have pushed it above the edge. I think we are flooding the edges, we are defined by our edges, but we're still sort of on a trajectory and a path that just letting this now be executed in the next few years is gonna create a significant step change for the role that Toblerone is starting to play in culture, and in people's life, is our hope.

NICK It's important to say, right? I think anyone who looks at the work, there's a lot of love, and a lot of creativity, and nuance gone into things, but we're being hugely respectful about the heritage equities of the brand. Our ideal is to get to something that disrupts, something that feels new, and feels like a brand is moving forward. But at the same time we want it to still feel more itself and I really hope that the work we've done and continue to do on Toblerone is actually making the brand realize itself and its potential more. And I think packaging is a really good representation of that. I do think when you look back at the old pack, it feels very bland, very underutilized creatively. My Mom said when she found out I was working on Toblerone, she was like, you're still gonna keep it triangle though, aren't you? <laugh>? Yeah we are Mum.

BRYONY The essence cannot be ignored for sure, and you cannot take that away.

EMANUEL <laugh>. We still have an April Fool joke lined up I think. that Toblerone's gone square because the whole world became triangles. So now we're gonna do something else. Yeah.

NICK Yeah, cool. Be square some <laugh>.

BRYONY That's a good one. Now outside of that two hour meeting with wine over Meets, was there a pivotal moment, or detail, or an element that made you think this is it. There's no turning back. This is exactly where we need to go, at a personal level.

EMANUEL For me it was, you know, in the brand world, but the brand world is broad and easy, then you gotta land it somewhere. It's gonna come together in something that we can see living and breathing on shelves, in people's life, in homes, wherever. I think for me that moment of real conviction was when we looked at the core pack and that presentation. So an absolute pivotal moment. Then we got massive challenges. So I think another pivotal moment was when we then got the research results back from this shelf test that we felt if it bombs now, one we feel that I shouldn't say this right, but consumers clearly don't get it and they should. But we then got the research results back and with existing buyers it just scored through the roof. But it also had this ability to really bring in and let new people that might not know Toblerone so well to reappraise and engage with the brand. That I think, it was what all of the skeptics, everything that we heard along the way, they then got some sort of reassurance that this is not a crazy bunch of people trying to go wacky about the brand, but actually this can probably move the needle in pushing something we haven't really tried before.

Those were the probably the two moments for me where I felt like, okay, now all of our gut reactions just seem to be also working on this really boring shelf test <laugh>, you know? And it does that wonderful job of compassionately relating to existing users and then bringing in new.

NICK I'd agree with that. I just think part of the industry we work in is kind of always taking young designers and teaching them along the way there's a hundred hurdles we've gotta do to get design through. The first thing you really need is brave clients, bold clients, which we had in this case. But there's still all these other hurdles and research is a huge one. So I think when we did initial qual testing and I heard that on multiple occasions people were just rotating packs, you know, it was just that movement of turning it, and the intrigue, and we always worked on this idea of Toblerone is for, it's not for everyone, it's for the curious, right? It's people who want to go a bit further and knowing that people's actions were living up to exactly what we wanted them to, physically playing it back to us, just thought that's exciting.

Kind of a point of no return. But I didn't really think about it like that anyway, you know, we are just trying to come up with exciting design and push it through. Another really lovely moment purely from a design perspective is the fact that I've worked on Toblerone at Bulletproof many, many years ago on a one-off kind of seasonal basis. You know, I think multiple agencies over the years have done a Valentine's pack, or a Father's Day pack, or a Christmas pack, and it's a really nice thing to do. It's a kind of small project, but what do you turn the triangles into? Are they the rooftops where Santa's flying over the top? We did one, the arrow head of Cupid's arrow for Valentine's Day in it. Unlocking what we've done on the kind of seasons and it started with Valentine's Day just putting the love heart with the triangle chocolate within it, the iconicity, the simplicity, and the beauty of that. And then just the color palette. Love that. I think it's breathtakingly simple and just suddenly creating something you're like, well no one else can do this. This is so uniquely Toblerone, and we've literally just invented our own design language that we can now push and play with. That's a real moment.

BRYONY And now looking ahead Em, what are you most excited about as you further implement the brand? Cause you know, the idea was reached

quickly, but you had some challenges in getting it all through. What of, what lies ahead are you most excited about?

EMANUEL I think all of it. There's never been a silver bullet answer on this journeys. It is a transformation that needs to touch every little touch that this brand has and every single din that it brings into the world. But once we have established and done the clean off, and we get this new iconicity out, and to Nick's point, do the seasonal sort of experiences, that is to really start creating a triangle community of people that really believes in the ethos of this brand. We've talked a lot about the edges that defines us, but sometimes we fear throwing out our unique differences in the world because there are judgments around some of these things. And I think Toblerone could really be this modern icon symbol for the differences that makes us all special. And if we can play a role in, you know, empowering young, old, everything in the middle, triangle mindsets and people to really bring in their unique differences in the world, I think we're gonna have a much more interesting place in lots of different aspects of culture.

So moving from having gone the foundations sort of established and right, to actually now starting to activate and play a role in culture, I think it's when this brand is gonna go from just looking beautiful to actually really mean something in people's life. And that's I think what we feel strongly is the next step. But obviously there are a few steps we need to walk to essentially help people re-appreciate sort of where we come from and where we are. And then of course we are in 112 markets, quite a lot to do to get this out. It's a big change. So there's lots of just, you know, spinning the plates now to make sure we land this consistently. And as we have, you know, an incredible internal triangle community of people, every single brand manager wants to make an impact on this brand. Making sure we stated the ethos and the bravery of what we have created here and not diluting it as a lot of other people starts working on it. I think it's a really important element of driving the true potential of this brand.

You know, one of the changes we have done versus some other global brands is that we've created a slightly larger central team to also really inject an end-to-end consumer experience for the brand. Where direct to consumer e-com is something we launched earlier is centralized along with our innovation experience. So far we are very iconic triangle, but I see so much potential in expanding our iconicity, also tapping into more edgy and angular and triangle experiences, and textural experiences that shakes up sort of segment by segment, category by category in chocolate because that's the true potential that I think Toblerone has. You know, before Ben and Jerry's there was vanilla, chocolate, and strawberry and now there's a lot more to it and I feel it is a bit the same here with Toblerone, we can really bring a truly progressive breath into a category that probably have gone a little bit lazy with some few very big brands. So we need a brand with a bit of muscle to shake it up a little bit. And I think that's the potential that Toblerone has.

BRYONY That's a lot of potential and a lot of ambition. Can't wait to see what comes of it. Nick, what was the most satisfying aspect of working on this project for you? Which was obviously a lot larger in scope than those seasonal packages of the past.

NICK Working with Em obviously, right? But <laugh>, I'm not allowed to say that. Um, honestly, I think first for me to come up with a brand world idea that has then become the brand purpose. That's amazing. That was really, really satisfying. I think the fact that it's then become the brand is even more satisfying. I kind of alluded to it at the beginning, but I just love those ideas that are simple and then everything flows from it. I always refer to it as creative momentum. Keep creative momentum going. One thing you have to do from an agency point of view working for years on big brands is keep that fire burning. Keep the energy going. When you get into a brand like Toblerone, there's high energy already, high ambition. I think when you then got an amazing brand world and a great idea at the heart of it, that's simple, you can start to see everything that we are touching flows. There's

kind of like this creative momentum that flows out as I referred to the kind of seasonal work, you know, we got to that quickl. When we've been kind of doing the vis ID work, new ideas like take a two-dimensional space and turn it into a three-dimensional space. Referencing Escher. Really exciting things happening with product depictions, sensorial depictions of product. So much potential to unlock here creatively. But it all comes from that lovely simple idea at the beginning of it. That's it really, from my point of view, it's kind of like the whole process and the fact that it's flowed so well from that ember, you know, that we're still finding now.

EMANUEL And can I just say this has also not only been Nick's day job. Any time of the day, whenever we have had any big moment, or challenges, or disagreements, Nick in his impossible schedule has always jumped on a call to support or come person or whatever. There is clearly a personal connection to this purpose that you feel so much ownership for. That's just also massively propelled your personal commitment to make this happen.

NICK I think we all feel really protective over it, right?

EMANUEL Yeah.

NICK That's a testament to a great team and a great project. We probably sound all cheesy about it now. <laugh>, it is genuinely a thing. You get to great work and we defend it really passionately internally, like Em said, all the way through. Trying to get ideas through. At the beginning, we're like, we believe in this, do you believe? And then by the end of it, we're like actually very robust now in our beliefs about the work and the way we pushed it through. We've got more triangles on board, so that's even easier.

BRYONY An army of triangles.

NICK Hmm. Yeah, exactly. It's easy to defend because it's great and we love the work we do. So very protective over it.

EMANUEL We stick always with odd numbers. We never go into meeting with even numbers, you know, it doesn't work. No.

BRYONY Ah, that is a good <laugh>. Good little tip. Just to wrap it all up at this point. You started with a fairly big challenge, a century old challenge, and you distilled it down to its essence. As a founder who was having an impact on culture and who was making decisions very early on based on standing out, on being unique, of doing things in a different way. You are continuing that tradition, but surely with a modernized view, with packaging, and color palette in a brand that definitely feels fresh. It doesn't feel like it's a hundred years old. It does not feel like that chocolate bar that I got from my parents going on a trip and coming back and realizing years later that, oh, they got that at the airport, surel. You had this sense of this precious little thing. Whereas now it's not so precious, it's bolder, it's fun, and has a lot more energy to it that makes it feel very fresh and grown up and ready for a new world.

NICK I'm just sitting here listening to you playing it back to us. I mean, that's fantastic. That's really what we want. Also being fit for the modern world, and all the troubles and adversities of the modern world, and the things that face people every day. As Em kind of alluded to earlier, something that really interests the team moving forward is creating this fresh, great brand, well loved brand, but also to do more meaningful things with it. We can do that. We can fulfill those ambitions around the brand because we've created a brand purpose that is more of a philosophy.

BRYONY Mm-hmm <affirmative>.

NICK That's gonna make that easier. So that's the journey we're on and that's the ambition to kind of fulfill.

BRYONY Well thank you so much for joining me today on The Follow-Up. I cannot wait to find this new revamped brand at the next airport and many more places.

NICK Amazing. Thank you.

EMANUEL Amazing. Thank you so much.

NICK Absolute pleasure.

ARMIN Aside from wanting a Toblerone bar so badly right about now, one of the biggest takeaways for me from this conversation was hearing that a turning point for Toblerone, as a brand, wasn't saying "look at me, I am different" but saying "Look at all of us, we are all different... let's all embrace being triangles of our own". Often times our job is not to magnify what makes a brand different and unique but to magnify what makes a brand the same and relatable to its audience in order to establish a more authentic connection. And if that happens to be through a triangle-shaped chunk of creamy chocolate and crunchy Italian torrone then sign me up... I want to be more triangle.

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