



Insights from the Field

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Project 1: Residential Recycling in Calgary



Construal Level

- Construal Level Theory
- Two different ways people can view the world

CONCRETE

- Lower-level construal of the activity
- Specifics

ABSTRACT

- Higher-level construal of the activity
- General

Message Framing and Recycling

Message Framing:

- Loss frames
- Gain frames



Loss-framed messages will be particularly effective when paired with a concrete appeal

Gain-framed messages will be particularly effective when paired with a abstract appeal

Field Study

- Field Study with the City of Calgary; 390 Households
- Experimental Design:
 - 2(Construal Level: Concrete vs. Abstract)
 - 2(Framing: Loss vs. Gain)
 - And a control group

	Concrete (How)	Abstract (Why)
Loss Frame		
Gain Frame		



CONCRETE CONSTRUAL: HOW TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Think about
ways to make
a difference.



- ♦ Remember, **no sorting required.**
- ♦ Recycle paper, cardboard, magazines, metal cans and aluminum foil products, plastics labelled 1-7, and beverage containers such as milk and juice boxes.
- ♦ Please don't place mixed materials in the bin (e.g., products made with more than one type of material) and do remember to remove lids and caps from containers.
- ♦ Set out the cart by 7 a.m. on your garbage day in the same general location as your garbage.



ABSTRACT CONSTRUAL: WHY MAKE A DIFFERENCE

Think about
reasons to make
a difference.

- Recycling will save our precious air, land and water resources.
- Recycling contributes to your community.
- Participation can double the amount of material Calgary recycles.
- Recycling turns materials into new products, rather than ending up in the landfill.



Loss Frame:

Think about
what will be lost
in our community if we
don't keep recycling.

- By not participating in the Blue Cart program, **we waste over 60,000 tonnes of paper** – the equivalent of **1.68 billion litres of water every year**.
- If we don't recycle, **we will lose over 10,000 school buses full of plastic** every year to the landfills.
- If Calgarians fail to recycle with the Blue Cart program, **we will lose over one million trees each year**.
- If we don't use materials more than once, **we will not conserve our natural resources**.

see over



blue cart
recycling

Gain Frame:

Think about what will be gained in our community if we keep recycling.

- By participating in the Blue Cart program, **we will save over 60,000 tonnes of paper** – the equivalent of **1.68 billion litres of water every year.**
- When we recycle, **we save over 10,000 school buses full of plastic** every year from the landfills.
- If Calgarians recycle with the Blue Cart program, **we will save over one million trees each year.**
- When we use materials more than once, **we conserve our natural resources.**

see over



blue cart
recycling

Method: Pretest- Posttest Design

WEEK 1: PRETEST OF RECYCLING BEHAVIORS

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graph TD; A[WEEK 1: PRETEST OF RECYCLING BEHAVIORS] --> B[WEEK 2: MARKETING MATERIALS DELIVERED (DOOR HANGERS)]; B --> C[WEEK 3: POSTTEST OF RECYCLING BEHAVIORS]; C --> D[MONTH 6: ONE MORE POSTTEST FOR GOOD MEASURE];
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**WEEK 2: MARKETING MATERIALS DELIVERED
(DOOR HANGERS)**

WEEK 3: POSTTEST OF RECYCLING BEHAVIORS

**MONTH 6: ONE MORE POSTTEST FOR GOOD
MEASURE**

Measures:

- Participation – yes = 1 and no = 0
(coded for change over time (-1, 0, 1))

- Volume of material (cm³)

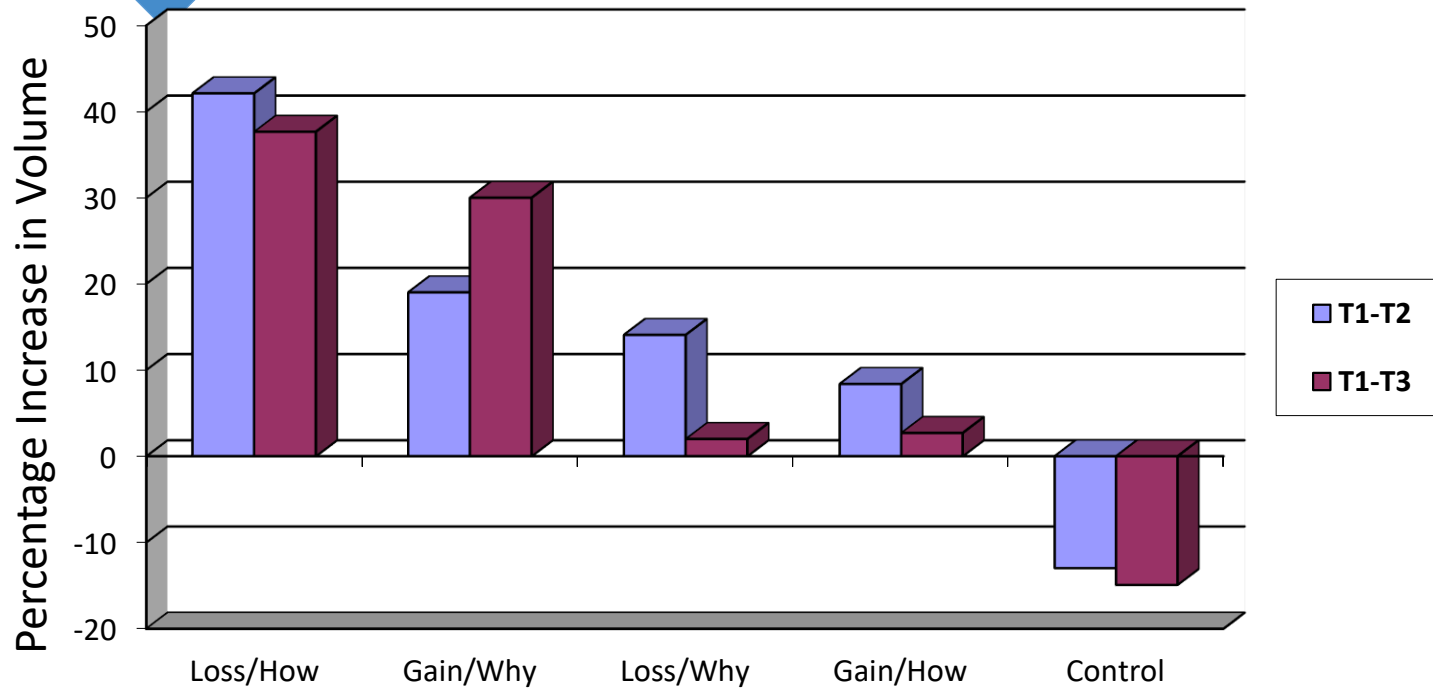
- Following instructions

- Contamination

- Variety (1 to 5)



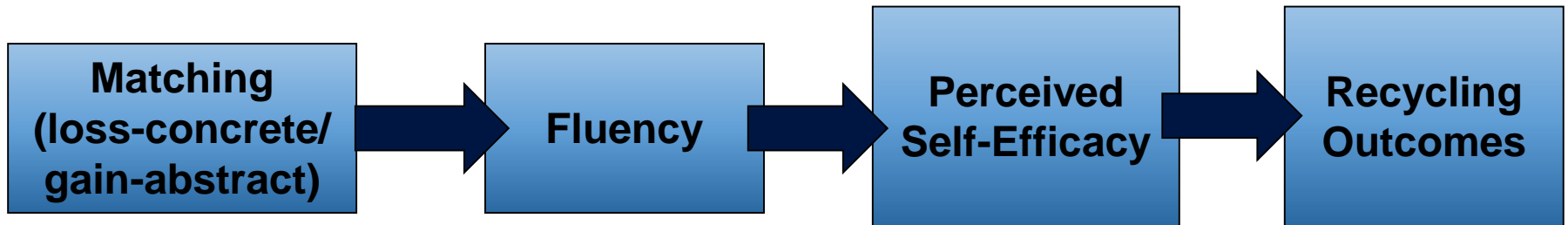
Results over time...



Why does it work?

Easier to understand = seems easier to do

Easier to do = people will actually do it!



Project 2: Grasscycling in Calgary

- The case of “Grasscycling”
- Initial results of survey research



Survey Research:

Descriptive Norms

- Norms that describe what other people are doing

Injunctive Norms

- Norms that reflect what others think should be done

Self-Benefits

- What is in it for me?

Messaging

Descriptive Norms

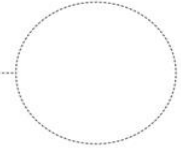
- **Your neighbors are grasscycling...**Join others in your community in grasscycling this spring and summer.

Injunctive Norms

- **Your neighbors want you to grasscycle...** Grasscycling is something you should do for your community.

Self-Benefits

- **Think about the benefits for you as an individual if you grasscycle...**Think of the time you can save on your yard work.



Grass clippings. Leave them on the lawn.

Grasscycling is the natural recycling of grass by leaving clippings on the lawn after mowing. Grass clippings will quickly decompose, returning valuable nutrients to the soil.

Why should you grasscycle?

A recent survey suggests that as an individual you can reduce the amount of waste going to the landfill in the summer months by grasscycling. Approximately 37 per cent of what you put in the trash during the growing season is yard waste, most of which is grass clippings.

Your neighbours want you to grasscycle.

- ▶ Grasscycling is something you should do for your community.
- ▶ You should grasscycle because it has positive implications for the environment—it reduces the amount of fertilizer and water you need to use on your lawn.
- ▶ You should make a positive contribution to our community by grasscycling.

Leave it
on the
Lawn



Individual Self

- “you as an individual...”
- “you can make a difference”

Collective Self

- “we as a community”
- “we can make a difference”



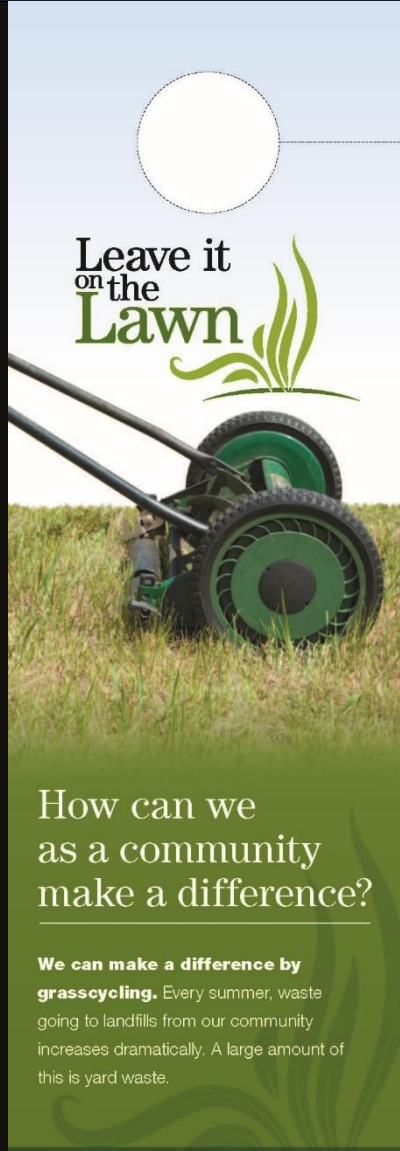
Leave it
on the
Lawn

How can you,
as an individual,
make a difference?

You can make a difference by grasscycling. Every summer, waste going to landfills from your community increases dramatically. A large amount of this is yard waste.



calgary.ca | call 3-1-1



Leave it
on the
Lawn

How can we
as a community
make a difference?

We can make a difference by grasscycling. Every summer, waste going to landfills from our community increases dramatically. A large amount of this is yard waste.



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Method

Part A: In conjunction with City employees, grasscycling activities for 696 households were recorded for a period of three weeks.

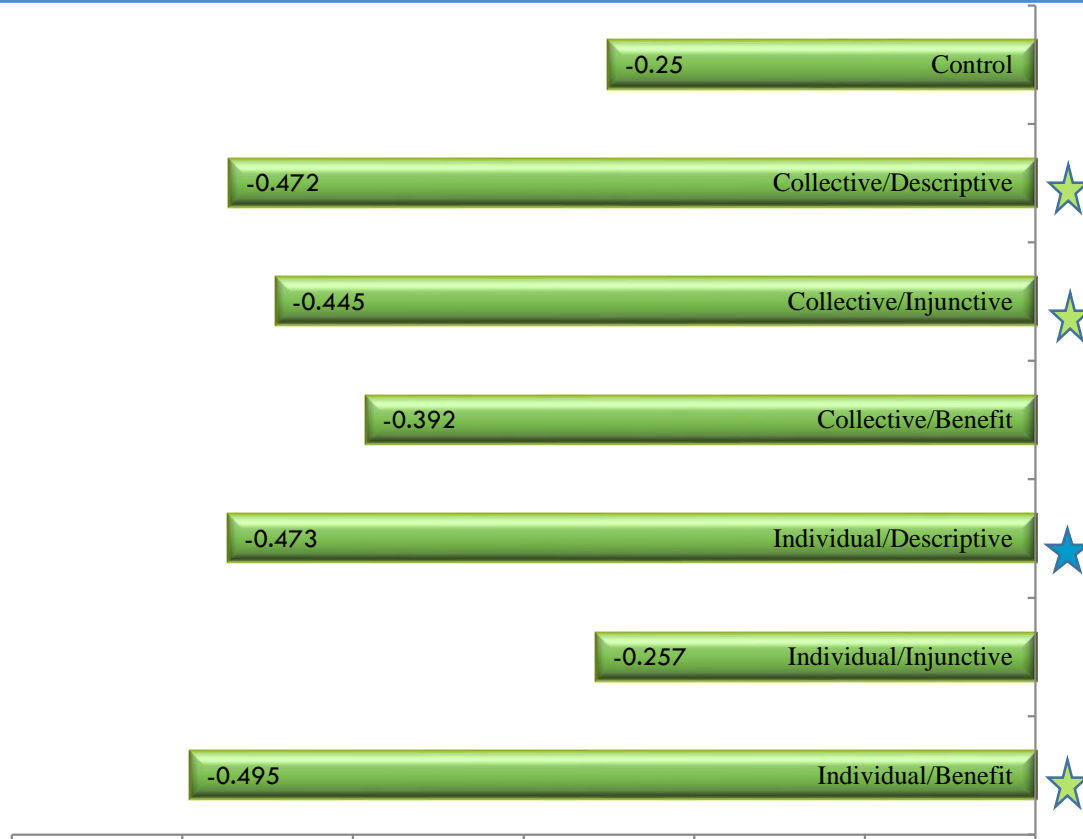


Part B: Appeals delivered on door hangers to each household. Varied **Level of Self** (individual vs. collective) and **Appeal Type** (self-benefit vs. descriptive norm vs. injunctive norm).⁰



Part C: Grasscycling activities recorded for a period of three weeks.

Grass Disposal Difference Scores (T1-T2)



Takeaways...

- 1) Message “fit” can influence sustainable behaviours
 - A match between loss (gain) framing and concrete (abstract) messaging led to increased recycling behaviours.
 - A match between the collective (individual) self and norms (self-benefits) lead to increased grasscycling behaviours
- 2) It is not the case that one strategy works “best” – context matters and you need to understand target population.



Thank You!

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