



spark

Real emotions. Real change

Mood of the Nation

Getting to the truth of how
UK consumers are really feeling
about the month ahead

May 2022

sparkemotions.com | hello@sparkemotions.com | +44(0)1543 255259

Getting to the truth of how the UK is feeling

Spark Emotions is a global insight agency with a **world class team of behavioural psychologists and industry experts.**

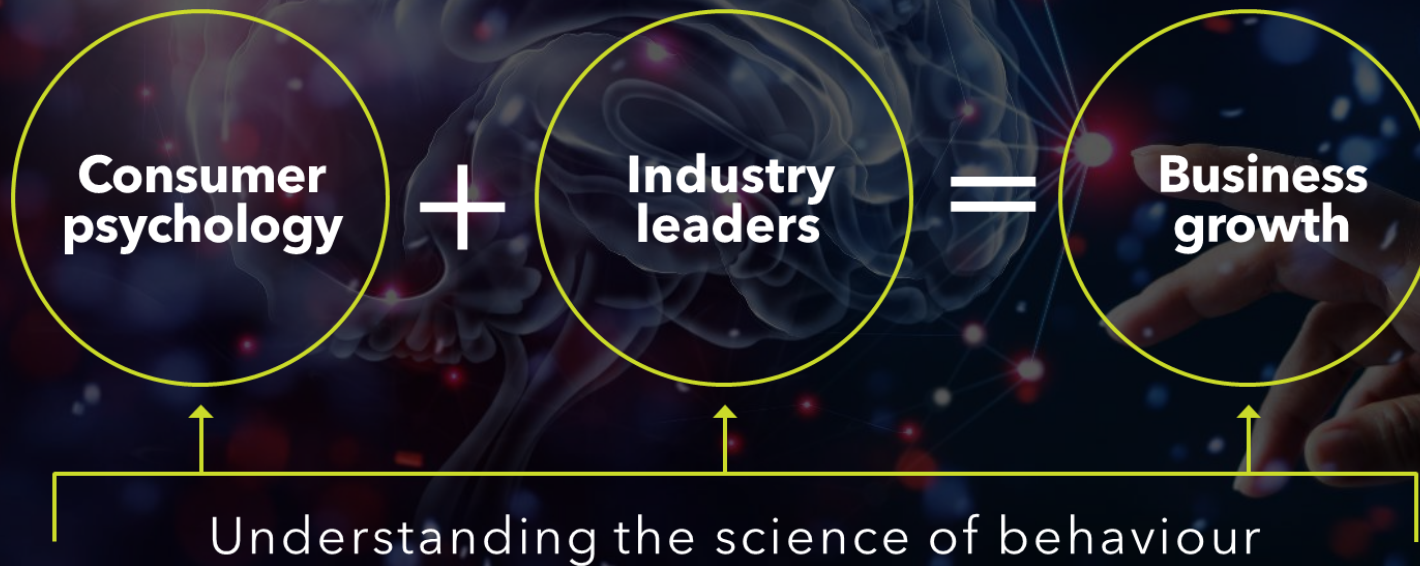
By combining the power of cutting-edge research techniques, scientific human behavioural understanding and market expertise, we help our clients grow and thrive. Our pioneering approach to insight gives you **an understanding of your customer's behaviour**, allowing you to serve up engaging and innovative solutions.

Every month, we will be speaking to 1,000 people in the UK to understand how they are truly feeling about the month ahead. Using our unique Spark Emotional Wheel, we will be able to **quantify the emotions of the nation.**

We will gain a broad read of how the nation is feeling with a particular focus on three or four of the most important topics to your customers.



We are a team of **consumer psychologists** and **industry leaders** that help you grow your business by **understanding the science** behind human behaviour



Contents

Chapter 1	5
Mood of the nation	
Chapter 2	15
May Bank Holiday	
Chapter 3	22
Preparing for Warmer Weather	
Chapter 4	37
Who are Spark Emotions	

A photograph of two young women lying on their stomachs on a white picnic blanket outdoors. The woman on the left is wearing a light blue button-down shirt and sunglasses, smiling broadly. The woman on the right is wearing a white polka-dot shirt and sunglasses, also smiling and making a peace sign. Between them is a large yellow number '1' followed by a forward slash. To their right is a wicker basket filled with fruit (grapes, bananas) and flowers. The background is grass and scattered pink petals.

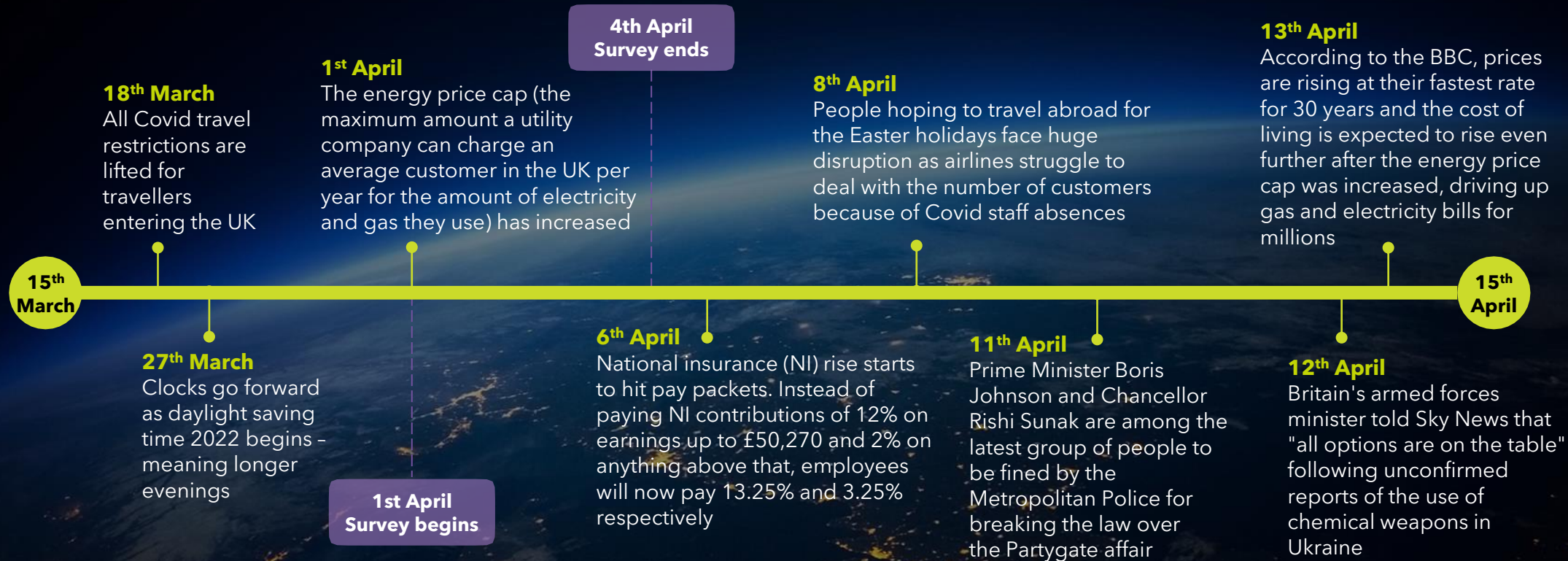
1/

Mood of the nation

Cost of living continues to be top of mind in the UK

We conducted a nationally representative survey of more than 1000 people to get to the truth of how the nation is really feeling during these turbulent times.

There were a number of events that would have impacted the mood of the nation.



Experts at understanding emotion

We are experts on the brain

- System 1 & 2
- Internal & external motivation
- Salience & attention
- Emotion & reason
- Implicit & explicit
- Working memory
- Actual vs. claimed



We can quantify emotions

Our Spark Emotional Wheel allows us to plot the emotions of shoppers and consumers by measuring 3 implicit levels within their minds:

Pleasure - How happy they feel

Excitement - How mentally stimulated (in a good or bad way) they feel

Control - How in control they feel

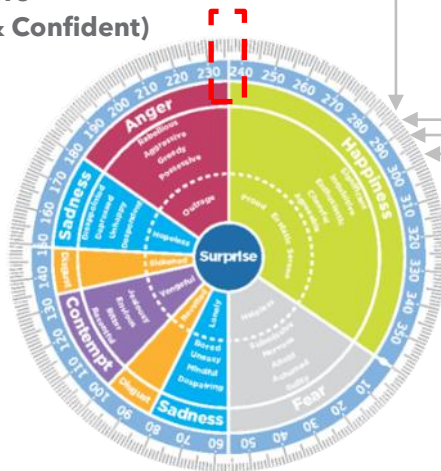


We get to **actual, not claimed, behaviour**, getting to **the truth is critical**

Cost of living bites to prompt low feelings of Control

- Improved weather and longer days prompt higher feelings of Happiness and Excitement this month
- However, increased cost of living and taxation changes mean lower feelings of Control compared to this time last year

**Ideal score
(Proud & Confident)**

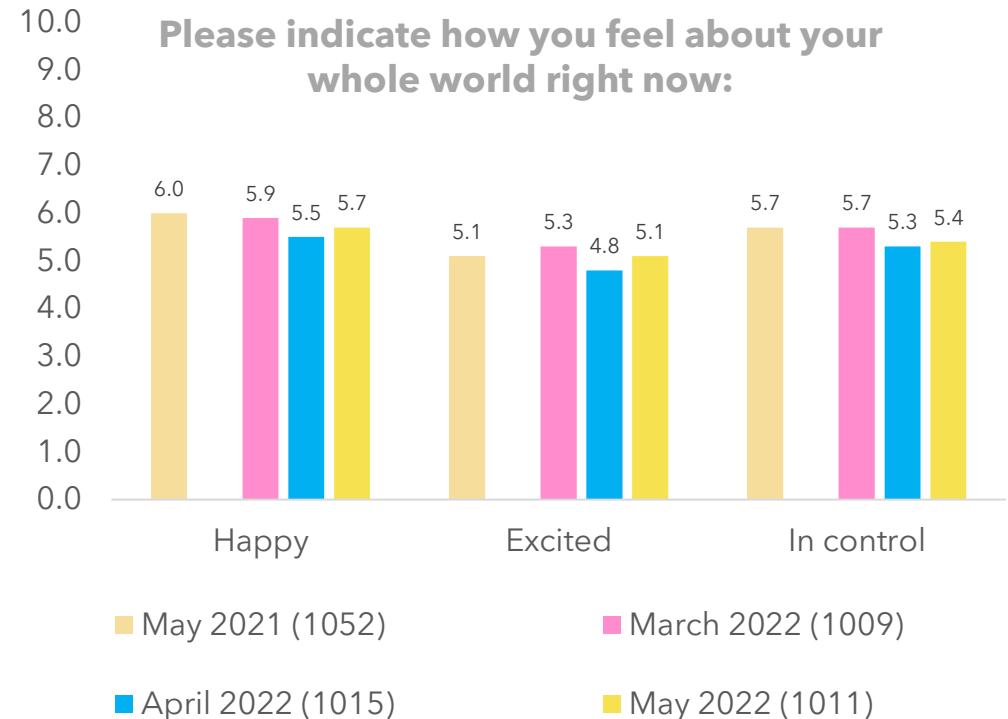


March 2022:
Elated

May 2021:
Enthusiastic

**May 2022:
Interested**

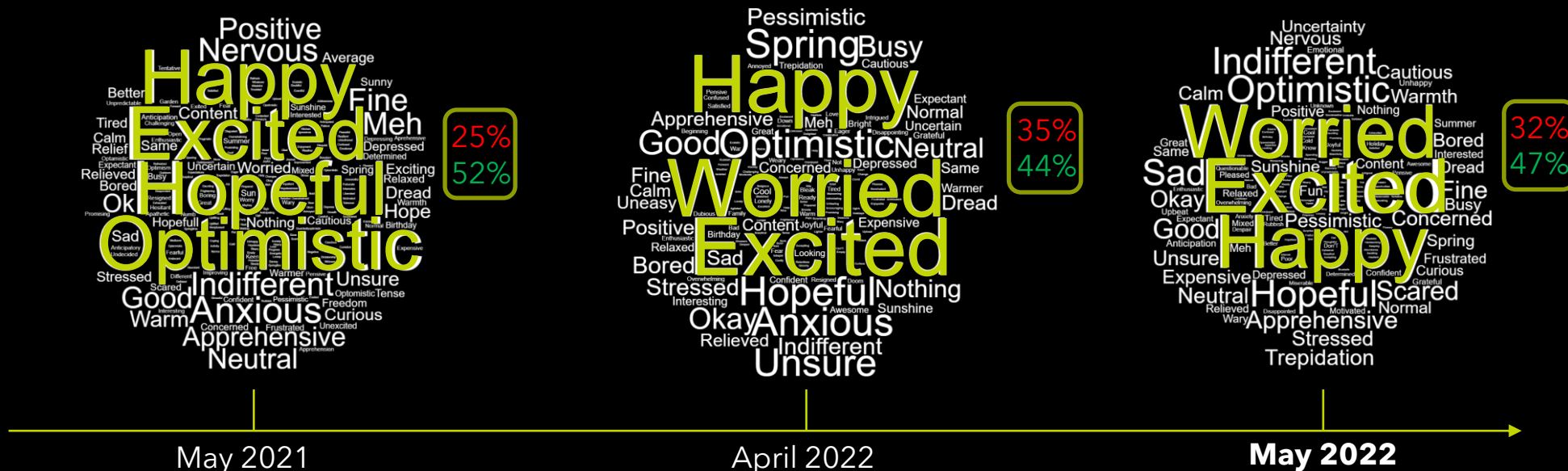
April 2022:
Amused



This scale consists of a number of words that describe different feelings and emotions. Please indicate how you feel about your whole world right now. Happy; Excited; In control (1 = not at all, 10 = very).

UK feels more negative now than in May 2021 - when lockdown restrictions still applied

Please describe how you feel about the upcoming month in one word or emotion (N:1011)



Response Analysis:

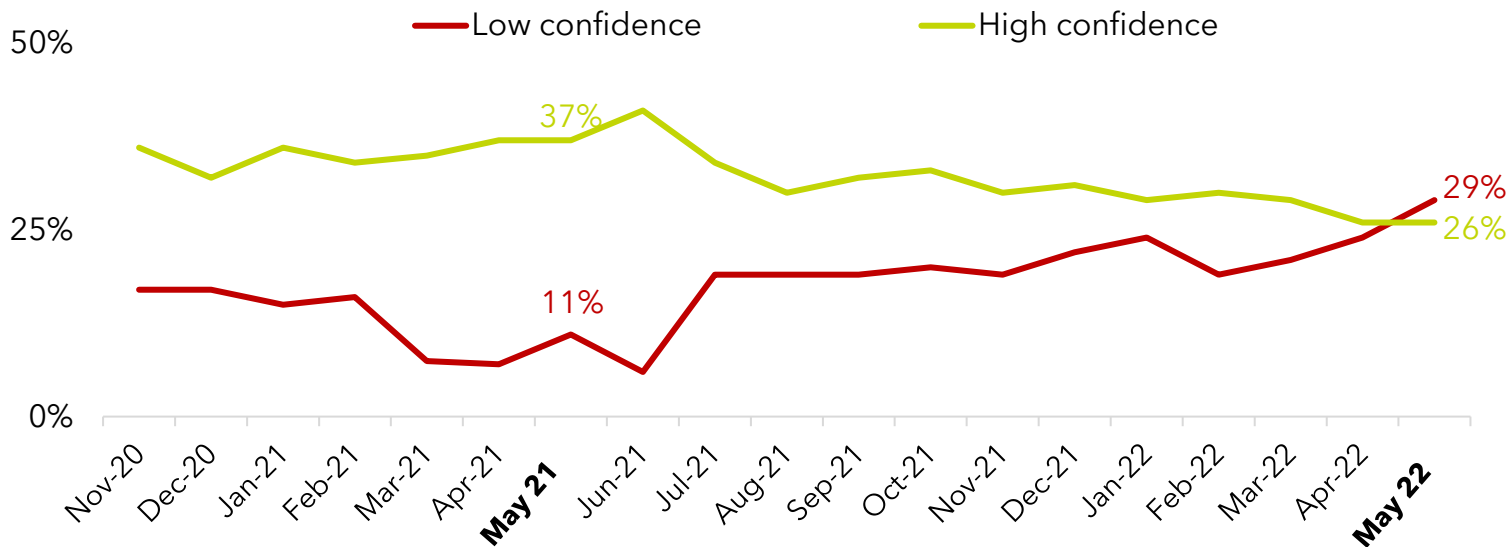
Negative
Positive

Please describe how you feel about the upcoming month of May in one word or emotion.

1 in 3 UK adults have low confidence in their finances, the largest proportion seen in 1.5 years

- The number of people with low confidence is greater than those with high financial confidence for the first time ever, so cautious shopping is likely to continue for consumers

Financial confidence across the 18 months



Financial behaviour this month compared to last (N:1011)



Adults are once again expecting to spend more and save less in the month ahead as bills increase

How confident are you about your finances in the month of May? (1=not at all, 10=very)
Do you expect to spend more, less, or the same amount in the month of May (compared to last month)?
Do you expect to save more, less, or the same amount in the month of May (compared to last month)?

Excluding bills, UK adults are spending money on holidays and social events

What is one thing you will spend money on this month?



**April
(N:1015)**



**May
(N:1011)**

In May 2022, UK adults expect to spend their money in similar ways to the previous month, focusing on holidays, clothes and home improvements.

This month, we also see sports and hobbies becoming a focus as the weather improves.

What is one thing you will spend money on in May? (Food and Bills are excluded)

Warmer weather increases positivity, but the cost of living is putting a strain on finances



Emotions

After a large increase in negativity for April 2022, lighter days and better weather see negative feelings levelling off and the UK reports higher levels of Happiness and Excitement



Finances

For the second month, levels of high financial confidence stay at a record low as NI rises and the energy price cap increase come into effect. However, levels of high optimism have increased slightly



Spending

Almost 1 in 3 UK adults have low confidence in their finances, the highest proportion of UK adults with low financial confidence in 1.5 years. Adults are once again expecting to spend more and save less in the month ahead as bills increase



2/

May Bank Holiday

May Bank Holiday

With the May Bank Holiday being around the corner, we wanted to know what UK adults have planned for the long weekend.

We also find out what special food and drinks people will be buying for the occasion.

With the No/Low alcohol industry being on the rise, will UK adults be buying them for the Bank Holiday ahead?

UK adults are open to inspiration for this May Bank Holiday

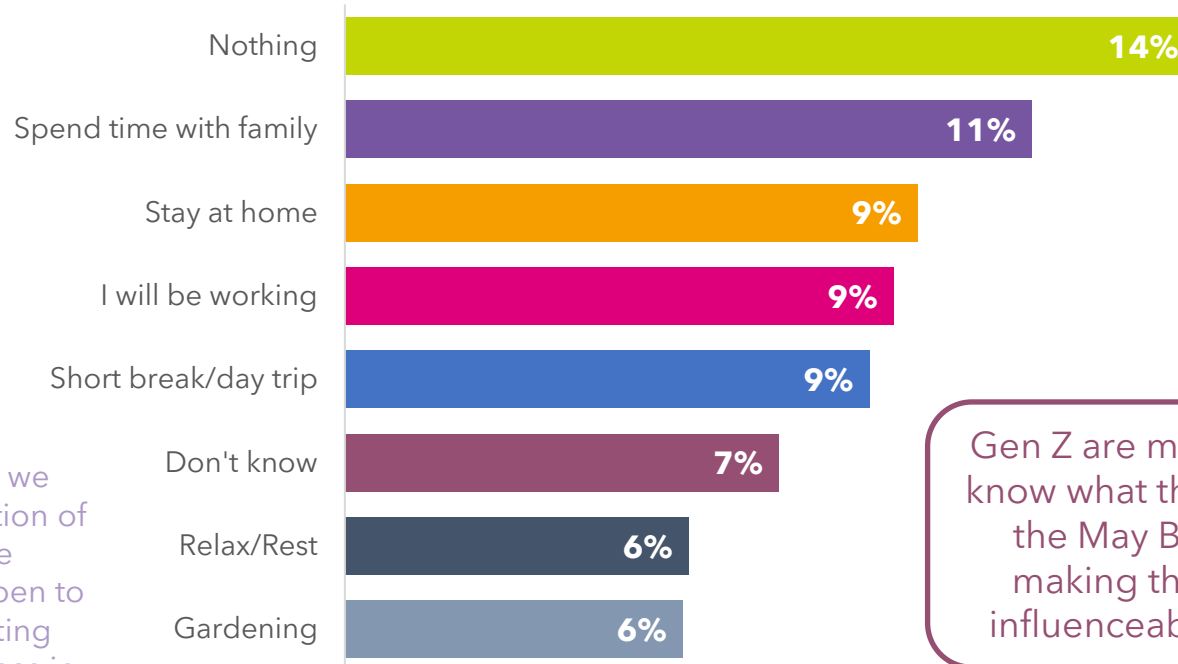
- Many UK adults will be spending the Bank Holiday at home, or looking for inspiration so retailers should be promoting garden products and activities for the event

1 in 5 Baby Boomers will not be doing anything special on the Bank Holiday

How you can help

For events like bank holidays, we often find that a large proportion of UK adults have no plans or are undecided – this group are open to inspiration. This is where exciting imagery and family activity ideas in store and online can come in to play

Thinking ahead to the bank holiday on 2nd of May, what do you expect you will do on that weekend?
Responses >5% shown only



23% of those in SEG C2DE will be doing nothing for Bank Holiday in May, compared to 9% for those in SEG ABC1

Gen Z are most likely to not know what they're doing for the May Bank Holiday, making them the most influenceable generation

SEG = social economic group (based on occupation)

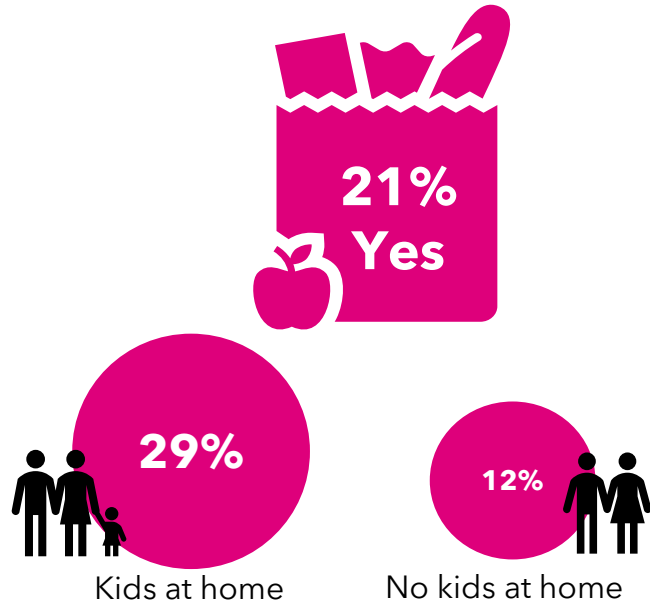


1 in 4 UK adults will be buying special food specifically for the May Bank Holiday

More than 1 in 5 of those buying food for the Bank Holiday are planning to have a BBQ

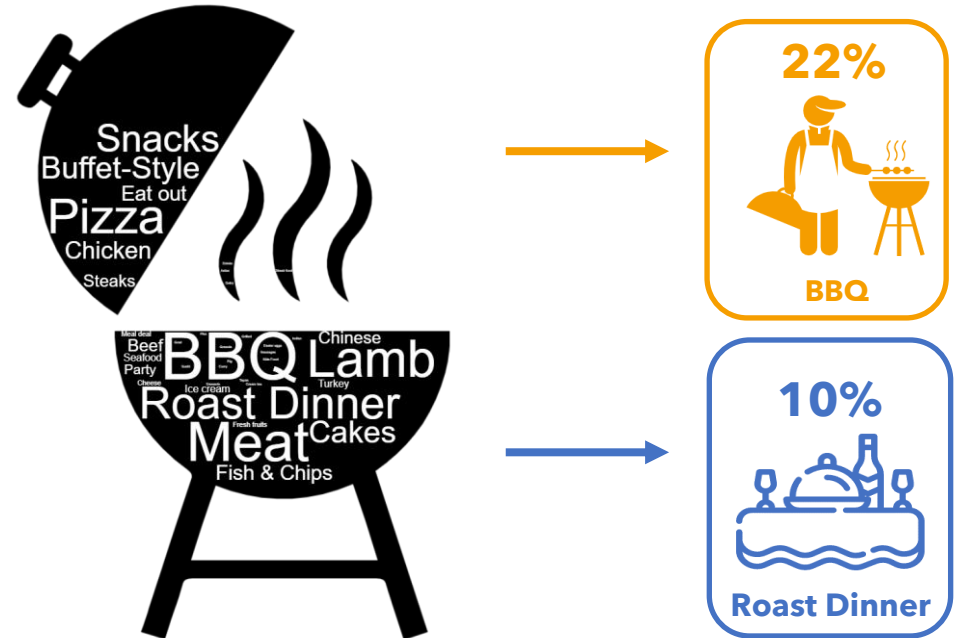
- 1 in 5 will be looking to purchase food specifically for the Bank Holiday so encourage shoppers to think about meals ideas by placing recipes cards near BBQ products to get shoppers experimenting

Do you expect to buy special food for the Bank Holiday in May? (N: 1011)



Do you expect you will purchase any special food or drink for the May bank holiday weekend that you wouldn't for a normal weekend?

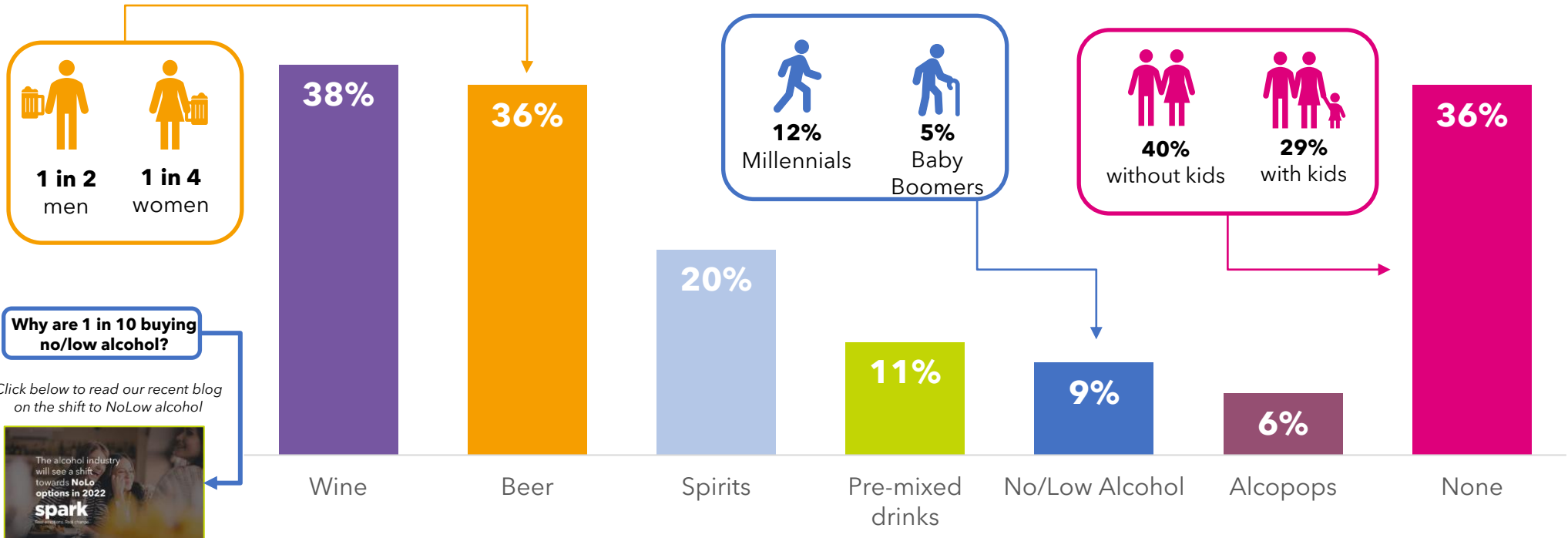
What special food will you buy for the Bank Holiday in May? (N: 215)



1 in 10 UK adults plan to buy no/low alcohol drinks for the upcoming Bank Holiday

- Those with children are more likely to be buying alcohol for the Bank Holiday, suggesting families will be putting on gatherings and parties with friends/family
- 50% of UK men will be buying beers/lager for the May Bank Holiday

Alcohol purchases for the May bank holiday (N:1011)



When thinking about alcohol for the upcoming May bank holiday, which of the following are you likely to purchase?

UK adults are open to bank holiday inspiration



Plans for the Bank Holiday

Many UK adults will be spending the Bank Holiday at home, or looking for inspiration so retailers should be promoting garden products and activities for the day



Food ideas

1 in 4 UK adults will be buying special food specially for the May Bank Holiday, and more than 1 in 5 of those buying food for the Bank Holiday are planning to have a BBQ. Those with children are more likely to be buying alcohol for the Bank Holiday, suggesting families will be putting on gatherings and parties with friends/family



3/

Preparing for Warmer Weather

Preparing for Warmer Weather

As we head into May we wanted to understand what UK adults are doing to prepare for the warmer weather ahead.

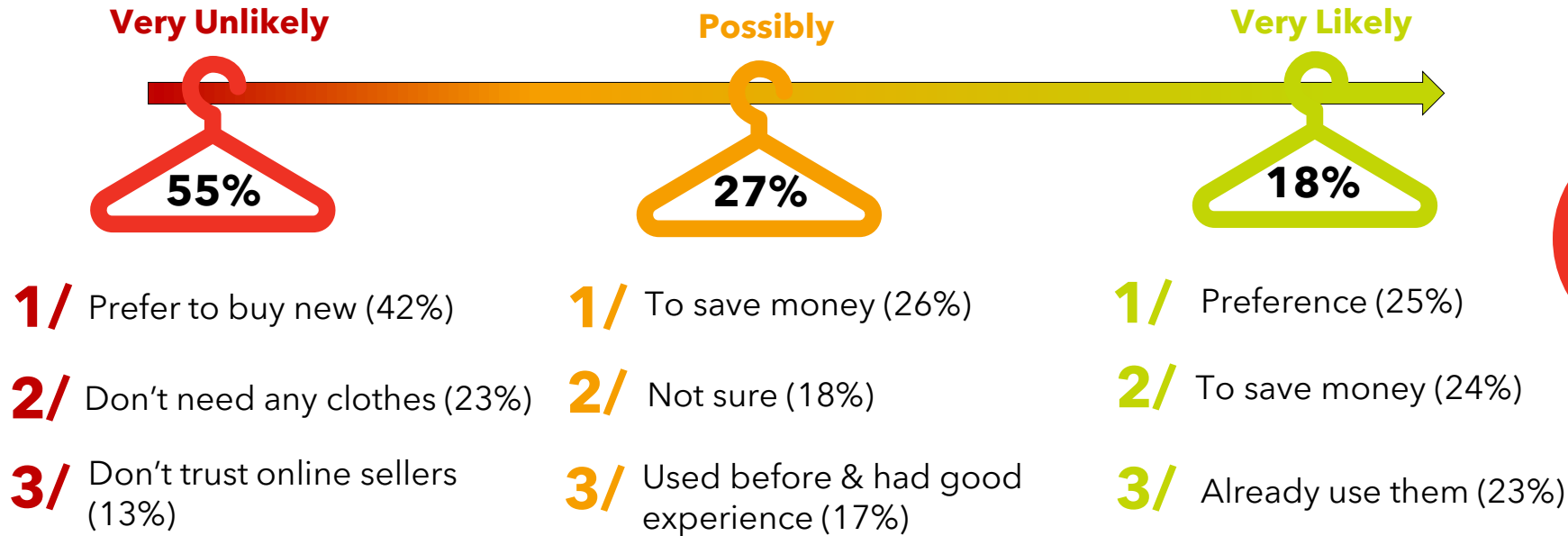
Our recent reports show that clothing is a top-of-mind purchase so we find out if people will be buying clothes from resale marketplaces and the reasons behind this behaviour.

Last year home renovations were popular as we headed into summer, is this the same pattern we see this year? We also look at where UK adults will be buying garden furniture from.

Almost half of UK adults would be open to buying clothes from resellers

- Those who say they would be open to buying from resellers do so to save money, however those who are reluctant are mistrustful of online sellers
- Good reviews and easy return options will reduce the risk friction points for nervous and older shoppers

How likely are you to buy clothes from resale marketplaces and why? (N:1011)



28%
of
millennials
are very
likely to
buy

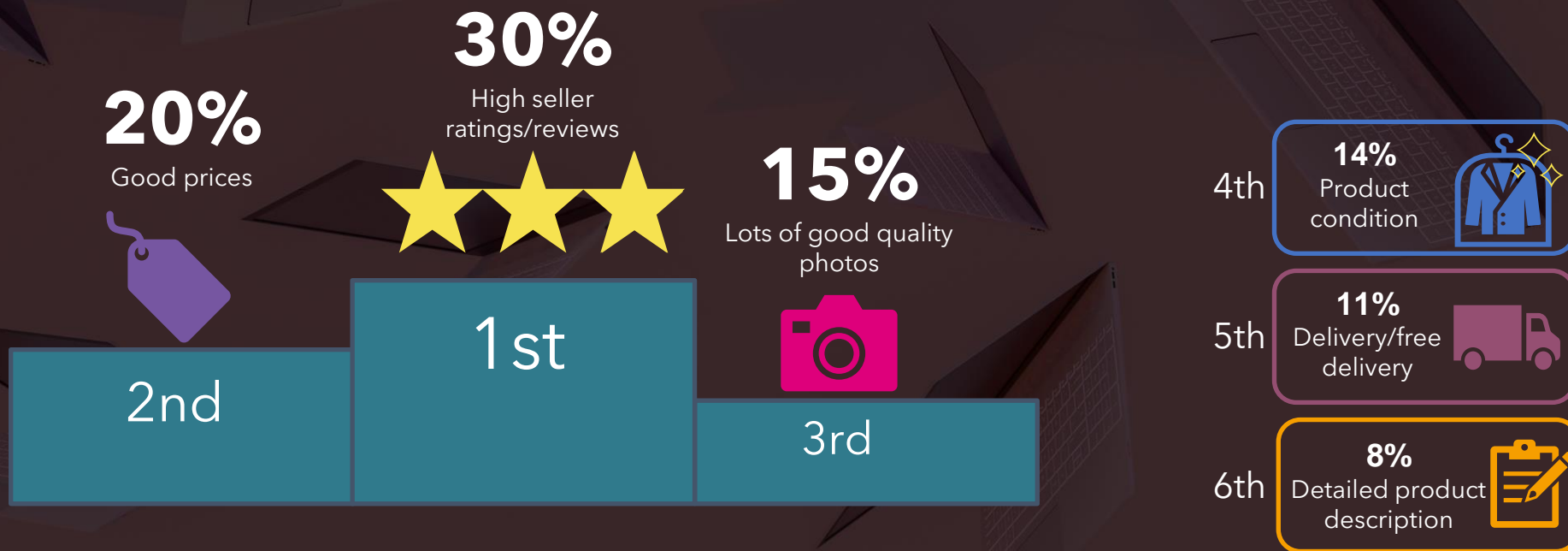
73%
of Baby
boomers
are very
unlikely to
buy

How likely are you to buy clothes from resale marketplaces (e.g., Facebook marketplace, Vinted, Depop, eBay, etc). Why do you say this?

Strong reviews are the most important consideration for almost 1 in 3 UK adults

- Trust is a key barrier to using resellers, so reviews are more important here than ever, but price is also still a top priority with 1 in 5 UK stating it as their number 1 consideration

Most important consideration when buying any products from resale marketplaces (N: 818)



When purchasing from resale platforms such as eBay, Facebook Marketplace, Depop, etc, which of the following are most important to you? (please choose your top 3)

Reviews shape consumers' decision making and product and brand perception

Social Proof

We are strongly influenced by what others do and think and tend to copy their behaviour

Word of Mouth



We trust our friends and family so when they recommend a product or service, we're likely to place higher value on it

Reviews/Ratings



Majority of consumers check reviews before purchasing. We judge people 'like us' as more trustworthy than the companies/brands

Influencers



Influencers have a trusted network of engaged fans and followers. Based on this trust, they can influence the buying decisions of their followers

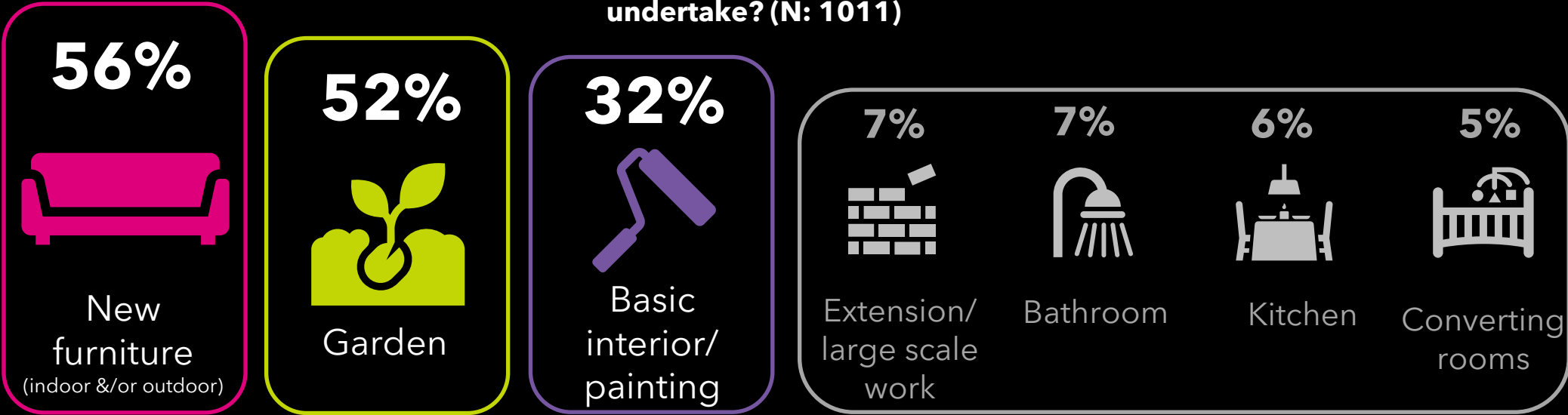
A woman with long blonde hair in a ponytail, wearing a white tank top, is painting a wall with a roller. The wall is partially painted a light pink color, while the rest is a muted grey-blue. The text is overlaid on the pink section of the wall.

68% of UK adults will be undertaking a home improvement project between now and summer

More than 2 in 3 will undertake a home improvement project before summer

- Over half of UK adults will be buying new furniture for summer so consider options for those who may need space saving options or items with multiple functions

Which home improvement projects between now and summer will you undertake? (N: 1011)



32%
said
none

Which of the following home improvement projects between now and summer will you undertake?

UK adults are more likely to buy garden furniture as new compared to clothes

- Most UK adults are very unlikely to buy garden furniture from resale places like Facebook Marketplace and eBay which is good news for brands and retailers
- Garden furniture is a big investment for many people so quality and trust is likely to be why resale places are not as popular in this category compared to clothes

Likelihood of you buying garden furniture from resale marketplaces? (N: 1011)

63%

Very unlikely

Baby boomers = 76%

27%

Possibly

11%

Very likely

Millennials = 21%

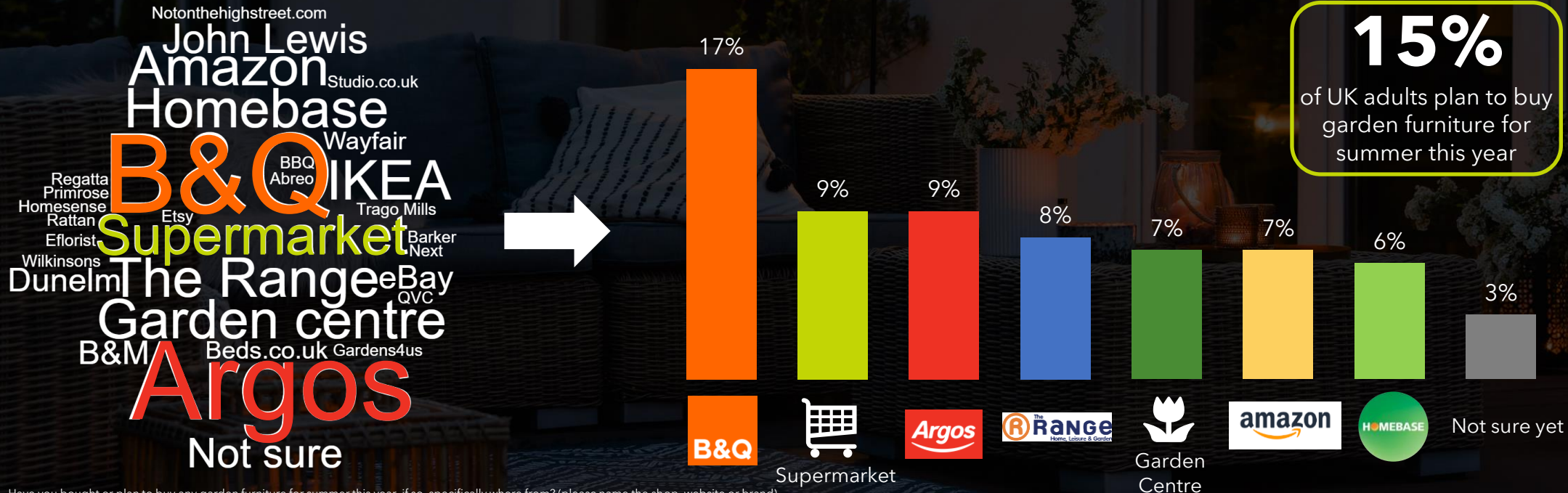
UK adults are more likely to buy clothes (18%) from resellers than garden furniture (11%)

How likely are you to buy garden furniture from resale marketplaces (e.g., Facebook marketplace, eBay, Gumtree, etc)

Over 1 in 10 will be buying garden furniture for summer this year

- Retailers like B&Q and Argos are a popular place for UK adults to buy garden furniture from
- Supermarkets and garden centers are also common options

Where have you bought/will you be buying garden furniture from this year? (N: 152)

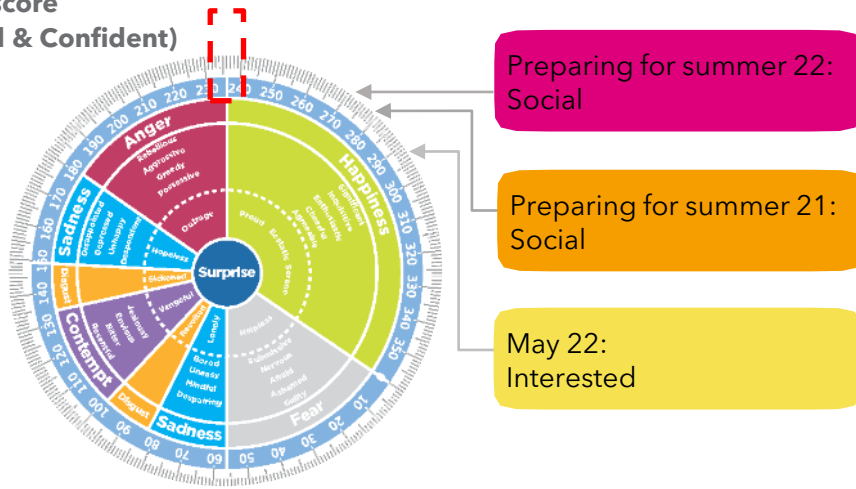


Have you bought or plan to buy any garden furniture for summer this year, if so, specifically where from? (please name the shop, website or brand)

UK adults are feeling 'Social' when thinking about preparing for summer

- UK adults report similar feelings for summer 2022 as they did last year despite the rising cost of living
- When comparing feelings for preparing for summer and general feelings for May, scores significantly increase, suggesting UK adults associate summer with a sense of optimism and escapism

Ideal score
(Proud & Confident)

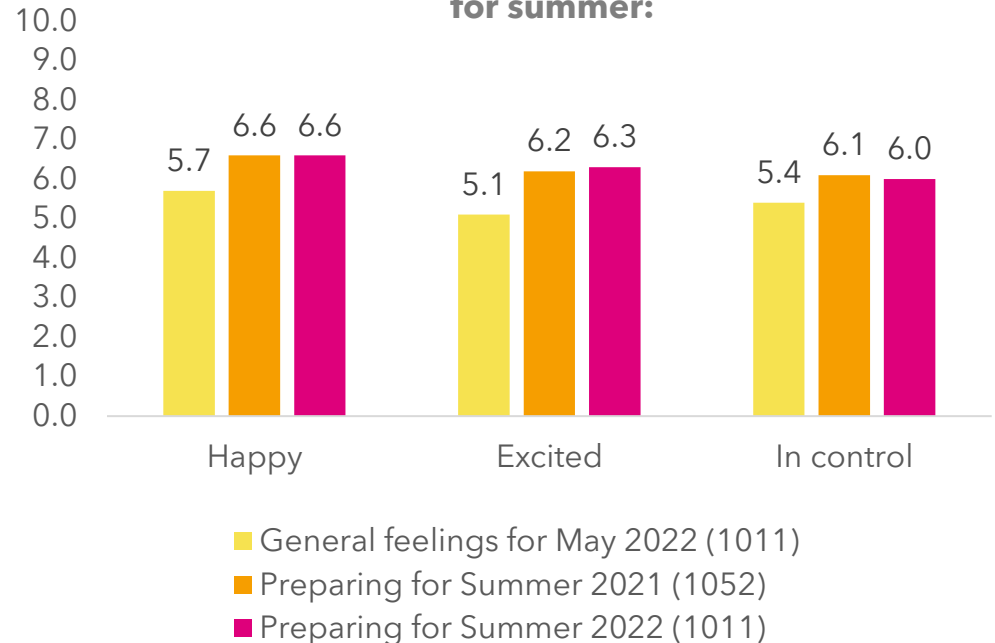


How can you help?

Promote products, activities and food ideas that shoppers can enjoy with friends and family this summer to facilitate social occasions

How do you feel when thinking about preparing for summer? Happy; Excited; In control (1 = not at all, 10 = very)

Please indicate how you feel about preparing for summer:



Warmer weather encourages home improvements and clothing purchases



Home improvements

68% of UK adults will be undertaking a home improvement project between now and summer. 56% will buy new furniture from trusted brands like B&Q and Argos



Clothing purchases

1 in 10 UK adults chose clothes as their one thing they plan to purchase in May. Those who say they would be open to buying from resellers do so to save money however those who are reluctant are mistrustful of online sellers. Older generations are least likely to purchase clothes from resellers

A woman with dark hair and sunglasses is riding a black mountain bike on a paved path. She is wearing a white and black striped long-sleeved shirt, blue jeans, and white sneakers. She is smiling and looking towards the camera. The path is lined with trees that have white blossoms, and the background shows a hilly landscape under a clear blue sky.

3/ Summary



The Mood of the Nation

- For the second month, levels of high financial confidence stays at a record low as tax rises and the energy price cap increase come into effect
- However, levels of high optimism have increased slightly
- Almost 1 in 3 UK adults has low confidence in their finances



Bank Holidays

- Many UK adults will be spending the Bank Holiday at home, or looking for inspiration so retailers should be promoting garden products and activities for the day
- 1 in 4 UK adults will be buying special food specially for the May Bank Holiday, and more than 1 in 5 of those buying food for the Bank Holiday are planning to have a BBQ



Preparing for warmer weather

- 1 in 10 UK adults chose clothes as their one thing they plan to purchase in May. Those who say they would be open to buying from resellers do so to save money however those who are reluctant are mistrustful of online sellers.
- 68% of UK adults will be undertaking a home improvement project between now and summer. 56% will buy new furniture

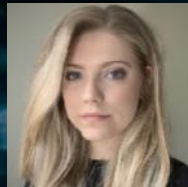
Thank you for reading

The team at Spark Emotions who brought you the May edition of Mood of the Nation combined industry expertise with consumer psychology to help get to the truth of how the nation is feeling.



Evie Harris-Jenkins

Research Executive



Tara Moran

Senior Research Executive



Scott Willey

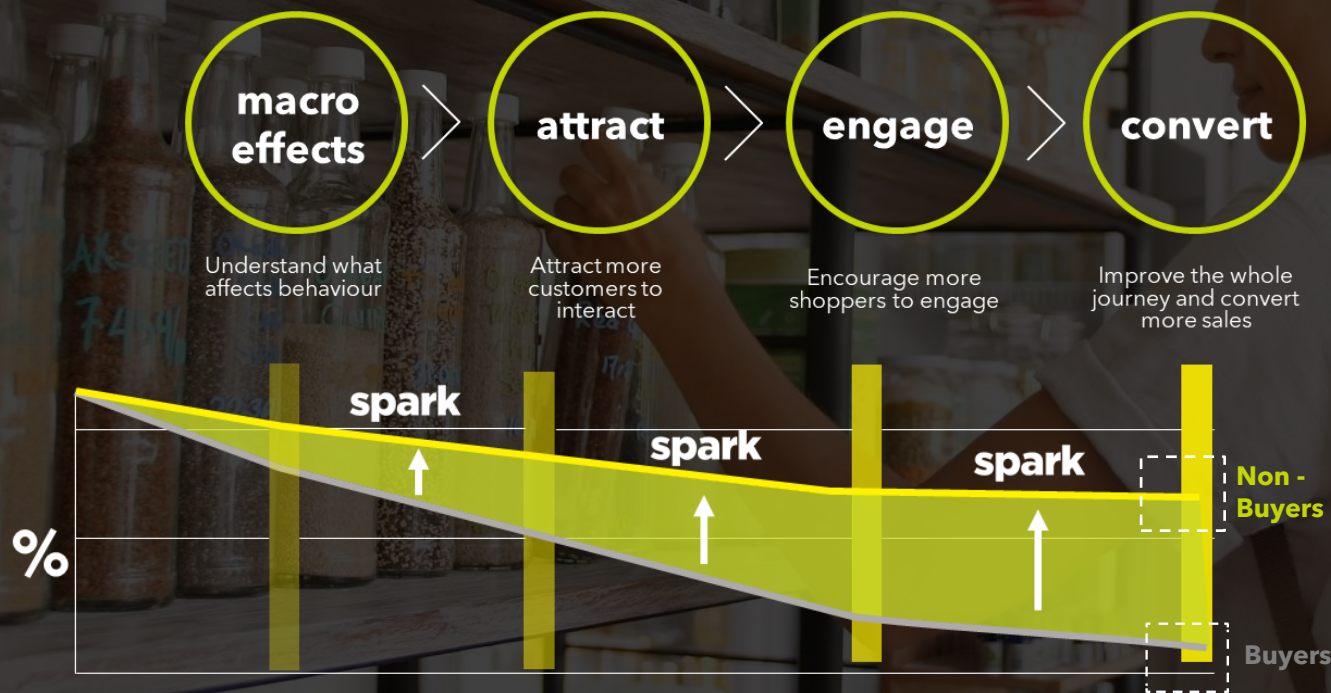
Associate Director

Get in touch with us - hello@sparkemotions.com



Who are Spark Emotions?

We understand buyers and, crucially, non buyers



At Spark Emotions we feel **passionate about using all data sources** available.

Whether we are looking to drive **new shoppers to store**, encourage shoppers to **visit more often**, or **spend more** in store it is crucial to go **beyond the traditional** basket analysis and segmentation.

Understanding the behaviours, emotions and purchase intent of buyers, but **crucially, non buyers** (and those **shopping with your competitor or category alternatives**) is where our **expertise comes into play**.

Thank you

email: hello@sparkemotions.com
web: sparkemotions.com
phone: +44 (0)1543 255 259

spark

Real emotions. Real change