

# Nudge & **Email Marketing**



Prepared By,  
Metrix Data Science | August 2022

# Introduction

Have you ever been subconsciously influenced to adopt a certain behaviour from clever and subtle messaging? If the answer is no then you've been swayed by nudge marketing, likewise if the answer is yes. Nudge theory, popularised by the economist Richard Thaler in the late 2000s, contains elements of behavioural economics and psychology. As the name suggests, a nudge is a push toward a certain behaviour. Nudges are small psychological tricks to lead to a certain behaviour(s).

It describes the process of impacting consumer decisions indirectly which often leads to persistence in the desired behaviour through reinforced messages

“ Communications which take inspiration from the principles of nudge theory is nudge marketing. ”



# Nudges In Practice

Policymakers are a terribly interested in the application of nudge theory to encourage beneficial behaviour. Governments across the world have been applying nudge theory to help with weight loss. Nudges are very separate from authoritarian dictates. That is, they are not designed to restrict consumer choice like. Therefore banning sugary foods is not an example of a nudge. Tricks like placing fruit and veg at eye level or promoting healthy products with cartoon characters are nudges. A key question social scientists are racking their brains thinking about is how to apply nudge marketing principles to tackle some of society's biggest issues. There are myriad things that policy makers and business leaders can do to alleviate power consumption to make inroads into reducing our reliance on non-sustainable energy sources.



Inspiration can be taken from an experiment at a Canadian University conducted four decades ago. To encourage more people to use the stairs, they added a 16 second delay prior to the elevator doors opening. This minor inconvenience meant more people used the stairs and energy usage reduced as a result. When this elevator quirk was reversed, people continued using the stairs, which shows how minor changes lead to persistent beneficial behaviour.



# Nudges In Practice

Some businesses in California have taken the hint and removed free car parks which saw a surge in public transport usage. Scandinavian restaurants have trialled designing menus which have vegetarian food as the default option and list vegetarian food at the top of the menu. The latter nudge discourages meat eating since it forces the consumer to search for meat plates.

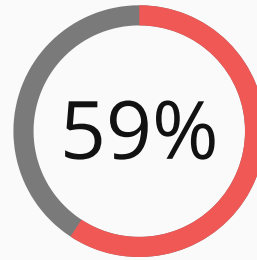
These innovations may seem piecemeal but slight alterations in behaviour can significantly accumulate to huge gains over longer time periods. The climate crisis is such that behaviours need to change quickly and need to be adopted almost universally. This will be the challenge for policy makers unleashing the tools of nudge marketing

“ The lesson from the elevator experiment is to create small obstacles in the way of non-green behaviour. ”



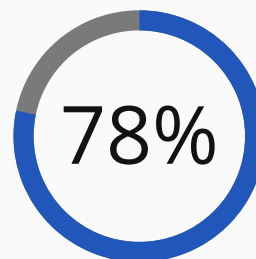
# Email Marketing and nudge

A very effective and popular way to convey nudge marketing messages is through email. Companies invest in teams of behavioural economists and psychologists to perfect their messaging and entice consumers to click their emails and purchase their products. The numbers bear out the success brands have enjoyed by employing nudge marketing.



According to SaleCycle, 59% of respondents say marketing emails influence their purchase decisions

Nudges do take time, but in the long run they are extremely effective. For brands that use email for commercial purposes, the medium has the ability to ensure existing or future customers are on the correct consumer journey to engagement, consideration and purchase.



78% of marketers have seen an increase in email engagement over the past 12 months (source: Hubspot).



# Email Marketing **and nudge**

The wide reach of email campaigns also gives the channel an edge when it comes to nudging people in the right direction. The visibility of email is a crucial part in this: even if people are not opening your messages they can still burrow into the subconscious. This, in turn, can alter the behaviour of people in your target market at scale.

Furthermore, subject lines with catchy but meaningful tones can be effective for capturing recipients' attention. Whether solicited or unwelcome, an email notification will generally have an impact by simply reaching the individual. Email campaigns can also be optimised by profiling certain customers who may be interested in a brand, using customer segmentation to reach the people who are most likely to act, from clickthroughs to commercial action.



# Summary

Nudges come in various forms and guises and once you are aware of their presence you can see them cropping up everywhere. Some of the most pressing issues that face this planet are being tackled in this way. As was the case with elevators, once people are shown the 'right' thing to do, the hope is that this will become a learned behaviour to be repeated even when the nudges are absent. Brands have shown themselves very adept at utilising this type of suggestion for their own ends. What's true for brands can also be harnessed for public health messages.

Emails can be sent on a much larger scale than most forms of media allow, reaching the greatest number of people as possible. This opens up exciting possibilities for the use of nudge to help towards building a better future.

