

WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

INSPIRE

BehaviourWorks
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INCREASING COMPLIANCE THROUGH WRITTEN COMMUNICATIONS

Are your letters getting the numbers? It's a question that many organisations and public administrators ask themselves in the face of rising postal and administration costs. Even for those organisations using digital communications to ask their customers and citizens to act on important requests, the cost of unanswered requests and non-compliance is high and getting higher every year.

So, what's the best way of influencing behaviour through written communications? BehaviourWorks Australia (BWA) has translated its expertise in this area into a simple set of techniques that have proven to be effective in increasing compliance.

INSPIRED LETTER WRITING

For several years, BehaviourWorks has been investigating ways to improve written communications and increase compliance via written requests.

As we've discovered, it's not just about moving away from complex or cold language, but about applying a range of simple techniques that have been shown to achieve large aggregate improvements in compliance.

For some organisations, even small percentage improvements in the effectiveness of written communications can have substantial monetary and policy benefits.

So, what are these techniques? BWA has translated them into a stand-alone product called INSPIRE.



INSPIRE draws on the academic literature, key behavioural techniques, successful behaviour change models and BWA's own experience working with government agencies and businesses to increase compliance through written communications.

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Based on an easily remembered mnemonic, INSPIRE captures and summarises seven proven techniques (right) to achieve compliance.

The framework - which can be provided upon request for a fee - gives specific instructions on how to apply each technique and overcome practical challenges as they arise.

In other words, INSPIRE provides a 'recipe' for designing high-impact, targeted messages that get results.

PROVEN RESULTS

The INSPIRE framework is based on BWA's own experience working with government departments, non-government agencies and private sector organisations since 2011. For example:

- By applying INSPIRE techniques, we helped VicRoads improve on-time reporting by drivers who were required to have a doctor check their medical fitness to drive by 24 per cent.
- By making subtle changes to the Environment Protection Authority Victoria's litter fine communications, INSPIRE techniques helped to reduce the number of people avoiding payments by 13 per cent.
- Using INSPIRE techniques in vehicle registration renewal letters elicited tens of millions of dollars more in on-time payments.

INSPIRE TECHNIQUES

The seven techniques articulated in the INSPIRE Framework* - at a glance.

- I**mplementation intentions – close the 'intention-behaviour gap' by encouraging people to make a plan to act.
- N**orms - use a combination of injunctive norms and descriptive norms to increase the uptake of desirable behaviours.
- S**alience – use visual stimuli, such as colour and symbols, to demand attention.
- P**rocedural justice – show the fairness of the process by emphasising the accuracy of the information, lack of bias, consistent procedures and respectful treatment of the individual.
- I**ncentives – use the right kind of monetary and non-monetary incentives.
- R**eputation and credibility – ensure that the communications come from, or are authored by, someone who can inspire belief.
- E**ase – making compliance easier via clear instructions.

*** Ref: Faulkner N, Borg K, Bragge P, et al. (in review). The INSPIRE framework: How public administrators can increase compliance with written requests.**

To learn more about how the INSPIRE framework can help your organisation, contact us on:
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BehaviourWorks Australia is a behaviour change research enterprise within the Monash Sustainable Development Institute at Monash University. Visit: www.behaviourworksaustralia.org