

## Campaign Title: The Lil Jif Project



### **Award Designation and Category:**

2022 Grand Ogilvy Award Winner  
GOLD, Food & Beverage

**Year the campaign took place:** 2021 - 2022

**Brand:** Jif/ The JM Smucker Company

**Creative Agency:** PSONE, Publicis Groupe

**Media Company/Agency:** Zenith, Publicis Groupe

**Research Company:** FireFish USA

**Additional Affiliated Companies:** None

### **Summary of the marketing challenge, methodology, insight discovered, creative execution and business impact.**

Jif noticed increased pressure from private label PB products, compounded by its main branded competitor outspending it many times over with a new campaign. Jif needed to ignite brand growth through consideration and conversion, especially among a new, younger audience.

Creative agency PSONE brought a seed of an idea rooted in a timely, cultural debate between old vs new hip hop fans. Research was required to not only validate this but to inform new creative featuring this genre. Deep knowledge from ardent rap fans was needed to ensure the message was respectful and authentic. Key guidelines and guardrails would also be needed to steer the creative, ensuring strong appeal, relevance and brand fit for rap & non-rap fans alike.

A multi-phase engagement - including an initial stakeholder knowledge-sharing workshop, a series of paired in-depth interviews with rap superfans, focus groups, and iterative 'huddles' with the creative & client teams - we learned how Jif could authentically land the execution without descending into parody, while amplifying the key takeaway that Jif is best PB on the market.

The result: Jif's highest category share in 10 years, significant lift in social voice share, and achieving its goal of attracting a younger audience.

## **Consumer Insight**

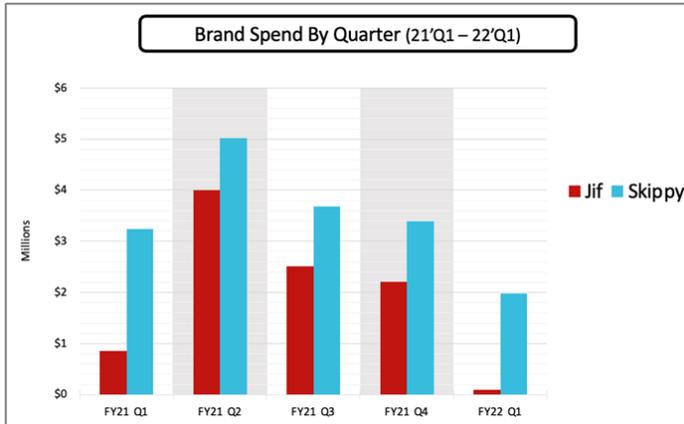
Jif could help unite both old and new generations to create a new pb-inspired flow that everyone could respect.

## **Marketing Challenge**

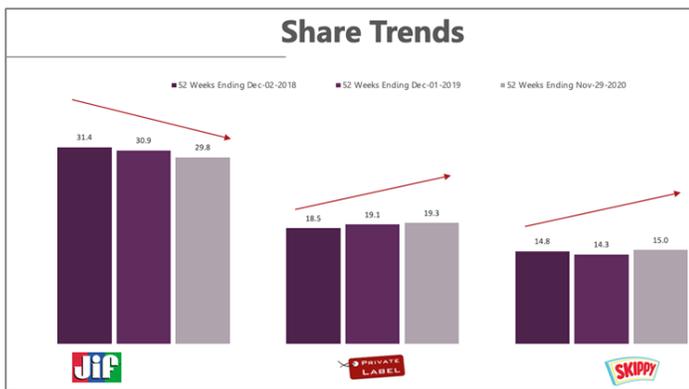
The [\*That Jif'ing Good\*](#) campaign launched in 2019 to shift the brand from its longtime strategy of speaking only to moms with its "Choosy Moms Choose Jif" campaign, to appeal to a wider audience of peanut butter lovers - particularly younger consumers who were driving growth in the category.

However, since the initial *That Jif'ing Good* campaign launch, the brand faced increased threats:

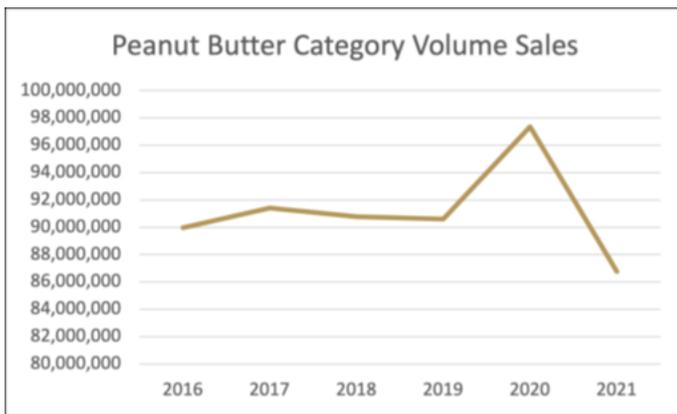
- Jif's largest branded competitor, Skippy, launched a new youth-focused campaign and had been consistently outspending Jif on average 78% more for more than a year, and 20x Jif's budget in the quarter prior to launch<sup>1</sup>



- Along with Private Label, Skippy was gaining share at Jif's expense<sup>2</sup>



- After a boost from at-home eating during COVID in 2020, the peanut-based spreads category declined 10.9% in 2021, making it even more competitive to just stay flat<sup>3</sup>



In short, after being budget constrained for over a year, Jif needed to find a way to break through, grab attention and increase relevance, to win over younger households.

The mission was clear: get today's younger peanut butter buyers to go nuts for Jif, even when the brand is outshouted and outspent by its biggest rival.

To not only reach, but emotionally connect with these younger, more passionate peanut butter lovers, would mean engaging them in a bold new way. Younger consumers in particular seek brands that are more involved in culture. They tend to be distrusting of, and less connected to, "big brands". Despite (or maybe because of) this, they are open to – and hungry for – brands to participate in and shape what's going on in the world, to actively participate in their interests.

Few things are more relevant to this younger generation than hip hop. It's the number one genre in the US overall by listenership, album sales, and streaming. It continues to grow in popularity year-on-year, especially with Millennials and Gen Z. In addition, peanut butter fans over-index as hip hop and rap music fans: nearly half (49%) of all PB users aged 18-54 have hip hop or R&B tracks on their Spotify streams, making them 25% more likely to stream the genre vs. Spotify total users.

As they explored the genre, PSONE & Jif discovered that debates and battles have always been central to hip hop, pushing its evolution. In recent years, the debate focused on rap styles. Many traditional rappers believed strongly in lyricism, but a new style of rap focused more on the rhythm and beat, with lyrics that were often indecipherable. These new artists were often dismissed and derided by old school lyrical rappers.

Some of the old school rappers were quoted as saying that these new rappers sounded like they had a mouth full of peanut butter. Enter: Jif!

The team was excited by the potential to align the brand with this organic conversation within a highly relevant genre. But, for a historically risk-averse company, and particularly in the context of the BLM movement, the campaign would need to be carefully considered and informed with strategically focused research with rap fans.

From hip hop's very beginnings, rivalries between crews, states, and styles have been fraught with tension and, with this fresh style of rap currently dominating, an incredibly nuanced understanding of it – and wider hip-hop culture & history - would be needed. The fierce passion that surrounds this uniquely layered, multidimensional musical genre meant that hip hop fans must be engaged at every stage, from idea to execution. Jif must find the right way to be provocative, to create and engage in the right conversations, to not go viral for the wrong reasons, and to genuinely connect with the audience.

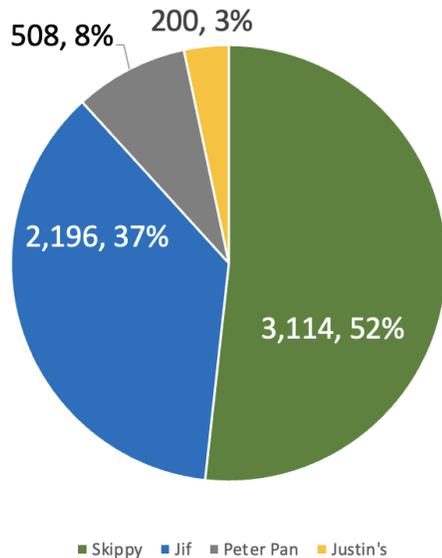
This campaign *had* to be a success for Jif to regain its lost share (loss of 1.6 points between November 2018 and 2020, as Private Label and Skippy collectively increased by 1 point during the same period<sup>2</sup>.)

**The objective:** increase category share by at least 1%

To make this happen, the campaign must:

1. Make Jif the most-talked-about peanut butter brand
  - o **Objective:** Grow share of voice from 37% to 55%<sup>4</sup>

**JIF SHARE OF VOICE**  
May-July 2021  
(Mention Count, Percentage)



- 2. Convert brand interest into action.
  - **Objective:** Increase branded search.
- 3. Get more people to recognize Jif's superior taste, to stand above the sea of sameness
  - **Objective:** Strengthen Jif's "great taste" ownership vs. competition.

## Methodology

The team planned a multi-phased, iterative, agency-client, collaborative approach - with ongoing consultation with the hip hop community - to ensure Jif's new message would connect and engage in the right way, with the desired audience.

### 1. IMMERSION

Phase One was a deeply immersive kick-off session between Firefish, PSONE, and Jif brand & insights teams. We reviewed all existing research & intelligence to ground the team in the current trends, priorities & hypotheses and engaged key stakeholders to surface crucial concerns to ensure we could address, and mitigate, them with our learning.

A primary challenge uncovered at this stage was reassuring the Smucker senior leadership that the campaign would connect with the audience in the right way, and without risk of viral offense. We also recognized that our audience is not one homogenous group, but rather one that comprises many cultural hubs, encompassing a range of motivations, beliefs & lifestyles. So, what might be ok to one community, may not be ok with others.

To mitigate this, we had to deeply understand potential socio-cultural implications of representing the hip-hop community, not portraying a 'stereotyped' picture of the genre.

## 2. **EXPLORATION**

Phase Two took significant measures to ensure our exploration leveraged expert moderators & techniques to create a "safe space" for discussing potentially sensitive areas of conversation. We undertook paired friendship depth interviews with rap super-fans in three major regional hip-hop hubs, Recruiting friendship pairs creates a more intimate social setting to enable frank, candid, natural conversation on a topic they are passionate about. In the pairs, we explored the language surrounding the different styles of rap to better understand fans' sensitivities to ways of portraying the styles, the genre and the culture.

Key learnings at this phase included how some rappers & rap fans perceive specific terms as signifiers for an evolving rap sub-genre and, if depicted authentically, would take no offense and in fact be highly engaged. However, for others, certain terms could be artistically - and potentially culturally - offensive, disparaging rappers who are utilizing a newer, oft-criticized style. In the extreme, deeper, potentially racially-charged, connotations could be identified with certain terms.

It is unlikely the team would have detected the likely (negative or positive) impact of specific words, phrases, and portrayals without this fan-friend-level of engagement. The deep understanding from the friendship pairs allowed the team to unpack these perceptions and better define how to navigate authentically. In particular, this clarity helped refine an extended, interactive TikTok challenge planned to increase reach and engagement - which presented unique cultural risk of the brand being 'cancelled' for insensitivity.

## 3. **REACH, REFINEMENT, RESPECT**

Phase three saw us conduct online group discussions with stimulus that had been refined based on feedback from the ardent hip hop fan friend pairs. We pulled apart strengths and potential challenges of the creative to understand if it would also connect with broader audiences.

We used Firefish's AURA (Attention, Understanding, Relevance, Authenticity) framework to help assess this, holding regular 'huddles' with PSONE & Jif to discuss learning, adapt and iterate stimulus, and identify areas for further exploration.

At this "broader audience" phase, the work was also shared with Publicis Groupe's internal Inclusivity Product Council, an independent peer-resource across racial, gender, sexual identity and ability bias to respond to matters of cultural sensitivity in the real-time and vetted against a Cultural Criteria Card (CIIM) and reviewed by Smucker's' internal Diversity & Inclusion Panel. Both groups validated that the research findings were being applied appropriately to the core idea and the representation of the genre and its artists, while also providing guidance for executional aspects.

Key Optimization learnings:

- Jif must enlist authentic partners and creators
  - Mix of both old & new rappers key to making this an authentic homage. It would also broaden appeal & talkability across audiences

- Fans don't want brands to appropriate hip hop culture for its own gain. Instead, Jif must *add to* the conversation.
  - Fans agreed that, with two generations of rap at an impasse, Jif was in a position to help unite old and new by partnering with an artist from each generation to create a new pb-inspired flow that everyone could respect.

#### 4. FINAL TESTING

With this learning, we further refined scripts and tested them in online consumer groups, identifying additional opportunity to increase the brand association/connection, as well as better demonstrate unity between the 2 hip hop worlds. A final copy-test validation was also performed by Material (LRW), resulting in a very good score across metrics.

### Creative Execution

Research had identified and validated the fact that, to successfully enter the conversation, Jif needed to ensure complete authenticity to the genre.

With Firefish having brought the right people (experts, super fans & PB lovers) into the process at various stages, helping the team truly understand the cultural sea-changes, the genre, category at large, the culturally-sensitive tone to strike, language to use and permissibility for the brand, PSONE were able to creatively bring the insights to life, leaning into the cultural relevance of hip-hop battles.

With key learnings firmly in mind and a vision rooted in the insight that audiences wanted Jif to add to the culture and not simply take from it for their own gain, the team knew that casting, community and creativity were key to the campaign's success:

- The name of the activation, "Lil Jif Project" was a nod to the many modern artists with "Lil" in the name
- Self-proclaimed PB fan and hip-hop stalwart Ludacris, very positively received in consumer research as a representative of the "old school" lyrical genre, was cast, alongside rising star, Gunna
- The video was styled as a genuine music video by a recognized director
- People credit Atlanta with being at the heart of modern rap, so the team tapped Atlanta-based street artists to design cover art for Ludacris' single and a special-edition Jif peanut butter jar for rap community influencers
- The activation linked to "That Jif'ing Good" campaign with taste superiority at the center

PSONE recognized a traditional advertising approach would not cut it with the younger generation and so rewrote the typical CPG comms plan. Rather than push product benefits via a traditional media buy targeting moms, they used culture as the media *and* message, creating a hot new sound from an unexpected source.

The holistic program had three core pillars:

1. Release Ludacris' song prior to the brand reveal: Ludacris, a self-proclaimed PB lover and legendary 2000s rapper still popular across generations today, would release his first single in over six years to the delight of his fans. But there

would be a catch: It wouldn't sound like the old Ludacris; it would have a modern trap beat and near-incomprehensible lyrics. Fans would (and did) go wild wondering why his sound changed so drastically. This worked to drive interest and buzz before the main campaign even launched. Buzz and intrigue were also built by tapping Atlanta's premier jeweler to the rap stars to create a custom, diamond encrusted Jif necklace, which they teased on their popular TikTok channel.

2. Reveal Jif was behind Luda's new sound: After a weekend of hip hop fans debating over Luda's new sound, Jif revealed through the Dave Meyers-directed music video that Ludacris' new flow was caused by his not being able to resist a delicious mouthful of Jif, even while recording in the studio. And that irresistible bite inspired an entirely new Jif rap sound. The rug-pull moment coincided with our big launch, across TV, online video, OOH, social, search and of course, audio on Spotify.

3. Invite fans to participate – with a mouth full of Jif: To seed this new sound, the brand went to where music is heard today, TikTok. But users don't just listen to music on TikTok, they build on it, which was exactly the aim. Rather than just push content, the aim was for fans to create it. Ludacris kicked off a TikTok challenge inviting all to duet. To encourage even more people to develop their own Jif-inspired sound, the brand tapped five of the top TikTok rap stars to take on Ludacris with their own pb-inspired lyrics and encourage users to make the Jif rap sound their own.

The team had hacked a years-long debate and, by partnering with drivers of culture, they'd moved the hip hop conversation forward with a brand-new sound that people on both sides could agree was absolutely delicious.

**With \$9MM available in paid media**, the focus was on getting the message to the right audiences, with enough scale to drive the business performance needed.

The iterative, strategic qualitative research phases helped the agency team refine the work to be an upbeat, playful ad that spoke across – and connected to – the audiences by tapping into a wider cultural discourse of old vs. new both in rap / music and beyond.

Finally, it also helped build an ownable space for Jif and drive a series of strong takeaways, including the irresistibility of Jif, and its versatility - both through its format range & usages.

## **Business Results/Lessons Learned**

All in, over 80% of the A18-54 target was reached & drove significant engagement with 71.5MM users engaging with the TikTok hashtag challenge, along with lifts in brand preference +8ppt, competitive share gain +9ppt (Spotify), & Consideration +2ppt (YouTube). Jif saw +5% in net sales & +2pt category share.

The Lil Jif Project activation achieved and surpassed the objectives. The biggest testament to the success of the campaign is the impact to the business.

- After launching the campaign, Jif was able to reverse course and gain back peanut butter market share, at the expense of Skippy and private label, despite being outspent for more than a year by Skippy.
- Jif achieved the highest market share in over 10 years and was able to grow, while the category began to contract after a big boost from initial COVID grocery spending.

The campaign successfully fueled interest in the brand, especially among the younger target audience, while remaining inclusive for all generations of peanut butter lovers.

- Jif overtook Skippy’s leading share of voice to become more than double Skippy’s share and became a TikTok sensation with people of all ages joining in on the #JifRapChallenge with a mouthful of Jif.
- Search traffic spiked with the challenge and continued to rise steadily months after launch.
- Despite Jif already being a household name, consumers were compelled by the campaign to increase consideration.

There was nothing Lil about these incredible results.

**Against the objectives set:**

**Objective 1:**

Improve category share by at least 1 point, boosting share that had declined at the expense of private label and Skippy.

**Result:**

Despite a category contraction, Jif boosted share by 3.4 pts at the expense of competitors, giving it the highest category share in over 10 years<sup>5</sup>

**Share Trends Of Peanut Segment**



**Volume and dollar share for Jif was at a 10-year high** by the end of 2021.<sup>6</sup>

One month after the campaign:

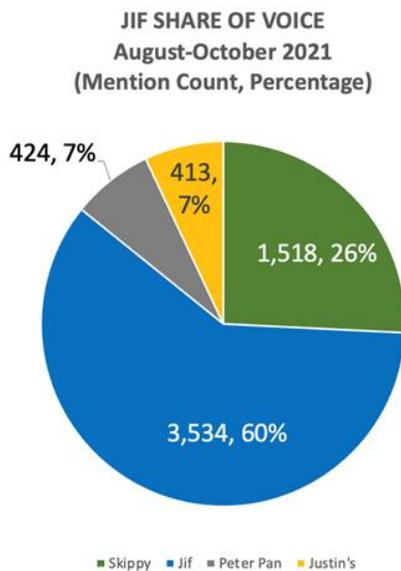
9/19/21: The overall Peanut Category is down in \$ Sales -1.1%, Jif was outpacing the category with \$ Sales growth +3.2% vs YA.<sup>7</sup>

**Objective 2:**

increase share of voice from 37% to 55%, to dominate consumer excitement and conversation. Skippy had outspent Jif for over a year, effectively overtaking Jif in online conversation, which is vital with our target audience. It was important for consumers to hear about Jif not only from advertising but from their own circles of influence.

**Result:**

Jif exceeded the goal by +5 points, to completely overtake Skippy and more than doubling Skippy's share of voice during the campaign <sup>8</sup>



+148% branded mentions vs. previous 2-week average. <sup>9</sup>

Excellent earned coverage helped accelerate the rate of brand mentions:

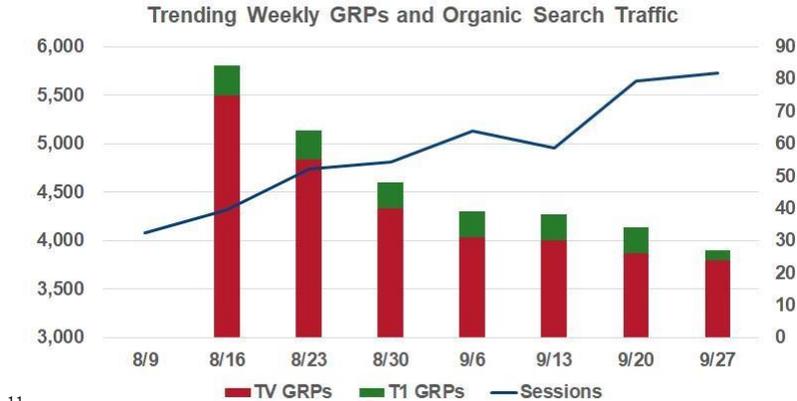
- The story was covered in 211 media placements across hip hop, lifestyle and trade earning 345M impressions  
*Note that this does not include TikTok mentions, so reach was even further, if this is taken into consideration.*

**Objective 3:**

Increase branded search. To fuel share growth, the campaign needed to not only drive conversation but convert interest into action, with people seeking out the brand and its products.

**Result:**

- A 41% increase in Organic Website traffic was recorded in the first seven weeks as a result of the new TV/OLV T1 campaign launch. <sup>10</sup>



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- Noticeable spikes in overall web traffic on 8/16/21, recording an almost 2x increase against the previous week, due to the Lil Jif Project activations <sup>12</sup>

Other shorter-term results:

- 25% uptick for Amazon organic search vs. campaign pre-launch<sup>13</sup>
- Traffic spike correlated with the #JifRapChallenge kicking on TikTok

#### Objective 4:

Strengthen Jif's "great taste" ownership vs. competition. Taste is the leading driver for peanut butter people – it's why they love and crave the category. So, Jif must further strengthen its great taste ownership.

#### Result:

Even with already-high brand familiarity, the unconventional advertising was shown to significantly increase consideration of Jif.

- +8ppt Lift Brand Preference on Spotify<sup>14</sup>
- +9ppt Lift Brand Preference on Spotify: Competitive Share Gain Against Skippy<sup>15</sup>
- +2.4ppt Absolute Lift Brand Consideration on YouTube<sup>16</sup>
- +13ppt Lift Brand Consideration – Snapchat among A25-34 users<sup>17</sup>

As previously referenced, branded mentions data does not include TikTok, which saw phenomenal success<sup>18</sup>, and so was further amplifies the success of the campaign:

- 6.3B total views<sup>19</sup>
  - Triple the expected views based on spend
- Exceeding benchmarks/averages vs. other TikTok advertisers<sup>20</sup>
  - 71.5% Unique Reach, +6% above benchmark
  - 4x Engagement vs. benchmark

## Sources

- <sup>1</sup> Kantar Spend by Quarter (Note JMS Quarters begin in May, i.e. FY22 Q1 is May '21 – July '21)
- <sup>2</sup> IRI Unify, Total U.S. Multi-Outlet Retail Sales Nut Based Spreads, 52 Weeks ending 11.29.20 vs past 2 years
- <sup>3</sup> IRI Point of Sale Volume Sales Data Trending 6 Years in U.S. Multi-Outlet Retail data
- <sup>4</sup> Brandwatch, 5/1/21- 7/31/21
- <sup>5</sup> IRI Unify, Total U.S. Multi-Outlet Retail Sales Peanut Based Spreads, 13 Weeks ending 10.31.21
- <sup>6</sup> IRI, volume and dollar share for week ending 10/31/2021 for a 52-week rolling Period
- <sup>7</sup> IRI Unify, Total U.S. Multi-Outlet Retail Sales Peanut Based Spreads, 13 Week average ending 9.19.20 vs past YA
- <sup>8</sup> BrandWatch, Average Social Share of Voice for Jif and branded competitors, 8/1/21 – 10/31/21
- <sup>9</sup> BrandWatch, Average Social Share of Voice for Jif and branded competitors, 8/1/21 – 10/31/21 vs. Average Social Share of Voice for Jif and branded competitors, 7/17/21 – 7/31/21 (Does not include TikTok mentions)
- <sup>10</sup> Google Ads Keyword Planner, for the weeks of 8/9/21-9/27/21
- <sup>11</sup> Jif.com web traffic in relation to TV GRPs, weeks of 8/9/21-9/27/21
- <sup>12</sup> Jif.com web traffic, August 2021
- <sup>13</sup> Amazon lift study
- <sup>14</sup> Spotify Brand Lift Study, 8/19/21-9/30/21
- <sup>15</sup> Spotify Brand Lift Study, 8/19/21-9/30/21
- <sup>16</sup> YouTube Attitudinal Brand Lift Study, 8/16/21-10/17/21
- <sup>17</sup> Snapchat Brand Lift Study, 8/16/21-9/26/21
- <sup>18</sup> TikTok Wrap Report covering 8/16/21-10/31/21
- <sup>19</sup> TikTok Hashtag Views as if 9/30/21
- <sup>20</sup> TikTok Wrap Report covering 8/16/21-10/31/21

## **Campaign Participants**

### **Companies Involved**

- The JM Smucker Company
- PSONe
- Publicis

### **Individual Credits**

#### **The JM Smucker Company**

- Jennifer Polkinghorne, Senior Manager, Content & Culture

#### **PSONe**

- Peter Defries, VP, Creative Director – Art
- Alan Wilson, VP, Creative Director – Copy
- Jennifer Baldwin, EVP, Strategy Director
- Allie O’Shea, VP, Strategy Director
- Erika Maddrey, VP, Account Director
- Yuri Lee, EVP, Group Account Director
- Gail Hollander, Presigent, Group Client Lead
- Patricia Hallock, SVP, Consumer Practice
- Nia Bolling, Account Supervisor
- Ariel Wakasa-Gonzalez, Senior Program Manager
- Alex Orson, VP, Group Director – Program Management
- Laurie Shulman Deroousseau, VP, Consumer Practice
- Alan Danzis, SVP, Media Strategy
- Tristen Sechi, Director, Social Strategy
- Dave Gordon, Social Creative Director
- Judd Wachstein, Associate Creative Director
- Jessica Larkin, Senior Art Designer
- Salama Warner, Head of Culture
- Jeff Bobick, VP Director, Data & Analytics
- Colleen Hotchkiss, EVP, Managing Director – Media
- Anna Kelce, SVP, Group Client Director
- Kim Iadevaia, EVP, Content
- Nicole Guadagno, Associate Director, Content

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- Lauren Schneidmuller, VP, Executive Producer
- Zachary Callopy, Senior Designer
- Spencer Chen, Designer
- Josh Clayton, Copywriter
- Mollie Coyne, Art Director