



Bristol Climate &
Nature Partnership

CLIMATE ACTION PROGRAMME

ENGAGING EMPLOYEES IN CLIMATE AND NATURE ACTION



The tips, examples and resources that follow came from our Intention to Action Clinic in November 2021

They will help you enable, inspire and motivate your colleagues to make more sustainable behaviour choices.



Why engaging employees is important

The behavioural changes required to meet net zero targets involve stopping or reducing behaviours as well as adopting new behaviours or technologies.

There are different ways to motivate and influence behaviour change, but fear is not a great motivator as it can make people shut down.

63% of the changes necessary for reaching net zero have something to do with behaviour
(Source: [IEA](#))

Finding ways to engage employees rather than simply imposing changes can help positively influence people.



Get set up for success

A solid foundation needs to be laid for staff engagement on climate and nature to be effective

Get the basics right

- ☛ Pay a Living Wage
- 🌿 Offer a good benefits package
- ✱ Ensure your staff are well supported

Ensure your staff feel satisfied at work

- 👤 Run an annual employee happiness survey
- 👤 Listen to and empower the team

Create a sustainability colleague network or empower green reps to feed in comments from their team.
Could you give them a place on the Board?

Get set up for success

Embed sustainability into organisational goals

- 🏢 Train someone senior to be responsible for climate issues
- ★ Include in job descriptions

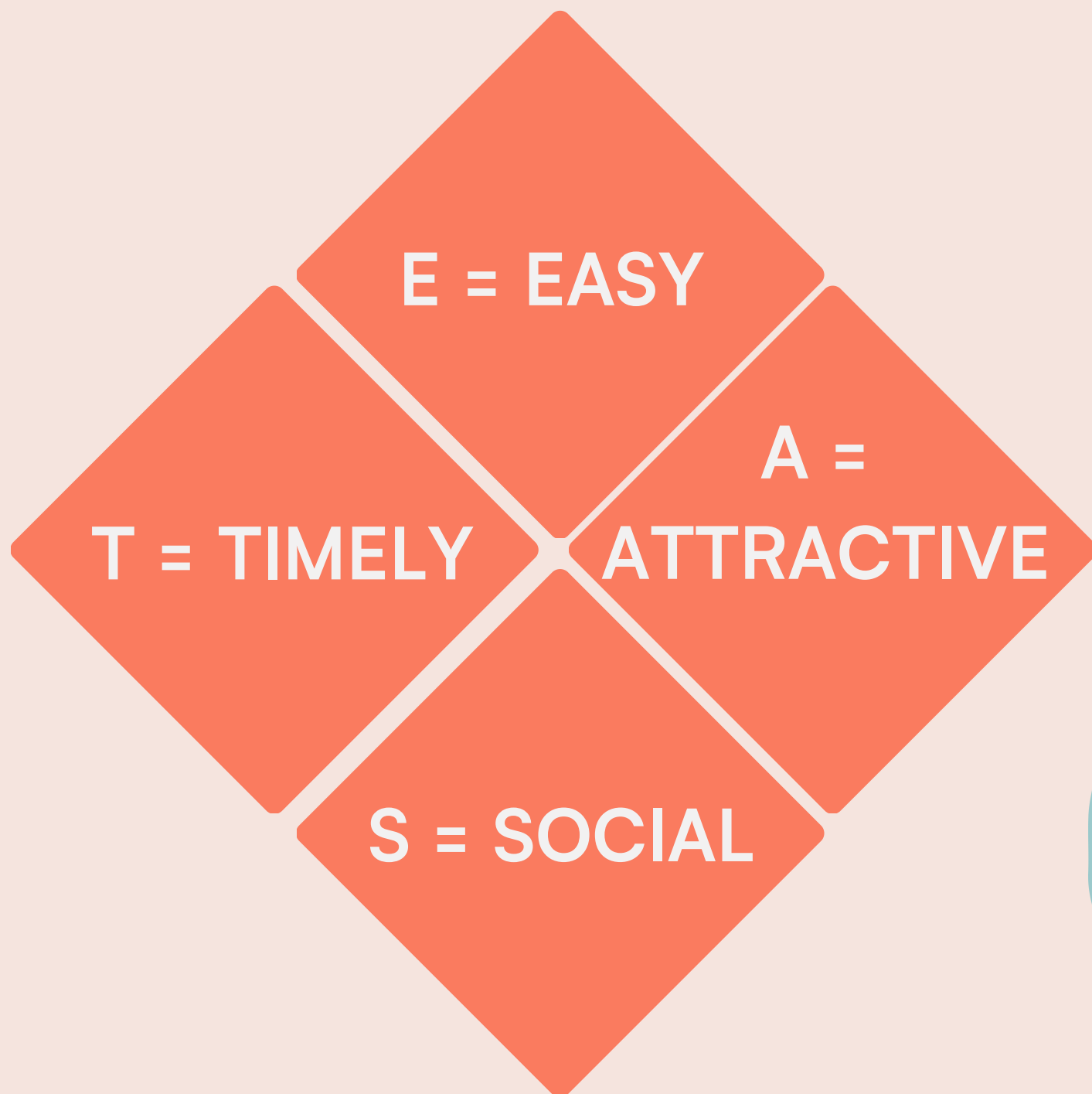
Be transparent

- ⌚ Communicate your sustainability goals and challenges to your team and involve them



Use the EAST Framework

The EAST framework is a simple tool for understanding how to create an effective behaviour change policy developed by the Behavioural Insights Team



Find out more:
EAST framework:
Four simple ways to
apply behavioural
insights

Make it easy

Changing behaviour is challenging! Simplify it

Use intelligent defaults

- Have local, plant based food as the default at catered events
- Opt out rather than opt in to green pension scheme
- Default to eco settings on appliances
- Have virtual meetings as organisation standard



Make it easy

Remove or add frictions

- Automatic taps make it harder to leave taps running
- Offer smaller plates and no trays to minimise food waste
- Make recycling bins obvious and easy to access
- Provide green infrastructure such as secure bike storage

Simplify the choice environment

- Provide fewer car parking spaces and more bike parking spaces

Make it attractive

We are motivated by incentives, but they don't have to be financial, get creative!

Use smart incentives

- Introduce lottery-based deposit return schemes for recyclable items
- Harness group pride through competitions and gamification
- Provide extra holiday days for sustainable travel choices
- Personalise messages such as department feedback on energy use
- Introduce personal carbon budgets, perhaps employees could trade credits to allow for work trips abroad for example

Make it attractive

Frame messages positively and highlight co-benefits

- Promote sustainable food as tasty and indulgent i.e. plant-powered, feel good or field grown rather than meat-free
- Encourage cycling to work as a form of exercise

Draw attention to the behaviour or opportunity

- Design recycling bins to be eye catching
- Make stairs more appealing than the lift

Any reward incentives should also be supporting the green agenda

Make it social

We tend to engage with green behaviours that we think others are already doing

Leverage networks

- Spread messages via people with whom employees identify
- Find existing channels that work rather than all messages coming from a sustainability person

Use reciprocity effects

- “We’re doing X, but we need you to do your bit too”



Make it social

Highlight others' sustainable behaviour/ social norms

- Compare departments energy usage
- Share information about positive trends
- Publicise rankings

Use social connections and peer pressure

- Set up a food sharing group to distribute leftovers
- Ask each green ambassador to engage one colleague

Make it timely

Our heads are in the moment!

Encourage pre-commitments and
emphasise immediate benefits

- Provide interest free loans to help employees buy a bicycle
- Allow people to choose in advance
- Bring future benefits into present
- Enable gradual changes



It's easier to change habits when there is already transition or disruption such as new staff or a returning to work after a break

Make it timely

Harness or create timely moments

- Give new employees info on how to travel to work sustainably
- Highlight positive behaviour choice at the moment of use
- Raise sustainability when you have a captive audience, such as at a staff party

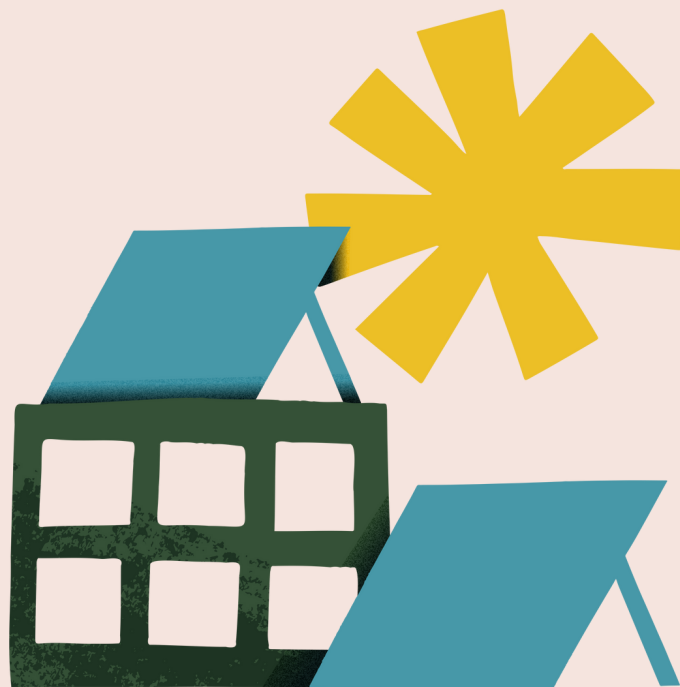


Find out more:
[Examples of green behaviour changes in Universities](#)

Make it timely

Help people plan and follow through

- Provide a checklist for reducing energy use
- Give people info before they need it such as help them plan a new route into work via public transport
- Provide protected time for people to complete the action



Learn from others

Here are six examples of engagement approaches organisations have tried:

1. Pledge

Run a fun pledge campaign for the whole team

- Find a way to share photos and tips
- You could even have a prize for the winning team

Pledge websites:

[Do Nation](#)

[Giki Zero pro](#)



Learn from others

2. Train your team

Provide compulsory climate literacy training for staff, as well as offering opportunities to learn more, for example, through monthly team lunches with guest speakers.

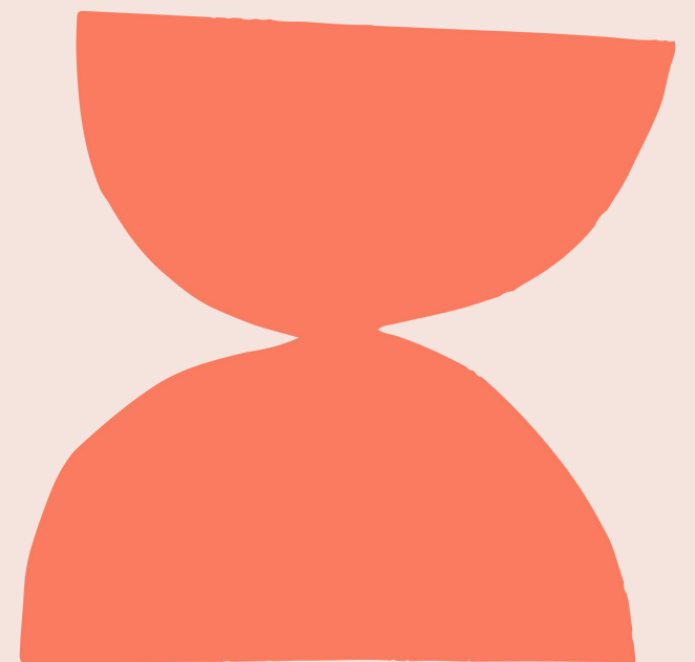
You could also provide more specific training relevant to your sector, for example, Pukka Herbs provides training on organic farming for all employees.

Climate training:

Make Tomorrow

Climate Fresk

The Carbon Literacy Project



Learn from others

3. Empower your team

Give everybody in the team, or each team, a special role or responsibility

How it works

Innocent Drinks came up with four roles and let staff choose:

- AGITATOR; looking out for how to be a more responsible business
- ACTIVATOR; delivering a specific element of their force for good work
- AMBASSADOR; sharing their force for good work with others
- PROTECTOR; guarding their approach to being a responsible business

Learn from others

3. Empower your team

The majority of board members act as protectors; directly supporting the sustainability strategy and holding teams accountable.

More than half of staff are in the grassroots agitator role.

They are asked to come up with and implement ideas that can improve sustainability both at home and at work.

Find out more:
[Edie article on
Innocent Drinks'
sustainability
roles](#)

Learn from others

4. Make targets personal

You could link certain sustainability targets to certain staff's pay or bonuses.

For example, Co-op launched a 10 point climate action roadmap and linked their Food CEO's pay to the targets

Find out more:
[Read Co-op's](#)
[10 point](#)
[climate action](#)
[plan](#)

Learn from others

5. Inspire your team



Provide opportunities for corporate volunteering for local green projects.

It will help identify colleagues who might be interested in supporting sustainability at work as well as connect people with the issues and solutions.



Learn from others

5. Inspire your team



Offer Dragon's Den style competitions where staff come up with innovative solutions to your workplace sustainability challenges, with the winning idea getting funding and support.



Don't forget to listen!

Ask your colleagues about their understanding, commitment and motivations

Learn from others

6. Imagine the future

Run a meeting as if it were 2030 and get everyone involved. What will your team, department or Board look like in 2030? What will you be discussing?

How it works

Boardroom 2030 invites and equips businesses to explore what 2030 might look like in the boardroom.

The Bodyshop imagined what their 2030 boardroom would look like live at COP26. Watch it or read more about it.

Learn from others

6. Imagine the future

Don't forget about influencing upstream!

Think about where you have impact as a business and make a climate action plan.

Find out more:
[Download your
free Boardroom
2030 activation
kit](#)



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Bristol Climate &
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