



Implementing reuse and repair solutions requires more than just technical, economic, or legislative measures; it requires an understanding of human behaviour and how to influence it. In this article, we will explore the role of behaviour science in driving reuse and repair.

BEHAVIOUR CHANGE IS ESSENTIAL

A sustainable world is not possible without sustainable behaviours. Technical, economic, and legislative solutions are necessary, but they must be reinforced and completed by behaviour change solutions. For instance, providing information or incentives may not be sufficient to influence sustainable behaviours if it does not consider human factors such as acceptance or habits.

INCLUDING FOR THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY

The circular economy is reliant on people's behaviour as much as technical and economic elements. From purchasing to end-of-life, people's behaviours dictate the success of a circular program. Circular behaviours include investing in more durable products, maintaining owned products, repairing functional products, proper disposal of products with no reuse potential, and returning instead of stockpiling. Solutions such as financial incentives and information campaigns are not enough to sufficiently influence these behaviours.

BARRIERS TO CIRCULAR BEHAVIOURS

To understand what influences behaviour, Behaven works with a scientific model that

divides behavioural influences into three categories: individual, contextual, and social ones. Contextual refers to the influence of the moment and place, social to the influence of others, and individual to the influence of conscious and unconscious factors such as intentions and cognitive biases respectively. To properly understand what might prevent or facilitate the adoption of circular behaviours, we need to understand all of these factors, not just some of them.

Some examples of factors influencing circular behaviours include lack of awareness, trust, access, convenience, and habits. Habits are particularly important because they are automatic and unconscious behaviours that people do without thinking.

WE NOW HAVE MORE TOOLS

The Rainbow Wheel™, Behaven's database of 60+ behavioural interventions specific to sustainability, is an example of a toolbox to encourage circular behaviours. Many circular behaviours require repeated actions which in turn requires habit formation. For instance, giving individuals prompts and feedback to engage in a circular behaviour can help create a habit around it. Co-creating with both stakeholders and the target audience is critical to remove barriers, change habits, and bypass cognitive biases. Additionally, it is essential to test behavioural interventions to evaluate their effectiveness and refine them based on data.

TO SUMMARISE

While technical factors, such as infrastructure and technology, are crucial to the success of circular programs, human factors play an equally significant role. The behaviours of consumers and stakeholders can make or break a circular program. The good news is that behavioural science can help both understand and influence these factors. By understanding the human factors that influence circular behaviours, you can intentionally and knowingly design circular programs that are more likely to succeed.

Many organisations struggle to get people to make sustainable choices. Behaven helps them understand and change people's behaviour to ensure the success of their sustainability programmes. www.behaven.com