

Sustainability Sharing Series

Behaviour Change Methods and Measuring

Behaviour change initiatives are a vital pairing with any infrastructure or technical advancements to reduce the negative environmental or social sustainability impacts of an institution. Measuring behaviour change is inherently difficult, however it provides insight into how effective projects are and can aid future strategy and build on progress.

Popular Methods

Nudge Theory

Nudge theory is at the forefront of behavioural science as a way to influence behaviour. In practice the nudge method involves deciding upon and creating small indirect changes to an individual's environment that encourage them to behave in a certain way. An example would be placing low carbon food options at eye level.

Gamification

Gamification is widely used in institutions to influence student and staff behaviours, an example being the [Student Switch Off](#) (NUS).



Measuring

Randomised Controlled Trials

Randomised controlled trials help to monitor change from your specific intervention, and are commonly used in the medical field. Although not applicable for all activities this method of measuring can be applied across a number of interventions to help to understand the direct impact and allow you to see any errors in methodology and how well the theory is working.

Accessing Data through Collaborative Working

As many behaviour change projects will involve gathering data from across the institution it is important to create relationships with the departments responsible for this data, such as catering, energy, maintenance or estates. Automated data collection such as contamination in bins listed from contractors can help provide a basis for evidence, coupled with data collected from other means.

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Participant Feedback

Participant feedback is a simple way to gather information of awareness of projects and goes some way to evidence impact, coupled with other forms of data. This could be a simple in-person survey asking “Are you aware of this campaign?”.

Time Scale

Any behaviour change project involves a high amount of resource in the research and planning stage to ensure there is sufficient data to analyse once the project is completed. The project must be planned to be live for a long enough period of time to collect data for a sufficient spread of participants.

Collaboration Opportunities

- Psychology/Behavioural Science Departments
- Business and Marketing Departments
- Estates and Energy Departments
- Students Union



Interesting Resources and Organisations

[Nudgeathon](#)—A two-stage crowdsourcing event in which decision groups draw on insights and methods from psychology, economics, design and the performing arts to produce implementable solutions to major problems involving human behaviour

[INudgeYou](#)—The applied Behavioural Science Group

[Lessons from 10 Years of Behaviour Change](#)

[Selling Sustainability to students: Online strategies for behaviour change](#)

[Behaviour change in practice: outputs, outcomes and future opportunities](#)

[Selling behaviour change to “them upstairs” - engage with senior management](#)

[EAUC-S Conference 2018 - Behaviour Change Decade Highlight - University of St Andrews](#)

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