

# ENHANCE CHANGE ADOPTION THROUGH NUDGING

Why leveraging behavioural insights within organizations is key

## Abstract

A successful digital transformation needs to consider the triggers of people's choices. Behavioural sciences offer us an amazing field to understand how people behave and make decisions. Organizations should unleash their potential to foster change adoption. What if small interventions could nudge people in the right directions and make big changes? After all, micro is the new mega.

## Introduction

Do you know how cigarette litter has been reduced by 46% in the streets of London? By installing ashtrays displaying the question “Who is the best football player in the world”!<sup>1</sup> People got the chance to choose between Ronaldo and Messi via their litter! These ingenious interventions, called nudges, are everywhere around us. Haven’t you already chosen food based on the nutritional score displayed on its package? Most of us have also tried to book a hotel room, while a pop-up window was informing us that 5 other people were looking at the same stay at the same time. Experiences like these have proven to be impactful and lead to remarkable results.

### 1. Nudge is everywhere in our daily lives... and an interesting technique to explore in the workplace

What is really a nudge? Richard Thaler and Cass Sunstein (2008) defined it as “any aspect of the choice architecture that alters people’s behaviour in a predictable way without forbidding any options or significantly changing their economic incentives.”<sup>2</sup>

In simple words, it is an indirect suggestion to guide a behaviour to the desired outcome. Consider it as a positive reinforcement. This concept stems from behavioural sciences and tries to explain the decision-making process of individuals; what triggers a certain behaviour in someone. Nudges are here to influence the choices we make, without removing the power to choose.

Nudge theory has been deployed to many fields to influence their targets, such as marketing, transportation companies, healthcare, even governments. According to OECD (2017), more than 200 institutions apply behavioural techniques in the public policy around the world.<sup>3</sup> In France, a behavioural science team has been forged in the government in 2018. Recently, the French government leveraged the nudges to fight against the Covid-19 virus spread. They used principles, such as social norms, rewards, and call-to-action, for the SMS communication promoting the application “TousAntiCovid” (app name in French, “All Against Covid” in English). By stressing that “More than 10 million French people are already using it and are alerted earlier in case of contact with the virus and have access to a test”, the average number

of downloads was multiplied by 2.5 compared to before.<sup>4</sup>

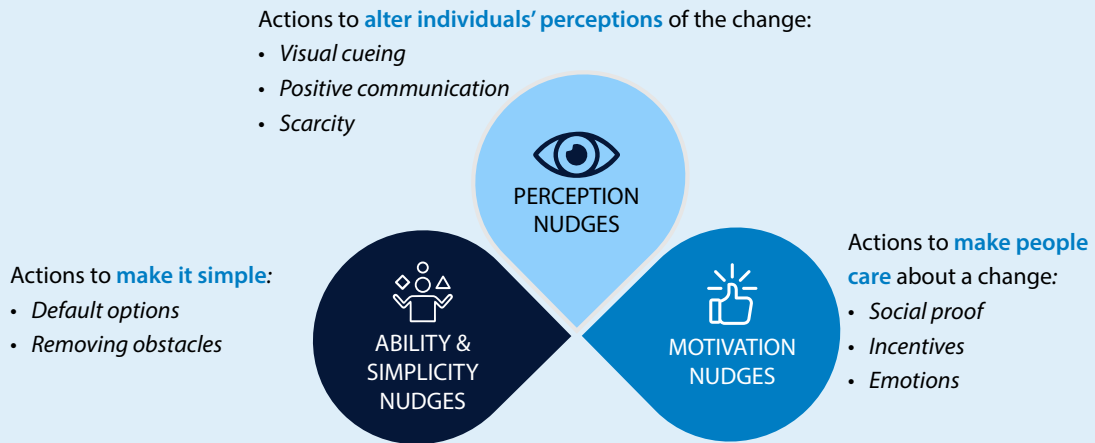
How can we apply that in the workplace? In organizations, change is everywhere, brought by technology, internal processes, ways of working etc. In this regard, nudge is an interesting technique to foster adoption and avoid the ‘change fatigue’ effect by softly stimulating decisions, mindsets, and behaviours. Interventions have low impact when they do not consider people’s perceptions. To succeed, organizations should start from understanding how people think and make decisions. Then, encompassing these behavioural insights into a holistic approach to manage the change can help attain the desired patterns. In other words, nudges can be part of the answer to implement a successful change management approach.



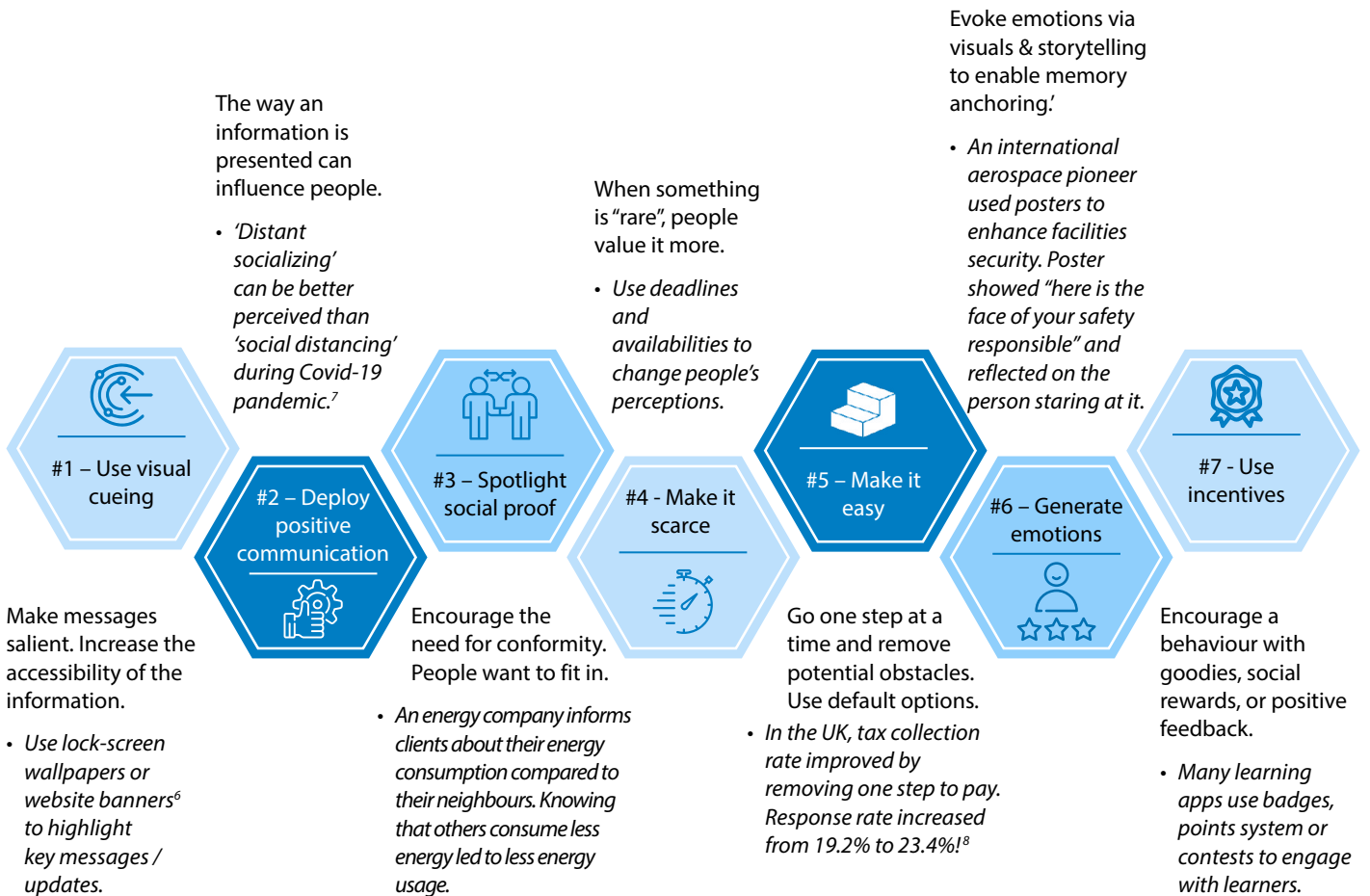
## 2. When applied properly, nudging principles can drive an efficient Change Management strategy to address typical organizational challenges

Behavioural sciences have investigated thoroughly what guides people's perceptions and decisions. Subtle interventions designed through a behavioural lens and embedded in a holistic change approach can unlock the desired mindsets.








Nudges design is based on the different triggers of human behaviour, such as loss aversion, emotions, need for conformity, etc. They can be classified in three major categories based on their objective.<sup>5</sup>



Here are 7 golden rules to design impactful nudging experiences:



These experiences can address some of the most common requirements within organizations:

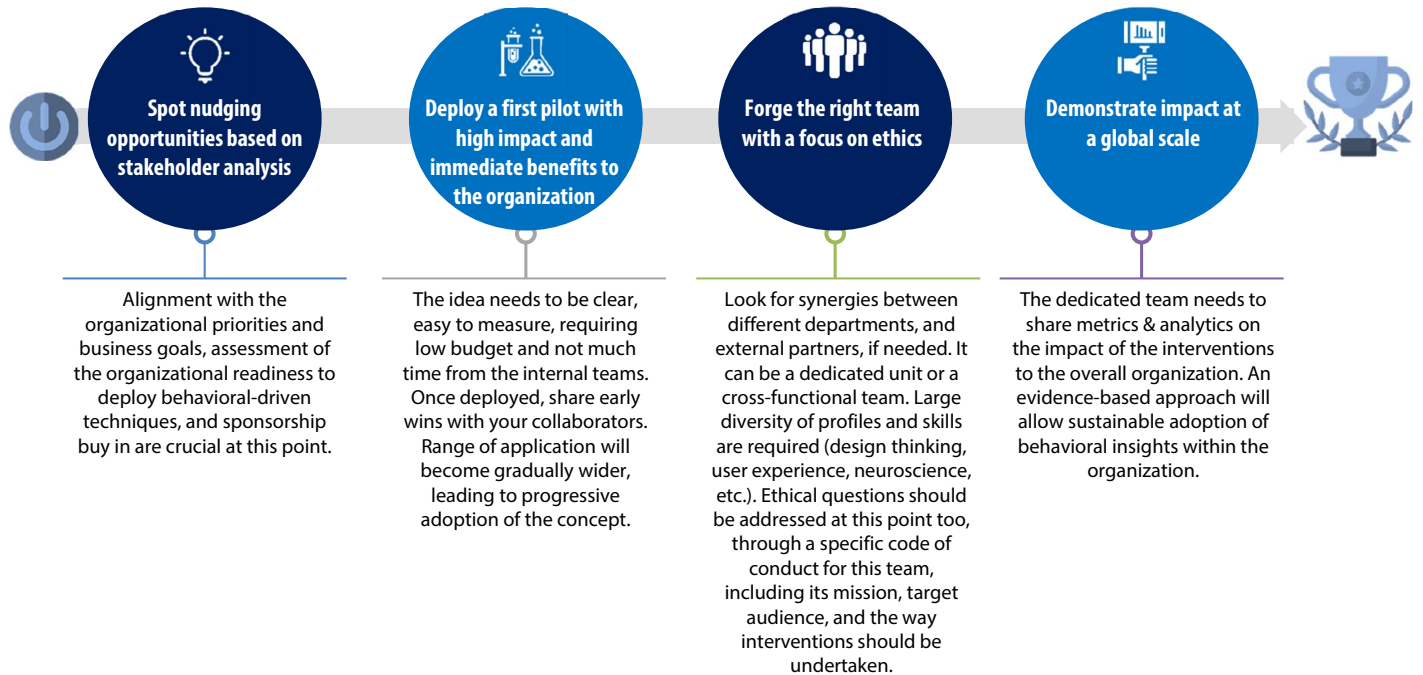
Organizational need	Typical challenge/pitfall	Nudge example	Corresponding principle
<b>Foster usage of an internal tool</b>	Workarounds employed instead of using the tool	Communications highlighting number of colleagues using the tool (peer pressure)	 #3 - spotlight social proof
<b>Shift mindset to self-service when facing an IT issue</b>	Employees tend to contact their service desk, leading to high cost of support	One-click button to access Knowledge Articles from any device / platform	 #5 - make it easy
<b>Ensure staff awareness about some fresh news</b>	Low number of views leading to low awareness	Banners / lock-screen wallpapers	 #1 - use visual cueing
<b>Collect feedback from employees (e.g. pulse check)</b>	Low participation rate	Deadlines for participation submission	 #4 - make it scarce
<b>Ensure respect of security rules</b>	Old habits taken away from compliance standards	Engaging posters in common spaces, reflecting employees' face: "it all depends on me"	 #6 - generate emotions
<b>Increase adoption of new ways of working</b>	Rumors and noise sabotaging the project	Success stories shared via e-mail campaigns	 #2 - be positive
<b>Nurture a lifelong learning culture</b>	Employees' learning time is scarce	Contest, badges, leaderboard	 #7 - use incentives

Aligning current practices at work with behavioural insights can be a game changer. Nudges have proven to lead to remarkable results. But to pave the way for sustainable change, they should be part of an overarching strategy, rather than being managed as standalone interventions.



### 3. Instilling behavioural sciences in your organization: the key for a long-term success

Nowadays, the most innovative and high-performing companies are integrating behavioural sciences at an accelerated pace. Nudge units or other relevant entities are created, and new roles appear, such as the Chief Behavioural Officer (CBO), in charge of applying behavioural science to the business.<sup>9</sup> Here is a 4-step framework if you wonder from where to start:



## Conclusion

In the era of digitalization and remote working, we need to focus more than before on the human and design “smarter” interventions for our customers and employees. In the meanwhile, the growth of behavioural economics is bringing new insights to the industry and is challenging our current practices. Integrating neurosciences in organizations is growing fast and is far more than being just a trend. The deployment of actions resulting from them, such as nudges, can lead to achieving strategic business goals.

Nevertheless, before starting the behavioural science journey, ethical questions of such interventions need to be considered. Be it for employees internally or for customers, for business or policy issues, nudges should be used in a positive change sense, that aims to fulfil the long-term interests of stakeholders, rather than manipulating them. Therefore, it goes beyond incorporating new tools to our current approaches. It is about infusing a new mindset, committed to applying them “ethically and effectively”.<sup>10</sup>



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