

KANTAR

Shaping Culture with Kantar

Creating cultural capital

How cultural vibrancy drives brand growth

Consumers don't exist in isolation. They are shaped by the cultural world around them. **Culture is the fabric of life.** It is everything made, consumed and experienced by humans.

Culture informs what people value, desire and how they express themselves. It influences the decisions we make and values we hold, without us necessarily being aware of it.

“Culture is the program for everyday living.”

Marcus Collins, Author of 'For the Culture'

Culture is the common ground through which brands connect with consumers.

It provides the shared language and common ground that enables a brand to have meaningful, relevant conversations with people about the things they care about.

In this way, Culture provides valuable currency for meaningful brand connection

People today, especially Millennials and Gen Z, increasingly expect brands to play a meaningful role in society and Culture — beyond just offering a product or service?

But connecting with Culture is not just an opportunity, it's an expectation

Brands need a point of view to navigate it and decide what to lean into and where they have the right to show up.



Culture is vast

Without a compass it is easy to get lost

It's Everything, Everywhere, All at once

Everything: From the high-level societal shifts, to the green shoots of change – the new ideals and the ugly truths.

Everywhere: It's URL and IRL, in skate parks and schoolrooms, broadsheets and tabloids, and it's geographically nuanced.

All at once: A cacophony of Culture often moving in multiple directions at once – requiring translation and interpretation by culturally fluent experts.

It's not just about reading trend reports, tracking influencer conversations or stalking brand accounts. It's also about understanding sub-cultures, the fringe opinions that might be found on Reddit forums or a certain genre of podcasts. The marginal behaviours that buck the trends, the outliers in the data. It's important here to tell the whole story about the new ideals and the ugly truths.

At Kantar, we take an expansive view and we don't discriminate in where we look. We're as interested in topics like the cultural importance of chicken shops as we are in the winner of the Turner prize or the Booker award. This expansive view of Culture can be overwhelming.



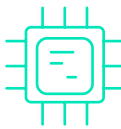
We make sense of Culture by contextualising it within the macro landscape which drives expectations, attitudes and needs



POLITICAL



ECONOMIC



TECHNOLOGICAL



SOCIAL



WELLBEING



ENVIRONMENTAL

Leveraging Kantar’s Global MONITOR, our tracker of consumer values, attitudes and aspirations dating back over 15 years, we analyse cultural signals within a wider, evidence-based context.

By overlaying cultural insight with deep understanding of enduring human needs as well as measurable societal change, we can prioritise the noise among the news and help our clients identify the right pockets of Culture to tap into, and how to do so with authenticity.

This contextualisation helps identify the difference between a fleeting fad and a cultural trend

Even for a business with its ear to the ground, in an era of hyper-accelerated trends, it’s easy to mistake noise for significance and chase every fad. The real opportunity lies in understanding not just what changes, but also the cultural constants that brands can build upon.



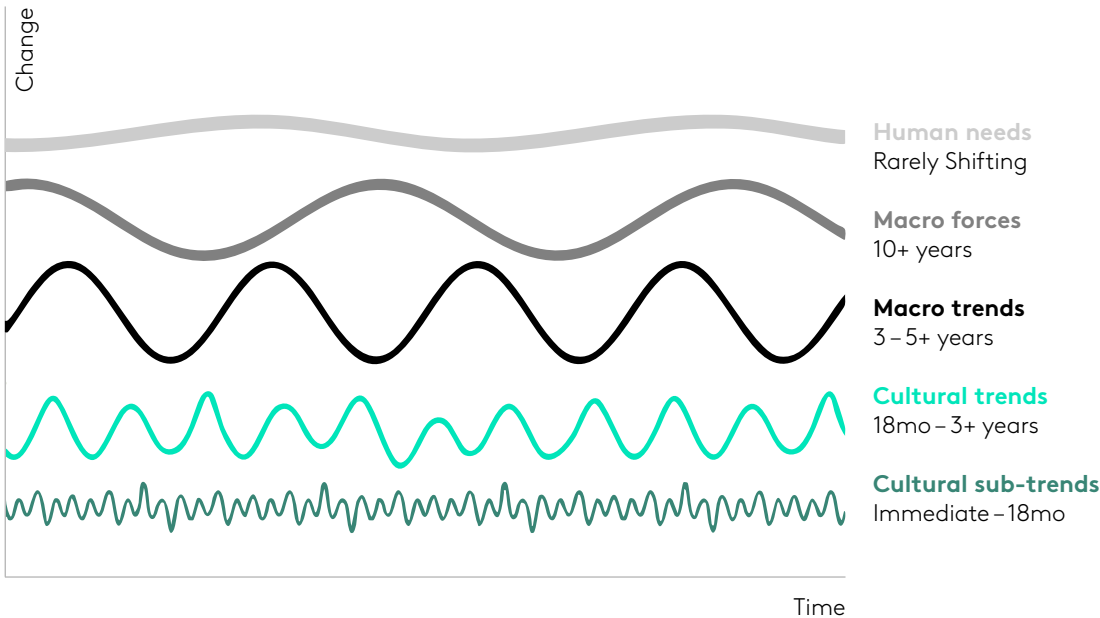
So how do you avoid falling for a fad?

At Kantar, we fuse AI and HI to help our clients digest, distil and deploy Culture to their benefit. We eliminate cultural bias and noise with on-the-ground intel from our global network of cultural correspondents. Then we filter it through our specialist team, whose cultural fluency enables them to interpret the data and get from insights to strategy.

By leveraging our understanding of enduring human needs which remain broadly stable, cultural intelligence and foresight, we crunch a magnitude of manifestations to diagnose what is;

Emerging – new and gaining traction
Evolving – shifting and adapting
Enduing – remains constant and foundational

This means we don't over or underplay the significance of cultural signals, but rather put shifts and trends into perspective, understanding their meaning, importance and likely longevity using our foresight and strategy expertise.



We start with Cultural Observation

e.g. We're seeing numerous examples in the media of people looking for ways to find comfort and self-soothe

To combat hustle culture, TikTokers are popularizing 'soft evenings' focused on self-care and relaxation

Dramatic rise in emotional support animals with more different types now

What Is "Soft Living"? How This Social Media Trend Is Transforming Mental Health

Labubus, Jellycats and Crybaby: Why are toys going viral in 2025?

On TikTok, "Mouse Moments" Are The New Way To Self-Soothe

4 giant emotional support water bottles that are a hydrating hug in a jug

Crocs, The Casual-Comfort Shoe Brand, Is Gaining Traction In The Luxury Market

REVOLUTIONIZE YOUR WELLNESS THIS WINTER WITH "COZY CARDIO"

Then we frame these observations in the macro context, codify responses and build out potential cultural hunting grounds



Human need

Safety & security



Threat

Chaos & uncertainty

Tension

The world seems out of control, and I feel powerless to change things

Behavioural responses

Seeking Comfort

Seeking Control

'Tapping in' to Culture isn't enough to create Capital.

To maximise Culture's potential as a catalyst for growth, brands need to connect authentically in a way that resonates deeply and helps set them apart.

Rooting cultural strategy in brand DNA is vital to success. To elevate your equity, the role a brand plays in Culture must be authentic to your DNA and the people you serve.

This means that the values, beliefs, and practices that define a brand should be reflected in its approach to Culture, ensuring impact and authenticity.

Aligning cultural initiatives with brand fundamentals is central to success.

Brands that get it right create Cultural Capital and grow!

Brands can be placed on a continuum from tone deaf to culturally vibrant, driving these cultural shifts.

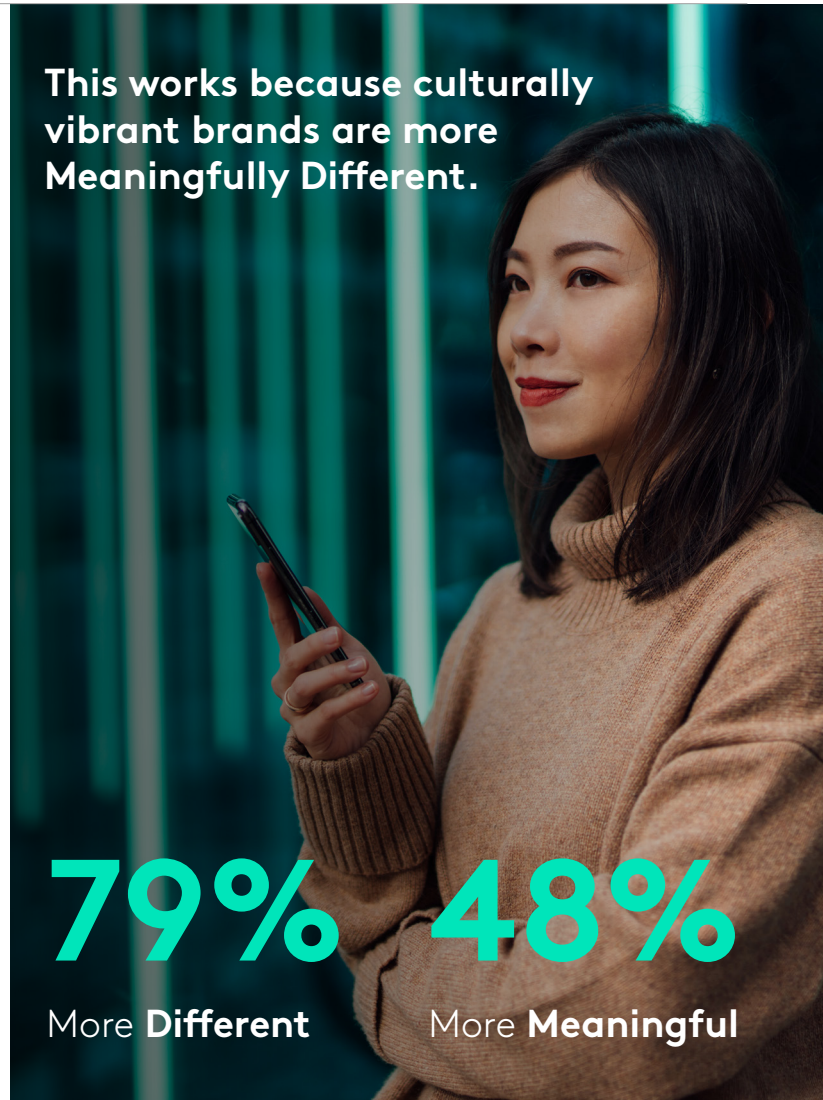
Kantar BrandZ data showed that over a 10 year period:

Brands with high cultural vibrancy grew nearly

6X more than brands with low cultural vibrancy.

Brands that play a vibrant role in culture achieve strong growth as culture can be the catalyst for engagement, relevance, differentiation and continual recruitment.

This works because culturally vibrant brands are more Meaningfully Different.



79% More Different **48%** More Meaningful

And brands grow by being Meaningfully Different to more people. Brands that are Meaningfully Different to more people command

5X the penetration today and real advantage in penetration growth over the next two years.

Meaningful Difference is a route to growth.
And culture is a route to **Meaningful Difference.**

Kantar's Blueprint for Brand Growth

BRANDS GROW BY BEING MEANINGFULLY DIFFERENT TO MORE PEOPLE

Growth accelerators for winning marketers to operationalise effectively

PREDISPOSE MORE **PEOPLE**

BE MORE **PRESENT**

FIND NEW **SPACE**

BEHAVIOURS: CONSISTENT, CONNECTED, OPTIMISED

POWERED BY THE MEANINGFUL DIFFERENT AND SALIENT FRAMEWORK AND BY THE MOST MEANINGFUL DATA

KANTAR

Kantar's Blueprint for Brand Growth, the result of a mega meta-analysis of attitudinal data, behavioural data and Kantar IP, reveals what drives truly sustainable business growth.

To summarise the model, in order to grow share brands need to grow penetration by attracting more people. And brands do this by being Meaningfully Different to More People. This increases the probability of future growth and allows brands to charge and maintain a price premium.

Marketers can achieve this via three growth accelerators, which are interconnected:

- 1 Predispose People More** – This is about increasing your brand's chances of being bought by leveraging exposure and experience.
- 2 Be More Present** – Make your brand easier to buy by leveraging the customer journey, distribution, range, pack, pricing and activation.
- 3 Find New Space** – Keep growing by redefining the business you're in, stretching to cover new motivations, occasions, categories and services.

These growth accelerators can be amplified by leaning into three key brand behaviours: being **Consistent**, **Connected** and **Optimised**.

Culturally vibrant brands amplify **Meaningful Difference** by being more **Visionary, Inspiring, Bold and Exciting**

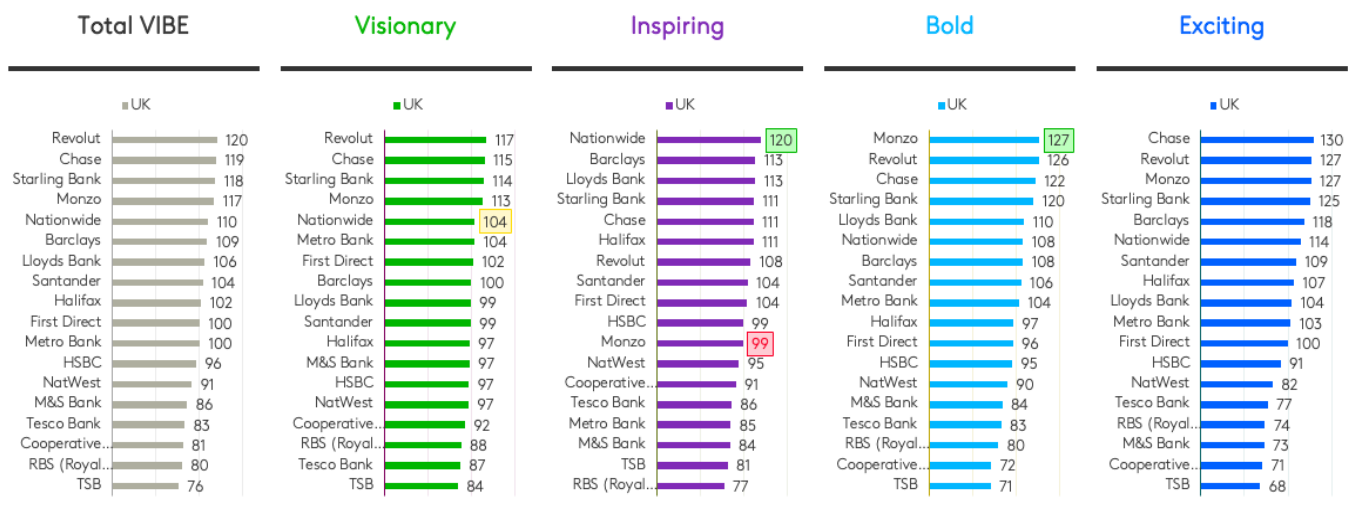
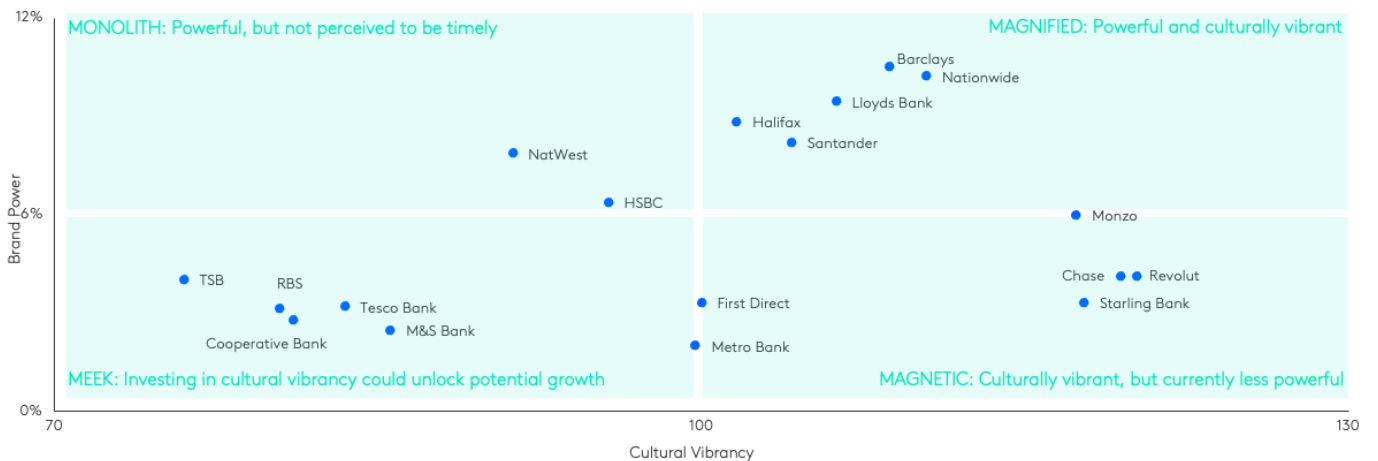
Kantar's proprietary Cultural Vibrancy (VIBE) methodology brings a quantified view to the qualitative world of culture, providing a more tangible and measurable view of how cultural relevance impacts business than ever before.

Kantar's VIBE measurement assesses the extent to which brands are hitting the cultural mark, and helps diagnose what's holding them back. We're able to unpack how Visionary, Inspiring, Bold and Exciting brands are vs. competitors, track progression over time, and build tailored strategies to drive greater Cultural Vibrancy.

Kantar's proprietary VIBE framework enables brand teams to measure and diagnose cultural vibrancy

Kantar's Strategic Brand Practice specialises in helping brands create cultural currency, by navigating the vastness of culture and collaboratively crafting strategies that will elevate the equity of your brand.

Retail Banking, UK April/May 2025, Brand Power x Cultural Vibrancy



Source: Kantar BrandDynamics, Retail Banking, UK April/May 2025, n:1773

Want to learn more about how we can help your brand Create Cultural Capital?

Please reach out if you'd like to find out more:

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all at once. Brands need a point of view to
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Hari Blanchbennet, Associate Director, Brand Strategy, Kantar