GROUPED

How small groups of friends are the key to influence on the social web

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Paul Adams is one of the leading thinkers on the social web. He is a researcher and designer, currently working as the Global brand experience manager at facebook. Prior to facebook, Paul worked with Google, on Google +, Gmail, Youtube and Mobile.

The world around us is changing rapidly. With the rise of the web, we are seeing the largest increase in information accessible to us since the printing press was invented 550 years ago.

There are four shifts shaping our world: a. The rise in accessible information, b. The change in the structure of the web, c.The third is our ability to map and measure social interaction,d.dramatic increase in our understanding of how we make decisions.

Most of the examples in this book are from facebook.

Experiences are better when businesses are built around people. Zygna didn't exist five years ago. They are now the biggest games company in the world. On every industry dimension technically zygna falls short, where they trump is that their games are around people and relationships.

When facebook photos was launched in 2005, there were better photo products on the market.Facebook photos didn't have editing features such as rotating, cropping, removing red eye etc. facebook photos wasn't built around content, it was built around people !

There is overwhelming evidence that the web is being rebuilt around people.. This is not a small change. It is a fundamental re-architecture.

Social networks are not new. For thousands of years, people have formed into groups, built strong and weak relationships with others, formed allegiances and spread rumor and gossip.

Human behavior changes much more slowly than technology. Much of our behavior is based on adaptations that took many thousands of years.

The focus on 'influentials' is mostly based on a view of how we want to view the world vs how it actually works. Even if we had 15 % 'influentials', they would at best generate 30 5 of the brand conversation, we are still left with managing the balance 70 %.

We are at the start of a cycle in business when we are moving away from 'influentials' to focus marketing activity on small connected groups of close friends.

We talk to survive.
The desire to communicate is hard wired in all of us. People talk because sharing information makes life easier.

Research shows that the majority of tweets that mention brands are seeking information rather than expressing sentiment, and one in five tweets is about a product or service.

In many cases the conversation that follows an update is more important than the update itself.Marketing campaigns need to support conversations.

We talk to help others.
When researchers have studied why people share, they have consistently found that it is to help others, an altruistic act with no expected reciprocity.

We talk to manage how others perceive us.

Many of our conversations are about other people.Many researchers have found that people don't share information, they share feelings!

Jonah Berger and Katherine Milkman studied the most e mailed articles on the New York Times over a six month period, totaling 7500 items. People shared articles that triggered the most arousing emotions.

This included positive emotions such as awe, and negative emotions such as anger and anxiety. Emotions that were not arousing , for example sadness, did not trigger sharing of content. Content that is positive, informative, surprising or interesting is shared more.

Our desire to appear in a certain way to others is a bigger factor in what we talk about online than offline.
Offline, many of our conversations are driven by a need to avoid awkward silences.

Keller Fay estimates that people talk about approximately 70 brands a week. Most references to brands in conversations happens in passing. We need to understand the incidental nature of brand conversations when planning marketing campaigns.

Most of our communication is with the people closest to us. Research shows that we have consistent communication with between 7 and 15 people, but the most are with our 5 strongest ties.

Keller fay found that 27 % of our conversation is with our spouse/partner, 25 % are with a family member, and 10 % with a best friend. That's 62 5 of the total conversations. Only 5 % are with acquaintances and 2 % with strangers. The remaining 31 % is with the rest of the people in our social network.

Albert Barabasi found that our networks were governed by three laws : the first is growth(about making new connections), the second is preferential attachment(people with more connections get new connections) and the third is fitness(factors as credibility, trust, domain knowledge etc)

Most people's social networks..

- **Show a common pattern**

1. The 5 people in your inner circle
2. Upto 15 people you are close to
3. About 50 people you communicate with semi regularly
4. About 150 people with whom you maintain stable social relationships
5. About 500 weak ties.

Strong ties are the people we care about most.

Our strong and weak ties change slowly over time, often over the course of many years.

Highly connected does not mean highly influential. Influence is hard to measure.
Ideas often spread because people are influenceable. Ideas spread when people have lo adoption thresholds.

We copy other people's behavior, especially people like us. When people are unsure about how they should act or feel, they observe the people around them. This is known as *social proof.*

We are influenced by what people have done before us.
Research by Duncan watts found that knowing what music other people listened to had a far more powerful effect than whether or not the music was of high quality. Music people chose to listen to was the same music that people had listened to before them.

Eastern cultures emphasize relationships and groups while western cultures emphasize individuals.

Culture is an emergent system. It forms the common actions and behaviors of many people who are reacting to other people's behavior.

Social norms are accepted behaviors within a culture, for example shaking hands at the end of a tennis match or walking to the back of an elevator and facing the door.

Gossip is how groups establish social norms. We talk about other people, what they said, what they did, how they acted…

We are influenced by people in our group. We increasingly turn to others to help us make decisions. This is because information is increasing exponentially, but our memory is not, so we need the help of others to wade through the infrmation.

Not everyone in a group is equal.

We experience the world through patterns. Our brain is constantly looking for patterns and we find it hard to deal with randomness.

Brains are built to generate predictions. The ability to predict is the foundation of problem solving.

Our conscious brains are not designed to process huge amounts of information. Our non-conscious brain makes most of our decisions.

Other people bias US

- **The actions of others influence our behavior**
- **Having common ground biases us towards others**
- **We remain consistent with past behavior when others see us act.**

We want more information and more choices than we can actually process.
We are concerned about losing what we have.
We overvalue immediate gains.

Our HABITS Bias US

- **People's habits are hard to change**
- **There are 3 ways to change people's habits : a.Change people's environment, b.Increase the benefit relative to the cost of a behavior, c.Ensure that you reward appropriate behavior.**

Problems of Interruption marketing

- **Interruption marketing is a race to the bottom**
- **Increasing frequency makes the problem worse.**
- **People no longer trust marketers.**
- **In a world of too much information, people turn to friends.**

Trust and Credibility

- **Credibility drives trust, trust drives loyalty.**
- **To be trustworthy, businesses will need to be transparent about personal data.**
- **All negative comments are not bad for your brand.It makes your brand real.**
- **Friends are a proxy for Credibility**