



DIFFERENTSIZEFEET

The 100heads Family Unit

‘Meet The Family’

A WHITE PAPER

September 2011



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A new model for understanding how psychology, conversation and social influence impact on our purchasing behaviour.

- **OVERVIEW:** inverting the model for influence
- **THE FOUR TENETS OF OUR RESEARCH**
 - **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**
 - **MEET THE FAMILY:** profiling the eight social buyer personality types
 - **THE FAMILY IN ACTION:** social purchasing behaviour across product categories
 - **CONCLUSION:** influencing the family

● OVERVIEW

INVERTING THE MODEL FOR INFLUENCE

The **Influencer** – that well-connected, vocal and trusted trendsetter who spreads advocacy and sales through his or her social network – has become the star of social media marketing. But he is nothing new. The academic concept of the influencer dates back to the field of **diffusion of innovations**¹ created by sociologists and anthropologists in the late nineteenth century, but has more recently become applied to online social media. Popularised by such books as Malcolm Gladwell's *Tipping Point* (2000), Duncan Watts' *Six Degrees* (2003), Ben McConnell and Jackie Hubba's *Citizen Marketers* (2006), and Chris Brogan's *Trust Agents* (2009), **influencer theory**² suggests that by giving positive experiences, opinions and recommendations to influencers – the individuals at the heart of social networks – brands can shift the behaviour of the **influenced** - the wider base of consumers on the fringes of the network.

Of course, we all play both roles in different times and contexts. We are sometimes the ones doing the influencing, sometimes the ones being influenced.

However, research into word of mouth focuses disproportionately on the influencers. Here at 1000heads, after eleven years' experience of working with brands to build social relationships and positive word of mouth, we have developed a specialist unit, Different Size Feet. Specifically designed to offer insight into *everyone* - the influencers *and* the influenced, it focuses on that most significant of socio-cultural groups – the family. Proactive social content creators are

always in the minority; the people who are influenced by brand conversation are the majority - and they are the ones who go on to actually purchase the product or service spreading through the network, on a large scale.

So, with the help of specialist family research agency **Kids Industries**³, we conducted an ambitious piece of in-depth research to investigate how social influence impacts on our buying behaviour, in particular as regards the family: how, why, where and when conversation prompts us to buy, on and offline, and which social relationships influence us at which stages of the process.

What did we discover? That we're not a generic herd of followers at all. We're complex individuals bound by all sorts of preferences and desires, and the web of relationships that make up our lives has huge impact on our buying decisions.

We also discovered, however, that most of us appear to fall into one of eight social buyer personalities, sharing common traits around what and who influences us socially and how that translates into our purchasing behaviour.

So we'd like to introduce you to our Family: the **Deliberators**, the **Experts**, the **Validators**, the **Frugals**, the **Child-Centred**, the **Impulsives**, the **Disengaged** and the **Excluded**.

Once you really understand their motivations and behaviours, you'll know exactly how to make them tick, talk – and buy.



THE DELIBERATORS

Driven by **GETTING IT RIGHT**

- CAREFUL RESEARCH ACROSS DIVERSE LOCATIONS
- VERY INFLUENTIAL
- 32 SOCIAL CONTACTS A DAY



THE EXPERTS

Driven by **QUALITY & SAVING TIME**

- RELY ON THEIR OWN RESEARCH AND EXPERIENCE
- FAIRLY INFLUENTIAL
- 23 SOCIAL CONTACTS A DAY



THE VALIDATORS

Driven by **SHARING & NURTURING**

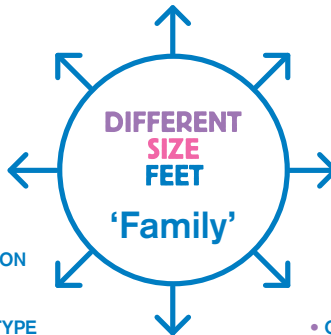
- RELY MAINLY ON PERSONAL RECOMMENDATION FROM LARGE NUMBER OF CONTACTS
- QUITE INFLUENTIAL
- 36 SOCIAL CONTACTS A DAY



THE FRUGALS

Driven by **BUDGET**

- RELY ON FAMILY RECOMMENDATION & OBSERVATION
- ONLY INFLUENTIAL WITHIN THEIR TYPE
- 15 SOCIAL CONTACTS A DAY



THE CHILD-CENTRED

Driven by **KID'S HAPPINESS**

- RELY ON RECOMMENDATIONS OF SMALL NUMBER OF CONTACTS
- ONLY INFLUENTIAL WITHIN THEIR TYPE
- 19 SOCIAL CONTACTS A DAY



THE IMPULSIVES

Driven by **GETTING WHAT THEY WANT**

- MAKE DECISION ON GUT REACTIONS
- NOT INFLUENTIAL
- 21 SOCIAL CONTACTS A DAY



THE DISENGAGED

Driven by **FUNCTION**

- HAPPY TO LET PARTNERS MAKE DECISIONS
- NOT AT ALL INFLUENTIAL



THE EXCLUDED

Driven by **GETTING BY**

- MAKE SNAP DECISIONS BASED ON LITTLE OR NO INFORMATION
- NOT AT ALL INFLUENTIAL

● THE FOUR TENETS OF OUR RESEARCH

1. PSYCHOLOGY RULES

'It's about the people, not the tools.'

Over the past five years, businesses have acknowledged that **word of mouth massively affects their bottom line⁴**. Social technologies have amplified, accelerated and distributed conversations and driven buying behaviour around brands and products in real time.

But those conversations are still at heart driven by human motivations and emotions. The school gates have been thrown open to the world; but the fears, hopes and aspirations of those standing beside them remain the most important influence on how, why and where people buy.

The **buyer decision process⁵** (BDP), wherever it takes place, typically depends on four key factors: level of involvement (a car requires more involvement than shampoo); situational influences (timeframe, budget, mood and social and physical context); socio-cultural influences (our class, culture and social reference groups) and psychology (our values, beliefs and attitudes).

When it comes to word of mouth, the focus is usually on the socio-cultural influences that affect social spread. But we felt there was a need to rigorously investigate the psychology involved in conversation and purchasing. How do people use conversation to choose which brands they ultimately buy? And are there certain consistent sets of behaviour that will allow us to segment and therefore more closely target them?

2. SEGMENTING SOCIAL

When it comes to social communication, knowing your audience is essential. Success depends on targeting and personalising experiences and engagement so that it is highly relevant and resonant to the people involved.

The social media industry offers several models for categorising people who spread brand conversation online. In 2007 Charlene Li and colleagues from the Altimeter Group created the widely distributed and discussed **Social Technographics ladder⁶**, which grades behaviour according to the level and type of online engagement with brands (creators, conversationalists, critics, collectors, joiners, spectators, inactives). This led to subsequent models such as Li's 2010 **Socialgraphics⁷**, with an Engagement Pyramid ranking types of social behaviour, and Brian Solis's **Behaviourgraphics⁸**, which considers the personality drivers behind those types of engagement.

However, these models still focus on how we engage with content online, not our behaviour regarding buying decisions – which is, after all, what businesses really care about. They also focus on online behaviour without taking into account our concurrent tendencies in the physical world. So we believe that our research offers the first segmentation model for how we use social sharing, both on and offline, to influence what we actually buy.

When it comes to social communication, knowing your audience is essential.

3. THERE IS NO LINE

Most people do not see themselves as living, talking or buying on, off, under, over or beside any sort of line. We believe that the concept of examining people and their behaviours solely 'online' or 'offline' gives a limited and unrealistic picture of how we really work.

So when we talk about social venues for conversation and decision-making, we set social media alongside social physical spaces. Thus rather than on or offline we might categorise social venues as:

- Social media (blogs, forums, social networks etc)
- Home
- Workplace
- School
- Hangouts (bars, restaurants, clubs etc)

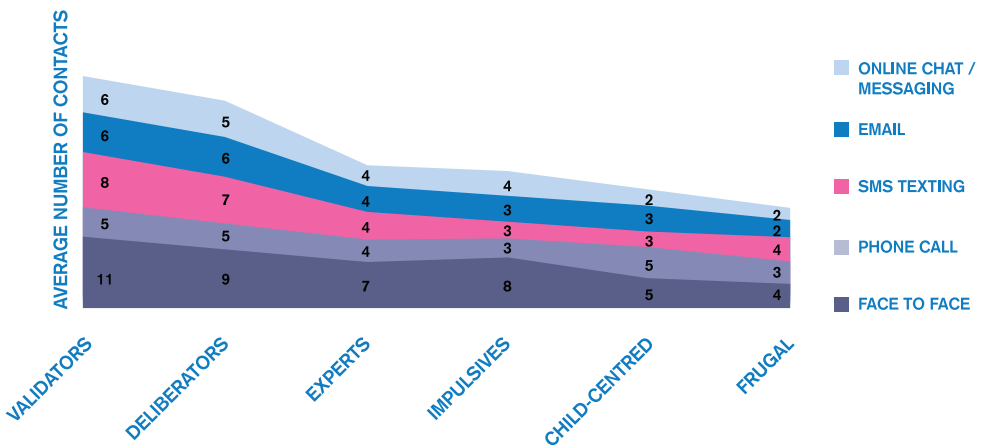
4. FAMILY MATTERS

We decided to examine social buying behaviours through the prism of the family. We all belong to some sort of family and this intimate web of relationships and influences can be an excellent field in which to demonstrate how our opinions and actions around brands are determined by our social context.

We were also interested in how decision-making changes when people become parents. How do children influence family purchases? How do spouses negotiate? What is the role of the extended family?

By sourcing our research via in-depth interviews with 32 mums and their partners (or key influencers if they were single), we aimed to get a clear picture of how socialising and buying decisions work on an everyday basis, where our relationships with our family, friends, colleagues, acquaintances and strangers all play a part.

NUMBER OF SOCIAL CONTACTS MADE ON AN AVERAGE DAY



● RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

First, a **pre-interview stage** incorporated consumption/conversation diaries keeping receipts and records of purchases; decision mapping; and brand lists.

There followed an **in-home interview** with the 32 demographically representative mums along with their partner/influencer. This was conversational in style, allowing respondents to talk to each other as well as the moderator. This also included **house tours**, looking round kitchens and bathrooms while probing the influence of recent purchases.

The discussion guide was focused on understanding purchasing journeys across six product categories: automotive, domestic appliances, holidays and day trips, food, and health and beauty. We placed specific emphasis on understanding influences at each stage, the drivers of those influences, and what proportion of that influence was conversational.

Examining this rich qualitative data, we saw eight distinct types of personality start to emerge when it comes to social influence and purchasing decisions. What's more, these personalities seemed to adopt the same behaviour across all six product categories, and at every level of emotional involvement.

We took our findings into broader **quantitative research** involving 1018 parents. The questionnaire was designed to build up a detailed understanding of their brand conversations: who they talked to, where they talked, what other influences impacted on them and, in turn, how far they

would influence others. The respondents were profiled by age, social economic group (SEG), number and age of children, and also by social buyer personality.

We will ask the girls about the colour of the house, yes. Quite often we say, 'You pick. What would you pick?' We do like their input, especially on something like that.
[Female Child-centred]

I rely on my own research before I buy something, but if I'm happy, I'll stick with it next time or get the upgrade – no point in repeating the process.
[Male Expert]

"What don't we talk about at the school gate?! There is actually no boundary, I don't think, at the school gate, of what you wouldn't talk about, because these are people that you see every day, day in, day out."
[Female Deliberator]

"My mechanic said it was a good car, and my cousin's son works for the AA. He's got one and the reason he bought his was because they hardly go out of service"
[Male Frugal]

"Well she's spent so much money on skin products over the year. I don't bother. I just wait till she finds one that's absolutely perfect for her skin and then I think, 'Right. I'll try it.'"
[Female Deliberator]

MEET THE FAMILY

PROFILING THE EIGHT SOCIAL BUYER PERSONALITY TYPES

THE DELIBERATORS



DEMOGRAPHICS

This group is evenly spread across gender and age. They are firmly middle class, found in all regions of the country and often married to a like-minded partner. They are well educated, with an average spread of incomes.

ATTITUDE

They are a very social group – their work colleagues and friends are of a similar life-stage, so there are plenty of opportunities for socialising together. They are very concerned with getting it right.

SOCIAL BDP

The Deliberators probably take the longest to make a purchase decision, as they like to cover off all bases at every stage of the BDP.

They will often discover a need at the consideration stage by making a compliment or sharing a problem, and will then ask for recommendations from friends, while also looking for online information – most notably reading reviews and checking out money-saving sites and group deals. They will often leave their own comments and share information and photos.

Although a third of their time spent online is on social networking sites, they say these are not as influential as offline conversation with similar 'considered' friends, partners and work colleagues (but rarely their own children). This group is very influential as others recognise the care they take in making decisions and trust their opinion.

THE EXPERTS



DEMOGRAPHICS

Two thirds of Experts are male and they are evenly spread across SEGs and age groups. They are the best educated of all the types, and have a greater representation in the South of England and Wales.

ATTITUDE

The Experts consider themselves to be influencers of others, have a strong conviction that they know what they like and rely on their own research and experience rather than the views of others. They have a slightly top-down family structure and are keen on quality and saving time, investing time upfront for future quick decisions.

SOCIAL BDP

Experts therefore tend to either go directly from the consideration stage to the purchase stage (brand loyalty is high amongst this group), or having observed a new brand in use, spend a lot of time at the information search stage – most notably using public and brand sources in order to 'discover' it for themselves.

They claim to be resistant to influence from others, although much of their research was online reviews and also conversation with others they considered to be experts too. This meant that family members were very often passed over even when making specifically family orientated purchases.

They see themselves as the person that others tend to come to for advice – a fact borne out by the other groups when questioned. They will rarely offer advice without this prompting however.

THE VALIDATORS



DEMOGRAPHICS

Two thirds of this group are female. They have an average age spread and are concentrated in the higher SEGS. They are highly represented in the North of England. They are well educated and have a medium to high income. They have moved some way away from their extended family (they are the least segment to display a similar outlook to their parents), preferring to centre their social life on friends and colleagues who are at a similar life-stage.

ATTITUDE

As a group they are hugely social – they prefer seeing friends face to face, but also use text a lot. They are most likely to chat at home, work and friends' houses. They have a flat family structure and are very extrovert; they love to organise social events, self-validating through sharing and nurturing.

SOCIAL BDP

Conversation will be the main prompt at the consideration stage, and once searching for information, they will rely very heavily on their personal sources – they revel in sharing their experiences with others, and will very happily compliment, ask for opinions and recommend products and services. They will also spontaneously divulge information without being prompted – some even identifying themselves as the product trialists in their social circle. They very much want to validate their own and others' purchases. These conversations will happen at every stage of the BDP and mainly with friends and extended family – once they have narrowed their choices, they will be asking for further validation right up to the post-purchase reassurances they will also seek and give.

As such, this group is influential – although Experts and Deliberators are more so – their volume of brand conversation perhaps diluting its impact on others.

THE FRUGALS



DEMOGRAPHICS

Members of this group are also more likely to be female, but are evenly spread across age and SEG. They have a larger than average representation in the South of England and The Midlands, and have quite low incomes.

ATTITUDE

The Frugals are not particularly social but do live quite close to their extended family. They have a top-down family structure and their main concern when making decisions about purchases is pragmatic: whether it works within their budget.

SOCIAL BDP

Brand conversation mainly happens in the home – they did chat at the school gate, but less so than the other types. Although the Frugals are happy to compliment, ask direct opinions, recommend and share problems, it is to a lesser degree than the other main segments.

They are also much more likely to simply observe, and less keen to spontaneously inform of recent purchases. Much of this reticence is likely to be a concern over their budget constraints or perhaps not wanting to broadcast that restraint.

They are however, the most likely of all the groups to tell of a bad experience! With regards the BDP, once they are satisfied on price, they will go straight to purchase.

THE CHILD-CENTRED



DEMOGRAPHICS

This group is far more likely to be female, younger and found further down the economic scale. These traits are more concentrated amongst families with young children and that membership is often transient – becoming a different type as their children get older.

They are not that well educated, but have a mid to low income. Whilst they are most likely to live in suburban areas of South of England, they have a larger representation in the North of England than the average, and also in rural areas.

ATTITUDE

This group live very close to their extended family (with whom they have a similar outlook), and further away from their friends. They have a bottom-up family structure – their childrens' happiness dominating their decision-making. They will often spend more than they can afford on their children, making the necessary sacrifices to ensure their contentment.

SOCIAL BDP

As might be expected of this group, many of which are mothers at home with young families, they have a low number of social contacts a day, and they are as likely to make a call as they are to see someone face to face. In spite of this, the volume of conversation with these few contacts is high – and they are happy to compliment, ask someone's opinion, recommend a product, share a problem to seek advice, and tell of a recent purchase.

They are the least likely to simply observe. In spite of their sociability, as a group they are not influential. They do not claim to be asked their opinion, and do not offer their opinions unless asked. Individual research rarely takes place – this group preferring to rely heavily on word of mouth recommendation.

THE IMPULSIVES



DEMOGRAPHICS

This group is evenly split across males and females with a slight skew towards lower SEGs. They are also more likely to be older. They are well educated but have a very mixed income, and are likely to be from the East and North of England. Few live rurally.

ATTITUDE

This group are not very social, and have a low number of contacts a day in relation to the other profiles, and mostly face-to-face. They are primarily driven to get what they want, quickly.

SOCIAL BDP

The Impulsives prefer to make a decision based on gut reaction and minimal research. They will rarely share an opinion on a product, recommend a product or share a problem. They do not focus conversations on product experiences, and are the most likely to observe in order to sidestep any research.

THE DISENGAGED



DEMOGRAPHICS

Usually male, this group is found across the SEGs and incomes.

ATTITUDE

Lethargic – they tend to defer to their partner on decisions.

SOCIAL BDP

The Disengaged are not big 'talkers' and seek information when absolutely necessary from trusted sources. Not at all brand driven, they tend to take a highly functional approach when considering new products and are happy to let partners make the decisions.

THE EXCLUDED



DEMOGRAPHICS

This group are mixed across gender with low SEG and income.

ATTITUDE

They have very few social contacts, lacking networks and experiences. Their main focus is on getting by.

SOCIAL BDP

This group lack experience with products/brands overall but can be very loyal when they find something that works for them. They lack access to information (both online and offline) – usually only receiving information one place (often close family). They confess to making lots of mistakes due to poorly informed decisions.

• THE FAMILY IN ACTION

SOCIAL PURCHASING BEHAVIOUR ACROSS THE 6 MAIN PRODUCT CATEGORIES

We asked respondents in the main six segments to cite their top 4 most important factors when deciding what they bought/booked.

SOCIAL INFLUENCE	EXPERT	DELIBERATORS	VALIDATORS	IMPULSIVES	CHILD-CENTRED	FRUGAL
Conversations With Friends	25%	27%	32%	17%	22.5%	26%
Conversations With Spouse	14%	19.5%	15.8%	24%	25%	23%
Conversation With Extended Family	12.9%	14%	16%	22%	15%	19%
Online Reviews	14%	17%	9%	9%	7%	3%
Advertising	6%	8%	8%	3.5%	15.8%	6.6%
Conversations With Work Colleagues	5.2%	8%	12%	6.3%	9%	4.6%
Conversations with someone with knowledge of the category	5.4%	3.5%	3%	8%	0%	4%
Conversations With Children	3.2%	3.2%	3%	6.3%	7.6%	4%
Social Networks	0%	0%	0%	0%	2.3%	0%

● CONCLUSION

INFLUENCING THE FAMILY

While we in no way claim that our social buying personality types are an exact reflection of the complex and shifting ways in which social content influences our purchasing behaviour, we do believe that they provide a valid and useful guide which will enable brands to effectively refine and target their approach to social outreach. So now that you've met the family, how are you going to change what you do to chime with how they behave?

- You may be providing the Deliberators with plenty of information about your products across the social networks they love to browse, but are you making sure word of mouth spreads to their colleagues and spouses offline – who they trust much more than online content when it come to actually taking that step to buy?
- Are you empowering the Experts to feel like their knowledge and opinions are more important than that of your marketing department?
- Are you enabling offline conversation with friends for the Validator?
- Have you included an exciting trigger to catch an Impulsive's eye?
- Is there any way you can reach the Disengaged in their comfort zone and help them get involved?
- If you are making changes to your internal communications and culture, can you use social influence to accelerate acceptance and ownership across the different personality types in your company?

Any approach that challenges brands to be guided by insight-driven human psychology - rather than new tools or sparkly award-winning ideas – can only result in better strategies that make greater impact on more people.

And that, surely, is where the future of social business communications lies.

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DIFFERENTSIZEFEET

For more information, please contact:

ROB FORD

GROUP BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT - 1000heads

rob.ford@1000heads.com

+44 (0)203 206 2000 +44 (0)7553 348 801

CARRIE GRAFHAM

DIRECTOR - DIFFERENT SIZE FEET

carrie.grafham@differentsizefeet.com

+44 (0)7813 206 041

Let us know your thoughts: Tweet at [@twitter.com/DSFeet](https://twitter.com/DSFeet)

www.differentsizefeet.com
