

Chris Rose explains a useful system to categorise different types of people and the values they hold

People differ: that's not news to politicians. Anyone who has met 'the public' is only too aware of that. The more successful politicians are adept at putting themselves in someone else's shoes. It's the dream ability of every salesman or marketer, the goal of psychiatrists, social workers, psychologists and the challenge in all relationships.

Yet how and why are people different? Some are obviously more similar to each other than to others. So what's a useful system?

Once upon a time politicians talked confidently of class. It seemed a very real thing, as physical as the difference between cats and dogs, or age, sex and ethnicity. Class had an intellectual underpinning in economic theories, crystallised in left and right. Although much of this has dissolved over recent decades, notions of class and socioeconomic groups persist as ways of putting people into categories used to formulate policy, design services and most of all, conduct political debate.

The party machines have ventured into the segmentations used by commercial marketers, mainly for election-planning purposes. Some combine lifestyle, with occupation, consumer purchasing and geography. Postcode profiling systems such as ACORN and MOSAIC generate dozens of sub-groups, but such systems haven't made much impact on political thinking.

Election-time inventions such as Worcester Woman (Conservatives) and Mondeo Man (Labour) have usually been defined by a mixture of behaviour (like changing car brand) and class, and have sometimes based on a sample size of just one!

Of all the systems I've found which look at motivation, the most convincing one is values modes by CDSM (Cultural Dynamics Strategy and Marketing). This divides people into three major 'Maslowian groups': settlers, prospectors and pioneers (sustenance driven, outer directed and inner directed respectively). Abraham Maslow was the father of humanistic psychology. The CDSM model turns his work from a theory into a communications strategy system.

CDSM's values map divides us not by consumer decisions or socioeconomic group but by social values: clusters of deep seated attitudes and beliefs. These values are not formal doctrinal beliefs like Christianity but expressions of motivational needs. This provides a powerful predictor of what people will and won't do, and values modes has been used by dozens of organisations from Greenpeace to Häagen-Dazs.

Settlers, prospectors and pioneers each see the world in different ways. If they agree about what's needed, they will disagree about why, giving potential for what Pat Dade of CDSM calls: "the logjam of violent agreement". You can check out your own Values Mode with the online survey at www.cultdyn.co.uk and find examples of values strategies at www.campaignstrategy.org. There you can also see the national UK Values Map showing the centre of gravity for 100 attributes - each representing a cluster of attitudes and beliefs, which can also be plotted separately across the map.

Settlers are driven by an unmet need for safety, security, identity and belonging. As a result settlers espouse ideas like national security and see any sort of change as a threat. For settlers, the past is best and if something bad hasn't happened yet, it's likely to happen to them soon. With a low sense of self-agency settlers want leaders to lead and to be in charge. They don't want to be asked questions without answers. They see themselves as local people.

CDSM's surveys show society was settler dominated until the 1980s. By 2006 they had shrunk dramatically to just 20 per cent of the population and many feel the world has other priorities and is passing them by. Settlers politics was heavily tribal - defending identity - and their decline in numbers paralleled declining turnout and dwindling 'instinctive' support for parties. This was the majority of old Labour and the authoritarian Tory base.

Settlers play little proactive part in social life outside their immediate local world but can be inflamed by threats, such as the accidental announcement by government agency Natural England in 2008 that villages in the Broads might be in future surrendered to rising sea levels. Settlers were enraged and led by a local farmer, who also happened to be an army general, mounted a media counter attack. What settlers expect is defence and continuity, not surrender. The Countryside Alliance Marches were another settler mobilisation: united against the (in this case urban) 'other'. Money has little to do with it - there were rich and poor settlers on those marches.

Prospectors want success. They have met their settler needs and that's how they became prospectors, looking for esteem of others then self-esteem. They want life to be fun, and full of opportunities. Their politics is much more transactional: "what's in it for me?". This is the segment that Tony Blair's New Labour appealed to, which old Labour didn't. Prospectors are not very interested in community (they want to stand out) but they do want to 'get on', always seeking better and

best. They are the economic motor of any market economy, and will have been those most traumatised by the financial crisis, which has shattered many of the obvious ladders to success.

Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) generally fail to reach prospectors, mainly because they are run by the next group, pioneers. Prospectors and pioneers each make up around 40 per cent of the population. Prospectors see causes as too worthy or too intellectual and a waste of time - busy is one of their highly scored attributes: they are busy looking for success and usually too busy for politics. They avoid risk including social risk like controversies, so hate political infighting. Their behavioural driver is to acquire and display the symbols of success - and if a policy doesn't do that, it won't cut it for prospectors.

The pioneers know inside that they are successful and that doesn't really interest them. They above all want to find life interesting and so will not only try new things but have more mental space to think about others and global things. They find foreigners and new things, even insoluble problems, interesting, not threatening. These are the people who have started the alternative means of politics, which have annoyed and befuddled some politicians. There are rich, poor and moderately wealthy pioneers as there are settlers and prospectors.

In a focus group, pioneers immediately stand out as those keen to offer a host of opinions and arguments. It's often hard to stop them talking. They have wider social networks than the other groups, although they are not so obvious as the prospectors, who are bellweathers. When the media say 'everyone's doing it now', they usually mean that the prospectors have just picked it up from the pioneers. Green lifestyle is at this point right now in the UK.

How do you find these groups? Of course, they are everywhere but they do tend to cluster (but not always), and channels such as newspapers often show strong values preferences, as do activities. Shopping centres are a prospector heaven. They meet the needs for getting the latest stuff but are also about having fun doing it socially, and being seen to be there - strutting your stuff is all part of a good day out for many prospectors. Not everyone in a shopping centre will be a prospector but you'd find that those who most go there and have the best time there, would be from that category.

In contrast, online shopping appeals disproportionately to settlers and to pioneers who led the way some years ago. Pioneers may find it an interesting way to seek out things that are quirky, different or hard to obtain on the high street, individual, or authentic and like it as a way to avoid wasting time shopping, so they can get on with their many other interests. Settlers may also use it to find an old trusted brand. Outside that though, pioneers will be found seeking out interesting shops and the innovative or simply convenient, while settlers will be disproportionately customers of the tried and trusted local shop which they may go to because they feel they have a duty to support it.

Some retail outlets or marketing offers have been specifically designed to match the preferences of particular motivational groups, while in other cases the match is strong but accidental. Bars designed for prospectors for example may include large windows, mirrors and music ramped up over the evening to provide a vibe, and furniture which allows for close socialising ('scoring' is success), while a bar for pioneers is likely to allow for conversation - not too noisy.

If all this still seems a bit vague just consider how much more useful it is in terms of motivating people than just saying they are 'middle class' - a term which, for example on wealth and profession, could apply to some settlers and many pioneers or prospectors, but whose motivations may be not just different but often polar opposites.

Tips on Communicating According to Value

Settlers: face to face contact from people they already know. Endorsement by traditional leaders. Familiar venues. Reference the past: by using the lessons of the past to fix the future. Small in scale. Acknowledge icons of identity.

Prospectors: 'better and best' (for example league tables, awards, recognition), being winners. Celebrity endorsement. Reference to the future - more success coming. Fashion (not too trendy or whacky). The best answers (nothing open ended or unknowable). Immediate, tangible, visible results. Prestige venues and big brand association.

Pioneers: causes and issues, personal ethics and responsibility, innovation. Having thought about better questions (they do not believe there are always simple answers, or any answers). A better than otherwise predicted outcome is a success. Interesting and authentic people, and real stories about individuals. Global and novel things. Innovation not fashion. Orientated to the present and with a high self-agency: "we can work through this". Getting under the marketing.

Chris Rose is the author of How to Win Campaigns: 100 Steps to Success