

HOW TO SHIFT CONSUMER BEHAVIOURS TO BE MORE SUSTAINABLE

Katherine White, Rishad Habib and David J. Hardisty
University of British Columbia

There are many sustainability challenges that we can address¹



Water

Commercial washing machines use an average of 34,740 gallons of water a year



Transportation

Transport is the most rapidly growing area of global energy use



Food

1/3 of all food produced i.e. 1.3 billion tons worth around \$1 trillion is wasted every year



Energy

If people worldwide switched to energy efficient lightbulbs we would save US\$120 billion a year



Disposal

More than 80% of wastewater resulting from human actions is discharged into rivers or seas without any pollution removal

Reviewing 320 academic articles revealed the following 5 factors

S

Social Influence

Social Norms
Social Desirability
Social Group
Membership

JOIN YOUR FELLOW GUESTS IN HELPING TO SAVE THE ENVIRONMENT

Almost 75% of guests who are asked to participate in our new resource savings program do help by using their towels more than once. You can join your fellow guests in this program to help save the environment by reusing your towels during your stay.

Linen-reuse rates were higher when the message mentioned **descriptive norms (44%)** than when it focused on environmental protection (35%)²

H

Habits

Break bad habits:
Discontinuity
Penalties
Form new good habits:
Make it easy
Prompts
Incentives
Feedback



Context changes make it harder to act automatically & easier to change habits
Recent movers reduced car use from **64%** of the time to **37%**³

I

Individual Self

Individual differences
Self-efficacy
Self-interest
Self-consistency
Self-concept



While men are often less likely to support sustainable causes, **masculine branding** or affirmation can close this gender gap⁴

F

Feelings & Cognition

Positive emotions:
warm glow, pride
Negative emotions:
Fear, guilt
Information
Framing
Labeling



Labels with "10-year dollar cost" framing increased energy efficient purchases from 12% to 48%⁵

T

Tangibility

Communicate impact
Match temporal focus
Encourage desire for intangibles
Concrete
Communications



Consumers are motivated more by **concrete stories, images, and examples** than by abstract information and statistics⁶

References

- ¹ Statistics taken from UN sustainable development goals, <https://www.un.org/sustainabledevelopment/>
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- ³ Verplanken, Bas, Ian Walker, Adrian Davis, and Michaela Jurasek (2008), "Context Change and Travel Mode Choice: Combining the Habit Discontinuity and Self-Activation Hypotheses," *Journal of Environmental Psychology*, 28(2), 121-127.
- ⁴ Brough, A. R., Wilkie, J. E., Ma, J., Isaac, M. S., & Gal, D. (2016). Is eco-friendly unmanly? The green-feminine stereotype and its effect on sustainable consumption. *Journal of Consumer Research*, 43(4), 567-582.
- ⁵ Hardisty, D. J., Shim, Y., Sun, D., & Griffin, D. (working paper). Encouraging Energy Efficiency: Product Labels Activate Temporal Tradeoffs.
- ⁶ Marx, S. M., Weber, E. U., Orlove, B. S., Leiserowitz, A., Krantz, D. H., Roncoli, C., & Phillips, J. (2007). Communication and mental processes: Experiential and analytic processing of uncertain climate information. *Global Environmental Change*, 17(1), 47-58.

For More Information

HBR Article: The Elusive Green Consumer
<https://hbr.org/2019/07/the-elusive-green-consumer>

Journal of Marketing Article:
How to SHIFT Consumer Behaviors to be More Sustainable: A Literature Review and Guiding Framework
<https://doi.org/10.1177/0022242919825649>