

EPIISODE 074

SLURPEE

IN CONVERSATION WITH

Adam Walko, Safari Sundays

AND

Marissa Eddings, 7-Eleven

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 74 of The Follow-up.

This will be our last episode for 2023 and we will be back on January 9, 2024 so we'll take this opportunity to wish you happy holidays and a safe and fun end to the year.

This week we are following up on Slurpee, a carbonated, frozen slush drink introduced in 1966 and sold by 7-Eleven and its subsidiaries A-Plus, Speedway, and Stripes Convenience Stores. It was originally invented in 1958 by Omar Knedlik, a Dairy Queen owner who created the machine for the product and named it ICEE. 7-Eleven licensed the invention — a soda machine and an ice cream freezer all in one that adds carbonation while freezing the mixture — under the condition that they use another brand name and that they are only sold at 7-Eleven. 7-Eleven named the product Slurpee, derived from the “slurp” sound that the drink makes when it is sucked through a straw, and was launched in two flavors, cherry and Coca-Cola. Nearly 30 flavors had been created by the 1970s and over 300 flavors — including limited-edition tie-ins with movies and brand name products — have been created over the years around the world where it is sold in more than 13,000 locations.

The project, designed by New York, NY-based Safari Sundays, was posted on Brand New on July 20, 2023. You can pull it up on your browser at bit.ly/bnpodcast074 that is B I T dot L Y slash bnpodcast074, all in lowercase.

This week we are joined by Adam Walko, Creative Director at Safari Sundays and Marissa Eddings. Senior Director of Brand and Digital Marketing at 7-Eleven.

In this conversation we slurp all the way down to the bottom of the cup — there is a metaphor in there somewhere — to find out how Safari Sundays and the 7-Eleven team uncovered a, quote, colorful world of imaginative joy, end quote, as the Slurpee brand evolves once more in its nearly 60-year history. We hear about the complexity of producing cups for more than 13,000 stores and how much that particular piece of the brand drove the timeline and launch of the project and we learn many more things along the way, like who was the muse behind the creative exploration, why the mascot has four hands and no feet, and what’s the favorite Slurpee flavor of each of our guests. As you listen to this episode make sure you have a Slurpee hand and do a shot (or a slurp) every time someone says “dollop”.

Now, let’s listen in as Bryony follows up with Adam and Marissa.

BRYONY GOMEZ-PALACIO

Many a roadtrip has been complimented by a frozen soda treat known to many as a Slurpee. First introduced in 1966, this accidentally developed treat has had a few brand updates since, but it wasn’t until recently that we saw the biggest evolution with a very clear strategy and market in mind, clearly defining a new era. In order to get the backstory, let’s welcome Marissa and Adam to The Follow-Up.

ADAM WALKO

Hello.

MARISSA EDDINGS

Hello.

BRYONY

Welcome.

ADAM Thank you.

MARISSA Thank you for having us.

ADAM Yeah, thanks so much.

BRYONY If you wouldn't mind introducing yourselves; name, title, where you're coming from.

MARISSA I'm Marissa Eddings. I'm coming from 7-Eleven and I lead our brand advertising media and in-store marketing teams as well as our in-house creative agency at 7-Eleven.

ADAM I am Adam Waco. I'm the creative director at Safari Sundays, a super small but effective branding agency in Tribeca—communicating and insights and design all the way through food and beverage.

BRYONY Wonderful. With Slurpee being a 7-Eleven staple over the decades, Marissa, if we can take a few minutes to establish why rebrand at this particular time after so much has happened.

MARISSA Like you said, Slurpee is an American icon and so we didn't take the decision lightly to change it. But if you look back over the last 58 years since Slurpee was invented, you'll see that the Slurpee brand has a history of evolving over time and so two things happened fairly recently that prompted our decision to look at the brand once again. For a little history, we acquired Stripes Convenience Stores, that's a convenience store chain in South Texas about six years ago, and then in May of 2021 we acquired Speedway Stores, which are based in the Midwest, but they span the country. And so with Slurpee now being available much more broadly than just 7-Eleven, secondly with a strong generational shifts that we're seeing with older Gen X starting to think about retiring soon, and Gen Z consumers really starting to enter the workforce and valuing different things than prior generations. We decided in 2021 it made sense to once again look at refreshing the brand to be more modern, more bold... so that we could appeal to that younger generation.

BRYONY Adam, how did Safari Sundays get involved with this project?

ADAM We've just been friends for a long time, as well as... we had actually just come off the back of not too long before that in 2020 evolving the coffee platform for the team. We felt it was really great success. We had some really fun things working on the cups, changing them to the OG to-go that no one really knew they were the first people to put coffee in a to-go cup.

Marissa and team came to us with I think a complicated ask at first. There was a lot of things changing. Gen Z may be remembering the same icon that we all knew growing up. What first came as a, how do we activate better against a new type of consumer? Became this evolved brief to actually tackle not just activation and comms, but branding altogether.

BRYONY There was no RFQ or anything like that, it was actually an evolving relationship.

ADAM Yeah, definitely.

MARISSA Yep, that's right.

BRYONY I find you in a unique situation in that you are a very large client and a small design firm. I would love to hear a little bit more about the teams behind each side. What are they're comprised of, and how many people are involved in the decision-making for the client, and in the creative for the design?

MARISSA Our marketing team runs very leanly at 7-Eleven. We have a brand advertising media team as well as a visual identity and packaging team, but both of those teams are only a few people. We keep decision making very, very tight. There's not a ton of people involved in that, to be honest. Just allows us to be more nimble, quick. We do have a team that specifically focuses on visual identity and packaging because we have so many proprietary products and private brand products, and so that team really shepherded the actual launch of the

rebrand—because cups are kind of first we got to get cups into 13,000 stores, it's a lot of stores, so that drove how we did that. On our side, even though we are a large company, we are able to operate pretty quickly on the marketing side just because of how small and how tight our marketing team is.

ADAM Safari is, I like to say super top heavy. Technically I would say we're 10-strong in Tribeca, but we are super global as well. Our founder is from Australia and currently resides in Sydney. Our head of strategy, we like to say is always on safari, which is part of our insights but currently resides in Europe and is helping us gain and gather as we have projects coming in on that level of insightfulness so, when a brief like this comes, we have the team ready to execute. But when we need certain help, say from a Grilli typography team or something like that, we go to the right experts to help us along the way.

BRYONY You mentioned when a brief like this comes our way, I am assuming Marissa, that you developed a brief to get the project started, and I'm wondering what key directives, or parameters, or guidance was in that brief?

MARISSA There are key three areas as we thought about parameters or requirements around the brief and what we were looking for. The first is that we had also done a brand strategy work for Slurpee fairly recently, and of course we wanted to make sure this was very grounded in that, and it was the natural next step out of strategy work to do the visual identity work. When we think about Slurpee and the brand, we think about how it transports us to a colorful world of imaginative joy. So Slurpee is all about creative joy and we wanted to make sure that we were interpreting that joy in a way that would appeal more to a younger generation. That was really the first, I think the key requirement or thing that we were looking for.

Secondly, we needed to make sure the design, while supporting and driving consideration amongst that design target of Gen Z was

obviously the priority, we can't alienate our core customer of course, and so that's kind of your older millennials, your Gen Xers who grew up with Slurpee as Adam mentioned, and so we want to make sure it still felt like the Slurpee they grew up with. It just felt like a more modern version of that and we wanted to make sure that we were still maintaining that relationship with our core customer.

Lastly, we felt like evolving the brand was the right natural thing to do. Again, we've been evolving it for the last 58 years, but we always want to ask for one option that's a really revolutionary approach. So, if we were going to just start from scratch or we're going to try something really crazy and take it in a different direction, what would that look like? And that really helps us to just ground ourselves on the right approach.

ADAM That was the long and the short of it. Yeah, give us something safe and give us something crazy.

MARISSA Exactly. Yeah.

ADAM Sometimes we do both at the same time. I would say that's how we began this trip because it was actually quite exciting when we went back to audit the brand. The brand lived in a constant eternal evolution, which is odd for such an icon... when you hear it or when you talk about it, it was quite ubiquitous, almost like a bandaid sometimes being confused with other brands, which was interesting. It was a huge opportunity for us I would say, to give the brand a brand mark, maybe? Because it always was a brand, but sometimes like I mentioned, people didn't know: was Slurpee, Slushy? or was a Slushy a Slurpee? Things like that.

Then at the same time, they had some amazing beautiful brand marks in the past that embedded in some of our older brains that knew it that we also wanted to relate back to and think about as we stayed anchored in what was rad about it, but give it the legs and the flexibility to communicate to a new gen, really.

BRYONY So it's not every day that you hear a client say, give me the evolution, but also the revolution. Usually that's something as designers we put on the table, but it's not a direct request. I'm curious to know for that first round of concept presentation, did you come in with just the evolution and the revolution, 27 concepts? What was that process like to get to that presentation, and what did you bring to the table?

ADAM A few things. Our process always starts with strategy. Yes, there was a really intense smart strategy built to begin with, but I think a lot of times words on a page are challenging when you're starting to build a brief design team. We always revisit and evolve, and think about, and present back to the senior teams our approach to the strategy and then how we will turn that into smart design strategy. Nuancing words is important when you're thinking about how to illustrate, or execute, or evolve, and I think that the most important thing for us was just to capture, and revisit, and revise the youth culture that it always talked about. And whether you're 48, 58, 15, everyone understands Slurpee, but I think giving it that flexibility to capture whatever inner youth is for you, was the opportunity we saw. We only did two options, but we went really deep into both of those—and the main goal in both options was to capture a different approach to not only the material and the amazing melted quality that disappears in a second, but also the youthful nature of enjoying or sipping a Slurpee and what it does to you.

And not only the classic thing, the brain freeze, but also we did talk about that word joy from the brief. We were calling it a jolt of joy rather than a negative term where, "brain freeze" is a complicated copywritten word, can only be used as an adjective technically, by the Slurpee team. We were looking to kind of evolve the thought into that jolt of joy and found two deep ways in where I would argue... both are close in, in graphic execution but flexibly went far out on how you could express it or where you could go with those two options, in very different ways.

BRYONY And what was the outcome of that first presentation, and how did you feel Marissa along with your team about the two options being presented?

MARISSA We saw the other option first because I remember thinking, this is awesome, I love this, and then you see the next one you're like, wait, this is more awesome! [laughter] makes more sense. They were both excellent options. I think they both gave us what we were looking for in terms of that evolution with ways to revolutionize some of the specific elements of it to be able to flex where we needed to and that was great. But our team really all gravitated toward where we landed and that's a good feeling, makes the decision much easier and it made it a lot easier for us to be able to go back to the team and provide our thoughts around maybe some things that could be adapted or shifted to meet exactly what we needed. Our team was really ecstatic with the color palette, and the contrast with the logo and the color palette, and so it was a lot of fun.

ADAM Rarely do our phase ones move beyond phase one. What you see out there today is just a small hair evolution of phase one, which was quite rare for us and quite brave of the 7-Eleven team. But I think it was a testament to how much we became obsessed over giving all the flexibility and variety that was needed, probably way over what you would expect to deliver in a phase one, but the depth to see it all, and the potential of it to come to life in so many different touchpoints, and activations, and media. We just got excited about the potential.

BRYONY What was the starting point from the creative side? Did you develop the mascot first, the logo first? What was it that, from there you were like, okay, we've got what we need in order to build out all of this flexibility and all of these touch points.

ADAM I think in the route chosen—which was the one was looking to connect with your inner youth a lot more—first and foremost, we established design principles for ourselves or considerations we call them, which are just pathways for the designers to explore, oh, how should we

go about evolving this thing to be the American icon in aesthetic that it was in sound and history to everyone's brains? And I think the first thing we definitely talked about was: can we give this thing a monogram or an icon? Can it have a short speak?

All of the brands that we love in American culture that work well, that last a long time do have those things and we thought it should have that. I think drawing upon some shapes and forms of the history of the logotype are one thing, but leaning into the fact that this thing has this swervy, swoopy, soft, melty quality to it, you couldn't help but just draw that into the logotype of the chosen route; and then inevitably, standing for the "S" and that little swoop of the dollop on the top of it, just felt perfect. It kind of all fell into place after that.

The mascot literally came out from that icon, and it was so bold and heavy, it could be filled with things, it could come to life. You could put the material inside of it, it can live in the material, or any material for that matter. Which was exciting when you start to see, not to jump to the conclusions, but what the brand team has done with it and what they've made after us delivering a toolkit, it's been really exciting to see.

BRYONY Is that part of what drew you to this particular concept, Marissa?

MARISSA With the dollop, that's something we talk about all the time. I never knew I'd talk about a dollop so much [laughter]. That is the iconic visual element within Slurpee that we focus on quite a bit and getting that just right... and this really helped us to think about it a little differently even because you not only see it in the logo, but we've even recrafted what the dollop looks like visually, and other elements as well to have that same visual look as the "S" in the Slurpee logo. For us, it was seeing those elements all come together and still maintaining equity we had built over the last 58 years. Taking that equity and creating something that feels fresh, and new out of it, was something that really, really appealed to us and that we knew would give it some longevity as well.

BRYONY It's common to see discussions on Brand New over the kerning, or over geekery whatnot, but there was a whole discussion in this particular case that drew my attention and that was: how does the dollop work? "I don't get a dollop. You get a dollop. Of course there's always a dollop". There was a whole discussion over, does a Slurpee have a dollop or not, and is it big, is it small? It fascinated me to no extent and it was very entertaining how geeky we can get over dollops, so I can imagine the amount of hours spent on getting it exactly right.

ADAM I think the short answer is yes. Does it happen fast and does it disappear? Yes, that's the lightness of the material. I think that's quite different. Marissa and I were talking about the other day how much more carbonated and light it is, but it's also thinking about it in terms of concept rather than just the literal.

That conversation is the great example of, it spoke to everyone in a way that they wanted to think about it more. Is it the frozen dollop? or the soft serve dollop? Either way, it speaks to dollop and that's the most important point that this thing is soft and swervy. We did obsess over it [laughter]. We started going into, well, what does this thing look like in 3D? And that meant how does it look like from every angle, because we did revise the dollop itself for visual necessity.

And I'm quite obsessed that things are actually what they are. So it's funny you say that because we do hope that there is an evolution to the cup top where we then formulate the structure to then emulate as you fill the cup, 'cause you should always fill with the top on—that's a pro tip. That the dollop would become the shape and the mold of the top of the cup so that when you fill the new plastic top, it would make the new dollop, if that makes sense. So that's an exciting evolution to come, I hope.

BRYONY Next summer road trips.

ADAM Yes.

BRYONY My kids are always asking, it's like, where's the next gas station?

ADAM Exactly.

BRYONY You also took the dollop into Styles, the mascot. I would like to know why styles got styled the way it did, and why he has four hands, no feet?

ADAM [Laughter] To hold more slushies! I mean, it's the obvious answer. Who needs legs? You need more hands! And he can walk on his hands, so that's no big deal.

Styles didn't come from nowhere, there was a secret addendum to the brief where there had been a character that came out of a small activation where they sent a Slurpee to space. I think that was like two years ago, or a year ago, I'm not sure.

MARISSA 2021. Yep, right before we started this work.

ADAM A kooky alien Slurpee cup character, I think they were calling Fred was lingering around and riding skateboards on stickers and things like that, and the team asked us, Hey, what do we do about Fred? And we were like, who? We loved Fred. He's definitely fun as a Cyclops cup from another world, but what we found was there could be a bigger potential to a mascot that had a brand relationship that was easy, and could be recognizable as we're evolving logotypes and things, but also could become the mischievous different voice for the brand team whenever they wanted to not say it from their mouth, but from some other mischievous perspective. Coming straight from the "S" just felt easy and inevitable that the thing could come to life with four arms and two eyes. The rest kind of works by the character and the stylization you give to those elements and the yes, obsessed and always trying to steal another Slurpee was just the inevitable. We even got really excited and again, we went overboard and animated the character right away, even before they were probably prepared to see the thing move. But we do have some really fun excerpts that we've yet shared to anyone yet of how Styles walks and slurps, et cetera.

BRYONY Well, you can't reveal everything at once, but Marissa, I see you smiling and nodding a lot. I want to hear your perspective on Styles.

MARISSA We love Styles. It's a fun way to bring it to life and to your point, we didn't want to launch everything at once, so we launched the vis ID first with the logo, and the colors, and some of those elements... and we really thought, what's the best way to introduce Styles to the world? Because we want to make sure that the "S" has a little bit of that recognizable factor to it.

Social media is the place to do that, right? And that's where we've really started to let him come around and take over with an Instagram and starting with our close friends on Instagram—giving them that first sneak peek, because they're our close friends, we want them to get to know him first. And we continue to roll him out in different ways and he's a sneaky little guy, he'll just show up in places. We launched a music video and we're like, how do we get him to show up in some of the animation of the video? It's kind of an Easter egg. So it's been fun to play with him and to think about how we can incorporate him, and use him, in a way to engage with our consumers even more deeply, and give them a connection point that in some cases maybe they see him or they recognize him and feel a little bit special that you were the one that saw it. We'll continue to evolve him obviously, and think about... or evolve the use of him, I should say. He's kind of perfect as he is, so I don't know that we need to evolve him, but apparently he walks in different ways that we haven't seen yet, so I'm excited to see that, but he's going to be a fun character for us to play with.

ADAM An ongoing cartwheel. Just picture it that way [laughter].

MARISSA I love it. I can't wait.

BRYONY In terms of social media, it seems you have a layered communications. On the one side you have from the 7-Eleven, then you have Slurpee, then you have Styles who's coming in disrupting things. How did you

develop the language, and how much has been done internally versus Safari Sundays saying, this is your plan, this is your strategy for social media?

MARISSA We have had a Slurpee social presence for years, so the Slurpee social media platforms and channels have existed. A lot of the conversation was, okay, how much do we retain what we've been doing versus what do we change, and shift, and what's been working, what hasn't? How do we start to incorporate this? Actually scaled down a lot of the content that had been on there. We're like, that's a refresh. Let's make sure that we're really only keeping the content that still feels somewhat aligned to the newer visual identity. So that's one element. And then if you look at the feed, I mean you see the colors, you see the Slurpee logo, you see the "S". We want that to be really prominent, and to really be the forward thing that you see when you go to one of our social media channels.

We still also create a lot of more social content creator type content, jumping on trends, things like that. But obviously we want to make sure we're doing it with the cup first and foremost, and upfront, and flavor upfront. Those things have all still been really, really important. One thing we haven't done as much is think about a voice from Styles perspective, and I think that's where we can continue, again, to evolve how we use Styles in social media, but we've definitely gone really far forward with the vis ID and the colors, which are just so vibrant and so fun to look at, that we incorporate them wherever we can.

BRYONY Any production challenges with the colors?

MARISSA [Laughter] Well, yeah... cups! Cups are always a fun challenge. When we started to produce thoughts, we said, let's step outside of just the colors of the cups you can actually get in the store and let's think about some of the other colors that we want to make sure, like pink! I mean the pink is just amazing and vibrant. So yeah, lots of days wrapping cups with pink that we were able to use for production, and

making sure those colors register on screen the way that you want them to—all the typical production challenges you have when you have really unique special colors.

BRYONY Not challenges you have with beige [laughter].

ADAM We got pretty lucky, not totally strategic, but really lucky that there was actually some very close to the RGB level greens, and pinks, and blues, that we wanted. I mean they're quite vibrantly primary. The green was my scariest moment. You've been working on something vibrantly in RGB and you're about to go in and make sure that you can find that color, and it was there! Really happy with the color green that came out on the cups. I was quite impressed. The material is not traditional. It has this soft cold material touch to it. It's not a traditional paper. We're really worried about that, but the 7-Eleven production team is diligent about that, and we had a lot of conversations and wrappings back and forth about placement of things—both legal and non—to make sure that everything came out really beautifully.

MARISSA Our teams worked very closely together on that, so we were able to get the cups in stores nailed pretty easily.

BRYONY The case study included a whole bunch of merch, some of it that I was like, [laughter] "Ooh, I want that. Ooh, I want that one. Oh, I want that one!" And thinking of people who would appreciate several of these. Are these actually going to be in production or are already in production? And not all of them obviously, but is this something that you're actually going to produce? Or is it just wishful thinking on my part?

ADAM They made 10 times more than what we... we always promote and propose in guidelines and in the case study. They went above and beyond, just another attribute of that team. When they love it, they went for it. I mean, the summer launch, we didn't even think about half the things they came out with. Even the collaborations, and the gold jewelry work and things like that. It was fantastic to see. So, I

would say, what do you want? Because I think it's all been made and then some! [laughter] Not to put words in your mouth Marissa, but you might have to send some things over.

MARISSA My chance to plug 7-Collections, our merch site, you'll find a lot of Slurpee merch there that Adam was just referring to. But we'll continue to create new merch for Slurpee, it's definitely one of our big collections. I think one of the more recent ones was actually a lot of pet merch with Slurpee all over it for National Dog Day.

BRYONY It is such a vibrant color palette and it is just fun. With teenagers at home I can just see how things would fit in the perfect little nooks. Now, it seems like the whole process was fairly seamless, but I'm wondering if there was a moment, be it in the strategy or the first concepts... where along the way that excitement reached a new level where you're like, I just saw this, I heard this, I felt this, and I can't wait for the end.

MARISSA Going back to the brief, we didn't brief them that we need a specific identifying element like the "S", so having that S-monogram component, for me it was that moment of: why hadn't we thought of that? Why wasn't that in the brief? Why didn't we do this previously? I would say that's one of the big differences as you think about that evolution of Slurpee over time. We've never had a monogram for Slurpee and it just makes sense, especially the "S" with the dollop shape, as we were talking about earlier. So for me that was definitely the moment of, this is it! And there's so much more we can do here.

ADAM We were excited from the beginning. Oddly enough, we were always excited and there was a pause and we were like, is this thing going to get made? In between waiting for some decisions and things to be made. I have to say the way it was launched in campaign really rejuvenated, because we had worked on it for so long and then delivered the toolkit, and then there's obviously like, okay, you wait for things to happen, but when it launched, it was really exciting to see where other creative teams took the elements.

Rarely, I'm sure does anyone say that, but it was really fun and it actually makes me want to do more and work more with the brand now seeing other teams work on it, and how they've launched off into new executions and new developments. Honestly, the most exciting point. I always knew how flexible it was because that's what we were intending, but when you see it come to life in commercials, and hip hop music videos, and jewelry and et cetera, doggy bags, all these things, you're like, oh my gosh, now I know what we want to do next. And pitches are coming, get excited for next summer, and maybe throwing some new things in the mix and pushing Marissa and team to do some crazy things, hopefully.

BRYONY Sounds like they might be game. The broad range of applications is not something you see every day. Hip hop videos and doggy bags usually don't go with the same client. To have a better understanding, what was that timeline of the entire project?

MARISSA We kicked it off in late 2021. I want to say we were probably final and done in terms of the actual visual identity by mid to late '22.

ADAM October, if I recall, we delivered the guidelines in 2022.

MARISSA Yeah, yeah.

ADAM With some breaks in between in the summer.

MARISSA The cups are what take the longest. I mean designing the cup, to Adam's point, getting that color just right, working between the teams and then getting them printed, and distributed, and getting scale in 13,000 stores. It's a long timeline. Once we had that vis ID around October, we knew we'd be able to get cups into most stores by about May. That was what drove our actual launch for all of the elements.

BRYONY All right, so about a year and a half [affirmative].

ADAM Just about... pretty fast actually, when you think about it.

BRYONY For the scale of the amount of stores, and touchpoints, and all of that, yes. But I think it's insightful for our audience to understand how a project like this is applied and how long it takes, not only from the strategy and toolkit development, but then yes, there's a big pause as things are being produced with various vendors all over the country or overseas, and then you have to get it all to 13,000 stores—and that does not happen overnight for sure. Marissa, what kind of feedback have you been getting on the rebrand both internally and externally?

MARISSA It's all been really positive. Our employees love it. Our team is obsessed with it. We probably buy more of the 7-Collection merch than anyone. We love it. And to Adam's point, I think it's just really come to life in the music video and spots that we have. All really positive feedback from all of the different elements where it's been released.

I have an interesting, funny little story that happened to me specifically. I happened to be at a photography studio randomly for another reason, and mentioned to the woman there that I worked for 7-Eleven and she said, "are you responsible for the new Slurpee brand?" And I said, "well, actually I am on that team". And she was like, you guys are a celebrity around here. We talk about it all the time, and I think they happen to have an out-of-home unit where the cup is first and foremost with our dollar Slurpee promotion near the office where they work. And they had been talking about it all summer and they had been going and getting Slurpee drinks. That had been a topic of conversation, and so she was so excited to be able to tell the rest of the team that I had been in there.

And hearing that feedback in the wild is always really exciting and really energizes you. But across the board we're seeing really great results in terms of how it is driving the brand, especially as you think about the brand being now in Speedway stores, which is fairly new for Speedway customers. We're really seeing a lot of positive reactions there as well.

BRYONY And you're getting those reactions across the generations, both your longstanding customers and the new onboarding customer.

MARISSA Yeah, that's right.

BRYONY Mission accomplished.

MARISSA Yes.

ADAM Wow.

BRYONY Adam, from this particular project, are there any learnings or processes that you're taking into future projects as a firm?

ADAM Most of it is how we go about doing everything and we just got a little more lucky than usual. One thing we tried for fun this time around—and maybe it's just the nature of some of the strategy we were briefing in wise—was looking for a muse for the design ideas, which is quite rare for us, I would say. It's hard to codify a person or a character enough depth or whatever to celebrate in a way where, "Hey, what would X do?" In this case, we're challenging the team to go into their own youthful natures and character, but also be able to flex across any type of perspective as a person and who does that so well. And it just was weird that Tyler, the creator, became like a muse for both design ideas for very different reasons. One, the fact that he is just the most amazing kid at heart and also makes his dreams become realities. And the other side of the spectrum, which is he's a persona in high-depth that flexes across every personality possible. And those two things were things we were looking for in the design ideas. It was a rare last minute thought. As I was building the brief with the team, you find visuals as reference, and this was the first time we were like a person could be a reference to spark design idea, which I thought was quite interesting and very new for us as a team. We probably will try again.

BRYONY And for both of you, what was the most satisfying aspect of this project?

ADAM Truly hands down, it is the partnership and relationship with 7-Eleven. The bravery in bold swervy letters is definitely what the team is. And

yes, we're very opinionated and I guess we can be persuasive, but not without a great relationship and also people who are willing to take the journey with you. We like to tell stories and they're along to the ride in a way that I've been really inspired from a brand team, maybe the most ever, honestly.

MARISSA The satisfying piece was how well the project went, how easily it came together, how natural the work felt for what we were trying to achieve. And to Adam's point, the relationship I think drove so much of that. I mean, on the emotional level, it's seeing the work. I live in Dallas, we have out of home here, and it's driving down the street, seeing me out of home, seeing these things out there and knowing that we've been able to create something really exciting and new for this American icon. This brand that everyone knows, people grow up with, people love, and that we did it in a way that people still love it and newer people are loving it. That's really satisfying because at the end of the day, that was the purpose and it's been a really positive outcome.

BRYONY So I sense a lot of excitement as to what comes ahead. Where do you picture Slurpee being in about, say, five years time or where do you want it to be? [laughter]

MARISSA Good question. Well, I mean I think going back to the reasons we did this, it's broader than just 7-Eleven now, it's in Speedway stores, it's in Stripe stores. I think it's how do we continue to grow this brand in a way that is independent from our master brand and from the stores themselves. And I think this refresh and this rebrand gives us that latitude. It gives us the ability to be able to do that.

That's kind of where I see it going. It'll be a continued expansion of what we've already continued, or what we've already been building. I can't speak for our merchandising team, but I think the brand itself lends to the idea of being outside of convenience stores as well.

ADAM We purchased... maybe on the second week of the process into design when we were getting excited, we bought Slurpee-dot-TV. So that's where it's going [laughter].

BRYONY Ooooooh.

MARISSA That's where it's going. Yeah. Slurpee TV for sure.

ADAM Which was part of one [inaudible].

BRYONY So Marissa, a brief is coming your way.

MARISSA I know, right?

BRYONY The tables will be turned! No, I think you have done a wonderful job, both of you from your roles in, indeed bringing a jolt of joy into 13,000 stores, into 58 years of legacy, and have positioned this brand into what the next 58 years are going to be. I asked about five, but I think that you are positioning what the next 50 years are going to look like. While there'll be other brand evolutions I'm sure in that timeframe, this is a stepping stone into a new era of what that might be, and I'm really excited to see where it will go—what videos and merch items are going to end up having the Slurpee logo on it. And I am not looking forward to my shopper spree [laughter].

ADAM Thank you.

BRYONY Thank you so much for joining me today and for sharing all of the nitty gritty of this process. I really appreciate it.

ADAM Thanks for having us.

MARISSA Thank you so much.

ARMIN It was fun to hear how important it was to capture a sense of joy in this project and how the two parties involved achieved it in unexpected ways, from the dollop-shaped monogram to the mascot to the merch with so much potential still left to explore and deploy across an audience that spans Gen Zs, Millennials, and Gen Xers. No easy feat

but one that can sure be achieved one brain-freeze — nay, one jolt of joy — at a time.

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