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STRATEGY: How Gloc Brands Is Navigating Coke System Refranchising; Canned Sparkler Prompts Broader Brand Refresh that Downplays Former Aloe Identity; Looks to Raise \$5 Mil in New Capital How do you build a national brand when your national DSD partner – Coca-Cola North America – is undertaking its own tumultuous distribution transition? That has been among key challenges confronting Gloc Brands as it navigates rollout within Coca-Cola bottling network that just concluded massive refranchising effort, as KO – an investor in Gloc via its VEB venture arm – devolves responsibility for local activities to network of indie partners. Throw in launch of a canned sparkling line, Gloc Sparkling, and rebranding of noncarb core line, now Gloc Water, and it becomes complex matrix. So co has been reinforcing ranks, notably by naming Evian vet Steve Finn to coo role earlier this year, even as it's retained Green Circle Capital Partners to help it raise \$5 mil in growth financing to capitalize on recent momentum, with KO anticipated to participate. Green Circle, recall, is firm founded by Stu Strumwasser, a banker, writer and musician who had a fling with mint bev brand called Snow about a decade ago. BBI caught up with Gloc Brands ceo Dino Sarti over cold-brewed coffee at Intelligentsia Coffee earlier this week when he was in NY for meetings at brand accelerator AccelFoods, which came aboard as investor last year.

Brand was created by incubation shop LA Libations in 2012 as straight aloe play called Aloe Gloc, with LAL founding partners Danny Stepper and Sarti acting as co-ceo's. (Pat Bolden is 3d founding partner of LAL.) Far from getting disproportionate degree of focus as "house brand" within LA Libations, Aloe Gloc tended to get lost in shuffle as team scrambled to service its outside clients – a "shoemaker has no shoes" situation, Dino recalled this week. That was despite encouraging test in LA in 2015 that signaled time was finally right to go bigger.

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