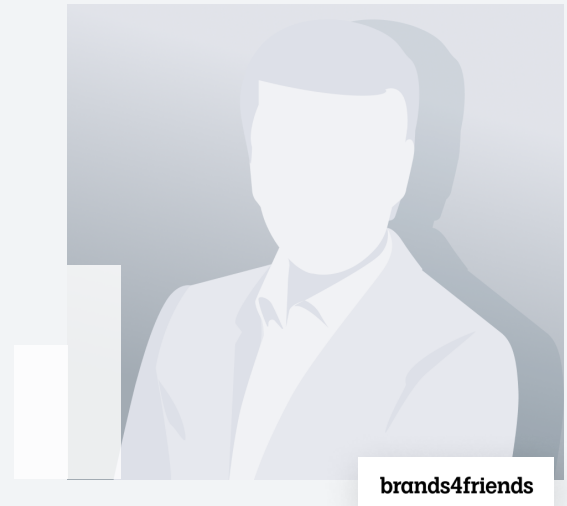# SAFE AND SOUND: HOW BRANDS4FRIENDS STAYS SECURE AND PRIVACY COMPLIANT

"E-commerce is all about people. We do more than just store personal data: we monetize it. This makes it critical for us to stay on the safe side of data protection law. DataGuard helps us do exactly that."

brands4friends

FACTS ABOUT BRANDS4FRIENDS

brands4friends is Germany's leading fashion and lifestyle online shopping club. The platform has several million members who enjoy a vast selection of products from renowned fashion and lifestyle brands. The e-commerce startup, founded in 2007 and acquired by eBay in 2010, operated under the umbrella of the leading online marketplace operator until 2019. Today, brands4friends is owned by US private equity firm Regent.

OFFER
Products from over 1,500 global fashion and lifestyle brands

TEAM
150 employees from 15 countries

CUSTOMERS
3+ million registered members

HEADQUARTERS
Berlin

BEFORE DATAGUARD

- Privacy challenges when sending newsletters to over 3 million users
- No framework to train employees about data privacy
- No experts at hand for ad-hoc compliance queries

AFTER DATAGUARD

- All newsletters and marketing activities are privacy compliant
- Total overview of which staff members have completed training
- All questions can be answered quickly by DataGuard's experts

THERE IS NO E-COMMERCE WITHOUT PERSONAL DATA

Since taking effect in May 2018, the GDPR has reinforced the importance of data privacy for online marketplaces. And for e-commerce businesses, this represents an interesting challenge. Personal data forms the foundation of this business model: from marketing to order processing. A selection of figures from brands4friends demonstrates this:

"We send out our newsletter to over one million users - daily. Add to this over 200,000 push notifications and additional marketing measures that we use to inform our members about current offers", explains Torsten Wolf, CMO of brands4friends.

LARGE-SCALE ONLINE MARKETING CAN INCREASE RISKS

brands4friends has around 3 million registered users. The company stores and uses the personal data of each and every user. As such, the company faces the constant scrutiny of data protection authorities and the public. "We are a well-known brand, but this in turn puts us in a highly exposed position due to our extensive online marketing processes", explains Andreas Grimm, CHRO at brands4friends, "For us, it is crucial to get everything right and stay on the safe side when it comes to the protection of our customers' data." The company also faces above-average liability risks: as part of the Regent Group, which includes German fashion brand Escada, the revenue of the entire group would be impacted if calculating fines for a privacy breach.

SEARCHING FOR A HOLISTIC DATA PRIVACY SOLUTION

"We wanted to clearly see the number of employees who have or haven't already completed their annual data privacy training at any time", says Grimm. "We decided a technical solution would be perfect for us, as it provides a full overview of our current data privacy status."

When brands4friends was sold to the Regent Group in 2019, the GDPR had been in effect for about a year. The regulation specifies clear data protection requirements. To meet these, the company had to appoint a data protection officer (DPO). An internal staff member was out of the question, because the DPO cannot be anyone with managerial responsibility, nor anyone who presents a conflict of interest. As a result, brands4friends started looking for a partner who offer a holistic data privacy solution who could support the company as an external data protection officer. They also favored companies who leverage technology to make privacy management more efficient: solutions that could bundle their documentation and provide templates and online training courses.

DATAGUARD'S COMPELLING 'ALL-IN-ONE' PACKAGE

During the evaluation phase, stakeholders at brands4friends met with several service providers, querying key performance metrics and comparing different offerings. "DataGuard's privacy experts answered every question we had quickly and competently. They personally convinced us and

compared to other providers, offered the best overall package in terms of scope and transparency",
confirms Grimm.

SPREADING AWARENESS AND BUILDING IN-HOUSE PRIVACY EXPERTISE

As mentioned previously, online training courses for the brands4friend's 150 employees was a major requirement. Courses are now offered to all employees in a flexible and efficient way, with seamless documentation, via the DataGuard platform. "Training our team was critical for us", explains Wolf, "because awareness about the importance of data privacy amongst all team members, together with an understanding of key issues in the handling of personal data, is vital for systematically preventing errors and GDPR infringements." DataGuard Academy is optimised to provide exactly that. Employees can find comprehensive training courses together with up-to-date information and a downloadable whitepaper.

"Demand is high: our team love using the platform without us having to instruct them to do so", confirms Grimm. "We can also attribute that to the fact that we are a very digitally minded company, with prior experience using similar platforms."

STAYING COMPLIANT IS THE MOST HONEST APPROACH BRANDS CAN TAKE

Within the team of brands4friends, DataGuard has boosted awareness for data privacy matters and brought expertise on GDPR-compliant processes for e-commerce: "Today, we can make sound decisions on data privacy compliant processes and realize our marketing efforts with the assurance that legal requirements are continuously met. This gives us a real sense of security", confirms Wolf. The bonus? Whenever brands4friends has any questions or doubts, they no longer have to search for an answer themselves or seek help from external experts. DataGuard is their single point of contact for any privacy-related query. "Whenever we have questions about data privacy, we reach out to our external data protection officer. DataGuard responds quickly and competently and gives us clear recommendations for action that we can implement right away. That's great", says Grimm. What's more, the teams can regularly exchange ideas and insights, keeping each other up to date and continuously improving processes in terms of privacy compliance.

ABOUT DATAGUARD

Combining human expertise with a web-based platform, DataGuard is the end-to-end solution for managing your privacy and information security with total peace of mind. More than 1,500 customers trust us to help them comply with regulations like the GDPR, attain and retain certifications such as ISO 27001, or manage consents and preferences with ease. With over 150 employees in Munich, Berlin and London, together we form a true partnership, driving compliance and generating value through trust and transparency.

Approaching privacy compliance is easier when your company is armed with a structured plan and the advice of an expert. To book a free consultation, contact us today.

BOOK YOUR FREE CONSULTATION

**OR CALL US DIRECTLY ON
+ 44 203 514 6557**

dataguard.co.uk

DataGuard