How-to guide: Design your own behavioural messaging campaign to improve food delivery worker work health and safety

This is a resource for food delivery platforms looking to implement their own behavioural messaging campaign to improve the work health and safety (WHS) of food delivery workers in the gig economy.

This practical how-to guide will describe step-by-step instructions on how to:

1. **Diagnose** the most relevant work health and safety challenges for your platform
2. **Plan** your campaign using evidence-based behavioural strategies
3. **Identify** when and how you will send your messages
4. **Evaluate** your campaign

Step 1: Diagnose the most relevant WHS challenges for your platform

The first step is to gain a robust understanding of the **nature and culture of WHS within your organisation**. A key part of this step is to ensure the WHS practices and policies of your platform align with the messages you plan to send to workers. This is important to ensure workers perceive your messages as valid and credible and to ensure your organisation is equipped to respond to any WHS issues that may happen during or after the messaging campaign (e.g. an increase in reporting of WHS incidents).

To further inform your understanding, you should gather evidence from a range of different sources, which may include **primary research** on **workers who are engaged by your platform**, such as:

- Interviews or focus groups
- Staff surveys
- Analysis of key WHS metrics your platform routinely measures

You may also want to compare this data with **existing research conducted by third parties** investigating the **WHS of other workers in the gig economy**. This may help you to sense–check your conclusions or contextualise them within the wider WHS landscape. Existing research and resources may include:

- Locally relevant research or reports, such as those on the Centre for WHS' Knowledge Hub
- Any available WHS data, such as formally reported incidents and insurance claims

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Step 2: Plan your campaign using evidence–based behavioural strategies

The next step is to plan a messaging campaign that addresses the most common or noticeable WHS concerns identified in Step 1.

We recommend **designing communications based on evidence about human decision–making and behaviour.** This enables your messages to take into account how humans think and behave in the real world, enabling your platform to better ensure the WHS of your workers.

Below we describe some general principles for designing and composing safety messages.

- Make communications **as easy as possible to understand**. Workers have busy and stressful jobs and are unlikely to read lengthy or confusing messages. **Short and simple** communications improve understanding and information retention. Use plain language, short sentences, and bullet points to make the messages quick and easy to read.

- Use **design and layout** to draw attention to the most important information. People are more likely to notice information that our perceptual system is drawn toward. Ensure that key information **stands out** by using large bold **fonts or colours** that contrast with their surroundings.

- Provide **specific strategies** for workers to do their job safely. For each of the safety topics you cover in your email campaign (see Box 1 on the next page), offer some specific suggestions on actions your workers could take to increase their safety in that situation. To ensure the **details and language feel authentic**, you should **collaborate and consult** with your workers.

How to decide on your topics

The topics you cover should be familiar to the workers delivering for your platform and relevant to their experiences on the job. We recommend that you collaborate with your workers and make decisions together about which topics to cover.

- Message 1: The importance of road safety rules
- Message 2: Wearing high–vis and safety lights during evening shifts
- Message 3: Why you should always lock up your bike when collecting food
- Message 4: Why you should never rush, even when a delivery is running late
- Message 5: Tips and tricks for delivering in bad weather

The messages should be built on behavioural strategies and tailored to the experiences of workers delivering for your platform.

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Behavioural strategies to incorporate into safety messaging

Social norms

We are influenced by what other people like us think and do. Informing workers that most people in their role take safety precautions is likely to encourage safety behaviours.

The social norms need to be both accurate and relevant to the worker. If the safety behaviour is not performed by the most of the workers yet, you can communicate the extent to which workers are increasingly adopting the behaviour over time, e.g. "More and more workers are turning up to Australian road rules training."

> The majority of our riders stick to the speed limits when making deliveries

> As a former delivery worker who experienced a traffic incident, I know how important this issue is

Credible messenger

Who sends or communicates the information is critical, as we are more likely to notice the message if it comes from someone we trust, has authority, or is seen as credible. Consult with workers to determine the most suitable messenger for your campaign.

Personalisation

We are more likely to pay attention to information that is personally relevant to us. Personalise communications where possible using workers' names and information relevant to their geographical location and vehicle type.

> Hi Rahul, There is high traffic in your area today. Here is what you can do to keep safe...

> Make a plan now for what you will do
>
> *If I can't find a park close to the restaurant, then I will...*

Make a plan

We often have good intentions but behave differently in the moment. This is especially true when driving or riding, as traffic and road conditions can be stressful environments. Advance planning helps workers respond in the moment in a way that moves them closer to their goal, rather than away from it.

A good plan includes concrete details about the situation and specific features of the response behaviour. The "if... then..." approach can be used to help workers plan in advance for specific obstacles or situations, and deal with them more effectively when they happen.

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Pledge commitment

Asking for a commitment can help us meet our goals. In your first message, you could ask workers to commit to reading all of the messages in the campaign. Public pledges can also be more effective than pledges made in private. Ask your workers to commit to a safety behaviour, then share that pledge with a peer, family member, or colleague.

Tell your friend or colleague how you plan to stay safe on the roads this month
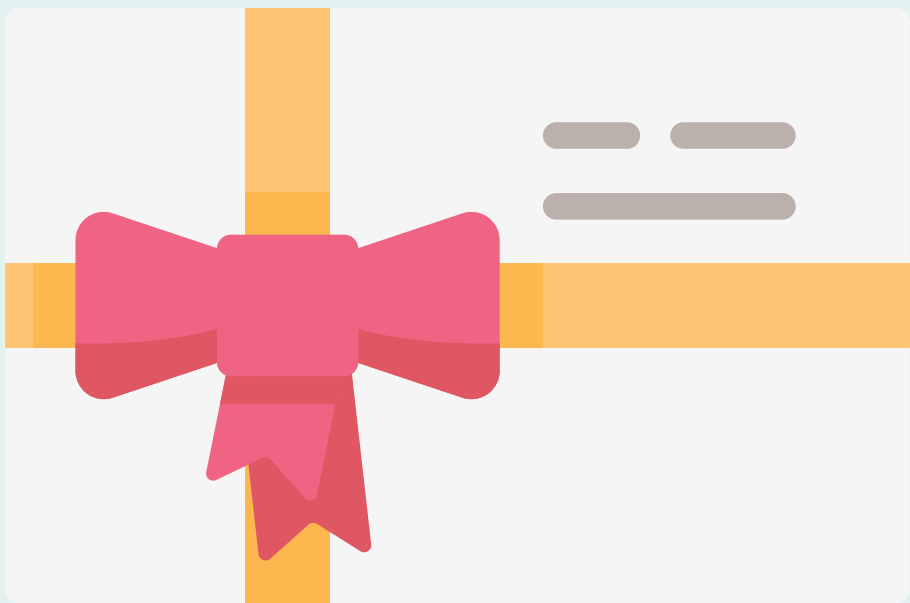
Incentives

Providing incentives can increase our motivation and spur behaviour change. Incentives do not necessarily need to be financial. In fact, non–monetary incentives, including those that are tangible, intangible, or even symbolic, are effective in changing behaviour.

Offer appealing incentives to workers to engage with safety initiatives. These may be tangible (e.g. vouchers for purchasing safety equipment or for a bicycle service) or intangible incentives (e.g. gamify elements of the app to reward safe behaviours).

Reciprocity

Reciprocity is encouraged when an unconditional gesture or gift is offered before asking the recipient to do something in return. The "gift" does not have to be tangible – it could be as simple as giving workers information that helps them understand how the platform works. For example, tell them about upcoming safety initiatives, explain their purpose, and highlight your investment in these initiatives.

We have invested in a high–quality safety training event this weekend.

We hope to see you there!

Step 3: Identify when and how you will send your messages

As we have seen in our research, getting workers to engage with messages can be a challenge. Workers will be more responsive to certain channels of communication and at certain times of the day. Selecting the **timing** and **most appropriate touchpoints** for communicating safety information to your workers is essential, and may critically influence whether your messages are engaged with or even opened in the first place. Some options include:

- **Short in–app reminder prompts** sent when workers encounter specific environmental cues (e.g. heavy traffic, poor weather, accident hotspots)
- **Short in–app messages** sent at timely moments of the day (e.g. during breaks, just before accepting an order)
- **Posters** in restaurants
- **Text messages**

To select the appropriate touchpoints, moments, and channels for your campaign, consult with your workers first, either through interviews and focus groups, or by user testing the messages before rolling them out.

Step 4: Evaluate your campaign to find out what works

What works is not always intuitive. Even when we follow best practices, we cannot always be sure what will work and what will not. Testing messages is a critical step when implementing your behaviourally informed messaging campaign. Testing will enable you to be confident that the new messages have returned the desired benefits and minimised any unintended consequences. Testing also will also enable you to maximise cost–benefit by only implementing and scaling messages or behavioural strategies that are proven to work. Below we describe three different testing methodologies you can use to evaluate your messaging campaign.

User testing

User testing helps determine how your workers respond to the new messages and invites their feedback. User testing can be conducted in a variety of ways. You can ask a worker to talk you through their experiences while they read the safety message or you could interview the worker about their feedback afterward. While user testing will return insights on individual worker experiences, you cannot generalise those insights to the whole fleet. To test your safety message on a larger scale, you can conduct A/B testing or a randomised controlled trial (RCT).
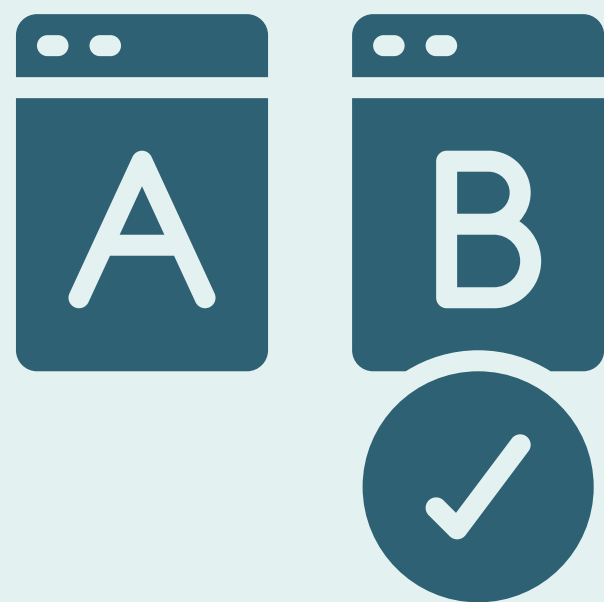
A/B testing

A/B testing involves testing two (or more) versions of a message with your workers to find out which version works best. Randomly assign your workers to receive one version of the message and compare the outcomes across the groups. A/B testing allows you to compare small variations in communications (e.g. a message with two slightly different content variations). A/B testing also helps resolve any conflicting findings from user testing by determining which version works best in the current circumstances. A/B testing does not, however, explain *why* the winning version was the best. To understand the reasons why an improved safety message was successful, you can conduct an RCT.
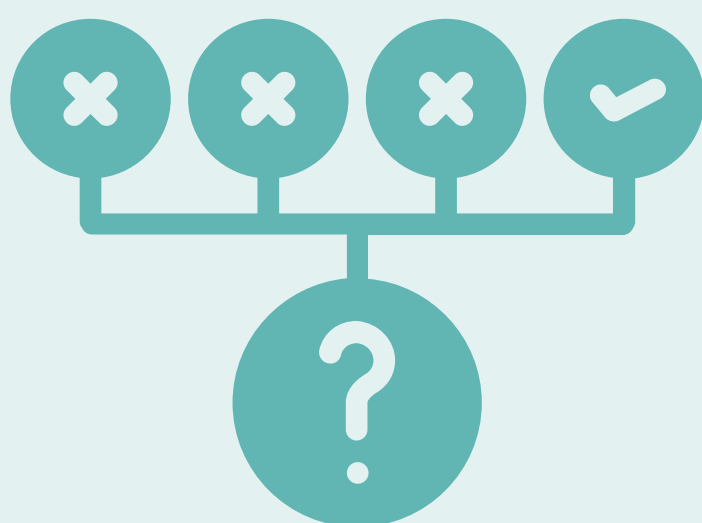
Randomised controlled trials (RCTs)

RCTs are widely considered to be the gold standard of impact evaluations. To do an RCT, you randomly assign your workers to either a treatment or control group. Those in the treatment group gets sent the message being evaluated, while those in the control group continue with 'business as usual'. The random allocation process makes sure the groups are not systematically different from each other, meaning you can be confident that any difference in the outcome is a result of the message.