

THE “3B’S” APPROACH

It's a daunting task to list all of the behavioral economic principles for behavior change. From loss aversion to social proof, the list can seem endless.

To help structure our principles, we created the “3Bs” approach to help design for behavior change that improves lives. Among companies that have used our approach to design products are Facebook, Google, World Bank and JawBone.

1 IDENTIFYING KEY BEHAVIORS



THE KEY BEHAVIOR IS A SPECIFIC AND MEASURABLE ACTION YOU WANT A USER TO TAKE.

We ask ourselves:

- What action do you want the user to take?
- Is this the single most important behavior for them to do to meet the business goals? (If we don't know, we identify the assumptions we're making)
- How often do you want the user to do this behavior? Some behaviors only need to happen once, but some require habitual engagement.

TOP 3 MISTAKES PEOPLE MAKE WHEN IDENTIFYING THE KEY BEHAVIOR:

1) Mistaking an outcome for a behavior

An outcome is “losing 10 pounds” or “acquisition cost under \$16.” Examples of behaviors are “eat fruit once a day,” “exercise every Wednesday after work” or “open up a savings account during first use.”

2) Not getting uncomfortably specific

Get uncomfortably specific. Define the exact behavior you want someone to do, and when they should do it. It should be as specific as: “Grab a red delicious apple from the kitchen fruit bowl every weekday morning, right before walking out the door for work.” If you're not a little bit uncomfortable defining your key behavior, you're doing it wrong.

3) Thinking log-in and sign-up are behaviors

“Log in” and “Sign up” don't count as behaviors: What is the behavior we want users to do after they've logged in?

2 REDUCING BARRIERS



BARRIERS ARE THE EXTRA STEPS AND THE HARD QUESTIONS. BARRIERS ARE THE FRICTION THAT PREVENT USERS FROM DOING OUR KEY BEHAVIOR. TO DESIGN FOR BEHAVIOR CHANGE, THESE SHOULD BE REDUCED.*

Example:

- Barriers can be big, like accessing and filling out long forms to apply for student loans or benefits, but they can also be much smaller, like remembering your login and password.
- Every click, every field, every signature, every step, every call, adds friction.
- Having to think and/or make a decision is also a barrier. The more you can reduce this barrier, the better.

* There are times where we want to have barriers. Adding friction can keep people from doing undesirable behaviors. For example: Keeping unhealthy food in a hard to reach place.

3 AMPLIFYING BENEFITS



BENEFITS ENCOURAGE AND MOTIVATE USERS TO DO OUR KEY BEHAVIOR. To design for behavior change, we want to amplify existing benefits or create new benefits. Where barriers add friction, benefits add motivation.

In both cases we want to focus on creating immediate and hedonic benefits.

- 1) What would impact a user's life right now?
- 2) Does the benefit appeal to someone's emotion?

To amplify existing benefits we can use our behavioral tools like social proof and loss aversion.

To create new benefits we want to think about the product's longer term benefits that we can make more immediately salient.

USING THE 3BS PROCESS ALLOWS US TO HONE IN ON THE MOST CRITICAL AND ADDRESSABLE ISSUES, LEADING TO MORE EFFECTIVE AND COST-EFFICIENT INTERVENTIONS.