

**Smart and
Stubborn**
at the Supermarket?
Workshop
on sustainable nudging



Manual for educators



Gezinsbond 

rikolto
VREDESEILANDEN

Ferm




UNIVERSITEIT
GENT

 eit Food
Co-funded by the
European Union 



Manual

“Smart and Stubborn at the Supermarket”

for educators

1. Purpose of the workshop	5
2. Course of the workshop	7
- Section overview	
- Each section in detail	
• Introduction	9
• Start of the workshop	11
• Behavioural psychology <i>How do people make choices?</i>	17
• Nudging techniques at the supermarket	27
• What can you do as a consumer/citizen?	37
3. Material	41
- Toolbox	
- Provided/ask the organiser	
4. Room setup/important points	43
5. Background information	45
- Gap in attitude vs. actions	
- Nudging: theory + additional examples	
- Food Citizenship – “what consumers can do”	
6. Tips for follow-up activity	45
- Potential follow-up actions (to be integrated into the approach)	
- Workshop concept – approach + ref. Rikolto support	



Handwriting practice lines consisting of 25 horizontal dotted lines.



1. Purpose of the workshop

The purpose of this workshop is

- ▶ **To make participants aware of**

- **The gap in attitude versus actions**

We have to move toward a more sustainable dietary pattern. But how do we get there? We tend to focus on awareness, and rightfully so. After all, it yields results: the vast majority of Belgians/Europeans are convinced of the importance of more sustainable consumption and prepared to adjust their dietary pattern. But awareness alone is not enough to generate the widespread behavioural change we need. Once inside the supermarket, we fall into our usual routines and habits. We choose based on appeal/taste/price,...

- **The potential for (nudging at) the supermarket to close that gap.**

The environment where our food decisions are made (in this case, the supermarket) affects our behaviour much more dramatically than we tend to think. There is enormous potential in there when it comes to helping us all make a more sustainable choice.

- ▶ **Encouraging participants to take action.**

In addition to demonstrating what a supermarket can do, and why it is necessary, we want to encourage our participants to send supermarket chains a message/signal to take the lead and take action. In the workshop, we work with a concrete tool that allows people to send that signal + we send them a survey afterwards, allowing us to compile the consumers' expectations of the supermarkets and approach the supermarkets with a clear message.



Handwriting practice lines consisting of 24 horizontal dotted lines.



2. Course of the workshop

Section overview

Introduction

► 10 min.

Welcome + program + basic principles

► Presentation

- Urgency of sustainable choices
- What is considered "sustainable" (six guidelines)
- Fact: the attitude is fine – purchasing behaviour remains niche

Behavioural psychology

► 30 min.

How do people make choices?

► Presentation with interaction (statements and questions to participants)

- Brain function (ratio – intuition)
- Consequences for food choices
- Ways of bridging the gap

Nudging techniques at the supermarket

► 40 min.

- What is nudging (why the technique is interesting from behavioural psychology perspective)
- QUIZ: seven techniques (incl. break)
- Clarification with additional examples and background

► Slides

► Quiz in groups and clarification

What can you do as a consumer/citizen right now?

► 30 min.

- Postcard campaign in groups

► Practice in groups and group discussion



Handwriting practice lines consisting of 24 horizontal dotted lines.

Each section in detail

Introduction



Objectives

- ▶ Connecting with each other – creating an informal atmosphere



Approach:

- ▶ Welcoming, informal, warm, in a stimulating setting: people enter and are welcomed. They receive a name tag, grab a pen, and a card and get to meet each other over drinks and snacks (optional but works very well!).



Material

- ▶ Signage and arrows
- ▶ Reception table
- ▶ Participant registration list, name tags
- ▶ Pens (sustainable and non-sustainable version) - see blue box
- ▶ Drinks and snacks – see “tips for sustainable catering” by Rikolto

Hidden temptations

- ▶ We include several decisions for the participants and subtly nudge them without them realizing it - participants are confronted with their subconscious decision in part 2
- ▶ Details in current state:
 - two types of pens (made of sustainable and less sustainable material), one type is displayed nicely, easy to reach, positioned right next to the cards and registration form; the others are placed somewhat haphazardly towards the back of the table.
- ▶ Inspiration for alternatives and extra nudges (optional): snacks (served in beautiful reed baskets and on an ugly plate), arrows on the floor, the choice of where people take place (working with arrows, appealing and less appealing setups left and right, etc.).



Handwriting practice lines consisting of 20 horizontal dotted lines.

Start of the workshop

People are brought to their chairs and invited to take a seat. The instructor positions themselves at the front of the room and starts the presentation.

Introduction



Objective:

- ▶ Bringing expectations into focus: theme, objective, take-aways
- ▶ Providing a program overview
- ▶ Making the basic principles explicit (share what principles the workshop relies on, which are not examined during the workshop – this is important to manage expectations if necessary)
 - Urgency/importance of a shift to more sustainable consumption patterns
 - What is considered sustainable consumption: six rules with impact
 - Observation: gap in attitude versus actions (figures)



Approach

- ▶ Presentation:
- ▶ Minimum interaction: insightful questions from the audience



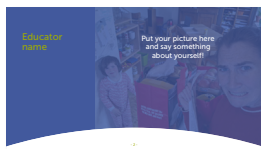
Material:

- ▶ Slides
- ▶ Setting: theatre

Content per slide



- Welcome
- Room to say something about the local department/location



- Introduction
- Tip:** what is your connection to sustainability/food, etc.? What is your reasoning? Share a fun fact about your *guilty pleasures* when it comes to healthy and sustainable food. Where do you “fail”?



- Partner organizations/initiators of the workshop:
 - Development: Rikolto and Ghent University
 - Initiative: Gezinsbond, Ferm, FairTradeGemeente, and Rikolto in *I am more than my receipt* (see next slide)
- Tip:** if necessary, being able to say something about each partner in one sentence



Handwriting practice lines consisting of 24 horizontal dotted lines.

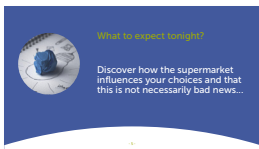


- ▶ What is “I am more than my receipt”?
A movement of organisations and citizens who want for sustainable choices to become more convenient at the supermarket. Joint activities and campaigns are organised to contribute to this goal.
More info on www.meerdanmijnkassaticket.be

Partners’ initiatives in 2022-2023:

- This **workshop**
- **Superlijst** www.superlijst.be

As a provider of this workshop, you are kept up to speed on current “I am more than my receipt” initiatives by e-mail.



Goal of the evening (tip: keep this brief - do not give away too much just yet)



Take-aways: participants go home with several concrete things:

- Six guidelines for more sustainable shopping
- Useful facts to unmask/resist hidden seducers.
- The option to participate in a concrete action

Before the workshop begins, you share three principles. Make very explicit that these principles are considered to be true and examining them is not part of the workshop.



Principle 1: Healthy and sustainable consumption/eating is **important and urgent**. **Brief clarification** of how food greatly impacts countless **urgent, global** challenges (see connection between food and all Sustainable Development Goals, endorsed by nations all over the world).



Principle 2: What is considered “healthier and more sustainable consumption”?

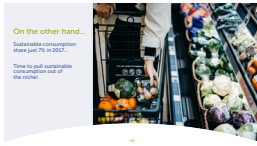
- six guidelines based on scientific consensus.



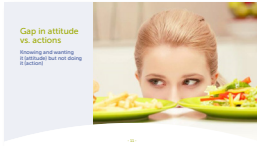
- Principle 3: consists of a combination of two observations
 - ▶ Observation 1: ATTITUDE is fine
Research shows that **most people** (in Flanders, Belgium, Europe) are aware of the importance of healthy and sustainable food and are prepared to make their food habits more sustainable
Figures: Vlam and BEUC survey (see background information)



Handwriting practice lines consisting of 20 horizontal dotted lines.



- Observation 2: sustainable consumption remains niche. Sales figures of products with a sustainable label reveal that sustainable food remains a niche market to this day.



Observation 3 = (sustainable ACTIONS do not automatically follow on from a sustainable ATTITUDE)

Scientific name for this discrepancy: Gap in attitude vs. actions



Go over the workshop program with them.

Tip: verbally highlight the logic of the structure:

First, we will dig into behavioural psychology seeking an explanation for the gap. Next, we will zoom in on one of the potential solutions to close the gap (the role of the supermarket) and test your knowledge with a fun quiz. And finally, we will put you to work, because you can make a difference too!



Handwriting practice lines consisting of 20 horizontal dotted lines.

Behavioural psychology *How do people make choices?*



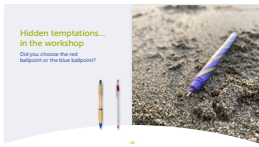
Objective

- ▶ Gain insight into how we make choices in order to explain the gap in attitude versus actions:
- ▶ We are all “imperfect consumers”.
- ▶ Arrive at the role of a stimulating food environment - we need help as consumers.

Content per slide



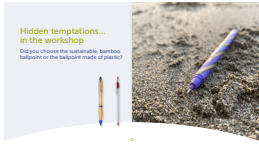
How do we make choices?



At the start of the workshop, participants chose a pen/etc.*

- Who picked the white/bamboo ballpoint? And why?
 - ▶ Several reasons will be mentioned: colour preference, what people like, no thought process behind it, associations, etc.

** adjust depending on the nudges you applied during ‘welcome’*



(Revelation): not just the colour difference – also sustainable/not sustainable, but that was not visible right away. The same tends to apply to food.

Talk about the techniques applied to stimulate a certain choice.

Tip: if you observed them entering the room, you may be able to speak to copying behaviour (e.g. people taking whatever the person in front of them took).



Decision-making process as rational and linear (a model often used by economists)

- Explanation: we think spontaneously (as many scientists, economists have thought for a like time) that a decision-making process looks pretty much like this (slide).

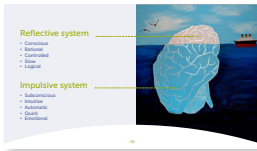
It seems to make sense: a linear and rational process.



But humans are not homo economicus – *a human who calculates the best choice rationally, makes cost-benefit analyses as a good business would.*

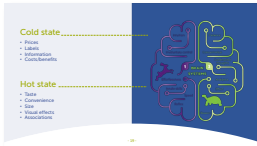


Handwriting practice lines consisting of 20 horizontal dotted lines.



Explanation about two decision-making systems in our brain:
Reflective and impulsive (see slide)

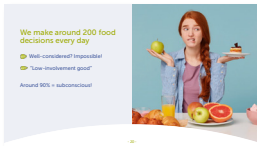
- Interaction question: name a few choices where we definitely use the rational system?
If no response: e.g. a car, a house, a job, etc.
- What choices do we tend to make impulsively?
If no response: e.g. online ad purchases, snacks for the road, etc.



Cold state and hot state

- What determines which of these two systems we use?
- Explanation:
The rational system works best when we are in a "cold state": calm, enough time and energy to focus on the process of information gathering, weighing our options, and making a choice.

The impulsive system will take over when we are in a "hot state": in a hurry, lots of emotions, basic needs, overstimulated or tired, etc. That is when we are led by taste, colour, size, convenience, associations, visual effects, etc.
- Interaction question:
what system do we tend to use when shopping?



Figures: we make around 200 to 300 food decisions every day.

- examples: should I eat something? Now or later? What will I eat? Do I feel like some fruit or chocolate? Will I grab something from that promo stand? Will I choose a different store for a change? Will I go into the sandwich shop this afternoon? Et cetera...
- Some explanation:
It is impossible to make these choices in a well-considered way. Our brains would be in overdrive continuously and overheat. Furthermore, food is a "low-involvement good" - not important enough to invest the effort of the rational process.

90 % of our food choices are made subconsciously!
Based on routine, likes, ...

Taking all of this into consideration, the gap in attitude versus actions ceases to be a surprise.

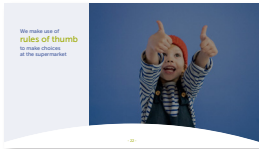


Handwriting practice lines consisting of 20 horizontal dotted lines.



Interaction question: How do you choose when pressed for time and lacking information?

(possible answers: making a grocery list, always buying the same, looking to the future, fresh/organic only, etc.)



Rules of thumb as a "shortcut".

To continue to make decent decisions even when confronted with time pressure and without information, we use rules of thumb. Guidelines you can follow without too much effort or thought.



Here are some typical examples that people use a lot.



Interaction:

- Ask participants to stand up straight
- We will propose several rules of thumb.
- They need to stand left or right based on whether or not they use/apply that rule of thumb.

Attention! This is not about true or false – just about "do you use this rule of thumb to do your groceries?"

Approach:

- For each rule of thumb, have the participants stand on the left or right side of the room.
- You can ask a couple of people to clarify each time.
- And show the explanation afterwards.
- All three rules of thumb suffer from generalization or even misunderstanding. You can't turn the rule of thumb around. Things are often complicated and depend on many factors: it is unrealistic to expect consumers to figure it all out (see conclusion slide 32)



Rule of thumb 1/Local



Explanation



Handwriting practice lines consisting of 20 horizontal dotted lines.



Rule of thumb 2/paper instead of plastic



Explanation



Rule of thumb 3/glass bottles



Explanation



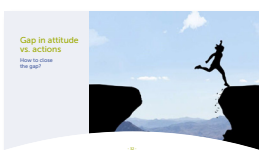
Rules of thumb are good, but untruths tend to find their way in. Sustainability is complex, many myths arise due to limited information or generalization.

It is important to inform and raise awareness to eliminate the myths, but more is required.

After all, we do not want supermarkets to blindly "listen to the consumer".

Example: replacing all plastic with paper because the consumer demands it; is it truly the most sustainable option?

Example: choosing local products; are they the most sustainable option?



How to close the gap?



Standard methods:

- Raising awareness
- Financial interventions
- Legislation

- All three methods are relatively expensive and/or very slow but there is a fourth way...

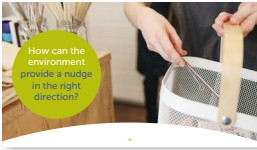


Handwriting practice lines consisting of 24 horizontal dotted lines.



Another model from behavioural psychology

- Explanation
Behaviour as a combination of motivation (persuasion), ability (how convenient is it), and triggers (discount, ads, information signs, etc.).



Applied to food:

Motivation = high.

Ability = low. You can make sustainable choices. There are labels and organic and packaging-free shops, but it is nowhere near convenient enough. It is complicated, sometimes confusing, demands a lot of extra effort, is perceived as expensive, you have to deviate from the norm, etc.



Handwriting practice lines consisting of 20 horizontal dotted lines.

Nudging techniques at the supermarket



Objective:

- ▶ To explain nudging based on several examples



Approach:

- ▶ Explain what nudging actually is (presentation)
- ▶ Warm-up round: recognizing nudges in a video (in group during presentation)
- ▶ Supermarket quiz (interactive without presentation; participants walk around)
- ▶ Explanation of the answers with additional examples (presentation OR clarification to the group while walking from one quiz table to the next)

Content per slide



How can the environment provide a nudge in the right direction?



Nudging at the supermarket



A good nudge meets three characteristics



Feet toward the trash can = example to illustrate the characteristics. Raising awareness would be a lot more expensive, as would legislation (fining people – requires police, courts, etc.), financial (slow: deposits for cans)



Nudges at the supermarket



Handwriting practice lines consisting of 28 horizontal dotted lines.



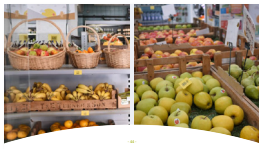
Warm-up: video from the UK where a supermarket is transformed to nudge sustainable choices.

- Interaction: participant has to try to name five nudges.



Video

- After viewing: have participants share what caught their eye (five examples?)



Walk through some examples; see if they match the ones they found.



Start Supermarket QUIZ

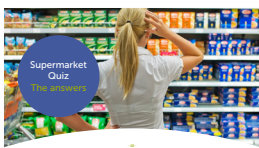
Participants get 15 minutes to walk from quiz table to quiz table.

In the meantime, they can have a drink and a chat.

Supermarket quiz - the answers

Once the participants have seen all the quiz tables, you can go over the answers. You can do this by walking the group from table to table, or you can ask the participants to sit back down and go through the answers based on the slides. If you choose the first option, you can hide these slides.

Below, you will find an overview of the answer slides with several additional examples of nudging techniques you can mention in your clarification. You will find a more detailed explanation of the techniques and additional examples in "A nudge in the right direction" (Een duwtje in de goede richting), a publication by Ghent University - see background information



Answers (title slide)

Handwriting practice lines consisting of 20 horizontal dotted lines.



Basket colour effect - question



Basket colour effect - answer



Different effect of colour: discouraging effect of the colour red

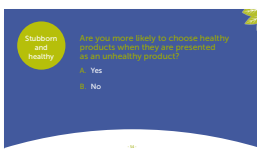
- Example on the slide = nutriscore: the discouraging effect of red is greater than the encouraging effect of green.
- Example: red background vs. green background (see Ghent University publication)



Effect: more/less of choice - question



Effect: more/less of choice - answer



Effect: associated with unhealthy - question



Effect: associated with unhealthy - answer



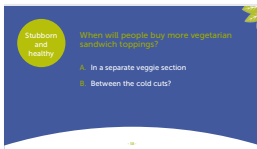
Effect: human characteristics - question



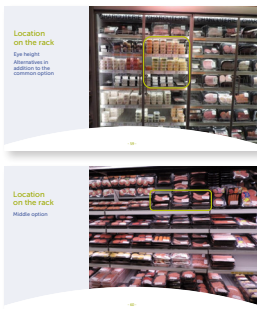
Effect: human characteristics - answer



Handwriting practice lines consisting of 24 horizontal dotted lines.

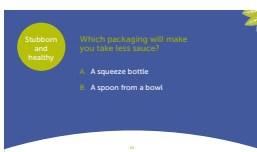


Placement of vegetarian alternatives - question



Placement of vegetarian alternatives - answer

- Examples of placement
 - ▶ Up – down perception
 - ▶ Left – right perception
 - ▶ Separate/together
 - ▶ The rack at the endcap of an aisle = wanted
 - ▶ ...



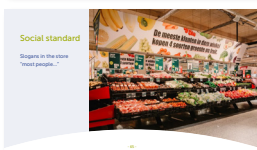
Packaging - question



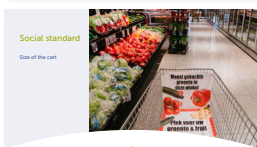
Packaging - answer



Seasonal products - question



Seasonal products - answers (5)



Handwriting practice lines consisting of 20 horizontal dotted lines.



Seasonal products - answers (5)



Do supermarkets use all of that expertise at the moment?

- Positive signals (see headlines slides)

It is often limited to short-lived campaigns

It could be a bit more ambitious – considering all of the possibilities!

- Not just nudging, of course: they can also adjust their assortment effectively, and they exert quite a bit of influence on what we buy with their promotions



Handwriting practice lines consisting of 20 horizontal dotted lines.

What can you do as a consumer/citizen right now?



Objective:

- ▶ activate participants and have them formulate their own signal to the supermarket



Approach:

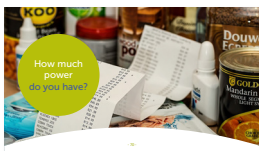
- ▶ Explanation about the "I am more than my receipt" movement and call to sign up
- ▶ Interactive exercise: participants work out several signals in groups of three or four and write them down on different postcards
- ▶ Exchange in the group about different signals
- ▶ Wrap-up



Material:

- ▶ Ppt
- ▶ Postcards

Content per slide



How much power do you have?

The conclusion seems to be that we have spent the whole evening explaining to you, consumers, what supermarkets should/can do. But what can you do about this?

Quite a lot – because if we want a supermarket to consider what we would like our shopping cart to look like in addition to what we like to buy, we need to voice that message loudly, clearly, and in larger numbers.



Therefore: I am more than my receipt!

- ▶ Explanation:
A movement of citizens and organizations who have been conveying this signal to supermarkets for three years now, in many different ways.

Tip: check out www.meerdanmijnkassaticket.be for current initiatives parallel to the workshops!



Handwriting practice lines consisting of 24 horizontal dotted lines.



Call on participants to sign up on the website after the session to increase the size of that citizen group.
Info: occasional newsletters are sent covering initiatives towards the supermarkets, but definitely on a less-than-monthly basis.



Intro exercise "what are your expectations of your supermarket"

We map out and amplify what citizens expect of their supermarket. And we ask you that very same question.



Explanation: postcard front

Grab a postcard –

On the front, they decide according to what theme the supermarket should make it easier for them (what choices do they consider to be the most difficult for most people)



Explanation: postcard back

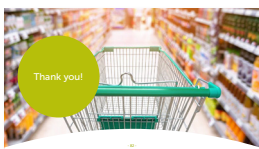
Message or question to the supermarket: which initiatives could/must they take according to you, what would make the biggest difference

Interactive exercise (without ppt)

- Exercise in groups of three or four participants (15 min.)
 - ▶ First, let participants think in silence for several minutes
 - ▶ Next, have them discuss in groups what a postcard to the supermarket should say. They are allowed to write down one or several messages.
- Exchange of the messages (10 min. – depending on the number of groups)

Tip: the participants may be overly informed and persuaded. It can help to have them think of their aunt or neighbour when they choose a theme (front) and formulate a question or message (back).

Collect cards and messages!



Thank you for your enthusiasm!

Explain that the cards are collected and the messages are delivered to the supermarkets at the end of the year (together with those generated in many other workshops).

Afterwards, they receive a short survey intended to better map what citizens want.

Handwriting practice lines consisting of 20 horizontal dotted lines.



3. Material

Toolbox

- ☐ Pptx
- ☐ Quiz sheets with posts
- ☐ 1 green and 1 red basket
- ☐ Pens set up at reception (40 pieces of each colour)
- ☐ Postcards to hand out
- ☐ Inspiration for framing the quiz

Provided/ask the organiser:

- ☐ Projector
- ☐ Laptop (if it's your own laptop – check if the connection is compatible with the projector)
- ☐ Enough chairs for all participants in group setup or at tables for presentation
- ☐ Seven quiz tables scattered around the room (allowing people to walk around and stop at every table with several people)
- ☐ Reception table
- ☐ Table with drinks/glasses (water, coffee, tea, juice) + if preferred, a table with snacks/cookies/soup and bread, etc.
 - ▶ You will find tips for sustainable catering in the folder with background material



Handwriting practice lines consisting of 24 horizontal dotted lines.



4. Room setup/focal points for the room

► Reception table

- ☐ Attendee list with participants
- ☐ (optional) name tags
- ☐ Bamboo pens nicely arranged, white pens chaotically arranged (or the other way around!). For the purpose of this setup and more explanation, see blue box, page 5
- ☐ Postcards
- ☐ Fridge cards with "stubborn tips"

► Table or bar with drinks (water and juice) + snacks/candy depending on the location

► Audience setup:

- ☐ Chairs for #participants (30 to 50) – in rows or groups around small table (if there is enough room)
- ☐ Install projector and screen
- ☐ Test sound
- ☐ Prepare laptop

► Quiz setup:

- ☐ Seven standing tables/regular tables far enough apart to allow for a small route past each table, and viewing, discussing, etc. in groups of five.
- ☐ On each table:
 - Quiz question
 - Answers: corresponding pictures or material – see quiz questions overview

► Additional framing:

- ☐ Various possibilities per quiz question
- ☐ General: shopping cart, shopping bag filled with all kinds of groceries, the cash register, etc.



Handwriting practice lines consisting of 20 horizontal dotted lines.

5. Background information

Gap in attitude vs. actions

- **2020 BEUC European consumer survey on sustainability** – report in folder
- **Sales figure research from Flanders** – various studies on sustainable consumption/attitudes
<https://omgeving.vlaanderen.be/MILIEUVERANTWOORDE-CONSUMPTIE>
- **2016 Agriculture and fishing report:** Interesting section about consumer behaviour (several examples of gap in attitude vs. actions starting p. 47
<https://publicaties.vlaanderen.be/view-file/42243>
- **Monitor sustainable food choices** dept. of agriculture and fishing (Flanders) (report in folder)

Nudging: theory + additional examples

- **A nudge in the right direction – retail case:** report of a Ghent University study into several interventions for stimulating meat reduction – contains a good introduction to nudging with a general overview of techniques and how they work.

Food Citizenship – “what consumers can do”

- <https://foodcitizenship.info/resources/> - About “food citizenship” UK (various interesting studies related to ‘citizen’s perspective instead of consumer perspective’)

6. Tips for follow-up activity

If the group is interested in pursuing this further, they can get in touch with Hannelore Tyskens at Rikolto. We can provide inspiration and guidance for a follow-up about this theme.

Hannelore_tyskens@rikolto.org

0472 24 34 97



Handwriting practice lines consisting of 24 horizontal dotted lines.

Smart and Stubborn at the Supermarket?

