

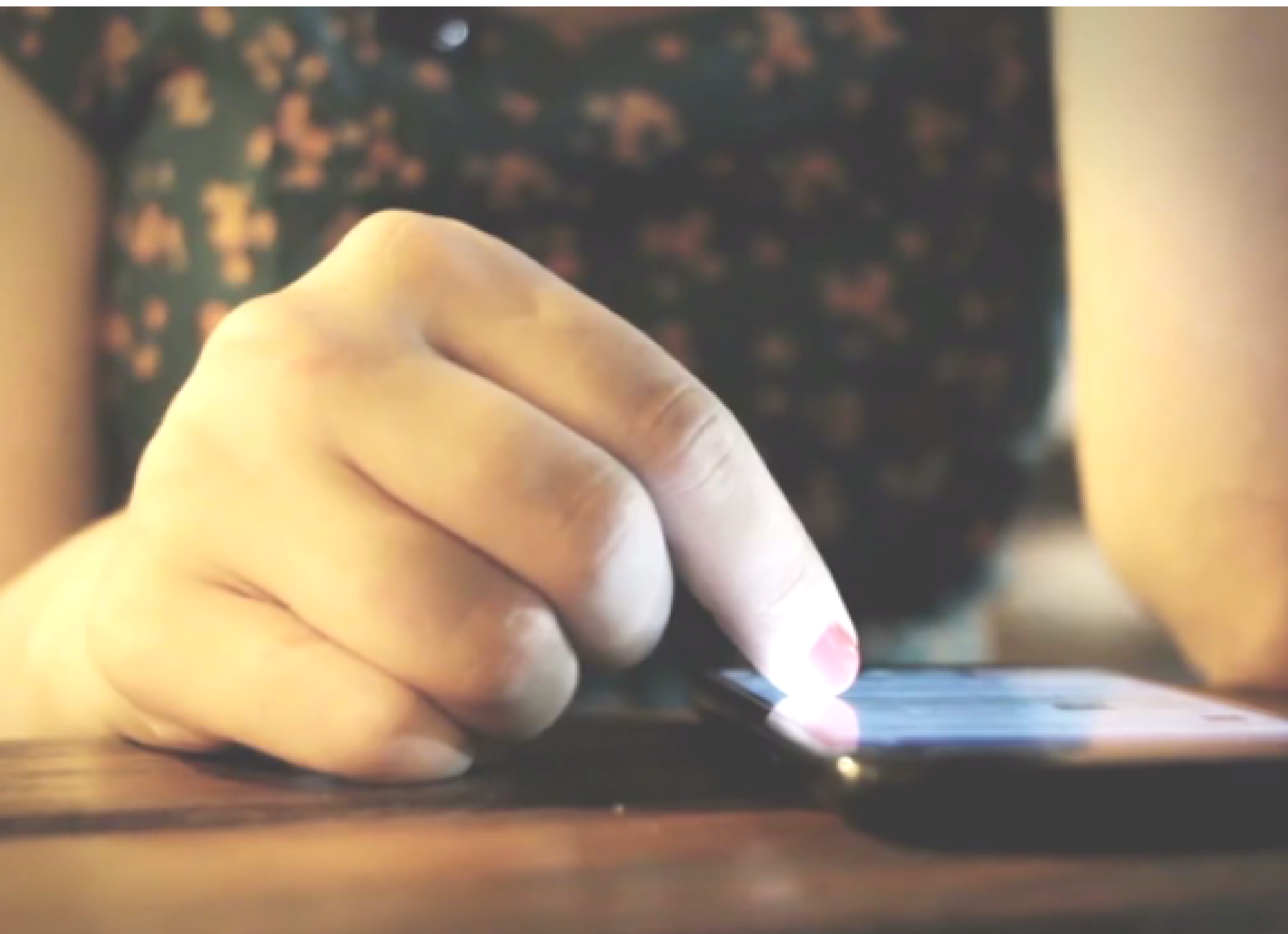
LEARN WHY

DARK SOCIAL MARKETING

**IS THE BIGGEST NEW
OPPORTUNITY OF THE 21ST
CENTURY**



FRICITIONLESS.SOCIAL



OVERVIEW

WHAT IS 'DARK SOCIAL'?

AND WHY DOES IT MATTER?

In the Summer of 2016, my colleague Jon Salmon and I set up Frictionless.Social, a Dark Social Marketing Company

aimed specifically at helping brands and organisations understand Dark Social and how to benefit from it.

We set out to gain a deeper understanding of the market by conducting a series of focus groups using different platforms from WhatsApp to Kik to YikYak and WeChat. We even conducted what we believe to be the world's first pop-up multilingual focus group with users from countries such as Morocco, Italy and China.

We wanted to understand:

- Why people used 'Dark Social'
- The tone of voice they used
- How they communicated within them compared to how they communicated on 'open' platforms such as Twitter or Facebook
- Whether they would allow brands to infiltrate this world and what they would expect of them

What we found out was very interesting...

*'I SPEND HOURS
ON IT DAILY'*

*'I TALK
DIFFERENTLY ON
THERE'*

In our WhatsApp Film Group we asked:
Were you able to talk freely in the group?

68% of respondents said 'Yes'



*'I CAN'T SEE WHY I
WOULDN'T BUY ON
DARK SOCIAL'*

YES, BUT WHAT EXACTLY IS DARK SOCIAL?

Have you ever sent a group text message?

That's Dark Social.

Have you ever sent something to several recipients via email?

That's Dark Social.

Have you ever used WhatsApp, Snapchat, Kik, WeChat or a similar service?

That's Dark Social too.

Simply put, for the purposes of this White Paper, we will refer to Dark Social as any form of online communication that is private. It's not on a public social network such as Twitter or Facebook (which are the exact opposites of Dark Social).

Because it's private it has three major differences from communication on open social networks:

- Because they are usually talking to a close group of family or friends, people are much freer in their tone of voice, what they will say and the type of content they will share on Dark Social networks.
- The nature of it being 'dark' makes it much harder for marketers to assess or measure. They may know traffic is coming from somewhere, but they're not sure where, and they are not able to measure the sentiment behind it (ie whether people are talking positively or negatively about it).
- As a result, in marketing terms, the user has a lot more power. If there is a marketing opportunity it is, first and foremost, permission-based in nature. Getting it wrong early on from a marketing point of view will have dire consequences.

KEY TAKEAWAY 1

DARK SOCIAL MARKETING
IS

PERMISSION-
BASED



WHY IS TONE OF VOICE IMPORTANT?

Getting the wrong tone of voice when talking to customers on Dark Social networks is a killer. But it happens all the time. Since the Twitter age, it's become commonly accepted that a lot of marketing power has transferred from the hands of marketers to the hands of the consumer: and therefore a social media mistake by a brand or organisation can require a clean-up team to jump into action. The wrong tone of voice is one of the easiest mistakes to make. It's the equivalent of Dad Dancing – great fun for those doing the dancing, but embarrassing for the kids involved.

It's actually a good comparison, especially as the key demographic that companies should be looking at for the future on Dark Social is the younger, teen audience .

Companies need to look and understand how their audiences are naturally talking to each other, and try to fit in to that tone of voice seamlessly. If they just turn up with a shouty 'Hey we're here!' approach then it's likely to immediately turn people off. Early mistakes in communicating on Dark Social can be costly if not impossible to overcome.

'It seems a *lot less formal* on WhatsApp compared to other platforms'

The average score out of 10 for how relaxed people felt in our chats was

7.9

'I use Twitter to try and be funny, and Whatsapp to *talk to friends*'

KEY TAKEAWAY 2

DON'T 'DAD-DANCE'

tone of
voice is
crucial

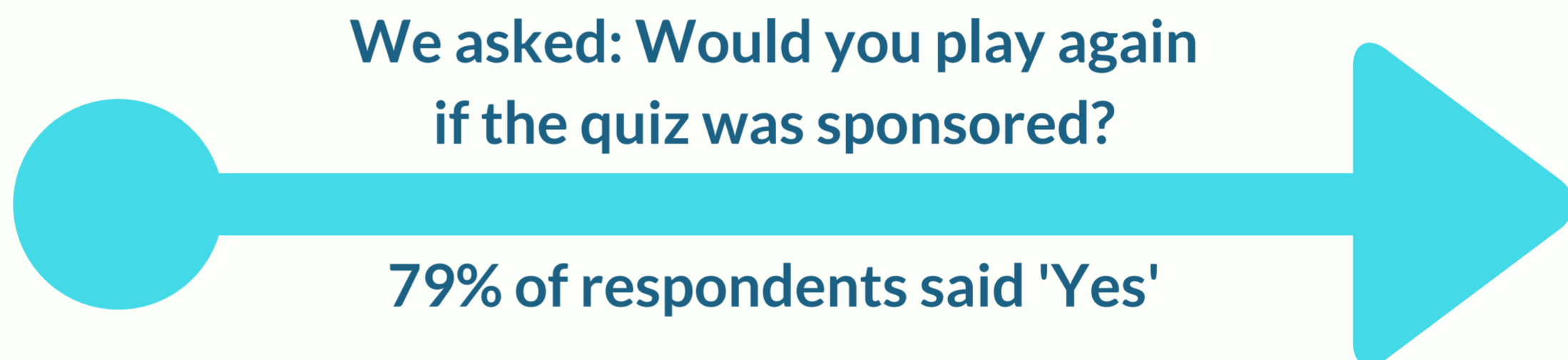


BRANDS NEED TO EXERCISE CAUTION BEFORE 'JUMPING IN'

It became clear from our surveys that any brand or organisation will definitely be given short shrift if it makes an error early on. People are more likely to recommend a positive dark social experience to their peers (and peer-to-peer recommendations are extremely valuable compared to a shout-out on Twitter or Facebook where there might be a larger audience but fewer people are actually paying attention).

And because people communicate more naturally and honestly in a dark social world, this spills over into the way they will communicate with brands, and the way in which they expect brands to speak to them. People are very open to offers and specific information that is personal and will help them, such as discounts and early release news: in fact anything that is useful to them and will improve their experience of a specific interest is something that most users will warmly welcome.

'As a customer, I
would trust someone
more if they have a
genuine interest in me'



'I would probably
opt out if I got
a *general message*,
they need to be
specific to me'

KEY TAKEAWAY 3

DON'T MAKE AN EARLY
MISTAKE

FIRST
IMPRESSIONS
COUNT



PEOPLE ARE READY TO BUY ON DARK SOCIAL

Perhaps the strongest message we learned in our surveys was that customers are ready to buy on Dark Social.

We know that people buy from people, and they want to build up a trust so that they can go back and buy from that same person again and again. And they want a relationship that is so special that they can get a sense of pride out of recommending it to their friends or network.

Our surveys found that the majority of Dark Social users are more than happy to buy on Dark Social. In fact, among younger users, there is something of an *expectation that they should be able to purchase*.

In 2016, users were able to purchase on Snapchat for the first time - with 20th Century Fox allowing them to buy tickets for 'Wolverine', for example. There is clearly a desire among the younger demographic for an extension of this power to buy across all apps.

'There's *no difference*
to buying online or on
through Dark Social'

'I can't see *why I*
wouldn't purchase
from WhatsApp'

KEY TAKEAWAY 4

DARK SOCIAL IS A WHOLE
NEW REVENUE STREAM

CUSTOMERS
ARE READY
TO BUY



WHY CHOOSE FRICTIONLESS?

For many marketing departments, Dark Social will represent a leap into the unknown. They will need a trusted source to give them a helping hand to maximise their exposure, create long-lasting relationships, and create new revenue streams.

That's where Frictionless comes in. We have a background in working on campaigns with name brands such as the Huffington Post, Virgin and ASOS.

We are now the only agency dedicated solely to working on Dark Social campaigns - unlike other agencies which offer it as a bolt-on offering. Since our launch we've had an enthusiastic response from the likes of Uber, GroupM and we've been featured as experts in an article in Inc Magazine.

But we've done more than just talk to people - we've broken new ground in a number of different ways...

WHY 'EDUCATE-CREATE- GROW' IS OUR MOTTO

Frictionless is the only Dark Social pure play that has:

- spoken to hundreds of Dark Social users in their natural environment to find out what they *really* think and want
- run a successful themed game called 'No Googling'
- created the only podcast devoted *solely* to Dark Social Marketing
- written the first book on Dark Social marketing (published January 2017)
- conducted opinion polls and surveys on everything from Brexit and Trump to fashion, sport and film

We know that the first steps in Dark Social aren't always obvious and that some departments may need some persuading to realise its potential. This is why our three core offerings are to :

- **EDUCATE:** Explaining to companies how Dark Social really works and how to penetrate it
- **CREATE:** Our award-winning team will create rich user experiences to have your customers come back again and again and to tell their friends about it
- **GROW:** We will help you run these campaigns, or give you the tools to do so yourself.

Find out more about who we are and how to contact us below.

Start your first Dark Social Campaign now

hello@frictionless.social
Tel: +44 (0)208 123 2983

KEY TAKEAWAY 5

COMPANIES NEED AN
'EDUCATE-CREATE-
MAINTAIN' STRATEGY

IT'S A WHOLE

NEW

MARKETING

STRATEGY

WHO WE ARE AND HOW TO CONTACT US:

Frictionless was founded and is run by:

Paul Hurley is a former Yahoo! Entertainment executive and BSkyB Head of Programming who set up and runs Handface Productions, a content creation company. Its client list includes the NHS, the Huffington Post, L'Oreal, local government and Channel 4 among many others. Paul is obsessed by making and thinking about shareable content and his first book on the subject 'Viral: The Social Video Handbook' was published in early 2016.

Paul@frictionless.social

Jon Salmon started his career at LineOne at the very start of the internet and has more than 15 years' industry experience across digital and broadcast platforms. Formerly Head of Internet TV at TalkTalk, his career spans from producing to consulting on video, connected-TV and broadcast projects for the British Film Institute, TwoFour, Universal Music, GlaxoSmithKline and AOL.

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Countries that participated in the first Frictionless pop-up multilingual chat:

