

Intervention design ●

Goal: To indicate or give permission that it is OK to take an item of food out of the shopping basket/trolley and not purchase it when getting at the check-out in supermarket/stores. Located just before check-out, when people are likely to be in a more rational mind-set ‘cold state’ (thinking about paying!), different messages are tested to prompt shoppers to think about whether they will eat all of the food they’ve picked up. And provide a space where they can leave excess products. The research has been conducted as a survey to explore if the intervention would be effective or not and worth it or not to be implemented in stores. The goal of the research is to provide information to design the intervention.

Implementation: Testing of four different messaging: based on different behavioural principles:

1. Reciprocity (If someone is generous or helpful, we feel inclined to return the favour): “leave it with us, if you’ve picked up too much food, leave it here and we’ll put it back for you” the supermarket is being overly helpful and generous to the shopper.
2. Psychological distance: “take a moment...realised you’ve more food than you’ll eat...why not leave it here?”
3. Loss aversion: “Don’t pay for food you’ll never eat. We carry home 200 kg of uneaten food every year. Save your money and leave it here” Social norms (we adjust our behaviour to follow others): “Together, we’re shopping smarter...If you’ve picked up too much food, join other shoppers and leave it here” The survey tested the concept on 400 customers corresponding to 3 consumer profiles.

Perception of customers have been evaluated through two types of questions:

- Response rate against chosen ‘criteria’ in implicit association testing.
- Self-reported explicit answers to questions;

Drivers: Buying too much food when in an ‘emotional’ state in the retail environment regardless of the reason- hungry, in a hurry, fallen foul of supermarket ‘buying’ nudges.

Levers: Using behavioural messages to give nudge people to return food items.

Effectiveness:

75 % of respondents considered it a “good to excellent” idea.

Transferability and scalability:

WRAP has been actively looking for retail partners to trial a ‘put back’ space for over three years. No partner has shown interest. The major barrier is partner interest, as opposed to lack of interest from citizens to use a ‘put it back’ zone.

Key features for replicability:

It is clear that what people say, is different to what they think, or feel. For example, message three – “Leveraging Loss Aversion” tested the strongest explicitly, but not implicitly.

COUNTRY ●

UK

IMPLEMENTED BY ●

WRAP

DURATION ●

12/11/2018 – 30/03/2019

Information sourced from:

Swannell, R., Bruns, H., Brüggemann, N., Candeal, T., Casonato, C., Diercxsens, C., Garcia Herrero, L., Gil Roig, J.M., Haglund, Y., Van Herpen, E., Kaptan, G., Kasza, G., Mikkelsen, B.E., Miranda Pires, I.M., Obersteiner, G., Vainioranta, J., Vittuari, M., Watanabe, K. and Sala, S., Evaluation of consumer food waste prevention interventions, Publications Office of the European Union, Luxembourg, 2023, doi:10.2760/224541, JRC133003