



# HOW TO MAKE A NUMBER-ONE BRAND BIGGER AND BETTER

Q&A with Leland Maschmeyer  
*Chief Creative Officer, Chobani*



Chobani, the number-one-selling brand of Greek yogurt in America, recently underwent a bold re-brand led by Leland Maschmeyer. As Chief Creative Officer of Chobani, Maschmeyer is responsible for guiding brand and product strategy, packaging, innovation pipeline, online channels, advertising, shopper marketing, and total customer experience design. His goal - to fulfill Chobani's vision to be a food-focused wellness company.

How do you make the number-one selling brand of Greek yogurt bigger and better? To assert further yogurt-market-dominance, Chobani and Maschmeyer have focused their attention on a new logo, identity, and packaging to sharpen the brand's personality and allow more room for product line extensions.

We spoke to Maschmeyer about the rebrand and how investing in creativity is key to making a bigger and better brand.

## Chobani®

### OVERVIEW

- How can good design and creativity create a bigger and more profitable company?
- What is the rationale for Chobani hiring their first-ever Chief Creative Officer?
- What considerations went into one of the biggest redesigns of this year?
- How are the brand and business performing after the rebrand?
- What are the next steps in Chobani's creative strategy?



### **What is the greatest challenge in 'creating a food-focused wellness company'?**

The toughest challenge is scaling. There is no absence of ambition, innovation, creativity, or effort. However, finding the best way to focus, coordinate, and drive those energies to larger scales is a complex challenge.

### **How can creativity and good design create a more profitable company?**

The core purpose of a business is to create a customer and take care of a customer. This is, inherently, a design challenge. Design is a culture of practice that asks, "What do people desire?" and then works backwards from the answer to turn desire into reality. Businesses that obsess about their customers and fulfill their desires win.

### **Who is Chobani's customer?**

Chobani's customer is someone who believes food should be delicious, nutritious, natural, and accessible.

### **What was the rationale for Chobani hiring their first-ever Chief Creative Officer?**

Chobani has always valued creativity. You see it in the

craftsmanship of the product, the history of unique packaging, expansion into the Café, and bold marketing efforts. The leadership created the CCO role to amplify and accelerate that creative energy.

### **How is Chobani making creativity central to all of its business processes?**

Creativity has always been central to Chobani's business. That said, we continue to invest and improve how we leverage it. First and foremost, we've brought creative exploration into the strategy phase of work. Early creative explorations help shape business strategies by revealing new information and opening new opportunity paths not captured by frameworks and formulas. Early creative exploration also proves (or disproves) the viability of a strategy. A strategy is only good if it leads to good work.

### **What considerations went into creating one of the biggest redesigns of the year?**

It is probably easier to name which considerations did NOT go into our brand and packaging re-launch.

At the beginning, we needed to achieve a hat-trick: One, re-energize our existing fans; two, appeal to those didn't buy yogurt or Chobani; and third, differentiate from the competition.

Functionally, the packaging needed to work from 10 feet, 5 feet, and 2 feet away from the shelf. As consumers approached it, they needed to have different levels of information revealed to them at each of these distances.

Furthermore, beyond functionality, we hoped our design solution worked on shelf in the store and at home. Packaging may be designed to scream "Buy me!"—such packaging is jam-packed with claims, call-outs, and visually loud graphics. When it gets home, it's hidden in a cabinet or below a sink. Alternatively, packaging may be designed to say "Live with me." When you aim for "Live with me," you obsess over customer's life and product experience: where do they live? Where will they eat our yogurt? How will they eat it? What do we want them to feel each time they see our packaging? Often, packaging that takes this approach both pops on shelf and compliments the home.





### How are the brand and business performing after the rebrand?

The rebrand has been wildly successful. Online sentiment has been overwhelmingly positive - reaching as high as 96%. PR impressions at launch surpassed 8 billion.

### What were some of the challenges bringing the redesign to reality?

The main challenge was the conflict between complexity and time. The rebrand was a year-long process - this included the masterbrand, all packaging, as well as our owned digital and physical properties. That sounds like a long amount of time. And it doesn't sound like much work. But I promise, it was an epic amount of work in a compressed timeline. Keep in mind too, we were building the in-house design team as we did it. I'm very proud of our team. They rallied together and committed themselves to excellence.

### What was key in helping your team to overcome these challenges?

Talent and perseverance.

I'm so thankful to have such incredible talent join me in this adventure. I owe all our success to them.

### Where did you see the greatest cost savings or losses in materials or the supply chain as a result?

As many of your readers know, switching to new packaging from old incurs scrap material losses. Our situation was no different. We worked closely with our supply chain teams to minimize those losses as much as possible. The entire process was a strong team effort.

### How did you balance creativity with customer data to make decisions?

Data told us how consumers navigated the shelf - specifically, what information they sought and in what order. So we aimed for that hierarchy. Other than that, we treated data as an input. Nothing more. Design is an integrative activity driven by abductive thinking. That's the only way you can find new spaces of possibility.

Data can only tell us what is; never what could be.

### In 5-10 years, how do you see Chobani and the product and packaging landscape being different?

We have purposely positioned Chobani for growth beyond yogurt. We talk and behave as a food-focused wellness company because we believe food companies can go beyond selling food to create more value for consumers.



Food is a cultural, social, creative, spiritual, and political object around which people's identities, relationships, health, rituals, schedules, and emotions revolve.

Becoming a food-focused wellness company means that we must recognize the complex relationship people have with food and determine how Chobani can best nurture that relationship for the better. I hope that in 5-10 years we are an example of how a food company can play a more active, inspirational role beyond the store shelf.

#### What are the next steps in Chobani's creative strategy?

We have many big ambitions. And we are working on all of them in small, fast-paced ways. Rather than give them away here, I'll just say this: stay tuned.

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*Leland Maschmeyer will be given a talk on "Discussing the Importance of a Major Rebrand to Accommodate New Product-Line Expansions" at the American Packaging Summit, held in Chicago on June 6-7, 2018.*

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**Interested in hearing more insights from Leland Maschmeyer and other industry leaders? Join us at the American Packaging Summit.**



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