

Beyond The Basics:

Leveraging consumer insights for game-changing brand creation

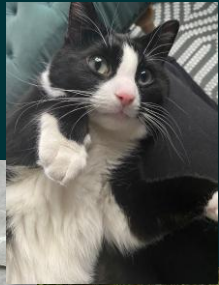
Quirks NYC
23 July 2025



Agenda

- Introduction and Context
- Innovation Process
- Strategic Collaboration
- Whitespace Identification
- Consumer Validation
- Brand-cept Process
- Commercial Execution
- Key Takeaways
- Q&A

Eboni Washington | Director, Innovation & Futures



Professional Skillset:

- ♦ Quantitative & Qualitative Research
- ♦ Data Storytelling & Analytics
- ♦ Social Intelligence & Listening
- ♦ Strategy Development
- ♦ Brand Marketing
- ♦ Product & Brand Innovation

Professional Journey:

- American Express
- Zegna
- Foot Locker
- Unilever
- Kraft Heinz

Education:

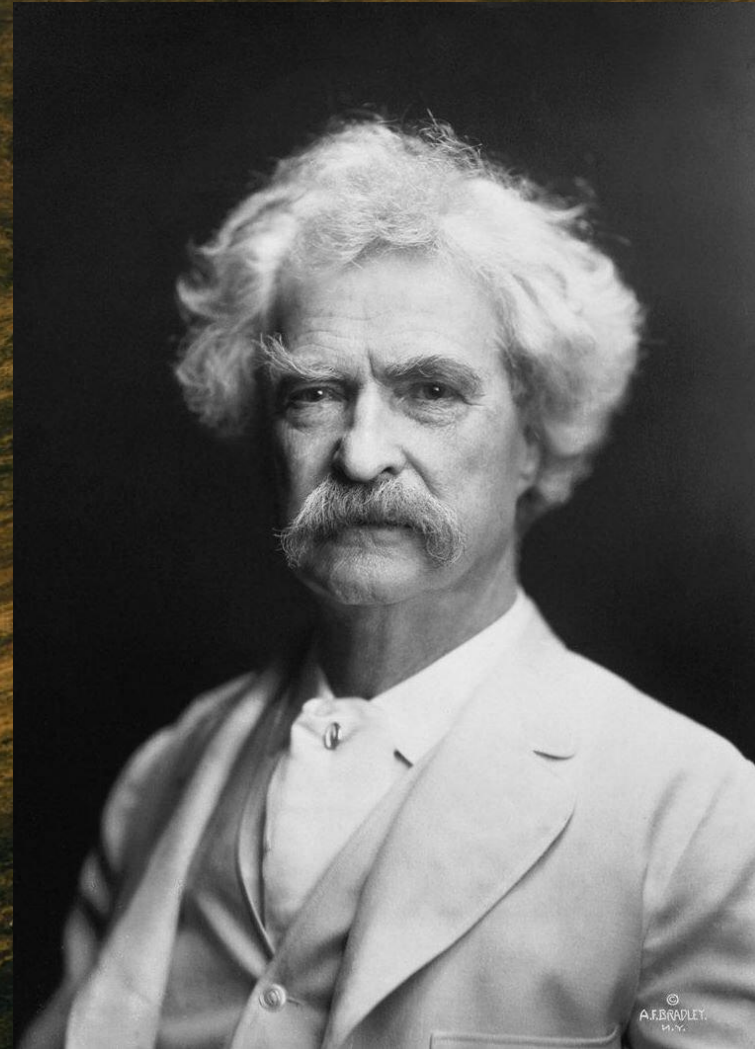
- Howard University, BA Marketing

Interests:

- Travel
- Food
- Fashion
- Animals
- New hobbies

“It ain’t what you don’t know that gets you into trouble. It’s what you know for sure that just ain’t so.”

- Mark Twain



Context



SITUATION

SGS is seeking to build out new platforms (e.g. brands, line extensions, business models) that are unique, consumer-relevant, and scalable propositions



GOAL

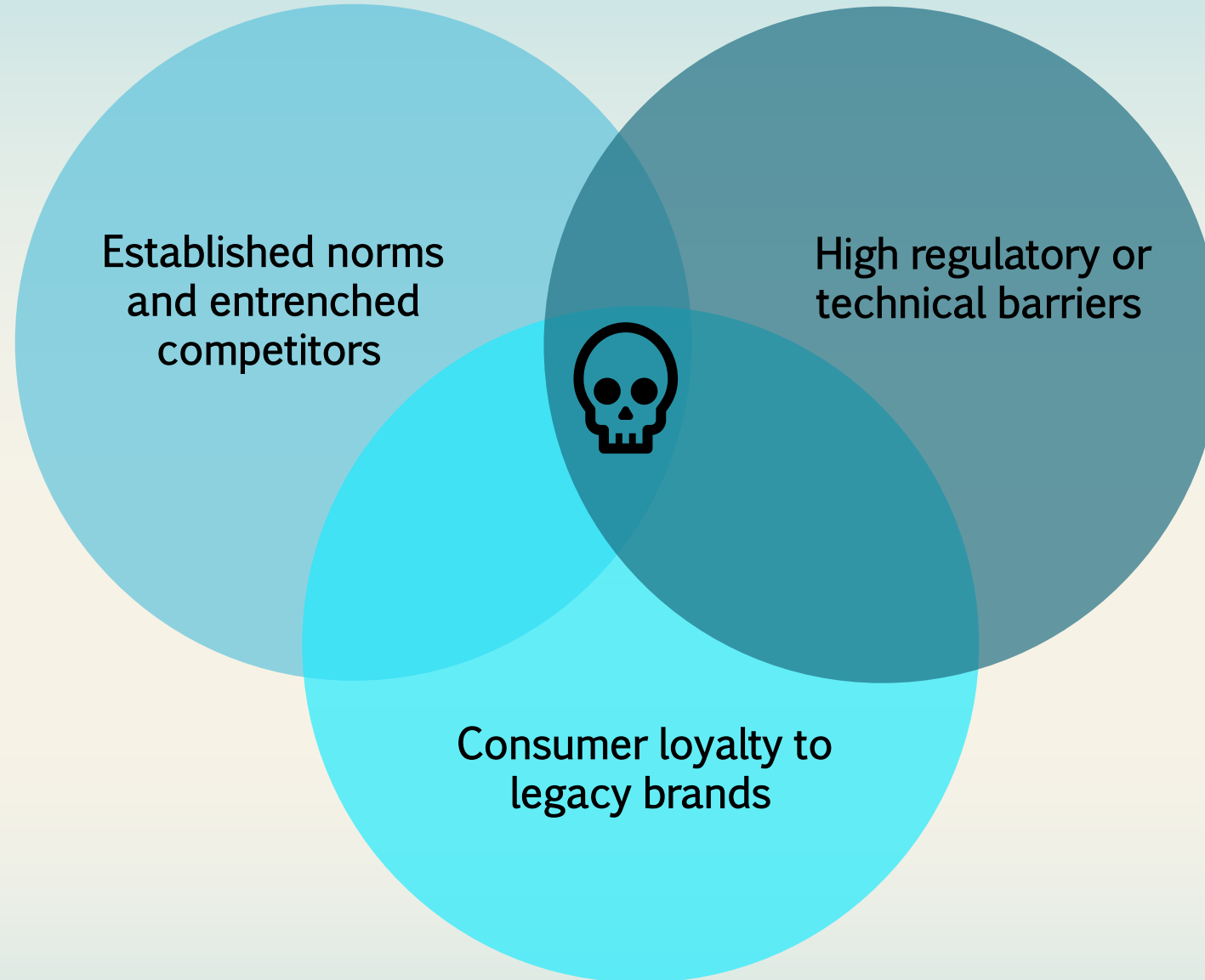
Achieve profitable growth through a differentiated, premium RTE proposition that fuses quality, taste, and emotional appeal



CHALLENGE

SGS needs to break through cluttered shelves and consumer skepticism by addressing under-met needs and tensions

Why do certain categories resist disruption?

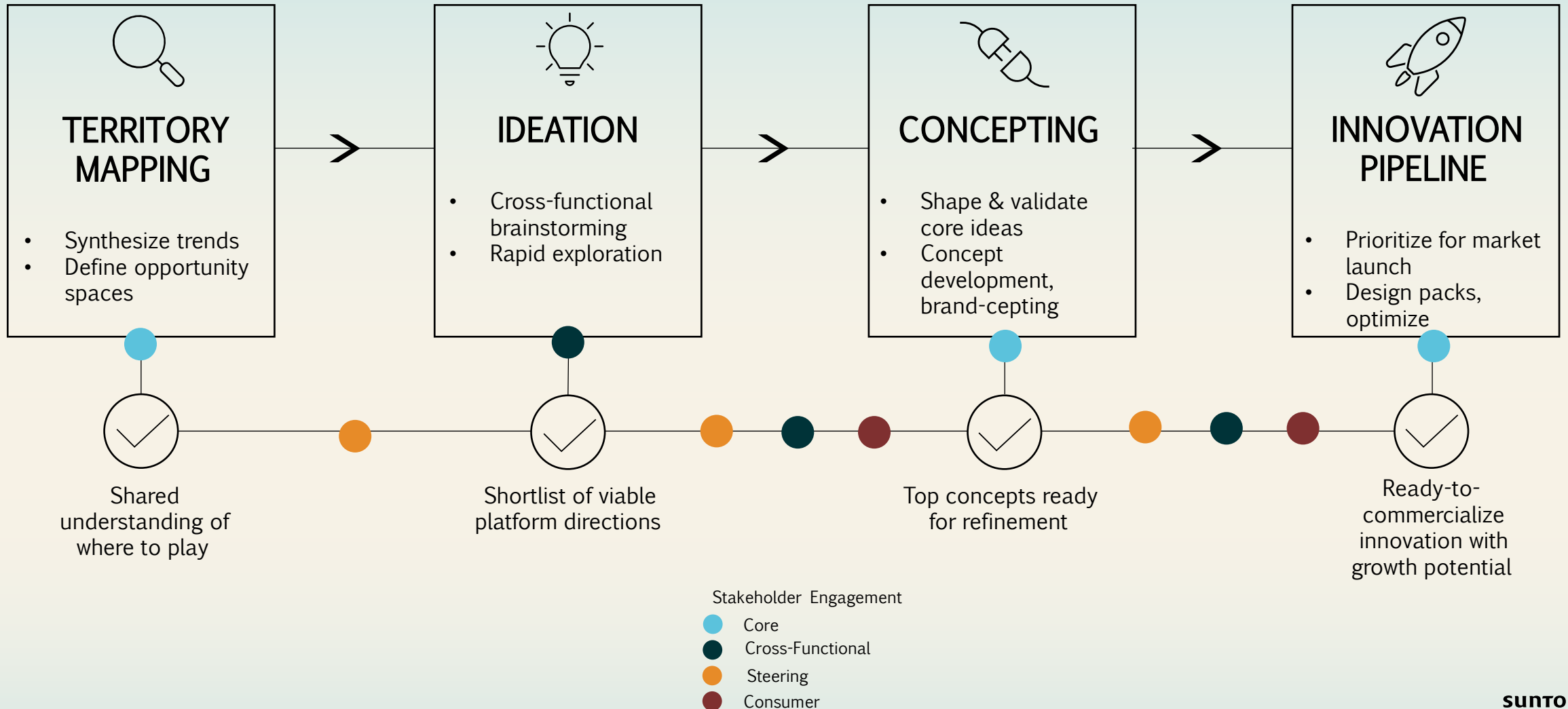


Internal dynamics may cause challenges...



Four-Phase Innovation Journey

Guiding cross-functional teams from early whitespace mapping to launch-ready concepts designed to win



Strategic Collaboration: Building and Engaging for Impact

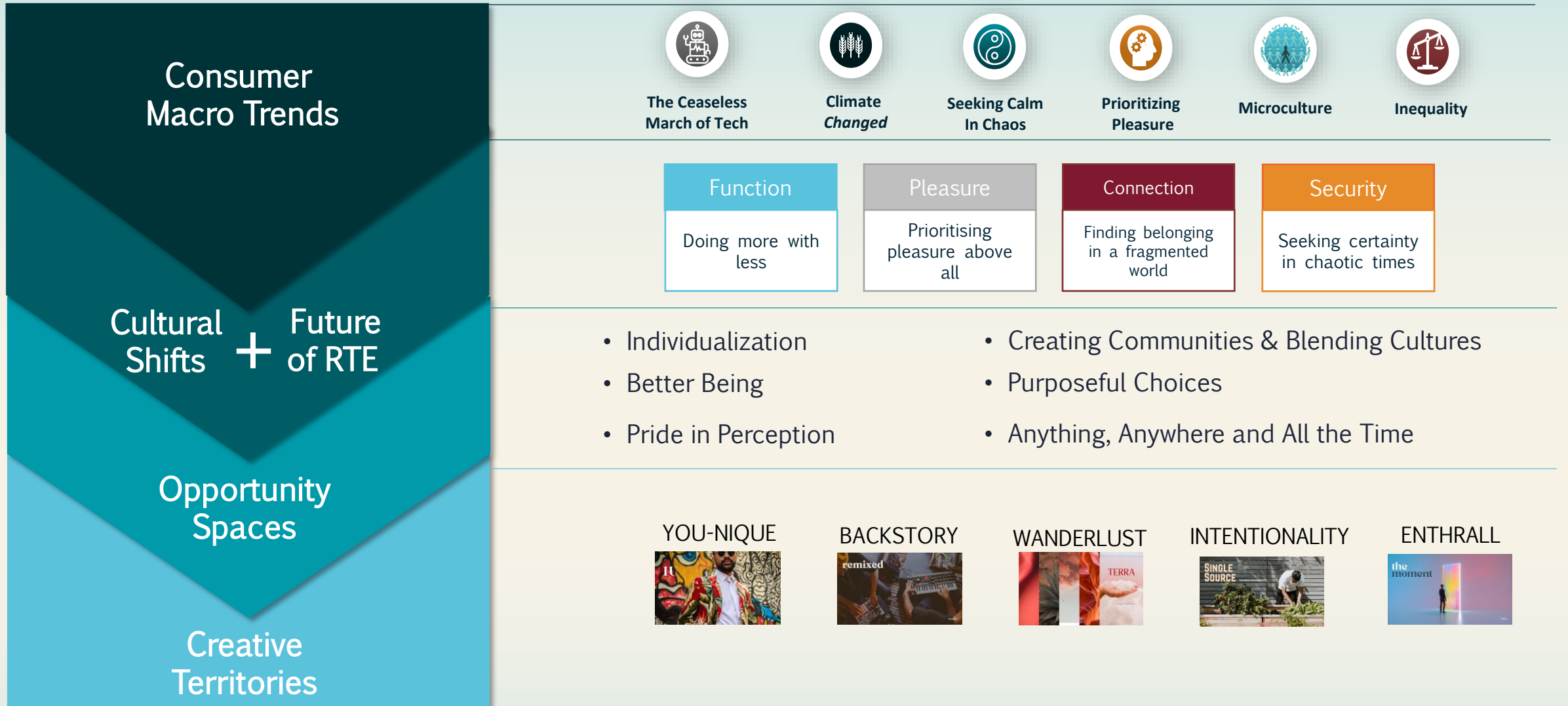
Function	Role in Innovation	How to Engage	Selection Criteria (Core Team)
Consumer Insights	Unlock unmet needs and validate concepts	Involve early in Territory Mapping & Concepting	Choose team members with qualitative + quantitative depth and storytelling skills
R&D / Liquid Team	Develop formulas aligned with brand promise	Bring in during Ideation & Concepting	Prioritize agile thinkers who can iterate fast and understand sensory cues
Design & Marketing	Craft brand identity & packaging	Embed throughout Ideation and Concept refinement	Select creatives who can navigate ambiguity and build from strategic guardrails
Legal & Regulatory	Ensure compliance without compromising edge	Engage as a checkpoint function at key milestones	Choose solution-oriented partners with RTD experience
Sales & Trade	Drive retailer buy-in and pricing strategy	Loop in at Pipeline Activation & Concept scoring	Select trade-savvy collaborators who understand shopper psychology
Steering Committee	Provide strategic alignment & unblock resourcing	Review progress at checkpoints	Choose high-level decision makers who embrace premium innovation and risk



CORE TEAM

- ✓ **Bias for action & agility** — select team members who thrive in iterative environments
- ✓ **Strategic storytelling mindset** — prioritize contributors who can translate insights into concept narratives
- ✓ **Collaboration-first** — look for inclusive thinkers willing to build on others' ideas
- ✓ **Familiarity with category nuance** — ensure mix of RTD experience + fresh POV

Whitespace Identification Framework





Better Being

Fully Attuned.

Modern life is wearing on people's health—physically, mentally, and emotionally.

As social media reshapes standards of wellness, many seek quick functional benefits and daily rituals to counterbalance stress and aging.

Predicted Future State:

- *Ingredient sourcing and clean labels may reign supreme in a category saturated with additives and the “the unknown” (e.g., Four Loko)*



The Opportunity

To breakthrough the ready-to-drink category, brands can embrace the conscious consumer and deliver against holistic lifestyle needs.

Yet, many RTD alcoholic beverages attempt to mask their manufactured taste with overly sweet, syrupy and bland flavors. There is an opportunity to lean into "realness" through naturally-sourced sweeteners and ingredients that celebrate authenticity – ultimately delivering a superior taste.

No artificial flavors.

No ultra processed ingredients or additives.

Just simple sweetness as nature intended.

Consumers were engaged frequently

Informal Qual “Dip”

Conducted quick pulse-check with consumers for any obvious optimizations to the Bases-style narratives and renderings



Concept	Feedback	Notes
Concept 1	Love the honey, vodka, I like that there's a couple of different notes of things in each option.	Keep this one, it's a strong contender.
Concept 2I wonder how much sugar is in them, and can they make it with less sugar?...	Consider a lower sugar version.
Concept 3	We [Gen Z] are getting more into caring what is in our products and becoming more mindful about what we are putting into our bodies.	Highlight natural ingredients.
Concept 4	I love that it [Nectar] is sustainably sourced, and the natural sweeteners cool...	Emphasize sustainability.
Concept 5	it made me feel like 'Oh I'm not drinking something that's all-artificial stuff'...	Use natural sweeteners.

1st Quant: Idea Statement Test

All the great work from the workshop was intentionally distilled and translated into 50 two-sentence idea statements and tested in a quant idea screen

2nd Quant: Concept Test The 10 BASES-style concept narratives and renderings + 2 benchmark concepts were brought into a quant screen to help inform top concepts to bring into product development.



Prioritize Top concepts identified to bring into qual “research party” to kick off full proposition testing and brand development

Research Party Consumer “meet & greet” with the brand concepts, including research stimulus, mood boards, and experience design



“

I love that it [Nectar] is sustainably sourced, and the natural sweeteners cool...

it made me feel like 'Oh I'm not drinking something that's all-artificial stuff'... With the honey, vodka, I like that there's a couple of different notes of things in each option.

–Jacob (Qual Dip)

....I wonder how much sugar is in them, and can they make it with less sugar?...

– Quant concept screen

We [Gen Z] are getting more into caring what is in our products and becoming more mindful about what we are putting into our bodies.

–Mayra (Research Party)

Crafting an authentic brand proposition was a priority

Macro Shift/ Cultural Conversation Macro-forces influencing consumer culture	Better Being & Purposeful Choices
Creative Territory Intersection of macro-shifts and creative thought starters	Intentionality
Cultural Insight What is happening at a consumer culture level	I recognize the impact of my actions, so I'm trying to make conscious choices
Consumer Insight What is happening at a category (RTD, alcoholic beverages) level	I'm seeking an alternative solution that can fit within my lifestyle goals and values
POD (Point of Differentiation) The key essence of the concept; what sets it apart from the current category	Ready-to-drink canned cocktails that are enhanced with natural sweeteners, like honey or agave
Pipeline Prioritization Rationale/throughline on why to prioritize for 2025 launch (over other concepts)	Must capitalize on the trend now to remain relevant
Concept Fit Occasions where the concept would be a good fit for/incremental to the existing set	Social gatherings, Solo drinking, Dinner Pairings

*The word nectar is **so organic**,
it already seems
healthy. It's a cool experience,
having a crazy bar cocktail that
is brought into your home in the
form of a can.
It feels fancier, with
multiple spices and fragrances
and that elevates
this drink. And I think it has a
**wide appeal...to all different
people.**"*
– Cian (Qual Dip)

PRIOR RESEARCH DESIGN

NECTAR

SIP THE SWEETNESS
OF NATURE



PRIOR RESEARCH DESIGN

Design Rationale

OVERALL

Consumers appreciate the simple yet elegant layout that's easy to shop with strong flavor imagery and color.

TAGLINE

"Where Flavors Harmonize" effectively communicates a balanced and premium taste experience while being short and catchy.

LOGO

The minimal icon suggests purity and natural ingredients, reinforcing the brand's premium and harmonious qualities.

The gold and white color palette enhances the luxurious feel, making the brand visually appealing and memorable.

INGREDIENT IMAGERY


The realistic representation increases quality and taste perceptions.

FLAVOR COLOR

The prominent flavor color coding enhances shop-ability and flavor appeal.



Nectar Collective achieved “Brand Grower” status in BASES testing



PRIOR RESEARCH DESIGN

Introducing NEW Nectara, sparkling alcoholic beverages thoughtfully crafted to deliver perfectly paired flavor profiles. Each ready-to-drink cocktail uses an intentional blend of natural ingredients to offer a flavorful beverage you can sip and savor.










Each cocktail is crafted with real honey or agave, then complemented with refreshing fruits and a hint of botanicals for a complex, harmonious blend of flavors. Made with quality spirits, Nectara thoughtfully combines natural ingredients to create a truly delicious and perfectly balanced cocktail experience.

Available in these varieties:

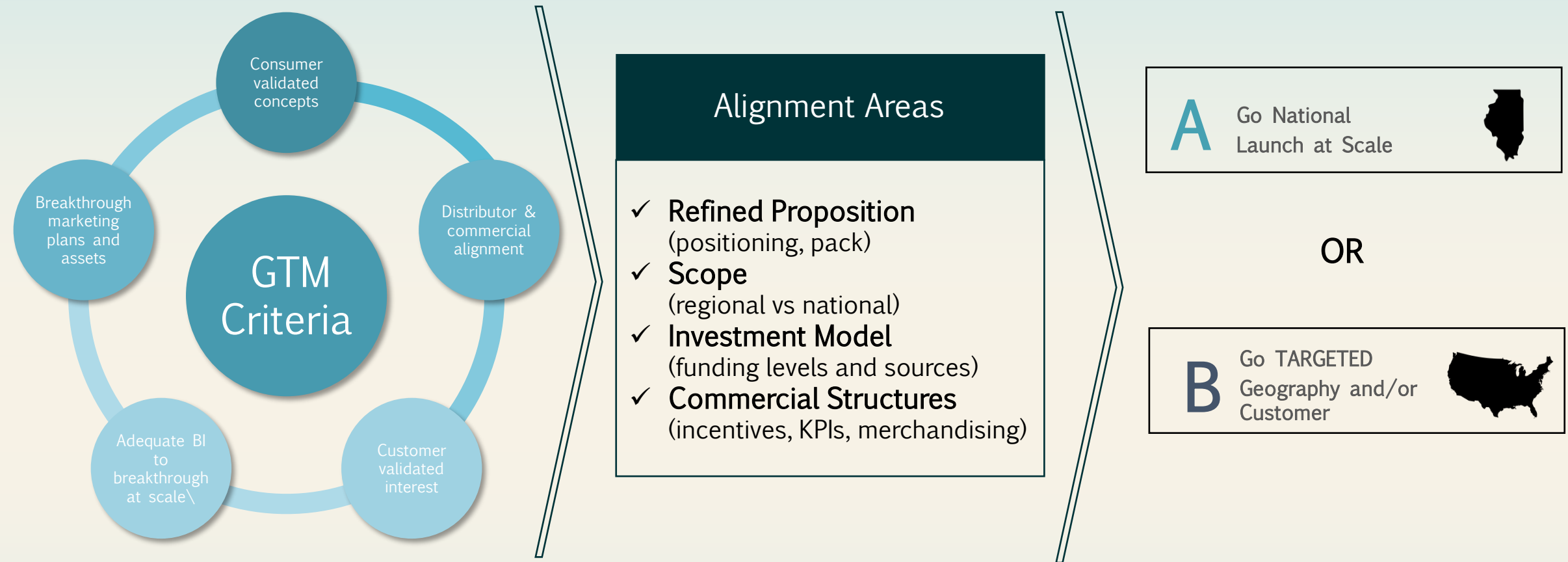
- Raspberry Basil & Vodka Cocktail with a Hint of Honey
- Lemon Lavender & Tequila Cocktail with a Hint of Agave
- Peach Orange Blossom & Bourbon Cocktail with a Hint of Honey

7% ALC./Vol.

Each flavor available in a 4-pack of 12oz cans for 12.99

	Nectara
ACTIVATION PROFILE	 BRAND GROWER
BROAD POTENTIAL	 Qualified
Trial Interest	 Above Average
Desire	 Ready
Acceptable Costs	 Risky
TARGETED POTENTIAL	 Qualified
Strategic Target	Authenticity Seekers
Trial Interest	 Top
Desire	 Top
Acceptable Costs	 Top

Success of breakthrough innovation requires strategic Go-To-Market planning that best nurtures the brand



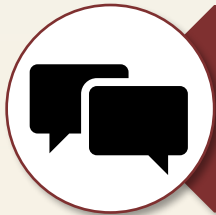
Key Takeaways



Utilize consumer trends to identify white-space opportunities



Leverage multidisciplinary teams for breakthrough creativity



Create space for frequent consumer feedback and optimization



Embed consumer insights in commercial plans



Special Thanks To....



Cherice Williams

Marketing Director, Suntory Global Spirits



Sterling-Rice Group

Innovation Agency



Questions?
