

VaynerX Presents: Marketing for the Now: Back to School Edition

One question an amazing lineup of ceos founders and experts This is marketing for the now to 58 I love her Yes Come out You you I haven't seen that for a while How are you doing Gary I'm good Yeah I miss marketing for now Hello everybody See you all in the comments Uh Excited to uh be back Uh see a bunch of VX people in the comments JIC actually CMO Zubin Sydney Sydney we will get our uh we'll get our calendars situated Um Did somebody leave a wall here The tour is good Uh Andrew I'm excited Fun episode Thank everybody You know it's 90 degrees Yes it is Back to school We got we got an exciting episode here We've got a whole crew of folks that we're gonna be talking about education retail business all kinds of exciting things So let's get in gear first up We've got our friend Amit Sva who's the CEO of ETS and he's calling in live from a back to school conference We are so excited to have him talk He's the largest private educational assessment organization and we are thrilled to have you on our show Today Amit Thanks very much Andrea great to see you Gary Great deal there He is I mean it's really great to see you brother Um Why don't you you know because these go very quickly Why don't you give a quick intro to everybody on uh what ETS does and then I'll uh rattle in some of my uh questions That sounds great Gary uh ETS uh is a educational assessment company Uh We work in K 12 Higher Ed and Workforce Uh We think of ourselves as a people forward educational organization We provide data and insights uh through a whole range of products and services We've been around for 75 years Uh We work both in the US and internationally We're one of the largest educational organizations in the assessment space So when you um when you uh think about the concept of back to school you know how do how do how do you as a human with your background Maybe you'll give a little bit of that And how does the organization think about that framework What comes to mind back to school is that time of year when you're getting your kids ready for going back in the fall and certainly for college as well Uh But I'd like to think about it Gary also as a time where we as adults can reflect and think a little bit about our own learning And um we're at ETS doubling down on supporting adults workers employees of companies with educational products and services So um I think back to school is is is is is an extremely important thing I also want to highlight that you know there's a

seasonality you know we're having this conversation in September when we traditionally think about this But so much of what's happening in the world now is a shift from that kind of calendaring of school Um lifelong learning is happening all year long And uh that old notion of you've got to go to high school for X number of years got to go to college for X number of years you've got to learn for four years and then go earn after for 40 years That's that's disrupting right There's a much more of a learn earn model where you're constantly learning you're constantly earning based on that learning So um so it is it is quaint in some way to think about back to school But I think it's it also is a reminder for us to be really be thinking about all the innovation that's happening in education WW when you think about innovation and education And I think you're right like life alone learning like it you know when I was growing up it was unheard of for a 32 year old human being in America to be thinking about learning or you know like you'd hear like once in a blue moon somebody going to night classes and almost always it was based on the insecurity they had of not having a certain degree Right You know whereas now the progressive conversation rightfully so is you know especially with the way the internet works side hustles like people now actually believe that they can change their careers at 36 if they allocate digital learning or maybe even physical learning You know when you think about innovation and education and you think about some of the challenges Look I'm a I'm a pretty public figure that's been fairly loud over the last decade of like I do not believe that college in the way it's constructed is for everyone in every scenario especially when you take on an extraordinary amount of debt and your natural skills or interest will take you to a place where that those classes and that degree will not create the outcome that you're looking for I think a lot of times people think that I'm anti educ education when I say I don't believe in college for everyone I'm actually the reverse I'm so uncomfortably pro education I'm just pro self-awareness and reality of one situation not universal vanilla ideology One size fits all Where is the educational sector the industries the governments the universities the private and public organizations How advanced are the conversations on this nuance Is it gaining momentum with the actual behavior of the end consumers both pre university college and to what you just talked about post or is there still uh a lot of red tape and ideology stuck in the systems Your assessment Gary after COVID the mood changed in K 12 and higher red I mean we just realized how challenged uh even broken so many of the elements were Um And so now the conversations are much

more about the future Um How do you incorporate A I into our educational system How do you upskill teachers and professors uh to be able to offer uh courses and content that's relevant for the work Sorry to interrupt you Um How to incorporate A I into I'm watching this very carefully because I have Children in the system I'm who I am This is one man's point of view This is not even officially ETS I want to talk to you as the human now because I wanna actually I'm just so you know I think you know I I have some warm feelings towards you So I'm genuinely curious how many school infrastructures forget about teachers and principals because these are these decisions are made above that What percentage of the orgs do you think are actually looking at A I as a positive Because I don't have to tell you almost all of them have banned chat G chat G BT and other aspects because they're in that short term you can cheat on a test you can write it like how many in the macro right now your assessment how many people are pro figuring out how you know you say it But I'm curious of how many people are living it versus what I'm seeing every day Headline by headline by headline of banned banned banned banned Where are we On A I yeah there are districts that are banning Uh unfortunately um there's also um a lot of debate but I would say Gary that the mood is shifting We're actually in that moment right now with when chat GP T uh hit at the end of last year the educational system went whoa we have got to confront this and address this Um Gary we launched uh in partnership with code dot org and uh the Khan Academy um earlier this year a huge initiative called Teach A I And the initiative is exactly that is to foster not just in the United States but throughout the world just the the fundamentals of A I So what 10 or 20 years ago when we were encouraging kids to learn coding it's now teaching them how to learn the fundamentals It it's the literacy it's the essentials whether you're in elementary school middle school kid high school even if you don't want to become a software engineer just learning the fundamentals of what this this means So I I mean I think there's a movement underway Gary I really do You are right that there is a fear factor um in the school system in parts but there are I think a lot of voices that are that are speaking the other way and saying we got really and by the way to the credit of the Fear Factor there's there's a lot of Fear Factor in society on it because it is a profound technology that will challenge us Like deep fake videos is gonna be something that the world is gonna have to figure out the way we figured out you know atomic bombs and diseases like it is a big big deal The fact that we've lived the last 100 plus years all treating video as truth and now we're gonna live through an era

where I mean in three years there's gonna be videos of me all over the internet saying things I never said and it's not gonna be based on the eye easy for someone to know if I said them or not and forget about me I'm I'm a a pimple on the ass politicians you know bosses leaders like there's a lot going on out here So anyway I it's insane how quickly we run out of time I want to give you a minute or two to touch on anything that you were thinking about going into this uh fun session of marketing for now on the back to school edition Anything you want to touch on that we didn't get to Gary I think it it ties into what we were just chatting about and I just want to build on it that the future is moving at a very fast rate So if you think about education as a sector just as much as it is um a foundational element of society it's it's an industry just like retail or other sectors The the currency that's now emerging in education is skills And so you you were talking about the traditional higher ed system not working the traditional higher ed system is largely based on time You've got to do 100 and 20 credits you've got to work through you know it's based on time in a seat right Or time in classes the world is shifting from time to skills as being the fundamental currency And I think this is super exciting and the reason I think it ties into the whole back to school and ties into the workforce is because the world of work is changing so fast A I industry changes new industries forming energy all of the opportunities I see in K 12 and Higher Ed are really to link to that world of work And so the through line here is the new currency the new foundation of education is increasingly becoming skills more personalized education much more innovation So we at ETS are really looking to usher in that from new products and services and assessments to new research that we're doing in this space So we're really excited to be on this show And I love the fact that you invited an education organization uh to to put the school back to school So thanks for inviting Happy too My friend Wishing you success talk soon Thank you Thanks to meet Gary next up We've got Sophie Bambu our friend the CMO of the North Face and she's been there for just over a year and she's come from some pretty stellar brands and look at that background She's come from Ever Lane Nike Converse Where are you Welcome Sophie I know I wish I was there I'm I'm in Denver I wish I wish I was there Yeah last minute last minute background change for you guys Hi I love it So how are you I'm doing good I'm doing good How are you Good Why don't you tell everybody for the few that don't know uh what the north face is and then we'll get into it Oh gosh the north face We are an outdoor industry uh leader We make uh we are actually known for performance uh gear but you know

we've been adopted in youth culture So we now play across performance and what we call performance inspired lifestyle Um And yeah we make all the gears that goes with it from a pair of footwear equipment Go get your tents and your sleeping bags as well Uh We make all of that So um yeah we are uh we're having fun How is how is you know staying on theme you know first of all I'm a pretty big fan of the brand and obviously you have penetrated popular culture and I'm 47 So I think when North Face started to really pop you know in pop culture not just the utilitarian aspect of the brand in the outdoors I was in that sweet spot of late teenage life and going into it So it's always been a brand that I've had a lot of love for Um How does the brand think about back to school This is the back to school edition Is that like a big watershed moment for you You strategize about that There's a ton of marketers and entrepreneurs here So I'd love to get your sense of like where does back to school Sit for your business You've also been in a lot of places in the past so you can speak broader as a marketer Where does it say This is the sixth biggest holiday It's the 13th It's the first for some some don't care others it's their whole business 30% of their business How do y'all think about it Yeah I mean I'll say maybe to put it Um it's probably the only kind of like what I call a commercial holiday that actually lives on our brand map right Because um it is a time where you can you can it's a double edged sword you can do it wrong Uh You can lose yourself as a brand because you're chasing revenue you're chase you're comping year over year Um you can also um use that time to actually do it right And actually really focus on product as a way to elevate your brand back to school for the north face is massive I mean our backpack business alone is I mean we we make a ton of the year just through that back to school window I mean if if when you take your kids to school every single kid has either the jacket or uh or the or the backpack and you know being that brand of choice on the first day of school is essential That's how we build loyalty That's how you know kids build their reputation also on that a little bit Um So it's really really crucial for you just said something that I'm profoundly interested in I believe that people misunderstand apparel and fashion completely and don't understand the higher plane and you just touched on it So I'm actually gonna use this to really educate the masses from a different voice than mine Fashion brands that the logo right the north face I'm very aware of what that meant The swoosh that used to work for We all know what that means All the Gucci and the Prada and all that like can you expand on the knowledge base of the biggest brands in the world of how much they understand that fashion is built

on a human's expression to the rest of the world No different than the haircut style they chose or whether they wear I mean look at me right now like it's like an emerging hat brand my own brand That's like a Pokemon thing I've decided to wear facial hair instead of clean color like like the level of expression that fashion actually is I mean otherwise we would all wear unbranded cloths and call it a day Can you go to that deepest highest level What this all means Yeah it's an identity builder right So the reality is what we the way I look at it whether you're fashion or you're actually creating kind of innovative and uh benefit driven product you're serving a need that the consumer might know or not know that they have And the majority of the time we're actually serving a need of identity they want to be able to um express outwardly to the world who they are and what they stand for Sometimes it is hey I'm an early adopter I know the coolest things I am into innovation I care about tech or I care about sustainability or actually to use Some people choose to not wear any brand names because that is also their identity and they want to actually identify with a specific segment or group or or or belief right We have a huge role in making sure that people can find themselves in our product So we actually a lot of the work that I've been doing over the past year actually is moving away from consumer segmentation which is useful when we do targeted content et cetera by moving into mindsets because we're serving mindsets we're serving Right Yeah because if you're an 18 to 21 year old you know Latino male like cool but like your essence may be a 40 I mean I've uh there's a 22 year old kid in my life right now The only way to sell to him is a a relative like is to market to a 58 year old like middle America like simple like like he's he's just he's 58 years old he's 22 he's fucking 58 So it is just a number Really What we care about is the behavior we care about the why and what uh you know gets people there and again like just even to go back to back to school and what we were saying it's easy to lose that focus when you go into a place where to a point every brand plays It's basically a menu unlimited menu of option and you just become one item against you know so many other So the the work comes in before and after to make sure people can find themselves in the brand and will choose the brand at back to school time and then during back to school time is really for us like what is it that we want to elevate I mean this year we actually made the conscious decision that back to school for us would be a back back campaign But go in depth Tell me where the zipper is fantastic Tell me why we built this for the outdoor versus hey get your gear at the North Pole which is kind of like the traditional approach the why the

utilitarian why it's about the why last minute or two for all the CEO S and CMO S what do they miss about back to school if they are deep in it Like they are sharpie or or a fashion brand or or what are they missing if they're not deep in it it's like actually not a big on paper obvious place for them to play What permission or opportunities are they not seeing Yeah I think um back to school is breeding ground for false narrative So what happens often is you're looking at the results of back to school and you're like hey you know putting all my eggs in the performance marketing basket or the more commercial basket works I'm getting the return and very often what happens is forgetting or missing out on the elevated expression of the brand So like you know traditional funnel model missing out on all your top kind of like funnel opportunity by just focusing on the middle uh on the on the bottom I think that's traditional like you see a lot of that So that's a risk when you are a part of back to school when you're not a part of back to school Actually I don't even know what you're missing I I you're lucky you're lucky if you're not a part of back to school It's not my favorite thing How about that It's not my favorite Is is it not your favorite thing from an operational standpoint Because it comes at a time of year It's tough to get orgs big orgs A lot of entrepreneurs here don't realize what you're dealing with in these big companies It's tough to get a lot of shit done in the summer in corporate life And number two you've also already got be planning for the fucking holidays and it's kind of in this middle and it's like fuck it's almost like weirdly annoying And that's also usually when you're planning your three year planning process and all that stuff So yeah it's really crazy Um But yeah I mean you know for me it's just yeah it's it's it's a lot to manage Uh And honestly it's not always the most aspirational stuff that you do Uh You really have a very clear ro i and clear goals that you're trying to accomplish And you know I personally I really like the elevated R stuff and you know the big strategic thinking um and back to school doesn't always allow you to do that It it fits within it Um but hey it's it's also back to school now It starts like in like May I mean it's I mean Santa Claus is in like retail store starting in April Like everyone's just gotten really Halloween stuff like right now and I'm like why Halloween stuff everywhere already I'm like Jeez can we just enjoy football coming back anyway Love you Thanks So we wish you well thank you Sophie Gary I'm super fired up about this next guest He's the CMO of 4H I don't know if you know about 4h But uh you know when I was a little kid in Wisconsin I was big time into 4H Excuse me I I went to high school in 100 and pound New Jersey where 4h was religion I didn't know what I was

walking into in eighth grade when I moved I came from Edison New Jersey Never heard of 4h It was more city urban culture and then I got to Hunterdon County New Jersey and 4H was fucking religion Amazing They're the largest youth organization They touched 6 million kids It's amazing And Ivan has come from the music and entertainment industry So he's done a lot in the two years that he's been there and we're super fired up to talk to you Ivan Thank you Andrea religion I love it We are religion That's what it is Well you know I think when you are you you know you think about boy scouts girl scouts for a you know like you think about these you know uh little league baseball you think about these institutions that have formed a lot of our lives especially you know as the world becomes more digital kids are spending more and more time indoors There was a funny tiktok I and I saw where this one guy says he makes a he makes like a tries to make a video making fun of my generation saying wait a minute you guys used to drink water from a hose Like didn't you know there were sinks inside and then like this woman stitched it and she was like uh we used to not be allowed in the house like we used to be outside and this is how we grew up and it made me laugh last night and makes me think a little bit about this combo which is like these iconic institutions that you know no no kidding When I say religion I think back to Jason Reker Katie Hank I I'm thinking about people in my high school that I got to know because I moved in eighth grade I got to know them by junior senior year and they were still incredibly passionate about giving back to 4h because they referred to that organization as foundational in their lives Yeah that's what I've come across as I started my role two years or 2.5 years ago and and sharing with my network I was surprised how many folks came out of the woodworks and shared similar sentiment You know I was like wow I didn't know it was that um you know critical to to to your development But you know 2.5 years in and I've realized it's one of America's great innovations up there with Coca Cola and like mcdonald's right I mean our mission is to create opportunity for all kids just there just with that mission alone I was like sign me up let's do this actually you know you just give us the mission statement give people because I do think a lot of people don't live in parts of the country or the world who are watching and listening that are not familiar with the organization give us give us a one minute honor Sure So 4h which is literally 4h s that are on a four leaf clover um has been around for 100 and 20 years and it's always been about providing kids with hands on learning personal growth and life skills So things like public speaking running a meeting project management civil

discourse having empathy giving feedback judging others like through uh you know um shows and and and and uh I'm sorry to interrupt you do does 4h believe it is an incredibly strong compliment to the K through 12 system that is rampant where it's teaching a lot of the soft skills and life skills You know one of the arguments that people like me always talk about is like man I really wish I learned a lot of the stuff that actually happens once you become 22 in school Do you feel do you feel like that's a strength of four ages of rounding out the curriculum Absolutely Things like public speaking and a kid at the age of 9 10 years old doing a speech in front of tens if not hundreds of people Um and and overcoming that fear and then becoming a master speaker that you don't get that in school right So we are definitely expanding the toolkit and I love Sophie's your conversation with Sophie Our product is 6 million already leaders That's what we're we're grooming and we have our eyes on like 10 million right We think every kid should be in this program We we'd have a much better world if if if we did that what was the biggest uh I mean uh uh injured it in the in the upfront But for everybody who might have missed it what were your two jobs prior to this So I spent a career in entertainment I was always drawn to music and um I thought I was gonna go and you know tour with Justin Timberlake um or or like work at a record label I ended up doing both not with Justin Timberlake but I did go on tour as a musician and then I like my curiosity grew um to to sort of like see what other success is out there beyond music in the marketing space And that led me to a you know a very lucky opportunity at Nickelodeon um where I really cut my teeth and learning how to build a Did you ever interact with Pam Kaufman there She's one of my mentors love her to peace She's the one she is a special of a person in the business world as there is Yeah And she has like endless amounts of energy I've never seen her like down she's always positive She is a force and anyone who knows her knows she's a force but and then I was able to uh you know parlay that into a good amount of time at Disney um which led which led me to this opportunity where we're at today So Nickelodeon Disney all these big IP S entertainment all you know should I clearly love you know what was the biggest besides how many people were impacted by 4h what else was surprising or different Just trying to frame this up for people that to give them courage to go into new shifts in their career or try new things What was what was surprising and what was most enjoyable Well I think I was intentionally looking to get out of my comfort zone Uh I am constantly learning I am always the dumbest person in the room in the best possible way surrounded by phd S who are experts in

building great young people What about what about reframing that And I know you're being self deprecating and clever But what about reframing that From dumbest to most curious Most curious I like that That's what I think I think words matter and I think a lot of people have imposter syndrome which really means insecurity But I could tell that's not what you were saying by the tone and tenor I think you know it's funny I'm a big talker but so it's hard for people to see it But when they start working with me they realize my core strength is the curiosity and the listening I grasp pretty quickly not in reading comprehension which is why I have to do a lot of verbal meetings but I grasp quickly which is why I then talk to get more insights But I think the most curious person in the room is a very valuable asset to a team Yeah And I'm constantly learning and uh going around the country visiting farms visiting urban areas suburban areas because you know 4h is in every county across the US which was another aha for me Uh growing up in Brooklyn I didn't have that exposure Uh But now I've seen firsthand the power of the programming and the byproduct's kids they are well spoken they are ambitious they're resilient they're confident and we're talking about back to school Not a lot has changed some nuance here and there from when you and I started high school but kids want to feel accepted in each of their personal groups you know as much as shit changes It's all the same thing right Just like the last thing with Sophie kids are gonna wear the fucking kid robot or or you know whatever segment like they're gonna wear the brand That's the hottest Iz Cicci These kids have speaking fable like people are gonna always try to identify that way and people are always gonna want to be accepted every kid on earth this week that went into a new school that was going into a new school maybe just moved or something of that nature or went to the next school system middle school high school all they want to do is be accepted find a friend That's it self esteem belonging Um And it's an opportunity for brands to show up and help these kids express themselves through their individuality right And for it plays in that space through our programming work confidence boosters right Um So hopefully we you know we we're building these kids that have more swagger they're more confident they're more empathetic they're just better citizens bro I agree I agree that like I but you know like it it's just so exciting to help them be better citizens but also find balance right You know like to me right now what I'm thinking about is the balance of everything I think what what I like about 4h overall is I think it's a balance system to the K through 12 system And and I think in general America especially is pulling in such different directions politically

business world socially even you know one thing that bothers me a little bit I mean even though I think about it a lot which is like I don't know when we grew up there was less like generational warfare Like I didn't think us Gen Xers were like against the Boomers And I wasn't like you know like I wasn't mad at the millennials I was like pump for them Like right now like people are identifying with their generation Yeah I think it's because there's just so much more information it is more socialized We say it we say it in all of these convenings They they are they are they are aware of it They're more self aware of who they are of what generation they are To me the to me the great goal of society is to get us to be all part of one brand called team human And I feel like unfortunately right now we're all trying to self identify into the most narrow places which always leads to for all new history Buffs out there War when you identify with one group over another religion race country Uh We've got a lot of it and I think one of the thing I see from a bunch of four age kids is um being you said it and I think about like the old genre of like be be good to your neighbor like that's gone You know like the reason us kids were able to go out in the eighties was we have 39 parents not one or two right Like my Robbie Tick's mom was my mom too So if I was acting a fool in her backyard I mean in the eighties you might get spanked by some fucking friend's mom like she was different and I think I think one of the things at its best what I think 4h has done well and I came across 4h kid not too long ago which is why I was excited that that was the topic that we spoke on uh on a train Actually I think it was going to Balti uh DC from uh uh just making teaching these kids how to love themselves so they can love everybody else Yeah And 4h ers are more inclined to help you out You will find when you come across a 4h and a 4h alum right It shows up in the in the in the adult version Uh They're more inclined to help you out and and extend that olive branch I enjoy this brother Wish you well take care See you Thank you Ivan Boy the chat is going wild Thank you Gary team human human love you See you later OK All right Let's bring up Zubin Zubin is our EVP of Ecommerce and we've got a really exciting conversation coming up with none other than Kate Spade Right Zubin Indeed What an amazing session we've had so far I can't wait to chat with Amanda Amazing So we're gonna welcome up Amanda Bopp and she runs all things marketing and ecommerce and focuses on one of our favorite topics which is we call it brand performance That that whole notion of how are we balancing out brand and performance marketing and we know you're living it every day Amanda So thanks so much for joining us Of course So happy to be here Hi

everyone Hey Amanda Uh Lovely to see you again Amanda let's get started Um First of all shout out to Z Cicci I hadn't heard that in a long time and it brought me back to high school cream sweatshirt I can't get that image out of my head Um But back to school theme for today I want to talk to you a little bit about the marketing side of back to school consumer behavior What folks can learn from your experiences this season and previous seasons but specifically this season can you talk to us a little bit about the shopping trends you've seen from consumers They're unique to this season versus previous seasons Yeah So one of the things that we're seeing and I think it was mentioned earlier is that all moments and holidays are being pulled up earlier and earlier So we saw um customers really looking for back to school product as early as late June Um and then we launched a lot of back to school activity in early July which is a bit earlier for us So we definitely see this pull forward In addition I think because of all of the things that are happening within the macro economy we see the consumer being much more price sensitive And in addition to that she really wants to see that she's getting value for the money that she spends So what we saw more so this year relative to prior years was a stronger emphasis on functionality She wanted to make sure the laptop would fit in the bag Does it have enough pockets Doesn't have enough zippers and and so on and so forth Whereas we had some other messaging that we felt like would be really valuable to the consumer things about recycled materials or fashion plays We saw those being less interesting to her relative to the functional aspects this year And I think it's more about again she's looking to make sure she's squeezing out as much value for her dollar as possible So a lot of fascinating points there let's talk about starting the season early and starting to market early Um What kind of drove that And what did you learn as a result of that And how could you shift and iterate and be more agile as a result of starting early Yeah So I think a couple of things I think one I think the consumer is really looking for moments in the calendar of punctuation right We know that um one of the things that gives consumers permission to buy new clothing and accessories is this idea of new of starting something new So I think the more that we can get into that mindset for her earlier the more it gives her permission to purchase I think that's one piece of it The other piece of it is of course starting early gives you the opportunity to eke out a little bit more share relative to your competitors And then lastly it gives you the opportunity to think about OK what's working what's not working and what do we need to shift as we get into the peak moment of the season And I think an example of

that is again where we had some messaging around things that were perhaps more fashion driven um or more driven around messaging about sustainability We thought that that wasn't resonating as strongly So we had the opportunity to make to make a shift there So I think that's a fascinating point there One of the things that we talk uh to a lot of brands that we work with uh is this notion that social listening and really leveraging your dot com and access that you have to first party data really gives you significant leg up on those organizations that don't So you can understand what's working shift accordingly Can you talk to us a little bit about that process that you realize that the functional messaging was outweighing or performing better than the fashion focused messaging and how you learn that and what you did as a result of it Yeah So one of the things that I think we've done well here at Kate Spade and at Tapestry our parent company in general is we've really built some nice muscle around reading and reacting Um And so we look at a variety of different data points Some of that is social listening Some of that is the way that people are searching on ecommerce Some of that is just pure performance data in terms of what people are clicking on and engaging on Um So we have a pretty good mechanism set up in place to be able to listen um and make some make some changes and earlier on in the season as I said you know we thought hey we've got some product that's got recycled materials in it and we feel really great about this and this is a message that we think is great for the environment and the consumer will really respond to and it's not that she didn't respond to it But what we heard her talking about much more was questions around functionality will my laptop fit into this Um You know does it have a pocket for my water bottle and so on and so forth And when we started to see those pieces of feedback come in scale from a variety of different data points Again be it social listening be it what the consumer was searching for We have that opportunity to say OK let's switch out some of the language that we're using Let's switch out some of the assets that we're using to make sure that we're putting front and center the product that she's looking for Um Because we know especially in a digital environment if she doesn't see what she's looking for immediately from you it's quite easy for her to go and and find it from somewhere else That's fantastic I think it's uh again such a great uh approach to marketing and really the only way to properly market in today's society based on consumer behavior to really listen to what's happening out there and create this mechanism as you have that gives you the ability to shift that gives you the ability to change your messaging and creative so that you're addressing what

it is that she's actually interested in Speaking of kind of from a that's from a social digital standpoint how do you infuse what you're hearing from store associates into that model Yeah So that's actually a really good point That's another piece of input that we have Um We have a weekly business recap meeting and we get lots of feedback from the sales associates within that conversation Um And what was happening here is we were actually seeing a lot of synergy between what the consumer was saying online and what they were saying in stores to our sales associates So this was an example of where that all really dovetailed very nicely Um And one piece of feedback from one population corroborated what we were seeing elsewhere Um And so we were able again to make that change in a wholesale way um that enabled the consumer to better find the product in store as well as online That's amazing Um Amanda as you've heard from our other guests these sessions go incredibly quickly So one you've been I think you've shared significant amount of insight for our audience and hopefully the marketers out there are learning quite a bit and it's helping them adapt to what they're already in flight from back to school as well as what they're going to be doing for the holidays One final question for you from your unique vantage point in the fashion industry What do you think is the most significant change or trend is reshaping fashion retail today And why should our audience take note So one of the things that's really interesting right now is that younger consumers particularly Gen Z there's this idea that in order to blend in you have to stand out and it's a bit of a contradiction in terms in that consumers are looking to express more individuality to feel like they're fitting into the group And so it's a really interesting thing from a fashion perspective because historically the industry is used to hey we set a trend we set a tone we tell the consumers what to buy and they pick up on it Now what we have to be able to do is find nuance within those trends and ways to speak to variety varieties of consumers and subsets to make pieces of collections or pieces of product feel like it's their own and that they can discover it and reinterpret it um as necessary so they can feel again like the individual who fits in with the crowd That's incredible I love that And I think that it's so incredible to be able to have again that organization to your point and the products that you have that are from a manufacturing standpoint I'm sure it's not easy but you're giving individuals the ability to be individual and yet to your point feel blended in which is quite ironic and yet society today Amanda This was lovely Thank you so much for joining us Of course Thank you for having me Have a wonderful afternoon You as well Thank you Thank you Amanda And

thank you Zubin Always a pleasure Likewise All right next up let's bring Zach Nadler Ceo of Veer speakers I love Zach How's it Going I'm doing great How are you doing Oh I'm so fired up for this conversation I'm gonna keep the intro very brief because I want to save all the time to sit back and learn We've got Laura Gasner Otting who's a best selling author And hopefully you can tell us a little bit more She's much more than just an author She's a coach She's a catalyst She's gonna tell us how to think big and I think we could all use this in our back to school um edition this time in our life So welcome Laura Thank you Laura Welcome to marketing for the Now how are you Oh I think you might be on mute Andrea We get back behind the scenes How's that Is that better I can't hear Laura Is that better Oh there we go Here we go right now We're cooking All right We're we're still figuring out all the technical stuff I like this Um All right So we're gonna dive right in because we do only have 10 minutes Um And so I love this because the timing is great This is the back to school edition and you actually just dropped off your second son to college So I can't imagine that when you're writing Wonder hell that's what you were talking about So your latest book Wonder hell tell us a little bit about what that feeling is Yeah So wonder hell is that moment when you've achieved something And you're like oh my God it's amazing It's exciting It's humbling It's wonderful And also there's possibility in front of me that I didn't know existed And isn't that exciting and intimidating and anxiety provoking and imposter syndrome rendering It's amazing It's wonderful But it's also hell it's wonder hell And I think all of us in this moment in time are feeling this this is incredible There's so much more out there Can I go for it Wow Yeah I mean I think you articulated that great because I think it's a feeling we all have and didn't even realize we were all having it Um So with this episode being about back to school and there's so many marketers that are watching watching this was think of someone said it earlier but this is like the second biggest spending period for consumers And so when these marketers are dealing with such an important time and you know even for students who are starting something new there's a lot of self doubt that can come into play So can you share some tips for how these folks can kind of navigate all this self doubt when there's so much at stake Yes I think back to school it's almost like New Year's It's like the real New Year's right I think Anne Handley said that the other day it is a time of reinvention and renewal of hope and optimism It's gonna be my year finally Right But it also comes with this I don't know it's really gonna be all right If I'm beginning to realize I'm a fraud am I gonna get doubt

Uncertainty doubt and security I think everyone wants to feel special but nobody wants to feel different And I think if we look back on some of the times when we were at our best it wasn't when we were conforming to what everybody else was doing I think facts have a hard time arguing with emotion So if we make a list of the times when we were at our best that's a great way to remind ourselves that those moments when we were different we actually were pretty damn special Wow And I mean there's so much there and I think something that you're kind of touching on is this idea of redefining success And I know that you've written a lot about this but how do you know whether it's the executives watching this or students were living in such results oriented world But how do you kind of navigate that when you're trying to measure your own success Yeah look I think we are all given these other definitions of success right Definitions of success handed to us by our parents our teachers our bosses And a lot of times we have to stop and say you know I can't be insatiate hungry for someone else's goals So what actually matters to me now when I was an entrepreneur running an executive search firm I realized that I could go hard After several results I could either maximize for profit I could maximize for freedom flexibility or I could maximize for impact in the world And that is that at any given time I could maybe maximize two of the three of them but I couldn't really go for all three So I would sort of set seasons I would set intentions I'd set goals for periods of time where I would run hard at one or two of these you know pretty consistently And what I found was that the third always came So if you're in this place and you're like I've got everybody else's definitions being handed to me I would stop and think what actually matters to me most What are the things that are the biggest priority when all the plates are up in the air and I can only catch a couple of them which are the ones I'm gonna really want because if we go hard at those things that matter to us most not only do the rest of them come but we're actually really good at the things that we really care about Got it That makes a lot of sense And I think prioritizing is something we can all probably do a lot better job at Um And so you know this is actually marketing for the now right So I want I want to kind of go back to some of the marketers here Um And I'm curious like with wonder how what are the real takeaways that that marketers specifically can learn from So what I found from you know I talked to 100 different glass ceiling shatters Olympic Medalists start up unicorns all in these moments of life where everything changed and every single one of them whether they were literally starting like a second billion dollar company which is a great

phrase right A second billion dollar company or they we should all be so lucky or they're like at the starting blocks of the Olympics with a gold medal in their pockets Still wondering like am I going to fuck it up on this one this time or if they were marketing a new product or something They all found themselves in these moments And what they realized was that meaning was the thing that mattered most So when they were talking to the consumers when they were trying to decide if they want to do the work in the dark when nobody could see when they were trying to put together a new product what they did is they said what actually matters to the people who are going to buy from me judge me make decision whether or not I'm going to get to the next stage And so for example you know nobody cares if your product is made up of you know recycled fabric if it's not going to help you feel confident being the best you No one cares how much memory is on the memory card if you're not going to be the life of the party So if marketers are thinking about going after the what \$83 billion of spending that's happening right now the way that they go after it is not to talk about your product or your process But to talk about the problem that you solve So if you can see your consumer's problem and they can feel seen in that problem then all that's left for you to do is to say I see you I got you And I'm going to hold that problem in my hand until our shared problem goes away So it's really actually a lot easier to say I solve your problem than to say let me tell you the 15 different ways Our process is cool And so that's for the marketers What are the non marketers I mean I know you were in executive search for a long time So do you have any personal examples You can share Yeah I can tell you that when I went in in an executive search I would walk into my client's office my potential clients office And I was like let me tell you how geeked out I am about how cool our process is and I crushed it I mean I was really really good except I didn't sell Jack and the reason I didn't sell any thing was because at the end of the day I didn't actually tell them I solve their problem And one day I had a friend on a search committee I thought he's called me up afterwards and be like Laura You're awesome You got the work and he called me He was like Laura sorry you didn't get it I was like why And he said let me ask you a question Do you find the world's best talent And I was like of course I do man That's like table sticks He goes yeah but you never said it Every other search firm walked in and said we find the world's best talent Now let me tell you how you walked in and you were like let me tell you how we do our work and we never knew that you actually realized that the thing we cared about most that we need to find the world's best talent was

the thing you actually did So starting from where your customer is where your consumer is and saying we solved your problem I see your problem It's real I get it I honor it I'm gonna solve it Now let me tell you how they don't care about the process or the the the the product until you tell them you see their problem I love that It feels like you were kind of battling your own authentic authenticity Like what do I want to be and kind of what do I want to stand for And I mean I'm kind of curious because with this idea of wonder how and and would you dove so much into authenticity Like there's a lot of internal struggles we all have with battling this success and especially now right whether it's a marketer going into the back to school season or even a student going back to school how do you balance this kind of genuine yourself Right With such significant ambition yet Can I tell you a secret I don't think ambition is a dirty word Everyone's like oh she's so ambitious Like it's like a bad thing Ok Would showing up let me ask you this would having more money more time more resources more leverage more market share or more name recognition help you show up better for the people you love and the causes you hold dear you would you I'd like time Yeah OK So having more time right Having more of anything more money more time or leverage more power more anything that would help you show up better for the people you love and the causes you hold dear Right Yeah So it's not your it's not your ambition it's your responsibility right I don't think it's a dirty word and I think being able to show up better for the people you love like crushing it in your work so that you had more time to be with your family I know you just dropped your daughter at school yesterday Able to do that more That allows you to be the most genuine more authentic version of yourself So why wouldn't you be hella ambitious so that you could do more of that I think they go hand in hand I I'm all for ambition I think ambition is the road to genuine authenticity I love that Well I'm getting the hook here So I want to thank you for joining us here in marketing for the Now Andrea Thanks for having us I think we need a full episode on just this topic Not that later but I am I am so into this and just go so many notes Incredible thanks to you guys Just loved it All right And last but not least I wanna welcome up Mindy Shire I just met Mindy last week but I feel like I've possibly known her my entire life I don't know She just one of the most brilliant people I've ever met She comes from the fashion industry but she's now bringing all of that knowledge and all that passion to people that have disabilities Um Just incredible work and mindy I'm so glad that you could join us Um We're just about to hit fashion week which is interesting Um But would love for you

maybe to kick things off and share just a little bit about your work Um And what got you um especially to be the founder of runway of Dreams Absolutely Well first of all Andrea thank you so much for having me This is such an important topic on such an important platform So as you mentioned I'm a fashion designer by trade Uh but I'm also the mom of a now 18 year old son who has a rare form of muscular dystrophy And when he was entering school in kindergarten our biggest worry was how was he going to be able to go to the bathroom on his own if he was wearing anything that had had buttons and zippers in it And so we solved that problem by him wearing sweatpants every day until he was eight years old and came home and said mom I wanna wear jeans I wanna wear what everybody else gets to wear And it was a pivotal moment in my life in my career that I needed my eight year old to remind me of how powerful clothing is to who you are as a human as a person So much of what Laura and Amanda just talked about um in terms of confidence and identity et cetera So I modified a pair of his jeans Um And when I saw the massive confidence that came over him from being able to not only independently dress himself for the first time but to go into school with his head held much higher from a pair of jeans it opened my eyes to the fact that there are 1.8 billion people on our planet that have a disability It's the largest minority in the world that any single one of us could be a part of it any point in our life So how in the world are we not thinking and making products for a population that is so large and so important in in uh our our world So in 2013 I started Runway of Dreams Foundation with the tiny little goal of changing the fashion industry to be inclusive of people with disabilities In 2016 we partnered with Tommy Hilfiger made fashion history by developing the first ever mainstream adaptive clothing line And that really opened the floodgates to so many other brands even other industries knocking on our door saying how do we get involved How do we develop adaptive products So in 2019 I launched gamut Management which is the first of its kind consulting and talent management company exclusively in the Adaptive Space and Mindy I have to tell you when you share those statistics at the at Wonder K the conference that we're at at Wonder I about fell off my chair because I had no idea that there are 1.8 billion people that are suffering from disabilities but you also shared something and I don't remember the exact number but just in terms of economically the opportunity for brands and for those that can kind of lean in it It is absolutely a huge business opportunity at the same time Absolutely It's \$13 trillion is the estimated spending power of this population That to be completely

honest is still white space It it and and really think about where we are in our lives and the world how often do we get white space This is really still untapped with huge movers um in the industry that are really making strides especially in the fashion industry But there's an opportunity and as I shared um at the conference it is really almost impossible to find um a company that has a product or service that cannot be modified to make it easier for people with disabilities to utilize Yeah And you know I was really struck by some of the examples and you showed a lot of visuals and things But I think you know I myself have had a number of different in injuries over time where it's difficult for me to put buttons and small buttons or you know hook and eye when you were sharing that kind of thing I couldn't help to feel like you're making the world you know sort of better and easier for all kinds of people that may be suffering may not in fact have um a declared disability And yet um you know we all have challenges at different moments in time and that you any one of us could have a disability in the future Absolutely And and one you know fact that I stated that I think is really important is when the button and the button hole was developed it was developed in the 13th century And the fact that we are still utilizing that technology when we literally can run our lives through our phones is such an opportunity for our in so many business is to rethink the way that things have been done so that more people can utilize um the product or service A great example too one you're wearing and those are eyeglasses They started out as a medical device Now it is a multibillion dollar industry that is solidly even a part of the fashion industry It is it is considered an accessory that we as consumers really love to wear The other is texting texting was developed as an alternate way to communicate Now it's the most used form of communication So really rethinking the way that things are done so that more people can utilize the product or service is not only innovative but it is adaptive in nature You know the other thing that struck me is just that all of us are trying to think more about our diversity You know our de and I um initiatives and things like that as as business people And yet many are not thinking about populations with disability whether they're physical disabilities or I sit on the board of Creative Spirit that focuses more on intellectual disabilities but it does feel like um you know this is not we aren't talking about about this population enough Um can you share any more about that And maybe uh you know are there ways that we can all become more involved Definitely And that's again one of the reasons why I'm so grateful to be here because unfortunately disability classically has been left out of the de I conversation

Um when again it is the only minority that is a cross section to every other minority you will find them in the world of disability So it's it's really and and I shared this with the work that we are doing currently with Victoria's Secret and not only helping them to uh modify their products to have adaptive uh bras and underwear that's launching in October and on our runways next week Um but they also um simultaneously were working internally and and really in their de I statements their hr their sales team how they are approaching hiring people with disabilities It is something that absolutely has to be considered internally as much as externally Um And that is something that that we at gamut take really seriously and and really helping brands navigate the process to become more disability confident That's extraordinary So you kind of hinted at what's going on next next week we know that um you know New York is um is all in on the on the uh fashion runway all the shows that are going on Can you tell us a little bit more about what you're up to Absolutely So th this coming Wednesday the 13th uh we will be hosting our biggest New York Fashion Week show where we will have over 70 models with all different disabilities wearing product from Tommy Hilfiger Target Coles JC Penney Zappos Steve Madden Stride Wright And actually for the first first time ever products will be debuted uh from Victoria's Secret uh their first adaptive products on women of all different ages ethnicities and and abilities So it's really going to be a pivotal moment and I'm so excited that you're going to be there to experience it I can't tell you how excited I am and we'll make sure that we'll share all that we can uh with the broader world It's gonna be such a special event and you know what we'd love for folks to be leaning in and helping in any way shape or form if there's anything else that you could share in terms of a call to action um you know feel free to do it but we're gonna be chatting this up on social uh and hope to have everyone that wants to join in on this on this mission Um be a part of it Absolutely I mean the the the call to action that I always say is to talk about it go back to your companies if you if you no matter what product or service that you are working on or if you don't necessarily have one But internally we could be doing better Think about the numbers that we talked about 1.8 billion people identify with having just so that's actually a much higher Number \$13 trillion is up for the grabs for the amount of spending power that this population has And it's the largest minority on our planet that every single one of us could be a part of that is power We can all do better and make this world a much more accessible place we can we can together Well thank you so much Mindy I love you

Love your work Can't wait to see you next week some more And thanks so much for joining us Thank you All right Thanks everyone for joining this episode This back to school episode We hope you have a great kickoff um of the fall and we look forward to seeing you in our next episode on October 19th from 12 to 1 p.m. Eastern We will see you then