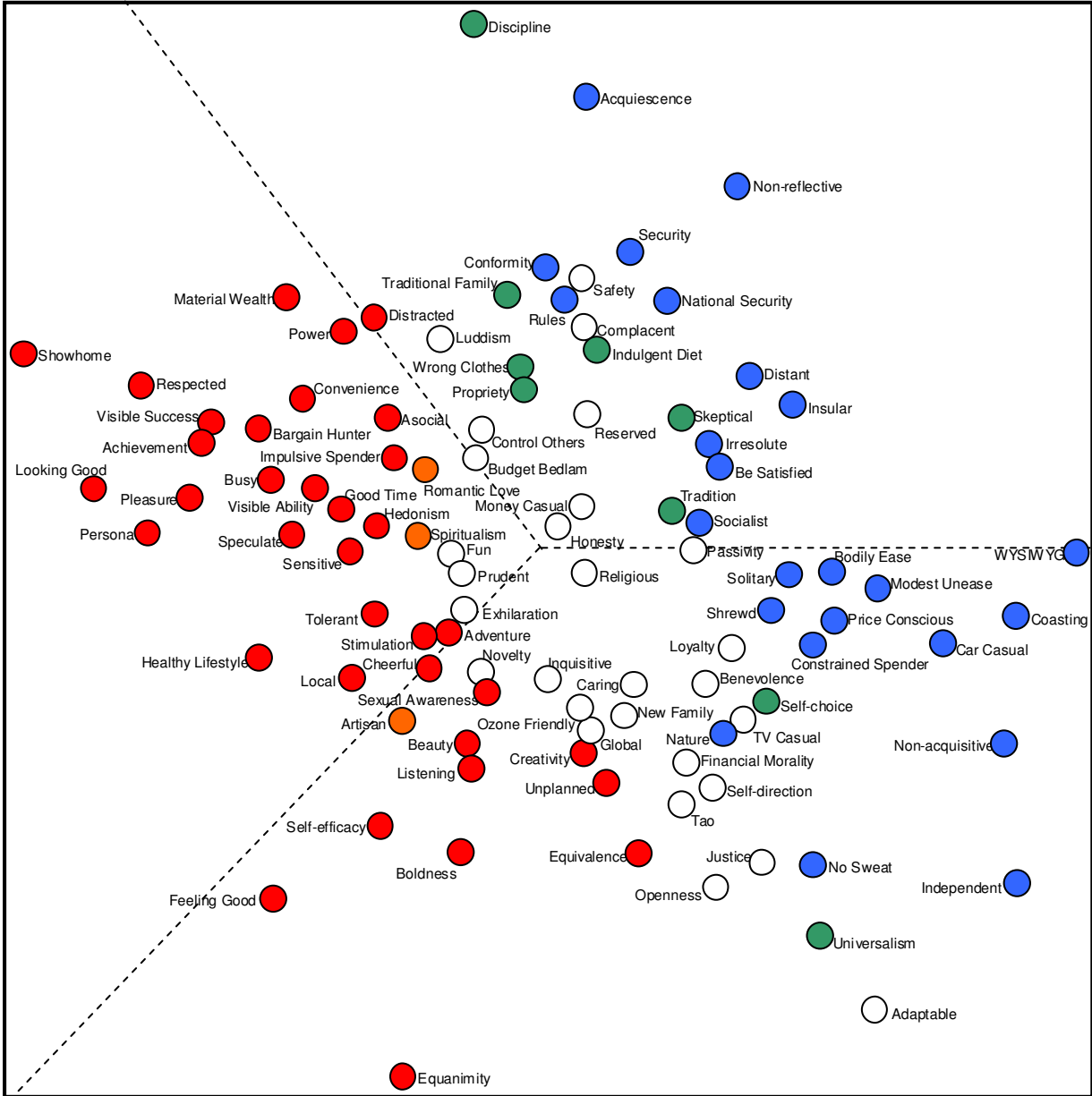


THE NOW PEOPLE

An addendum to the IPPR report “Consumer Power” (September 2009)



Attribute Map for Now People. (Red spots indicate high scores, Blue spots indicate low scores).

The Now people have the highest energy level of all the Values Modes. In the words of the 60's iconic rock band, The Doors, “We want the world and we want it NOW”!

They have an immense hunger for life and want to consume it all, right now. They want to **own** and **display** the good things in life. They also want to **experience** the best that life has to offer. “Eat, drink and shag Mary (or Barry, depending on your preference!)” is an appropriate motto of this socially active set of people.



The Now People are perhaps the epitome of the Outer Directed Maslow Group. They have far more energy and zest than the other Outer Directed groups, and a much greater need to use it to gain the approval of others – their dominant Maslowian need. This need also has other consequences. It drives them to use all their social skills to build and maintain a “network” of supporters. It drives them, more forcefully than any other Values Mode, to **identify, acquire and display** symbols of value. It causes them to need the support of “the group” to define their own identities.

Whether at work or at leisure, Now People will try to create situations that intensely energise others. They can then harvest that energy for themselves and bend it to drive other situations that are to their own advantage. The energy created will always have an intensity unlike that created by any other Values Mode. This is “Saturday Night Fever”, the “inspired brainstorming session” or the meeting with a “leader” that “changed your life”.

The Now People want to “go to the next level”, “go one step beyond” or “go further or faster than man has ever gone before”. This is a romantic ideal. The desire to experience the romanticism of the mystical and magical is constantly at the back of every activity driven by the Now People.

Consciously or unconsciously, these people will attempt to become the centre of attention. They are more extraverted than most – at the very least, this is the stage in their life when they will be at their most extravert. Feeling comfortable within a group, where they can shine, just comes naturally to them. They are natural networkers – wanting to know everything and letting everyone know that they are in the know.

Now People have a real skill set based on the “Sensitive” attribute – *i.e.* they can easily make an emotional connection with others. This can be a very intimate and sensitive moment, producing strong physical reactions, like crying and sobbing, rage and anger; or it can be a time of elation and exhilaration – the thrill of victory and the agony of defeat. Whatever it is, it will be felt and expressed without self-consciousness or embarrassment.

It is this “connectability” with others that makes them a natural “attractor” in many networks. Networks, by their very nature, do not have a centre of gravity but complexity theory recognises “attractors” as areas within the system that have a denser set of connections. In the complex of social relations that we all inhabit, the Now People tend to create zones of attraction around themselves – and others are naturally drawn towards that zone.

This zone of attraction has a dynamism generated by their enthusiasm for the here and now, and the future. Sustaining connections does not rely on the past. The Now People have a highly developed sense of the “feel good” in most social situations. Life can be a party, so why not just do it?

This hedonistic approach to life can be difficult for others, who can accept the fun and intensity that Now People bring to everyday and work situations but feel they need to



step back from some of the more overt “party hard” aspects of the Now People at play – it’s just too “over the top”. This response can be confusing to the Now Person. They are aware that they often push the boundaries of acceptable thought and behaviour, just because they can. When they find themselves doing it, they’ll usually think about it for a moment then just get on with it – accepting any consequences, good or bad, that stem from their behaviour.

The Now People’s hedonism is balanced by their desire for a healthy lifestyle, and they will try to eat more healthily and exercise more regularly than most Values Modes. This is not about “health” *per se* – it is more about the right body shape, which they see as important for making the best impression they can on others. Just what constitutes the “right” body shape will depend on the group they are in, or aspire to. If necessary, they can stick to regimes of diet and exercise for which other Values Modes would lack motivation.

These “go for it” people “know” they will finish any project they put their minds to. Any goal or target with numbers attached to it is a great way for them to generate the success they love. Any target that can be met can be exceeded. This is Now People heaven.

Hell, for Now People, is a place of amorphous or changing targets; no recognition of achievement; waffling and questioning instead of statements and results. All of these things prevent them going for gold – winning, looking good, being recognised and gaining the esteem from others that is at the core of their being.

This approach to life runs through everything the Now People do. This is the filter through which they see and interact with the world around them – their friends, relationships, families – at home, leisure and work.

To make connections with them, others – people and organisations – need to acknowledge their energy and enthusiasm, and provide ways for them to satisfy their primary need for the esteem from others.

Here is part of a report to us from a research company who had run some focus groups for one of our clients:

...we separated the Inner Directed Transcenders and the Outer Directed Now People and ran them (in that order) as separate groups with spookily real-feeling results ... in a nutshell the Transcenders were captivated by ideas which felt surprising, interesting, thought-provoking and ‘different’. They loved these ideas because they allowed them to stay ‘unique’ in a post-modern, more-than-the-sum-of-my-parts way. The Now People loved ideas which felt current, popular, shared and accepted. They loved being first with these ideas and they loved passing them on. What they hated was being in any way defined by them (opposite of the Transcenders). Thus, the classic archetype idea for the Now People was a conspiracy theory – by passing it on you position yourself as ‘in the know’ but, because it’s a public phenomenon, not as a ‘weirdo’. One Now Person told us a perfect story about a friend of his who



had been banging on and on about a specific conspiracy to the point where he was getting boring. The Now Person was intrigued though, and passed it on to another friend. The other friend started querying the story and 'our' Now Person defended it for a while and then suddenly and instantly let it drop. "I realised I'd become personally interested in the idea and I thought – God, I'm becoming a conspiracy theorist – I dropped it like a hot potato!" - *i.e.* As soon as it started defining him as unusual or 'not like' his mate he went right off the idea.

CDSM does a lot of work with universities and one of the courses they contribute to and work with is a Masters Degree in Design at Nottingham Trent University. A couple of years ago the feedback to the students on a 9 week project of design for Values Modes included these comments:

...Because style matters (to the Now People), they discovered that they could use any and all forms of media and experience to communicate with, and influence behaviour and attitudes of the Now People.

The students understood the complexity of the Now People and their needs for approval and success rested on the keen understanding that true Now People happiness was contingent of three components: **style, taste and integrity**.

They understood that the Now Person wanted to be stimulated above all else. They also understood that this was more of a visceral, physical stimulation than an intellectual stimulation.

They understood that "the surface" is much more important than "the concept".

They understood that the "mix and match" ethos of postmodernism is really a reflection of the Now People values set and designed accordingly.

Driving this desire for new stimulation, and changing behaviours and attitudes, was the conceptual framework of "Escape the Average". In this framework the students understood that the Now Person would be attracted to design that gave a "style to their personal independence"; an independence that facilitated the impression they were "beyond average".

The students understood that fashion is the vocabulary that the Now People use to express their taste (or as social commentators would say, hipness). The students quite rightly defined hip as "things as they ought to be", the stylised, stripped down, cleaned up version of reality that puts the Now People at the centre of their own psychological universe.

Being cool begins in the mind of the Now Person and is reinforced through the approval of others, which is facilitated by the surface image they project.

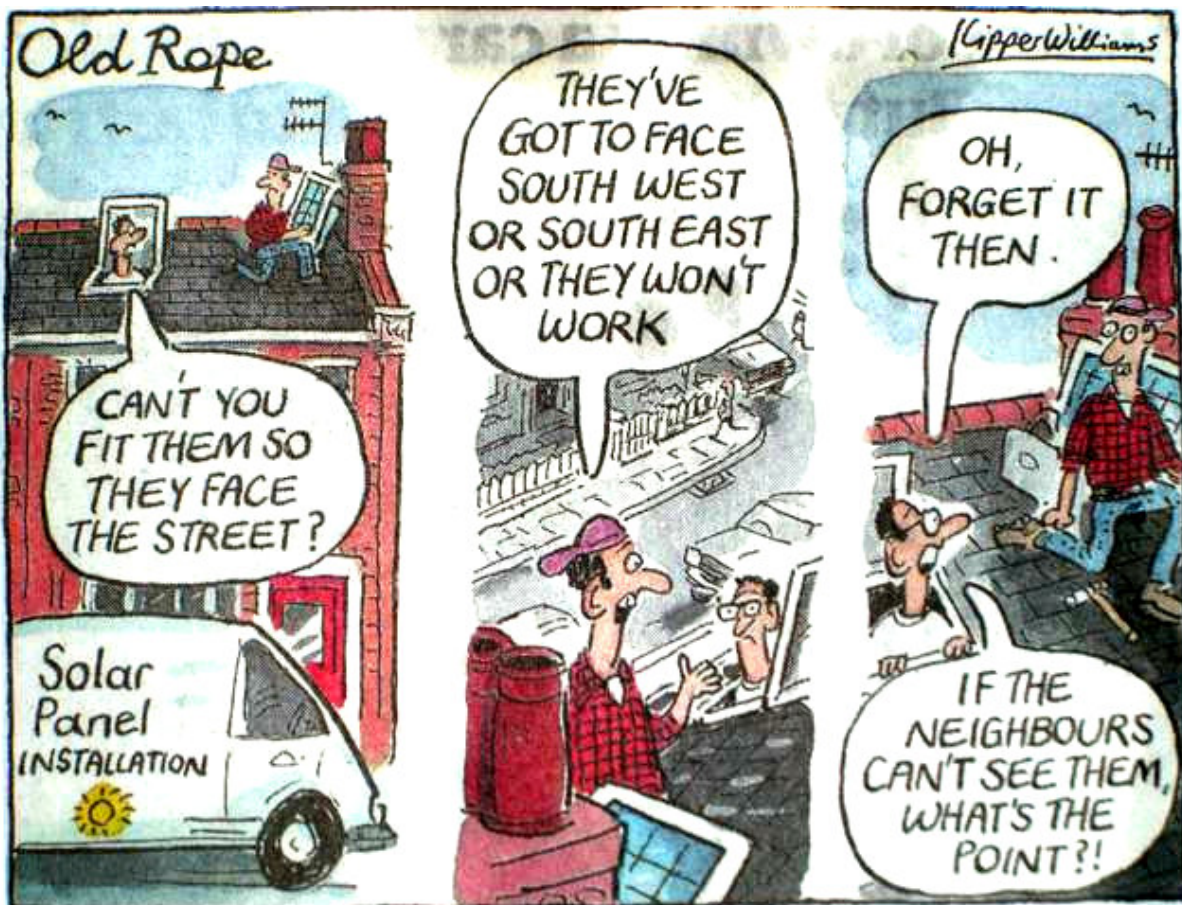
The students made an interesting and significant finding in their research and observations that could be used for design and communications purposes -



Now People tend to shop in pairs. This is a significant insight into the thought process, and thereby the motivational state, of Now People.

Because the Now People have a more physical, rather than emotional, mind set it should be expected that the body of work produced would be more frenetic and fragmented than the work produced by the Settler and Pioneer Groups. This proved to be the case.

The cartoonists and the social commentators are identifying these aspects of the Now People already. Though it may look like a cheap laugh, it reflects real stories we have picked up in focus groups with Now People. They are not saying such things to be the butt of jokes, but in all seriousness, a reflection of their world view.



We work with a range of researchers and consultants and are constantly being asked to comment on policies and projects from a wide variety of organizations...even TV programmes, such as "The Apprentice".

The Apprentice usually takes a bunch of Now People and puts them into competition – their natural habitat – and watches the results. One show in the British 2008 season had them create a "green" product and market it. The "uber" Now People young adults launched a product - a gift card - who's content was a Now Person version of Concerned Ethical green sentiments - but instead of the Politically Correct



CE way it was harsh, brash and demanding Now People stuff. We sent this comment in a response to a query from one of our clients

This was a brilliant example of the Now People in action! Not only is it "Alpha" Now People trying to get their head around "Green", and understanding it and "doing" it in classic Outer Directed ways -a tremendous example of their lack of concern about established morality or ethics (it isn't about doing the right thing - it is about "being right") and the "shakiness" of their commitment to any project - but it is also a great illustration of their over-the-top energy (150% sure!) applied to anything they do, even if they don't believe it!

Kevin (one of the participants in the show) is the ultimate demonstration of the old adage (well, from the 1970's anyway - when I first heard it) that the way to success is "fake it till you make it". Kevin put his "persona" (as project manager - the Alpha role) on the line, gave it "150%", and ended up **believing** that green was good for the first time. He believed his own hype!

Is this the Emulation dynamic? Yep!

Another side of the Now Person's was shown to be inherent in Kevin's approach to life - the ability to use the "persona" (the "me" you see is not the "me" I am) to "experience" life and find ways of being right (in the mind of others!). This is the blunt tool Now People can use for both "growth" and "protection" and is the single largest source of anxiety they produce within themselves and by extension the groups that they interact with. Truth, reality, justice and, indeed, openness are factors that do not enter this world with any degree of robustness. Our research and hundreds of other research papers from culture after culture show the same thing.

Kevin sits in the studio being lambasted by others, made a mockery of, and calmly accepts the denigration - because it really isn't Kevin that they are blasting - it is the "persona". Kevin can go right out again and do exactly the same thing but with a different persona and never "learn" a thing, except how to be a "good Now Person". This central aspect of the Now People is the powerhouse of their high energy - they are really never the "bad guy", they are just doing what they **have** to do to be "right".

They know life isn't "real", like it used to be when they were Sustenance Driven - with rules and boundaries and a clear set of guides to keep them inside the boundaries. They know that essentially there are **no rules**, only those you chose to observe - and that winners (the ones they look to for guidance/role models) **make their own rules**.

They also know that they don't know what is "real". But that if they are going to "win" - to get the esteem from others - they are going have to play the "game" (of life). This approach to "life as a game" is the thing that gives them the incredible resilience they display after "getting it wrong"(not getting the esteem from others) time after time.



Their **need** for esteem drives them to not dwell on their failures too long. Though they do more self introspection than they used to do as Sustenance Driven, the introspection is almost always about "**how to do better**" (the "**-er**" and "**-est**"), not "Be Different". They then use the anxiety of their unmet needs to fuel the creation of a "better persona".

So Kevin is sitting there taking the punishment - the abuse from the panel and the backstabbing from his team - like a "real man", like an Alpha Male. His "Even Alpha's learn by experience" persona can do that. This is the John Wayne and George Bush "bring it on" mask - you can kick me when I'm down, when I get up "watch me now"; what doesn't kill me will make me stronger, - yadda, yadda, yadda!

No crisis of confidence, no growth!

No growth means more "-er'ing" and "-est'ing" until the "doing" is recognized as unsupportable without the "being" and the Now People realize that they **need** to change in a fundamental way.....and that this transition is so fundamentally different that they **must** allow the crisis to occur - and **no personas allowed!**

Kevin is a long way from that crisis!

He is still full of persona driven energy, sparking off the energy of others and creating a wonderfully model of "looking positive" to the world.

There is no element of denigration when I call him a "dancing fool" - he is just doing what he's gotta do - with all the energy and imagination that he has got at his disposal. He needs the platform where we can all see him strut his stuff, to "watch him now" - to get the esteem and love he so **needs**.

I could go on and on but Berry Gordy said it so much better in 1962:

You broke my heart cause I couldn't dance
You didn't even want me around
But now I'm back
To show you I can really shake 'em down

Do you love me (I can really move)
Do you love me (I'm in the groove)
Do you love me (do you love me)
Now that I can dance
Watch me now

(work, work) now work it out baby
(work, work) oh, you're driving me crazy
(work, work) with a little bit of soul now



Well I can mash potato (I can mash potato)
I can do the twist (I can do the twist)
Well do the funky funky chicken (do the funky funky chicken)
Well do you like it like this (do you like it like this)
Tell me (tell me)
Tell me

Do you love me (I can really move)
Do you love me (I'm in the groove)
Do you love me (do you love me)
Now that I can dance
Watch me now .

The IPPR research shows that these people may be finding that achieving the dream of being the centre of attention and admiration has become a little more difficult with “The Crunch”, as it impacts their abilities to identify, acquire and display symbols of value – to be seen in the right place at the right time – and to identify and emulate the right role models (some pre-Crunch idols having been, for the time being at least, discredited).

In the new political and financial world, post-Crunch, where the environment is coming to the top of many political agendas and being linked with massive social and corporate investment on a scale previously undreamed of in the go-go “noughties”, the opportunity for policy makers, manufacturers, suppliers and communicators in every walk of life to present and differentiate offerings has just exploded.

To say that “green is the new black” would be a horrible cliché if the truth were otherwise!

Green issues have been the province of the Inner Directeds and, unfortunately, after over 20 years of intensive lobbying and communicating it has hardly broken into mainstream values-driven behaviour change unless there has been a relatively large legislative element – taxation or tax breaks – driving rational choices. In terms of the issues at hand – global warming and climate change – this amounts to large effort for small return. A school report would note this as “**must try harder**”.

Cultural Dynamics’ research over the last 36 years has shown it is not really about trying harder – it is more about being smarter.

Being smarter is to stop focusing all the attention on the Inner Directed mind set – those who get it – and start focusing on the Values Mode that truly “needs it” – The Now People.

When the Now People feel that this (green) issue – becoming more mainstream all the time – is an issue that makes them look and feel good when they perform green behaviours, they will create markets for new forms energy efficiency and new patterns of behaviour that are not only socially and environmentally desirable but also



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create a “normalizing effect” that will bring along the other Sustenance Driven Values Modes that are currently turned off by the preaching of the Inner Directed and the “not normal” solutions proposed by the environmental movement of the last 25 years.

The Inner Directeds have traditionally seen the Now People as a significant part of the problem. They need to “get over this” and embrace the Now People as a key to the solution.