




ASK MY BUDDY

HELPING CLIENTS GET
CLOSER TO REAL PEOPLE



WHAT IS ASK MY BUDDY?

What's it all about in a nutshell?



ASK MY BUDDY is a new and unique methodology to help clients get to know their customers as **real people** through an ongoing programme of **face-to-face or webcam Buddy meet-ups**, plus **anytime access to their opinions** via an interactive panel.



DOES YOUR BUSINESS NEED ASK MY BUDDY?

What does it offer?

Here's the key questions checklist

If the answer to any of these questions is no, then you urgently need **Ask My Buddy!**

- 1 As a business, do you know our customers as real people, behind the veneer of social media?
- 2 Do you know what's going on in their lives and how that's informing their brand and category choices?
- 3 Do you have a responsive panel of trusted customers that we can reach out to at a moment's notice?
- 4 Is all your contact with customers informed by clear strategic focus?
- 5 Are all of your colleagues skilled at interviewing customers and developing a rapport with them?
- 6 Do you have a cost-effective, agile, hassle-free methodology that will enable all this?



Ask My Buddy will enable you to shift...

From

- Reactive
- Slow to change
- Business-led
- Inward facing
- Didactic
- Innovating in hope

To

- Proactive
- Nimble
- Customer-centric
- Outward facing
- Treating customers as equals
- Innovating in certainty

1

As a business, do we know our customers as real people, behind the veneer of social media?

- We offer a programme of **structured one-to-one meet-ups** with **handpicked customers** to help you develop relationships that are **more meaningful and long-term**.
- Ideally, these would be **face-to-face**, but we also offer **webcam** meet-ups.
- We have a **global reach** and a big focus on **precision recruitment** to ensure you speak to the right individuals worldwide.



2

Do we know what's going on in their lives and how that's informing their brand and category choices?

- Context is king. So we offer a **flexible mix of real world and digital tools** to help you go deeper and truly immerse your team in their Buddies' lives.
- We have a number of **best-in-class partners** — from **mobile ethnography** to **eye-tracking** and **360° webcam immersion** — to create bespoke solutions that get you the richness you need to meet your specific business needs.



3

Do we have a responsive panel of trusted customers that we can reach out to at a moment's notice?

- Increasingly clients want to get **quick and easy feedback** from their target customers.
- Alongside the regular, structured meet-ups, we offer a **secure, easy-to-use online platform** that enables your teams to **contact their Buddies directly**. It's perfect for those 'if only we could just find out if...' moments.
- And we can configure this to meet your needs; **channels can be private** between one client and a Buddy, or between a particular function and all their Buddies, **or completely open** across the whole programme. It's up to you.



4

Is all our contact with customers informed by clear strategic focus?

- Insight functions need to be able to **demonstrate an ROI** from their programmes.
- We **work with key stakeholders to create a strategic framework** that gives focus and direction to the programme, and ensures that there are clear targets, timelines and ambitions.
- We also **create discussion guides and capture templates** to help structure the meet-ups, and **summaries of key learning**, collated from regular **internal touchpoints with the team**.



5

Are all my colleagues skilled at interviewing customers and developing a rapport with them?

- Some of your colleagues may never have conducted primary research, and be **out of their comfort zone** trying to build a rapport and elicit information from customers in their homes.
- We provide **dedicated coaching from best-in-class, MRS-accredited trainers** on how to make the meet-ups go smoothly, ask questions, listen, avoid correcting, and generally put respondents at ease.
- We also provide **market-specific cultural tips** to ensure your team develop a positive relationship with their Buddies.



6

Do we have a cost-effective, agile, hassle-free methodology that will enable all this?

We are living in uncertain times. Travel budgets are being slashed and businesses are looking for ever more nimble ways of engaging with their customers.

WE OFFER:

- A time- and cost-effective way of staying in close contact with the people who matter most to you
- The choice to meet them face-to-face or remotely via webcam, according to budgets, schedules, geography
- The opportunity to seek their opinions on day-to-day issues, as well as bigger, more strategic challenges
- The peace-of-mind to know that all the logistics will be taken care of and that this will be hassle-free for you
- A flexible programme that can complement, enhance or stand alone from any pre-existing research initiatives



HOW DOES IT WORK?

What might an example programme look like?

Your Team — A Dedicated Senior Resource



Julian Rolfe,
Founder

Ex-Head of Qualitative and Senior Strategist @ Mash

MRS award nominee

Extensive experience in the tech / comms / gaming categories for Vodafone, King, Paddy Power & Samsung



Kirstie Storrar,
Associate

Over 20 years qualitative research experience

Ex-Insight Director @ Added Value

Conducted projects across multiple sectors like FMCG, retail and leisure



Alice Vessey,
Associate

Vastly experienced insight specialist

Ex-Associate Director, Added Value

Combines traditional research experience with new techniques with cultural insight across categories like FMCG, fashion and gaming



Claudia Rimington,
Associate

Senior Brand Strategist & Qualitative Researcher

Dedicated gaming expertise both in terms of online and offline, and communication strategies for Grosvenor, Casinos, as well as experience in brand coms for Samsung and Porsche



Julz Donald,
US Associate

Senior strategic partner, futures and insights specialist to clients such as Diageo, American Express, Philips and Kraft

Ex-Group President @ The Futures Company, NA

Flexibility is key

No two businesses are the same.
We totally get that.

So we take a very flexible approach and we work with every client to design a bespoke programme that meets their specific needs.

We can amend, change and evolve the programme at any time, to meet your changing needs. And we can develop a programme to work alongside your existing initiatives.

However, to give you a sense of what a programme might look like, here is an example outline...

The Journey



Scope & Ambitions

Establish strategic ambitions and align on scope

We work with **you and your key stakeholders** to identify the **strategic ambitions** for the programme and **create a vision and timeline**.

KEY AREAS TO IDENTIFY ARE:

- **Overall strategic aims**
- **Key criteria** for Buddy **recruitment**
- **Frequency** of **regular, structured meet-ups**, and level of demand for **ad hoc discussions**
- **Roles and responsibilities** within functions for collating materials
- Key **challenges to overcome** (Eg. Language barriers, travel budgets, time zones, etc)

Preparation & Training

Internal Launch

WE RECOMMEND HOLDING AN INTERNAL LAUNCH TO :

- Spark engagement
- Share the ambition
- Invite builds
- Align on all the key criteria
- Outline what will happen, including training and how the process works
- Ensure teams are happy with roles and responsibilities

Preparation & Training

Precision Recruitment

Precise and tailored recruitment is an absolute pre-requisite for the success of the Ask My Buddy programmes. **We are proud to work with 2 key partners in this space:**



Riteangle have been recruiting for over 15 years, and have an extensive global network. They are adept at locating those hard-to-find target groups, and leave no stone un-turned in their quest for first class respondents.



Discuss.io are our webcam partner and also give us access to their network of 15 million strong global community. This gives us unprecedented access to webcam respondents worldwide.

Preparation & Training

Upskilling

Your CMI and marketing teams may have all done Consumer Connects in the past so feel comfortable interviewing customers. But your R&D and Supply Chain teams **may have never done anything like this.**

We would offer a number of **dedicated training sessions around the world** to help **build their confidence** and **give them the tools** to **get the most out of their meet-ups.**

We work with **best-in-class, accredited trainers** and will **provide practical summaries** on:

- How to put respondents at ease
- How to ask questions
- How to listen actively.

Preparation & Training

Create DGs, capture templates, etc

Once we have aligned on the overall strategic ambitions and the focus for the trimester, we will create a number of documents to help your teams run the Buddy meet-ups smoothly and that the output is useful.

THESE WILL INCLUDE:

- Sample **discussion guides** (these may well vary across functions with different aims)
- **Capture templates** to give your teams clear guidance on what is expected and ensure that output is comparable where necessary
- **Market-specific cultural tips** to ensure customs and the local culture are adhered to

Launch



We recommend holding a launch party. A show of numbers is important to **demonstrate to internal teams and their Buddies** that they are a **part of something significant**.

Ideally, this will take place in a **venue outside the office** so that client and Buddy can meet on an **equal, informal footing**.

Of course, budgets, geography and time zones may make this impractical – so **Virtual Meet & Greet**s via webcam or **staggered start-times** are alternative options.

We would envisage **hosting & manage** this, so you have **one less thing on your plate**.

Trimester 1

Regular, structured meet-up 1

The ambition may be for **every Buddy meet-up** to be **face to face**, but we know that **schedules, time zones and geography** conspire to make that impractical. So we offer **two different ways** that the regular, structured meet-ups can take place.

A programme may consist of 80 staff each meeting up with a Buddy 3 times per year. We also like to partner up with a few Buddies as a sort of ‘Co-pilot Programme,’ so when analysing the responses, we have a head-start and are already immersed in the lives of the target.

1

FACE TO FACE

Meeting with respondents **initially at their home, but over time in other locations** that they visit frequently – be that retail outlets, in their car, a coffee shop, bar or whatever is most relevant and can give us an invaluable window into the **context of their lives and how they engage with our brands.**



2

VIA DISCUSS.IO WEBCAM

Remote conversations can be **extremely rich and rewarding** in their own right, especially now that our partner, Discuss.io have **launched a unique 360° Immersion** that will give you **unprecedented levels of access** into people’s homes and other important places of their lives. You can see how they use your brand – without having to leave the office!



Trimester 1

Analysis of Capture Templates & Summary of Learning



Your team capture key learning from their Buddy meet-ups on the templates.

We analyse their templates - along with the ones we have completed at our own Co-pilot Buddy meet-ups - and distill everything into key learning, which is visual, powerful and actionable

We also identify any gaps, other questions that it raises, and make recommendations about the potential areas of focus for the next trimester

Trimester 1

Regular, Internal Touchpoints

THESE ARE CRUCIAL FOR 3 REASONS:

- To ensure that the initial **strategic ambitions are being met**
- To **share learning** from the programme to date and **discuss implications**
- To **set the agenda and goals** for the next series of meet-ups

We would recommend having **3 of these a year** so that **learning is fresh** in your team's mind, and to ensure **we keep everything on-track** and manageable by dividing the year into **3 'trimesters'**

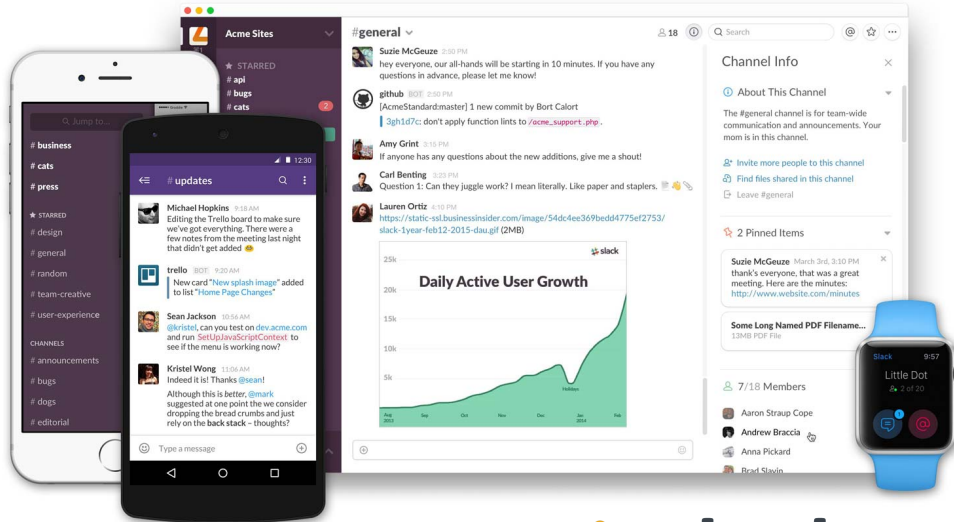
These touchpoints can be managed as a **cross-function workshop, or run in individual teams**

We can **prepare materials and agendas, facilitate** them and **capture the key learning & implications** for the next trimester.



Trimester 1

Ad hoc questions via the hub



Ask My Buddy is about more than just customer closeness. It's also about having a **trusted board of customer advisors that you can turn to on an ad hoc basis** as and when you want.

Perhaps **overnight at a workshop**. Or to sense-check a **piece of comms, packaging** or new innovation.

Our partner is the **cloud-based collaboration tool, Slack**, to **keep costs down** and ensure **usability is super-simple**.

Clients can **upload video, images or other files**.

They can **contact their Buddies at any time** via the platform. It becomes the place for ongoing day-to-day conversations, as well as the **hub for making arrangements** for the next regular face-to-face / webcam meet-up.

But they can also **contact particular groups** of Buddies that **meet particular criteria** (age, market, gender, etc)

Trimester 3

Programme Review

You can, of course, choose to keep your *Ask My Buddy* programme running indefinitely. However, you may choose to identify a particular timeframe to adhere to.

Should you opt for the latter route, we would recommend an end of programme review to assess how successful it has been in meeting the original strategic ambitions, and how flexible it has been in responding to your evolving needs over time.





HOW MUCH DOES IT COST?

Cost: a flexible approach

There are a number of variables that make providing a one-size-fits-all quote somewhat difficult.

THE KEY AREAS THAT WE NEED TO RESOLVE TO PROVIDE A QUOTE WOULD BE:

- The number of internal staff to participate
- The number of Buddies for each participant
- The location of those Buddies
- The rough demographic profile of the Buddies
- The number of staff who would need training
- The frequency of the regular, structured meet-ups
- An estimate of the frequency of the ad hoc responses
- The frequency of the Regular, Internal Touchpoints
- The level of strategic involvement you require from us
- The amount of materials you require from us (Eg.DGs, tips, capture templates, etc)
- The type of output you want
- Translation of materials



THANKS FOR READING!

FOR MORE INFORMATION:

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