



Remote Results

The Sound's Virtual Best Practices Playbook

The Sound | 2020

Business as usual is not so usual anymore.

Today, we are all asking questions of how companies can continue to stay safe and act with empathy, while continuing to capture insights that are smart as f*ck and never boring.

We are here to answer those questions.

The Sound Team

How can companies adapt to a new way of working...if it's uncharted territory?

By necessity, **virtual methodologies** have become the new normal for capturing insights, strategizing and innovating. However, it can also be uncharted territory!

The good news is that The Sound has years of experience in virtual methodologies...which **have been a core part of our business since we were founded.**

Words. Numbers. Photos. Videos.

We love them all.

We are methodology-neutral in our quest to uncover the truth.

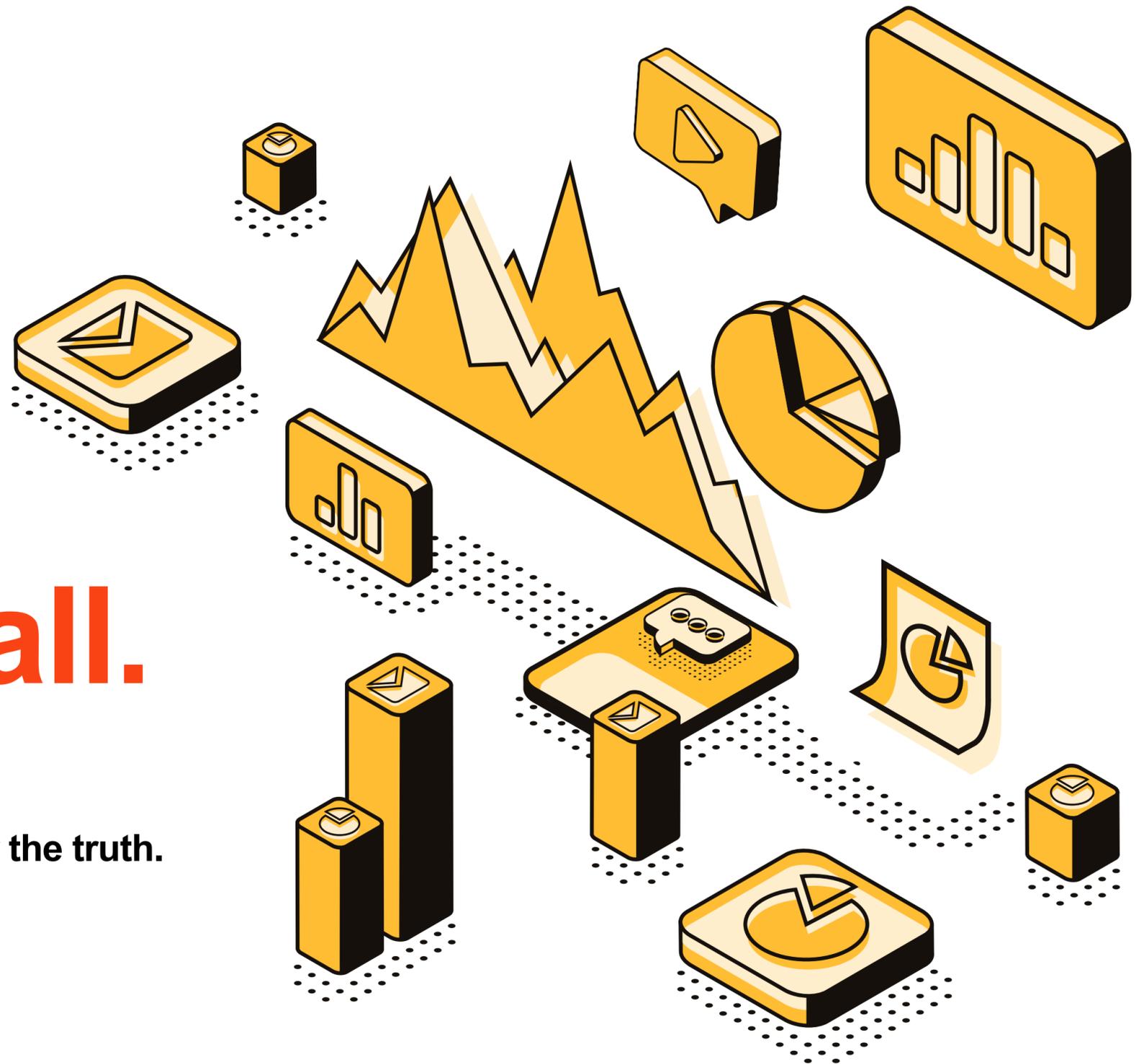
We don't chase shiny objects or new methodologies just for the fun of it.

We choose the best approaches to answer your questions.

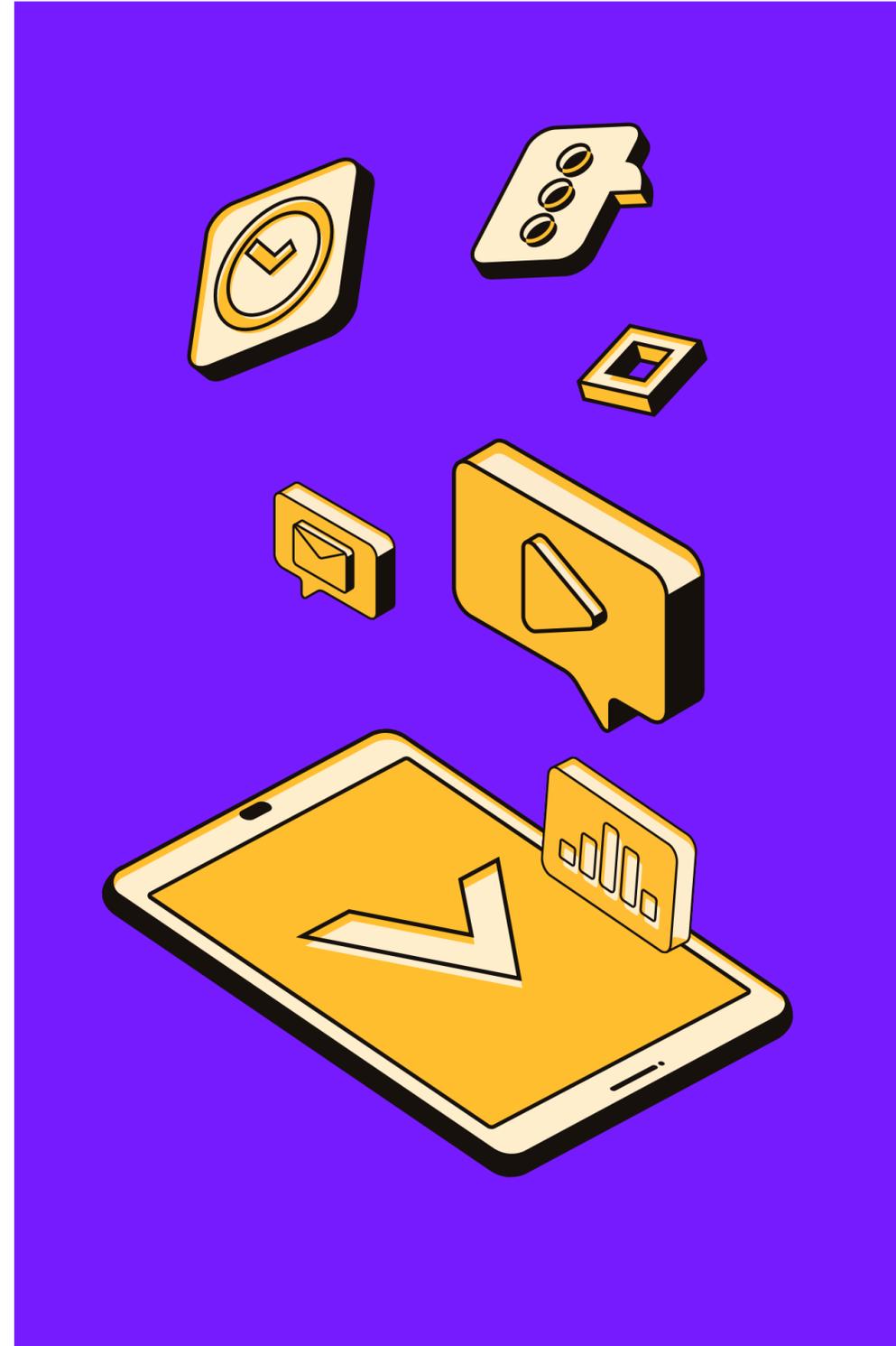
Whatever we do, it needs to fuel strategic thinking and creativity.

When we work with data, it needs to **inspire** opportunities.

When we speak with people, it needs to **inform** the business.



And that doesn't change when **we** **go remote**



Years of experience have enabled us to test, learn, and refine our approaches, leading to the insider tips we will share with you today!



In fact, there are a multitude of benefits to virtual engagement



More markets, less time

- Virtual research enables us to reach consumers in more markets without limitations on travel

In a familiar space (the home!)

- An in-home setting offers a level of familiarity that gives respondents greater comfort when going deep
- Respondents have greater access to artifacts in their home that help bring their stories to life
- We can even take virtual home tours, peek inside closets, and open cabinets

Sensitive subject friendly

- Self-ethnography and digital diaries help respondents feel a sense of space and privacy

At a time when respondents *want to share*

- Given the current situation, recruiting can be easier, as people are at home with free time
- Respondents are eager and willing to share their experiences, even (and especially) now
- Video calls are becoming the new normal, even among harder-to-reach demographics
- Experts who previously proved hard to engage now have more time and fewer barriers to participating

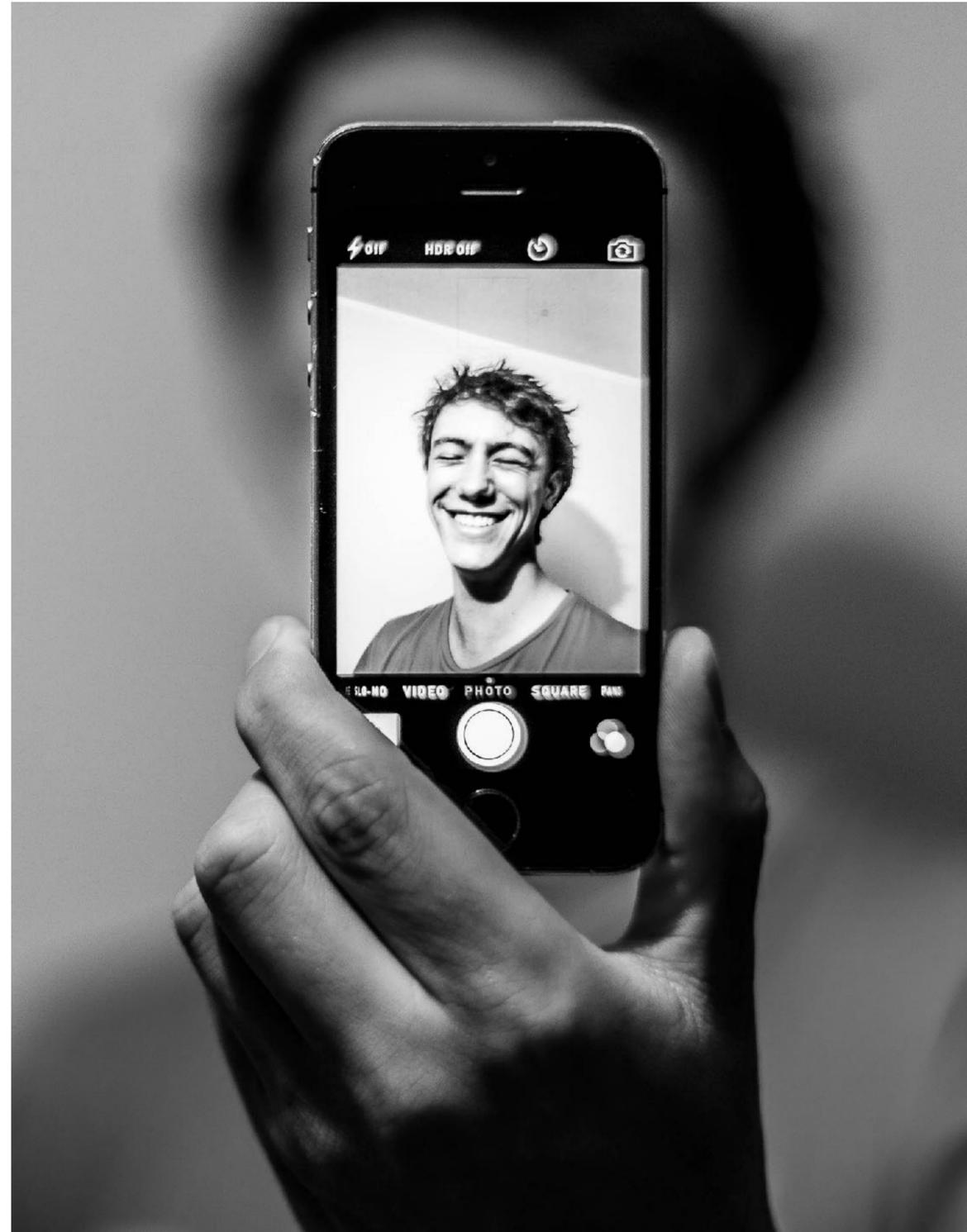
Let's dive into the details: Virtual approaches and insider tips



Digital diaries: Capturing real life and reflections with our proprietary tool, The Sound Wave



Peering into your target's life



What is it?

- The Sound Wave is our proprietary app and online dashboard, designed to remotely capture an **expansive and immersive understanding** of target audiences via daily tasks and challenges

How does it work?

- Participants will download a user-friendly, social media-inspired app onto their phones and use it to document their experiences
- Over a set number of days, we will ask participants to upload answers to creative and thought-provoking tasks through written text, image, or video responses
- Our expert moderators probe in real time to ensure lively and engaged participation
- Your team can be as involved as they'd like - watching responses as they stream in live, or returning to the platform later

Key output:

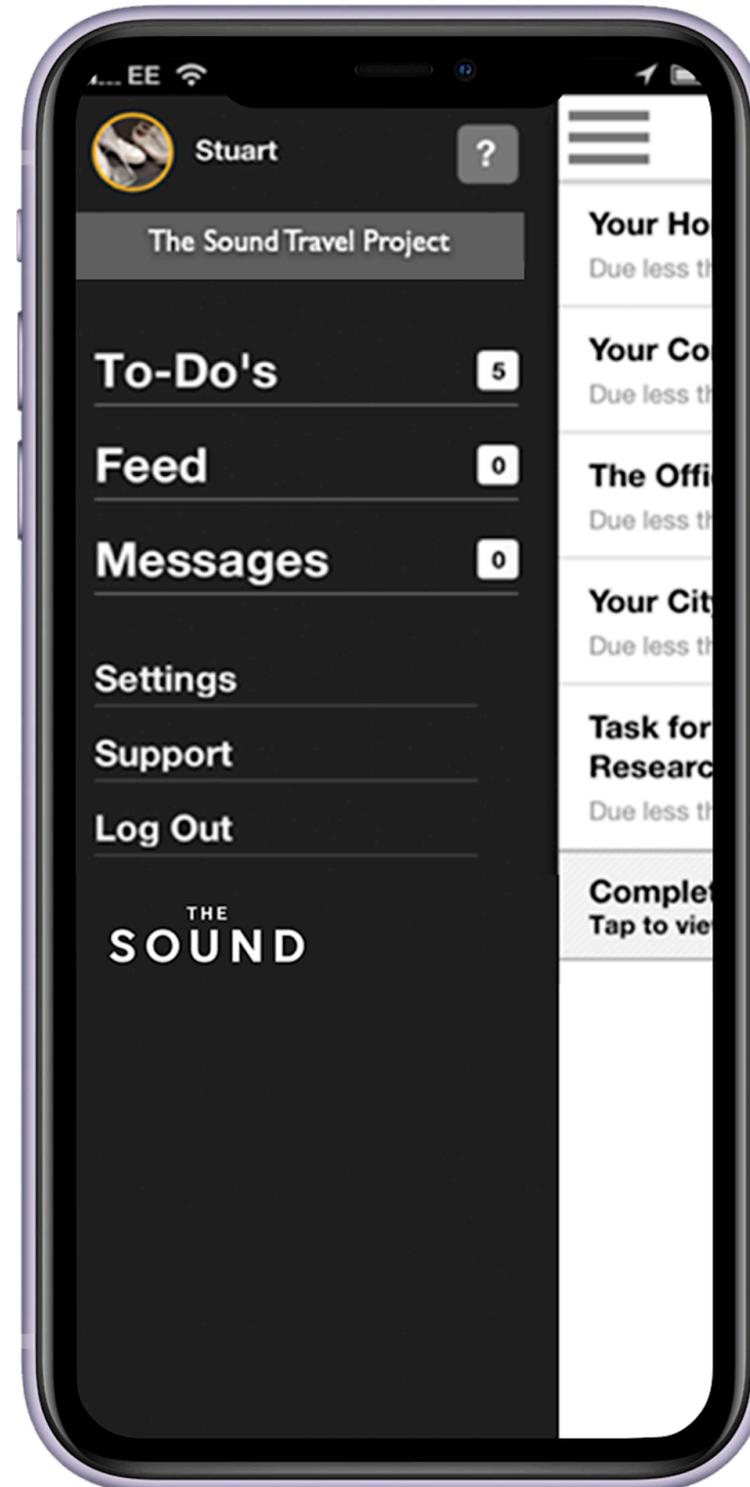
- Multimedia-based artifacts and in-depth reflections from consumers in their own environment

More about the Sound Wave and **why it works**

Mobile ethnography illuminates real life...

Integrated into their routine

Our mobile app (and the exercises and tasks we give them) are built around their lives, making it easy for them to participate. Mobile has become the top engagement platform across audiences!



More thoughtful responses

Letting respondents complete “reflective” exercises on their own time allows for more thoughtful responses to our creative/projective exercises (vs. surface answers on the spot). We gain deeper insight when we have a good balance between projective techniques and straight-forward questions.

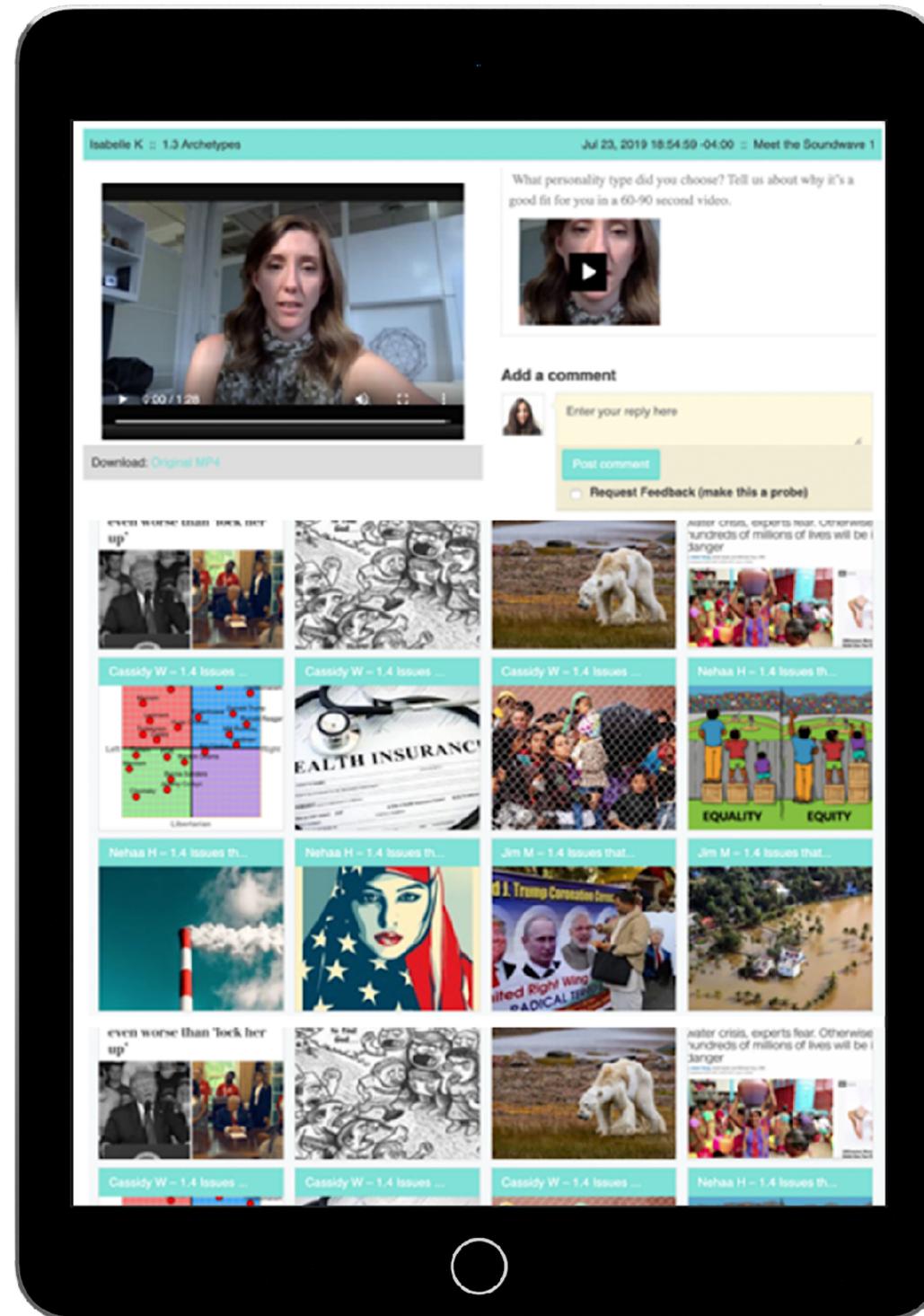
Rich multimedia narratives

With images, text and video, we gather more inspiring ethnographic evidence than in a traditional focus group. We can capture their personal values and beliefs through deep storytelling exercises, and image uploads or video documentation of an experience even live confessionals!

Time and cost efficient

No need to travel. Just log onto the mobile app and follow along as the insights come in—in real time.

...on
 an easy
 to use,
 visual
 platform



Intuitive social media platform

Sound Wave acts much like social media sites where participants can upload, watch or scroll through content with just a few taps — on either a computer or mobile device

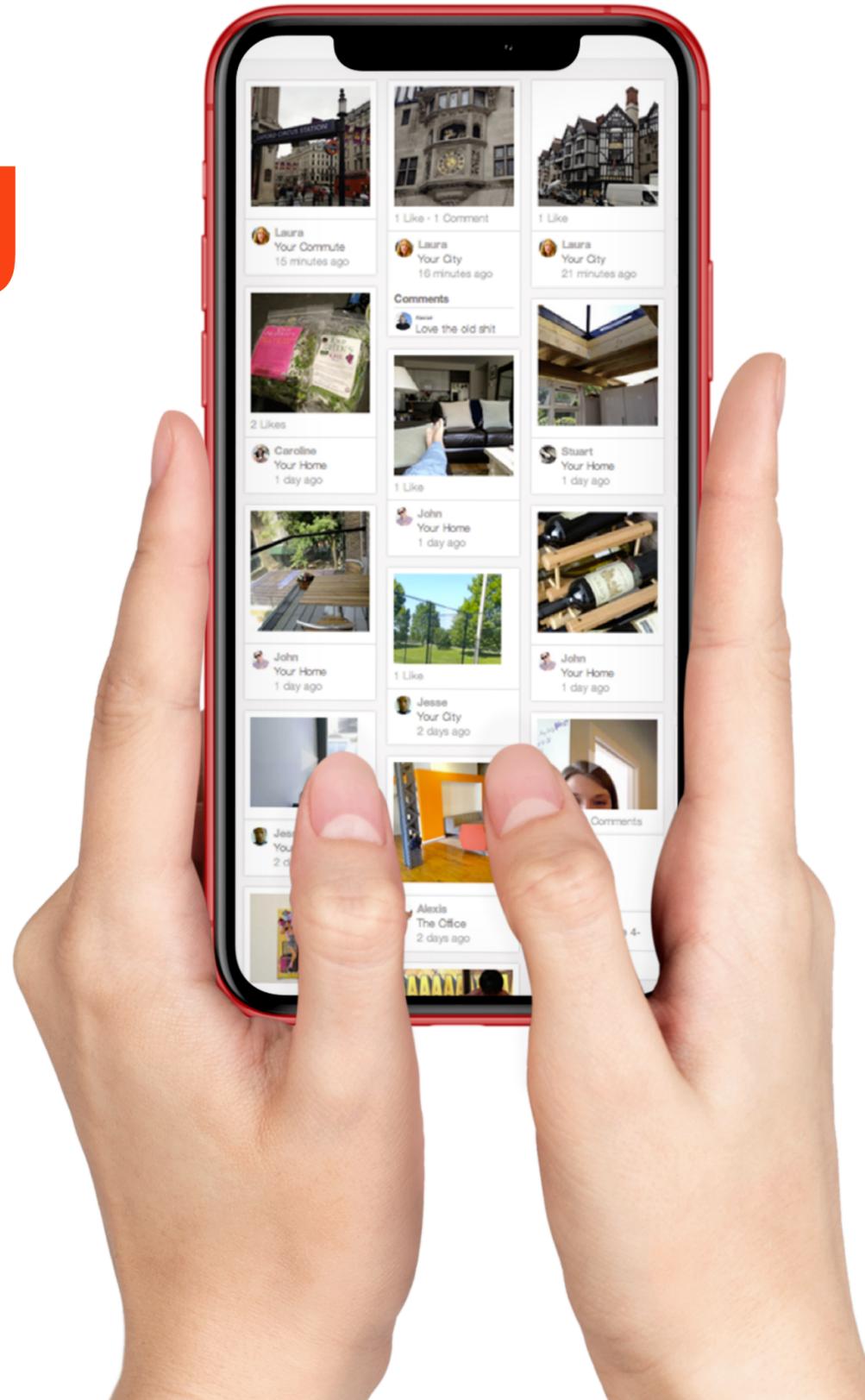
Your teams can follow along

Your teams can observe responses and post comments that only our moderators will see, and probe further with respondents

You own the data

You can access the Sound Wave platform long after fielding is over, and our teams are glad to deliver the raw data, should you need it

Developing our own tool has enabled us to hone our craft



Insider tips:

Recruiting stars: Our project managers have longstanding, trusted relationships with recruitment partners that know how to recruit for articulate consumers that are adept at expressing themselves online

Creativity sparks insight: Leveraging creative and projective techniques, we've mastered the art of designing thought-provoking activities that uncover deeper levels of insights

Direct contact: Our teams check in with participants not only through probes, but also direct messaging to keep participants engaged and on the right path!

Watch & read: AI transcripts are available for English language projects, making video content easier to digest

Sound Wave 101: Our teams are experts in facilitating quick-start sessions to help your teams familiarize themselves with the platform should they want to get immersed!

Self-filmed ethnos: Creating inspiring output





Leveraging consumer- generated content



What is it?

- Guided by tasks and challenges we assign, consumers use smart phones, Go-Pros or flip cams to capture high-resolution footage of their lives over the course of a few days
- Then, our team brings it together into compelling film deliverables designed to inform and inspire

How does it work?

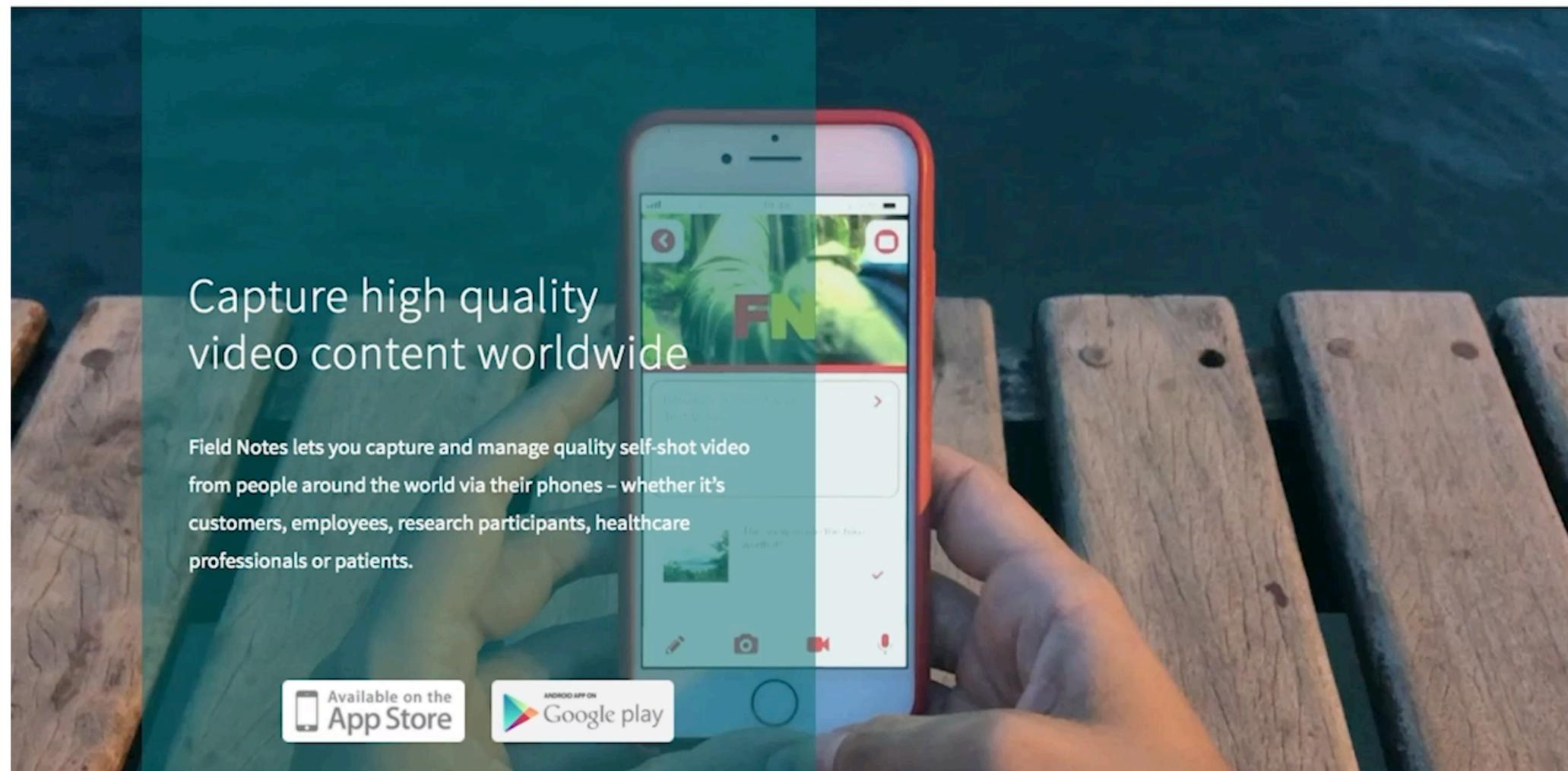
- Using the highly-trusted **video-based ethnography platform Field Notes**, we'll capture high quality video that participants shoot themselves
- The participant will get tasks or topics to cover, but after that, it's in their hands to share their experience with us — through film!
- Together, we can watch footage as consumers upload it, with the ability to probe and follow-up with participants directly through the platform
- There is also the option of **sending participants Go-Pros or flip cams**. This is especially relevant for when we field in a place with limited access to Wi-Fi

Key output:

- High quality footage of or participants' real lives, including raw in-the-moment and unfiltered perspectives, delivered as professionally edited films

Field Notes is a platform purpose-built for film

Video of the platform in-action



Quality results

This film-forward platform captures higher-res videos with built-in controls that ensure user content is of the best quality and correct orientation (landscape), reducing wasted footage

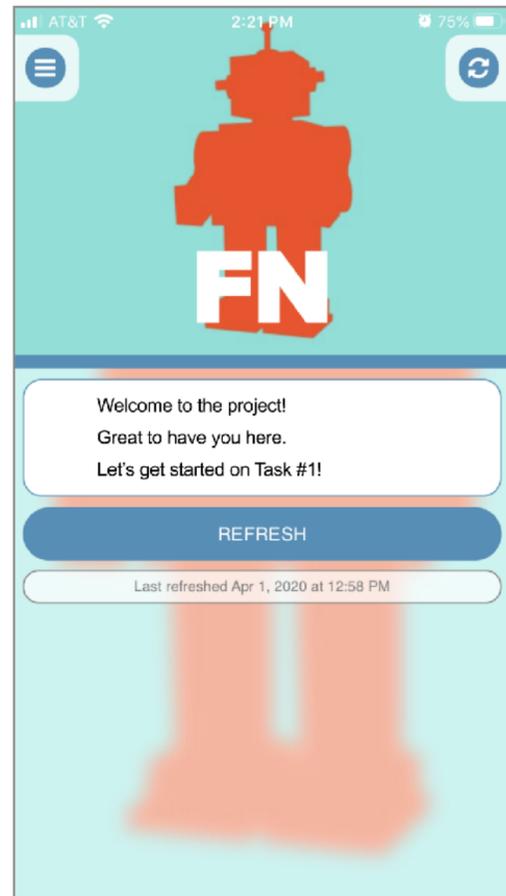
Global capabilities

As a global solution, Field Notes also produces AI transcripts in 9 local languages: English, German, Spanish, French, Italian, Japanese, Chinese, Russian, and Brazilian Portuguese

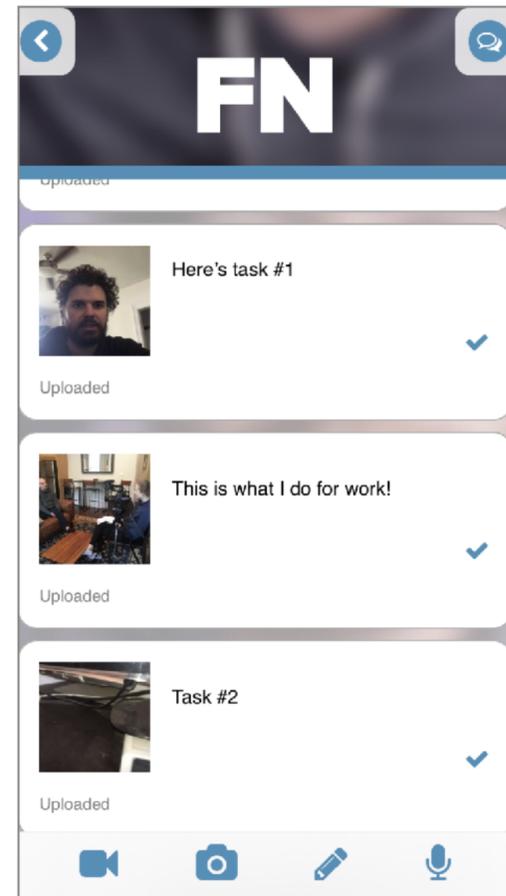
Moderation and guidance

Our teams can can probe and guide directly on the platform and capture text responses to any additional questions

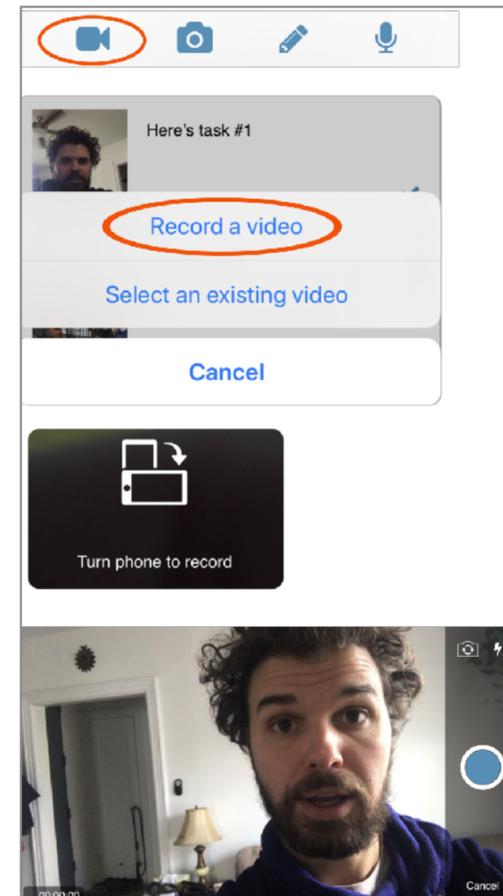
A glimpse inside the Field Notes platform



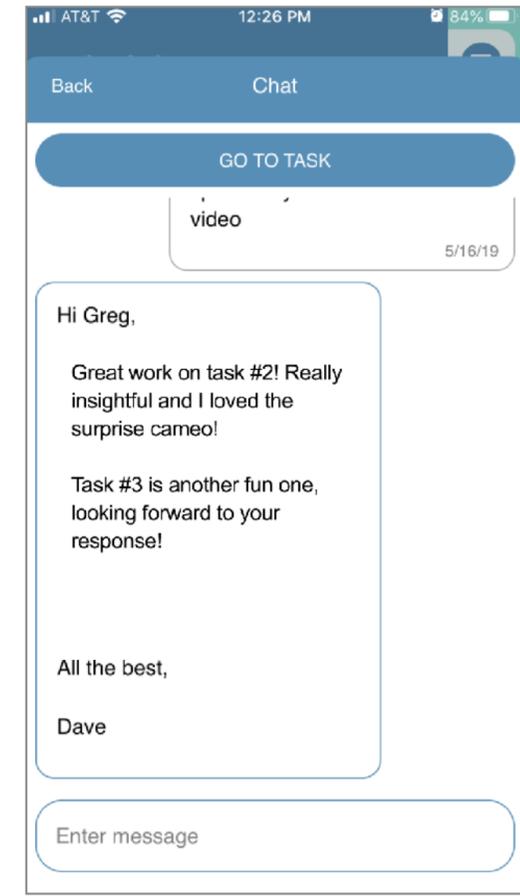
Welcome screen



Clean interface organizes tasks and assignments



UX allows for highest quality footage



Interaction with participants is easy

...and our expert film team knows how to empower consumers to capture quality film

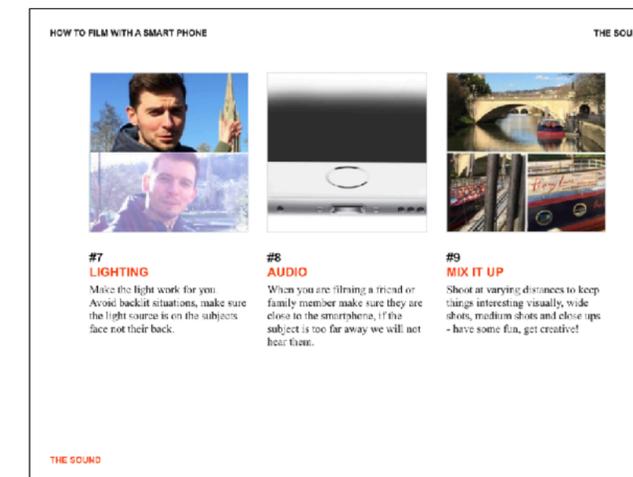
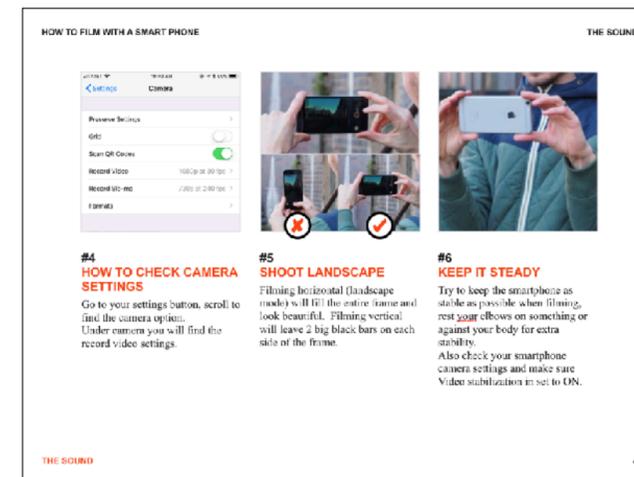
Insider tips:

Start with live:

We start by facilitating a live virtual session so we can get to know them, their role in our story, and ideate around topics to film. Then, we do a how-to on filming, setting them up for success.

Detailed guidance:

We also equip consumers with a detailed guide on how to shoot quality footage





In-depth interviews: Uncovering deeper 'whys' and 'hows'

Going live and in- depth with consumers



What is it?

- The Sound conducts virtual interviews across a range of platforms, from InterVu to Skype, FaceTime or Google Meet
- Interviews are not confined to the consumer's desk — we can go on virtual walking tours of wherever they are

How does it work?

Virtual Sessions with InterVu

- InterVu is the gold standard in virtual engagement and a longstanding partner
- As moderators interact with respondents, your team will be in a virtual “backroom” where you can have discussions and send probes to the moderator

Skype or Google Hangouts:

- Consumer-centric platforms enable us to engage with respondents on what they may already use
- You and your team can join the call as silent listeners (cameras and microphones off), and debrief with our teams afterwards

Key Output:

- A deeper understanding of ‘why’ and ‘how’ via dynamic conversations
- Greater depth to existing insights

We know how to keep in-depth interviews engaging

Insider tips:

Less is more: Keep the guide simple, and interviews 45-60 minutes max

Build rapport: Engage respondents and *show* you are listening using your voice (i.e. tone and inflection) and body language (i.e. gestures, heading nodding, smiles)

Minimize distractions: Ask teams to save questions for the end to avoid disruption

Slow down: Speak more slowly and clearly than you would in person, and give respondents time to think. Don't be afraid of silence!

Maintain eye contact: Maintain eye contact just like you would in person, and avoid temptation to look around you — it will put respondents at ease to see you engaged

Taking groups to virtual platforms



What is it?

- The Sound works directly with InterVu to host virtual groups for a focused discussion on a topic or for reactions to stimuli

How does it work?

- We recruit and onboard respondents to the platform with dry-runs to test tech
- Respondents are often given an assignment as a pre-screen to complete in our **virtual waiting room**
- As moderators lead the group discussion, your team is in a **virtual backroom** where you can discuss learnings and ask probes
- Respondents can **see, comment and mark up stimuli** on their own or with the group

Key output:

- Gain perspective, reactions, and feedback on a topic or stimuli, without in-person constraints

Our expertise makes virtual groups a smooth experience



Insider tips:

Screening for success: Add technology requirements to the screener and ensure respondents do a test-run the day before their group

More groups, smaller sizes: Traditional group sizes can be too large for virtual. Recruit up to 6 to seat 4, max

Smart scheduling: Avoid fatigue by scheduling shorter groups (90 minutes, max) with 30 minute breaks in between, and no more than 4 groups per day

Polished stimuli: Use as finalized of stimuli as possible, to give participants the best opportunity to understand the concept without needing to repeat

Virtual waiting rooms: Use virtual waiting rooms for activities that will identify selects and build rapport

Managing the conversation: Rather than wait for a response, call on respondents directly to cut down on cross-talk

Capturing virtual reactions: Use thumbs up/down, emoji sheets for identifying feelings and quick polls to read the room's reactions, virtually!

Virtual workshops: How we approach ideation, activation & innovation sessions

Taking workshops to virtual platforms



What is it?

- Virtual workshops are when we transform our opportunities via fun, empathetic, and actionable ideation — be it a co-creation session with consumers, ideating with your teams, or innovation sprints

How does it work?

- The Sound utilizes [Mural](#) as our working virtual ideation tool; it allows us to input clear and concise templates & stimuli inspiration for each activity throughout the session as well as successfully facilitate from afar— keeping everyone engaged and inspired
- Our sessions can include virtual breakouts and group discussions, with activities like whiteboarding, sticky-noting, mind-mapping, sorting and prioritizing, as if we were in the room together

Key output:

Build momentum and ensure quick activation with ideas that teams can immediately put into action, or use to inspire your next steps

We know the secret to seamless sessions in virtual settings



Insider tips:

More clarity, slower pace: Virtual sessions mean even clearer guidance, guardrails, examples and templates to ensure that we work towards common goals (despite our separate locations!)

Use creative stimuli: Creative platforms are our jam—written or visual, these tools can create clear starting points in an ideation session to inform and inspire

Break up the time: We like to toss in a quick 5-min “get up..” and “go gather..” mini-exercises to prevent fatigue, mental constipation and spin; there will be no need to turn off the video to put a load of laundry in :)

Converge, diverge, repeat: Virtual platforms often offer break-out rooms where smaller teams can work on a challenge together — helping more people feel heard!

Inspire with the unexpected: Break people from their standard category perspective to find new opportunities (i.e. bring the confections category into an ideation on pharmaceuticals) adding a spark to creative thinking, even from remote places

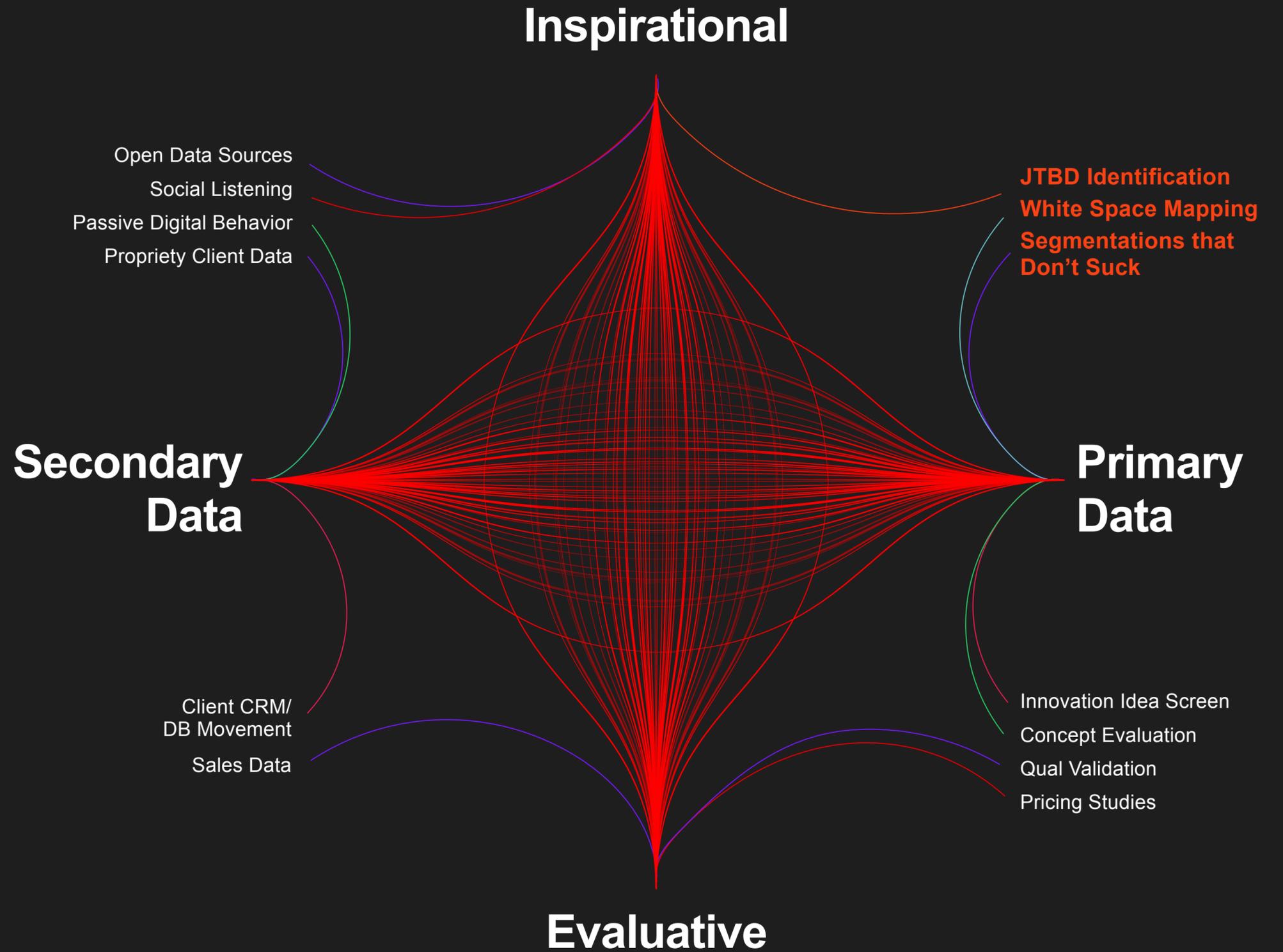
Invite a cross-functional team: The best ideas come from shared knowledge—leveraging what we already know, what someone knows from a past life, where is the passion, what does marketing know that sales doesn’t or R&D knows this and insights knows that?



Creative analytics: Bringing humanity to data



Our team and methods are skilled and rigorous enough to tackle just about anything, but our sweet spot is using primary data to inspire, identify frameworks and spark new opportunities for growth of business and ideas



Data that inspires

Our in-house Creative Analytics team works together with our explorers, strategists, innovators, and creative teams to tell new human stories



Here are a few examples of what that means in practice.



JTBD identification

Discover and size the breadth of ‘jobs’ that people hire products to do for them in a given category - uncovering opportunities to capture new ground



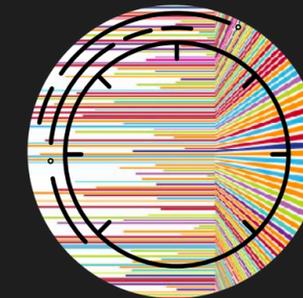
White Space Mapping

Tap into a new way of thinking and redefine the category in which you live. Let consumers reveal a new landscape and a new set of rules against which you can win



Segmentations that don't suck

We uncover cluster solutions that work for you, striking that perfect balance between intuitively ‘right’ and uncomfortably surprising



Proprietary Data re-mining

Sometimes the answer lies in existing data — it simply needs to be examined through a fresh lens

**How might we work together
to achieve your goals?**



Capturing insights

Fielding research during these times can pose strategic questions that we are here to answer. Is there a unique perspective to be gained? What do we risk by not engaging our consumers? Let's answer those questions together

Building your strategy

Developing strategies, whether it's for your brand, product portfolio, or other part of the business takes close collaboration between our team and yours. Let's team up to map out what a collaborative partnership could look like

Focusing on innovation

Many companies are using this time to focus on *innovation*. Let's chat about how we can keep the quick, iterative, and hands-on feeling of an innovation sprint in a virtual setting

THE
SOUND

Engaging brands with people.