

# IMPROVING COMPLIANCE

# INSPIRE

**BehaviourWorks**  
AUSTRALIA

## INCREASING COMPLIANCE WITH WRITTEN REQUESTS - A BEHAVIOUR CHANGE APPROACH

Are your letters getting the numbers? It's a question that many organisations and public administrators are asking themselves in the face of rising postal and administration costs. Even for organisations that use digital communications to ask their customers/citizens to act on important requests, the cost of unanswered requests and non-compliance is high - and getting higher every year.

So, what's the best way of influencing behaviour through written communications? BehaviourWorks Australia has developed and published an effective model of compliance - INSPIRE.

### INSPIRED LETTER WRITING

For several years, BehaviourWorks Australia (BWA) has been investigating ways to improve written communications and increase compliance with written requests.

As we've discovered, it's not just about moving away from complex or cold language, but about applying a range of simple behaviour change techniques that have been shown to achieve large aggregate improvements in compliance - keeping in mind that even small percentage improvements can have substantial monetary and policy benefits.

So, what are these techniques? BWA has translated them into a stand-alone product called INSPIRE.

Recognised by the journal *Public Administration Review*\* as the first model of behaviour change



specifically designed to help public administrators, INSPIRE draws on the academic literature, key behavioural techniques, successful behaviour change models and BWA's own experience working with government and non-government organisations.

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## RECIPE FOR SUCCESS

Based on an easily remembered mnemonic, INSPIRE captures and summarises seven proven techniques (right) to achieve compliance.

The framework - which can be provided upon request for a fee - provides specific instructions on how to apply each of these techniques and how to overcome practical challenges as they arise.

In other words, INSPIRE provides a 'recipe' for designing high-impact targeted messages that get results.

## PROVEN RESULTS

The INSPIRE framework is based on BWA's own experience working with its government and industry partners. For example:

- By applying INSPIRE techniques, we helped VicRoads improve on-time reporting by drivers who were required to have a doctor check their medical fitness to drive by 24%.
- By making subtle changes to the Environment Protection Authority Victoria's litter fine communications, INSPIRE helped to reduce the number of people avoiding payments by 13%.
- Using INSPIRE techniques in vehicle registration renewal letters elicited tens of millions of dollars more in on-time payments.

\* Ref: **The INSPIRE Framework: How Public Administrators Can Increase Compliance with Written Requests Using Behavioral Techniques.**  
<https://doi.org/10.1111/puar.13004>

## INSPIRE TECHNIQUES

- I** Implementation intentions – close the 'intention behaviour gap' by encouraging people to make a plan to act.
- N** Norms - use a combination of injunctive norms and descriptive norms to increase the uptake of desirable behaviours.
- S** Salience – use visual stimuli, such as colour and symbols, to demand attention.
- P** Procedural justice – show the fairness of the process by emphasising the accuracy of the information, lack of bias, consistent procedures and respectful treatment of the individual.
- I** Incentives – use the right kind of monetary and non-monetary incentives.
- R** Reputation and credibility – ensure that the communications come from, or are authored by, someone who can inspire belief.
- E** Ease – making compliance easier via clear instructions.

To learn more about BehaviourWorks Australia's research services, visit [behaviourworksaustralia.org](http://behaviourworksaustralia.org)  
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**BehaviourWorks Australia is a behaviour change research enterprise within the Monash Sustainable Development Institute at Monash University.**