

# Make yourself

More than 190 million people live outside their country of birth. Jo Bowman looks at how authorities are reaching out to new – and not so new – arrivals.

**T**hink 'international migrant' and the mind quickly runs through a long list of people, from your favourite take-away owner through to a specialist doctor, a plumber, business associate, taxi driver, and a refugee. Depending where you are, the mind probably also turns to friends and neighbours.

Migrants are all of these people, and integration notwithstanding, for the most part they are – for a generation at least – not the same as the broader communities in their new home countries. They don't live in the same places, speak the same languages, get the same

diseases or have the same habits.

Most governments with significant immigrant populations realise that if they want to communicate with these people – and address the issues that are unique or different to these groups – they must find out what makes them tick, and address them in a way that ensures they'll listen.

"In the past, people have lumped everything and everyone together – it just doesn't work and it's very easy to cause offence," says Mark Speed, joint managing director of IFF Research, which has the British Government's Central Office of Information among its clients.



# at home

One ill-thought-out public information programme backfired on the London Underground transport service in 2004, when it had to scrap a UK £100,000 poster campaign that prompted a protest from the Italian Embassy. The posters said 'Please don't eat smelly food' and showed a man of Mediterranean origin surrounded by Italian food. The role of research in ensuring this kind of blunder doesn't happen tends to have two parts: first, researching ethnic communities' habits and lifestyles to determine what services or campaigns are required. Then, there's research into how best to get those messages across.

## Taking the pulse

Health-related issues tend to be at the heart of research and communications targeting ethnic minority groups. Smoking rates tend to be higher among certain groups, for instance, and variation in diet between different communities has a significant impact on health.

John Vidmar, head of Synovate Diversity's public sector group in the US, says first-generation migrants' change of lifestyle – often from manual farming work to something more sedentary – has huge health implications that need addressing.

In France, riots have erupted over charges of social exclusion and prejudice in the volatile suburbs where ethnic minority communities tend to live. Paris-based ethnic marketing and communications agency SOPI Communication says that while French prisons hold a disproportionate number of ethnic minority offenders, and there's what CEO Jean-Christophe Despres calls a "huge lack of services" for minority communities, the issue is so charged that few organisations want to touch it for fear of being called racist or biased.

The French census does not refer to ethnicity, it's forbidden to keep lists of people grouped by ethnic background, and research based on ethnic groups needs people to expressly volunteer to take part. In practice, he says, it's not that difficult to pursue research in this area, but he says few government departments are pursuing it – openly at least. Health is one of the only areas where it's done.

In Canada, meanwhile, where there are six million immigrants and 150 different ethnic groups with 1,000 people or more, it's mainly NGOs that work with minority communities, rather than the government. Michael Adams, president of Environics Research Group in Canada and author of *Unlikely Utopia: The Surprising Triumph of Canadian Pluralism*, says the diversity there is "mind-boggling", but there's little need for specialised research or public

information campaigns. There are no ghettos or 'bad' schools attended mostly by minorities, and no sense that these people are underprivileged. An immigrant society and long experience with dual languages in Quebec means there are few community-specific problems.

"We've recruited a very high quality of immigrant. These are groups that are doing pretty well," Adams says. "There's still the proverbial PhD driving a taxi, but their kids are blowing the socks off everybody else in school."

## Mind your language

Research techniques are adapted depending on the community. Emil Morales, senior vice president, Multicultural, with TNS in the US, says it's possible to buy lists based on the likely ethnicity of people with certain surnames or people living in certain areas known to have high ratios of people from certain communities. One difficulty comes with the fact that more than 17% of the Hispanic population have only a mobile phone, no land line, and autodiallers can't be used for mobiles.

When TNS did research on research aimed at minority communities, they found they needed to continue with off-line methodologies such as telephone research or questioning in public places like malls because of low internet penetration among African Americans and Hispanics (49% and 49% compared to the national average of about 75%).

"The people [in these groups] who tend to be online tend to be wealthier, with demographic and attitudinal differences, and you can't make a business decision for all Hispanics based on that," Morales says. Questioning for the Hispanic community frequently needs to be done in Spanish, and designed to take account of a tendency to agree with the interviewer. "You have to understand cultural nuances, design research appropriately and make sure interviewers are properly trained," Morales says.

Speed says researching minority groups takes common sense – like sending a female interviewer to meet Muslim women. "You don't do a lifestyle study among Muslims on the first day of Ramadan, but I've seen that happen," he says. "We also have to think about global issues; if there's been an earthquake in Pakistan, it's not the time to do a silly survey about use of mobile phones among Pakistanis."

For highly sensitive issues such as bullying or racism, Speed would also recommend ethnic matching of interviewer and interviewee. The language of surveys covering things like drinking and sexual behaviour must be very carefully chosen; when sexual issues are covered, he says, these tend to be

in a self-completion questionnaire that's put in a brown envelope, after a face-to-face interview to build rapport.

In Canada, Adams says researchers can be quite cavalier in their approach to these communities, given that they tend to acquire English very quickly. Special treatment is required, however, for research of the country's indigenous people, who number 1.2 million and speak up to 50 different languages. While same-sex interviewing is not required, permission is often required to enter reserves where these people live.

### Getting the message across

For some well-integrated communities, particularly the young, mainstream media channels are as effective in reaching an ethnic audience as a broader one. Speed says that for the Indian community in Britain, little specialist work is needed, especially for under-35s. Literacy rates vary significantly among other communities, however, so the use of brochures and posters must be carefully considered.

Anti-smoking campaigns have been tailored to ethnic communities, says Vidmar, to take account of the fact that while African Americans are more likely to be smokers than the general population, they are smoking fewer cigarettes than the average.

Nigerian, Ghanaian, Bangladeshi and Chinese residents of Britain are the primary targets of a national campaign to raise awareness about restrictions on food imported from overseas. The campaign, devised by agency Media Moguls, includes street team activity with in-store display units within African, Chinese and Bangladeshi stores, and church-based activity for the African community.

In France, Despres says health campaigns targeting migrants have included reggae songs and music videos targeting those of Caribbean descent, using the areas where people live as a backdrop and making the material reflect their daily lives. "It's all about codes, and making what you say relevant to them," he says. ■

## Common interests

The Brixton area of London is a microcosm of what multicultural Britain has become, with more than 140 languages spoken there among a population originating from as far afield as Haiti, Ghana, Jamaica and India. People from ethnic minorities make up almost 8% of the national population and it's estimated that by 2012, 51% of the capital's population will be from an ethnic minority.

The Government's Central Office of Information (COI) has a UK £3 million a year budget specifically for communicating with ethnic and culturally diverse communities. Projects have included a campaign on illegal food imports for the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, a Stop and Search campaign for the Home Office, and a blood donation campaign for the National Blood Service.

"Government has a responsibility to make sure it communicates with all citizens, not just certain groups," says Fiona Wood, director of research with COI. "What's really important is that communications

are sensitive to different cultural issues; without that, you're not going to have resonance. It's like understanding any target audience – if you understand your audience and you've done your research properly, then you create communications that are effective."

Research for the COI has found that young people from all ethnic groups have largely common interests – a love of 'urban music' and technology, and keep up to date on celebrity news. Mainstream media was found to be effective in reaching the Indian and Black communities, and the younger generation within all communities, while specialist ethnic media were particularly important for older Asian and Chinese people, and for those who speak little or no English. Ethnic minority people want to see characters from their communities playing 'normal', positive mainstream roles in mainstream advertising, it was found. Saad Saraf, CEO of Media Reach, has been working on COI projects since 1991 and works with 26 different communities in Britain. Projects have included work promoting awareness of the minimum

wage among Polish, Lithuanian and Slovak people, and anti-smoking campaigns with Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Bengali communities, where smoking rates tend to be higher than the national average.

Media Reach's research includes diary panels and focus groups. For young groups in the capital, mixed-sex groups are acceptable. Further north, Saraf says people tend to be more traditional and single-sex groups work best for some communities. The resulting campaigns tend to include advertising, infomercials, and outreach programmes in churches and bars, where teams of people go out to spread a message among people in their own language.

"It's partly language and partly culture," Saraf says. "You have to show you understand the culture without slipping into tokenism, then people will be much more receptive to the message that comes in. It's not about ticking boxes; it's about understanding the culture."



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  - ADVANCES IN MARKET SEGMENTATION
  - CREATIVITY
  - CURRENT AND EMERGING TRENDS IN QUALITATIVE RESEARCH
  - DEVELOPING TALENT
  - INSIGHT GENERATION
  - SEMIOTICS (2 DAYS)
  - THE ULTIMATE DEAL
  - WEB 2.0 RESEARCH AND BEYOND

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MOSCOW / 13 - 15 OCTOBER

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  - ADVANCED QUANTITATIVE TECHNIQUES (1 DAY)
  - ETHNOGRAPHY AND OBSERVATIONAL RESEARCH (2 DAYS)
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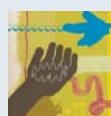


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