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**Me &
the Bees™
LEMONADE**

The Legacy in the Making Story



THE LEGACY LAB™





Summary

Let us tell you the story of Me & the Bees—a seven-year-old lemonade brand run by 12-year-old CEO and up-and-coming social entrepreneur Mikaila Ulmer. With the help of her parents, Mikaila nurtured her company from its humble beginnings as a lemonade stand in the front yard of her Austin home to a nationally distributed brand on the shelves of Whole Foods Market® and Starbucks®.

When we tell you how she accomplished this, you'll be inspired by Ms. Ulmer's courage and ambition. But Mikaila's American Dream almost came to a halt when, in early 2015, she discovered that

the brand name and logo she had created at just four years old was accidentally infringing on another company's trademark.

Mikaila had been stung by bees before, but never by lawyers. Right at that moment she worried that her hard-earned brand equity would be lost and that her dream of starting a business to help save the honeybees might be over forever. So allow us to tell you the story of how we partnered with an inspiring young social entrepreneur to rebrand BeeSweet Lemonade as Me & the Bees. And how, through this deft rebranding, we helped a brave, young entrepreneur bring her dream to even more believers.

Let's gin!

When Mikaila Ulmer was just four years old, she was stung by two bees in the same week. Mikaila was terrified of these little stingers, but her parents turned her anxiety into curiosity by encouraging her to do some research.

It turns out Mikaila was quite the resourceful researcher. In no time she learned that honeybees play an important role in our food chain, pollinating all types of plants that produce ingredients used in delicious foods like chocolate and pizza.

Mikaila also discovered that America's honeybees were beleaguered by a problem called Colony Collapse Disorder (CCD). Without healthy pollinators, our farmers wouldn't be able to produce the food we need. Instead of being afraid of bees, Mikaila wondered how she could help them.



A Business Is Born, and a Dream Takes Flight

As she continued her research on honeybees, Mikaila received an old cookbook in the mail from her Great-Granny Helen with an heirloom recipe for flaxseed lemonade. Mikaila decided to test out the recipe, replacing sugar with honey in honor of her newfound friends, the bees. It was so delicious that Mikaila decided to set up a lemonade stand in her front yard to share her discovery with the neighbors. Just like that, BeeSweet Lemonade was in business, and Mikaila was its CEO and Austin's newest social entrepreneur.

A Buzz Builds Around BeeSweet

At just nine years old, Mikaila had already appeared on the popular TV show *Shark Tank*. Her poise and passion sparked interest among influencers and bloggers worldwide. Within a year, this nascent social buzz caught the eye of two of America's leading retailers, Whole Foods Market and Starbucks. Her brand was taking off.

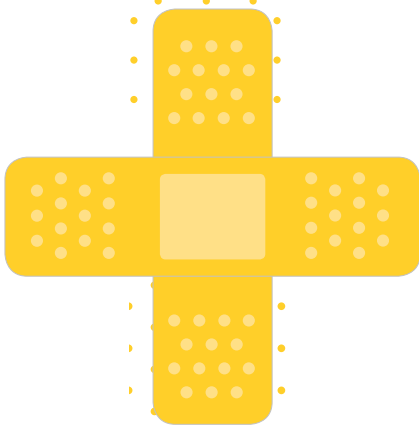
Unfortunately, not all of this attention was positive. When a company with a similar name and logo noticed Mikaila's success, they politely asked her to stop using the name BeeSweet. Evidently, they believed Mikaila's fledgling company had strayed too close for comfort to their own trademark.



turn a



into a



When Life Gives You Lemons ...

We met Mikaila and her family as they were coming to terms with the fact that finding a new name would be an unavoidable reality. After spending years creating priceless brand awareness and equity for BeeSweet, the now 11-year-old founder reluctantly accepted that she would have to drop the name altogether.

As our strategists calculated the cost of new packaging and advertising materials, Mikaila and her parents projected the cost of lost brand appeal and its potential impact on ongoing negotiations with Whole Foods Market and Starbucks.

For Mikaila, losing her brand name could mean losing control of her story and her dream. We quickly learned that when a business is founded on a purpose, every branding and marketing challenge becomes intrinsically personal.

A New Name to Advance the Story

Legally speaking, any new name and logo would need to be completely different from “BeeSweet” and able to be trademarked. Stylistically, it would need to be similar enough to the original branding to calm retailers’ nerves.

The rebranding would also need to be turned around quickly in order to avoid further legal action.

It was then that our team had an epiphany inspired by one of Mikaila’s favorite sayings: **“Don’t be discouraged by life’s little stings; get back up and spread your wings.”** This simple aphorism epitomized Mikaila’s bravery, tenacity and optimism and became the inspiration for the new brand name and identity.

Rather than just cute words and imagery on a bottle, we partnered with Mikaila to see a new brand name as an opportunity to engage retailers and a larger audience in her story—an invitation into her mission through words and design.





Three Strategic Ingredients for a New Trademark

We developed three strands to Mikaila's new brand strategy:

First, we wanted the new brand name, logo and label design to be an extension of Mikaila's mission as a social entrepreneur. Though the name would change, her brand purpose and vision of a more bee-friendly world would always remain the core of her brand.

Second, in order to stand apart from the other me-too lemonades on the shelf, we rejected the typical branding conventions of packaged goods. Because Mikaila was a young hero, we created a brand name that echoed the conventions of children's storybooks. We wanted the new brand name and visual language to feel like an amazing tale about a courageous young woman on a quest to help her friends.

Finally, we tailored our communications strategy to enroll a credible mass of opinion leaders rather than a critical mass of followers. As a social entrepreneur with limited resources, Mikaila wasn't playing the usual numbers game or chasing the typical metrics of social media. Rather, her aim was to mobilize positive cultural and social influence by enlisting the support of friends in high places.

At the intersection of these insights, we made the strategic leap that the new brand name should be the title of an amazing tale: a story that would inspire believers who shared Mikaila's vision to join her noble quest to save the honeybees.



Writing a Story You Can Drink

We initially developed over 300 alternative brand names, sorted by storylines. But only Me & the Bees seemed to capture the brand's storybook optimism, courage and camaraderie. To the Ulmers' relief, it could also be trademarked!

Inspired by Mikaila's youthful determination, our strategists penned the uplifting narrative of a young girl who was stung by bees, but spread her entrepreneurial wings to help them live healthier lives.

The creative solution combined all the elements of a great story:

- *The date and place where it began*
- *Heroic characters on a quest*
- *A challenge that stands in their way*
- *Hope that these obstacles can be overcome*

This "origin story" would become an integral element on the label, helping to spread the brand's purpose one bottle and one sweet sip at a time.



i love it!

me too!

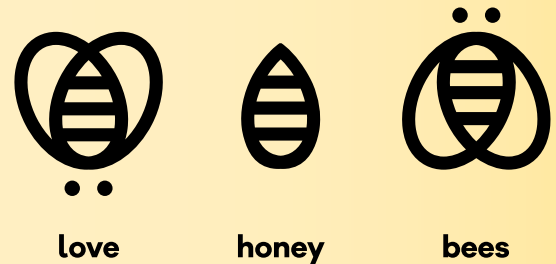


Illustrating Her Story

To alleviate retailers' anxieties, we designed the new label to share visual DNA with the old label—accentuating the inspirational bravery of a little girl with big dreams, her friendship with the honeybees, and the natural deliciousness of the ingredients.

Our designers brought the humble honeybee to life not as a scary stinger, but as a friendly, healthy insect. When viewed from one perspective, it's simply a bee. From another perspective, it's a heart. From a third perspective, it's a drop of honey.

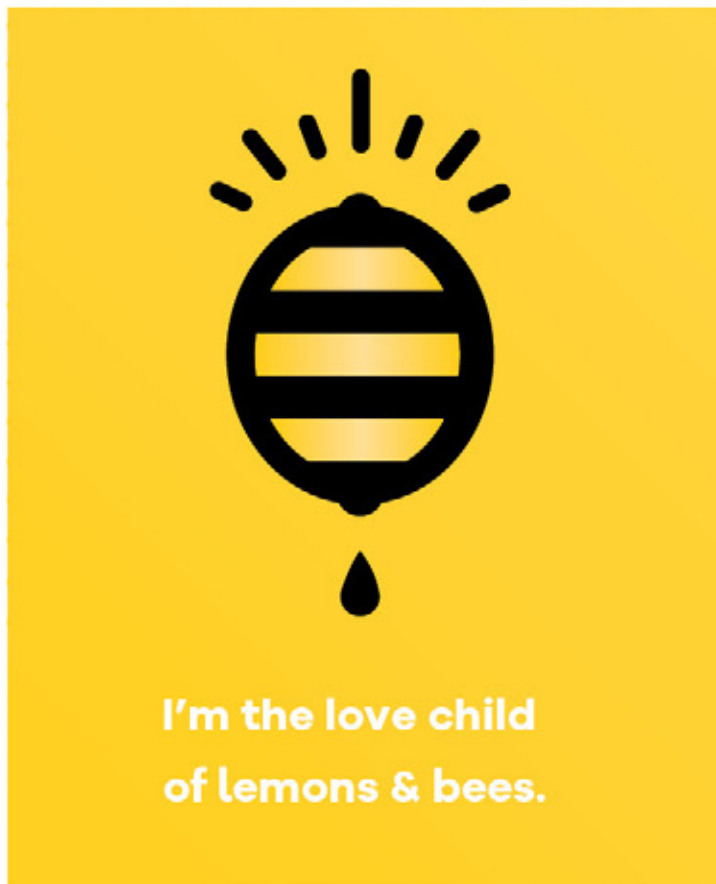
We also created a state-shaped icon using a bee icon to mark Austin, Texas, where Mikaila's story first began.



I'm hometown pride.



This is the story of Me & the Bees. To be honest, I didn't always dream of befriending a bunch of honeybees. But two bee stings, Great Granny Helen's old family recipe and a little lemonade stand later, I got curious and got busy learning about bees. Turns out, bees are bigger than bugs. Our fuzzy friends are the littlest and biggest links in our food chain. And they need our help to stay busy, healthy and productive. That's why I use honey to make lemonade that tastes good and does good. Every sip spreads the buzz, and some of our profits go to organizations working hard to help bees. Join me on my mission. Become a believer.



Communications Strategy



Launching the Brand

Our communications strategy called for Mikaila to introduce her new brand name at highly influential events across the country: reinforcing her mission, reclaiming her story and recruiting believers by starting her speeches with the simple phrase,

“Let me tell you the story of Me & the Bees.” This approach allowed her to align more purposefully with influencers and organizations with the resources, contacts and vision to propel her mission forward.



I'm the Bee to the Me.



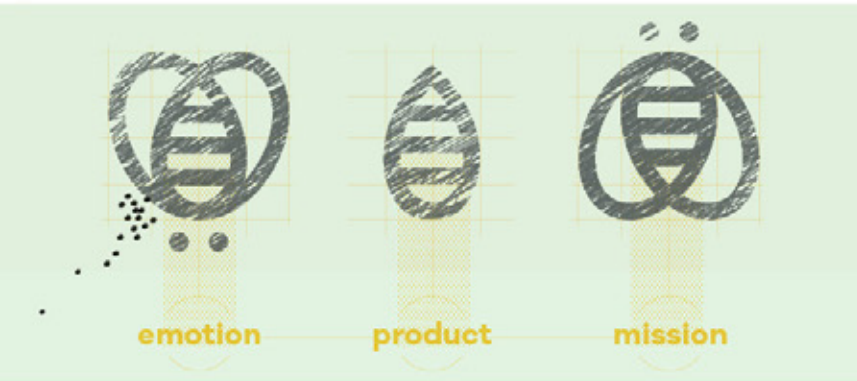
I'm liquid love.



I'm a lemon.
(But I'm no dud!)



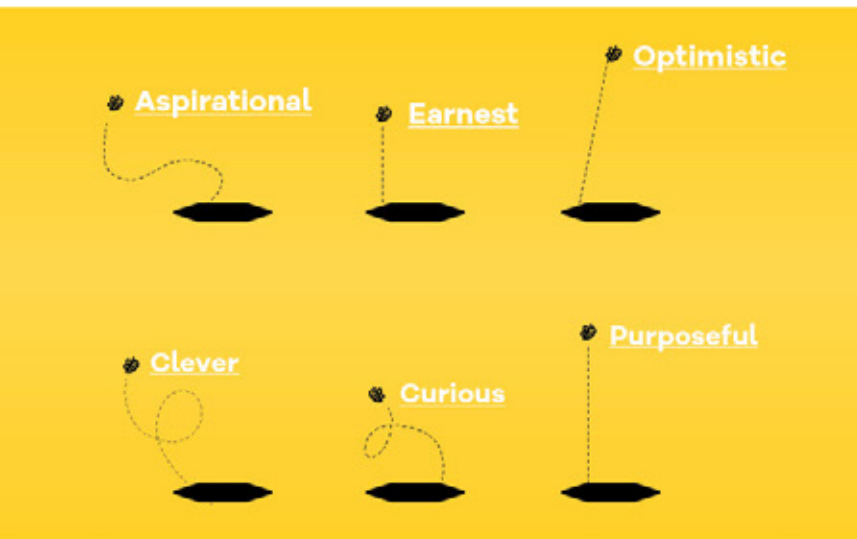
I'm petal to the metal.



emotion

product

mission



Aspirational

Earnest

Optimistic

Clever

Curious

Purposeful



Not Just a New Name, but a Platform for Growth

Our primary objective was to maintain the growth trajectory of the brand that would help Me & the Bees finalize its pending distribution deals with leading conscientious retailers. After landing on Me & the Bees, the Ulmers were delighted to learn that in spite of the name change, Starbucks decided to proceed with the Texas pilot, and Whole Foods Market even expanded its distribution. Sales continue to grow as new retail partners, including WegmansSM, strike deals with Mikaila.



The Beginnings of Some Major Buzz

In the 12-week period since rebranding on April 19, 2016, compared to the previous 12 weeks, we saw:

90+% Twitter engagement rate increase

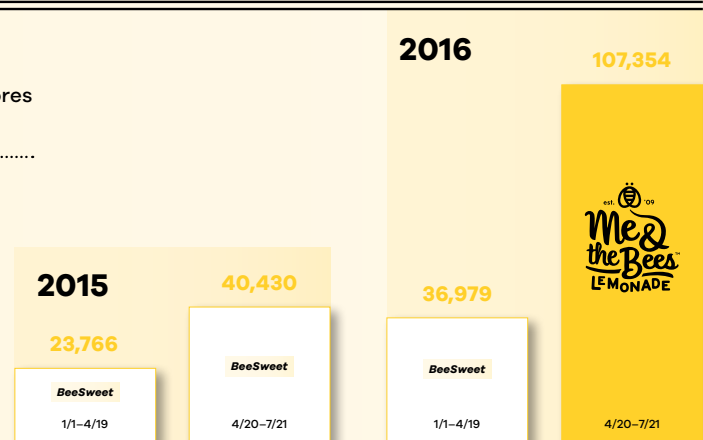
800+% Increase in Mikaila Ulmer & Me & the Bees mentions

170+% Facebook engagement rate increase

1,000+% Increase in impressions

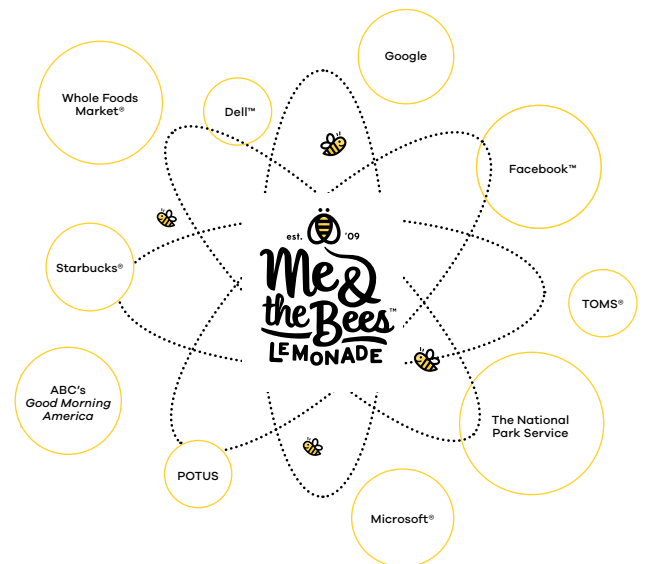
Nearly **300%** Increase in the number of stores where the product is sold

166% Sales increase from previous year



The new brand platform didn't just help Me & the Bees secure these partnerships; it engaged thought leaders from business, culture, technology and politics in its social mission as well. When the Obamas learned of Mikaila's story, they invited her to introduce Me & the Bees at the White House. *Good Morning America* and *The Real* went one better, giving Mikaila the opportunity to publicly launch her new brand name on-air.

As a by-product, Mikaila's loyal believers are now more engaged than ever, and already we've seen buzz around her brand name increase.





All of this success came from a strategic idea to infuse Mikaila's mission to save the bees with a helping of storybook inspiration and serve it to individuals with the passion and resources to create change. As a result, Mikaila Ulmer has an identity for her brand that is mobilizing some of the most influential individuals and organizations toward social and environmental responsibility—proof that people today don't just buy what you make, but what you believe.