

EPIISODE 058

INSTACART

IN CONVERSATION WITH

Daniel Renda, Wolff Olins

AND

Kevin Byrd, Instacart

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to The Follow-up, a weekly podcast that goes in depth into projects recently reviewed on Brand New featuring conversations with the designers, and sometimes their clients, uncovering the context, background and design decisions behind the work.

BRYONY GOMEZ-PALACIO

This week we are following up on Instacart, a leading grocery technology company in North America. The company partners with more than 800 national, regional, and local retail brands to facilitate online shopping, delivery and pickup services from more than 70,000 stores across more than 5,500 cities. Instacart makes it possible for millions of busy people and families to get the groceries they need from the retailers they love, and for more than 600,000 Instacart shoppers to earn by picking, packing and delivering orders for customers on their own flexible schedule.

The project, designed by Wolff Olins was posted on Brand New on August 8, 2022 with a follow-up post on October 11. You can pull up both posts on your browser at bit.ly/bnpodcast058 that is B I T dot L Y slash bnpodcast058, all in lowercase.

This week we are joined by Daniel Renda, Senior Creative Director at Wolff Olins and Kevin Byrd, Executive Creative Director at Instacart.

In this conversation we learn about how the growth of Instacart — not just as a consumer-facing service but also as business-to-business enterprise — informed the need for an evolution of the company's

identity and signal its changes not just externally but also internally. We talk in-depth about the importance of the carrot icon; how it was important to recognize its history but also envisioning its potential for the future; and how the Wolff Olins team was able to infuse it with a newfound significance by planting it in the ground and transforming its top into an arrow. We also explore the development of the custom typeface, the photography, an extra fun campaign with Lizzo and how the “shop and savor” ethos served to guide not just the design work but to provide a creative strategy that permeated the business.

Now let’s listen in as Armin follows up with Daniel and Kevin.

ARMIN VIT Hello everyone, please stay where you are and relax because like Instacart, we are coming to you with a delivery of freshness and goodness as we unpack the process behind their identity, and how they arrived at one of the most well received icons of the year. Kevin, Daniel, welcome to The Follow-Up.

KEVIN BYRD Thanks for having us.

DANIEL RENDA Thank you. Lovely to be here, Armin.

ARMIN Excellent. Just so that our listeners can know who’s who, if you can introduce yourselves with your name and title, that’d be great.

KEVIN I’m Kevin Bird, I’m the Executive Creative Director at Instacart.

DANIEL I am Daniel Renda, Senior Creative Director at Wolff Olins.

ARMIN Kevin, we’re gonna start with you to set some context about this project. Now, I imagine that the pandemic is a big part of this answer, but what prompted Instacart to embark on a major redesign at this point in its relatively short history?

KEVIN The business itself, we celebrated our 10th anniversary. So Instacart has been around for about 10 years. You know, as a business grows and evolves, I think so must the brand identity. So, when we started a decade ago, we were just a grocery delivery company and

back then we chose a carrot as our logo because it was fun, it was friendly, approachable, representing food, which was that we fill our grocery carts. But if you fast forward to today, our business looks a lot different. We have transformed to become grocery first, but not grocery only. And I think that this is important evolution within the business. So from fresh produce to home goods, beauty, pharmacy, electronics, and office supplies, we serve so many different use cases that the original identity was somewhat lagging behind. And while it was highly recognizable, and reflective of where we had been, I think to really reflect this new reality while honoring our past, this created a moment where we needed to see an evolution, if you will.

ARMIN And had this thinking started before the pandemic? or was it because of the pandemic? or accelerated by the pandemic?

KEVIN Well, I mean undoubtedly most on demand delivery companies definitely... in some regards were a necessity during lockdown. I think the business had already been evolving and it was more about the brand identity catching up with where the business was going.

ARMIN Now I understand that you semi-recently joined Instacart. At what point in the process of this rethinking of the brand did you come in?

KEVIN I joined Instacart in June of 2021, and I think we began this process during the summer of 2021. I think we fully got into the engagement probably in August. Is that right, Daniel?

DANIEL Yes, Yes. Around August. I think we were in full swing in September.

KEVIN Yeah.

ARMIN So that's a good segue into Daniel. How did Wolff Olins get involved in this project?

DANIEL Well, it was through a previous client relationship. So Laura, now the CMO, knew Wolff from Uber. They felt like it was the time to take a serious look at their brand. As you said, the pandemic had accelerated growth, it created a crowded marketplace with a lot of copycats. The

brand was blending in. We were interested because they had all these new ambitions like Kevin said to be grocery first, but not grocery only. And they came with a new team that had a fresh perspective. We knew it was gonna be an interesting process from the beginning with the new client team. There was also new leadership, new CEO, new COO, and then this marketing team that was being built by Kevin and team in an organization that was previously product first. Right, product only. Really.

ARMIN What kind of initial conversations were you having with the team about the engagement that you're gonna have that started to define the direction that you're gonna take in?

DANIEL Yeah, pretty clear. There was a lot of great inspiration. I think there was the conversation around the emotion that we want people to feel from Instacart. So it had a reputation of just being transactional, wanted to have a deeper connection with peopl. As we said, the food first, but not food only or the grocery first, but not grocery only. So an identity that could be flexible and work for products and items beyond grocery. We thought a lot about flexible systems to convey all the possibilities of the product. You're thinking about a marketing experience, but you're thinking about a product experience. So that's two very different ends of the spectrum that you wanna bring together. So people feel like they're traveling through this very immersive brand experience. We had to support a range of partners, like Kevin mentioned, there's like Sephora, Best Buy, electronics, cosmetics, pharmacy. And then from there, the most polarizing conversation, the carrot combo, the keep or cut. There was a lot of love from leadership and the existing team for the carrot. They had grown with it literally. But the new team, Kevin, Laura, they were more open. They wanted to see what the possibilities were. You get one shot at these things and you wanna do it right. So you wanna make sure you look at everything. I mean, what do you think, Kevin?

KEVIN You covered a lot of ground there, Daniel, that I'd love for us to dig into a little bit more, but I think it's important to back up for a second. Just think about the momentum of the company. Here as a company, as Daniel was saying, that was very much invested in making a great product experience. And in many regards, there was a little bit of I would call maybe brand debt there. And the company decided through leadership that it was time to really dedicate to building a brand that people love. And I think that was a lot of what instigated this project as a whole. And I guess when we were going into it, there were a lot of discussions about, well, what are we looking for here? And Daniel said like, Laura Jones and myself were relatively new to the company as a whole, but we knew that we wanted a new brand identity to be somewhat modernized but have familiar connection to where we had been. The other thing, and I think what Daniel mentioned is we needed a brand identity that supported all four sides of our marketplace. So when you think about the business of Instacart, consumer facing is a big part of that four sided marketplace. Serving and delighting the customers and consumers is one thing, but also enabling our retail partners, which is an important sort of B2B aspect of our business. And amplifying consumer product brands. So you've got the retailers, the Krogers and the Publics and more. And then you've got consumer product groups that are the Pepsis of the world that want to see their brands. So when you talk to those audiences, what we were finding was that we needed to develop an identity that worked across that B2B side of things. And then the foresight of that marketplace is really our shoppers, the wonderful community that does the actual last mile delivery, does the shopping. Because of that, we felt it was important from the get-go for our identity, whatever direction we went, that it needed to serve all four sides of that. I think the other thing with this investment and dedication to building a brand that people love, we knew that we needed to recognize our past. And this I think was setting off to be more of an evolution than a revolution, if you will. But we wanted to embrace that vision of the future. And I think with any good brand, making an emotional

connection to the consumers, which we can talk about a little bit, was super important. So from the get-go, I was just trying to ground set us Daniel. These were the things that we were thinking about. The other thing is as you're evolving a business, a new identity can really be a signifier, not just externally of change and evolution of the growth and the vision to power every grocery transaction. It's a signifier to consumers. Oh, there's something that's evolving there, but it's also just as important as a signifier internally as the company makes a strategic investment into the brand experience side of the company. I would say we just needed some new clothes. We needed a new wardrobe really to support not just from the business perspective, but to be that signifier that hey, we're growing as a company. And that was kind of the impetus. And so when we reached out to Wolff Olins again, they were the perfect partner to strategically help place us there. And then being that lack of a better term, I guess like a Sherpa <laugh> on that, do we get there? Right.

ARMIN That's actually a first that we hear someone on the client side describing the agency, the designer relationship as a Sherpa, which is great. I think a lot of what we do, yes, it is creativity and it is strategy, but a lot of it is just leading the way, paving that path so that we can all get to where we want to get and eventually do it in a fun creative way. But also in short, it sounds like it was an easy challenge, just four little markets signifying change internally, externally sounds like an easy thing to do.

KEVIN Yeah, we'll have that back in a week. Thanks. Yeah,

ARMIN <laugh>. Okay. So Daniel, how do you start to unpack all of that at Wolff Olins? Meaning you have these conversations, you understand what the needs are, what is the first step that you take at Wolff Olins?

DANIEL We start every project with strategy and engagement. And I think the engagement part was really important. From the get-go we were building with this team, we became the core team. So we set up a structure that was going to allow us to build together. And then from

there, in this case we did more of a creative strategy. We did build on an existing strategy, which was a great big broad starting point of “share love through food.” We used that to kick off the creative territories and start exploring different ways to go. But I really think that engagement from the beginning, I think we connected and you don’t get that with every client. We try to make it happen. But I think when we met Laura Jones, and Kevin, and team we did see that they were also finding their way through the business. And I think to that point of being a Sherpa, we felt like we could be that connector. So I think throughout the process, and we’ll talk more about that later, I guess... we were really serving as that conduit between them, the new leadership, the marketing team that was being built, the product team, just bringing all of them together. Cause like Kevin said, brand is a rallying point. You gotta galvanize people around it and shared belief and belief is built through a process.

KEVIN One thing that’s kind of unique to where we are, I’m sure these engagements as a brand agency you guys do all the time, but we’re living in a remote sort of world and we’ve got new tools that have popped up that facilitate collaborative work from afar. So a lot of the work that you might have done, tissue sessions in person or pin ups and so forth as to defining that. In many ways we were enabled by a lot of the tools like Figma where we can all work in one space live, and talk at the same time. And I would imagine that with a lot of engagements like this, when you’re making a change at this level, you’re galvanizing to use Daniel’s words, a rallying point for all of the company. You have a number of different stakeholders. At the same time, I’m building this internal creative team, this function that when you’re building an internal creative team, they need to feel invested in the work that’s being made and that keeps them engaged in the long term. And I really loved how you guys took all of those parts and you guys helped us to organize those, whether it was interviews with stakeholders or work sessions with people that are not designers, for instance. And then even with the internal creative team, I felt like all along the way, it was a conversation that was happening very

actively and very live. I don't wanna miss that point because I mean when we talk about relationships between client and agency, for me it was really important that we had the right energy behind that, and engaging in the right way. And that's one of the proudest things that came out for me. The result of the work is incredible, but just the working relationship I felt, and this has gone on for the past year quite frankly. It's a model that I hope to follow no matter where I go from here. There were some aha moments, not just with what we were doing, but how we were working together.

DANIEL Yeah, it was like conversations instead of presentations.

ARMIN That's one thing that we've found as a recurring theme in these podcast episodes. Especially when we have someone from the client side and someone from the agency side talking together about the project, is that we're sort of used to this idea that design happens when the client asks for something, the design agency goes back to their office, they do stuff, they come back like, please clap for your favorite option, and then send us a check. But that is far from the reality nowadays, and I think the best results are coming from this sort of really great collaborations and synergy established from the beginning that allows both parties to be invested and come up with a solution that fits everyone involved. Let's start getting into strategy. I know this is mentioned in the case study, which it boils down to... forgive me, it's a shop and something.

DANIEL Shop and Savor.

ARMIN There we go. Yeah, I just was blanking on that second word. So how do you arrive at the Shop and Savor mentality? and how did that inform everything else?

DANIEL Shop and Savor is what we call a brand ethos, and that becomes a framework to guide all the creative decision. It doesn't compete with purpose, it works with it. It developed quite organically through the process. We started thinking about synergies at the same time with

strategy and design, and how we approach Shop and Savor. I think it goes very much in line with the ambition that we defined at the beginning. We started by asking what's unique to Instacart? It's an efficient product, yes... and a service, but it gives you back valuable time. So it's both tech and food. It's not one or the other. And I think that duality gave us this range and underpinning to create a brand system. So you have Shop standing in as a shorthand for the efficiency and the technology. Savor is the enjoyment. Savor isn't just about tasting something delicious, right? Savor is the feeling of relief, the feeling of spending time with your friends and family. So it extends into lots of different product offerings and you'll see throughout the system that informed all the creative decisions that we made.

KEVIN It's a wonderful truth. Our product is really about convenience, and speed, and being fast and efficient, what it does, the service that it provides. And I think that this framework was really defining for us because everything thus far, we've used this framework from developing typefaces to what decisions you make along the customer journey. Is this a Shop moment, which is about efficiency, get out of the way, let people do what they need to do? Whether that's checking out or those moments where it's about let's streamline, to this other end of the spectrum, which is really that sort of slow down, stop a moment, enjoy life, enjoy the moments, take that deep five second breath in, that five second breath out. Really celebrate what the product enables. Through its speed and efficiency, it gives you that time back with your kids or for you to enjoy life in other different ways. There's a truth there. And what's great about that is that creative framework or ethos as Daniel will call it, has become this North Star, this guiding light that becomes this filter in everything that we do. Over the course of our engagement, I really began to recognize how powerful that is when it comes to helping us to do all the things from product design to marketing. Is this about a clear and direct message that we need to communicate clearly? or is this a more about a softer moment that we can celebrate the enjoyment of life?

ARMIN So with Shop and Savor in place, Daniel, how do you start giving visual voice to that? What did the initial round of exploration look like? What did you show Instacart? If that was a process, I don't know if it was more organic than that, where you were working together on Figma developing stuff together.

DANIEL It was very organic, just like you said, Armin. We had the shared Figma that was always on. It was definitely not a linear path. We explored many different directions. We made a mess. <laugh>, we worked hand-in-hand for collaborative studio. We had these regular work sessions that Laura, Kevin were present and then the extended team. It was more like I said, conversations about where this could go, versus us going into presentations. And from there people could contribute words, references, sketches, test elements. I love that about Figma. I feel like I should be selling it right now, but you go in there, you could pull an SVG out and someone can try that in something they're working on. So we were actually looking at real life use cases at the same time as developing ideas. And then the way we think about creative territories in general is like we want to get into a range. So, it might be that it ends up being a combination of some of these territories, but what we want to really do is start to exercise the different polls of where this could go. So something might be a little bit more focused on the tech and efficiency. Something might go more into the enjoyment and the romance of the situation. But we wanna have that range and then we can go through that and decide where we want to go as a North Star. You can go in there and we could talk more about things we explored. Carrot versus not Carrot, that's more technical. But I think that the thinking there is really about getting that range and having the conversations about the big ideas.

KEVIN There was something along the way that I found really compelling. This is part of Wolff Olins bringing their expertise. I feel like we should discuss the carrot or no carrot.

ARMIN Yeah, let's just get it out of the bag. <laugh>.

KEVIN Yeah, we talked a little bit about why the carrot was such a signifier and I think through traveling through the organization and understanding people that had been with the company for a while, there was this internal cultural embrace of the carrot. From nomenclature that we as employees are “carrots”. And when you have 10 years of that, and while we’re not a heritage brand, there was kind of a moment where we were like, you know? this is actually very important that we begin to maintain that connection to our past and make this into an evolution. With that being said, what are the forms that can kind of take? That sort of aha moment with the carrot and the Shop and Savor? You guys were looking at other forms at which this could evolve, but you were also sort of speaking towards, it’s not just an icon you may find on an emojis or a carrot icon you might find in icon stock, right? There needs to be some sort of embedded meaning into that. So it’s not just a signifier of that. I can’t remember the example that you used, but even in the case of Apple, if you have a silhouette of an apple, that’s one thing, but if you take a bite out of it, that brings a meaning to it. And I think when you guys were starting to dig into, okay, how do we bring that meaning to the form that this carrot takes? That moment where you put the carrot into the ground and you simplified the form and then also metaphorically how the top of the carrot represents that sort of efficiency and Shop side of it. The bottom of the carrot representing that emotional Savor connection, started to codify that. I remember we were experimenting with different tops to the carrot and Daniel, this is all a Figma blurt for me, so step in. But we were okay. Is that a form of a heart? Is that a form of a... and when you guys stumbled on this once I stumbled, but when you guys explored this idea of it becoming an arrow that is directional, that really spoke to that fastness, that efficiency. There’s a very sort of aha moment eureka that this is about the ease of adding items to your cart. You took a form and you kind of embedded it with that meaning; communicating a range of offerings that arrow could sort of decouple itself from the logo itself and become this form that is about our connections to our retailer or directional, like in wayfinding <Daniel

affirmative>, I can't remember when that actually happened, but there was a phase there when we established that we want to entrust where we've come from, modernize our feel, and move us forward. We spent a lot of time at that level and I'm so happy we invested there because I think it exploded into what would eventually become a system.

DANIEL I think it's easy at the beginning of these processes to come in with a selfish goal of creating some new symbol, or redoing an identity from the beginning. And how we approach all our projects at Wolff, we believe that that listening and understanding allows us to make the best work. And we knew that the carrot, like you said, was embedded internally. We knew someone at the company had drawn it, one of the founders, employees identified for it. We also, from a brand perspective, we were looking at all these other ideas. Could we be a cart? which is more flexible? You could put anything in a cart, What a metaphor is for speed. Can you transform speed into the joy? We had letter-based solutions, but we saw so many pros for the carrot along the process. It already had some equity. It cues a good healthy feeling. It feels unique in this space. We felt like, oh, we could own green and orange. Who has a better license to do that? And a symbol for an application, especially with a long name Instacart, is really, really valuable. But like Kevin said, what was missing was the apple bite. That thing to discover that meaning that people can really start to say, this is what we're about, this is what we do as a company. I think we're at this phase that we can do some of that through just the forms, right? Classic corporate identity, but then we have the license with motion to bring things to life. And I think that's what you're talking about Kevin with the extensibility of how it just felt like, hey, I could add anything to this cart. And then when we went really bold and cropped it, you had something that was even more symbolic and I think surprises people along the way. That carrot could jump up at any time and reveal itself, but when it's in the ground, it really does. And without getting too heady, it really does feel like the future, like you're growing something. And I think we liked that broad vision of it versus it just being an illustration of a carrot.

KEVIN The Shop and Savor framework also came back to us whenever we started thinking about other elements of the design system, particularly when we engaged with Ryan on developing a custom typeface. It became very clear that we needed two typefaces. One that was about clarity of message, a sans serif that's meant for product and small sizes that embodied that Shop side of things. And then something that is a bit more luscious on the Savor side. And I just loved how once we kind of arrived at what is that marker, that representation, embedding it with meaning, then we started going through each of the different aspects of how you extend that. When we got to typography, it was really helpful to have that framework as a starting place.

ARMIN There's a lot to unpack <laugh> in this last couple of minutes, but yeah, I think one of the great things about the carrot is how your brain is able to complete the carrot. Even though you're seeing literally 10% of the carrot, the leaf part of the carrot, you know, cut it off, you take it away. So it's just like the fact that you can tell that it's a carrot just from the part where it connects with the stem. So it is, it's really a fantastic icon. I understand why it was so well loved on Brand New, and interesting how that then translated into the typeface. So let's start talking a little bit about those supporting elements. You talked a little bit about the typeface and having two different typefaces. What's interesting is that, yes, you have two, but they're one and the same in that it's a variable font. Let's talk a little bit about where that need came from. Why didn't you think like, Oh, let's just use an existing retail font. How do you bring in Ryan Bugden, typeface designer into the fold? What kind of brief did you give him? I know that from past conversations on the podcast about typefaces, we could do another 30 minutes on just the font, so let's try to keep it brief <laugh>.

DANIEL Absolutely. I could kick it off because I've had a long relationship with Ryan. He's not only a fantastic type designer, but he's also started as a brand designer. He has a great understanding of brand systems and how brands need to communicate. From the beginning, which I think

is gonna be interesting for a lot of people, had Ryan join the team to create typography ideas in parallel with directions. So we were actually making different alphabets for each direction. And this was great because the designers could test typefaces early, and between the people who are focusing on the core brand identity elements and the typographer, you're unlocking synergies in the directions. And then later in the process, we were actually able to create beta type faces for the Instacart creative studio to test, and the product teams to test. But from the beginning, going back to your question about the brief, the goals like Kevin already articulated, reflect the Shop and Savor ethos. So that led us instinctually to things that could have a range of personality. And I think the functional need for that was something that's equally great in product and marketing. And by starting with a typeface that has the same framework, the same basic metrics, you're able to keep the same expression, distill it down for product, it becomes really efficient, leads you through the process at the smallest sizes. And then for marketing, it could become a bit more voluptuous, it could express itself, and it could become really big at those display sizes. And then I think lastly, typography' is such a tricky one. You want to create something that could be timeless, but then also stay up and be the right amount on trend. The brief really was thinking about how we could achieve something that we hadn't quite seen before. The right cues from the past, but not nostalgic. I think in the food space, we've all seen a lot of these softer, nostalgic serifs, and we wanted to bring in that framework of the efficiency. So you'll see even in the typeface when it gets to its most expressive, and round, and curve, it has really straight cuts on the terminals. And that really gets at the synergy with the carrot. You see that in the volume of the bulb. You see that in the leaves where it has the rounds and then it has these really sharp cuts that are going through the arrow. That synergy, both from a conceptual standpoint and then from a functional executional standpoint, really started to become the brief for Ryan in how he would integrate into the team and create something like this.

ARMIN And then for you, Kevin, now that you've been working with this typeface for a little bit longer, how does it perform? How do you use it? What are the pros, cons? If any?

KEVIN When you look at what we do internally and all the different surfaces, we need to cover everything up and down the funnel of marketing—from the bigger brand moments like our Lizzo commercial, down all the way to the highly functional performance marketing type of stuff. We as a team have trained ourselves to identify what is most appropriate. When we need clarity, when we need to get a message across quick, and it's a social media post, then we're leaning on sans, right? And then whenever we are seeking out a more emotional connection with our consumers, or we need a little bit more jazz <laugh>, then we're using our Savor typeface, which it's got so much joy. It's a special place in my heart. I really love that typeface, the contrast in it. I think in motion too, it really comes alive. With a variable typeface, we're able to kind of quickly fatten it and, for lack of better words, fatten it up nice and thick, and nomnomnomnom, right? When we want to up that emotional side, we rely more on the serif. So that's kind of how we approach it. I think the other piece in here is layout structure. We also kind of introduce container system, which is where a lot of the color and energy comes through our photography, our illustration, which that container can provide some grounding or provide a stage. We try our best to keep type separate from image just strategically from a design philosoph. With marketing, campaigns come and go, right? There are ephemeral in nature. And so we need to be able to have a structure that holds this together. And I think it's done through this layout strategy that the idea of we have this vessel that we can feel it with anything. And that's really where the color and so forth comes from the brand. And then we've got what I would refer to as the setting the stage or the vessel, which is our cashew color and our kale color, which becomes the base brand signifiers. I'm not sure I answered your question quite right.

DANIEL Sounds like it's working.

KEVIN <laugh>. Yeah, yeah, yeah. I guess I also mentioned is like we've been trying to figure this stuff out for the past year, and so there's a lot of testing that's going on. Undoubtedly we've gotta make templates for emails, we've gotta make mailers, we've gotta do the hard work that the marketing demands, and then we've also gotta bring it into motion. And I think along that entire journey, I'm gonna go back to that word, Sherpa. Wolff Olins has been involved, I know for about six months we did a brand office hours. A signup sheet, we've got a new challenge that is ahead of us. Our art directors and designers would come to our brand office hours and we would tackle it together in Figma. This is kind of what I'm thinking... And then both feedback from the Wolff Olins team and from our brand experience team led by Adam Cote, we would sculpt all of that stuff together. So often, I guess this goes back to the working relationship, there was something unique about that as a process because our internal team were taking stabs at how applying it, we were gently guiding the sculpting of this. And that's really important for internal team members to feel that investment that they're contributing to the creation of the identity. Wolff Olins could have just mic dropped and delivered some guidelines. I think the fact that we extended that relationship, and this to me is the most important thing. You can have great guidelines and a great logo, and just replace logos everywhere is one thing, but then how do you embed the philosophy and the design approach in every touch point from extra large to extra small?

ARMIN What I like about the extra long answer <laugh> is that it does sort of go back to the original question about how is that typeface working for you in the sense that it is all about flexibility. And I think having those two extremes and spectrums of that typeface, being able to modulate different voices is sort of a way of working that has translated into how you design and how you develop new things. In that you have that flexibility to tackle anything that comes your way through that typeface, with the colors, through the photography, et cetera. So speaking of photography, whenever I have a criticism on the blog, I don't like to bring into the podcast because I don't like to put people

in the hot seat, but the one sort of negative criticism that I had about the project, or at least the project in the redesign introduction was the photography and the people shown. Nothing against the people, it's just like they're really cool people, they're really well dressed, they look like they're having more fun than I am on a regular basis, especially when I am thinking about groceries, <laugh>. So what was sort of the thinking behind that approach to photography? And maybe I'm answering myself in that, Kevin, you mentioned that campaigns are ephemeral, so this might be a way of bringing attention to Instacart at this point as it changes or like, Hey, Instacart is not just about convenience, it's not just about Shop, but it's also about Savor. So I'm gonna stop talking and let you answer.

KEVIN When we talk a little bit about the themes of transactional versus inspirational... the act of shopping for me fulfills not just functional needs, but emotional needs. It's a sensorial experience, it's recreational, it can even be hedonic. And we all know that consumers enjoy going to the grocery store occasionally. It fulfills not only a physical functional need, but there's an emotional need. The need for discovery, connection, enjoyment, something that's truly sensorial in its experience. As the online grocery industry continues to grow with more players, many of those interfaces start to look similar and feel same, feel generic. I think it's our aspirations, at least on the marketing side, is in order for us to build an epic brand that reflects our evolving business, we need to lean in to evolving from a transactional to an inspirational experience. And this is work that we continue to do. I don't think that this is done yet, and it feels like we're constantly evolving it, but it at least sets a North Star for us from both the product and from the branding perspective. So yes, the nature of our photography is more than I think what you're just seeing in these case studies because we have four sides of our marketplace. So those emotional connections that we want to build with consumer isn't a direct equivalent when we're talking to retailers or to our consumer product groups, which are more business. Our photography, we have several different tranches that begin to sort of address that. So it's

not like a one and done sort of thing. I think whenever it comes to photography style, consumer facing, we know that we want to be vivid and craveable, inspirational, embody delight and do that in unexpected ways. But when we're talking to our shopper community, for instance, it's much more important for photography style to reflect this work we do with that community and building transparency, and feeling real and connection. So just like our typeface, we have this range from the hardworking sans to the delightfully fun Savor serif typeface. We equally have that in the photography space.

ARMIN All right, I'm sold <laugh>.

KEVIN Okay. Yeah.

ARMIN Now speaking of inspirational and aspirational, you briefly mentioned the Lizzo commercial. I saw it recently when I was writing about the follow up post that we did. It's really this delightful brief story of Lizzo in her bathtub ordering stuff from Instacart and things just coming to life in her bathroom. Like the Takis coming to life. She's like, Yes, please, wherever that is happening, I want to be there in that world full of Takis. How did that come about? Is this something that we can expect more from Instacart?

KEVIN She loves Takis, that's why they're in the commercial specifically. I think the world is your cart is our boldest creative platform for Instacart from a marketing and brand perspective. And I think this campaign ushers in a new era of shopping inspiration by celebrating the promise of Instacart, everyday moments turning into these new worlds. I just found it a delightful concept. So this manifesto, this sort of "one cart, many possibilities," "the world is your cart", I think this campaign shines a light on the stories that our shopping carts can tell of our lives. So giving customers this exciting new idea that what's in my cart tells maybe a little bit about me. It was important for us engaging with Lizzo to make something that was honest to her, and her life. She brings that inspiration to reality in the bathtub. We have a 60-second film, which manifests that inspiration of the cart so much more than

a collection of goods. And so that's where we bring in that delight and that hyper real sort of ways that as she's adding things to the cart in her bathtub, the world around her is evolving and reflecting that. We worked with Droga5 and the director, Sam Brown, who just had such great ideas on how to sort of transition between scenes, both using practical effects, augmented with CGI. So as we're evolving that ethos of "the world is your cart," the world is your oyster, right? We're developing new in-app shopping experiences which enable people to see it and cart it. I mean it's in our name, cart, right? A new feature that enables pop culture, which we continue sort of develop. Part of us being part of the cultural conversation, or embedding us in culture is about engaging pop culture personalities, and retailers, and creators, to create collections of shoppable curated content. Not only did we have a commercial, but Lizzo also created a custom cart, a Lizzo cart if you will. When you went into the product experience, you could shop—I mean, it's sort of, whenever I was gonna say, when I crack open an Us Weekly and I want to know about the celebrities and where "they're just like me" and they're going shopping. I don't read Us Weekly, but metaphorically, that's what I'm kind of saying. There's a human sort of interest in, oh, what's in their cart and what does that say about them? Everything from a Swifter, to Takis, to Oreos, all of those things that she loves. And I think that's a really nice framework that we're furthering with other celebrities and other creators like Ciera and football players, TikTok and Instagram influencers, where we take the cart with the philosophy that it's one cart, but so many different possibilities. And what does that say about you? from a, not say, but how does your cart reflect that? I find it delightful, and it's a way for an Instacart to enter into the cultural zeitgeist.

DANIEL Just a testament to building that emotional value at a brand, giving it personality. And we said it with a bunch of these elements going from transactional to this aspirational. We were really excited to just see that foundation come to life.

ARMIN Sounds exciting, and I can't wait to see what else comes through Instacart in this manner. So in trying to sum up the conversation, Daniel, what was the most exciting aspect for you working on this project?

DANIEL I think it's two things. First, getting to work with a great client team that was willing to take some risks. It was a process. It felt hand in hand. I also was fortunate to have a very talented team with me that pushed and challenged throughout the process from engagement to strategy, and especially in design. It was just really great to work with that group. Secondly, for the project aspiration, being able to uncover the link between business ambition and design. I mean, that's really exciting. We could do lots of logos that we feel have embedded meaning, and sometimes they just don't translate and people don't get it. Being able to develop a creative strategy that's permeated the business, and hearing leadership say "Shop and Savor," hearing the product team thinking about, well, how do we think about our app experience through Shop and Savor? That ambition and being brought to life with strategy and design thinking is just why I do this.

ARMIN Perfect answer. Kevin, for you, on your end, the question's a little bit different. What is exciting about this identity moving forward?

KEVIN Well, it came at the right time for us. I've been building out this internal creative studio and equipping these team members with new tools and new ways of doing things to better their work. As a manager of creatives, I wanna be able to motivate them and engage them. The whole process of the entire design system being so flexible, I think was wonderful. Particularly wonderful for me, seeing it in action. I just have had moments in the past where we get delivered something and it's not practical. It misses on so many marks, and that flexibility that's embedded in the system has really been an enabling part of this. And like I said earlier in our conversation, that the way that we work together was kind of an eye opening moment, external and internal working hand-in-hand. So that was amazing. I think there's a lot on the horizon with how the Instacart is going to evolve. We've

made it flexible enough to adapt to even unknowns that we have at the moment, and I think that that's really exciting to me. It means longevity. It doesn't mean like a flash in the pan.

ARMIN Wonderful. Well, Daniel, Kevin, it has been great to talk to you and dig deeper into this carrot that you put in the ground, with a arrow that can take it in so many directions. It is a really enjoyable identity and it sounds like it has empowered and invigorated Instacart in a great way. So I can't wait to see what else comes. Thank you again for joining me on The Follow-Up.

KEVIN Thank you.

DANIEL Thank you Armin.

BRYONY Another great identity, another tale of a great relationship between client and designer that further blurs the perhaps-outdated model of "us" (designers) and "them" (client) that often creates an unnecessary division between in-house and external agencies. Instacart's and Wolff Olins' collaborative approach demonstrates that a shared Figma file where the two parties explore together and envision the potential the brand can be as impactful, if not more, than a single, mic-drop presentation from the designer and yield a more fruitful — or, in this case, root-vegetable-ful — result.

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