GU ENERGY LABS

GU ENERGY LABS

BRAND REFRESH AND
PACKAGING DEVELOPMENT

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 13 Research and Overview
- 23 Audience and Atmosphere
- 59 Brand Refresh Concept
- 73 Packaging Process
- 99 Identity Before and After
- 147 Semi-Final

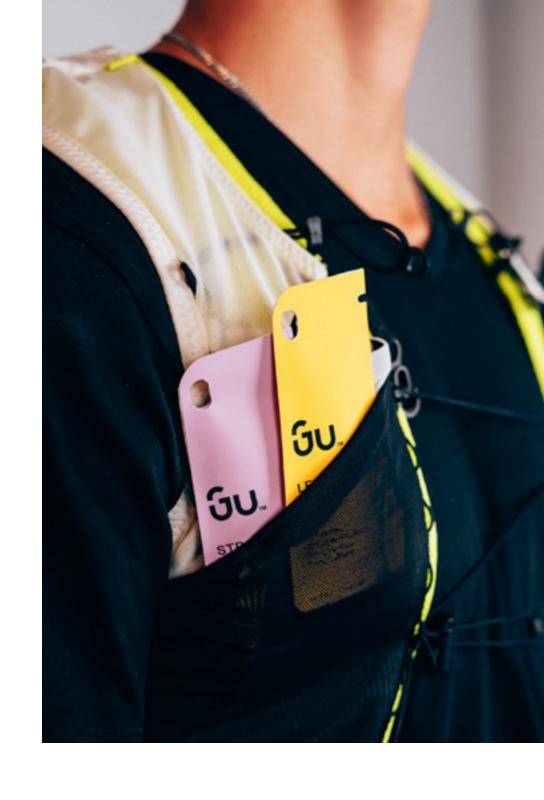
Gabby Escobar gabbyescobar.com

















RESEARCH & OVERVIEW

SUGAR

Research & Overview

Sugar is a carbohydrate that the body breaks down into glucose. This glucose enters the bloodstream and is absorbed by the body and muscles as a source of energy. There are several types of sugar and sugar alternatives, but regardless of the type, they all break down in the same way.

25-50 GRAMS PER DAY

Research & Overview ENDURANCE ATHLETES



Participants in high-intensity cardio activities for extended periods deplete their energy levels significantly. They represent a market of individuals who need to consume higher amounts of sugar while avoiding digestive issues. Their bodies may require up to...

60-90 GRAMS PERHOUR





In 1999, GU Energy Labs set out to revolutionize endurance sports by producing the first energy gel pack. Dr. Bill Vaughan initially aimed to help his ultra-running daughter compete in increasingly longer trail races by solving the challenge of consuming key nutrients while running without causing stomach issues. Finding solutions for athletes of all kinds has been a part of their history and remains a driving force in their mission to revolutionize sports.

GU ENERGY LABS



AUDIENCE & ATMOSPHERE

AUDIENCE SNAPSHOT 25

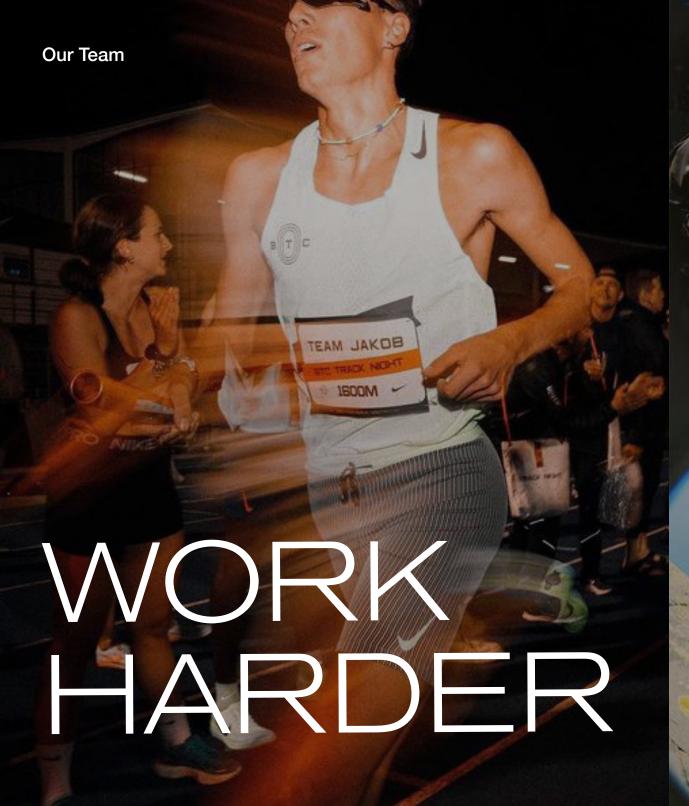
ON-TRAIL RESEARCH 35

INTERVIEWS 43

CASE STUDIES 49

AUDIENCE SNAPSHOT

Defining and developing the audience of GU Energy Labs starts with immersing oneself in the community. This research explores the culture of GU and endurance sports, from 5K brewery runs to 50-mile ultramarathons. Through this research, one thing became clear: regardless of the scale of an athlete's practice, we all form GU's unofficial team.





Our Team

LOCKGOOD IN ACTION

At its core, GU strives to reach athletes who are unafraid to stand out and forge their own paths. Strategy and sheer grit are their tools for success. This team pursues their aspirations through dedicated practice, aligning with brands and products that resonate with their ambitions. Embracing an athlete-off-duty aesthetic, they value functional yet stylish workout gear, believing that high performance and great style go hand in hand.



MILLENIAL MARATHONIER

Several news outlets have reported an increase in marathon and half-marathon participation. Psychologists attribute this trend to emotional factors such as midlife reassessment, challenge-seeking, the pursuit of meaningful accomplishments, community engagement, evolving life priorities, and self-discovery.

Modern millennials are more likely to be single than previous generations and tend to have greater disposable income. These factors create an environment where millennials are motivated to push their limits and conquer endurance challenges like the marathon. Strava, a platform with over 100 million users across 160 countries, has reported that more than 22% of users log at least one race per year. Among them, 26% of millennials participate in an endurance race.

Overall, millennials are a core audience for GU, as they seek to surround themselves with ambitious individuals and invest their time in a community that uplifts and encourages one another to reach their goals.



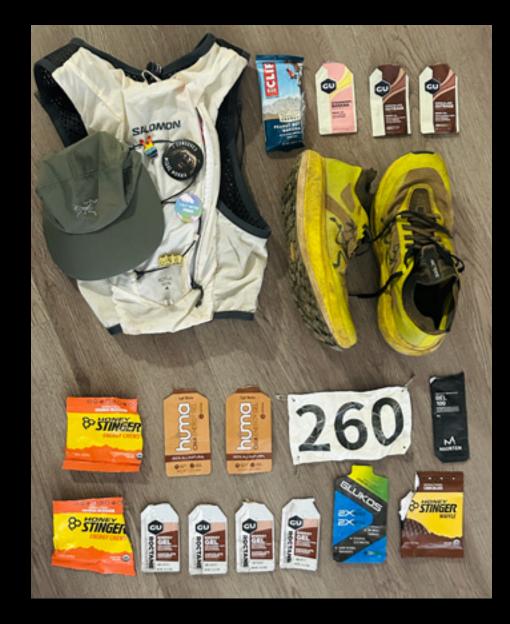


ELEVATED ACTIVEWEAR

ON-TRAIL RESEARCH

Although I was already an active runner in the community, this rebrand transformed every run into a case study. I covered nearly 900 miles, carefully strategizing and analyzing how to position GU for growth and success in the coming years.





7 Gu Roctane Gels

4 Gu Classic Gels

2 liters of Gu Caffinated electrolyte beverage 2 Stinger Waffles

4 Stinger Chews

2 Huma Gels

1 Maurten Gels

1 Glukos Gels

1 Cliff Bar

2 Uncrustables

3,110 g. of carbs for 11hrs 40 min

As part of my product research, I competed in a 50-mile ultramarathon, putting GU and several other endurance nutrition brands to the test. GU overwhelmingly became my brand of choice for this event.

Although I primarily packed alternative brands, when GI issues began to arise, I found myself reaching for GU products at every aid station, ultimately leaving behind what I had initially brought. Since this was a GU-sponsored event, I relied on several GU products for caffeine, essential carbohydrates, and sugar.

Larger and flatter gels, like Glukos, were more packable. However, GU proved to be the most convenient to consume while running on the trail. Overall, dealing with detached gel packet corners became cumbersome, especially when energy was running low or the terrain was technical. GU gels remained my primary source of nutrition from mile 5 to mile 45.



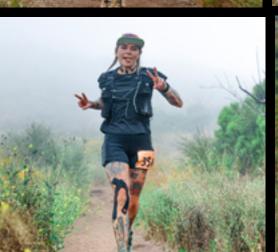














TRAIL CULTURE 39 & FASHION

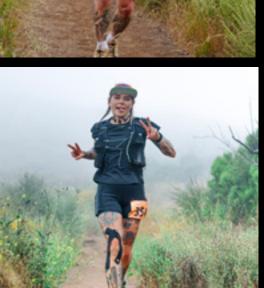
EVERYONE RUNS FOR THEMSELVES

I had the unique experience of engaging in hours of conversation without eye contact.
With no context of appearance or age, the only thing I shared with these runners was the fact that we found ourselves on the same mile at the same time. These conversations were not only deeply personal, but they also existed without the concern of being perceived. There was no service, no phones, no cameras—just raw, unfiltered connection. This community encourages you to come as you are, dress as you like, and do what works for you, even if it's a bit unconventional.

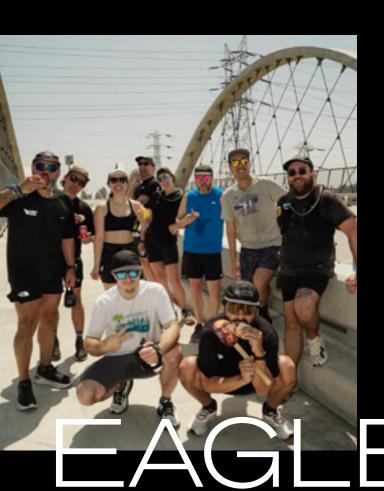
AN EVENT FOR ALL AGES

The age range for this event spanned from 24 to 69, resulting in an average age of 34 and a median age of 46. While the nature of the event primarily caters to participants in their 30s and 40s, it remains welcoming to anyone ready to take on the challenge.





On-Trail Research



RUN CLUB EAGLE ROCK RUNCLUB



SOCIAL EVENT

Over 100 people attend this event weekly on Thursday evenings at a brewery. At least 1/3 of participants indulge in post-run drinks, hot dog, and socializing.

HIGHLY COMPETITIVE & SUPPORTIVE

Just because it's a social run does not make it easy. People are always pushing the pace and at the conclusion of my run I was asked by several people "how did you do?"

CURATED AESTHETIC

Each event they host has designated photographers and they have a small team of designers for merchandise and social. Conscious selection of people and photography chosen. Dressing your best can get you featured.

YOUNG ADULTS

This event was for 21+ participatns. The crowd appeared to be mid 20s to mid 30s.

INTERVIEWS & INSIGHTS

Based on insights from current trends and on-trail research, I selected individuals to interview in order to gain a deeper understanding of endurance athletes. My interviewees represented a diverse range of personas, from elite ultramarathoners to dedicated 5K runners.

HILLARY ANN



ABOUT

Age 32 Income 70K Married with a dog

ATTRIBUTES

A creative mind with a competitive side. Hillary began trail running at 25 and built her career from the bottom up. She is a runner sponsored by Arc'teryx and has traveled the world climbing tall mountains and running far. She is a successful freelance creative that can do it all!

MOTIVATIONS

She aspires to encourage people to get outside their comfort zone. She is also a strong advocate for women in ultra running and this theme is reflected through her work.

CORE NEEDS

She cares for the environment and aligns herself with brands and events that share her values in conserving and appreciating nature. She also appreciates a playful and high spirited energy

PAIN POINTS

Dishonest companies. There has recently been a "scandal" brought to light about spring energy gels lying about the nutrition in each gel. For this reason, She is thinking about swapping brands.

Interviews

ABOUT

Age 24 Income 65-70K Single

ATTRIBUTES

Alex is always in the know. She chases the latest trends and next upcoming brands and always leaves the house in style. She is outgoing yet takes a step back to meditate and think more deeply about her emotions.

MOTIVATIONS

She just recently graduated college and is ready to make her way in the world. She aspires to take each step in life with intention and find meaningful moments thorughout her day.

DAYAN ROSEN

LAWYER, HOBBY MARATHONNER

ABOUT

Age 54
Married with a dog

ATTRIBUTES

Hard work pays off! Dayan has spent a lifetime setting high goals for himself and working hard to find success. He is overwhelmingly optomistic and seeks to find the positives or opportunities to learn in every setback.

MOTIVATIONS

He thrives around other passionate indivuduals and appreciates the training just as much as race day.

CORE NEEDS

He aims to find and share meaningful moments in every day life.

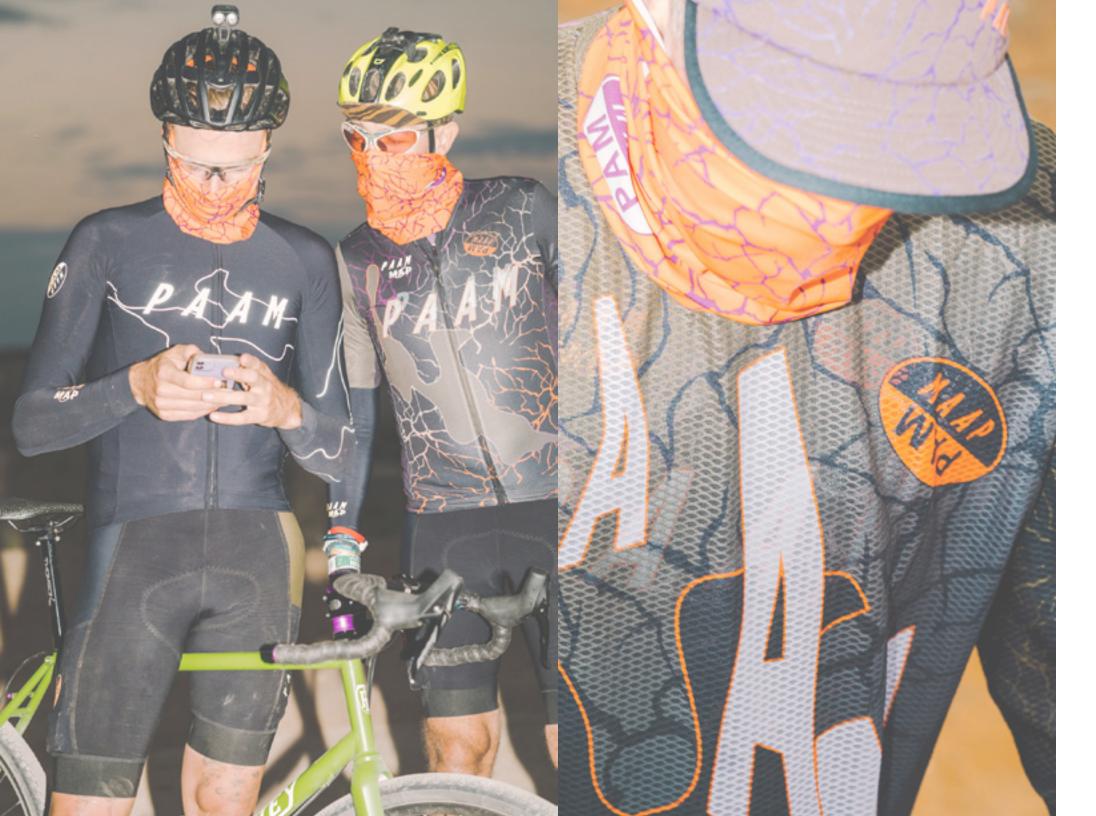


ALEX CORTEZ

MARKETING, PASSIONATE NEW RUNNER

CASE STUDIES

When examining my case studies, I focused on how the design has crafted the culture of the brand, community, and sport. There is a sense of practicality and style. These brands aim to be setting the trends and setting the stage for the future of their industry.



Case Study 1

MAAP

MAAP, a leading cycling apparel company, is revolutionizing the industry by transforming cycling gear into a curated, premium experience. Their packaging design reflects this ethos, offering sleek, high-quality presentations that enhance the brand's luxurious appeal. By emphasizing meticulous detail and user experience, MAAP creates a sense of exclusivity and sophistication. This approach not only elevates the product itself but also makes the entire consumer journey feel bespoke and thoughtfully designed.

While MAAP embodies luxury and exclusivity, it also fosters a brand identity that meets cyclists wherever they are in their journey. Whether leading the pack or riding at the back, cyclists find a sense of community and belonging through MAAP. The brand's inclusive ethos ensures that every rider, regardless of skill level, feels valued and part of a larger cycling family. This dual focus on high-end quality and community connection sets MAAP apart in the cycling world.



@ALWAYS LEAD OFF THE FRONT. @LEAVE A BETTER PLANET THAN THE ONE WE INHERIT. 3 WE EXIST TO PROPEL CYCLING FORWARD THROUGH BETTER DESIGN & PERFORMANCE. 04 MAAP BELONGS TO US ALL. OS AUTHENTIC = VALID. WE FOLLOW AN ALT-CYCLE ETHOS. 66 CYCLING MAKES EVERYTHING BETTER, WE NEVER STOP PEDALLING.

Case Study 2

The Salomon S/Lab x Courtney Dauwalter collaboration on a dental hygiene system for trail runners is an unconventional yet playful innovation presented with a refined touch. This unique kit, co-designed with trail-running legend Courtney Dauwalter, includes the S/Lab Ultra Spark Vest equipped with a carbon toothbrush, nutritional toothpaste, a rinsing flask, and a retractable Boa-floss. Beyond the lighthearted idea of clean teeth fueling performance, the team focused on reducing gear weight and enhancing the toothpaste's nutritional value. By incorporating carbohydrates and electrolytes, the toothpaste not only cleans but also provides an energy boost, seamlessly blending practicality with performance enhancement. This collaboration underscores S/Lab's commitment to innovation, merging functionality with elite performance standards.

Salomon's S/Lab is renowned for its cutting-edge approach to gear design, constantly pushing the boundaries of athletic performance. This specialized extension of Salomon is dedicated to developing high-performance equipment tailored to the precise needs of elite athletes. The dental hygiene kit serves as a testament to S/Lab's dedication to addressing even the most nuanced needs of athletes, ensuring they have the tools to excel in every aspect of their sport.

SALEMON S/LABX COURTNEY DAUWALT



QUIP

Each QUIP toothbrush comes in a travelready case that doubles as a stand, offering
convenience for both home use and on-thego care. The minimalist packaging design
reflects the brand's commitment to simplicity
and elegance, reducing unnecessary waste
while enhancing the overall user experience.
Additionally, QUIP's subscription service
ensures the timely delivery of replacement
brush heads and toothpaste, encouraging
consistent dental care. This thoughtful
approach to packaging and product design
has set a new standard in the dental hygiene
industry, seamlessly blending practicality with
modern, clean aesthetics.





CONCEPT

PAST 61

PRESENT 63

FUTURE 67

Past

Humble and Wholesome Beginnings

GU Energy Labs was born from a father's unwavering dedication to his daughter, a passionate athlete striving to reach her peak potential. Determined to optimize her performance and recovery, he meticulously crafted energy products that were both effective and wholesome. This humble yet heartfelt beginning embodies GU's enduring commitment to athletes everywhere, ensuring their bodies are fueled with the best nutrition to achieve excellence in their sport. Today, this legacy of care and precision continues to drive GU Energy Labs, inspiring athletes to push their limits and pursue their goals with confidence.







Future

GOTHE EXTRAMLE

GU as a brand is ready to go the extra mile so its audience can do the same. The products are proven to work, but they need to capture an athlete's interest at a glance.

Visually, GU should embody the aspirations of its athletes—whether they are extreme Ironman competitors or conquering a 5K. When athletes are on course with GU, they should feel powerful and unstoppable.



ANYWHERE ANY PERSON ANY EVENT

GU's customers are a team—individuals of varying abilities, sports, locations, and goals—united under an empowering brand. It is essential to craft an identity that resonates with a diverse range of active people and athletic events. The true mission of GU Energy Labs is to empower athletes to achieve their goals through a high-quality, accessible, and efficient product line.

FRIENDLY ELECTRIC POWERFUL

PACKAGING PROCESS

BRAND AUDIT 75

FORM DEVELOPMENT 83

MATERIALS 97









ANALYSIS & OPPORTUNITIES

GU's packaging system is functional yet conventional. Its design closely mirrors that of competitors, making it difficult to stand out. How can GU revolutionize sports nutrition by enhancing the functionality of its packaging?











GEL 100

MAURTEN













As the first to market, GU Energy Labs established themselves as the leading innovators in endurance sports nutrition. However, over time they have become indistinguishable from their competition.
Although they dominate the market with the largest product range, GU loses their identity when side by side with other brands.









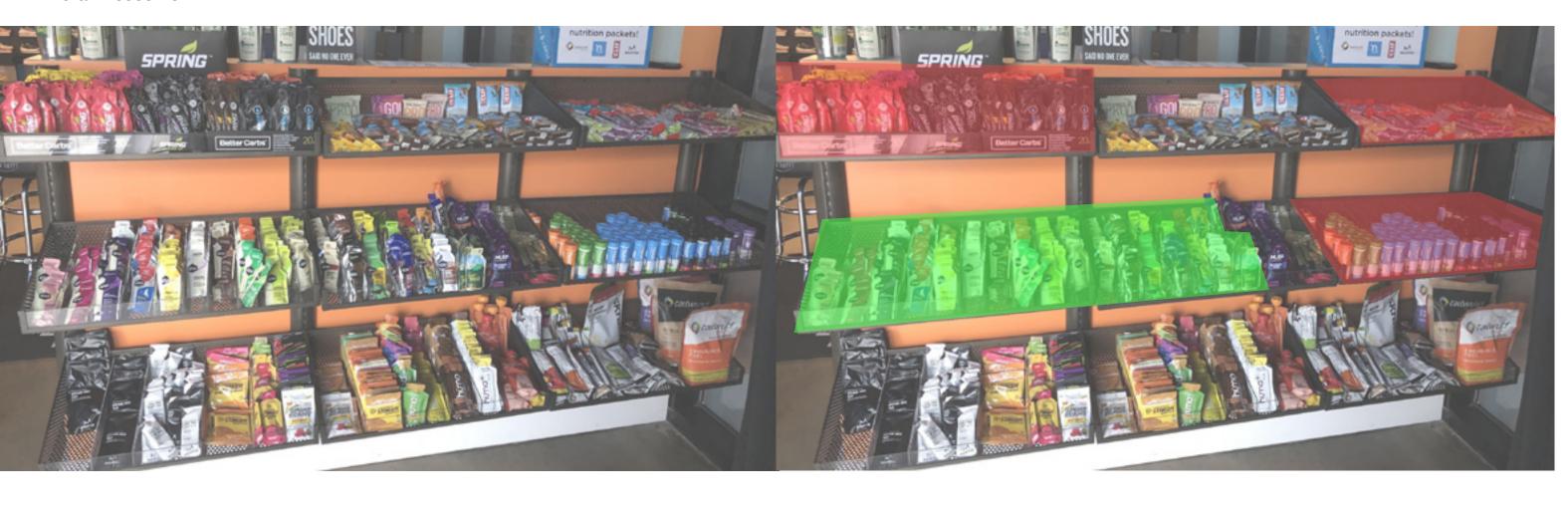








Retail Assesment

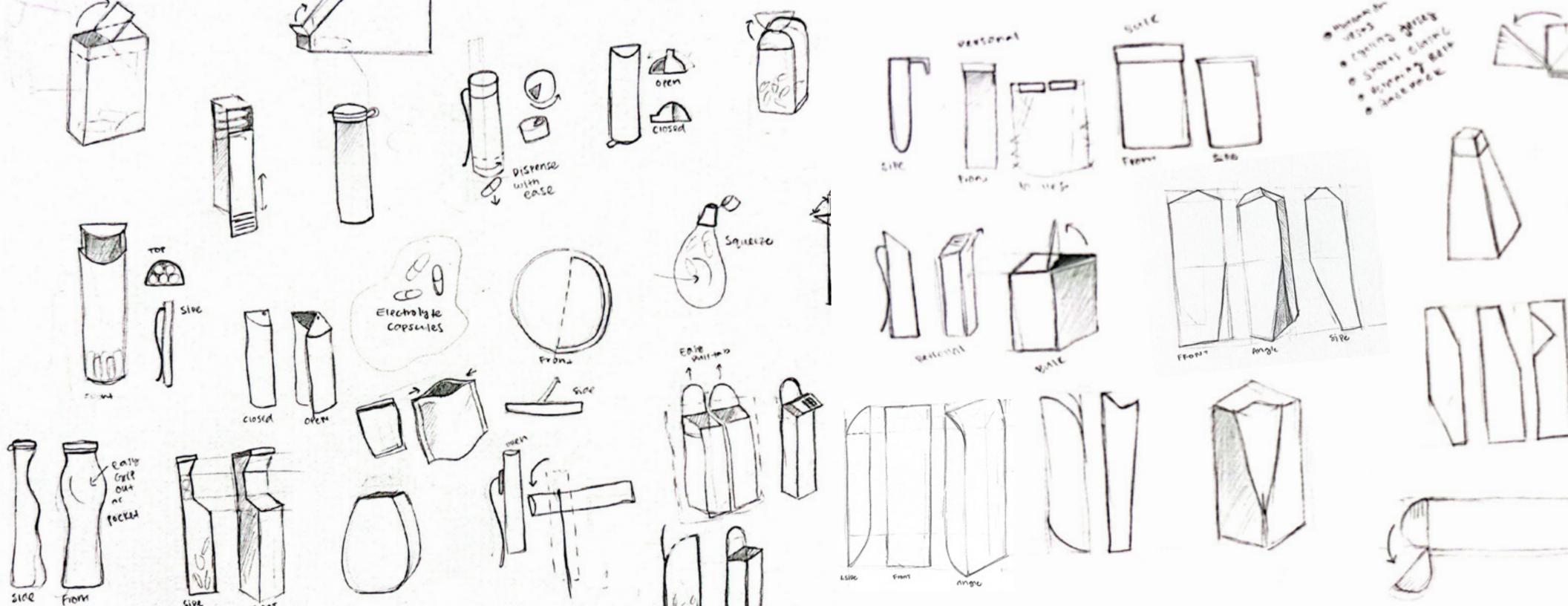


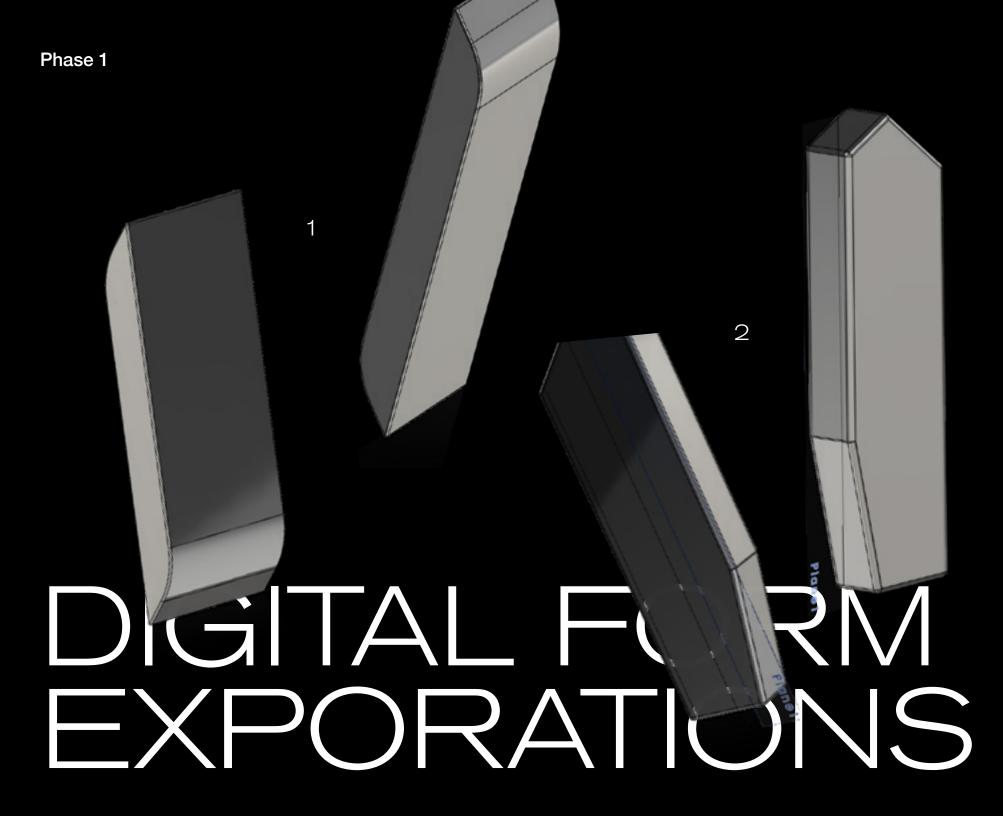
Gu Energy Labs is prominently featured in specialty sports and active lifestyle stores, establishing itself as one of the leading brands in these retail environments. Despite its substantial presence, the current packaging lacks visual distinction from competitors in terms of form, color, and logo design.

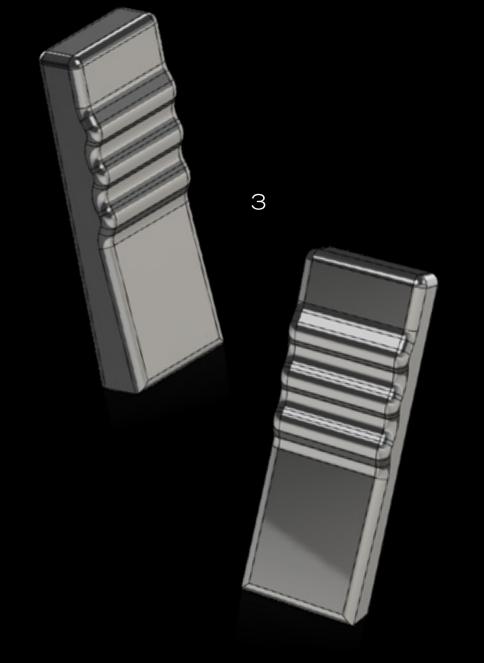
RETAIL ASSESSMENT

When designing for athletes, it is crucial to consider the practical application of Gu products during physical activity. In redesigning the packaging, it is imperative that the product remains optimal for various uses and sports. I have meticulously evaluated the following options.

HYDRATION VEST RUNNINGBELT ELASTIC BELT CLOTHES POCKET BIKE JERSEY







MODEL 1

Large rounded edge for optomal pocket compatibility
Flat and compact package and maximum internal capacity
Optomal space for PDP and branding
Visually simple and cound have difficulty displaying on shelf

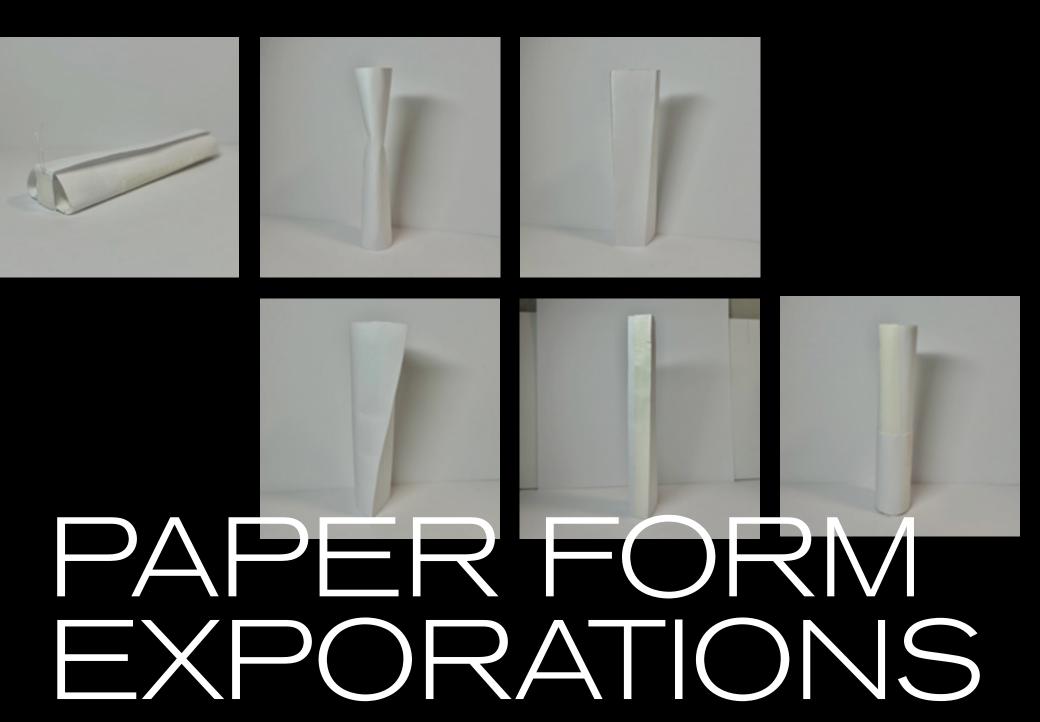
MODEL 2

A unique silohuette with a minor compromise to volume Clear "pour" direction to disperse product Angular with rounded edges to be resistant to abraision with athletic fabrics

MODEL 3

Simple form and maximal volume Grip pattern on the front to aid in removal from pockets Rounded edges to be resistant to abraision

Phase 2



ANALYSIS

Each paper form development started with a round base. From there I creased, cut, layered, and folded areas to make intresting and unexpected forms. Several of these have experimental dispensing mechanisms such as dispensing from the bottom or swiping of an outer lever.

Phase 3





CLAY FORM EXPORATIONS

ANALYSIS

Creating clay forms allowed for the exploration of more angular forms. This phase became more sculptural. I explored how this product may fit with the body and in hand.



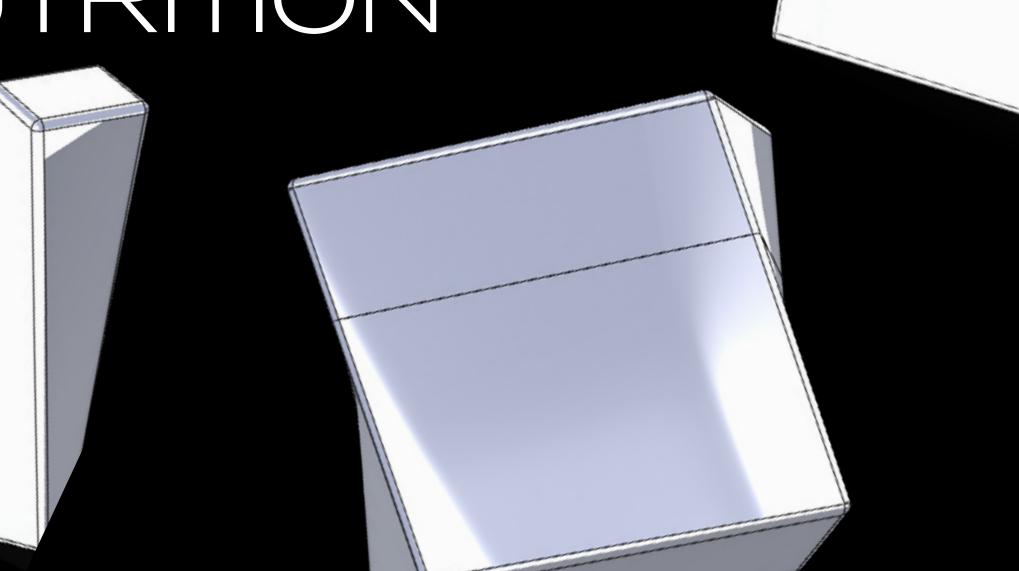








Audience Profile



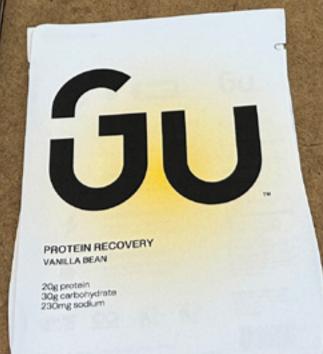
Functional, sculptural, organic, yet calculated—a packaging system that is simple in essence yet bold enough to capture attention. This product line embodies a brand that is cultivating its own culture. GU is not only a product that delivers results; it unites athletes of all backgrounds and abilities.

A TWIST



GU.

KIWI MANGO



MET WY 32,862 (2.5); 80 9369

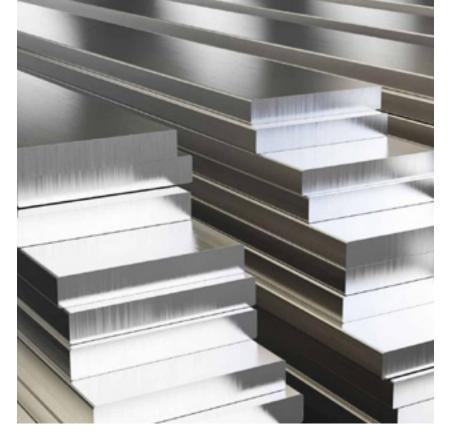






MATERIALS OVERVIEW

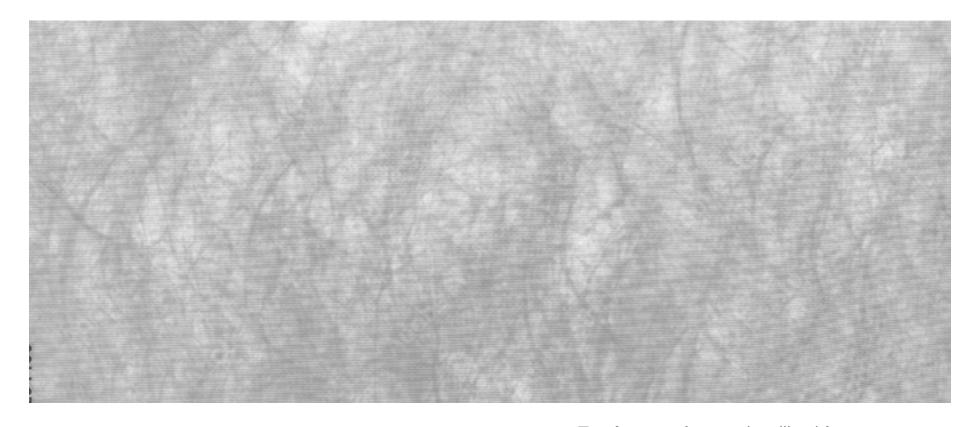
Gu Energy Labs is committed to constructing products with materials that are sustainable for the environment and that can be recycled or re-filled without sacraficing durability.



Aluminum has insulated qualities and is resistant to abraison which is ideal for the signle use energy gel.

Sulapac is a plastic alternative for hard packaged products that house water-soluble goods. This includes our BCAA capsules and drink tabs.





Tyvek paper, frequently utilized for race bibs and outdoor maps, is esteemed for its remarkable durability and resistance to water and tearing. This high-density polyethylene material is both lightweight and flexible, rendering it ideal for applications that demand strength and resilience. The unique properties of Tyvek allow it to endure harsh environmental conditions, ensuring both longevity and reliability. Furthermore, Tyvek is recyclable, enhancing its sustainability and mitigating its environmental impact.

IDENTITY BEFORE & AFTER





BEFORE AFTER











IDENTITY PROCESS

LOGO DEVELOPMENT 109

GRAPHIC DIRECTION 123

PRODUCT APPLICATIONS 135

Logo Audit



ANALYSIS & OPPORTUNITIES

GU Energy Labs has created an endurance nutrution vocabulary around their name. It's not uncommon for a runner to ask "What's your favorite gu" or biker to take a "gu break. With this customer awareness the goal is to To ensure when they are shopping for "gu," they choose Gu. Adjustments can be made to the logomark that commands attention.

FU GU GU GU GU GU GU GU GU GU BU BU GU FED GU GU GU GU GLI GU SO SU GU EU EU GU E EU Sul Gu gu Eu Gu

圖圖 600 月月 5月 GU GURA 3 GEGERALE CO GU GU GU GU



DIRECTION 1.1



DIRECTION 1.2



DIRECTION 2.1



DIRECTION 2.2



DIRECTION 3.1



DIRECTION 3.2



DIRECTION 4.1



DIRECTION 5.1

LOGO IDEATION PHASE 2

In phase two of my logo development process, I digitized and refined several concepts originating from the initial phase one sketches. The objective was to transcend the conventional boundaries of the Gu brand, focusing on the themes of racing, movement, time, and competition.





DIRECTION 1.1



DIRECTION 1.2



DIRECTION 1.3



DIRECTION 2.1



DIRECTION 2.2



DIRECTION 2.3



DIRECTION 2.4



DIRECTION 2.5

LOGO IDEATION PHASE 3

In phase three, I honed in on two logo directions. The first direction is expressive and bold. Through iterations, I explore the texture of gu within the wordmark. The second approach refrences time. Gu products are designed to be consumed on a schedule for optimal nutrition benefits during activity.



UPDATED LOGO

The updated logo is simple and striking. I maintained the bold logotype from the orginal logo but crafted a form with a taller profile. The strikethrough alludes to time, as Gu products are designed to be taken on a schedule with exercise. Furthermore, the logo has been freed from its orginal bounding box to allow it to expand beuond its boundaries both figuratively and literally.

GRAPHIC DIRECTION

121



GRAPHIC INSPIRATION

Gu Energy Labs' redefined identity focuses on optimizing athletic performance and unlocking potential from within. To embody this vision, I am exploring a visual strategy that is textural and tactile, ensuring instant recognizability and a refined simplicity that stands out from the more visually overwhelming designs of competitors.

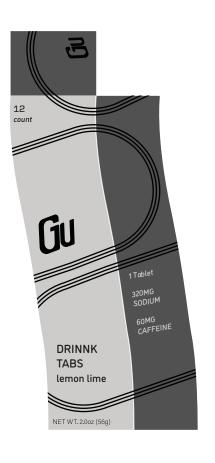
Phase 1















Based off of standouts from the collaged graphic explorations, I explored how these could manifest in the drink tabs packaging. I chose to explore in black, white, and grey to experiment with contrast and various logos.

In the second phase, I refined the most successful explorations of the first round. From there I applied color to further explore the relationship between the type on the PDP and colors of the packaging.





COLORS

Lemon Lightning

Pantone: 122 C

Asphalt

Pantone: 419 C

Strawberry

Pantone: 515 C

Kiwi Mango

Pantone: 7746 C

Blueberry

Pantone: 7542 C

The use of a vibrant yellow invigorates the Gu identity, creating a friendly and eye-catching appeal. The primary colors are used sparingly to avoid overwhelming the main display panel, thereby drawing attention to essential nutritional information. This clarity is crucial for consumers. Additionally, color variations in the smaller, portable product line indicate different flavors.

PRIMARY

GRANTHA SANGAM MN BOLD

ABCDEFGHIJKLMNOPQURSTU VWXYZ0123456789

SECONDARY

Denim Wd Regular

AaBbCcDdEeFfGgHhliJjKkLlMmNnOoPp QqUrRrSsTtUuVvWwXxYyZz0123456789

LEGAL

Avenir Next Condensed, Regular

AaBbCcDdEeFfGgHhliJjKkLl MmNnOoPp QqUrRrSsTtUuVvWwXxYyZz0123456789

Avenir Next Condensed, Demi Bold

AaBbCcDdEeFfGgHhliJjKkLl MmNnOoPp QqUrRrSsTtUuVvWwXxYyZz0123456789

TYPOGRAPHY

PRODUCT APPLICATIONS



GU.

LEMON LIME ENERGY GEL

100 Calories M25m8 Amino Acid 125m8 Sodum 35m8 Caffeine

T 1975 7.5 102 (3276)















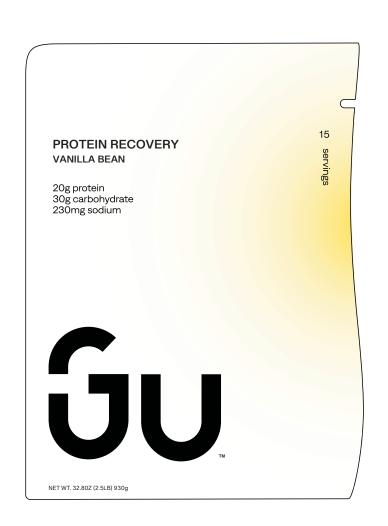


PROTEIN RECOVERY VANILLA BEAN

20g protein 30g carbohydrate 230mg sodium



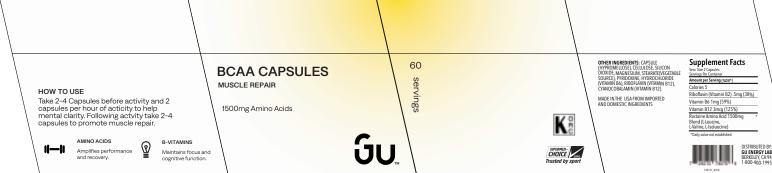
GUENERGY.COM OUR RECOVERY FORMULA Mix two scoops into 8 ounces of water. Shake well and consume within 30 min after activity. Greated to promote recovery from demanding physical activity, our Protein Recovery Drink Mix includes the primary ingredients essential to facilitate recovery: 20g of high-quality whey protein , fast-acting carbohydrates, and sodium. **Nutrition Facts** PROTEIN Servings 10 per container Helps promote muscle Serv. Size: 2 scoops (61e) tissue, repair, and recovery CARBOHYDRATES Repleneshes glycogen levels to restore energy ELECTROLYTES Maintains fluid belence and aid in rehydration PATRICULAR STATES AND PATRICULAR SOURCE SOUR DICTIONS OF SUPPLEMENTANS, 1 800-800 THYS, BESTELD, CARRYSO Crist Georgiculo, All rights enamed, — the registered trademark of Assessed Food Consegnation











SEMI-FINAL





FEEDBACK

PROS

Strong before and after impact

Audience was very reactive during pitch

Engaging packaging form

Attractive color choices

Working Prototypes

Product set-up

CONS

Confusing heirarchy of drink tabs PDP

Need to refocus when presentation elicits audience reaction

Needs photography of objects in action

Refine presentation typography and poster

Refine added product accessories

APPRECIATION

Thank you to my professor Ania Borysiewicz, for her expert guidence and support.

Product photography by Logan Monroe