

British Reserve Highlighted In New Study By Mintel

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Brits keep calm and carry on

We are a nation famed for our politeness and ‘very British reserve’, perhaps a label many have sought to steer away from in recent years, but latest research from Mintel - carried out for the first time to determine the personalities of the nation’s men and women - has confirmed it.

Indeed, of the five key personality types determined by Mintel, it seems both British men (24%) and women (30%) are most likely to show ‘Passive’ personality traits. So just who are Mr and Ms Passive?

He’s quiet, takes a back seat in group activities, is agreeable, shies away from planning and avoids confrontation and change - meet Mr Passive, the most frequently found kind of man in Britain today. The dominant characteristics of Mr Passive - an estimated 4.19 million of the male UK population - are introverted, risk-averse and passive. Whilst he is a team player he tends to show little motivation over and above his station.

Also rather quiet, Ms Passive takes a back seat in group tasks, is agreeable, likes to plan and avoids confrontation at all costs. Change is not her thing and she likes to stick to the tried and tested. The quietest of all the female personality types, she’d be the first to admit that she is a little too quiet for her own good.

Accounting for three in ten women in Britain, today there are 5.13 million Ms Passives. In the new reports examining how to market to UK men and women, Mintel’s research reveals five core personality traits in the UK today:

Alexandra Richmond, Senior Consumer and Lifestyles Analyst at Mintel, said:

“Far from being a negative label, the fact that the Brits are more likely to be passive personality types is something we can be proud of. Passive, in this instance at least, doesn’t stand for not caring or being lazy, but shows someone who is easy going, who wants to keep the harmony. Far from being a pushover, the Brits are shy of confrontation, going out of their way to avoid causing unnecessary conflict. A passive personality type is likely to be quieter than others, but they choose their words wisely and when they do speak, they’re likely to say something worth listening to.”

The study also reveals some interesting behaviour by the nation’s men and women to tricky situations. For instance, how does the nation deal with a noisy hotel guest - every holidaymaker’s nightmare? It’s late at night, you have the room to yourself and the person in the room next door is making a lot of noise and disturbing you.

Avoiding direct confrontation, the majority of men (41%) admit they would call down to reception to ask them to sort out the problem. However, the next biggest group were braver, with 29% stating they would knock on the person’s door and calmly ask them to keep the noise down.

Women were slightly more inclined to call on reception to deal with the problem (49%) while less than a fifth (17%) would take the route of calmly knocking on the door. However, the research also examines the level of agreeableness of men in Britain today and a strong 45% say they are comfortable criticising when necessary.

What is more, nearly one in 10 (9%) claim to enjoy it. Meanwhile, the majority of women (52%) feel uneasy about criticising, but will do so if unavoidable. Less than one in 20 (4%) are happy to criticise.

“The aspect of being comfortable with criticism is also reflected in other leisure habits. Some 73% of men and 84% of women watch reality TV shows and perhaps part of the appeal of talent shows with a vocal judging panel is that they make criticism acceptable. In general, Brits are uncomfortable with passing judgement directly, so allowing the judges on the shows to say what we’re thinking is liberating for us.” Alexandra continues.

And it seems attitudes towards vary by gender too. Today, more than half of men have a credit card (61%), car insurance and savings accounts/cash ISAs (59%) and home insurance (57%). Around a third of men own a company pension, life assurance and mortgage. Overall, 70% own some kind of insurance, and close to half (46%) have a pension.

The majority of men (68%) are in a healthy/reasonable financial position. A quarter (24%) are making ends meet, but only just. Only 9% indicate their current financial situation is tight or that they are struggling. And for women, financial product ownership is also high, with over half of women owning a savings account/cash ISA (60%), as well as credit cards (55%).

Under a third (31%) have a pension. Just under two thirds (64%) are in a healthy financial position and things are tight for a quarter (25%) of the nation’s women.

While men are a nation of sports lovers - almost nine in ten men (88%) have participated in sport in the last 12 months - just 42% have taken part in a team sport. The top three activities for men are walking (68%), swimming (52%) and running (44%).

Meanwhile, over eight in ten (85%) women stay in shape and do some sort of sport or exercise and the top three activities for women are walking (68%), swimming (50%) and gym/fitness classes (36%).

When it comes to grooming, thankfully, the majority of British men can hold their heads up high, with as many as 77% of all men always trying to look presentable when leaving the home. However, women have the slight edge here with (83%) striving to be presentable.

Today, two thirds (64%) of men agree it is important to appear well groomed, while the majority of men (54%) keep it simple, using as few grooming products as possible. Women on the other hand are more product enthusiasts, just (34%) saying they try to use as few products as possible.

Finally, eating in a pub restaurant or bar is the British man's (50%) and woman's (49%) first restaurant of choice. He loves a burger and fried chicken (48%) or fish & chips (41%), she also can't resist a burger (43%) and a natter in the cafe/coffee shop (43%).

Source: Mintel Oxygen Reports

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