

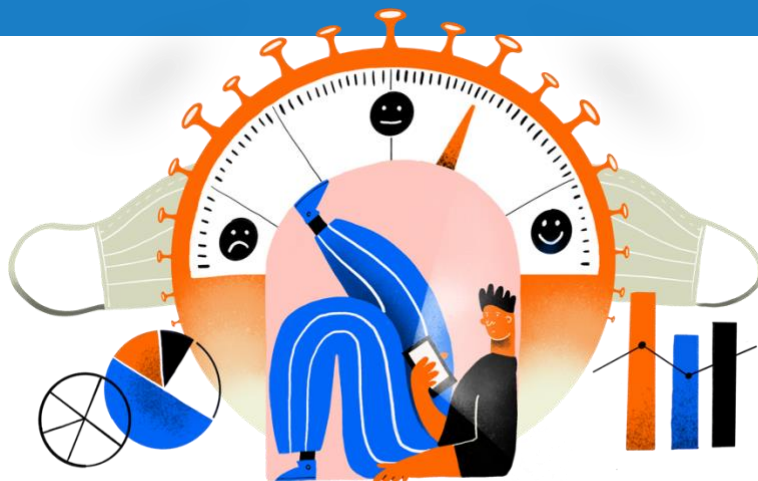
REPORT 19

Christmas 2020

The Motivation Barometer

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Reference: Motivation Barometer (December 23, 2020). Christmas 2020. Ghent, Belgium.



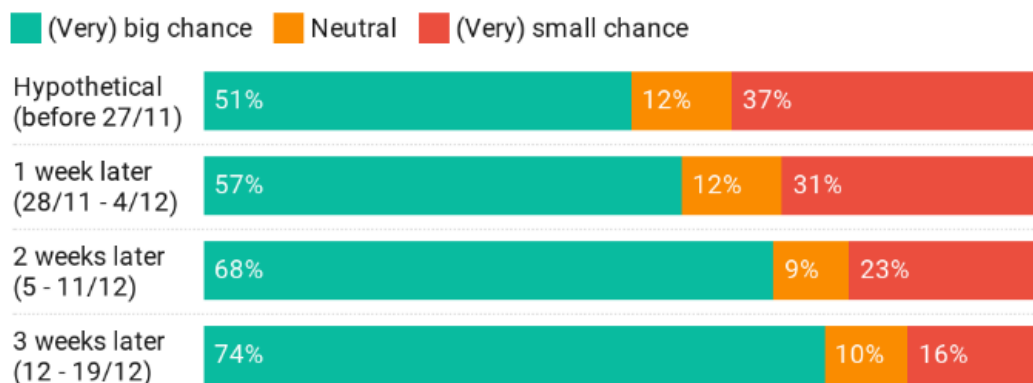
By necessity, Christmas 2020 becomes a celebration without guests. It is notable that a growing majority is willing to comply to the restrictions, but that this is accompanied by an increased sense of discouragement. As if we are adhering to the measures with reluctance. After all, we have no other choice. Media and government play a key role in motivating the population.

Christmas Measures

Last weekend, the percentage of respondents planning to adhere to the Christmas measures rose further to 74%, while 10% was still hesitant and only 16% said they were highly unlikely to do so (Figure 1). At the end of November, only 51% was prepared to adhere to the measures. The alarming development of corona numbers have sharpened risk awareness, but the stronger threat of monitoring and sanctions may also be playing a role, although the latter does not create long-term motivation.

Figure 1. Probability of adhering to Christmas measures over time.

Motivationbarometer



Total N = 24 290

Signs of discouragement

With the increased emphasis on contact restrictions during the Christmas and end-of-year period, since the end of November, the population's sense of discouragement also increased (red, lower curve, Figure 2). Our motivation is very mixed and fluctuates: we persevere because we realize it is necessary, but also because we have to. At other times we get discouraged and threaten to give up. The lack of short-term perspective undoubtedly plays a role in this. The good news about the start of vaccinations provides some long-term hope, but not in the short term. Providing a short-term perspective is therefore crucial.

Figure 2. Evolution of motivation during the COVID-19 crisis.



Some recommendations

More than four in five respondents are committed to adhering to the Christmas measures, but it is hard: several indicators point to increasing discouragement. To deal with this feeling, it is important that we continue to see the need, gain perspective in the short term, and see a clear connection between what we are doing and what it brings. What we also increasingly lack is a sense of social connection and solidarity in the common fight against the virus. Helping things are:

- A clear timeline and intermediate goals that act as virological and psychological milestones.
- Systematic feedback on the impact of our efforts (via infographics, half-lives, etc).
- Maintain an awareness of risk through personalized stories of people who are seriously ill or health workers working in a COVID-19 department.
- Strengthening sustainable motivation by imagining who you are following the measures for.
- Have a corona proof plan B ready if you invite people outside and the weather would complicate this.

It would also help if the media would put up a more accurate picture of reality. Every lockdown party gets extensive media coverage, while for every person who doesn't follow the measures, there are virtually 8 who do. Positive examples in the media would underscore that most people follow the measures instead of giving the impression that lockdown parties are out of control.

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