



# TIPPING DESIRE INTO ACTION

People aspire to reach their goals, but need a little extra help

It's not a lack of motivation that keeps people from making changes to reach important goals. It's the lack of clearly designed paths to success. The changes may be about recycling more, saving for retirement, taking medicines to improve health, or sticking with a program. Throughout these interactions, there is a common thread: people are finding it difficult to go it alone.

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#### TAKE ACTION – designing for Life's Changes

1.

#### *Help tip the scales*

Decrease the perceived costs of making changes and increase the perceived benefits.

2.

#### *Stage information*

Provide the right information at the right time to ensure relevance and ease of comprehension.

3.

#### *Piggyback on existing routines*

Help people form useful mental models with familiar analogies and design regimens that fit with their current lifestyles.

4.

#### *Mix it up*

Help people fight boredom and fatigue by creating variation in routine.

5.

#### *Mind the gap*

Develop small, immediate reinforcements (e.g., feedback, encouragement, reward) instead of focusing on a big, distant payoff.



## *My donations are bigger than yours*

Donating money to good causes seems like a universally desirable activity. Although many agree, few carry through on their intentions. They forget, other things come up, or they just never get around to it. United Way explored other ways to help people move from desire to donation. Instead of preaching solely about the benefits of donation, the worthiness of the causes, or the added perk of tax deductions, the United Way aims for people's raw competitive nature.

Imagine companies who naturally compete for market share and profit also competing for maximum donations. Who can raise more: Fidelity or Schwab? For Ezra, an Abbott employee in his late 20s, the tactic really speaks to his competitive nature, "United Way at Abbott is huge. There's competition, and they announce every day who's winning and who's losing. It's great—everyone gets involved."

PATTERNS are a collection of shared thoughts, insights, and observations gathered through our work and the world around us. We invite you to join the conversation, so we can raise the bar and develop richer design thinking experiences collectively.

## *Hesitant to walk the walk*

Jonathan is very involved in the HIV/AIDS community, volunteering his time to events, being a support to friends during testing, diagnosis and living with the condition. An acknowledged hypocrite, he is learning as much as he can to be a resource to others, but has never been tested himself. There's always an excuse. A crazy travel schedule. Concerns about privacy. Perceived low risk. The only way he can picture himself being tested is if he could do it at home. He reasons that the costs of testing through a clinic are just too high right now.



**Be a pattern spotter:** Now that you've been exposed to a few different examples, don't be surprised if you start seeing *Life's Changes* patterns all around. Keep your eyes open and let us know what you find, especially if it's the next new pattern.



## *Football saves a friendship*

When Bobby's childhood friend got married, he knew that it would be a struggle for them to see each other as often. Time they had spent hanging out when they were younger was now spent with their significant others. And asking for a night out with the boys was something that had to be negotiated each and every week. That's when Bobby's friend suggested getting season tickets to the Bucks so they would be guaranteed one night per week to go see the game and spend time with one another. And the best part of the plan, they only had to ask their significant others once for the time away.

Aside from the fact that they have always followed the Bucks, both friends admit that they buy the season tickets mostly to stay connected with one another. It's a ritual. Just like listening to a new CD on their way to the game. Making a commitment to the team is a proxy for their commitment to the friendship. It's an investment made today so that they don't lose the connections in the years and decades to come.

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## **Bank of America**

By reframing saving from an event to an automatic everyday action, the Bank of America Keep the Change program embodies the principles of behavior change. The costs of saving are reduced, the mental model is reframed, and the routine is made much more seamless. On top of that, the savings-matching program is a way to give instantaneous reinforcement.

## **Weight Watchers**

Losing weight is notoriously difficult, with challenges to many facets of behavior change. In response, Weight Watchers has developed a comprehensive system to help people reach their goals. They offer two programs, Points and Core, which support two distinct mental models of losing weight. Self-assessment quizzes help people recalibrate the costs and benefits of losing weight. The flex point concept creates flexibility to fit better into people's lives and allow legal "cheating." And, meetings and weigh-ins give quick feedback and encouragement of progress.



## **Recycling**

It's not that people don't want to recycle, but sometimes they just don't remember. With a simple design change, the bin-in-bin system makes recycling easy in the moment. A larger bin for recycling with the smaller bin for non-recycled waste inside creates a clear framework to help people understand what percentage of their trash is recyclable. It also encourages them to rethink tossing recyclable objects into the regular trash.

**Contact:** Get in touch with us for all that is pattern related at [patterns@ideo.com](mailto:patterns@ideo.com) or visit us at <http://patterns.ideo.com>.