

20 TOP TIPS



For effective behavioural change communications, when attempting to reduce demand for illegal wildlife products

Tips about messaging

'Dos':

1. Focus on 'new/good' behaviour: rather than telling people to stop doing a 'bad' behaviour, how about encouraging them to consume high-value experiences or sustainable products instead?
2. Appeal to the heart as well as the 'head'; can you make the 'new/good' behaviour something that is cool, sexy and fun?
3. Make the 'new/good' behaviour, something simple with a clear personal short term reward; for many, appeals to 'save a species' are unfortunately a bit too long term and impersonal to encourage a real change their day to day behaviour.
4. Grab attention: make it eye-catching and thought provoking – can you use visual images to enhance short punchy text? Behaviour change messages have to somehow stand out from the estimated 5,000 pieces of communication that bombard consumers' everyday
5. Consider cultural relevance: In some countries, people's purchases are especially influenced by the reaction others will have to them, perhaps less the consumer's own choice.

'Don'ts':

6. The law matters, but better not rely on that only; can you design messaging that aims to 'shape motivation', to complement that raising awareness around behavioural controls?
7. Avoid lecturing people or using a 'moralizing' or 'didactic' tone - nobody likes it!
8. Think carefully before using pictures of powerful animals – there is a risk you could provide a behavioural 'prompt' and remind people they provide products to buy!
9. Consider carefully telling people animals are at risk of extinction or...
10. ...that there is a high price for their products – some people might be encouraged to purchase such products for investment purposes.
11. Avoid implying that many people are buying illegal products; this could convey purchasing such products is already a social norm, and that the risk of suffering penalties for doing so is low.
12. Carefully consider the use of 'shock-tactics'; some may be disgusted and turn away, or assume that it is nothing to do with them, as they are inherently a 'good person' and couldn't possibly be e.g. causing elephants to die painfully/horribly.

Tips about messengers

13. Carefully consider who can influence meaningful behavioural change: Who are really the best people to act as 'Key Opinion Leaders' and 'Influential Agents of Change', rather than those that just grab attention and raise awareness? Celebrities will help set the tone around what is and isn't 'trendy' amongst certain audiences. Those that surround consumers on a regular/face to face basis (family, friends, colleagues, peers), however, are likely to have a critical role in changing consumer behaviour.
14. Consumer research will identify who the target audience trust, respect, value or love: consider those within this group who can act as messengers, able to reinforce messaging over time – Some consider it takes a single message distributed six or seven times in different ways, to really achieve behaviour change, so your messengers should have regular contact with the consumer target audience if possible!
15. Face-to-face communication is a good complement to e.g. non-personal PSAs, banner ads on websites or mobile phones, LCD screens in airports, posters in bus-stops, etc.

Tips about mechanisms

16. Carefully consider when and where to use conservation themed branding or logos – be prepared to go 'logo' free, or use 'Key Opinion Leaders' logos instead... some consumers may switch-off if they see a conservation logo, purely because of the brand attachment ('a conservation group would say that, wouldn't they').
17. Lateral associations are key but underutilised; an efficient and effective way of sharing behavioural change messaging is to embed it within an existing successful message – are there any that can be adapted? i.e. Can messages addressing company executives, telling them how to improve their reputation, reduce exposure to corporate risk, improve brand integrity etc., make a reference to reducing consumption of illegal wildlife products? Can government messaging, such as those issued by Traditional Medicine administrations, or communications such as the Chinese government's campaign around 'ecological civilisation', emphasise choosing alternatives to wildlife products? Tourists and State owned companies with staff operating abroad can be great ambassadors for their home country: can conservation messages be embedded within current communications, to promote this link?
18. Targeted placements for behavioural change messaging – the right message needs to be in the right location/s where it will have maximum impact on the target audience, e.g. messaging about rhino horn consumption on buses is unlikely to reach consumers as the latter are generally wealthy enough to own a motorbike or a car.
19. Behavioural change is a 'journey' – various behavioural change models recognize that people tend to change first their Knowledge, then their Attitudes and finally their Practice – 'KAP'. Changes in the KAP usually happen incrementally over time. Behaviour change communications could aim to make a change in each aspect of the KAP accordingly.
20. Luxury product consumers usually go through a cycle of consumption behaviour; i.e. initially consumers buy big name brands to display their new found wealth or on-trend status. Over time their tastes become more specialized and they start to purchase unique products instead. Ultimately this shifts again into buying unique experiences. At this point, they might make interesting 'messengers' with other luxury consumers.

Panel 1: Imagine yourself at a dinner with a group of friends who are business people... Someone asks... I want to buy a gift for my next potential business partner... What should I buy? Why not get rhino horn? A statue made from elephant ivory? Tiger bone wine? I saw on a poster, that these species could be extinct soon – maybe the prices of their products will increase in time. What would you say about ivory for investment? I know that you are good at giving investment advice! Consider carving skill and craftsmanship over the material being used! An intelligent investor would seek an alternative. Avoid buying things that could come from wildlife trafficking, it is destroying livelihoods in the countries where these animals live. Ivory is a very poor choice... prices for 'collectable' items like that change a lot, plus the ivory could be illegal. The wise and moral man would not buy it. A very exciting discussion was generated that night...

Panel 2: A friend of mine lost a business opportunity because he bought a gift of Tiger bone wine, and it became illegal... I thought about buying rhino horn as a medicine for my father, despite the rumours about how many fakes there were around... The only way he will get better is if we get him to the TCM Doctor to get proper medicine... The head of the table finally speaks with authority – they all listen. Hey, why don't you give him an eco-safari voucher! This has great meaning, we can give people a chance to be great ambassadors for their country, show how they're leading the way in tackling illegal trade! Some of the artists I know might be able to prepare a special commission, using local talent, sustainable materials... the perfect choice for those seeking beautiful, one-off luxury products as business or other gifts! My success has come from within. Wildlife products are not a sophisticated choice, you will not gain respect. Can you gift an experience or a sustainable product instead? I believe those are the future! Something unique and special that will leave happy memories! Or, you could buy an individual piece of art from my high-end gallery... We can help you, certainly! First we need to create and design messages, which are of course culturally relevant, and also based on strong insights into consumer motivations here; we have consumer research that can help! Let's try to change consumer behaviour! ...by changing knowledge, attitudes and then practice!

Panel 3: The next day. So, there are probably MANY people out there looking for alternatives to wildlife products! Yes, and we can help do a great thing for our local community and city's economy too! The gallery owner gets great feedback from some of the local artists, who would love to join in a 'matchmaking' service, between them and those seeking alternatives to wildlife products. He decides to share the 'matchmaking' idea with a conservation charity who work on reducing demand for these wildlife products. This is exactly what we're looking for! We can help you, certainly! First we need to create and design messages, which are of course culturally relevant, and also based on strong insights into consumer motivations here; we have consumer research that can help! Let's try to change consumer behaviour! ...by changing knowledge, attitudes and then practice!

Panel 4: We should think of at least six ways to deliver the message for it to really work well! Face to face messaging is one very useful way to change behaviour! i.e. in a business dinner setting, talks with friends, through professional associations... Success comes from within, it doesn't rely on animal products... Our research shows that just relying on telling people it's illegal, or highlighting the threat to animals, might not be the most effective way to change what people buy... Also, avoid implying wildlife products are currently what everybody goes for – we don't want them to think it's okay because it seems others do it! CAUTION! But careful about what pictures you use - consider whether glossy pictures of animals might remind people that you can buy products from them! And then shocking pictures might turn people away...

Panel 5: Think about whether to use a logo/ how to brand the message, some consumers might 'switch-off' if they see a conservation groups' logo; if you need to use a logo at all, your Gallery's logo would work. Although you could choose to develop a logo specific to the matchmaking service instead! Avoid lecturing people! Focus on the new / good behaviour that they can do instead! Advertising agencies would say: emotion is key. Appeal to the heart as well to the head. Use language that sells the great smell of the food, rather than the food itself! Recommend something that is simple, straight forward and easy to do!

Panel 6: Change consumer's Knowledge first. We need to find specific locations for the Ads to reach our target audiences! There are many good spots; business people will read finance newspapers, business magazines... the Chamber of Commerce website, etc. ...Business class lounges in the airport, if they travel a lot. Business people are always at the local tennis club here, too! And of course... face to face messaging is also a good way to share messaging; so let's work with champions who can distribute the messaging using a personal touch, in e.g. business. Let's develop Ads that grab attention! They have to stand out. then Attitudes then Practice. One Year Later. A great idea and collaboration had been born! The gallery wins on all fronts, attracting international attention to their matchmaking service! They are delighted with the accolades but also happy they have made a meaningful contribution to their community, the local economy and also to wildlife worldwide... The Gallery owners have launched their matchmaking service and are now at an award ceremony, where it has been entered into an international competition, in the categories for best market innovation, best CSR Strategy, and best communications strategy... As they have matured in their careers they realise that success does indeed come from within... and not from any material measure. They are contented and happy and now their own 'head of the table'.