

## THE CONSCIOUS ADVERTISING NETWORK ADVERTISING THAT'S FIT FOR THE INTERNET & SOCIETY OF THE FUTURE

**It is our belief...** that industry ethics must now catch up with the technology of modern advertising. Brands do not live in a vacuum and the money spent on advertising has a profound impact on society. The advertising industry, from brands and agencies to adtech, is perfectly placed to consciously change both their operations and the content they produce in pursuit of making communications that are better for all. Our ambition is that:

- Ad fraud should be eradicated
- The industry and content it produces should be as diverse as we are
- Neither hate speech nor deliberately misleading 'fake news' should be funded by brands
- Consent should be informed and people seen as active participants in their online experience
- And, as forms of advertising to or around children evolve, so should the safeguards to their wellbeing

### **The leadership position**

Our objective is to actively encourage the advertising industry to adopt a leadership position on these key issues by embedding Conscious Advertising Network (CAN) criteria in company internal policies, creative guidelines and agency briefs. By endorsing CAN criteria they will also be committing to solving issues through co-operation and flagging content/practices which contravene minimum standards to the relevant authorities.

### **The commercial imperative**

Society is demanding that companies, both public and private, go beyond delivering products and services and serve a social purpose<sup>1</sup>. And brands that make people's lives better outperform those that don't.<sup>2</sup> These expectations are especially pronounced amongst younger people: 60% of Gen Z's will support brands that take a stand on issues they believe in regarding human rights, race and sexual orientation<sup>3</sup>. Never has good conduct been so important to future-proofing brands.

There is declining trust in online communications, with desktop European ad blocking rates at 25.6%<sup>4</sup>. Rising levels of ad fraud blight the industry and the looming ePrivacy legislation could see more untargeted ads, reducing ROI for brands in the longer term. Brands are seen as guardians of personal data on social media sites: most consumers feel that brands should take responsibility for ensuring that social media platforms safeguard personal data (71%), curb the spread of fake news (70%) and shield them from offensive content (68%)<sup>5</sup>.

The contract between people and brands is being rewritten. No-one currently working within brands or the communications industry would deny that collectively resetting the ethics for the modern world of advertising would be a good thing to do. But we need the industry's active participation in order to achieve this. We can tackle the faults in the existing system together and improve the value exchange between people, content, advertising and data.

1. Larry Fink, CEO of Blackrock writing to CEOs of Public Companies – January 2018
2. Millward Brown, BrandZ™, 2017
3. The Drum, 'Pivotal' Gen Z, 2017
4. Moat Ad Blocking analysis, Q2 2017
5. Edelman Trust Barometer Special Report, 2017