



Influence at Work
THE PSYCHOLOGY OF PERSUASION

The Power of Social versus Economic and Regulatory Factors in Behavior Change

Dr. Robert B. Cialdini
President, Influence At Work

Contentions

- Government can rely too much on economic and regulatory levers when seeking to motivate citizens toward policy goals.
- Policy-makers would do well, as well, to consider what is known from behavioral and social science research about psychological motivators that can be at least as effective, yet less costly.

The Six Universal Principles of Social Influence

1. Reciprocation
2. Scarcity
3. Authority
4. Friendship/Liking
5. Commitment/Consistency
6. Consensus (Social Proof)

Principle 5:

Commitment/Consistency

People try to act in ways that are consistent with what they have already said or done.

**Behavioral scientists have labeled
what people have already said or
done as commitments.**

**What's more, they've found that the
most *persisting* commitments have
four features.**

Principle 6: Consensus

People try to follow the lead of those around them, like them.

**Thus, people are influenced by
the actions and opinions of:**

- Many others
- Similar others

Impact of Social Influence

Let's consider how these two simple principles of social influence can impact behavior in a pair of arenas relevant to government policy:

1. The Efficiency of Healthcare Delivery
2. Energy Conservation

Impact of Social Influence

The case of:

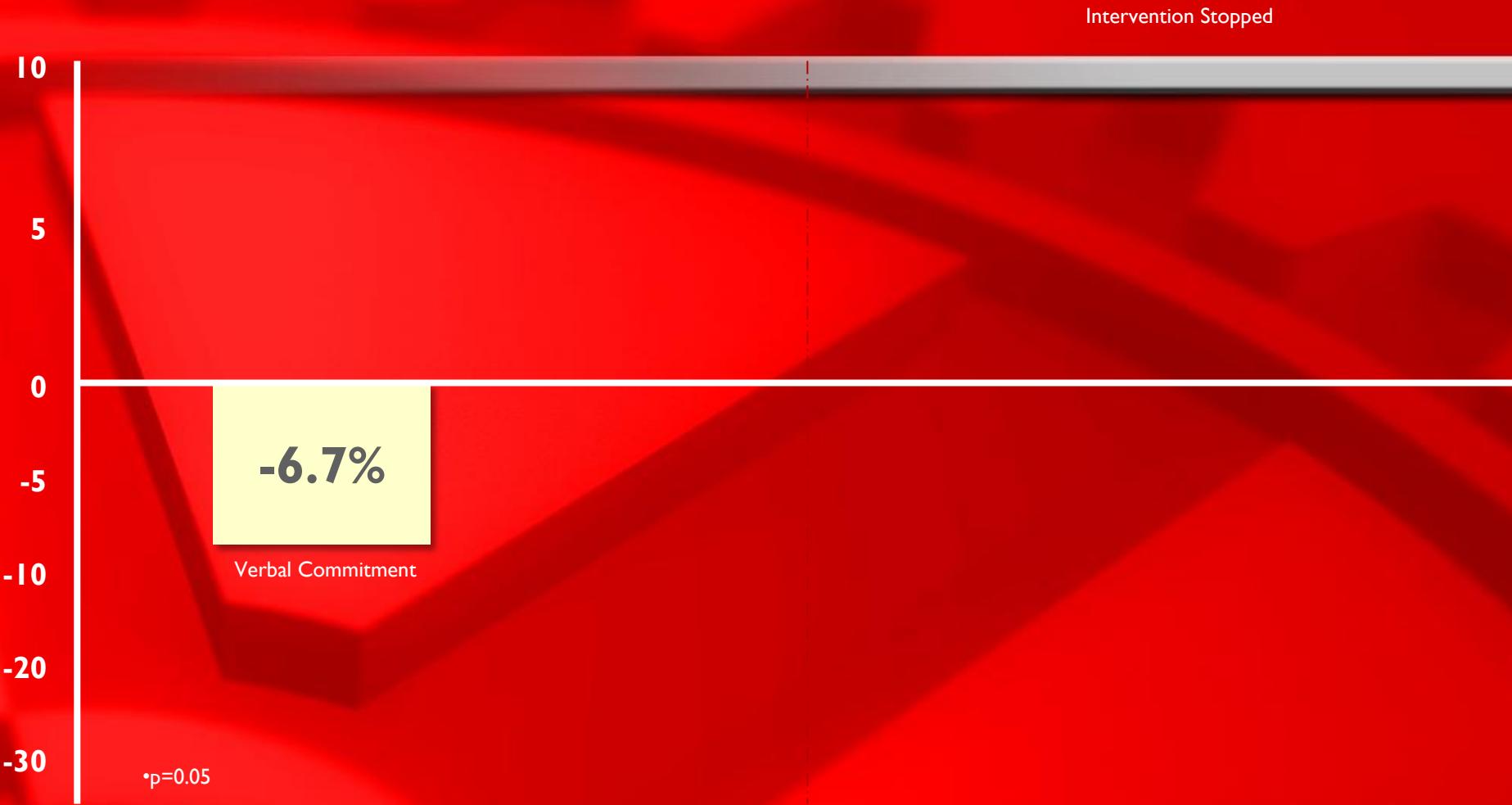
The UK's Behavioural Insights Unit

and

the National Health Service's problem of

Did Not Attends (No-Shows) at
appointments for medical visits and
procedures

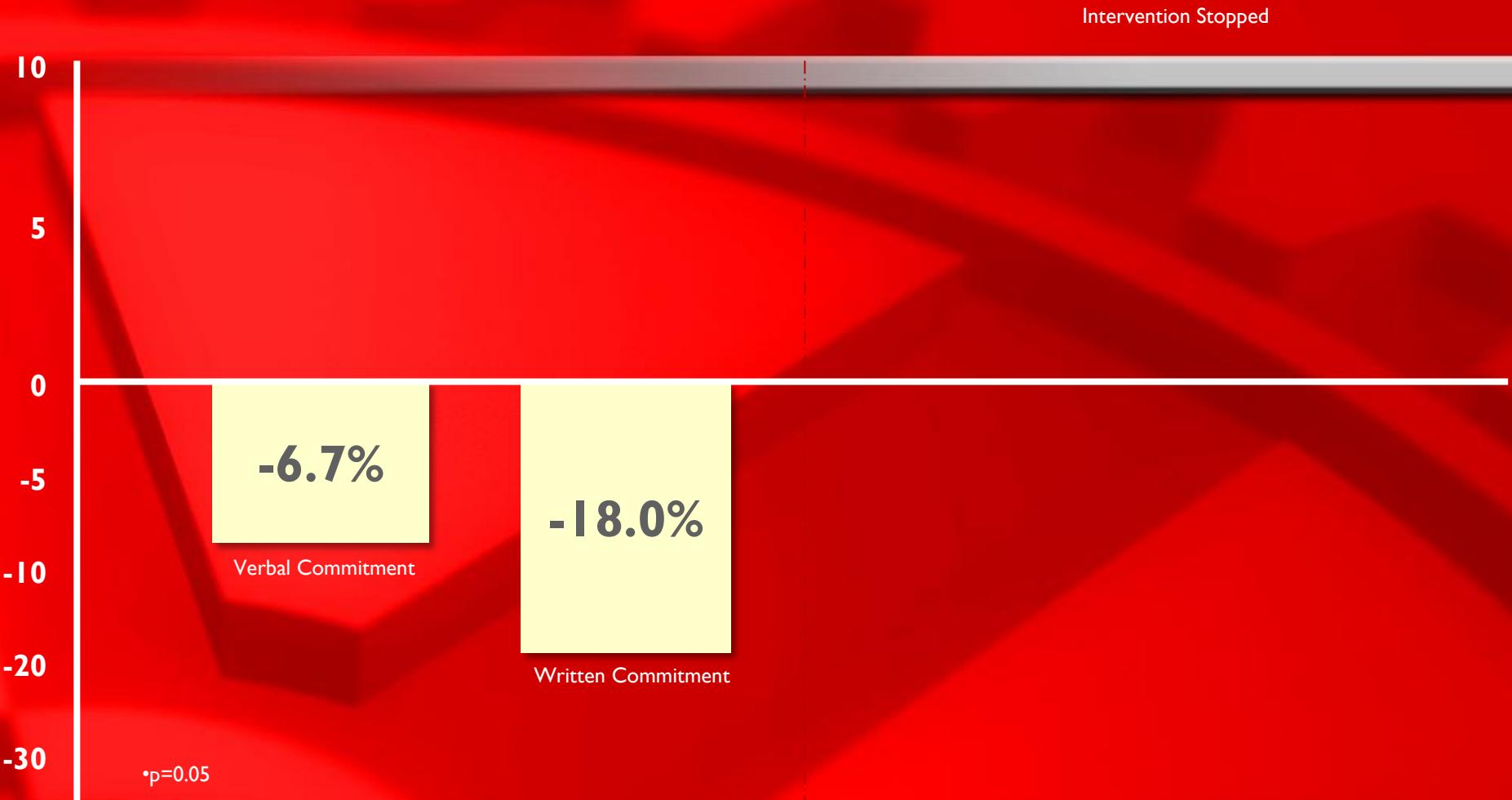
Influence At Work / NHS Bedford DNA Study



Lasting Commitments Are:

- Active
- Public
- Voluntary (Owned)
- Written-down

Influence At Work / NHS Bedford DNA Study



Impact of Social Influence

What happened when the principle of
Consensus was added to the mix?

Commonly employed signage in UK Health Centres

67

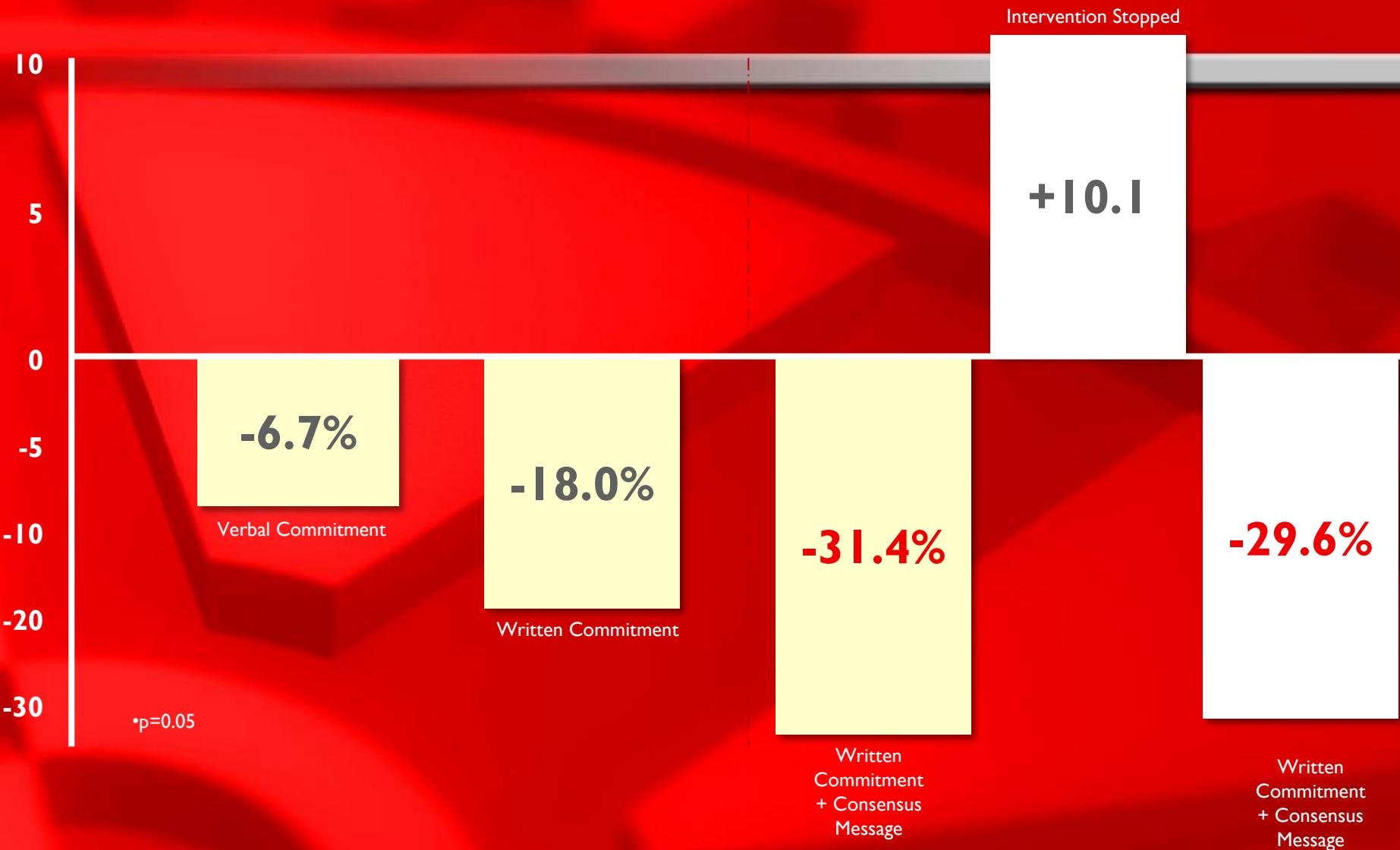
**PATIENTS FAILED TO
ATTEND THEIR
APPOINTMENT IN THIS
PRACTICE LAST MONTH**

Intervention Signage in UK Health Centres

95%

**OF OUR PATIENTS DID
ATTEND THEIR
APPOINTMENT IN THIS
PRACTICE LAST MONTH**

Influence At Work / NHS Bedford DNA Study



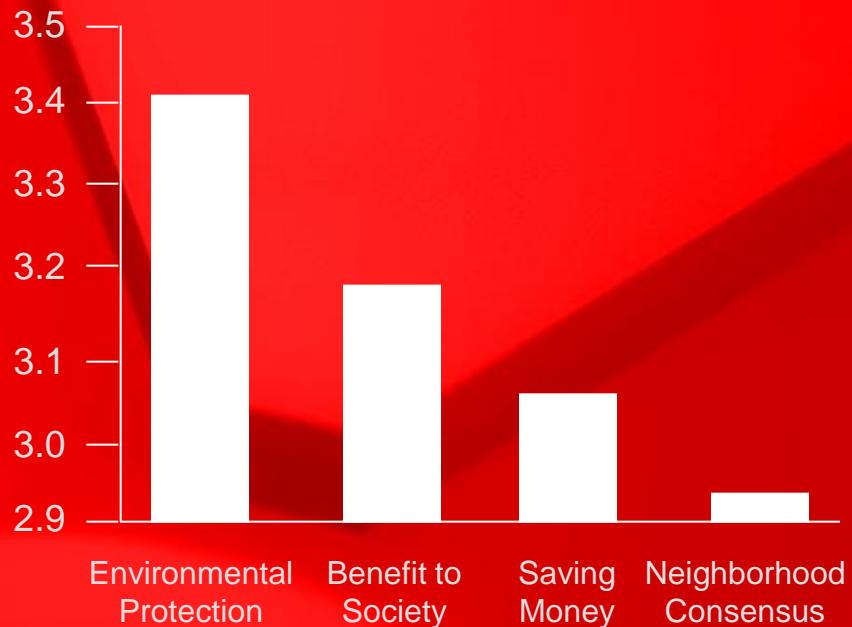
Impact of Social Influence

But, is there any evidence that information about the actions of multiple, similar others would work in other domains, such as household energy usage choices?

There is.

California Energy Savings Survey

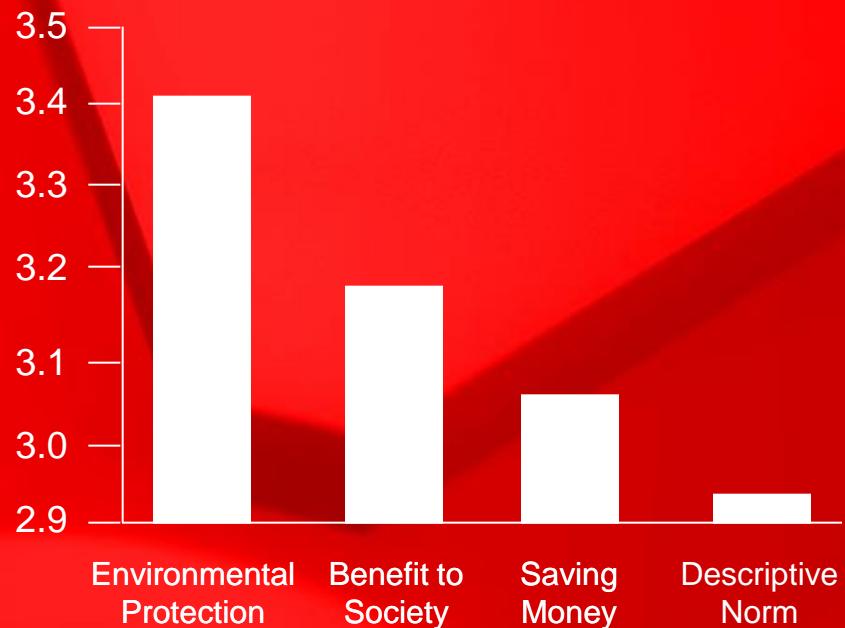
Reported Beliefs Regarding the Influence of Each Motive



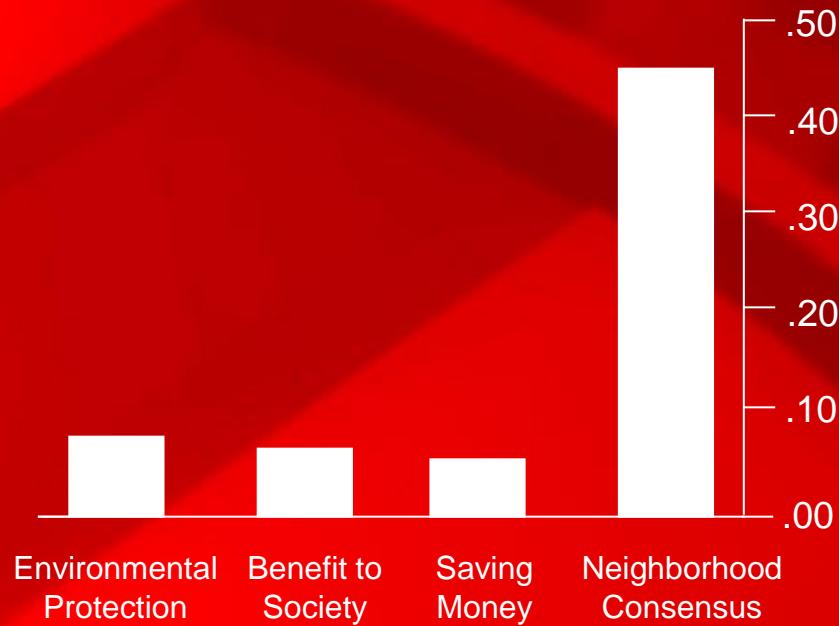
Different Motives to Conserve Energy

California Energy Savings Survey

Reported Beliefs Regarding the Influence of Each Motive

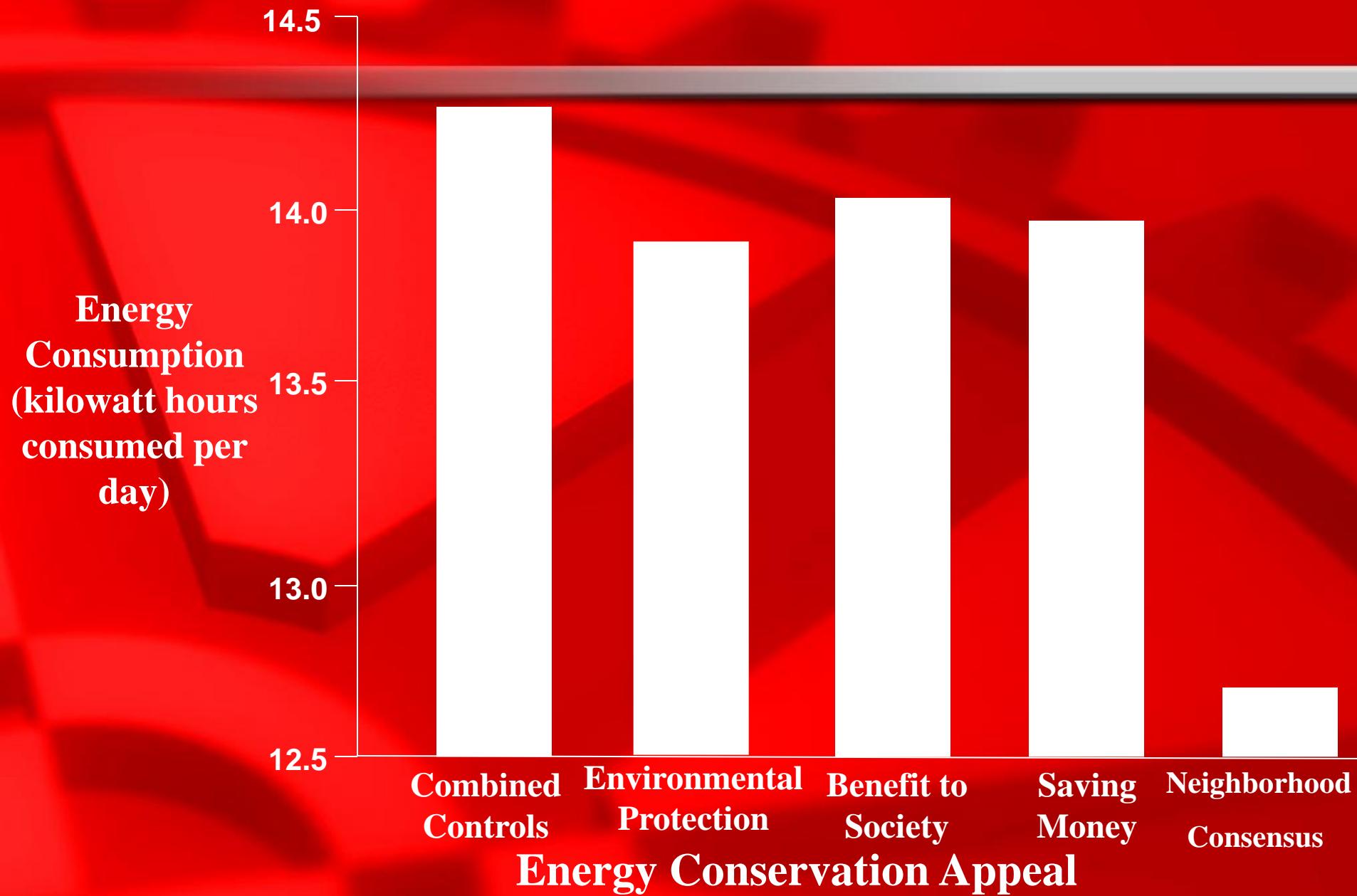


Correlation of Each Motive with Conservation Behavior



Different Motives to Conserve Energy

Field Experiment



Consensus

**How can we use this principle
to advance national environmental
goals?**

**One possibility would be to engage
the private sector in the process.**

OPOWER Report

SMUD
SACRAMENTO MUNICIPAL UTILITY DISTRICT
The Power To Do More.

Account number: [REDACTED]
Home electricity report
bill period: 07/16/08 - 08/13/08

WHAT IS THIS? This report contains information and analysis about your electricity consumption and personalized tips to help you reduce your use and bills.

WHY AM I RECEIVING IT? 35,000 randomly selected SMUD customers are receiving these reports as part of a pilot program.

HOW DO THE COMPARISONS WORK? Your neighbors were selected based on location, home size and heat type to make the comparisons as fair and relevant as possible.

We hope the information in this report helps you to better understand and make choices about your electricity use!

Last Month Neighborhood Comparison | Last month you used 98% MORE electricity than your neighbors.

Efficiency Comparison (kWh):

Category	Usage (kWh)
EFFICIENT NEIGHBORS	429 kWh*
ALL NEIGHBORS	975 kWh
YOU	1,909 kWh

*A 100-Watt bulb burning for 10 hours uses 1 kWh per hour (100W).

YOUR ENERGY STANDING:

Clear (2) | **Below Average** (1)

12 Month Neighborhood Comparison | In the last 12 months you used 62% MORE than your neighbors. At today's rates this COSTS YOU ABOUT \$994 EXTRA PER YEAR.

12 Month Neighborhood Comparison (kWh):

Key:

- YOU
- ALL NEIGHBORS
- EFFICIENT NEIGHBORS

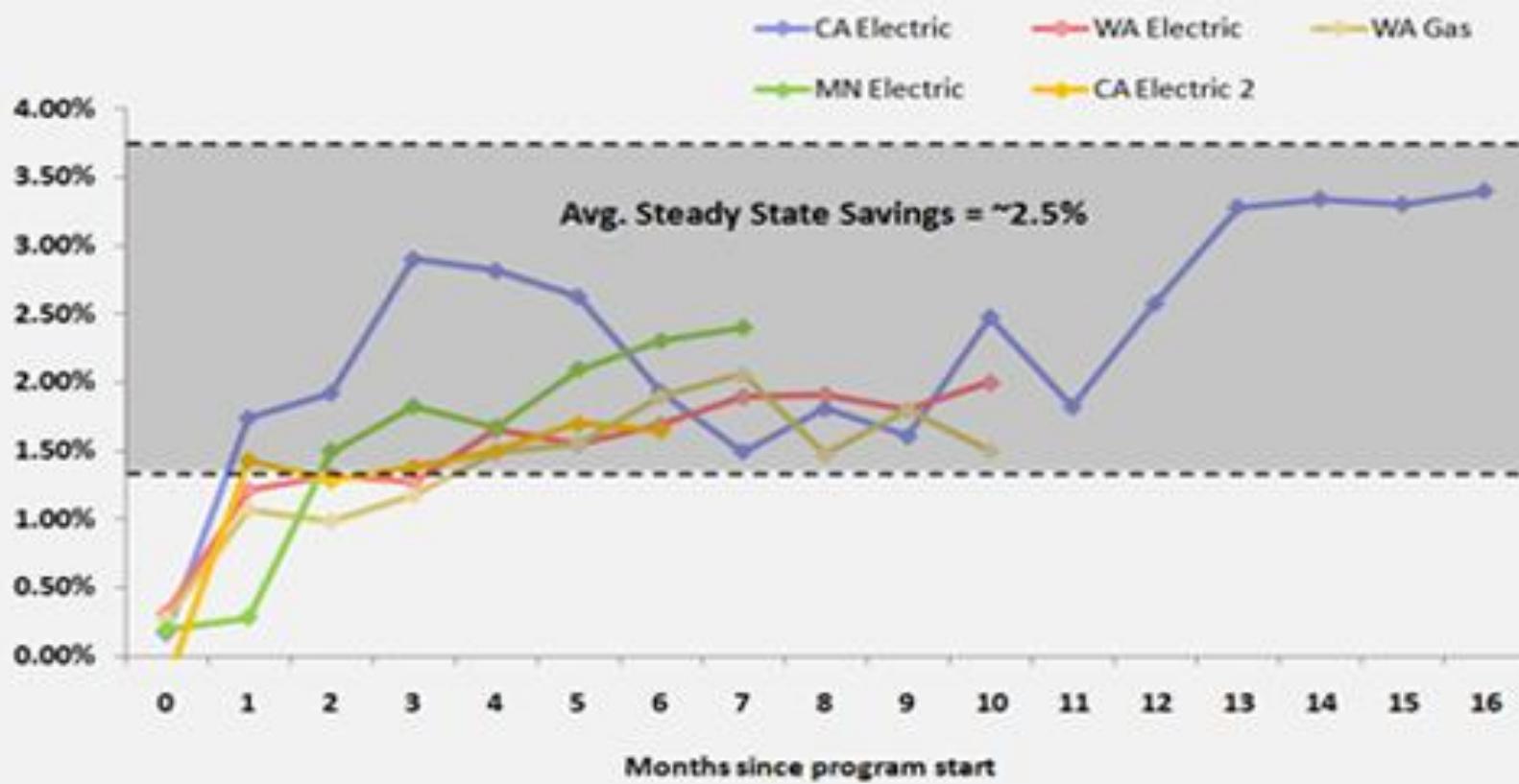
YOUR NEIGHBORS "All neighbors" means approximately 100 occupied homes nearby that are similar in size to yours (avg. 1,446 sq ft) and have the same heat type as you. "Efficient neighbors" are the 20% with the lowest usage from that group.

Personalized Action Steps

Hang laundry out to dry Reduce AC costs with fans Pay less to keep outdoor lights on

TURN OVER TO LEARN MORE

OPOWER Results



OPOWER Results

In less than 5 years of operation, Opower has partnered with 90 US utilities and has:

- reduced consequent U. S. energy consumption by over 3 billion kilowatt hours,
- cut CO₂ emissions by nearly 5 billion pounds,
- and saved residents \$355 million in energy costs.

Conclusions

- Government can rely too much on economic and regulatory levers when seeking to motivate citizens toward policy goals.
- Policy-makers would do well, as well, to consider what is known from behavioral and social science research about psychological motivators that can be at least as effective, yet less costly.
- Government and its citizens are entitled to know and use the results of that sometimes game-changing research because they have paid for it.