

# Meta releases Culture Rising: 2022 Trends Report

 By [Elizma Nolte](#)

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A new report by Meta reveals shifts in social behaviour with enduring ramifications for business...



What will the long-lasting impacts of the last two years be on us? That was the question a team of researchers and analysts at Meta asked themselves when they set out to investigate the changes brought about by the global pandemic using aggregated, anonymized data from the 3.5bn people that use its platforms. The result is a breakthrough report from Facebook IQ called [Culture Rising](#), which looks beyond ephemeral trends to fundamental shifts in people's attitudes and behaviour - and what they mean for brands in the future.

The report finds that Covid and concurrent world events have profoundly impacted what we talk about on Meta's platforms and the way we do it. They've served as a call to action, spurring us to reevaluate our purposes and priorities in life, sparking new behaviours and throwing the spotlight on social issues. The report's key takeaway can be seen as 'Get real!'.

Perhaps it's the two years we've spent living in sweatpants and on Zoom, with our co-workers' washing up and roaming pets as backdrop: we're behaving more openly on social media. From our bodies – conversation around body positivity is up 96% – to our sexuality, our heritage to our abilities, we're speaking out, turning up the volume on that well-worn buzzword, 'authenticity.'

This is good for society and it also matters for business. If brands and agencies are to succeed in the future, it's up to us to

understand and respond to cultural shifts. That means talking to customers in their own, unvarnished language about the things they care about.

As we look towards planning for next year and beyond, here are some of the key trends the survey, based on people from over 12 markets over the past 15 months, exposed what will impact the way we do business in the future.

## Identity activism

We're living in an era of rising conversation about everything related to our genders, from equality to fluidity. At a time of self-expression, it's not surprising that it's making waves on our platforms – hashtags like #they #nonbinary and #trans have seen double-digit rises in the last year.

This openness extends to our sexuality and our cultural heritage: people are increasingly finding joy in talking about parts of themselves that they might once have hidden. LGBTQ+ pride, Asian pride, Black History Month, National Hispanic Heritage Month and other cultural celebrations have all been featuring prominently on our platforms, and technology is empowering social media movements such as #LovelsLove, facilitating purchase choices (with #BlackOwnedBusiness trending), and amplifying boycotts, protests and signature campaigns.

The racial reckonings of the past two years, including the Black Lives Matter movement, continue to make an impact, as people take to social to protest against historical injustices and build more equitable futures. In the UK, conversations around colonialism on Facebook have increased 87% in the past year. With Gen Z and millennials, it's particularly important.



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It's refreshing to see that this activism is having a positive effect, helping to drive acceptance and inclusion. Globally, 47% of respondents say society is more inclusive now than a year ago, though the rate of change varies widely across societies and there are, of course, still big challenges ahead.

How can brands respond? By making marketing a force for good. Consumers are increasingly looking for businesses to solve society's problems, but they've never been better attuned to phoniness: action is everything.

Partner with relevant communities and use your voice to amplify pride, encourage acceptance and drive real change. Some examples I've admired recently include a big entertainment company educating viewers about racist content in their old films and brands around the world championing body positivity - including leggings brand Andar, which defied Korean norms by casting a plus-size model. And don't forget to make sure your own house is in order: is your business as equitable as it could be?

## Rethinking relationships

Another trend I find interesting is the way we're approaching relationships. After months of isolating together and apart, unions of all stripes are being celebrated. We're re-committing to life partners – 'wedding vow renewal ceremony' has been trending – and experimenting with new sexual connections. Throuple and polyamory are hot topics in pockets of the world; in the US, conversations around nonmonogamy are trending up 40% year on year.

In the coming years we'll be finding new ways to forge authentic connections with people, including in the metaverse. We're only at the beginning here – it'll be five-to-ten years until this new paradigm is fully realised – and that makes it a blank canvas. We can ensure we build for diversity, authenticity, and inclusivity as we design the metaverse together.



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Meanwhile, outside our intimate friendships, we're developing our own nanocommunities aligned to nuanced interests - gathering places that include Facebook Groups and Instagram hashtags. #Crochet, #Baking #NatureLovers and #CrystalHealing are a few popular examples, but whatever you're into, however niche it may seem, chances are your crew is out there.

Again, we're finding that, in these digital nooks, conversations, often among strangers, can be remarkably honest and supportive. People are also connecting around areas that were once stigmatized, like mental health.

### Greater expectations

For many of us, the stresses brought about by the pandemic have contributed to our desire to lead more balanced lives and re-evaluate priorities, and our survey reflects this. Conversations about self-reflection, self-love and mindfulness have increased, and alternative wellness approaches such as botanicals, acupuncture, meditation, energy healing, nature therapy, and yoga are skyrocketing, too.



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We're also reconsidering our careers, opening ourselves up to new possibilities and more autonomy: independence, flexibility and choice are now key concerns for workers globally. One thing we're finding is happening less than the headlines might have us believe? Switching up locations. Overall, house moving is down on previous years – perhaps not surprising when much is still up in the air.

### Planet protectors

Finally, a conversation topic I'm delighted to see more of is sustainability. Globally, 69% of respondents to our survey believed brands should care about the environment and provide sustainable living products for consumers and sustainable tourism options for leisure activities. That's a big change from just a few years ago and it's down to an increasingly visceral awareness of climate change; the steady drumbeat of news about increasing droughts, unprecedented floods, unseasonal heat waves and ferocious wildfires that can no longer be ignored.

It's time to get real here, too, and there are clear action points for brands and businesses. Greenwash at your peril: as Millennials approach their peak spending years, they'll be holding businesses to account. Forward-thinking companies are increasingly pushing beyond neutrality in their approach to sustainability, shifting from "carbon neutral" to "planet positive."

I've seen several creative ways of responding to the climate crisis – one example is Corona Mexico's campaign. They turned plastic waste into currency, accepting it as a form of payment, as well as committing to clearing up a square metre of local beach for every six-pack purchased.

From identity openness to activism to concern for the climate, I'm sure you'll agree that the developments we're seeing in the way the world is using social are hugely positive.

And as you look to your own business's future and reflecting these shifts in the campaigns you build, there's one final finding I suggest bearing in mind. Whatever your objective, you're not alone. We've entered an age of collaboration, and

whether it's an AR developer, an NGO with expertise in sustainability - even a business rival, there's a group or individual out there to partner with and move your business forward - all you need to do is find them.

Download the [Culture Rising: 2022 Trends Report](#)

## ABOUT ELIZMA NOLTE

Elizma Nolte is Head of Business Marketing for Sub-Saharan Africa. She is passionate about media, technology and Africa - and finding ways to connect the three for positive change. Before joining the Facebook Africa team, she did so as Country Marketing Manager for Google South Africa and as media entrepreneur, journalist and publisher. She holds a B. Computer Science and BA Honours Journalism from Stellenbosch University, MSc Electronic Publishing from City University London and an MBA from INSEAD in France and Singapore.

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