

The logo for Global Dating Insights (GDI) consists of the letters 'GDI' in a bold, red, sans-serif font. The 'G' and 'D' are connected, and the 'I' is a simple vertical bar. The background of the entire cover is a collage of semi-transparent portraits of various people, with a red overlay on the right side.

GDI

POWER BOOK

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POWER BOOK 2018

RECOGNISING EXCELLENCE
AND ACHIEVEMENT IN THE
ONLINE DATING INDUSTRY

exoClick

THE INNOVATIVE AD COMPANY

2018 Sponsors



WELCOME TO THE 2018 EDITION OF THE GDI POWER BOOK, THE DEFINITIVE LIST OF THOSE INFLUENCERS, INNOVATORS AND MOVERS WHO HAVE SHAPED OUR INDUSTRY OVER THE PAST 12 MONTHS.

Since last Valentine's Day, the online dating world has seen some tectonic movement. Spark Networks SE and The Meet Group are both newly formed, publicly listed umbrella companies with the potential to reinvent their respective corners of the market, and Tinder has hit new heights after introducing a second premium tier. Demographically targeted brands have sought to capitalise on a fragmented user population, while others have incorporated video streaming in an attempt to get the mass market edge.

Executives have had to be on their toes to keep their companies relevant in the eyes of consumers, with rapid changes in AI, blockchain, cryptocurrency, Google ads and Twitter algorithms coming in month after month. Even geopolitical events are

now having ripple effects which alter user behaviour moment to moment, and some dating apps have had to act quickly to save their brands from social media firestorms. For those with their finger on the pulse, however, the rewards have been there in the form of massive virality and organic exposure.

The year also saw diversification - several brands made forays into digital journalism and offline events, mixing dating with community spirit and making sure even casual site engagement can be valuable to consumers. The dating app interface was applied successfully on new platforms like Bumble Bizz, suggesting that as our understanding progresses, algorithms and software designed for romance will help people connect in novel and meaningful ways.

GDI evolved in its own way in the run up to this year's Power Book. Our London Conference was bigger and better than ever, featuring speakers from Tinder, The League, Paktor, App Annie, Microsoft and others. We hosted 'An Audience with Facebook' in Barcelona, and gathered industry executives for the first of many summer parties in

Monaco. Towards the end of 2017 we brought on board a new Editor, Scott Harvey, and began to push our product further to provide dating professionals with even more news and insight.

This fourth celebration features a host of niche brands and startups alongside the big names, and pays special attention to those dating executives who have moved with the times and operated at the technological frontier. The dedication of these talented people continues to transform the lives of singles around the world, forging new connections and bringing millions of couples together.

In association with ExoClick, we are proud to present the GDI Power Book 2018.

SIMON CORBETT
FOUNDER,
GLOBAL DATING INSIGHTS





When I joined the dating industry a few months ago, one of the first things that struck me was how much there is to talk about. There are apps for casual daters, serious daters, extramarital daters, millennial daters, senior daters, millennial daters looking to meet senior daters - the list is endless, and every niche is worth investigating. Within these niches are various brands, each trying to digitise an extremely nuanced psychological process better than their competitors. Companies are juggling priorities, outflanking one another technologically and marketing themselves across old and new media. They need to consider acquisition, retention, monetisation,

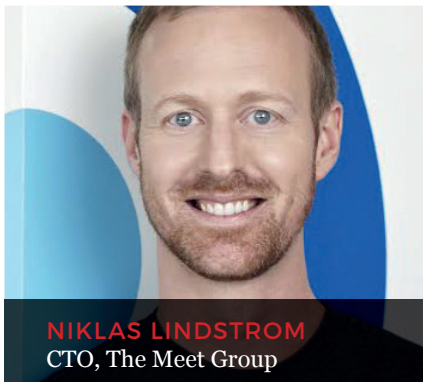
different levels of algorithmic involvement, different subscription models, security and functionality, plus a host of other universal business concerns.

In 2018, GDI is moving to reflect this diversity. In addition to expanding our daily news bulletin, we'll be running longer opinion pieces as 'GDI Editorials', exploring one problem or event in the dating industry and elaborating on how it relates to any wider trends. We'll also be stepping up our audio interviews to get more expert opinions, and redesigning the website to make it easier for readers to find the new content. GDI has already introduced the Startup Roundup in the Friday newsletter, identifying innovations as they emerge and watching for disruptive players in the market. Lastly, our events staff are preparing to take GDI across the pond for our first Los Angeles Conference in June!

On behalf of the team, thanks for downloading the GDI Power Book.

SCOTT HARVEY
EDITOR,
GLOBAL DATING INSIGHTS

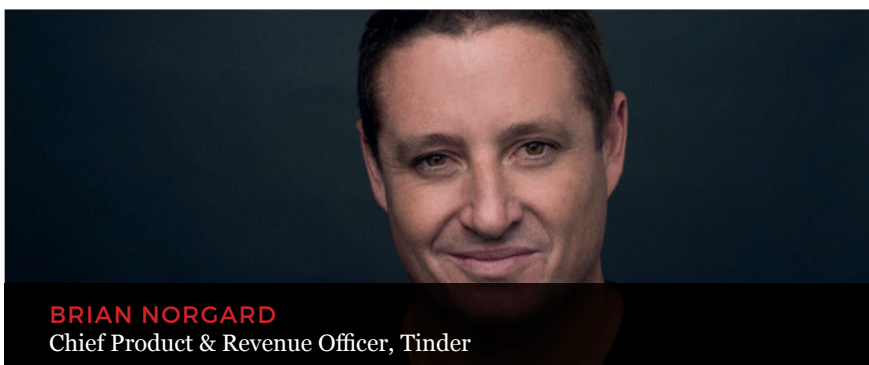
“ON BEHALF OF THE TEAM, THANKS FOR
DOWNLOADING THE GDI POWER BOOK.”



NIKLAS LINDSTROM
CTO, The Meet Group



HERBERT SABLOTNY
Chief Strategy Officer, Spark Networks



BRIAN NORGDARD
Chief Product & Revenue Officer, Tinder



MICHAEL O'SULLIVAN
Owner, HubPeople



MICHELLE KENNEDY
CEO & Founder, Peanut



ANONYMOUS
Founders and Executives, Raya



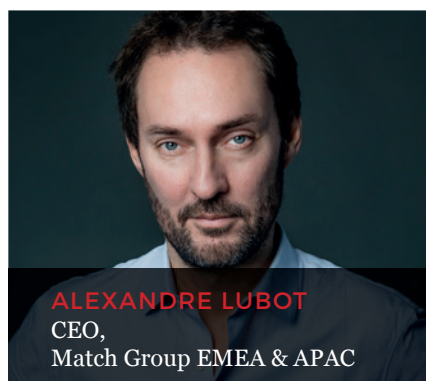
JOSEPH PHUA
Group CEO,
M17 Entertainment



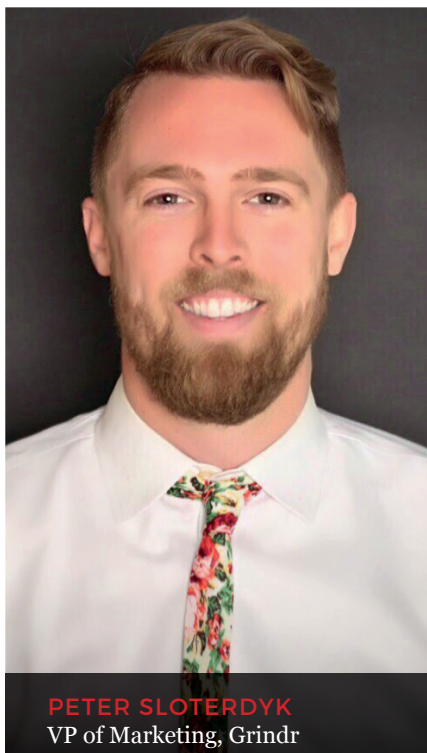
DR. STEVE CARTER
Manager of Data Science, Facebook



JENNY GONZALEZ
Chief Revenue Officer,
Agile Wings



ALEXANDRE LUBOT
CEO,
Match Group EMEA & APAC



PETER SLOTERDYK
VP of Marketing, Grindr



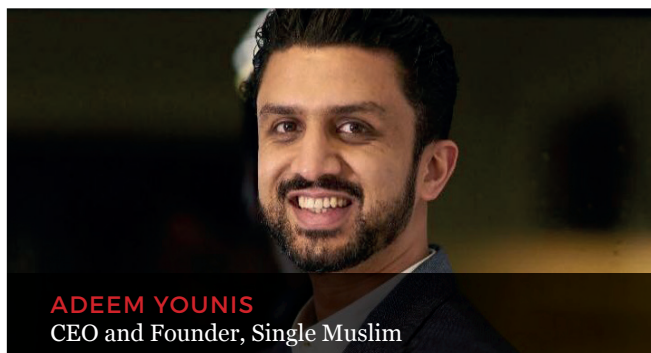
DAVID VERMEULEN
Co-founder and CEO, The Inner Circle



ANONYMOUS
Social Media Manager, Patrio



JUSTIN MCLEOD
CEO and Founder, Hinge



ADEEM YOUNIS
CEO and Founder, Single Muslim



CHARLIE BROOKER & KRISTEN ROUPENIAN
Creator, Black Mirror; Author, Cat Person



STEVE PAMMENTER & ROSS WILLIAMS
Owners, Venntro



WHITNEY WOLFE
Founder & CEO, Bumble



VIOLA LIM
Co-founder & CEO, Viola AI



ROBIN TOMBS
CEO and Founder, Yoti



It is with great pleasure that ExoClick is sponsoring Global Dating Insights' Power Book 2018. ExoClick is the innovative ad company and this guide is full of innovators within the dating industry. ExoClick is a global ad network platform and a programmatic ad exchange serving over over 6 billion daily ad impressions to a global network of publisher sites. Dating is the biggest vertical accounting for 30% of those impressions.

As part of our growth strategy we wanted to ensure that advertisers and affiliates could increase their opportunities for conversions within this market, so back in June last year we launched our members area traffic business unit. Thanks to a range of exclusive deals with leading dating platforms, advertisers have two ways they can buy this traffic, firstly, they can purchase CPC email blasts that go directly to a membership site user's email in box. Secondly, they can buy ad space with a range of ad formats that are displayed within the members area of a site. Generally there are no more than 2 ad spots available inside the websites membership area, which gives very high visibility, additionally CTR is 10 to 40 times higher than with standard ad placements.

Our members area traffic is of premium quality and consists of qualified users that are active members of dating platforms, they have shown an interest in specific products and 85% of traffic comes from English speaking GEOs.

ExoClick's platform offers full transparency and real-time statistics to enable advertisers to make the right decisions in order to maximise their ROI. By implementing pixel tracking on our platform advertisers can see a range of data from each click including the date, hour, country, region within a country, device, OS, browser, language, carrier, offer and campaign. Try out this high converting traffic by contacting your ExoClick account manager or emailing advertising@exoclick.com.

As 2018 gets underway I am looking forward to seeing many new innovations in the dating market of which ExoClick is proud to be contributing to.

BENJAMIN FONZÉ
CEO AND FOUNDER, EXOCLICK
www.exoclick.com

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THE INNOVATIVE AD COMPANY



WHITNEY WOLFE HERD

FOUNDER & CEO,
BUMBLE

Another year, another staggering set of statistics from Bumble HQ. The feminist dating app now has approximately 23 million downloads, 10 million of which came in the past 12 months. It has the fastest growing daily active user base of any dating app worldwide, and is reportedly valued in excess of \$1 billion. The expansion of Bumble Beats at events and some savvy celebrity marketing is helping to ensure millennial consumers know about Wolfe Herd's brand, and its strident, swaggering online presence kept the headlines coming at the turn of this year.

The app's success has been matched, if not surpassed, by the rise and rise of the CEO and Founder. With a Forbes feature, Fortune feature, New York Times feature and Vogue-covered wedding to boot, Whitney Wolf Herd is fast becoming the dating industry's leading personality. If Bumble stays on this trajectory for the remainder of the decade, her old employers will soon have to contend with a serious rival.

"IT HAS THE
FASTEST GROWING
DAILY ACTIVE
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ANY DATING APP
WORLDWIDE."



“LINDSTROM IS AT THE HEART OF THE MEET GROUP’S MOVE INTO VIDEO STREAMING.”



NIKLAS LINDSTROM

CHIEF TECHNOLOGY OFFICER, THE MEET GROUP

MeetMe, Inc. changed their name to The Meet Group, Inc. in April 2017, rang the NASDAQ opening bell, then slammed the accelerator. Ten months of acquisitions and accolades later, the dating giant now boasts a portfolio of internationally recognised, cutting-edge brands, a year-on-year revenue increase of 88%, and top quality user engagement across a range of features. The company picked up a ‘Best Technology Workplace For Diversity’ nomination at the second annual Timmy Awards in September, and Meet Group executives can regularly be found speaking on innovation at industry events around the world.

As Chief Technology Officer, Niklas Lindstrom has been at the absolute heart of The Meet Group’s

move into video streaming. Live broadcasts have the potential to completely reshape social media as a whole - something Facebook has openly acknowledged - and working to get Skout, MeetMe and Tagged ahead of the curve for 2018 might be one of the sharpest moves in the sector. Early signs are that users fully embrace the shift, sending virtual (monetised) gifts and upping their interactions on Meet Group platforms considerably. Moreover, Lindstrom has been effective in integrating push notifications, modern message interfaces and general efficiency improvements across the famous brands, making sure each is in position to evolve and thrive in the coming months.





JOSEPH PHUA

GROUP CEO, M17 ENTERTAINMENT

After enjoying raring success as the CEO of Paktor, a leading Asian dating service launched in 2013, Joseph Phua moved to acquire the Taiwanese firm 17 Media and form a new entertainment group. Paktor and the live streaming platform merged to become M17 Entertainment in April, and the combined company has since secured \$40 million in series A funding. The investment is helping M17 to agree contracts with its streamers and celebrities and expand into new genres, such as music and reality TV. In 2017, Phua launched his live video service into new markets including Taiwan, Indonesia, Hong Kong, Japan and, more recently, Malaysia and Thailand. The company is now strategically recruiting artists en masse to increase growth in local content for millions of viewers.



M17 ENTERTAINMENT



JUSTIN MCLEOD

FOUNDER & CEO, HINGE

Justin McLeod began the year with something of a U-turn, reneging on the decision to adopt a \$7 subscription model for Hinge and opting instead for a freemium approach. The token fee was intended to deter casual daters so, in removing it, Hinge ran the risk of becoming indistinguishable from its mass market competitors. In the months that followed the user base increased rapidly, up 50% by July and 130% by November, suggesting the gamble may not have come off, and that less serious, curious daters were flooding in. On closer inspection, however, some 85% of the sign ups were serious about a long term relationship. What had happened? The average age of users increased from 26 to 28-29 - Hinge had carved out a space as one of the leading 'post-Tinder' destinations.

Hinge



VIOLET LIM

CO-FOUNDER & CEO, VIOLA AI

Viola.AI burst onto the Singaporean dating scene in 2017 with one of the most ambitious products in the sector. Their artificial intelligence 'Love Advisor' helps users to find a date, book a venue via business integration, court their love interest over the following weeks, manage the relationship as it progresses, and it will even remind users when their anniversary is coming up if all goes well. Not content with seeking to automate the entire coaching industry, the team at Viola.AI have also built their own cryptocurrency to facilitate transactions on the platform. Co-founder and CEO Violet Lim, a passionate entrepreneur with 13 years of dating industry experience, has set herself the target of 25 million users by the start of 2020.



V I O L A . A I

ROBIN TOMBS

CEO AND FOUNDER, YOTI

As location-based dating apps become increasingly common, concerns about users' online and offline security continue to get amplified. Sophisticated cybercrime networks make protecting personal data and avoiding scam profiles far from easy, so having organisations like Yoti that are innovating just as fast offers a real benefit to consumers. CEO and Founder Robin Tombs' products are powerful, serious tools for businesses and individuals, but his company won the hearts of many in late 2017 with one of the best light-hearted advertising campaigns in any industry that year. 'Little Casanova' depicted a catfish gone right, with Lewis from Hull starring as a witty 12-year-old that tricked women into first dates. The clip got their message out to over 20 million Facebook users, giving them a massive boost and setting the company up perfectly for 2018.





“SLOTERDYK HAS SPEARHEADED COLLABORATIONS WITH POPULAR PODCASTS AND CONTENT CREATORS ACROSS THE LGBTQ WORLD.”

PETER SLOTERDYK

VP OF MARKETING, GRINDR

Grindr’s Vice President of Marketing arguably led the dating industry’s most successful diversification effort in 2017 with INTO magazine. The lifestyle website reached an incredible 25 million unique monthly visitors in the five months after its launch, making it one of the LGBTQ community’s most talked about publications and a lucrative advertising space. As well as bringing a former Vogue journalist on board as managing editor, Sloterdijk has spearheaded collaborations with popular podcasts and content creators across the LGBTQ world. The wide appeal of the magazine has allowed Grindr to access and engage with

lesbian singles for the first time, opening up a host of future possibilities.

Further, Sloterdijk continues to oversee user acquisition, digital and traditional marketing, brand health management, social media, CRM, analytics, customer operations and content development & distribution at Grindr, now the world’s largest LGBTQ social network. He is involved with the app’s progressive campaigns, and is vocal about the need for modern attitudes to homosexuality to spread in the developing world. Sloterdijk’s plate spinning prowess will prove invaluable in 2018 as Grindr seek to expand their political influence and grow INTO magazine further.



HERBERT SABLOTNY

CHIEF STRATEGY OFFICER, SPARK NETWORKS

Pre-merger Spark Networks reported a 28% revenue decrease in March 2017 amid flagging subscriptions on its Christian and Jewish platforms. Herbert Sablotny, then working as the Chief Financial Officer of Affinitas, was among the minds that saw this as an opportunity. The Elite Singles umbrella worked quickly to charm Peak6 investors and others, announcing the deal in May and wrapping it up by November. A governance reshuffle saw Sablotny moved from CFO to the CSO of newly formed Spark Networks SE, and tasked with charting a complementary course for each of the brands under the new moniker.

The focus while the group completes its transition is on expanding Elite Singles' presence in the USA. Behind the scenes, however, niche sites Christian

Mingle and JDate have been receiving meticulous technological upgrades, as Sablotny and co. work hard to reverse their 2016 fortunes. CEO Jeronimo Folgueira told GDI that the performance marketing approach which helped Elite Singles achieve prominence will again be implemented to revivify the American user base, and that analytical tools are at the heart of all the acquired brand strategies. Elsewhere, French acquisition Attractive World continues to expand successfully into Oceania.

Spark Networks SE ended the year by travelling across the Atlantic from Berlin to ring the bell at the New York Stock Exchange. 2018 will see the firm endeavour to fend off competition in the premium dating space, and carry on building a reputation as one of the established groups on the market.



“2018 WILL SEE THE FIRM ENDEAVOUR TO FEND OFF COMPETITION IN THE PREMIUM DATING SPACE.”



MICHELLE KENNEDY

CEO & FOUNDER, PEANUT

The swipe-based interface expanded beyond the realm of dating in 2017, helping users match with their dream video games, lawyers, rescue dogs and initial coin offerings. Michelle Kennedy, formerly of Badoo and Bumble, was among the first to realise that the model was suitable for export, launching Peanut the day after Valentine's Day. Connecting new mothers in the UK and USA for mutual support, socialising and networking, the app now has close to 200,000 users. Since securing investment from the Female Founders Fund in November, the CEO has taken steps to expand and improve her product. Peanut is well placed to replicate its success around the world in the remainder of the decade, though it will have to be wary of competition from Mush, another app in the mum-matching space, which recently secured £2 million to develop into this emerging niche.



STEVE PAMMENTER & ROSS WILLIAMS

OWNERS, VENNTRO

Since launching back in 2003, Venntro has been an active player in leading the world's dating technology services. This year, the platform has successfully grown all of its metrics positively as consumers show more willingness to pay for a good quality product. Owners Pammenter and Williams have led the success, signing multiple agreements for Venntro's core product White Label Dating: the firm was able to partner with mobile performance network Reporo to monetise traffic, partner with Bauer Media Australia to power online dating services, and move the team to a brand new office in Windsor to kick off 2018. White Label Dating now has over 1,700 niche sites in the U.S., and Venntro is impacting the market with over 10,000 dating sites on its platform. It boasts over £248 million in revenue, and more than 55 million registrations.




 SPONSOR'S PICK

KELAN STONE

HEAD OF MEMBERS AREA BUSINESS, EXOCLICK

With a decades worth of experience in online marketing, Kelan made the switch to focusing solely on the dating market 4 years ago. In June last year Kelan was tapped by ExoClick to head up their members area traffic business. Already a key player in the dating vertical, ExoClick wanted to further expand this business segment by offering dating site membership traffic. Kelan has since signed up exclusive deals with Traffic Mansion, Dating Factory and several more dating networks. Because the dating market has so much potential and opportunity for growth and development, Kelan's mission is to find new ways of generating net revenues by using the tech capabilities of ExoClick's platform. He has done this by ensuring that membership site publishers maximise the monetization of their traffic while allowing advertisers and affiliates direct access to this high-quality dating traffic.

Working closely with ExoClick's sales and marketing teams and developing strategic pushes to promote this unique traffic source, Kelan has achieved considerable success in growing ExoClick's members area business. In Q3 2017 ExoClick served 168.8 million impressions to dating website members, by Q4 this increased by over 330%, serving 572 million impressions. Similar growth has been achieved with direct CPC email blasts to members area traffic during Q4 2017: October saw 216,930 clicks served, November 554,277 and this rose to 2.2 million by December.

Kelan is looking forward to the opportunities 2018 will bring.





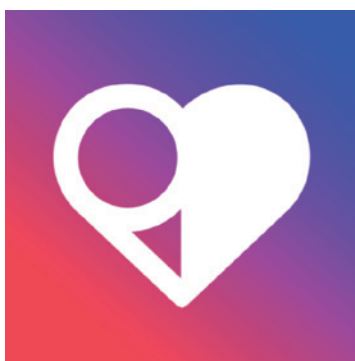
ANONYMOUS

FOUNDERS AND EXECUTIVES, RAYA

It's mostly smoke and mirrors, but Raya has let slip just enough about its user base and admissions process to keep the media hooked. 'Illuminati Tinder' reportedly counts John Mayer, Chelsea Handler, Elijah Wood, Trevor Noah, Cara Delevingne, Diplo, Avicii, Fred Durst and Matthew Perry amongst its recent paying members, and model Stassi Schroeder was unceremoniously kicked off the app for mentioning it in public. Screenshots are forbidden. Little is known about the elite group of entrepreneurs behind the curtain - only that they include Dakota Johnson's brother Jesse Johnson, and that they pass Instagram-linked applications through a committee for assessment. The past year saw Raya effectively corner the market for celebrity dating, with The Times (UK) describing it as "The only one that is really difficult to get on". Privacy will be the watchword in 2018, as any and all unwanted attention detracts from the network's USP.

ANONYMOUS

SOCIAL MEDIA MANAGER, PATRIO



Research has shown that politics is more important to millennial daters than sex, and that it is fast becoming a first date (or earlier) 'filter question'. This can make online dating a minefield for young conservatives, who are faced with a choice between stating their views explicitly and seeming brazen, or introducing them more slowly and seeming disingenuous. The current US administration may be incumbent as late as 2024, and the chasm between its supporters and opponents could be around for even longer. If Bumble's staunchly progressive social media presence can be effective at marketing to one demographic, there is no reason why Patrio's America First Instagram account can't appeal the other. Trump Singles went quiet in 2017, leaving room for an innovative brand to Make Swiping Great Again in 2018.



“HE LED THE DEVELOPMENT, TESTING AND IMPLEMENTATION OF THE KNOWLEDGE THAT POWERS EHARMONY’S ALGORITHMS.”

DR. STEVE CARTER

MANAGER OF DATA SCIENCE, FACEBOOK

eHarmony doubled down on their scientific credentials in 2017, releasing banner research from their US labs and UK university collaborations. The ‘Future of Dating 2050’ report wove demography, technology and economics to examine the impact of a changing society on app use, and the ‘Politics in Online Dating’ factsheet explored the effect of partisanship on romantic communication. The science behind their revolutionary ‘humour matching’ is all but complete, with the technology set to go live later in 2018.

Dr. Steve Carter, a psychology PhD then working with eHarmony as Chief Scientist, was the architect behind these research efforts. He led the development, testing and implementation of the knowledge that powers the platform’s algorithms, and is an authority on the intricacies of connection. In April, Dr. Carter delivered a lecture at the Institute of Ideas about the differences between initial attraction and lasting intimacy, noting how difficult it was for dating sites to solve for both. Now outside of the dating niche, the California native applies his talents with Elevated Careers and with Facebook, helping both to bring people together in evermore rigorous and worthwhile ways.

facebook

ADEEM YOUNIS

CEO AND FOUNDER, SINGLE MUSLIM

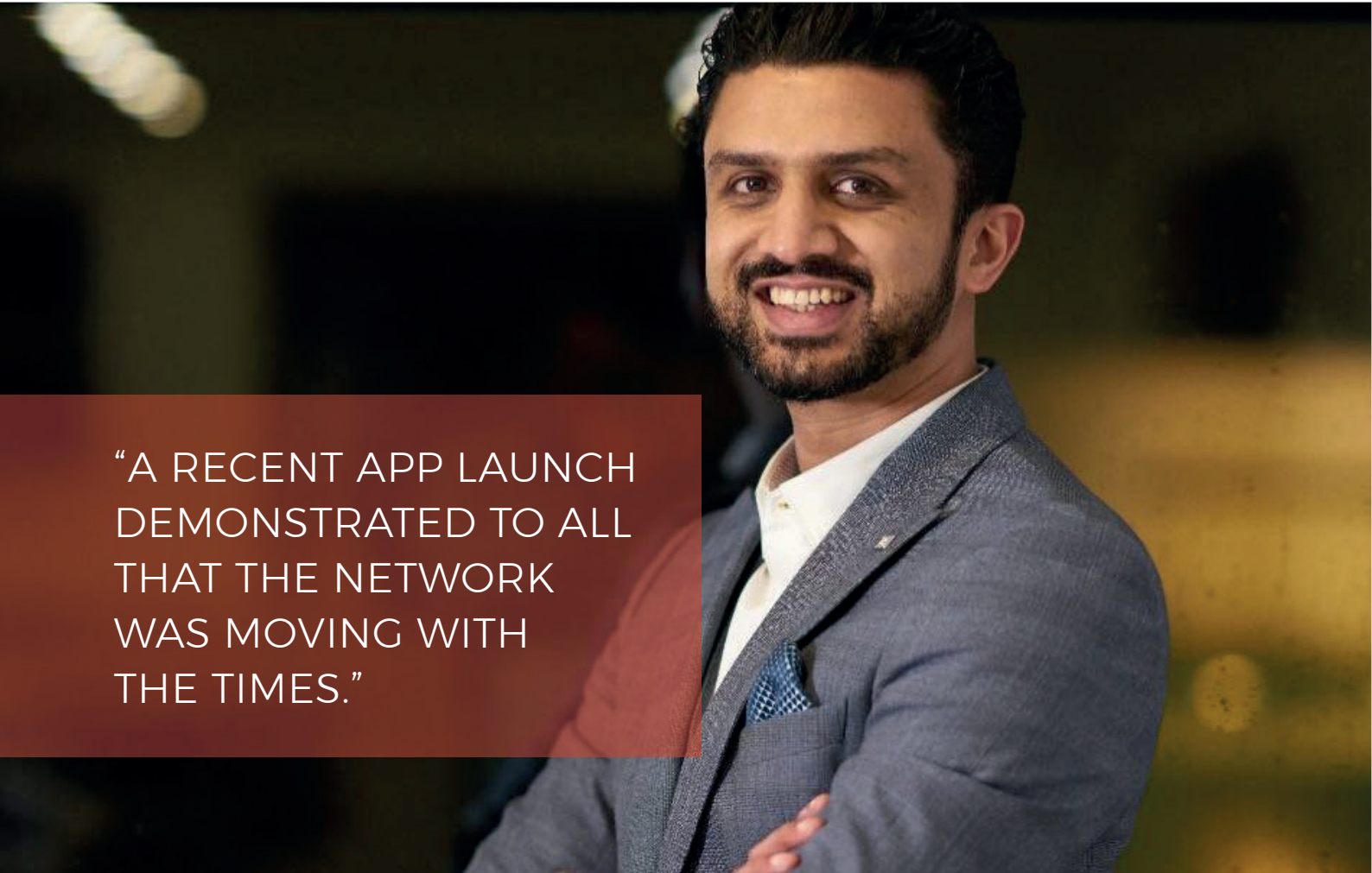
Single Muslim saw three major landmarks in 2017: it crossed 1 million UK users, got to the point where one in two British Muslims had tried its service, and was credited with its 50,000th marriage. In a minority religious community, these numbers represent serious demographic impacts - UK Muslims are marrying across sects, geographies and cultures because of the CEO and Founder Adeem Younis' vision. A recent app launch demonstrated to all that the network was moving with the times, and that it could continue to engage younger Muslims effectively as competitors emerge.

Enjoying extremely high monetisation rates, the religious dating platform has been able to

leverage its 2017 success and position itself perfectly for continued expansion. Offering an ergonomic product that appeals to various levels of religiosity, Younis will seek to enter Pakistan and other major Asian markets in 2018. The target? 200 million Single Muslim sign ups worldwide.

This, of course, is only half of Younis' vision. His charity PennyAppeal.org helps orphans and disadvantaged children access education in over 30 countries around the world. This year, his work with the organisation saw Younis named the National Natwest Great British Entrepreneur for Good.

SingleMuslim



“A RECENT APP LAUNCH
DEMONSTRATED TO ALL
THAT THE NETWORK
WAS MOVING WITH
THE TIMES.”



MICHAEL O'SULLIVAN

OWNER, HUBPEOPLE

Over the past year, the Isle of Man-based company HubPeople has been focused on a range of gainful projects. Michael O'Sullivan's firm has explored emerging technologies and looked at how they can be applied in the dating space. It has aimed to build up key dating products in areas with natural communities of people, enabling users to talk, blog and discuss various issues. It has also launched a new sub-brand called HubStars, which lets users quickly set up their own white label site and provides a channel purely dedicated to dating partners. The platform has over five million dating members and counting from all over the world, and currently hosts over 10,000 white label sites.



CHARLIE BROOKER & KRISTEN ROUPENIAN

CREATOR, BLACK MIRROR;
AUTHOR, CAT PERSON

Apps like Tinder and Bumble feature prominently in the day-to-day lives of millions of millennials, and have done for a number of years. Curiously, popular culture has been slow to reflect the shared experiences of swiping, matching and meeting back at the population, particularly in the domain of fiction. Of the creatives who took on modern dating in 2017, none fared better than Charlie Brooker and Kristen Roupenian - the former's dystopian take on conscious algorithms and the latter's description of fumbled interactions brought digital dating firmly into the storytelling mainstream. Their works raise concerns about the dating industry and its products, providing developers with both entertainment and food for thought.

BLACK MIRROR



JENNY GONZALEZ

CHIEF REVENUE OFFICER,
AGILE WINGS

Late 2016 saw Agile Wings finish integrating its white label acquisition, Dating Factory. The combined company, now frictionless, has driven forward and sought to deliver profitability to its partners in new and impressive ways. Since the deal, Agile Wings has been better able to glean specifications for its development services to work from, making their solutions bespoke and impactful in a way that could never have been achieved without the inter-firm knowledge transfer. Chief Revenue Officer Jenny Gonzalez sees the fragmentation of the dating industry and evermore specific consumer demands as huge opportunities for the white label market, and she will be among the first executives to reap the rewards should these trends continue.



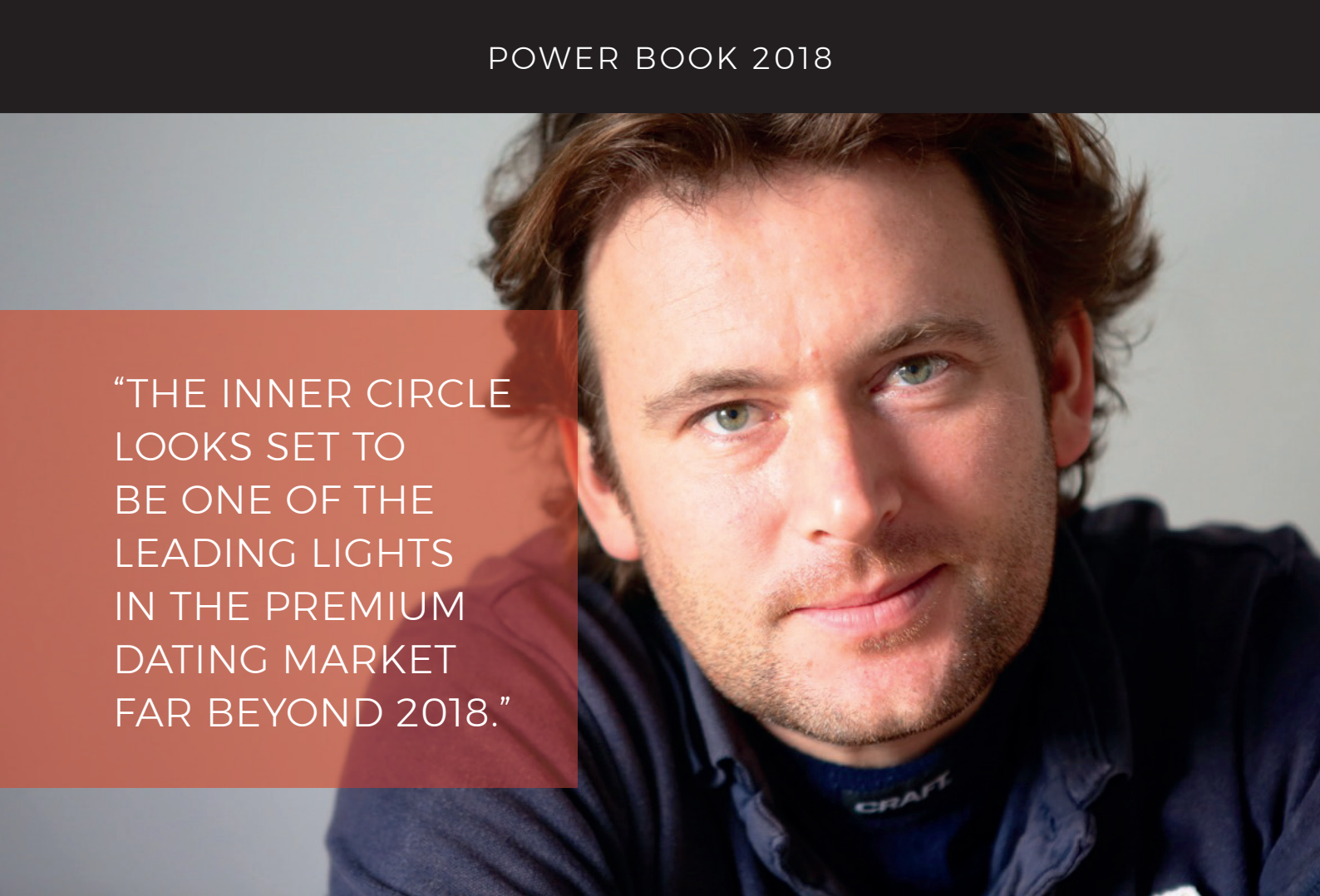
ALEXANDRE LUBOT

CEO, MATCH GROUP EMEA
& APAC

With many of Match Group's flagship brands headquartered in the Americas, maintaining dominance in complex international markets presents a unique challenge to the firm. Alexandre Lubot, now working as the CEO in Europe, the Middle East, Africa, Asia and the Pacific, helps Match to execute acquisitions from around the world and to monetise effectively via organic growth. Further to this, Lubot plays a crucial role in corporate strategy as the only European member of the firm's executive leadership team. Working with dozens of brands and just as many languages, Match Group's Paris office is one of the market leader's most vital organs.

matchgroup



A close-up portrait of David Vermeulen, a man with brown hair and a slight beard, wearing a dark blue jacket. He is looking directly at the camera with a neutral expression. The background is a plain, light-colored wall.

“THE INNER CIRCLE LOOKS SET TO BE ONE OF THE LEADING LIGHTS IN THE PREMIUM DATING MARKET FAR BEYOND 2018.”

DAVID VERMEULEN

CO-FOUNDER AND CEO, THE INNER CIRCLE

The Inner Circle’s user base grew concentrically outwards at an incredible pace in the lead up to the new year. High-profile launches in major European cities begot long waiting lists in fashionable locations, helping rather than hindering the brand’s exclusive image and landing CEO David Vermeulen extensive press coverage. Featured in The Times (UK) as being ‘Too Posh for Tinder’, Vermeulen has brazenly and effectively marketed his product to an audience of “better quality people”. TV personality and sex journalist Nichi Hodgson joined the company in March, taking over PR and grabbing even more headlines for the high-toned platform.

While a number of apps looked to diversify into hosting offline events in 2017, none accomplished this with quite the same panache as The Inner Circle. Since taking on Events Manager Oceane Krugel, Vermeulen’s team have become increasingly adept at treating their members to ski trips, parties and polo tournaments. Engaged users can now post their own events on the site, and the offline connection this facilitates has become an invaluable part of the product. With a raft of new premium features in the pipeline, The Inner Circle looks set to be one of the leading lights in the premium dating market far beyond 2018.

BRIAN NORGDARD

CHIEF PRODUCT & REVENUE OFFICER, TINDER

In the 2017 edition of the Power Book, GDI congratulated Tinder for becoming the highest grossing dating app on the market. This year, the tech giant went even further. Bringing in more revenue than any other app in the world at times, the swipe-based platform is currently valued at over \$3 billion according to Forbes. Now available on desktop as well as mobile, academics say the firm's revolutionary product has emerged as a 'new tool' in the intimate lives of Western millennials. Tinder started January 2018 with an advertisement that showed how dating has changed through the ages, the final scene panning across a bar full of virtual matches enjoying their first drink together. For any other app this might have been self-aggrandising, but executives and pioneers at the Hollywood HQ can justifiably claim to have reshaped the way people meet.

The iconic flame got a makeover in August, peaking consumers' interest before the major rollout of Tinder Gold. Letting Gold users see who swiped right on their profile (thereby removing all of the uncertainty and inefficiency from browsing) effectuated a surge in paid memberships that saw Match Group quarterlies skyrocket. Buoyed by the success of the subscriptions update, Tinder is now experimenting with both a newsfeed feature and Artificial Intelligence recommendations. Chief Product & Revenue Officer Brian Norgard seems to be hitting his two KPIs more and more emphatically every month, and the project team beneath him will undoubtedly send more shockwaves through the dating world as they build on their 2017 success.



“THE SWIPE-BASED PLATFORM IS CURRENTLY VALUED AT OVER \$3 BILLION ACCORDING TO FORBES.”





SCOTT HARVEY
Editor

SIMON CORBETT
Founder

CHLOE GAY
Reporter

JENNIFER HARTLE
Events Manager

LUCY WALKER
Marketing

EDDIE BOLGER
Videographer

GDI

POWER BOOK

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