

EPISODE 083

MANISCHEWITZ

IN CONVERSATION WITH

Lisa Smith, Jones Knowles Ritchie

AND

Shani Seidman, Kayco Kosher Food Brands

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 83 of The Follow-up.

This week we are following up on Manischewitz, the leading brand of high-quality, kosher, traditional Jewish foods in the United States. Founded in 1888 by Rabbi Dov Behr Manischewitz, who started a small matzo bakery in Cincinnati, OH, and invented the process to automate and mass-produce the confoundingly satisfying flatbread, the company eventually became the world's largest matzo manufacturer. Manischewitz remained family-owned through 1991 before being shuffled around by a few different owners, until its kosher products were purchased in 2019 by Kayco, the leading Kosher food distributor in America. Today, Manischewitz offers a wide range of kosher products that range from the original matzos, to matzo ball mix, to gefilte fish, to cookies, to oils and vinegars, to noodles.

The project, designed by the New York, NY, office of Jones Knowles Ritchie was posted on Brand New on March 27, 2024. You can pull it up on your browser at bit.ly/bnpodcast083 that is B I T dot L Y slash bnpodcast083, all in lowercase.

This week we are joined by Lisa Smith, Global Executive Creative Director of Jones Knowles Ritchie; and Shani Seidman, Chief Marketing Officer of Kayco Kosher Food Brands.

Unlike the most recent two episodes with projects that had really tight timelines, in this conversation we hear about the opposite situation with a project that kicked off in 2021 and that went through a long period of strategy, a long period of design exploration and refinement, and a long period of implementation and development, waiting for the right time to launch and announce the change, which eventually coincided with this year's passover. We also get a glimpse into how the energetic dynamic between the Manischewitz and JKR teams — especially in that first round of design exploration meeting — was reflective of a rambunctious family dinner and how, in turn, that proved to be the perfect visual and verbal energy that this brand needed to capture a broad new audience while staying true to its existing audience, one matzo at a time.

Now, let's listen in as Bryony follows up with Lisa and Shani.

BRYONY It has been my experience that the best way to get to know a culture, be it my own or another, is to sit around the table loaded with food and the people who share their stories and their plates. So how do you package and market mass produce staples for the current consumer that ranges from say... your college student all the way to your great grandmother's cousin's wife? Manischewitz recently tackled this question and today we get to know the details.

Lisa and Shani, welcome to The Follow-Up.

LISA SMITH Thank you. Excited to be here.

SHANI SEIDMAN Thank you, Bryony, so excited to be here. Thanks for having me.

BRYONY Absolutely my pleasure. Now if you can just introduce yourselves and who you're representing.

SHANI Shani Seidman, CMO of Kayco, which is the parent company for the Manischewitz food brand that we all know and love and that we're here to talk about.

LISA I'm Lisa Smith, I'm the Global ECD at JKR based in New York, even though I have a British accent [laughter].

BRYONY Wonderful. It's good to have you back, Lisa. Now Shani, let's take a few minutes to establish the history of Manischewitz since its creation in, you know just 1888 or somewhere around there in Cincinnati, Ohio all the way to today being very brief. I know this is a very big ask, but just to get an understanding of why you ended up choosing to rebrand at this point in its history.

SHANI Yeah, I mean it is a tall order to go through the whole history, but basically Dov Behr Manischewitz started the brand in 1886, like you mentioned, started with a square of matza or around matza at that time for his community. He saw a need in his community to make Matza for Passover and he made it. That's really how the brand started in Cincinnati, Ohio—immigrated from Eastern Europe, brought with him all the customs of Jewish culinary customs and what started as just the matza evolved into what we see now and along the way over the past 135 plus years, introducing authentic traditional Jewish dishes, ingredients for his community, and beyond. There was a point where you need to scale-up a handmade matza and Dov Behr Manischewitz patented the first machine matza. There was business scaling happening in 1910 already.

Then we had the shelf-stable gefilte fish, which gets some mixed reviews from time to time [laughter]. That happened beginning of the 1920s, 30s, and along the way these innovations for Jewish food happened with the brand, and now we sit here now in 2024, and we really felt like the time was ripe because... first of all, we always had a core consumer and that was loyal and we had a base. We saw that as time went on, the core consumers, their grandchildren, we wanted to reach out to them who may not necessarily be buying exactly the

same way that their grandmothers bought or cooking the same way that their grandmothers or grandfathers cooked. So we really felt the need to expand the target consumer to both in our core audiences grandchildren and their friends who may not be Jewish at all, and we really felt like the time was right for introducing Jewish culture through food.

That's how we represent Jewish culture. There's a lot of avenues you can get to Jewish culture. For Manischewitz, the way we owned it was through the categories that we were in through food. We approached JKR with this enormous challenge because it's an old brand. We want to hold onto the roots that I just mentioned, and the connection, and the nostalgia that the brand brought, that familiarity, but we wanted to present it to a different consumer and to broaden our categories and consumer base. So we approached JKR with this looking at packaging through the years work together on what we see now.

BRYONY I do understand the relationship with food and culture. It is something that's very embedded in my own personal history, but Lisa, JKR is no stranger to this kind of project [affirmative]. The scale, the size of the client, the history, all of these things. I'm curious to know what was the first reaction within the firm when you got the call and the possibility of this project?

LISA You are right. We're quite familiar and I guess that's what attracted Shani and the Manischewitz team. It was a really interesting challenge 'cause t's a brand with a billion dollar name that's been going over 130 years. People that know it, really know it, but yet being famous, but also the sort of limited cultural relevancy was in decline. People that are keeping kosher aren't as strict as they used to be. The aisle has kind of got smaller. It's also got very, very beige. There was a huge opportunity to reinsert a level of energy and attention back to this category, back to this food that honestly is having its own kind of cultural moment. Anyway, some of us are based in New York City, but just restaurants and the remixes; I heard of a Jewish fusion Japanese

restaurant the other day. The things that are happening culturally on TV in terms of *Marvelous Miss Maisel*, all of those things, there's a huge found love and attention on a community that in some ways the food was declining, but the culture is rising, and how can we take this opportunity and really put this food brand that people that know and love it, I mean, I'm getting sent so many texts by people over their Passover showing me pictures [laughter] of the packaging going, this is a staple every year on our table.

Just so excited about sort of re-energizing of such a legacy brand. It has to be handled with care. When you've got something that's 130 years old too, that it's means so much to people that already know, but how can you shake it up so that we can invite more people into the category in the most authentic way to Manischewitz and its heritage.

BRYONY Yeah, you don't want to shake it up so much that you throw everybody away from it.

LISA No, no, no.

BRYONY They can't even recognize what it stood for. So from both of you, I would love to hear the foundation of getting started. What were those first weeks of the project? What are the conversations? What was set as foundational or the starting point that was key to really get into the solution?

SHANI I remember... the way beginning... where we went really core of the brands. Lisa just mentioned we identified this brand that's embedded in a culture, Jewish and American culture, and we recognized the recognition was stronger than itself. And we wanted to get that gap smaller. We had a discussion with Jewish versus kosher in the way way beginning. What's the core of the brand, how it started versus how it's going kind of thing. It definitely started as a Jewish and kosher brand and it continues to be. What is it's core? We realized the relevancy is the Jewishness—still kosher, still has that seal on it, but the relevancy

in how we present ourselves to the world is that it's a Jewish brand. That was the first thing that we identified together.

I actually remember that first meeting and a lot of the first few meetings was also getting to we know each other, so the JKR team and the Kayco team. It was a little bit of a microcosm of our target. From the Kayco perspective we had a very dynamic team from our CEO Morty Herzog, Since Kayco brought the brand, had the idea to do this in the right way, went to JKR, he really knew they were up to the task. We had a whole team that was very dynamic. We were sitting around a dinner table loud interrupting each other, very involved from the beginning and JKR's team as well. Kind of a microcosm of the demographic maybe we were looking to attract, and we had these discussions about how everyone saw the brand. I grew up in a kosher home. I know Manischewitz from that perspective. Someone else grew up in New York but not Jewish and they have a perspective of Manischewitz in that way. We were talking about how there's so many ways to come at the brand. When we identified the lane where we had the most authenticity—before we even got to design, we really did some soul searching—and we figured out where we had to, again, the most authenticity and the most history, but kind of like a runway to...

BRYONY Take off into the future, [yeah] into what the brand would be and—

SHANI And kind of picking up on these cultural things that are happening with cultural pride, the deli renaissance in New York City... But picking up a few things along the way and figuring out where our position is and all of that. Lisa could talk from a design perspective when they came to Kayco looking at our archives and seeing where the brand has been and where it has been in a design perspective that obviously came at the same time. This is part of our legacy as well.

LISA That's a perfect segue because really from our perspective, we always obviously look at the company and the history. When you go to Kayco's offices, they have these mini glass cases of the archival

history. Again, we're talking about 130 years and the packaging has evolved and other amazing little tidbits of someone landed on the moon, they said Manischewitz—there's just so many fun moments in culture as well as how the brand has evolved in terms of look and feel. So it was really important to understand the company, to interview a lot of the people there because it's such a dynamic team. It means so much to different people. But we also started to look more into culture, so we started to look in terms of we talked to the owner of Kitchen Arts and Letters and the co-founder of [unintelligible]. We wanted to understand how Jewish food sits in culture right now, how it's perceived, how's it changing the relevancy, and I just think that was really exciting.

We also spoke to a range of consumers across sectional consumers of different age groups, Jewish food brought up, and kosher, and non-kosher, but then also other people that are more food curious. So that's where you come into JKR having also a very dynamic team of a mix of backgrounds, but this is meant to appeal to people that are more open to food curious. Shani and I always talk about it, you might have tacos on a Tuesday night and you have matzos with this. The way we're mixing food and culture no matter what our backgrounds are, is super interesting and so that's where we started to unlock this brand and the range of foods are just so much more relevant to such a wider audience that are open to trying different things. So it was very like, yeah, the consumers, the category, culture, and then obviously understanding the company and heritage.

That's where we've really got to the essence of this idea of "Savor our tradition", embracing where Manischewitz has come from and the generational impact it's had, but also inviting and welcoming others into this world of Jewish food and it has this inviting confidence. And then I think Shani started to talk about the spirited personality working with this team as she was explaining the makeup of the team. Even on the Manischewitz side, it is so spirited, just like a dinner table.

That's why you've got the energy and the typography and it feels like the cacophony of a conversation happening, because everybody is just so spirited and then we had to make it a whole ton, a lot more craveable and delicious and obviously that's where my past and all of BK [Burger King] or all of these other types of food brands. It's just the food, it was coming off very beige, not as delicious as actually the food really is and how people put it together and how they make it or prepare it. Just really bringing back that craveable comfort.

BRYONY To get a better understanding of what this phase looked like and overall the timeline of the project. It would be good to know when it started, how long you spent on the strategy part and then into the creative, when it ended. I know it continues production wise and it will not stop internally, but the handoff.

LISA We started back in 2021 I think is when we first started talking and the strategy phase, I mean we try and be kind of smart with a timeline. It can go anywhere from eight to 12 to 16 weeks, but we wanted to make sure we were very thorough with our research on this one, so we didn't just use our guts and our instincts. We did do all that research that we shared and then we did do quite a few rounds of creative. We did explore over another, again, like 12 to 16 weeks, different rounds of creative and we went back at one point even further back to the drawing board and then even started again. So we did two very big rounds to really make sure we were encapsulating it and we did multiple directions.

Again, I remember being part of the team, we were building Miro's, so some of that was still hybrid and remote and how we're all working and all of that. Some of it was in the studio. I remember the meetings at Kayco where we'd pin up all the territories, pull apart different bits that everybody loved and not to make a camel, but really to encapsulate the energy. It wasn't as purist as "you have to buy this direction, this direction or this direction". It definitely became honestly tidbits of each. It came little bits of all the different directions that

became the amalgamation and it was very generative and then got more reductive and then more reductive until we really nailed in what each asset and each element stood for and stands for.

We did that probably over a 12 month period, but we also had a moment where we had completed a lot of it and then we paused whilst one, the Kayco team did a lot of the rollout internally of all the packaging. They've done a fabulous job in extending it across a lot of the lines and they're working on innovations; and two the right time to launch this and roll this out without wasting so much packaging. I'm working with more and more brands where we're very conscious. Everybody comes into it, let's do it fast, let's get it done, but actually logistically the challenge around the packaging, the materials, trying not to waste too much, watching the change over times at shelf, allowing for a little bit of a messy period because one, you don't want to waste food, and two, we don't want to waste materials anymore either. It was hugely wasteful.

BRYONY Yeah, if you have 5,000 packages, you don't want to put those in the trash.

LISA Exactly. So with this, there was over a year of holding, but that gave the team plenty of time to roll it across everything and also time to really plan when is the right moment. There's never a right moment obviously for a rebrand, but coming up to Passover, timing felt right and most authentic to again the core consumer and the audience.

SHANI Lisa what you're saying is a hundred percent correct. The brand has over 200 products, so we had to be very strategic about what category we go after first, we change over first. Me and the buyers are very tight right now. I'm calling them all the time, when's the next production? How much inventory do you have in this film? How much inventory does the manufacturer have and we have, and working with the production timelines and the rollout. Okay, so if we wanted to roll out, would it be September Rosh Hashanah time? or would it be

Passover time? And strategically, I think we all felt, both Kayco and JKR is Passover even though this brand is going to be not just two -week brand. This is going to be a 52-week brand, especially with the new innovations coming out. What do people know us for now?

Let's lean into where the nostalgia and the familiarity of this brand comes in now and where we actually honestly get the most press anyways. There's a halo effect and we really recognize the Passover is the best time to do it, and the shelves kind of turn over themselves. It was like a natural transition. Most of the products, I got the opportunity to start fresh matzos, start fresh every year. There were so many ways that start fresh with that and the Passover sets kind of rolled out the same time we riled out even after the design portion was finished, there was a little bit of a breather like Lisa said, and we had to get to work and actually executing on all their brilliant creative and then we worked very closely with a PR team. I'm working with the Bender Group, we're working with JKR's PR team. We're talking about how we're going to make the announcement, when we're going to make the announcement. Passover was late this year. I don't know if you realize that.

BRYONY Yes, I'm very aware of that [laughter].

SHANI So supermarkets put up these Passover sets in the day after Valentine's Day, no matter what, regardless of Jewish sleep year, they have their calendars. So we had the Passover sets early, so we were going to make the announcement early and we sat down with the team together and said we need to wait until a month before Passover, not two months before Passover. There was a lot of give and take about the design, the announcement... and understanding that it's not just a food announcement, it's a cultural and a lifestyle announcement and understanding the right time to make such an announcement was very important to this rollout and I think was part of the success of why it got so much attention.

BRYONY That makes sense when you consider all of the details and you don't take anything for granted, even though you're basing it a little bit on tradition, you're not basing it on the retailer's tradition of when they put things on the shelf. Now Lisa mentioned lots of territories, lots of back and forth, and I would like to know Shani, from your perspective and that of your team, when you started to see this creative coming your way, what was the initial reaction and the feedback that was necessary to get JKR to the next iteration?

SHANI We got very excited every time we got something, it was like an onion, almost like we were uncovering where we want it to be. If we got a few territories and we're like something about this is speaking to the brand, it's calling to us. Initially illustrations were presented, we're like illustrations as a way to interact with the food. We love it what style illustration, let's explore that. There are moments where we realize that there is a legacy in the orange color, the spectrum is the orange, it's warm, it's engaging, and the brand has equity in the color. We've been using that in our logo for almost the entire time. So when we saw the orange, we're like yes, and how can we nuance that a little bit more? So even from the beginning there were aspects that were really speaking to us in terms of how we want this brand represented and we just needed to dive deeper. I do remember when Lisa came to Kayco after our pause... pencils down—we had a pencils down moment, which was not so easy to do because we wanted to make sure that we were all going the right direction. We knew we had something, but we wanted to tweak it. We wanted to embrace something that we hadn't embraced yet. The core level of the onion. So I remember when you came and you mentioned the word tidbit [laughter] in your presentation. Is that creepy that I remember that? I don't know [laughter].

LISA I noticed I used it a couple of times as we've been chatting. I think it just brings out in me... [laughter].

SHANI I think we were like yes, tidbits and that's why we were pulling from different territories thinking about it, about the brand itself along the way. Do you want to just reference one era like in the seventies? You

want to reference the depth and the roots this brand has over 136 years. You need tidbits. You need to gather the best parts of the brands and bring them to a place that's cohesive. A lot of times that's not easy to do if you're gathering, digging, and you're putting designs together. Sometimes they don't form something that's cohesive, so you need to do that. And the tidbits, if you look at the packaging, more of a maximalist feel, we went away from the beige and the grayish both as an appetite appeal and because it's much more dynamic part of the packaging. It's almost like you walk into your Bubby's apartment, it's like there's more is more [affirmative/laughter].

It's kind of referencing our dinner table, like this little sayings here and there's an illustration here. You see the bold packaging on the shelf. You pick it up and there's an exploratory part of that, that happens. When we wanted to explore the design a little bit more and go a little deeper, that's what we wanted to do. We wanted to make sure that that was all incorporated. The heart of it was incorporated. And after that meeting when you came to Kayco, we had that mural on the wall, we were bringing everything together. The heart, it came together, "Savor our tradition" came together really beautifully and it shows on the packaging.

BRYONY And Lisa, you went back after that meeting and what happened?

LISA That meeting was, as we said, it was a lot of conversation. It was very heightened. I just remember everyone at one point was talking at the same time, Shani and I was like, can I interrupt everyone? Stop. So you say you like this, you like this, you like this, you like this. There's so much excitement and is an excited dinner table. And I think once I experienced that, even in person; we talk a lot about even the tone of voice for the brand for example, it's made up of that lovingly outspoken Bubbie, but it is part relatable, funny and sort of Jerry Seinfeld and then it's this proud enthusiastic foodie. It's like they all met round the table and they can't stop talking all together and they're [laughter] all talking over each other.

But that is then what we went on to do. We made a logo that embraces that energy and that boldness in a way that exudes and kind of shouts. It has the confidence and the personality, but it also has these little beautiful twists that are sort of a wink towards the Jewish heritage and the way Hebrew letters are designed. And then it was dynamic. So to the point that we started to induce these Yiddish schisms and slang and we overheard people say the word Mani'z many times and we were like, we don't want to change the brand identity and the brand is Manischewitz. But then we were almost like, oh, this is a snackable logo. Maybe we'll give Mani'z bought by Manischewitz over to the snacks. So when you start to get chips, or biscuits, or any of those in the future, there's going to be the shorthand Mani'z all the way down to the monogram of the M'z which is used a lot for social as actually unlike a lot of other food brands I've worked with they use the social platforms as conversations with the community... they're playing, they're putting out gefilte fish jokes and getting a lot of followings and play on that. So all of these identity elements were super important to connect the dots. You talked about the typography, and the dynamic typography fits exactly with the language, but that's why it can go extended and compressed and up and down and it's got that almost musical kind of feeling to it. But I think the illustration is one of the pieces that I know the team once we landed that were just so excited, it was almost like it was an annotation. We were inspired a little bit, New Yorker, New York Magazine. Someone's almost doodled a little cartoon on the side and annotated it. So we ended up working with an illustrator from Copenhagen, Maria Milenko, partly because she'd worked a lot in culinary and food but also worked a lot in editorial news. So it was kind of that perfect combination—making sure we're not stereotyping. Again, I've heard so much feedback that it feels reflective of "is that my family? That looks like our family!" which I've always loved, and they all tell little stories about each of the packaging, whether they're rolling on the black and white cookies or juggling the different pieces... or you can see behind Shani with the

gentleman, the first guy cooking the matzos in the oven, they've all got these lovely little eccentric qualities. And I think the rest of the design system, you can tell it sort of has endless variation. The colors born in the heritage of the orange, but a big enough range of a spectrum that can allow from the deep reds and browns for more baking and cooking all the way to brighter yellows. The soup range obviously is one of the largest ranges. We call that the soup hugger, just these giant arms coming round the bowl. So it's just really being fun and playful, which is again the essence of this brand. You can tell just even Shani and I and then you add Morty into the mix and it's just like we're just laughing.

SHANI Absolutely.

BRYONY Was there ever concern about it all being too much? Too much loudness and playfulness in the typography, in the tone of voice, in the illustrations, in all of the parts and it all becoming [yeah] that moment in the meeting when everybody's talking and you're like, please stop. I need a minute. I need to process [laughter].

LISA And I think yeah, it's got a rich system because it has such a broad range in the portfolio that they have to cater for. But to your point, it's like an orchestra, isn't it? It's got to be curated in the right combinations in the right way, otherwise dilutes the message. And yes, it could be crazy and that's where in the past historically and as being a designer that's worked in-house, there's always been an apprehension between in-house creative teams and agencies. They won't be able to follow the guidelines and be able to balance, because I about to give them all these tools [yeah] and all of these assets and you're like, "oh, what's going to happen?" And the team did such an awesome job, but it's all about putting the combinations together. And the packaging has a very disciplined framework system behind it. So it allows for the moments and the pops and the sort of flexible flare of the illustrations, but it's also actually very systemized in terms of what's the product names and how are we using the color system across the portfolio,

which ranges from food that you cook to convenience foods, to celebration foods, to snack foods.

It's all kind of like in an architecture and there is a lot of rules and rationale that seem to be very translatable that the other teams can execute this and they're doing a great job. I've seen that also on the out-of-home with the comms team because many brands have different agency partners. You don't have the luxury of doing all the advertising, all the social, all the packaging, the branding, the PR. That's a lot of people with different specialism. So how do you create a toolkit that all these other partners can use, still allows enough room for creativity, but the distinctive assets that we're creating or we hope they will be distinctive over time, which I believe the orange and making them as unique as possible, especially the core ones like the logo, the typeface, the color system, and even the illustration style. If you want to be able to see those, recognize those and attribute those back to Manischewitz whilst allowing enough room for other agencies to come up with copy lines, campaigns, social media things. And that's kind of the success that we're seeing. So it was heavily guided and we spent time handing that over together and it's been, yeah, a great process.

SHANI I need to say something about the brand book. It is a work of art, the brand book itself, stunning piece of creative design. The packaging is a reflection of that. The brand book I've sent it, I'll tell Lisa live here, the feedback that we've got just on the brand book and when we talk to partners now we're doing media buys, we want to partner with other foodie cultural media outlets like Food 52. We're going to come for the first time to Javitz Center fancy food show in June. I'm working with someone to design a booth. I don't have to talk, but I sent in the brand book. People get it, they're immersed in the brand. The website people said, this is the best brand book I have gotten in a long time because it guides whoever is working on the brand through other permutations of how you market things.

Packaging is one thing, and then there's brand world behavior, and then there's websites. So JKR took into account everything along 360-marketing along the way. And I would also say that it takes a real genius to take what we just said, all the chaos and cacophony of conversation and 130 years of different designs, and structure it. You don't see a package that's crazy like that or it's confusing. There's hierarchy. The product name is where the product name is in every category. JK R took into account the size of the [...], that a standup gusseted pouch would look different than a box of matzo. So the restraint it takes to have the feeling of maximalism and comfort and tidbits, but still feel organized and consumer friendly and reader friendly, it looks effortless, but it really takes a lot of talent to do that.

LISA What's really interesting is, and I'm seeing this or I had been seeing this over the last few years as almost a bit of a trend in terms of automated obviously brand sites, which are almost are asset management sites and things like that. And don't get me wrong, we have to move into an era where it doesn't matter where you are in the world, you can access all of their assets and things like that, but they'd almost got so oversimplified to the point that it's just like this is your logo, this is this. Then people fill in the missing blanks. I saw a real sort of almost rejection of brand guidelines and brand books and things like that. And then correlating to that, I think we saw more brands that were more sterile, more blanding that we've talked about in the—

BRYONY Formulaic.

LISA Formulaic and actually some of the best brands I've ever worked on that have the best guidelines or the best brand books or whatever in the ways we've done trainings and passed those off, whether it happens to be in a digital format or in a more traditional PDF, goodness knows, I dunno when the last time I ever did a printed one. But regardless when we've done it well and we're partnering well with the agency and brand, I see it executed so well, it's rich and feels storied and it feels welcoming and exciting. People have been stripping everything away.

They've got to get it done faster and quicker and roll out, and then hence you wonder where all the personality of all of these brands have gone.

And I just remember from being even at another branding agency years ago being like, ah, "we're done with guidelines, guidelines is the past". And it's like, well no actually craft and while executed needs to be taken into consideration and it's just so refreshing to see brands be really welcoming of that and being able to use them in really great ways. From Manni'z all the way up to BK, I've seen every partner that works with these guidelines, the US or global, you recognize the brand, but it still allowed, as I've always said, for the creative freedom of whatever that agency's remit is of designing and building a booth. And it's not formulate, but it connects the dots.

SHANI And you know what it is, Lisa? I think it makes people feel part of the journey of the brand. What I've noticed with my team is that you tell a story in the brand guide, so it's not just here, the PMS colors, this is the category pillars. You tell story, it's engaging. Now people that work on the brand are partners in this. They feel involved in a way that if you've just got a sterile, these are the colors. It's inches away from the way the brand guideline has that, but it's more than that. And I feel like even from my admin, someone sends samples out to someone who's working on blowing out the designs, they feel invested when doing the brand good, making sure they're guided by this, but also there's flexibility and there's a dynamic aspect to the way that the JKR designed this, that there's a mix and match because of the tidbits. What tagline to put here asks where they can have their hand in it while staying true to what the brand looks and feels like the absolute look of the brand, they could still contribute in a meaningful way. For my team, I think the execution shows that.

BRYONY I think there's a keen new awareness in terms of brand guidelines and brand books that is moving away from providing instructions to providing a story that tells you how to do things, how to implement the brand. And the other aspect that's really interesting is moving all

of this information from being entirely private, you know this is what we're handing over to the designers to a public sharing. You did a wonderful video of sharing the brand with your audience at large and we're starting to see that more and more. This one in particular really stands out and I would like to touch on it a little bit, get a sense of what the reaction of your audience has been in regards to that brand video narrated by Grandma [laughter].

SHANI Bubby. Yeah, from that video to the entire launch, the response has been... It was like a gift to people, people who have a history with the brand, that little piece, that story where the brand has been because what it did is that that video is it obviously explained the design of the brand, it was very clear, this is the typography, this is how you use it, but it did it in a way that told a story about the book. I mean we could get more literal than that. I told a story of a brand and I think with people familiar with the brand, it's like, yes, you encapsulated something that I feel that's so familiar to me. And I think for people that may be new to the brand, it really introduced the heritage, something they're walking into, we're not making this up. A lot of times the Morty will say, brands can try to be like Manischewitz, but they have to exist for another 135 years and they can have what man has and that you can't build that in a day. So what that video think showed is what has been established and built and then introduced the new branding in such a lively way that new audiences just compelled to even like, okay, "I'm going to go check this out, I'm going to go buy the product. Where can I find it?" What we realized is it's a cultural announcement, not just a rebranding announcement. The response has shown that it's shown, it's like a brand that has a lot of meaning for people and the video itself encapsulated that very succinctly.

BRYONY I found it to be that an existing customer who might rebel against a rebrand couldn't say no after that video [laughter], couldn't be upset after seeing all of those details and being narrated in such a wonderful way. As you look back for a second, was there a moment, an item, an

element, an asset, something in the entire process that spoke to you personally as, yes, we are on the right track, I can't wait to see the end.

LISA I mean I think it would've been that meeting. I remember having a call where we'd got up to a certain point with Shani, and Morty, and Sarah, at JKR and going, we feel like we're on something but we haven't quite cracked it. And that was when Morty talked to me about where this name is so beloved and known in culture, a lot more kind of eclectic than maybe we were starting to uncover. And it was just this conversation. The minute I'd spoke to Shani and Morty about it, I'd garner enough to go away with the team and collaborate, and come back with what we saw as the final sort of three territories that did all become an amalgamation and it became this wonderful... It was just this moment in time and it was a meeting where you invited quite a few senior people from across the Manischewitz and the Kayco team.

Lots of voices as I said [laughter], but it was the energy that everybody left the room so excited and it's the moment when you can see it [yeah], you finally can see it. We deliberately push directions apart, but more often than not these days, I actually have started to embrace this sort of camel moment where I was brought up by very strong mentors and creatives that would be like, this is the direction you only need to present one, go and strong and opinionated! I'm much more these days deliberately [yeah], you are almost investigating. You're getting to learn and so you have to almost prototype and trials some different scenarios all within a certain sandpit that you're playing within, but that's where the magic starts to happen. And sometimes you do that in digital presentations and yes, using Miro's , but this we printed a lot out, and we got on the wall, and we cut off, and we amalgamated and it was just an energy. It just rarely happens. And of course the world changed and the more and more I want to get back to those moments.

SHANI Yeah.

LISA Some people will say, “oh, well that’s so old fashioned to do it that way”. And no, this is a great way to get more people around the table.

SHANI I think it shows, and by the way, I want to show you something. We have a group internally, same group by the way that you had around the table. And the picture of the group is the wall. This was the wall [showing her phone] after that meeting, I snapped the photo as I was leaving.

BRYONY Yeah, I could see all the bits.

SHANI And those are the bits. And we walked away feeling accomplished, but in a way that we, we did it justice. We felt like we got to where we wanted to go. I remember someone reacting to the soup hugger, that’s it. Warm hug around bowl soup. That’s what we want to say. And I think that it represented the direction and from there, of course we had meetings where we were like, okay, now let’s get that down to business and figure out the architecture of this because that has to happen afterwards. But before that happens, I think you need a little bit of the messiness. And I like Lisa’s saying people try to avoid that now, maybe it’s more dry, but we got to wade through it and pick out, you can miss a gem if you don’t do that. And then of course we got more disciplined and got more organized and had planned to execute, but that was really the meeting.

BRYONY And now of everything that you know is coming—that I’m not aware of, and you don’t have to specify what that is—but of all of the things that are coming in the future, what is the most exciting for each of you?

LISA I’m now excited for the brand. It’s starting to extend into some of the innovations. I know throughout the year there’s still things that are rolling out, but now I’m excited to see the brand play in culture because they always managed to do that very well and perhaps at certain points they’ve done it more within the sort of kosher keeper audience. And now I’m excited to see them take the same “Savor our traditions”, our American Jewish food traditions and bring it more to more people, whether they’re doing trade shows or partnerships. I know they’ve done Marvelous Miss Maisel in the past, but it’s just like

I'm excited to see more of how this brand can play in culture because it's just such a wonderful brand. It's also really delicious. I've eaten way too many macaroons throughout this project [laughter].

BRYONY You chose a good one.

LISA I'm excited to see it come to life in all of those ways, and I know that I keep getting also so many messages of "how do I buy the swag, the soup with balls, t-shirt"... And the fun humor side, it's been so needed in the world and I just feel like this brand does a nice job of being able to get and be serious when it needs to be, but also be really fun and playful and welcoming in a whole nother way, in a little cheeky way sometimes.

SHANI Exactly. That's who we are. At least people are approaching us. We talk about partnerships, we're talking to a few people from culture. We have food partnerships coming, but more so outside of food are approaching us, whether it's comedy, or it's events, they're approaching us in this like we need to partner with you, nice ego boost for the brand. But people feel very strongly that they want to be a part of this because it represents something about where they are. And in terms of their industry, I am super excited about partnerships moving forward, and I think for me and for the brand itself, I think we're very excited here at Kayco to live up to our promise of delicious food. We already have, like Lisa said, macaroons, and at the same time we just announced as a rebrand of existing products. What we're coming out with is delicious new products and a way to welcome more people to the table, whether it's just because it's too dang good to pass up, or because it's introducing a format that's more palatable or approachable.

Because I don't know if everyone knows exactly how to make a matzo ball. For example, over Passover, we came over frozen matzo balls, we made it for you: hop it in your soup and just taste the deliciousness because that's a more approachable way. If you've never had one before, or if you only had one in a diner and you want to make one

at home from Matzo Ball Monday. I'm really excited to be known 52-weeks a year for delicious products. Again, the promise that we're making, the tradition that we want people to savor. I'm really excited that we're going to be known for representing Jewish food in a really delicious way.

BRYONY Looking forward to it. I picture the prior packaging more as ingredients versus meals. It almost felt like a bag of flour was the matzo. It was just plain, simple, very flat. And now it's a brand that is making me think of a very open-minded grandma that's saying, "everybody at my table, all of the things, all of the friends, everybody over September, November, January, whenever, let's all get together and enjoy a wonderful meal" .. There's a vibrancy to the brand that you definitely managed to create out of all of those tidbits and all of those reactions to the many territories, the many explorations and the consideration of everything that you had behind, but also that very deep understanding of how people are relating to each other, and to food, and to culture, in a very different way than a hundred years ago or 133 years ago. Those divisions of culture, nationality, religion, all of those things are so blended now, and it's a wonderful way of living that you're embracing and bringing into your table, and I'm very much excited to see how people around me start to realize those things also and embrace them into their own tables.

So I want to thank you both for all of the insight, all of the tidbits [laughter], and for being with me on The Follow-Up today.

SHANI Yeah, thank you.

LISA Thank you so much.

SHANI Thank you for having us.

ARMIN There are a couple of interesting takeaways from this episode. The first is the importance of a good brand book and how much it can empower the internal team and increase their confidence as they collaborate

with other creatives and partners by immersing them in the brand story while slipping in the design minutia of what's right and wrong. The other was this concept of "tidbits" and how various, perhaps disparate, elements can help tell a broader, richer, and more robust brand story. Finally, there was a nice sentiment expressed by Shani of how Manischewitz wants to welcome more people to the table. In their case it's almost literal, in the sense of bringing people to an actual table and eat their food but as a general life and business value, it's a nice reminder to keep an open mind and a set of open arms to new people, new opportunities, and perhaps even new foods... like Gefilte fish. Trust me. It's delicious.

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