

renegade

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COLLECTIVE

ISSUE 12

**WHY IT PAYS
BIG TO SOUND
A LITTLE DIRTY**

#thefrankeffect

**LEANDRA
MEDINE**

REPELLING MEN
SINCE 1988

+

**3D
SKETCH IT
PRINT IT
WEAR IT**

**ALL THE
RIGHT
MOVES**

NAILING
YOUR
NICHE

**LILY
COLE**

model turned everything

“So, shall we go back to yours?” Resistance was futile. Who was I kidding? He had me at “hey, babe”, and with the promise of working “wonders from the outside in”, before I knew it we were in my shower, getting dirty...

They’re the kind of pick-up lines that might otherwise incur a drink in the speaker’s face, were they not coming from Frank, an innocent packet of natural coffee scrub. His seduction is refreshing, charming even, and without a doubt is the only reason this product has made its way into my bathroom.

It’s a cunning marketing move, shrouding a product in a mystery man, who when asked about his identity is uncharacteristically coy. But dig a little deeper and you’ll find that appearances can be deceiving – there are in fact three women behind the flirt that is Frank.

Erika Geraerts, Jess Hatzis and Bree Johnson, the founders of Willow & Blake creative agency and ‘mothers’ of Frank, laughingly describe his created persona as the “inner creep in their heads”. They had pitched the idea of using a fictional character to past clients, all of whom had had their reservations.

So on discovering a winning formula for a high-quality scrub, the trio birthed Frank – a brand that permitted them full creative control.

His name is an ode to “cutting the crap”, as Erika divulges.

“This is a simple product, so let’s just be frank about that.”

And that bag of scrubby goodness is now so coveted that in less than a year, sales have exploded across Australia, and into New Zealand, the US and Europe (“with good numbers on the books. While I can’t disclose the actual amount of units we have sold this year, I can tell you that it’s enough to surpass the daily recommended intake of caffeine,” says Erika.)

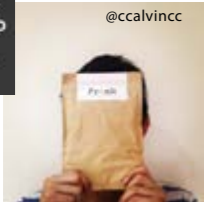
Given that the product is just coffee grinds with a few other ingredients in a bag, how do they get people to buy it? >



IMAGES COURTESY OF FRANK



I'M JUST SITTING HERE DRINKING COFFEE AND MAKING PLANS FOR WORLD DOMINATION.



CONSIDERING how YOUNG the brand is (less than a year), it didn't make sense to have all these CONFLICTING messages.

Bucking the current cute and aspirational branding trends, the trio decided to sex up their product and "just be a little bit more upfront and outgoing".

Confessing to not being the girliest of girls, they chose to let a man speak for, or rather be, their scrub. Frank converses with his "babes" from the scrub's site and various social media platforms.

He also blogs, offering advice on how to make your "bum more bootylicious, touching on the intricacies of healthy skin and sharing with you a few of [his] observations of the world".

The girls explain that most companies talk from a third-person perspective - "we do this and we do that" - and they thought it would be refreshing to come in at a more personal level, with one 'person'.

This may be so, but why make it a secret or fictional identity?

As Jess explains, they never really wanted the business to be about them.

"First and foremost, it was about the brand and the product," she says.

"Considering how young the brand is (less than a year), it didn't make sense to have all these conflicting messages."

The singular focus allowed a complete separation from their pre-existing creative agency, she adds, before pointing out you often don't know who's really behind a business.

Putting a "Frank hat" on whenever they log into the account, they accompany customers through the entire purchasing journey.



@leahsostman



@melbournegirl



@alexandraaxu



After Frank woos you all the way to the checkout, he sends an email assuring that he's on his way (so "you can start taking your clothes off - really, really slowly") once the scrub has been dispatched.

Too much information?

His comments are tongue-in-cheek, sprung from the girls' mutual fondness of satire. But there is the risk that Frank may cause offence or be perceived as condescending to women.

"We've been sensitive to a lot of things and know that there's only so far that we can push the content, both visually and in the copy that we write," says Erika, adding that they're constantly checking responses to posts to gauge if they're striking the right balance.

On the rare occasion that anyone does take offence, she says Frank comes in to explain his 'actions', often easing the situation.

Accepting that it's impossible to please everyone, the girls use themselves as their guide, asking the question, "What would we be offended by?", before anything goes to market. And they've hit the mark with more than 300,000 people joining in on the satire online.

"I'd never think we would have been able to encourage that many people to take their clothes off and smother themselves in coffee," marvels Jess.

But they have, and it's not just the Aussie "babes" getting their kits off. Frank has been showerhopping with great success all over the US and Canada.

His honest intent (to get you "naked, dirty, rough and clean") is what gets him into your shower, but it's his ability to deliver on promises that keeps him coming back for more, the girls say. Not bad for a plainly packaged, humble coffee scrub that makes a total mess of your shower.

IMAGES COURTESY OF FRANK



ACCORDING TO

frank

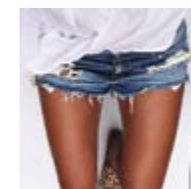


BUILDING A BRAND... is not something that should be rushed. It takes time, a lot of thought, and a lot of research. Know your audience, the reason why your brand exists, and think about the future. It's always good to have a goal - or 10.

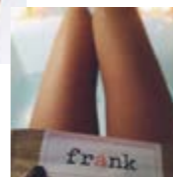
GETTING THE MESSAGE RIGHT... it's so important to be sending out a message that's unique to your brand, not someone else's. Think about your audience and what they're looking for; get inside their heads. And of course, send out a message that you feel confident to stand behind.

STARTING A BUSINESS... is f**king hard work. But it's incredibly rewarding, and we wouldn't change it for a second. Remember, it's not all sleep-ins and nice breakfast meetings, it's accounting and admin and staff and making sure you're bringing in work not just today, but tomorrow, and next week, and next month, too.

Having said this, if you feel like going out on your own or with someone else is the way to go, then do it. You can only try, and the worst thing might be that you just have to start again.



@seewantshop



@_sarahlee



@nordasad



the frank team

WORKING WITH FRIENDS... just like starting a business, is f**king hard work. And just like starting a business, it's incredibly rewarding. We at Willow & Blake at Frank are very lucky to have each other, to challenge each other and celebrate together. The most important thing is open and honest communication, knowing that you're all on the same team, embracing constructive criticism and feedback, listening to each other's concerns or ideas, and finally, remembering that you're friends - and making time to be just that.

USING SOCIAL MEDIA TO YOUR ADVANTAGE... social media has been an amazing tool for Willow & Blake and Frank. It's an extremely volatile platform that could change any day, so being responsive and aware of what's going on is crucial. Every account we manage we look at from both a business and customer perspective: what will work in conveying the business's goals and what do customers want to see? What's going to actually add value to their life or day or 15 minutes on public transport etc? 📌

@beginningboutique



@_sophialam



I'm with frank.

#letabefrank

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