

# MARKET SEGMENTATION OF BARRIERS TO HOUSEHOLD WASTE RECYCLING

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World Social Marketing Conference, Brighton 2008

# Context

- ◆ Approaching 2/3 (61%) UK population claim to be committed recyclers
- ◆ Participation monitoring implies 10-25% UK population are non-recyclers
- ◆ Contrary evidence from observation of waste collection data
- ◆ No clear statement of current barriers to recycling, nor is there a theory-based conceptual framework for behaviour change
- ◆ So what are the barriers and how do we get people to recycle more things more often?
- ◆ Can we apply the social marketing criteria and develop a behavioural change approach?

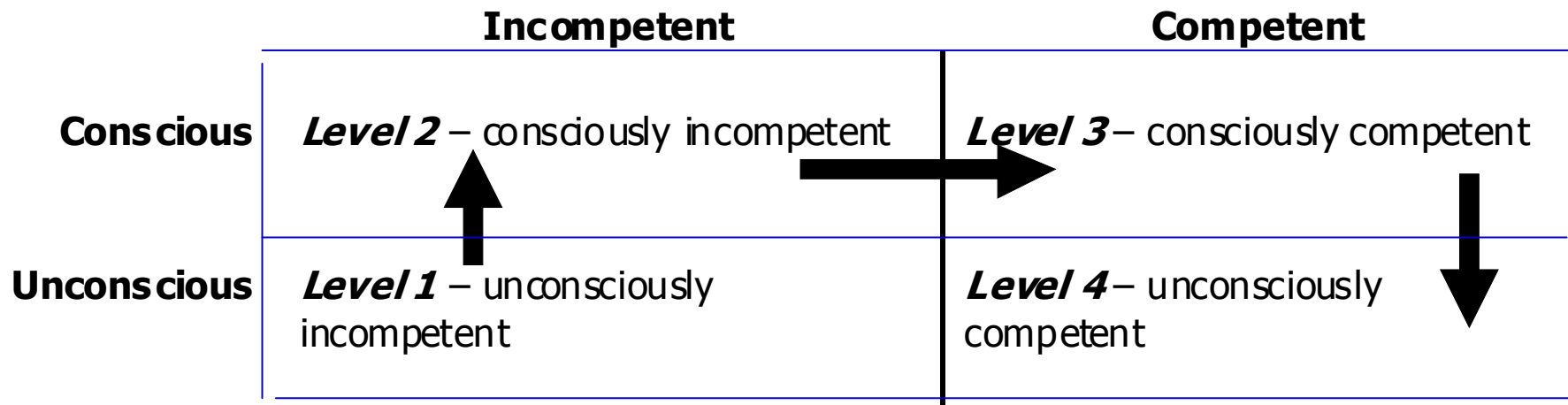
# WRAP 'barriers to recycling at home' : study design

- ◆ M·E·L have run previous literature review on barriers to recycling (UK only, post 2003)
- ◆ WRAP qualitative survey - face to face semi-structured interviews with 73 householders (qualitative insights)
- ◆ WRAP quantitative survey - face to face structured survey of 1512 householders (quantitative data)
- ◆ Scope: 9 Local Authorities in England
- ◆ 3 recycling collection regimes:
  - ◆ Weekly residual and weekly recycling
  - ◆ Weekly residual and fortnightly recycling
  - ◆ Alternate weekly collection recyclables and residual

## Barriers conceptual framework

- ◆ **situational barriers** - not having adequate containers, a lack of space for storage, unreliable collections, unable to get to bring sites.
- ◆ **behaviour** - household disorganisation, too busy with other preoccupations, difficulties in establishing routines for sorting waste and remembering to put it out.
- ◆ **lack of knowledge** - knowing what materials to put in which container, what's collected when, and understanding the basics of how the scheme works.
- ◆ **attitudes and perceptions** - not accepting there is an environmental or other benefit, resistant to householder sorting, and feel no personal motivational reward from recycling.

# Competencies learning model



# Recycling Competence Levels

Recycling rate	Recycling Competence level (1 to 7)	Description	WRAP Committed recycler status	Population %		7. Honestly Disengaged	6. Stalled Starters	5. Cautious participants	4. Sideline supporters	3. Concerned consumers	2. Waste watchers	1. Positive greens
0%	1. Recycling unaware	Just not on their radar, no idea about it at all	Non recycler	}	6%	✓	✓					
0%	2. Aware but inactive	Knows about it but have not seriously contemplated doing it	Non recycler			✓	✓					
Sporadic	3. Contemplated but not engaged	May have dabbled, possibly elsewhere, may do occasionally, drifted back	Recycler but not 'committed'	}	23%		✓	✓				
A little	4. Unreliable	Recycle but sometimes forget, sometimes miss out, recycle opportunistically not regularly	Recycler but probably not 'committed'					✓	✓	✓		
A fair amount	5. Trying their best	Usually take part, recycle 'staple' items like newspapers but confused about other items	Committed recycler	}	41%				✓	✓		
A lot	6. Broadly competent	Reliable and regular but may still miss out some materials or collections	Super-committed recycler								✓	✓
100%	7. The complete recycler	Recycle all available items of all recyclable materials all of the time	Super-committed recycler	}	30%						✓	✓

## Implications for a Social Marketing Plan

- ◆ Insights into behaviour – vignettes and qualitative data from interviews
- ◆ Market segmented by:
  - ◆ barriers conceptual framework and competencies model
  - ◆ ACORN (demographics)
  - ◆ Quantitative structured interviews
- ◆ Maps onto Defra pro-environmental behaviours framework (see previous diagram)

## Intervention and marketing mix

- ◆ Messages tailored to the market segmentation, competence levels being targeted, and the major types of barrier experienced
- ◆ Communications messages proposed in WRAP Barriers Research reflect this type of approach – see following

## A) Instructions – Basic how-to ‘user guide’

Briefing people on what services are available and how they should be used. Messages must be treated as a situational issue and part of service delivery.

- All householders, at whatever competence level must be provided with instructions on how to use the service.
- There should be no reason why this information is not easily available.

### Communication methods:

- Should be predominantly direct mail and other material which will provide a permanent reminder in the home.

## B) Explanations - What is recycling?

‘What is recycling’ messages and their benefits focus on competence levels 1 – 4.

- The more ‘intensive’ methods of communication, such as door knocking and local events, should be focused on areas at competence levels 1 and 2
- Coupled with outdoor advertising in the local area to raise awareness of recycling.

### Communication methods:

- Messaging should clearly link with national newspaper and television advertising to develop a coherent and recognisable campaign with the aim of creating behavioural change.

## C) Dispelling the myths - Education and information

Messages to dispel recycling myths and increase understanding should be focused around competence level 4.

- There are many myths about recycling and a lack of understanding around why recycling is a good thing and waste disposal to landfill is harmful.
- The lack of understanding can relate to simple operational issues or more complex issues such as the relationship between sending putrescible material to landfill and climate change.

### Communication methods:

- Messages should be provided in newsletters and council newspapers which reach all households.
- Strong PR should also be employed to get local press on-side.

## D) How it works - What actually happens to the recyclables

Many committed recyclers seem to take a blind leap of faith as to what happens to the material they put out for recycling. This should not be the case.

- appropriate messages should explain where their recyclables are made into new products.

### **Communication method:**

- Well developed lorry livery and newsletters explaining where the locally recycled materials are reprocessed
- what local products are made from them (such as local park benches made from recycled plastics)
- national television promotion informing householders of the national picture.

## E) Saving cash – Cost effectiveness and value-for-money of recycling

The competent recyclers want to understand the cost and financial benefits of recycling,

- less competent recyclers should be made more aware of the cost of recycling and the reduction in the local authority income stream if they do not recycle.
- Myths that councils profiteer from collecting recyclables should also be actively dispelled through effective and swift media rebuttal.

### **Communication method:**

- A simple local 'cost benefit statement' highlighting the equivalent value of recycling – for example that the costs saved equate to 'x new litter bins' in the area.
  - Information should be provided in newsletters and council newspapers which reach all households.
  - Strong PR should be employed to drive the message home of cost of services and income streams from recyclates.
  - Messages should be employed in door knocking exercises when addressing householders with lower competence levels.

## F) Rewards - Feedback and thanks

All committed recyclers (competence levels 5 – 7) need to know how well they are recycling and how their district and the UK compares to other parts of the country and Europe.

- They also need to be thanked for participating in the council collection schemes, to reinforce motivation and prevent people flagging through lack of appreciation for their efforts.

### **Communication method:**

- Some limited feedback and thanks should be provided in instructional leaflets such as the annual collection calendar.
- More detailed information should be provided in newsletters and council newspapers which reach all households, and Household Recycling Centre signage.
- Strong PR should also be employed to reinforce this message with practical local 'human interest' stories commending people and groups who have achieved high recycling performance.

# Conclusions

- ◆ Developed **better understanding** of barriers and how to overcome them
- ◆ Barriers are **not just felt by non-recyclers** - most 'Committed Recyclers' say they could recycle more things more often
- ◆ We should focus on **lifting people's recycling competence** and help them 'learn the skill'
- ◆ Recycling communications campaigns need to be **much better targeted and personalised** – around specific barriers and household circumstances
- ◆ We need to move from a 'mass communications' awareness approach to a **customer centred, social marketing approach**

## References and further contact

WRAP (2008). *Barriers to recycling at home (WRAP project CDC405-001)*, [Online]. Report prepared by M-E-L Research. Banbury: WRAP.

Available at [www.wrap.org.uk/barrierstorecycling](http://www.wrap.org.uk/barrierstorecycling)

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