PRE-BRIEF FROM QUIETWORK

New labels for the Halden range

Prepared for Dev and Anjali Rao. Please send it back by 5 December.

For Dev and Anjali, who have spent six years building Halden Pickle Works from market stalls and their own website, and now want nine labels that are ready for Mumbai's gourmet shelves.

Six years of farmers' markets, a website that sells, and now two Mumbai gourmet stores to pitch. That is a real business with real customers behind it, and new labels should be built on what it already is, not on a guess.

This work is for nine labels that hold their own on a store shelf and still look like Halden. To get there, I need the material only the two of you have: how the business works, who buys from you, what sits next to you, and what you each want the jars to say.

Dev, on the call you said the current labels "look like a school project" and that you want a "premium" look for the stores. Anjali, you said you don't want them to look "like every other fancy jar". Both can be true at once, or they can pull apart. Question 2 is where we find out, and it is the most important answer in here.

This takes about forty-five minutes, in your own time. Please send it back by 5 December. A few questions ask for each of you separately: answer those on your own first, then compare. I read every one of these before we meet, and our first session starts from what you wrote.

Polish is not required here. Honesty is.

PART 1

The Context

Quick. Mostly tick-boxes. About five minutes.

1. What is driving the new labels right now? Tick all, then underline the one that matters most.

Most projects have more than one reason. The underlined one tells us what to protect if we have to choose.

- ☐ The pitch to the two Mumbai stores
- ☐ The labels no longer match the product inside
- ☐ Growth online
- ☐ A competitor that looks more finished
- ☐ Wanting the range to look like one family
- ☐ Something we haven't put into words yet

2. The most important answer here. Each of you: when a shopper sees the new jar on a Mumbai shelf, what should it say first?

Dev, you said "premium". Anjali, you said not "like every other fancy jar". Answer separately. If your answers differ, that is useful, not a problem. If you can't pick, write both pulls: what you'd gain and what you'd lose with each.

Dev: _____

- ☐ This is premium and worth paying more for
- ☐ This is a family recipe, made in small batches in Goa
- ☐ Both equally, and we haven't decided which leads
- ☐ Something else: _____

Anjali: _____

- ☐ This is premium and worth paying more for
- ☐ This is a family recipe, made in small batches in Goa

- [ ] Both equally, and we haven't decided which leads
- [ ] Something else: _____

3. When is the store meeting, and what do you need to have in hand for it?

On the call it was "sometime next month". The exact date if you have it, and whether you need printed jars, samples, or designs on screen. If the date isn't fixed yet, say what you know.

- [ ] Finished, printed jars
- [ ] A few printed samples
- [ ] Designs shown on screen
- [ ] Not sure yet

Date, if known: _____

4. Who has the final say on the labels, and who else needs to approve them?

Names and roles: the two of you, a family member, a store buyer, anyone who checks the legal text. Better to know now than at the final review. Only the people working on this project will read this.

5. Each of you: what budget range are you working to for the labels?

Tick a band, or write a range under your name. If your numbers differ, write both; we plan from the real range, not a single guess. Only the people working on this project will read this.

- [ ] Under ₹1 lakh
- [ ] ₹1 lakh to under ₹2 lakh
- [ ] ₹2 lakh to under ₹3 lakh
- [ ] ₹3 lakh or more
- [ ] Not decided yet

Dev: _____

Anjali: _____

6. Each of you: what is the one thing you want to walk out of this project with?

One to three sentences. For example: labels both Mumbai stores say yes to; nine jars that look like one family; a look you're proud to hand over at the market stall.

Dev: _____

Anjali: _____

PART 2

The Mirror

An honest snapshot. Where things are today, not where you want them to be.

7. What does Halden make, said the way you'd say it to someone new at your market stall?

Drop the label words. What's in the jar, who makes it, where, and why someone comes back for a second one.

8. How do your regulars describe Halden when they recommend you to a friend?

Their words, not yours. If market regulars and online customers say different things, give both.

9. Dev, you said the labels "look like a school project". What exactly gives that away?
Point at specifics: the paper, the fonts, the printing, the colours, how the nine jars look side by side. "It feels cheap" is a start. Go one step past it.

10. Anjali, on the call you spoke about the recipes being your grandmother's. Tell us that story.
Who she was, what she made, how her recipes became the jars you sell. Write at the level you're comfortable with; the shape of it is enough. Then mark anything you would not want printed on a label or a website. Only the people working on this project will read this.

11. How have sales moved over the last year, and through which channels?
On the call you mentioned strong growth last year. Split it as best you can: your website, the markets, anything else. Rough numbers are fine. Only the people working on this project will read this.

12. What do you do that other pickle and chutney makers don't?
Facts, not adjectives: where the ingredients come from, how a batch is made, how long it takes, what you leave out, how the range is built. Write something a customer could check, not "ours tastes better".

13. What about the current labels would you be sorry to lose?
A colour, a word, a drawing, the name as it's written now. "Nothing" is a valid answer.

14. What feedback has stuck with you, even if it stung?
From a market customer, an online review, a store buyer, a friend. The comment you quietly dismissed counts most.

15. If a buyer at one of the Mumbai stores searched for Halden today, what would they find?
Open a private browser window on your phone and look as they would: your site, your social pages, any listings. What story would they piece together? "Almost nothing" is a valid answer.

PART 3

The Horizon
Where this needs to be. Roughly twelve to twenty-four months out.

16. Who are the new labels for? Rank them, then tell us who they are not for.
Number them in order. Then name the shopper you're happy to lose.

- ☐ Shoppers in the Mumbai gourmet stores
- ☐ The buyers who decide what those stores stock
- ☐ Your market regulars
- ☐ Online customers
- ☐ People buying a jar as a gift
- ☐ Someone else: _____

Not for:

17. On the call you mentioned a competitor, but we didn't catch the name. Who was it, and who else sits next to you?
At the markets, online, and on the shelves of the stores you're pitching to. Real names only. One is fine.

18. If a shopper picked one of them over Halden, what's the most honest case they'd make?
The worse it makes you look, the more useful it is.

19. Anjali, you said you don't want to look "like every other fancy jar". What do those jars do?
The words they use, the colours, the shapes, the claims every one of them makes. Name a few if you can.

20. Name a few brands, in food or anywhere else, whose look you'd love to sit beside. Then the ones you'd hate to be mistaken for.

The contrast is half the brief.

21. Each of you: if we meet again in twelve months and the new labels worked, what's true that isn't true today?

One paragraph each. The thing you'd point to.

Dev: _____

Anjali: _____

22. And what would tell you it didn't work?

Knowing what failure looks like keeps us honest.

PART 4

The Inventory

What there is to work with, and what there isn't yet. Blanks are expected.

23. Drop the links.

Your website, Instagram or other social pages, any listings, photos of the stall.

24. What do you already have? Tick all.

- ☐ A logo file, and the name of whoever made it
- ☐ The current label files
- ☐ Good photos of the jars
- ☐ Product names and descriptions written down
- ☐ Ingredient and allergen lists for all nine products
- ☐ Barcodes
- ☐ None of these yet

25. What sizes and formats do the nine products come in?

List each one with its jar or pack size. Mark the three that sell most.

26. What has to appear on every label, and who checks it before print?
Ingredients, allergens, the lines you are required to print, barcodes, best-before dates. Name the person who signs it off. Only the people working on this project will read this.

27. Who prints your labels now, and what do they need from us?
The printer's name, their file specs, how long they take. "We haven't chosen one" is useful to know.

28. What have you already tried with the labels or the look that didn't work?
A designer, a reprint, a template, a change you reversed. Be specific. The wreckage is useful.

29. What should I see before we start?
Old labels, photos of the stall, notes on the recipes, messages from customers. Voice notes count. Don't tidy it.

PART 5

The Open Channel
One question. No word limit. This is where the real diagnosis usually hides.

30. What feels off about Halden right now that you've never quite been able to put into words?
Take your time. It might be about the jars, the move from market stalls to store shelves, keeping up with orders, the website, or something nobody has asked you about yet. Each of you can answer, together or apart. Say it here. You don't have to make it neat.

Dev: _____

Anjali: _____

Before you send

- Did you skip a question because it felt uncomfortable? Go back. That's the one that matters most.
- Did you write what you want to be true, or what is true?
- Did you each answer the "each of you" questions on your own before comparing? If not, do it now, not at kickoff.

Please send your answers back to me by 5 December, as a reply to my email or in a shared doc, whichever is easier.

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