

BELONGING BRITAIN



UNDERSTANDING
MODERN
COMMUNITIES

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



Our new research provides a deep dive into the evolving landscape of **British communities;**

from the types of communities that exist, their dynamics, the role they play in people's lives, and the potential for communicators across the commercial, third and public sectors to connect with them.

This project began in response to a period of rapid social change, with declining trust in established institutions, the rise of more self-directed and fragmented communities, and a trail of unanswered questions about the impact this has had on the people and society we need to communicate with. It answers important questions about the

value and rules of engagement of community-based communications approaches to more authentically, ethically, and effectively reach and build a relationship with audiences.

It makes the case for communities as an important element within communications strategies, rather than as an afterthought, or 'not a thought'. We reveal that most people in modern Britain belong to communities and they reflect and resonate with their complex identities. They're often places of high attention, engagement, and trust, and are influential over minds and behaviours.

This work provides guidance for marketers on how to best navigate the community landscape based on their communications objectives.

7.2 DIFFERENT FACTORS MAKE UP THE AVERAGE PERSON'S IDENTITY...

and demographic traits are less pertinent.

People's social relationships, personalities, passions and values are key. This means we need to re-think and augment traditional demographic-based communication strategies.

7.2

different features
make up the
average person's
identity, such as:

FAMILY

INTERESTS/PASSIONS

SOCIAL CLASS

POLITICAL BELIEF

HEALTH STATUS

FRIENDS

LOCAL COMMUNITY

ETHNICITY/RACE

AGE

NATIONALITY

LIFE EXPERIENCES



The Recovery Olympics in Stirling, bringing together over 300 people who have dealt with addiction. MirrorPix.

2 A SENSE OF BELONGING IS THE KEY DISTINCTION BETWEEN COMMUNITIES AND GROUPS.

Despite recent social and technological shifts, the meaning of community endures. At its core is a central need for 'belonging', alongside themes of kinship, shared interests and values, and human interaction.

3

COMMUNITIES ARE NOT JUST FOR THE OLD OR NICHE GROUPS:

65% of people are in at least one form of community and this spans demographics. On average, people are part of 3.2 different communities.

65%

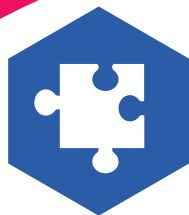
of people are in at least one form of community



Helston Town Band leads celebrations at Helston Flora Day in Cornwall, marking the arrival of spring. MirrorPix.

4 FIVE DIFFERENT TYPES OF COMMUNITIES SEEM TO EXIST AT A MACRO LEVEL BUT THERE MAY BE SOME OVERLAP BETWEEN THEM:

These are groups of people who share
(1) interests or activities, (2) beliefs,
(3) characteristics, (4) locations,
(5) experiences.



**SHARED INTERESTS
OR ACTIVITIES**



**SHARED
CHARACTERISTICS**



**SHARED
BELIEFS**



**SHARED
EXPERIENCES**



**SHARED
LOCATIONS**

Mehnaz is 24 and lives in London. She's a proud Muslim, weightlifter and as a software engineer, connects with the coding community online.





England football fans in Manchester during the 2024 Euros. MirrorPix.

F

PASSIONS AND ACTIVITIES BRING THE MOST PEOPLE TOGETHER:

82% of people in communities are in at least one shared interest/activity group. Shared locations are the second most popular form.

82% of people in communities are in **at least one** shared interest/activity group

COMMUNITIES REFLECT THE PARTS OF OUR IDENTITIES THAT MATTER:

3/4 people in communities say their community is **'important' to their identity**, **1/3** say it is **'essential'**. Communities reveal important, often unconscious, signals of what makes us, us – and how that flexes in different contexts.



Sisters Lydia and Alma run a YouTube channel to encourage black youths to embrace their natural afros. MirrorPix.



1 DESPITE THEIR BUSY LIVES, PEOPLE MAKE TIME FOR THEIR COMMUNITIES:

67% of people engage with their community at least once per week and **more than half** are **'active'** or **'core'** members.

more than half

say they're
'active' or 'core'
members

67%

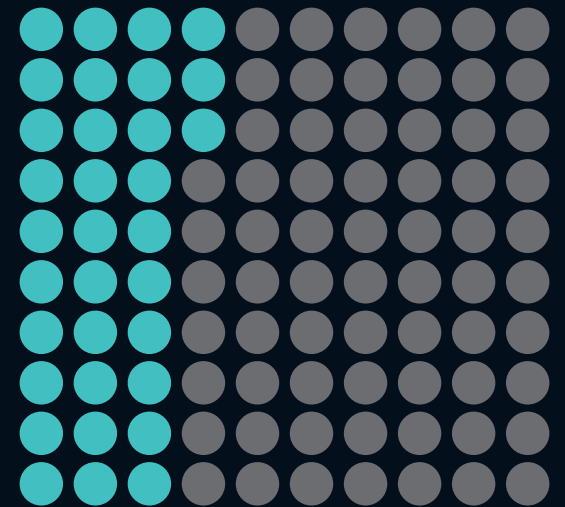
of people engage
with their community
at least once per
week

{ HYBRID COMMUNITIES DOMINATE OUR HYBRID WORLD, BUT WE DO SEEK PROXIMITY:

33% of communities are offline only and the rest are mostly a mix of real and virtual connection. The emotional **potency of 'IRL'** interaction can't always be replicated online.

33%

of communities
are offline only



9 HERD MENTALITY IS RIFE AND PERSUASIVE:

96% trust the opinion and advice of people in their groups. Having being exposed to opinions expressed in their community, **42%** started something new, one-third discovered something, and one-fifth changed their opinion on a matter.

trust the opinion & advice of people in their groups

96%

discovered something

1/3

42%

started something new

1/5

changed their opinion

10 COMMUNITIES WANT YOU TO SUPPORT THEM BUT NOT THROUGH FREEBIES:

only **14%** of those in communities are not willing to engage with brands or organisations. Those that are willing seek expertise, knowledge, a listening ear or supportive voices over free products and funding.



National Lottery winners helping out in the community garden at Alder Hey Hospital in Liverpool. MirrorPix.



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To learn more about how understanding modern British Communities could help your planning, please get in touch:

belonginginbritain@mgomd.com



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