

Using Behavioural Insights to Improve the use of ESDC Job Match Service

Published On: 03 April 2017

Organisation: Employment and Social Development Canada

Country: Canada

Level of government: Central government

Sector: General public services

Type: Communication, Methods, Public Service

Launched in: 2014

Overall development time: 2 year(s)

Like this innovation

0 persons like this innovation

Description

Job Match (JM) is a newly developed tool within the Job Bank initiative. It allows job seekers to find jobs that more closely fit their skills, experiences and knowledge and helps them actively connect with the right employers. The takeup of the service has tended to be relatively low, partially due to behavioural barriers. In light of this, we tested different messaging based on various behavioural insights (BI) principles.

Why the innovation was developed

- JM is a major government investment in the area of labour market efficiency. The service can only work if people (job seekers and employers) fully complete their user profile.
 - It was hypothesized that behavioural barriers could in part explain the low takeup (lengthy profile creation process, complexity, incomplete information about the benefits of the service, etc) and ESDC senior management provided a strong signal for considering innovative approaches and tools such as BI.
-

Objectives

Enhance transparency, Improve effectiveness, Improve efficiency, Improve service quality, Improve user satisfaction

Main beneficiaries

General population, Government staff, Low-income groups, Other

- Job seekers

Existing similar practices

Applying BI to foster the use of direct deposit.
In public administration of my country
Canada Revenue Agency
Applying BI to foster the use of direct deposit.

Results

Service quality

Other:

Other improvements

- improved communication
- This innovation so far allowed us to learn what works best in improving the takeup of the JM service through communicating with Canadians. Some of the findings from this innovative research have already been implemented as permanent features of the JM website.

Development

Design

The main signal leading to the development of this particular innovation came from the department senior management. The idea of using BI to improve program and service delivery processes was shared with policy and research analysts within the relevant areas. Extended discussions among these players and with external academics led to the refinement of the idea behind the innovation discussed here. Design time: 5 month(s)

Testing

- The project involved a randomized controlled trial (RCT) to test variations of BI principles integrate in communication material with job seekers. A literature review was also conducted to inform the design of the nudges.

Testing time: 6 month(s)

Challenges and solutions

- A key challenge encountered during the testing of this innovation was related to concerns around the ethics of testing and applying BI on the general population.
 - This challenge has been addressed through ensuring the transparency of the research and educating key departmental stakeholders. In addition call volume were rigorously tracked to measure any dissatisfaction from the public.
-

Partnerships

Officials from the research and program areas of ESDC

Academics and Research Bodies, Other Public Sector

Collaborators on this innovations brought complementary expertise (program, IT and research). This collaboration has been key in ensuring the ongoing success of the initiative. In particular, it ensures that an appropriate balance is kept between the requirements for rigorous research design and the realities of programmatic objectives and operational constraints.

Lessons Learned

Lessons Learned

- Nudges based on Behavioural economics principles do matter and clearly outperform standard government messaging in some context.
 - Nudges may tend to have immediate/short term impact only. This should be better accounted for when designing future nudges.
-

Conditions for success

- Collaboration and leadership are key. IT should be flexible.
-

Other information

Important to address organisational risk aversion and breaking down silos. Important to start small to build evidence and showcasing successes and lessons learned.
