

Encouraging Positive Environmental Behaviours in Employees

Toolkit and examples from Queen Mary University of London



DOCUMENT PURPOSE

This document sets out steps for designing and implementing an employee behaviour change programme and references real life examples from Queen Mary University of London.

The process laid out draws on academic literature, proven behaviour change models and insights from a successful pilot undertaken at Queen Mary University of London.

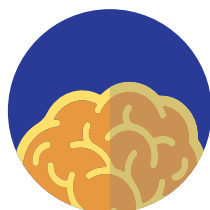
The four-stage process described is a condensed version of Carbon Credentials' approach to developing behaviour change programmes focused on positive environmental behaviours. The process applies the COM-B model developed by Professor Susan Michie et al (2011)¹ to identify and understand behaviours and design interventions that stick.

The development of this toolkit and the pilot were part of an externally funded research project by Cancer Research UK, which was led by Professor Danae Manika (for more information please see: <http://danaemanika.co.uk/cruk.html>).

¹ Michie, S., van Stralen, M. and West, R. (2011) The behaviour change wheel: A new method for characterising and designing behaviour change interventions. *Implementation Science*, 6(42).



1. Targeting behaviours



2. Using Com-B



3. Designing your intervention



4. Measuring the impact

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INTRODUCTION

Many organisations are realising the value of employee behaviour change initiatives in the workplace. Behaviour change can enable organisations to meet more and more stretching environmental targets.

Most people are aware of the need to behave sustainably and engage in environmental behaviours. However, research tells us that there is often a gap between what people do at home and what they do at work.

At Queen Mary University of London a study was undertaken to understand employee environmental behaviours in the workplace and associated lifestyle habits.

The study focused on academic staff and administrators and the environmental behaviours that they already or could engage in.

A selection of behaviours were selected and an intervention was developed to promote these behaviours amongst employees. The intervention involved an information campaign and a green champion designated to promote behaviours.

An 8-week pilot of the intervention was conducted to examine the feasibility of the intervention for large-scale implementation in accordance to the funded project's objectives.

This document explains the steps needed to design and implement an employee pro-environmental behaviour change programme in the workplace and puts this into context using examples from Queen Mary University of London.

1. TARGETING BEHAVIOURS

These days we're subject to an information overload every day. To make your communications stand out, target what you want to change and keep it simple. The first step in the process is targeting behaviours.

Clarifying your objectives is also necessary. It ensures your programme remains focused on behaviour changes that will meet these objectives.

Once you have a clear list of objectives use these to identify what behaviours will meet these objectives and target those with the largest impact.

If your objective is to reduce energy use, for example there will be several behaviours that people can participate in to achieve this.

A good starting point is to investigate where most of your energy is used and what equipment is using it. Once you have identified the areas of significant energy use determine what ability people have to influence these – what behaviours can they change? These could be as simple as:

1. Turning off lighting when you leave a room
2. Setting heating timings in accordance with occupancy rather than on 24/7
3. Setting equipment to eco mode

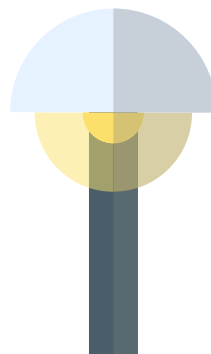
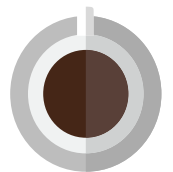
People then need to understand what you're asking them to do, and importantly, why. For example, what is the impact of the behaviour change. It helps to relate to individuals personally and to understand how the behaviours you're targeting fit into what they do every day.

This can be tricky in a large organisation, so a simple method for grouping stakeholders is by role. Those in the same role will likely undertake similar tasks day-to-day allowing you to target what behaviours they can change.

By understanding who needs to do what differently, when, where and how, you will probably find that different groups need different instructions, and you may identify further behaviours that you wish to target.

“Providing examples of how much energy can be saved is a good way to get people thinking about their energy consumption.”

Queen Mary University
of London employee



Insights from Queen Mary University of London

At Queen Mary University of London a focus group was held to gain a better understanding of the typical environmental behaviours that employees already engage in or could engage in at the workplace. This group consisted of volunteers from academic and administrative roles.

Eight target behaviours that would have a positive environmental impact were identified. These behaviours were designated as employee pro-environmental behaviours.

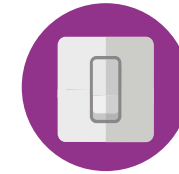
The study focused on the behaviours that academics and administration staff interact in day-to-day. By narrowing down the target group we were able to define specific behaviours and create an intervention that was targeted rather than broad.



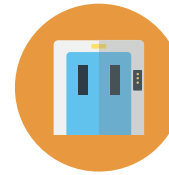
Eight Pro-Environmental Behaviours Were Identified



Recycling



Switching off equipment



Avoiding using the lift



Sustainable travel



Travelling long distances by train not plane



Bringing your own lunch



Using re-usable carriers



Reducing printing

2. USING COM-B

Not everyone will have equal capability, opportunity or motivation to make behaviour changes. This next section draws on the COM-B model developed by Susan Michie et al (2011)¹ to understand how these conditions influence behaviour change.

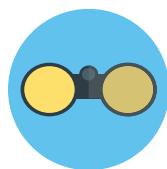
The model draws on learnings from the healthcare sector and provides a system for designing effective behaviour change interventions.

The model describes the influence of capability, opportunity, motivation on behaviour. According to the model, behaviour occurs as an interaction between the these three necessary conditions.

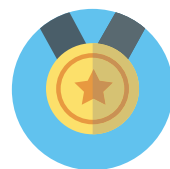
To successfully design a behaviour change intervention, you need to understand the interactions between all three of these conditions.



1. Capability
– how capable are people of partaking in the behaviours?



2. Opportunity
– do people have the opportunity to partake in behaviours?



3. Motivation
– what will motivate people to partake in behaviours?



¹Michie, S., van Stralen, M. and West, R. (2011) The behaviour change wheel: A new method for characterising and designing behaviour change interventions. *Implementation Science*, 6(42).

Capability



To understand employees' physical or psychological capability to enact pro-environmental behaviours, the focus group at Queen Mary University of London was asked to discuss how easy it is to engage in these behaviours at work.

The group was also asked whether any particular knowledge, skills or abilities were required, and what information would improve their understanding of the behaviours.

Findings

The group decided that some education was necessary, for example how to use recycling bins. The information required was brief and could be condensed into simple leaflets/briefings.

Opportunity



To understand what motivates academics and administrative staff, the focus group debated the reasons for engaging in pro-environmental behaviours in the workplace and discussed what the benefits of these behaviours are and whether they felt it was their responsibility to engage in these.

The group also determined whether they felt they could make a difference by engaging in these behaviours.

Findings

Three key motivators were identified:

- Convenience – how easy is it to undertake the pro-environmental behaviour?
- Awareness - how much publicity is there for the pro-environmental behaviour?
- Setting an example – do others participate in the pro-environmental behaviour?

Motivation



To understand whether the physical and social environment provided the opportunity to engage in these pro-environmental behaviours, the focus group was asked what prohibited them from engaging in pro-environmental behaviours in the workplace and what could be done about this.

Findings

There was some frustration over the mechanisms in place to encourage pro-environmental behaviour, and the group listed four main reasons why people do not undertake pro-environmental behaviours.

1. Lack of systems and processes.
2. Lack of infrastructure, technology and facilities – e.g. solar PV, EV charging points, water fountains, recycling.
3. Lack of clear communications around what to do – for example what to recycle and where.
4. Lack of time.

3. DESIGNING YOUR INTERVENTION

DESIGNING THE CAMPAIGN

Understanding what's important to people, and communicating messages in a way that resonates with them generally increases the up-take of behaviour change.

When designing key messages for a campaign at Carbon Credentials, we look to understand the following:

1. What people should know
2. What people should do
3. How people should feel

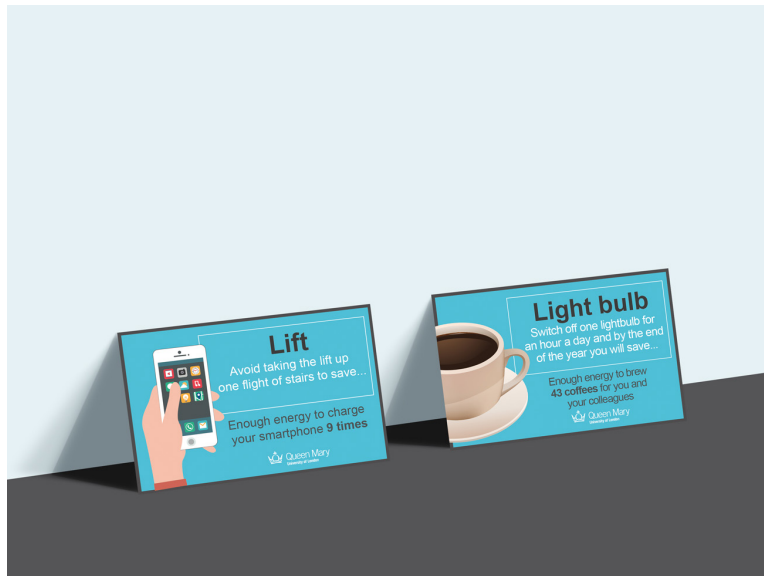
This enables us to decide what information they require and determine the best means by which to get this information to them.

“I have never thought about the energy implications of using the stairs vs the elevator”

Queen Mary University of London Employee



Using the information gained in the focus group an intervention was designed that included a campaign of communications material and promotion by a Green Champion.



Please note: design materials should not be used without the consent of Professor Danae Manika and Carbon Credentials. To request materials, please email d.manika@qmul.ac.uk

FIND THE RIGHT CHAMPION

Behavioural insights tell us that people are heavily influenced by what others do around them. Stickers and posters alone are not enough. Finding someone relatable to champion behaviours, to act as a role model and guide others is essential for good uptake.

A Green Champion can be a volunteer interested in the area and keen to make a difference. Alternatively, where specific skills and experience are required it's beneficial to build the Green Champion responsibilities into an existing job role.

Typically, a champion should exhibit the following attributes:

- Be influential, and a natural leader that others follow.
- Be willing to get involved and take an interest in environmental issues and opportunities.
- Exhibit environmentally friendly behaviours and act as a role model.
- Encourage and motivate colleagues to make positive change.
- Be willing to share information, messages and ideas with others.

Champions need both the knowledge and head space to understand and encourage the behaviours you're trying to change.

“The way people were encouraged to think about things that related to their own experiences was really useful”
Mike Witcombe, Green Champion



Mike Witcombe, a member of the administrative team at Queen Mary University of London volunteered as the Green Champion.

Two training sessions were provided for the Green Champion role. The **first session** was given before the intervention began and covered:

- Introduction – an introduction to the intervention, including the aims and timescales.
- Role – the role of the Green Champion and what the minimum requirements were.
- Campaign materials – what resources were at his disposal and how to use them.
- Talking to colleagues – what behaviours we were trying to encourage and how to talk colleagues through them.
- Benefits – the benefits of being a Green Champion.

“Simple reminders helped encode behaviours as part of people’s working lives”

Mike Witcombe, Green Champion



The **second training** session was given half way through the intervention and covered:

- Feedback – discussion on how well people had engaged to date, any challenges and successes.
- Motivation – how to keep colleagues motivated by ensuring they have the knowledge, skills and ability to engage in behaviours and by using current and relevant emotive information.
- Campaign calendar – a campaign calendar was provided listing external initiatives that could be used to promote the importance of behaviour changes.

Mike is passionate about the environment and was motivated by the positive behaviour changes he was able to encourage amongst his colleagues.

4. MEASURING THE IMPACT

Without a measurable impact and positive feedback, momentum is quickly lost. People need to feel that they are making a difference.

Impact can come in many shapes and sizes, including:

- Measurable reduction in energy, waste or water
- Improved recycling rates or increased energy efficiency
- Enhanced employee satisfaction in the workplace or comfort

Reporting on impact regularly and consistently helps to maintain the changes that have taken place and prevent people from slipping back into old habits.



Insights from Queen Mary University of London

At Queen Mary University of London two similar buildings were selected for the 8-week pilot, one acted as a control and the other was exposed to the intervention.

Twelve employees volunteered to participate in the pilot, six in each building. Participants were asked to complete a survey before the intervention began and after, and they were observed before and after the intervention by researchers. Observers noted down the number of times participants recycled, printed, used the elevator or took the stairs.

The pilot study at Queen Mary University of London demonstrated that this approach could be effective at increasing employee pro-environmental behaviour, and the pilot shows potential for large-scale implementation.



APPENDIX: ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

STEPS TAKEN AT Queen Mary University of London

The steps taken to develop and test the intervention at Queen Mary University of London were:

- | | |
|---|---|
| Step 1:
Focus group | A voluntary workshop attended by Queen Mary University of London staff to gather a better understanding of what employees know, feel, think and do regarding environmental sustainability in the workplace. |
| Step 2:
Co-development workshop | A voluntary workshop attended by experienced academics and practitioners to generate the messages and create the design briefs for the campaign materials. |
| Step 3: Design materials | Engaging and interactive communications materials were created as part of the intervention to promote behaviour change. |
| Step 4: Pilot & Measurement | 12 employees participated in an 8-week intervention where their pro-environmental behaviours and lifestyle habits were surveyed and observed before and after the intervention. Two similar buildings were selected for the pilot; one acted as a control and the other was exposed to the intervention. The pilot assessed the feasibility of the intervention and in a large-scale implementation could test its effectiveness and measure results. |

THE DO'S AND DON'T'S

The focus group at Queen Mary University of London flagged several do's and don't's of a good behaviour programme.



Demonstrate that the target behaviour is simple, doable and not disruptive

Focus on the positive to empower the people

Use people to set an example

Expose people to examples without explicitly stating them

Create a culture where not behaving this way is unusual

Highlight the impact and benefits using facts and figures



Patronize people and state the obvious

Scare monger and focus on the negatives

Sound preachy and superior

Use classic green colours for posters



STRATEGIC ADVISORY FROM



FUNDED BY



External reference number:
C58030/A25891

Research led by Professor Danae Manika

For more information of the funded project please see
<http://danaemanika.co.uk/cruk.html>