

How to get consumers to make choices that are better for the environment?

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How to get consumers to make choices that are better for the environment? Through nudging.

Nudging is one way of influencing people and their choices through subtle modifications of their decision context. To nudge someone is to deliberately affect their surrounding choice architecture, meaning the way choices are presented, framed and structured. (Schubert, 2017.)

In thinking, how do we get consumers choose reuse instead of new items, we decided to look into green nudging theory (Schubert, 2017) and connect its suggestions with the previously made consumer research (Joro et. al., 2024). The green nudge theory divides nudges into three groups: 1) simplifying and headlining green information, e.g., through eco-labelling, 2) following the herd, e.g., imitating green behavior of peers and conveying social norms, 3) green nudges as default, e.g., exploiting the behavioral effects of purposefully set defaults (Schubert, 2017).

We used the three consumer personas made earlier during this project and identified the data from the consumer interviews (Joro et. al., 2024), that could be connected to each nudge. Later we combined each consumer persona with the most apparent nudges suitable for them. You can see the results in the table below.

CONSUMER PERSONA NUDGES

	Normalisation	Sustainability information
Style individualist	Normalising and encouraging reuse via social media “– making it (reuse) more acceptable — like if celebrities would talk about buying second-hand in social media.”	Comfort, durability and traceability “Usually I check if the material is — thin like a fabric that would tear immediately.”
	Social encouragement	Accessibility
Comfort seeker	Societal and social pressure “then a friend of mine linked to a 2nd hand store—. — it was so convenient—.”	Accessibility of a store or product and price “–I often go when I’m on a run and then simultaneously go through the selection--.“ “– annoying that if you find something nice, then it is not your own size.”
	Familiarity	Easy and attractive
Classic dresser	Familiarity of the concept or brand “Sometimes yes, I’ve just gotten used to the idea that I might buy it new, even though I know it would be good.”	Reliable, appealing and organised “I feel that it (new) is certainly of a higher quality. I find it somehow more reliable.”

As stated, the nudges can be useful in persuading people to choose a certain service or product. Therefore, these nudges were presented to the companies participating in prototyping this Autumn. Each of their concepts were connected with a potential nudge for them to use during prototyping. We first identified their possible customer group and then offered some insights on what kind of nudges could be effective. It remains to be seen how the companies participating in the prototyping phase of the project will continue and utilise these nudges.

Sources:

[Schubert, C. 2017. Green nudges: Do they work? Are they ethical? Ecological Economics, 2017:132. 329-342.](#)

[Joro, V. Gurova, O., Kuuluvainen, S., Antola, S. 2024. Baltic2Hand Results Report. Companies & Non-profits, Consumer survey and interviews, Consumer personas.](#)

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