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# Applying the Principles of Behaviour Change Communications to Increase Campaign Effectiveness

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## What can behavioural science offer to public sector communicators?

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Behavioural science is more than nudging and counterintuitive results of RCTs!

Systematic approach to understanding problems

Applying knowledge about how people tend to behave

Identifying what may be preventing behaviours

Systematically removing barriers with effective interventions, including communications

Clear principles guided by evidence

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## If not nudging, then what?

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GCS Behavioural Science Team provides behavioural science expertise to major government campaigns - and beyond!

Our team's philosophy is: *When a problem is broken down into its constituent parts, most behaviours can be explained by individuals to their situation in a way that makes sense to them*

We approach problems with a belief that people try to do the best they can, given their circumstances



Objective

Behaviour

Message

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**(a few) Principles  
of behaviour  
change comms**

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Specify behaviours

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Identify different  
types of barriers

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Remove barriers  
with effective  
messages

**Make your  
campaign  
objective about a  
*specific behaviour***

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Objective

Behaviour

Message

**Make your  
campaign  
objective about a  
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What specific behaviours is your audience **currently doing, or not doing?**

What specific behaviours are you trying to **encourage?**

Which **audience** has the power to create this behaviour change?

# Make your campaign objective about a *specific behaviour*

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Behaviour

An action that is observable

(who does what, how and when?)

Office workers get  
an LFD Covid test  
twice a week before  
coming in

NOT a  
behaviour

- A change in attitude
- Increased awareness
- More engagement in something
- A culture shift
- A social norm

Better awareness of  
the importance of  
getting tested for  
Covid at work

**Identify barriers to  
the behaviour**

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Objective

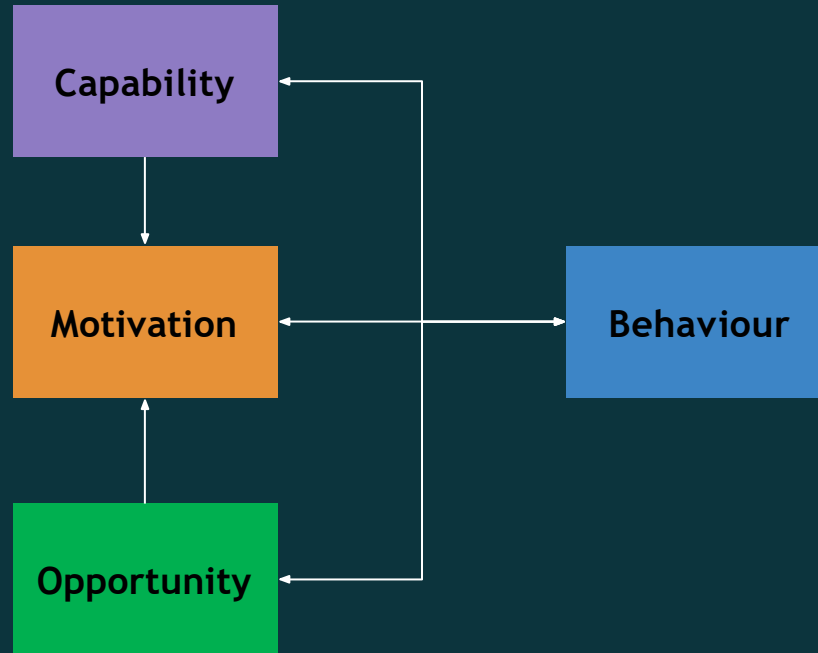
Behaviour

Message



Identify barriers to the behaviour

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## Identify barriers to the behaviour

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### Capability

Does your audience **have the right knowledge** to do it?

Does your audience **have the right skills** to do it?

Are they **physically and mentally able** to do it?

## Example

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**Behaviour**

**Communicators who attend this talk  
download our guide today**

**Capability**

They are not aware of the guide

They don't know where to find it

They don't know how to download a pdf

## Identify barriers to the behaviour

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### Motivation

Does your audience **believe they should** do it?

Does your audience **want to** do it?

Do they have the **necessary habits in place** to do it?

## Example

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**Behaviour**

Communicators who attend this talk  
download our guide today

**Motivation**

They are not interested by it  
They don't think it's relevant to their work  
They don't think they will learn anything  
new

## Identify barriers to the behaviour

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### Opportunity

Does your audience **have the resources** to do it?

Will the **system or environment** allow them to do it?

Will the **people around them** help or hinder them in doing it?

## Example

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**Behaviour**

**Communicators who attend this talk  
download our guide today**

**Opportunity**

They don't have the time to do it

Their workplace blocks the website

Their colleagues tell them not to waste  
their time

**Get target  
audience's attention**

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**Tell the audience  
what they have to  
do**

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**Motivate the  
audience to act**

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**Get target  
audience's attention**

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- ✓ Audience identify the message is directed at them
- ✓ The message uses their familiar language and words
- ✓ There's nothing competing for their attention
- ✓ They are likely to trust the source of the message
- ✓ The message is hard to ignore

**Tell the audience  
what they have to  
do**

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**Motivate the  
audience to act**

---

**Get target  
audience's attention**

---

**Tell the audience  
what they have to  
do**

---

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audience to act**

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- ✓ It's clear what the required behaviour is
- ✓ It's clear who is responsible for carrying it out
- ✓ The message is in plain English
- ✓ The message helps people form a plan of action
- ✓ The next steps are clear
- ✓ The message conveys appropriate urgency and timelines

**Get target  
audience's attention**

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**Tell the audience  
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**Motivate the  
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- ✓ The message is framed positively
- ✓ It's clear why one would want to follow the instructions
- ✓ The consequences of not doing anything are clearly set out
- ✓ The message makes people feel empowered to act
- ✓ The action sounds fun, interesting, or intriguing

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There's a lot more from us...

Government  
Communication  
Service

**Strategic communication:  
a behavioural approach**

Government  
Communication  
Service

**The Principles of Behaviour  
Change Communications**

Government  
Communication  
Service

**IN CASE: A behavioural  
approach to anticipating  
unintended consequences**

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