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Branding and Messaging: Getting the Biggest Bang from Outreach

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Internal Agency Outreach

- Why successful outreach matters
- How principles in messaging can impact behavior & culture
- Elements of successful internal agency outreach
- Best practices

Successful Outreach

- Conveying information is not the goal.
- Behavior change is.



“Civilization advances by extending the number of operations we can perform without thinking about them.”

--Alfred North Whitehead

What is the Outreach-Behavior Link?

Simply explaining
the right thing to do
does little to bring about
change.



Outreach Informed by Behavior Tools

Challenge: Outreach to a large number of federal workers, possibly in multiple locations, to advance performance in:

- Energy conservation
- Resource conservation
- Recycling
- Energy efficiency

Goal: sustainability compliance on autopilot

Behavioral Activators

The Psychology of Persuasion



Behavior Change Tools: The Short List

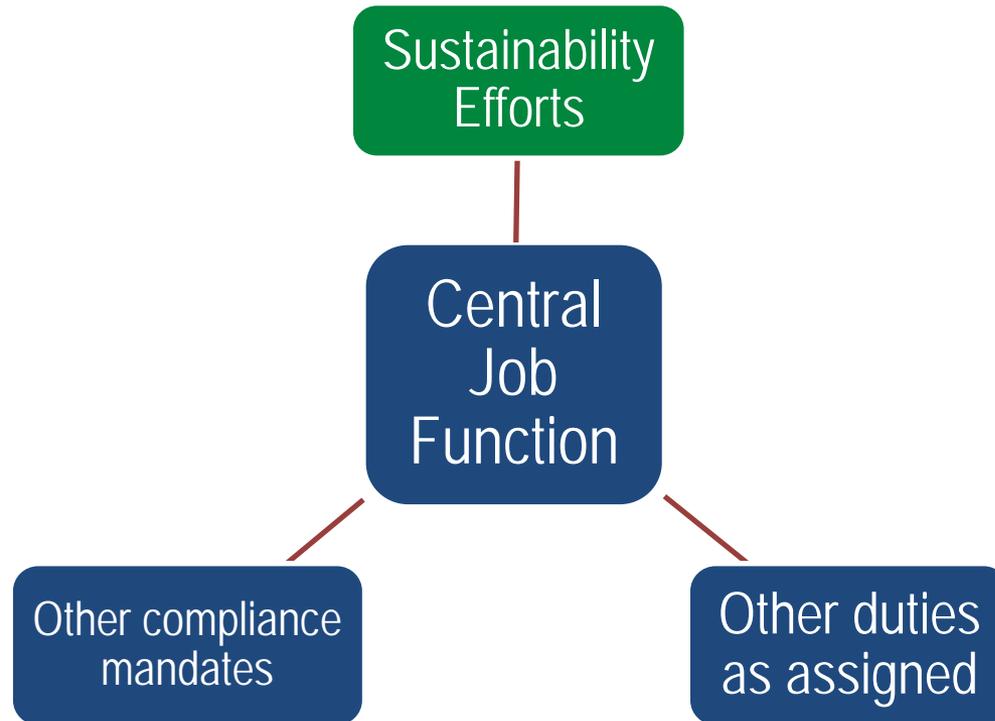
Consistency – We are inclined to strive for consistency between our thoughts, beliefs, and actions.

Commitment - Once we make a commitment, we are more likely to follow through with it. The more public the commitment, the stronger the likelihood of compliance.



How NOT to Frame Your "Ask"

The "Piling On" Model



Activities to support sustainability cannot be presented as supplemental to existing job functions.

The Behavior Ace in Your Hand: Organizational Mission

Staff within
your agency
have already
made a
commitment on
which your
outreach
should be built.



Your Outreach Task in Simplest Terms

- *Link your goals to the service of the mission.*
- *It's about consistency with a prior commitment.*
- *Activate social norms.*

Message: Sustainability serves the mission.

Commitment
to the mission

=

Commitment
to sustainability

Veterans Affairs

Behavior Change Messaging

Challenge:

- Thousands of staff, hundreds of facilities
- 16 major Departmental initiatives that don't seem to relate to sustainability
- Difficulty gaining internal recognition for the importance of sustainability efforts

Mission:

"To care for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan."

--Abraham Lincoln

VA Green Routine



 Department of
Veterans Affairs

Promoting Consistency



How will **you**
commute on

Top 5 reasons
to ride your bike*



Friday, May 20

1. **For fun!** It feels good!
2. **For your health.** It's better for your heart than driving!
3. **Do it for VA.** Biking reduces greenhouse gas emissions, making VA a more sustainable workplace.
4. **Get cool VA stuff.** VA will have bike water bottles exclusively for our May 20th participants.
5. **Snag a t-shirt.** Be one of the first 8,500 registrants at www.waba.org to reserve your t-shirt, then swing by Freedom Plaza the day of the event.

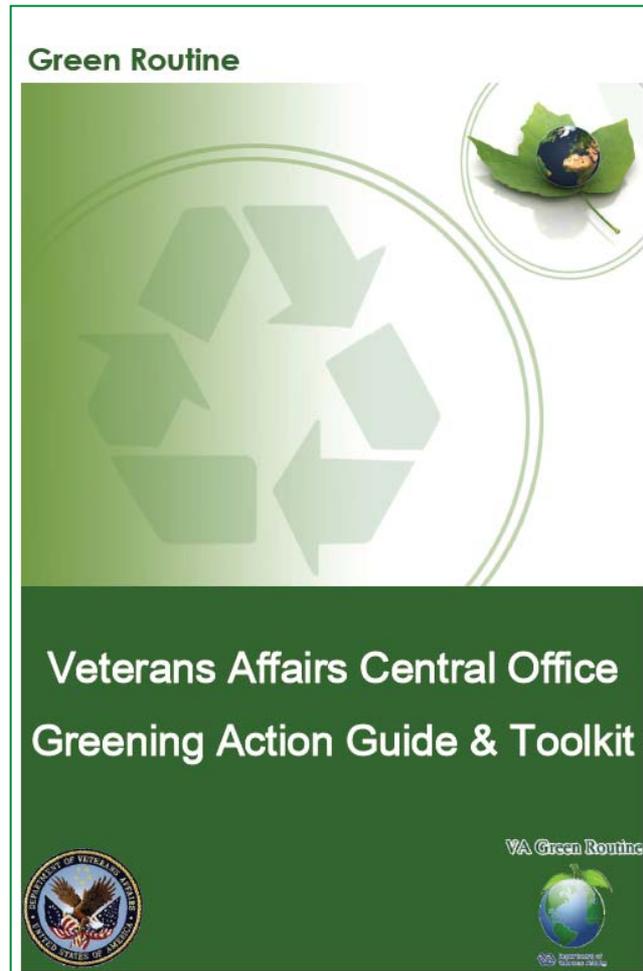
*Keeping our promises to
Veterans through sustainability*

VA Green Routine



 Department of
Veterans Affairs

What resources do they need?



The poster for the "VA Earth Day Fair" features a white background with a green border. At the top right is a small "VA Green Routine" logo. The main text reads "Don't miss the VA Earth Day Fair!". Below this is a 2x2 grid of images: top-left shows green leaves and water ripples; top-right shows solar panels; bottom-left shows a blue recycling bin; bottom-right shows hands holding a small green plant. Below the grid is the tagline "Keeping our promises to Veterans through sustainability". The event details are: "Thursday, April 21, 11:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m., Room C-7". The activities listed are "Exhibits", "Light refreshments", and "Raffle drawings". A section titled "Come find out who won!" lists "The Green Routine Awards" and "The Sustainability Achievement Awards". At the bottom, it says "Sponsored by the Office of Asset Enterprise Management".

Commitment in Action

THE GREEN ROUTINE PLEDGE

Yes! I will:

- ✓ Turn off lights and monitors when not in use
- ✓ Recycle more at work and home
- ✓ Print double-sided at all times

VA Green Routine



 Department of
Veterans Affairs

Signature

Email Address

Print Name

Office Code

When is commitment not commitment?



Encouraging Facility-Wide Action

- VA Green Routine Awards program: recognizing grassroots efforts to improve sustainability performance.
- Outreach for Boise VAMC blue-wrap contest invites community-wide problem solving.



Elements of Successful Outreach

- **Create a simple, central message** – Consistently apply it across all outreach, focusing on a priority list of target actions
- **Form a green team** – Encourage participation from recognized members of all key departments
- **Use multiple outreach vehicles** – Use existing agency channels, as well as social media
- **Leverage events** – Tie in to key observances like Earth Day and Energy Action Month and other agency-specific events; consider competitions, awards programs
- **Use prompts** – Place direct, positive reminders (to carry out optimal behaviors) as close as possible in time and space to the desired action.

A Few Best Practices

- Don't rush to shape your message.
- Consider your agency's culture and mission.
- Listen to your audience.
 - What are the challenges to compliance? Barriers that need removal?
 - Determine the lowest hanging fruit.
- It's okay to start small.
- Consistency applies to you first.
 - Keep messages focused.
 - Develop a consistent graphic look for immediate recognition.
- Don't be afraid to be original.

Want to learn more?

Influence: Science and Practice

by Robert Cialdini

Made to Stick: Why Some Ideas Survive and Others Die

by Chip Heath

Switch: How to Change Things When Change Is Hard

by Chip Heath



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Significant Work.
Extraordinary People.
Inspiring Excellence. **SRA.**





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Thank You.