

# 12 Determinants of Behavior

Common Factors  
That Influence Human Behavior



# PEOPLE DO WHAT'S FUN, EASY AND POPULAR

## 12 FACTORS THAT DRIVE OUR BEHAVIOR

### FUN

**Maximizing good results; minimizing bad.**

**PERCEIVED CONSEQUENCES.** We seek rewards. We avoid problems. The sooner and surer the reward, the more powerful the pull. But we need to expect the reward to act on it.

**RISK.** High risks can deter us. But other influences are often more powerful unless the risk is perceived as imminent, personal and easily addressed.

**EMOTIONS.** Actions can trigger emotions we want – or don't want – to feel. How an action is framed can trigger the emotion or experience it recalls.

### EASY

**Removing or reducing barriers to action.**

**SKILLS / KNOWLEDGE.** Some actions require know-how. We can only do what we know how to do.

**EFFICACY.** We need confidence we know how to do something, which may or may not relate to what we actually know.

**CONTROL.** We like to be in control. Feeling control over a decision empowers one to act. Choice helps: It gives us a sense of control.

**INVESTMENT.** The cost of action can lead to inaction. This includes monetary cost, time required, social capital needed and the cognitive load required to act.

**ENVIRONMENT.** Behaviors are influenced by their context. We often favor what's accessible, noticeable, supported or triggered by environmental cues.

**BIAS & HEURISTICS.** Behaviors are often chosen intuitively, without reflection, using instinct and mental shortcuts to lighten the cognitive load. We call those shortcuts "heuristics." The results are predictable biases that influence behavior.

### POPULAR

**Make the behavior right for who we are.**

**SOCIAL NORMS.** As social beings, we are influenced by what we believe others do, and by what we think they expect of us – in a word, norms. Social norms can be embedded in cultures as traditions or emerge quickly as trends.

**SELF STANDARDS.** The standards we set for ourselves, driven by aspirations, fears and self-image, impact our behavior as we signal who we aspire to be.

**SOCIAL IDENTITY.** Our affinity with social groups influences our perceptions and behaviors. We cherry pick data to protect our identity and our perceived value to others. To motivate change, marketers must initially fit their outreach and asks to the target's existing world view. Connection always precedes conversion.



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