



Behaviour Change: COM-B and the 4 Pillars of Change

Description

What follows is an example of how to combine my Four Pillars of Change with a proven behavioural change model – COM-B. We will be using bounce rate on a website's homepage as the behaviour we wish to change. Companies often struggle with high bounce rates on their websites, indicating a disconnect between the website and its audience. However, with a little understanding of behaviour, we can start to sort this.

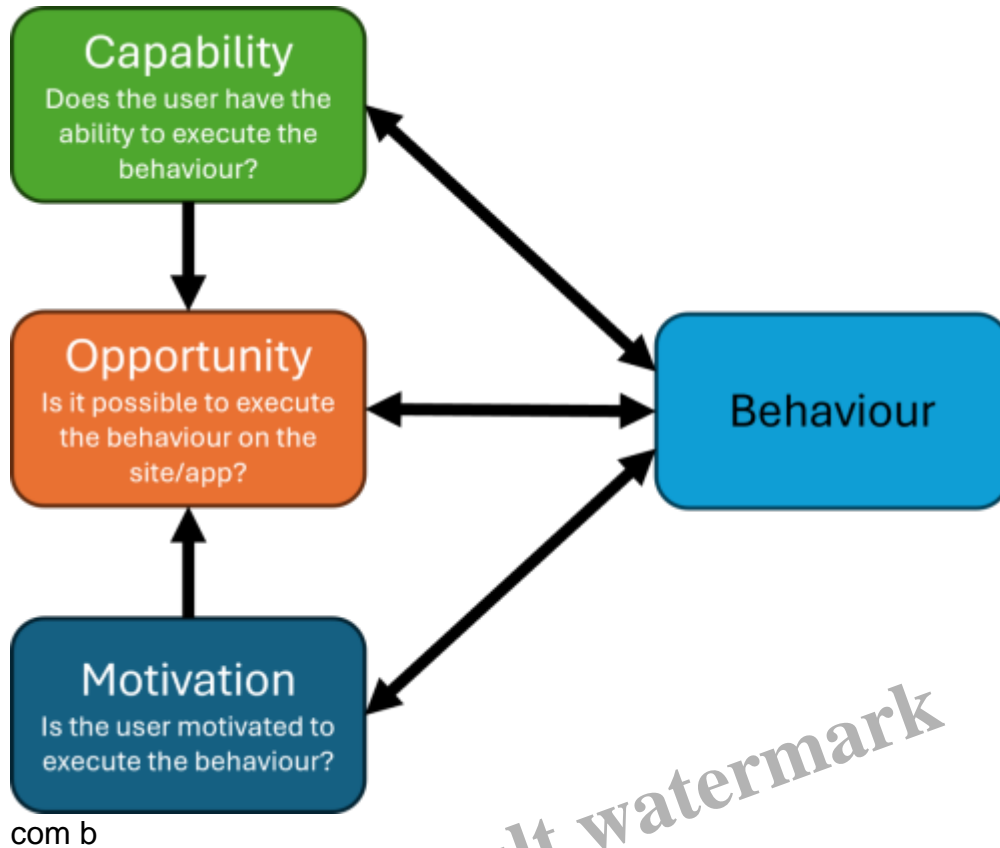
Understanding User Behaviour: The Key to Success

So, the first piece of the puzzle to creating an effective homepage is to understand user behaviour then design a user experience specific to what users want and need.

COM-B: A Scientific Lens on Behavioural Change

Developed by Professor Susan Michie, the COM-B Model outlines three factors influencing behaviour change:

- **Capability:** Does the user possess the requisite skills and knowledge to perform the desired action (e.g., navigating the website with ease)?
- **Opportunity:** Are there external factors influencing the desired behaviour (e.g., clear calls to action, readily available contact information)?
- **Motivation:** Does the user have a compelling reason to interact with the website (e.g., content that addresses their specific needs and challenges)?



The Four Pillars: Translating Theory into Actionable Strategies

I outlined the [4 Pillars of Change in a previous article](#) – briefly, they are

- What do you want to change?
- Why do you want to change it?
- How are you going to change it?
- How are you going to measure the success of the change?

If we break down the challenge of reducing bounce rate on the homepage, we can use the four pillars to define the problem and how we might look to solve it.

1. What do we want to change?

- We want to reduce the bounce rate on the homepage.

2. Why do we want to change it?

- A high bounce rate indicates that visitors are not finding the information about products they want fast enough or are not engaging with the homepage's layout. This reduces conversions and lowers brand awareness.

3. How are we going to change it using The COM-B Framework

- **Enhancing Capability:**
 - **Website Clarity:** Ensure the homepage clearly conveys its value proposition and how the website or store might match the needs of the visitor.
 - **Intuitive Navigation:** Design navigation menus that are user-friendly and straightforward.
 - **Search Functionality:** Provide a search bar to cater to users who have a specific goal in mind.
- **Amplifying Opportunity:**
 - **Call to Action (CTA) Prominence:** Display clear and relevant CTAs prominently, guiding users towards their desired actions.
 - **Reduced Clutter:** Minimize distractions and avoid overwhelming users with excessive information.
 - **Mobile Optimization:** Ensure a seamless user experience across various devices by optimizing the homepage for mobile.
 - **Recommendations:** Create recommendations based on previous behaviour or popular general behaviour (such as top sellers) to help users get to things of interest quickly.
- **Boosting Motivation:**
 - **Value Messaging:** Ensure that the company values, messages, value etc are easy for the customer to see. A company that matches the personal values of the customer will often have a higher chance of succeeding with capturing their engagement.
 - **Visual Appeal:** Use images that resonate with the user. If you know they are male from previous visits, show them images with men. If they have come in from an external campaign on social media – make sure the images and messaging follow them.
 - **Social Proof:** Showcase reviews, product feedback, case studies, or social proof badges to establish trust and credibility.

4. How are we going to measure the success of the change?

- **Tracking Bounce Rate:** The main KPI is going to be bounce rate. If our plan has worked, this should go down.
- **Analysing User Engagement:** Track metrics such as time spent on each page, click-through rates on CTAs, and user behaviour recordings to gain a deeper understanding of how users interact with the homepage.
- **Guard Rail Metrics:** Keep an eye on other metrics, such as conversion rate and AOV just to see if the change you have made hurts them.

By using the COM-B Model alongside the Four Pillars of Change, you can adopt a data-driven and user-centric strategies to solve almost any behaviour change related problems!

Additional Tip: A/B Testing for Continuous Optimization

Use A/B testing to continually optimize your homepage by testing different variations based on the COM-B principles. This iterative process ensures that your homepage delivers the absolute best possible user experience.

Category

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