



Nudging towards diet change

Influencing food choices for a greener future



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NEW FOOD HUB

INTRODUCTION

In the dynamic world of consumer behaviour, nudging has emerged as a powerful tool for steering choices towards sustainability. Marketing professionals can make subtle use of factors that influence consumers' purchase decisions, these include product design, pricing, labelling, product placement, promotions, and other persuasive marketing material. Experts Thaler and Sunstein (2008) suggest that nudges can be used to enhance product appeal, simplify purchasing, and provide feedback to consumers on their choice of purchase.¹

Here, we'll explore key studies that demonstrate the effectiveness of nudging in encouraging consumers to make environmentally conscious and plant-based food choices.



THE ESSENCE OF NUDGING



Nudging, as defined by Pelle Guldborg Hansen et al. (2016), is a strategic approach aimed at influencing decision-making processes by shaping the environment in which choices are made.² This can involve various methods, such as altering default settings, providing feedback, simplifying decision-making processes, or framing choices.

At its core, a nudge refers to a modification in choice architecture that predictably changes behaviour without imposing restrictions or altering economic incentives.¹

LIBERTARIAN PATERNALISM AND CHOICE ARCHITECTURE

The term 'Libertarian Paternalism' was introduced by experts Thaler and Sunstein (2008)¹ to describe a framework that guides individuals toward decisions benefiting their well-being while preserving individual liberty. Choice architecture, i.e. the design of a decision-making environment, plays a pivotal role in this framework.



ETHICAL CONSIDERATIONS, RESPONSIBILITY, AND INDIVIDUAL AUTONOMY

Nudges, which aim to help individuals make better choices without imposing significant burdens on them, must be easy and inexpensive to avoid, thus aligning with libertarian paternalism. They should not be manipulative and should allow for the highest freedom of choice, according to Hansen and Jespersen (2013).³



STRATEGIC SHELF PLACEMENT

Placing plant-based food items prominently on shelves at eye level in supermarkets influences consumers to notice and consider these options first.



This aligns with the essence of nudging, as demonstrated by Van Kleef et al.'s (2012)⁴ study on healthier snack choices. When healthy snacks took the spotlight, consumers overwhelmingly chose them. This underscores the potential of visual cues in shaping preferences and promoting sustainable options.



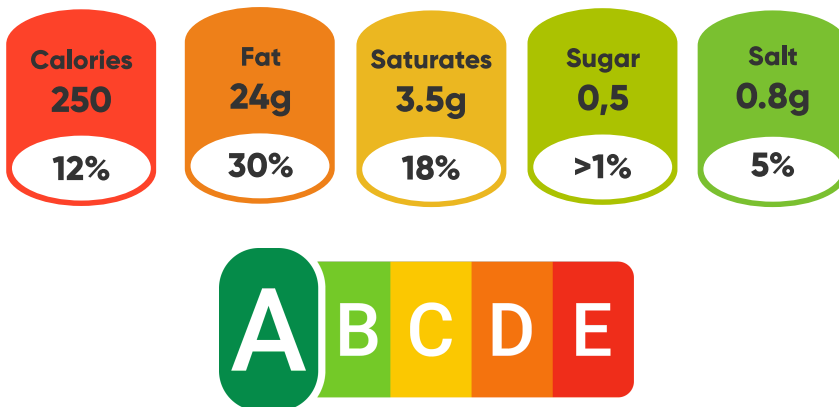
DEFAULT OPTIONS FOR PLANT-BASED MEALS

In food delivery apps or meal-kit services, setting plant-based meal options as the default choice gently guides users toward decisions that align with their well-being, adhering to the principles of libertarian paternalism.



TRAFFIC-LIGHT LABELLING AND INFORMED CHOICES

Clear labelling that conveys the nutritional value and environmental benefits of plant-based products is an important step towards respecting consumers' autonomy. By providing essential information, this approach aligns with the principles of nudging.



A traffic-light labelling system, introduced by Thorndike et al. (2014),⁵ uses colours to indicate the healthiness of a product. This method encouraged consumers to make healthier choices, thus highlighting the potential impact of informative labeling on sustainable food choices.

INDIRECT PROMPTS: MUSIC, SCENT, AND PRODUCT PREFERENCES

In 1999, North and his colleagues illustrated how music and scent can subtly influence customers' purchase decisions.⁶ The seamless pairing of sensory elements with consumer choices emphasises the deep-rooted, subconscious connections formed. Similar indirect prompts can be used to encourage consumers to choose plant-based and sustainable food options.



APPEALING VISUALS

According to Starke et al.'s (2021)⁷ research findings, attractive visuals have a significant impact on shifting online choices towards healthier recipes. This highlights the importance of visually pleasing presentations in the online realm, as they nudge consumers towards exploring and selecting sustainable and plant-based options.



CONCLUSION

→ Nudging techniques offer a powerful tool for promoting sustainable and plant-based food choices.

→ By providing accessible information, making plant-based options appealing and convenient, and creating a sense of community around these choices, we can shift towards a more environmentally conscious and responsible food system. It is up to all of us, as consumers, marketers, and policymakers, to work together towards this common goal.

Drive your brand's plant-based sales by using these tactics in your product marketing strategy.

Email corporate@proveg.org to learn how to apply these techniques to your product strategy and drive your plant-based sales.



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