

How does the content of classifieds ads affect the behavior of site visitors?

A survey made by Next Consulting in collaboration with Besedo



Summary

Main Findings



Is it relevant?

Consumers clearly don't have any patience with irrelevant or missing information. When shown an ad lacking relevant content nearly 80% said that they would not return to the site where it was posted, nor recommend it to others. Scams, illegal and inappropriate content are often discussed as the biggest concern in the industry but our findings were that lack of relevant information gave the most immediate negative impression and a gut reaction was to turn away.



Inappropriate content

The listing containing racism and nudity was the second least favorable. This means that the buyers found an ad without relevant information more disturbing than inappropriate content. We don't mean you should keep disturbing texts and images on your site, but again lack of information is something you shouldn't turn a blind eye to.



Scam detection failure

Buyers are (downright) bad at detecting scams. 43% of the respondents were likely to act in favor of the scammer on the ad. This is just emphasizing the importance of protecting your users from fraudsters by keeping your site clean from such content.



Summary

Main Findings



Lack of trust

Even though the genuinely good listing was perceived the best, 1/3 of the respondents still shied away due to lack of trust. This points to a general skepticism and the need to patiently continue the job of earning the trust of your audience and strengthen your brand.



Counterfeit

Less than 50% spotted the counterfeit, even though this was very apparent and clearly stated in the ad. Yet another area where you need to step in and help your users making the right choice.



European scepticism

Brits seem to be more skeptical than Americans, as they continuously failed to take desired actions on the ads shown to them. Keep this in mind if you have to prioritize your moderation efforts between different markets.



About the survey

Why is this survey needed?

Does the content of your classifieds ads affect your users behavior and perception of your site?

We have seen numerous examples of sites getting into trouble when loosing control of the content on their sites.

We are also seeing that more brands are putting resources, time and money into building their brands with big campaigns and expensive commercials.

But are these sites really living up to their brand promises? How does content quality affect visitors to a site, and how is quality perceived?

We wanted to find out. This is why we initiated this survey.

NEXT Research & Consulting helped us perform this study. NEXT is a firm specializing in market research within the Customer Experience field.

Read more about NEXT (in Swedish only):
www.nextconsulting.se/



About the survey

What did we want to investigate?

The purpose of this survey was to find out how different types of bad content in classifieds ads is perceived by the general public and how it affects the willingness to perform desired actions like buying the product, recommending or returning to the site.

The definition of bad content is based on "Besedo's 5 layer quality model", which identifies and categorizes bad content into the following 5 layers:

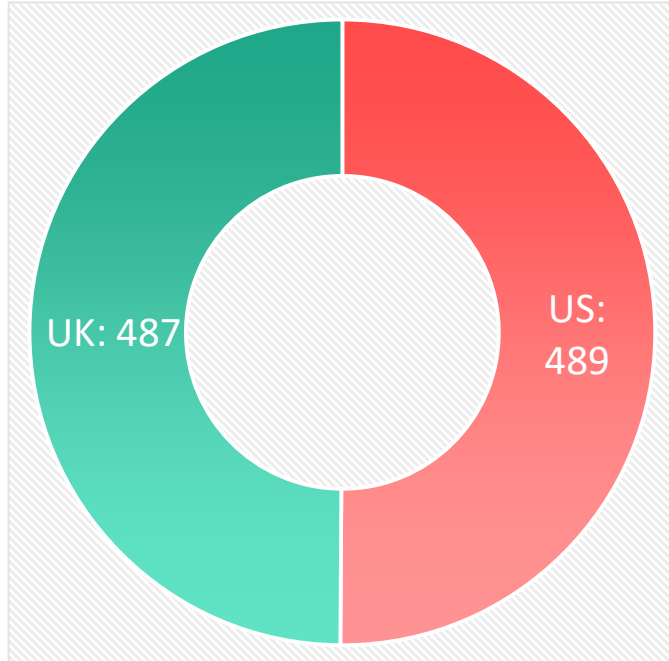
Illegal	Scam	Abuse	Irrelevant	Inappropriate
Is the content illegal and if so, is the publisher liable? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Weapons• Drugs• Pharma• Endangered species• Prostitution	Is the person behind the content attempting to actively deceive your users? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Advance fee• Charity• Pets• Pyramid• SMS	Is the user misusing your service in order to get more exposure or avoid fees? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Unrealistic offer• Keywords• Commercial links• Bitten professionals• Multiple regions	Is the site easy to navigate or does it contain content not belonging there? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Poor picture• Gibberish• Wrong category• Multiple items• Duplicated	Is the site content what your user are expecting to see? <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nudity• Profanity• Slandering

*Read more about the 5 layer quality model in this blogpost: <http://blog.besedo.com/moderation-5-layers-model>.



About the survey

The method we used and people we included



Targeted age 18-75



Web panel using cint.com



December 9-23, 2015

*30 of the respondents have been removed from the data set since they failed to follow some of the given instructions.



About the survey

The instructions the respondents were given

- The respondents were shown six different fake ads for an iPhone 6.
- The ads were designed to look like "typical" classifieds listings with different types of "bad" content* and they were placed in random order.
- The respondents were asked to imagine they were out to buy a phone from a classifieds site, and answer a set of questions about which desired actions they would take**.

*Based on Besedo's [2014 study](#).

** Desired actions in this survey included to buy this or any other products, return to the site, put their own items up for sale or recommend the site to others.



About the survey

The ads shown to the respondents

Good Listing

iPhone 6s rose gold 16gb
Published the 01st Nov, 21:05

£400

CONTACT SARAH

Email Phone

Name

E-mail

Phone

Type your message here

SEND

Private seller

Brand: Apple
Model: Iphone 6S

I am selling my Iphone 6S rose gold 16gb in good conditions. I used it only 1 month, so the guarantee is included. I have some accessories as Earpods, box, charger and I have the Apple invoice.

Please contact me by phone. Thanks.

Irrelevant Information

iPhone 6 for sale
Published the 01st Nov, 21:05

£1

CONTACT SARAH

Email Phone

Name

E-mail

Phone

Type your message here

SEND

Private seller

Brand: Apple
Model: Iphone

Good condition call me for details

Inappropriate Image & Text

iPhone 6s rose gold 16gb
Published the 01st Nov, 21:05

£400

CONTACT SARAH

Email Phone

Name

E-mail

Phone

Type your message here

SEND

Private seller

Brand: Apple
Model: Iphone 6S

I am selling my Iphone 6S rose gold 16gb in good conditions. I used it only 1 month.
Blacks, Nigerians guys, and carpet merchants dont bother contacting me.

Contact me for info.

Promotional Offer

iPhone 6s good offer
Published the 01st Nov, 21:05

£400

CONTACT SARAH

Email Phone

Name

E-mail

Phone

Type your message here

SEND

Professional seller

Brand: Apple
Model: Iphone 6S

Several phones models available:

APPLE iPhone 6s, 6S plus, Samsung Galaxy S5, S6, Samsung, Nokia, Apple, BlackBerry, HTC, Huawei, Archos, Asus, Motorola, Infinix, Microsoft, Sony, LG, Google, Lenovo, Sony Ericsson, Android, windows, Alcatel, Iphone, Samsung edge, Galaxy Note, Lumia, Xperia, Zentone, Desire, Touch, Nexus...

Super offers on our website:
iphonesoffer@abod.com
Visit our online shop on
iphonesoffer@competitor.com

Scam

iPhone 6s rose gold 16gb
Published the 01st Nov, 21:05

£200

CONTACT SARAH

Email Phone number not available

Name

E-mail

Phone

Type your message here

SEND

Private seller

Brand: Apple
Model: Iphone 6S

The phone new original comes with a 2 year warranty and comes with an English menu on it.

I accept payment via Western Union or Money Gram and also the total cost of the phone, because £200, including the cost of delivery to your door step.

Western union provides me with necessary speed necessary for delivery. I make sure the shipment via FedEx Air Express delivery (3days).

Special offer. Buy 2 units and get one free!

Counterfeit

Phone similar to iPhone 6S
Published the 01st Nov, 21:05

£200

CONTACT SARAH

Email Phone

Name

E-mail

Phone

Type your message here

SEND

Private seller

Brand: Apple
Model: Iphone 6S

I am selling my phone gold 16gb looks like an Iphone in good conditions. I used it only 1 month. More info by phone.

Summary

Ranking of the ads

How the respondents ranked the ads based on how they impact their opinion of the site.

Ranking	Type of Ad (1= highest 6=lowest)	Average ranking (1-6 where 1 is the most positive and 6 is the most negative)
1	Good Listing	2.3
2	Scam Ad	2.5
3	Promotional Offer	3.1
4	Counterfeit	3.2
5	Inappropriate Image & Text	4.0
6	Irrelevant Information	4.1

The Good Listing gave the best site impression and ranked no 1. Not far behind was the typical Scam ad. This is obviously alarming since it points at a very high risk for buyers to be defrauded.

The ad with Irrelevant Information gave the least favorable impression of the site and hence ranked the lowest. Almost as badly perceived was the Inappropriate Image & Text ad.




AD 1: The Good Listing

This ad was designed as a legitimate ad without any deliberate flaws or bad content.


iPhone 6s rose gold 16gb


Published the 01st Nov, 21:05



£400

CONTACT SARAH

Email 

Phone 

Name

E-mail

Phone

Type your message here

SEND

Private seller

Brand: Apple
Model: Iphone 6S

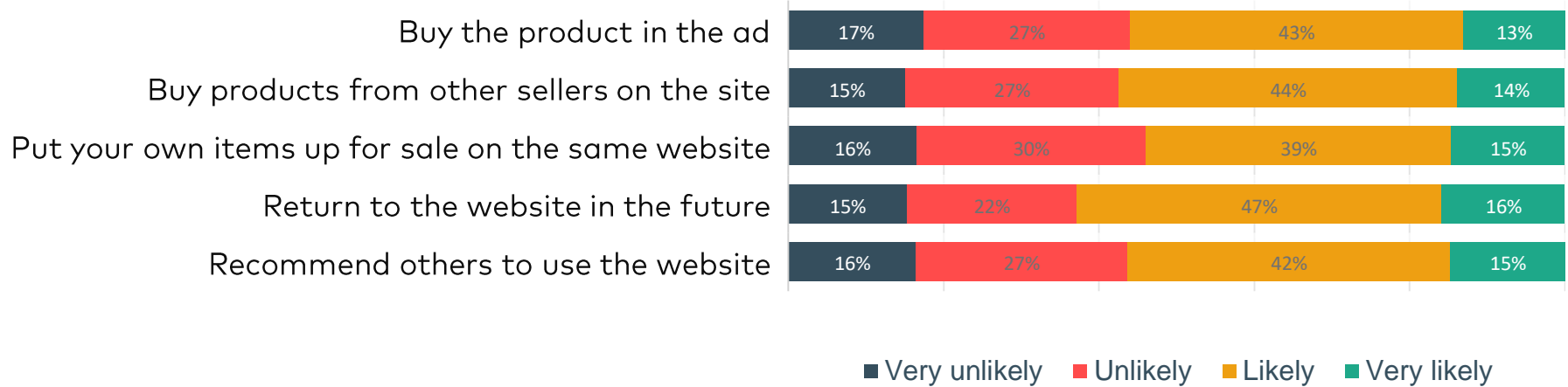
I am selling my Iphone 6S rose gold 16gb in good conditions. I used it only 1 month, so the guarantee is included. I have some accessories as Earpods, box, charger and I have the Apple invoice.

Please contact me by phone. Thanks.



Good Listing

Detailed results



56 % were likely or very likely to buy the product in this ad.

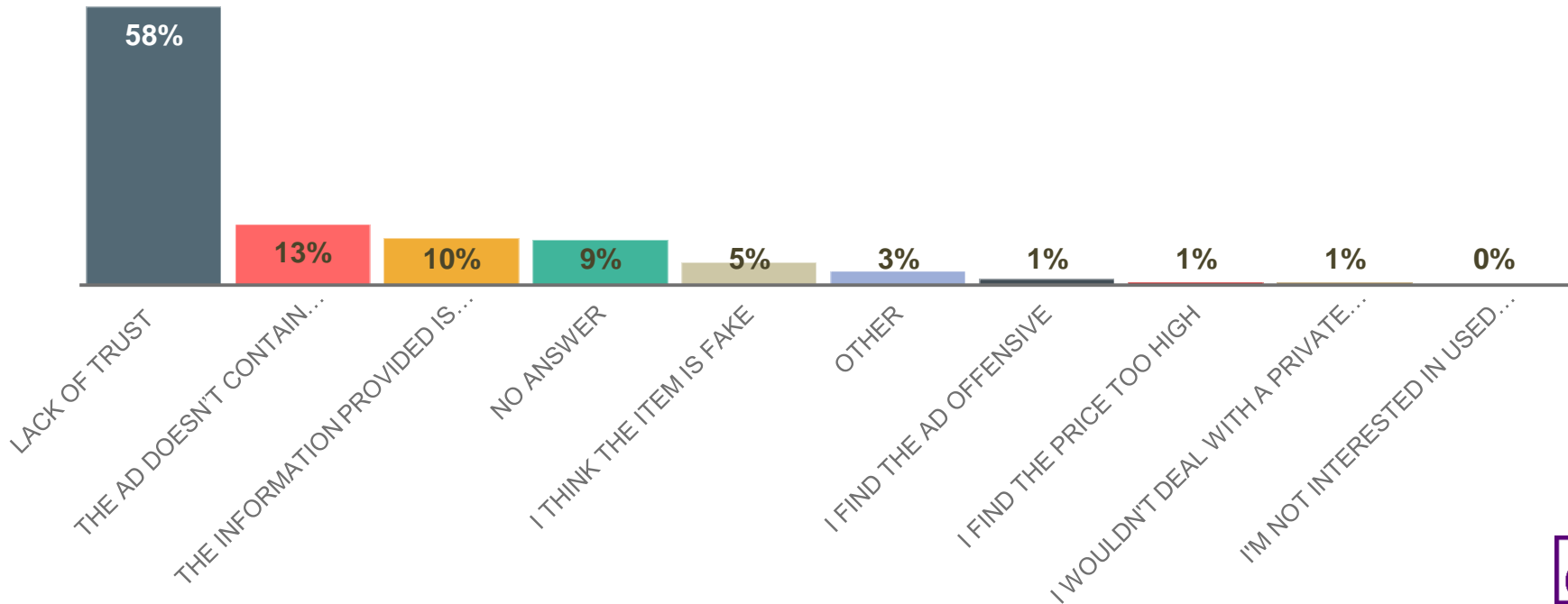
It is reassuring that this ad was perceived as the best choice since this kind of ad is most likely to be real and relevant.



Good Listing

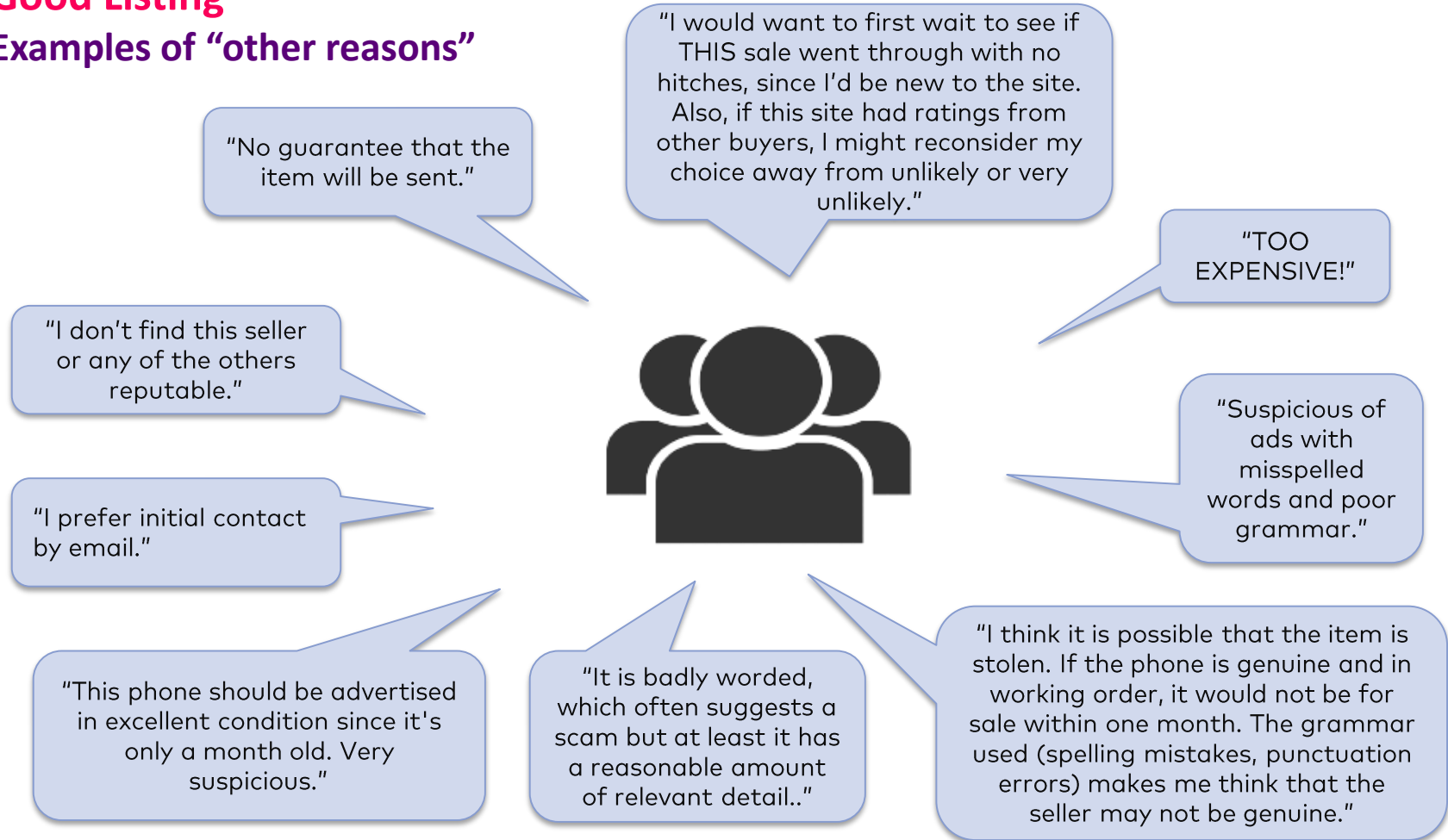
Main reasons for not taking desired actions

The question was asked to respondent who responded unlikely or very unlikely to at least one of the questions.



Good Listing

Examples of “other reasons”



AD 2: Irrelevant Information

This ad lacks relevant information about the product advertised.

IPhone 6 for sale


Published the 01st Nov, 21:05



£1

CONTACT SARAH


Email


Phone

SEND

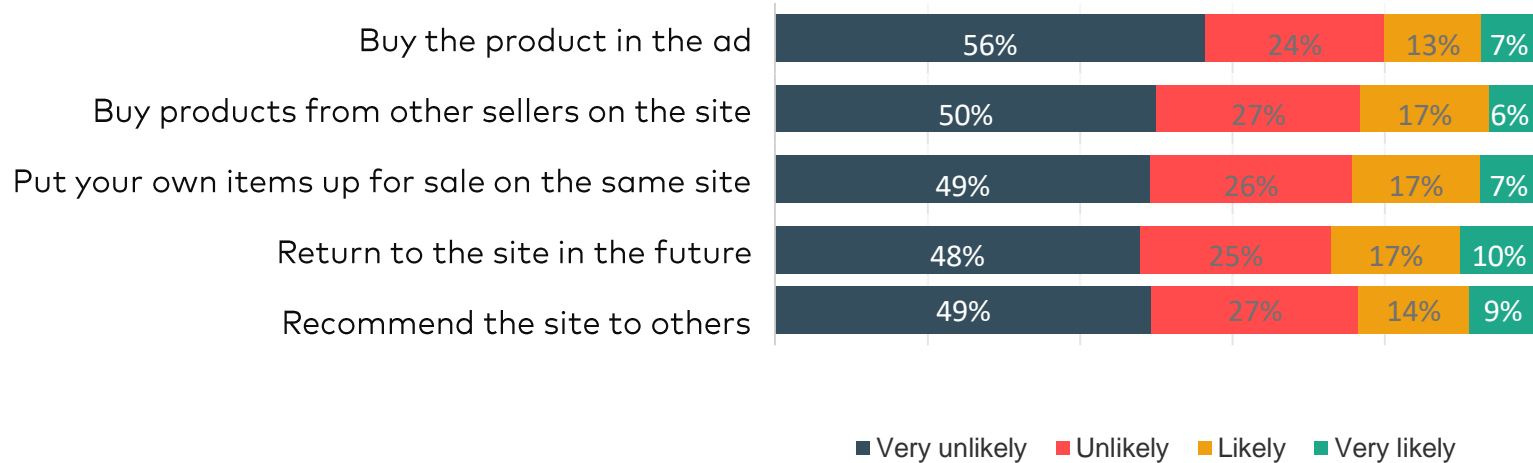
Private seller

Brand: Apple
Model: Iphone
Good condition call me for details



Irrelevant Information

Detailed results



This ad, showing very little information about the product advertised, was perceived the very weakest of them all. Only 20 % replied that they would be likely or very likely to buy the product.

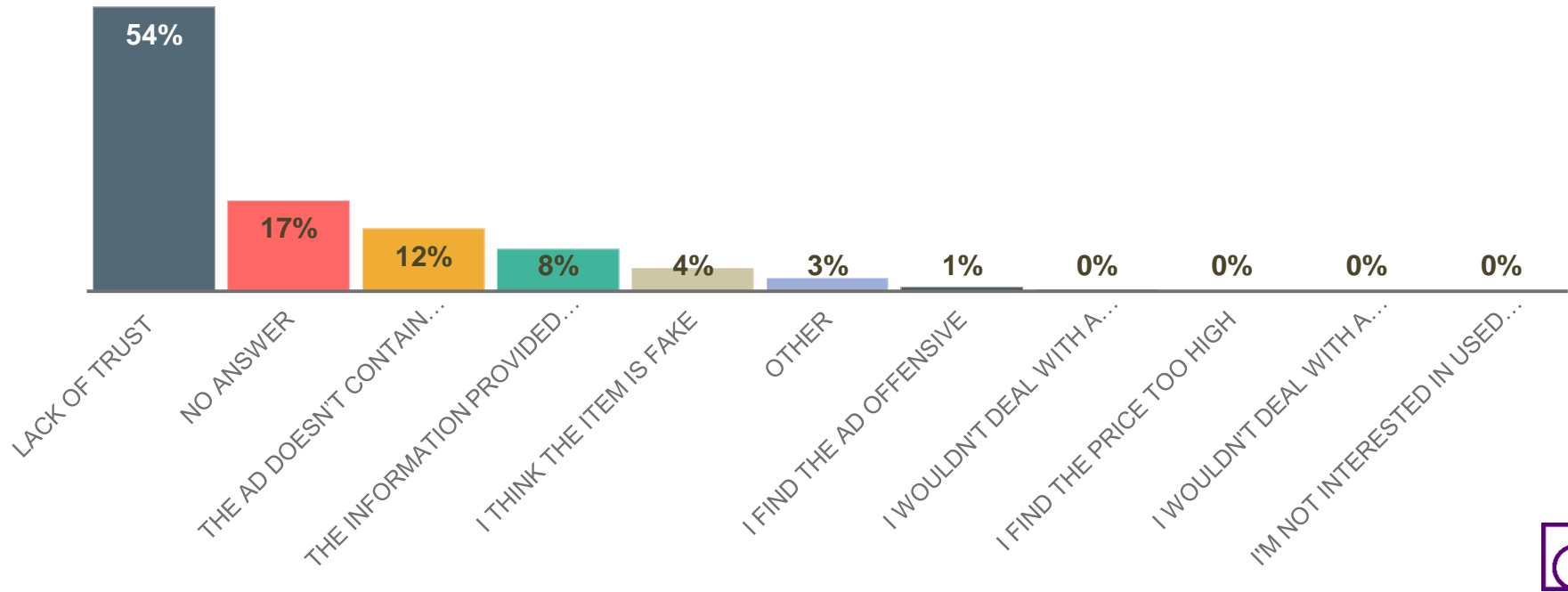
The ad also has a very negative impact on the willingness to return to the website in the future as well as the likelihood to recommend the site to others.



Irrelevant Information

Main reasons for not taking desired actions

The question was asked to respondent who responded unlikely or very unlikely to at least one of the questions.



Irrelevant Information

Examples of “other reasons”

“There are no pictures of the phone.”

“A phone for \$1 is unrealistic and I therefore think they’re just after my contact details.”

“Because the price is ridiculous.”

“I would never buy a phone from an ad or site like this.”

“The price is ways too low to be of any value. Also there is no details about the phone.”

“No photo, 1 pound, very dodgy.”

“I don’t buy second hand.”

“\$1 really? Something stinks.”

“Incorrect price, no photos and no information. I’d say the ad itself is fake.”

“The price is too low, no photo, no details. It looks like the seller could not be bothered, how do you know they’d be bothered sending the phone.”




AD 3: Inappropriate Image & Text

This ad contains nudity and racist language.


iPhone 6s rose gold 16gb

Published the 01st Nov, 21:05




£400

CONTACT SARAH





Email



Phone

SEND



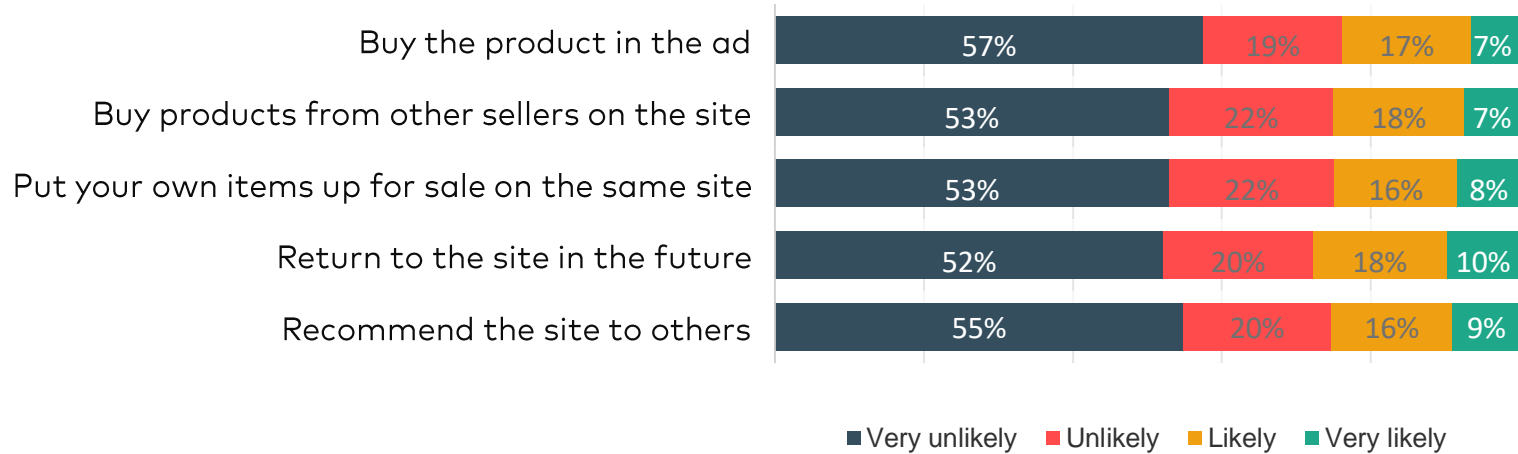
Private seller

Brand: Apple
Model: Iphone 6S

I am selling my Iphone 6S rose gold 16gb in good conditions. I used it only 1 month.
Blacks, Nigerians guys, and carpet merchants dont bother contacting me.
Contact me for info.

Inappropriate image & text

Detailed results



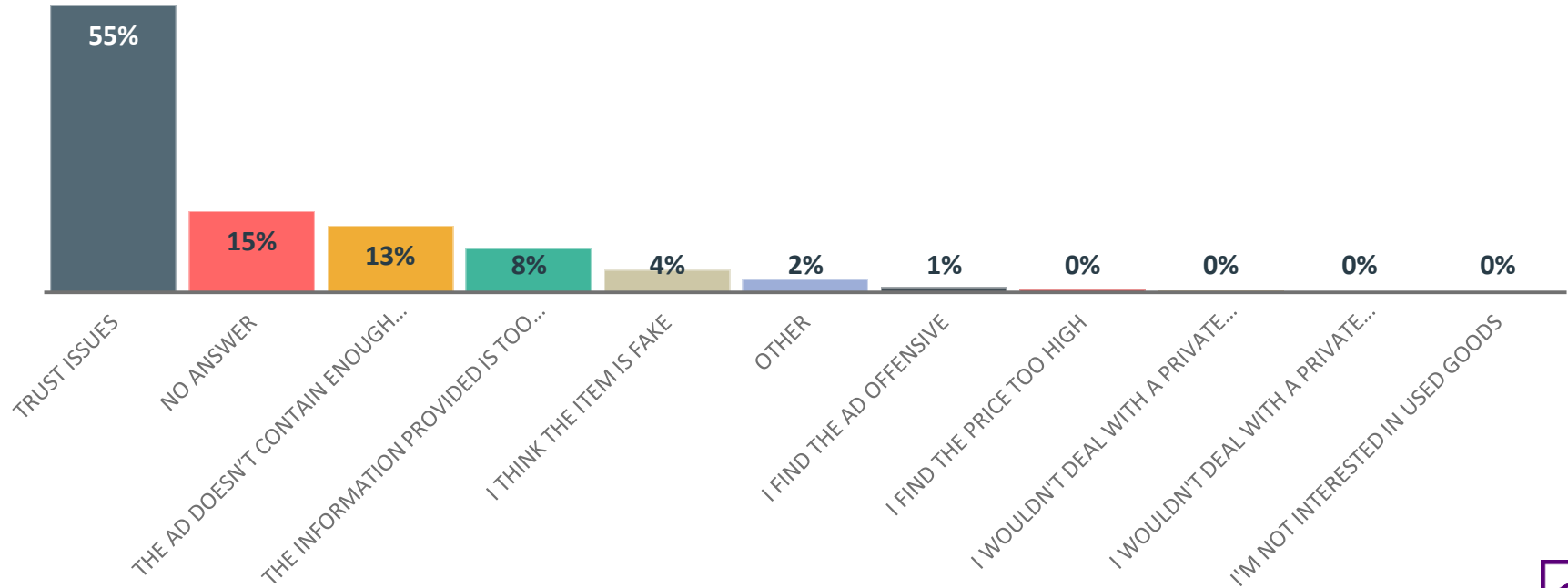
This ad didn't score as low as we would have expected, considering the image and text used in the ad, although the ad did have a negative impact on all the actions we asked about in the survey.



Inappropriate image & text

Main reasons for not taking desired actions

The question was asked to respondent who responded unlikely or very unlikely to at least one of the questions.



Inappropriate image & text

Examples of “Other Reasons”




AD 4: Promotional Offer

This ad was designed to look like a professional seller, advertising its business just as much as the product.


iPhone 6s good offer


Published the 01st Nov, 21:05



£400

CONTACT SARAH


Email


Phone

SEND

Professional seller

Brand: Apple
Model: iPhone 6S

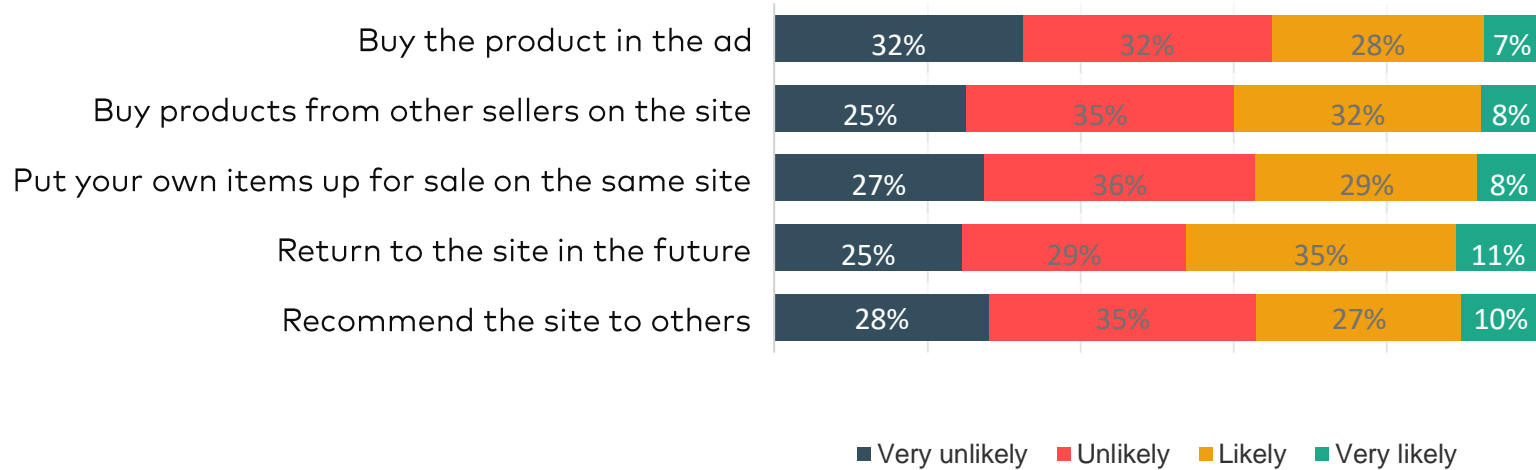
Several phones models available:

APPLE iPhone 6s, 6S plus, Samsung Galaxy S5, S6, Samsung, Nokia, Apple, BlackBerry, HTC, Huawei, Archos, Asus, Motorola, Infinix, Microsoft, Sony, LG, Google, Lenovo, Sony Ericsson, Android, windows, Alcatel, Iphone, Samsung edge, Galaxy, Note, Lumia, Xperia, Zenfone, Desire, Touch, Nexus...

Super offers on our website:
iPhone6soffer@abcd.com
Visit our online shop on
iPhone6soffer@competitor.com

Promotional Offer

Detailed results



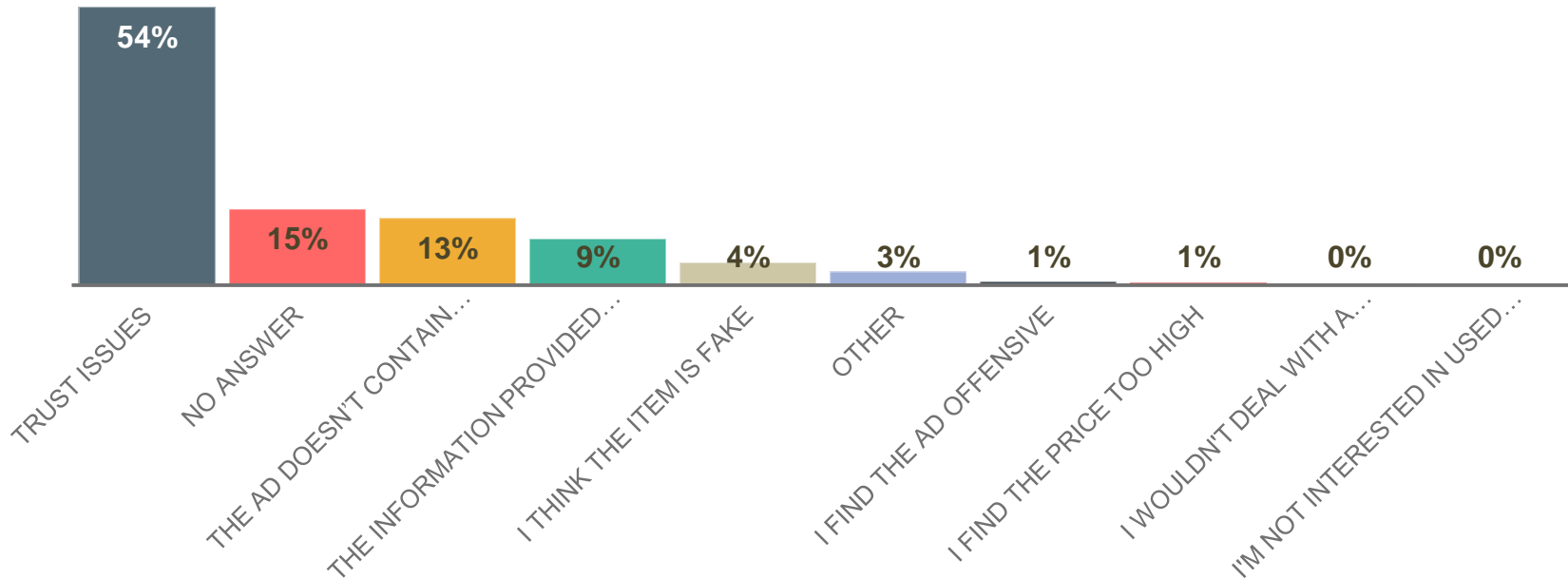
The promotional offer ended up in the middle, ranking number 3 out of 6. The majority of the respondents would not buy the product or take any desired actions on this ad.



Promotional Offer

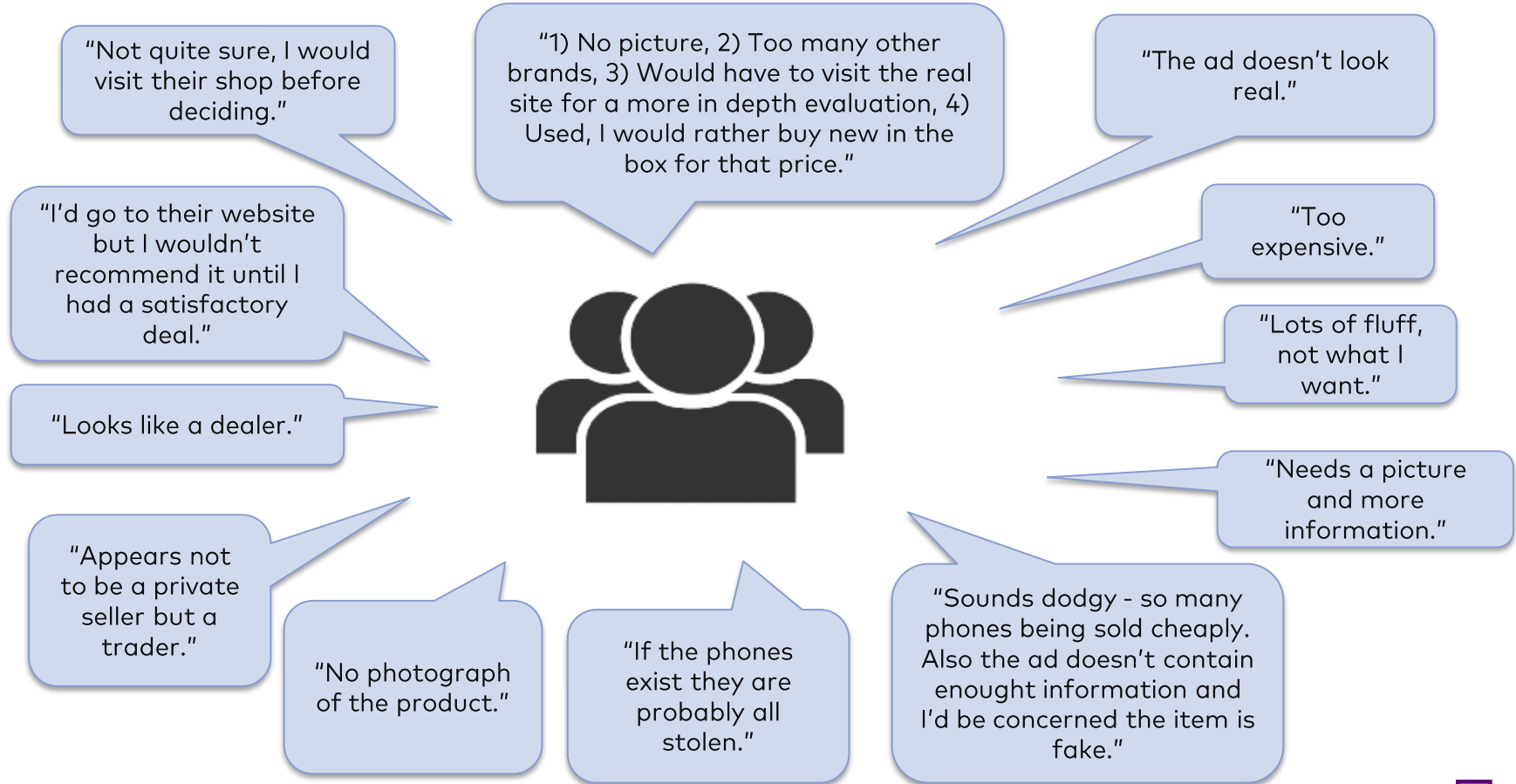
Main reasons for not taking desired actions

The question was asked to respondent who responded unlikely or very unlikely to at least one of the questions.



Promotional Offer

Examples of “other reasons”




AD 5: Scam

This ad was designed like a typical scam, with Western Union payment and grammatical errors in the text.


iPhone 6s rose gold 16gb

Published the 01st Nov, 21:05



£200

CONTACT SARAH

Email  Phone number not available

Name

E-mail

Phone

Type your message here

SEND

Private seller

Brand: Apple
Model: Iphone 6S

The phone new original comes with a 2 year warranty and comes with an English menu on it.

I accept payment via Western Union or Money Gram and also the total cost of the phone, because £200, including the cost of delivery to your door step.

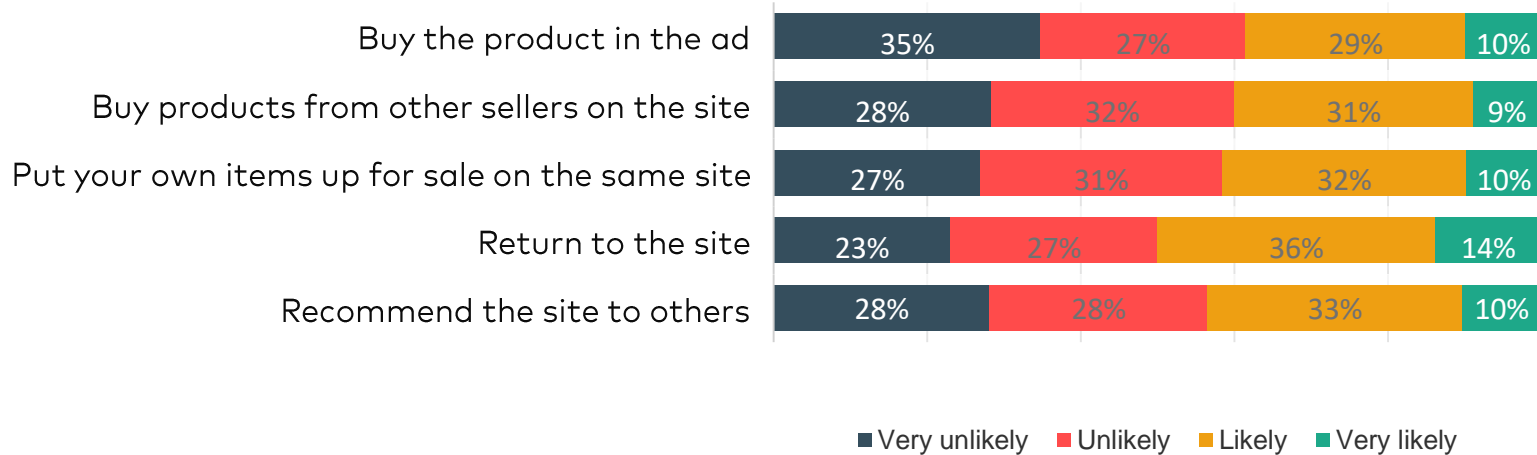
Western union provides me with necessary speed necessary for delivery. I make sure the shipment via FedEx Air Express delivery (3days).

Special offer: Buy 2 units and get one free!



Scam AD

Detailed results



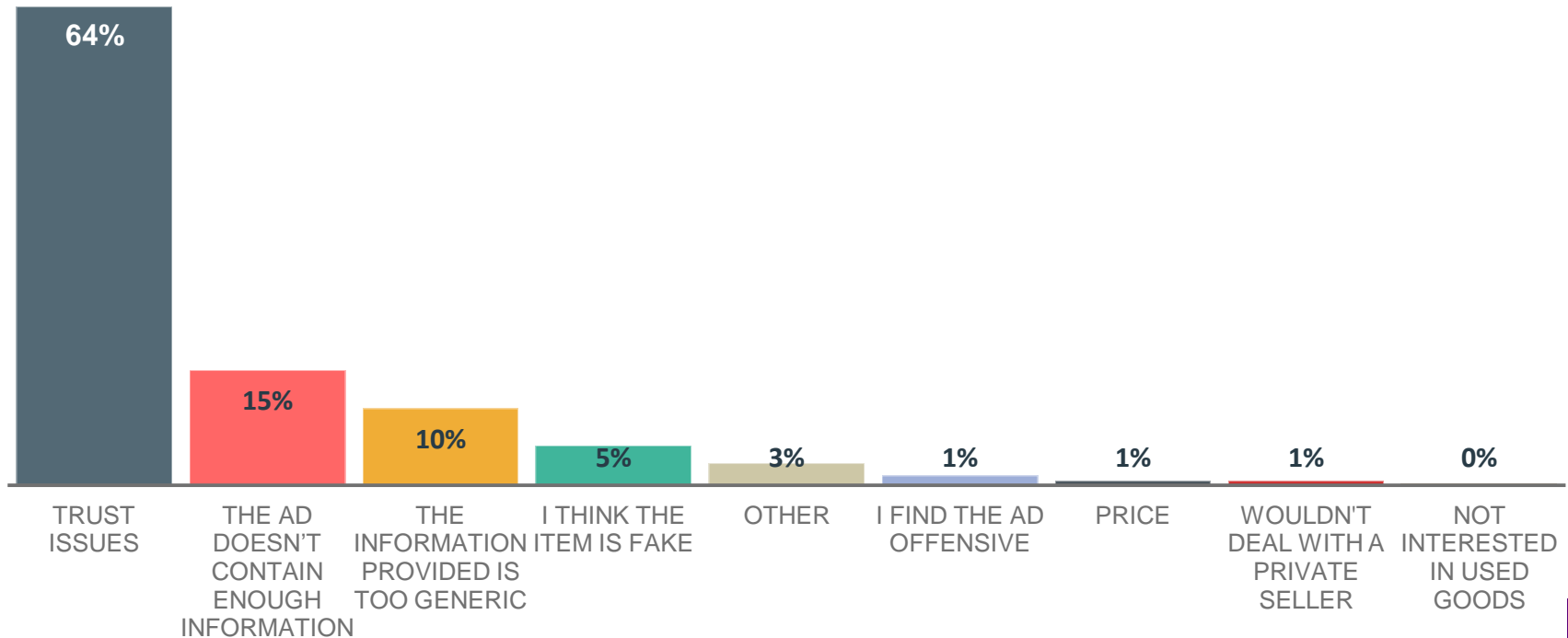
39 % answered that it was likely or very likely to buy the product in this ad. This means that 39 % did not see the signs that were put in the ad so make it look like a typical scam. This should be a real concern for sites where people can sell and buy items.



Scam AD

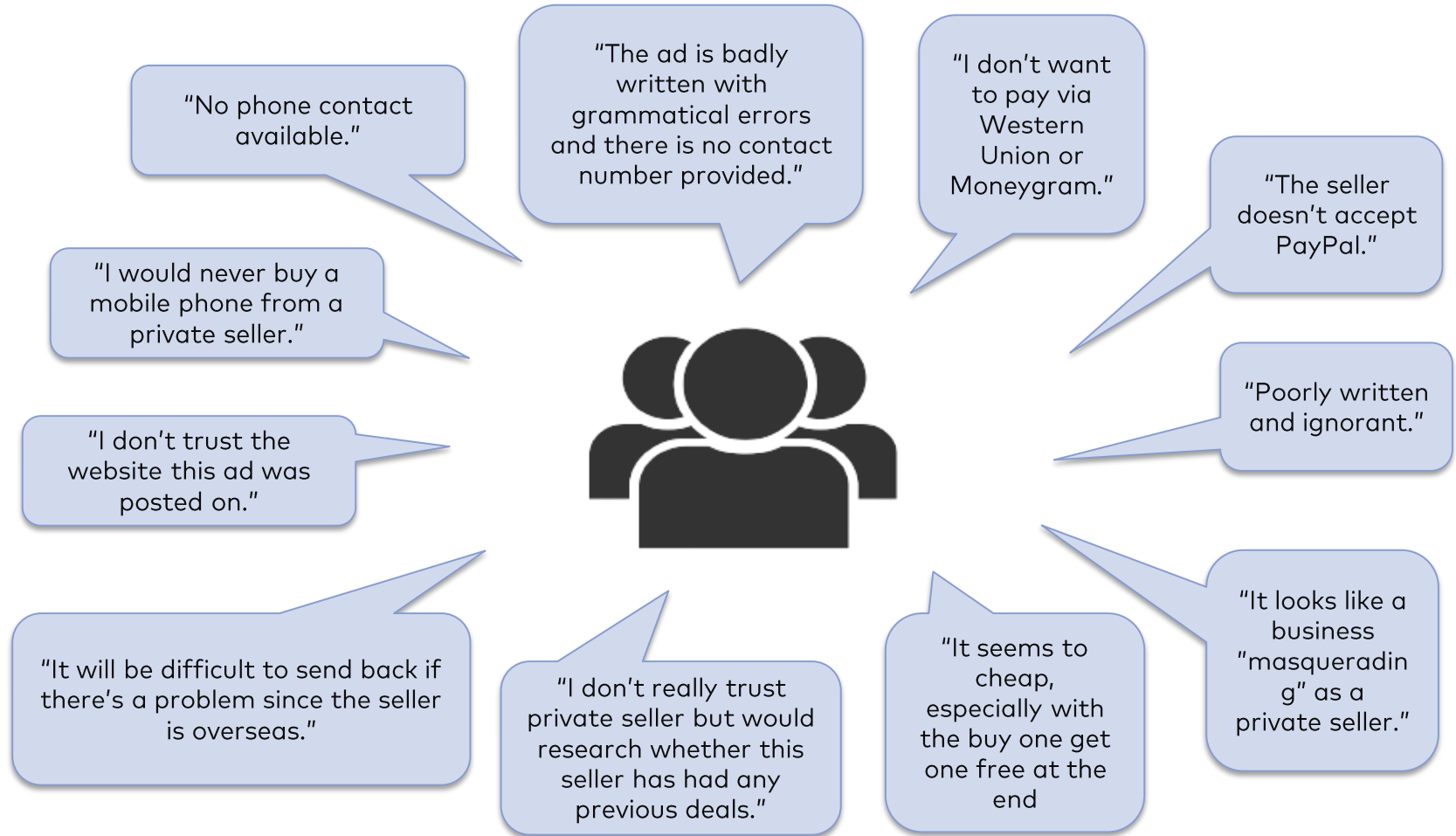
Main reasons for not taking desired actions

The question was asked to respondent who responded unlikely or very unlikely to at least one of the questions.



Scam AD

Examples of “other reasons”




AD 6: Counterfeit

This ad is for a fake iPhone, which is described clearly in the text and images.


Phone similar to iPhone 6S

Published the 01st Nov, 21.05




£200

CONTACT SARAH




Email



Phone

SEND



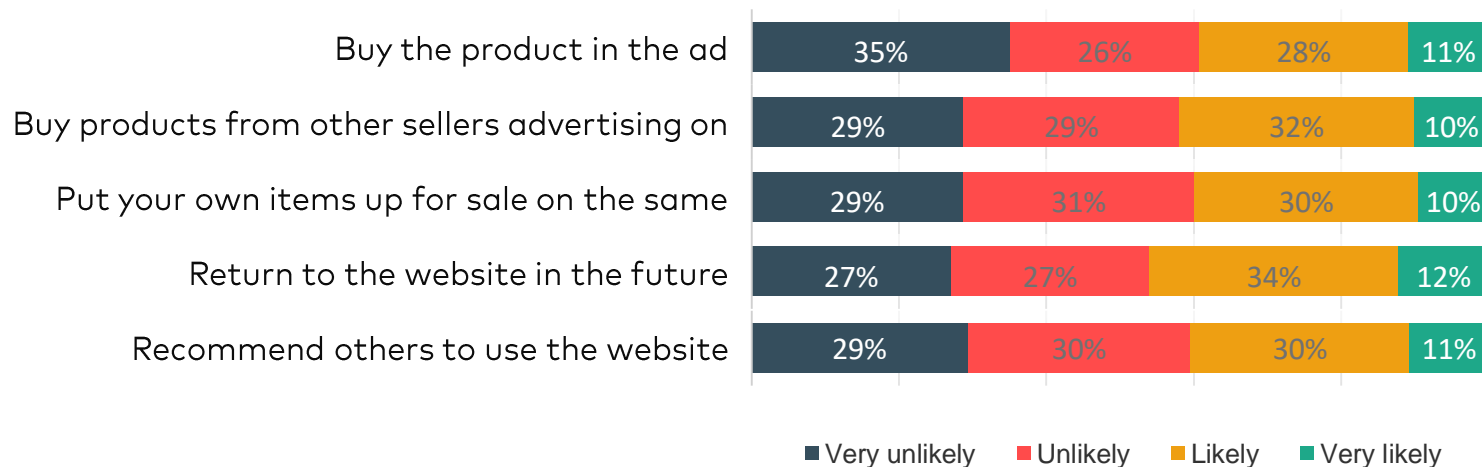
Private seller

Brand: Apple
Model: iPhone 6S

I am selling my phone gold 16gb looks like an Iphone in good conditions. I used it only 1 month. More info by phone.

Counterfeit

Detailed results



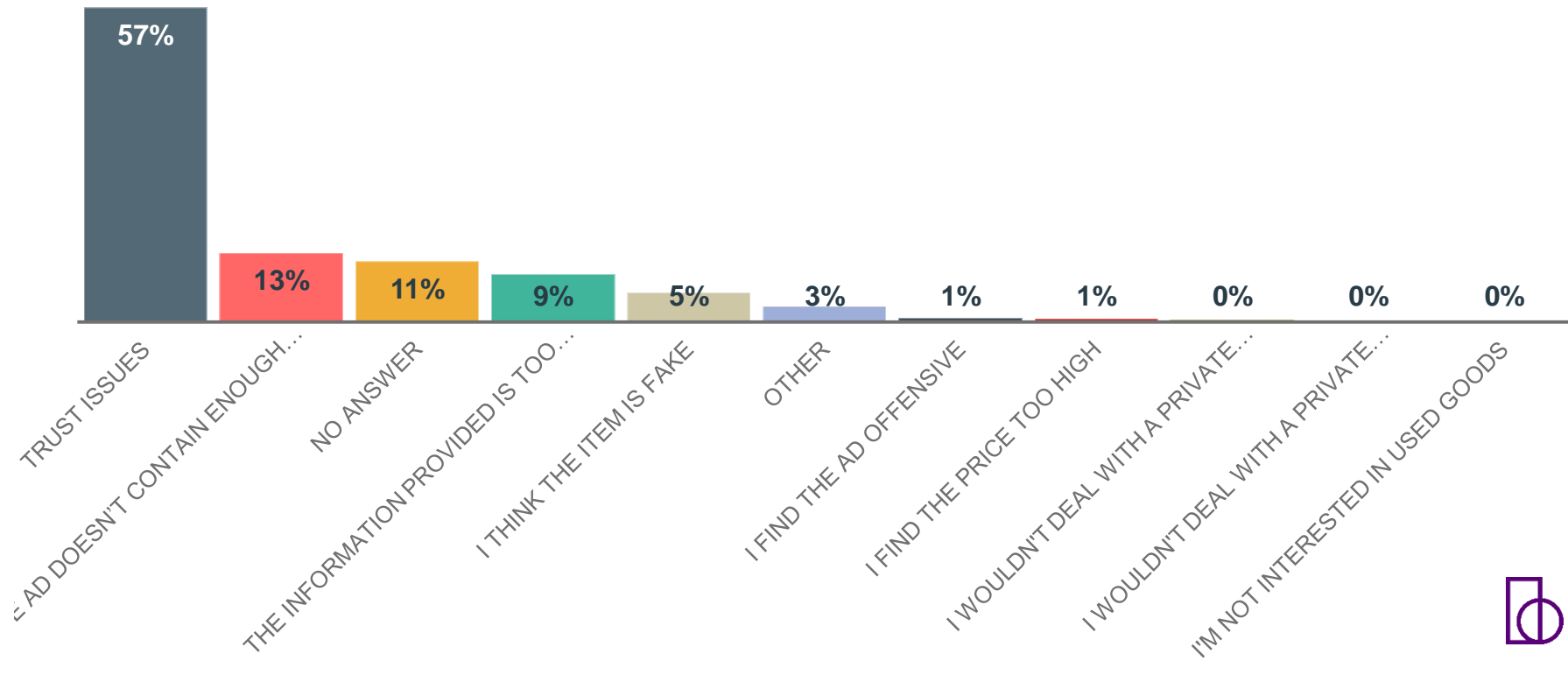
39% said they would be likely or very likely to buy the product in this ad. This ad with the counterfeit phone was rated just below the scores of the ad with the promotional offer.



Counterfeit

Main reasons for not taking desired actions

The question was asked to respondent who responded unlikely or very unlikely to at least one of the questions.



Counterfeit

Examples of “other reasons”

“The ad is inconsistent and doesn't give the real brand of the phone being sold.”

“The item is not being advertised as an iPhone but I was looking for an iPhone. I wouldn't buy one that's similar. The ad is contradictory as the title states it's “similar” while the ad calls the model as an iPhone . Is it real or fake?”

“Poor English makes me think it's “foreign”/grey import.”

“It says it looks like an iPhone so it's not what I'm looking for.”



“Poor grammar and the comment “looks like an iPhone and in good condition. That's weird.”

“It is not an iPhone 6.”

“Because I don't want a fake iPhone.”

“I'm looking for an iPhone, not a generic phone. And not enough info.”

“I was looking to buy and iPhone 6s, and that's what I want. Not a generic phone that looks similar to an iPhone”



We'd love to help you improve your moderation

Get in touch →

More resources:

[The Besedo blog](#)

[Besedo knowledge Library](#)

[Implio – all-in-one moderation tool](#)