



Many sustainable behaviours need to be repeated (e.g. purchasing of goods, waste disposal etc). Breaking an established unsustainable habit is very hard - in a business context, it might also mean starting new onboarding processes, changing procedures, training, potentially new risks...

- How to overcome this, if it becomes a barrier?**
- Highlight the difficulty of carrying on as usual, e.g. finding insurance coverage for an unsustainable business
 - Highlight the potential penalties (e.g. taxes, fines, higher prices) if the unsustainable behaviour continues
 - Encourage your client to "just try" the new sustainable behaviour or product, where possible
 - Highlight the advantages of the new behaviour, like the ease of use, time and money saving, and potential incentives (e.g. grants, rebates, tax relief schemes)
 - Automate the new behaviour as much as possible so that the decision needs to be taken only once
 - Help them on their sustainable habit-building journey: provide templates, explanations, training, prompts etc.
 - Provide feedback (e.g. compare your client's behaviour with a competitors') to start or strengthen positive habits

People are often impacted by the presence, behaviours and expectations of others, e.g. around recycling, saving energy or choosing to purchase sustainably sourced goods.

- How to overcome this, if it becomes a barrier?**
- Show your clients how others have successfully implemented sustainable solutions - put together some strong case studies that resonate
 - Lower the uncertainty around a "pioneering" technology by providing solid data and risk assessments
 - Show them how their competition is more sustainable or how they can get ahead of their competition by being more sustainable
 - Highlight their shared sustainable identity with other successful and high-status people
 - Highlight how they will be able to use these new behaviours publicly to promote their business and attract new and better customers and talent.

The climate crisis can seem an abstract, vague and distant issue not affecting people directly.

- How to overcome this, if it becomes a barrier?**
- Show them immediate, concrete and close to the individual's (or company's) interests effects of unsustainable and sustainable behaviours
 - Uncertainty leads to greenwash and inaction. Focus on proven facts and benefits around sustainable behaviour
 - In a company's scenario, highlight the long-term profitability and resilience of a business that adopts a sustainability outlook
 - Focus on the immediate consequences of behaviours in the local geographical area (e.g. [use the local climate stripes for a visible representation of the changing climate](#) or focus on improvements in the local community)
 - Highlight a clear roadmap of steps your client can follow to adopt their new sustainable behaviour



Habits



Individual self



Individuals want to reinforce a positive self-view and can become defensive when they learn that their own behaviours are causing a negative impact. Change can be a threat to the self-identify of the individual, as it represents a potentially risky change (e.g. some identifying as conservative might not engage with progressive sustainable behaviour for fear of losing that identity).

- How to overcome this, if it becomes a barrier?**
- Highlight the positive associations of sustainable behaviours with the self (e.g. by enhancing how this is in line with their individual and/or company values)
 - If you are struggling with promises that do not get fulfilled, a written commitment can increase the likelihood that they will engage in sustainable behaviour
 - Highlight how they might be already engaging in sustainable behaviours in other parts of their lives - consistency reinforces the self-identity
 - Describe the positive outcomes and impacts of sustainable behaviour - this will reinforce the importance and meaning of engaging in it
 - Make sure you highlight the bigger picture's benefits - many people want to be part of something bigger than themselves
 - At the same time, what's in it for them at an individual level? Status, glory, publicity, more money, a promotion...

SHIFT

behaviours towards sustainability

Feelings & Cognition



People behave according to either what they know or what they feel - or a combination of the two.

- How to overcome this, if it becomes a barrier?**
- Avoid provoking strong negative emotions (e.g. shame, fear, sadness) as they have a relative effect on changing behaviour - and might paralyse the person to inaction
 - Saying that, showing people what they'll lose by not adopting sustainable behaviours will be more effective than showing them what they'll gain
 - Show urgency and relevance to the individual (how is their behaviour going to affect them directly? Pictures of polar bears are too distant from the lives of most people to change their behaviour)
 - Aim at provoking positive emotions ("warm glow" feeling of having a positive impact)
 - Simple, clear messaging that shows causes, effects and impacts can have an effect on behavioural change - however not in isolation. You'll need to combine this with other tactics.

Tangibility