

Behaviour Change: Maintaining Momentum

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1. Introduction

Three common questions asked in relation to energy behaviour change interventions are:

- How much resource should be invested?
- How much energy will be saved?
- How is momentum to be maintained?

The third question is the subject of this article. Many people's experience of energy awareness campaigns or initiatives is that they are 'flavour of the month' or a 'flash in the pan' and any initial gains are inevitably lost. As a result many funding agencies and Government bodies do not see behaviour change as a real energy saving measure and also because it is not a tangible piece of equipment such as CHP.

"The one great element in continuing the success of an offensive is maintaining the momentum."

General George C Marshal

It is true that many initiatives lack momentum. But ask yourself this question: "Is a flash in the pan better than no flash at all?" For example, some years ago a car plant invested £7,500 in an awareness raising initiative and it saved £1,000,000 in 6 months. The total energy bill was £22 million per year. That is a 4.5% saving and was published by the Government as a Good Practice Case Study. So here is the question: "If the initiative lost all momentum in 6 months, was the £1m worth saving?" The answer is clearly yes. Savings with no momentum are better than nothing.

This is not to say momentum is unimportant but it does make a point. In that site, the ideal situation would be that momentum is maintained and that £1m is saved **every** year by behaviour change. Is it achievable? If so, how? The answer lies in three main areas:

- Design of the Intervention
- Management and Organisational Practices
- ISO 50001

2. Design of the Intervention

The time to consider the momentum aspect is in the design of an intervention – not when an initiative is running out of steam or a year into a programme. One simple way of doing this is to consider the balance of planned activities. These usually fall into three categories:

- One-off event/activity where there is no momentum
- Something where momentum is partial and then lost
- Something where momentum is integrated into management systems/processes

These can be summarised as little/no momentum, some momentum, much momentum. It is best illustrated by examples:

Little/No Momentum – this could be a one off activity such as a high level Launch Event of an initiative. Good to do and makes a splash and raises awareness.

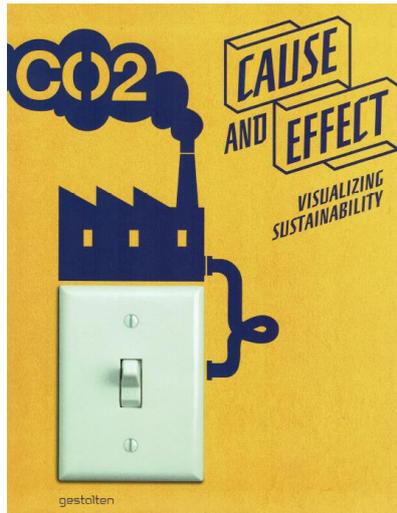
Some Momentum – this could be electronic communications, posters, shutdown checklists. Essentially anything which will become dated and ineffective if not reviewed/renewed. They have a certain shelf life.

Much Momentum – This a recurring event and automatically happens. For example, one cause of a loss of momentum is by a relatively high turnover of staff which is common in the retail industry. The target audience in Year 1 is different in Year 2. In one retail chain before an employee can begin work they have to do a series of e-learning courses from home and pass tests on each course. The courses included subjects like health & safety and customer care. So energy awareness was included as an extra module. Once an employee is in a position they have to repeat all the courses as a refresher once every two years. So the communication is built into the system and momentum is maintained for that aspect. It is recurring and always be there.

So in the design stage of an initiative it is worth using a simple momentum matrix to see if momentum is being addressed. An example is given below in Table 1.

Planned Activity/Process	No/Little Momentum	Some Momentum	Much Momentum
Launch Event	✓		
Shut down checklists		✓	
Integration with e-learning programme			✓
Staff surveys		✓	
Payroll messaging		✓	
ISO 50001			✓
Performance Appraisals		✓	

Table 1 Momentum Matrix



3. Management/Organisational Practices

In considering any behaviour initiative it is important to consider what is already in place and, most importantly, what works well and is effective. The reason for doing so is that it is easier to piggyback onto something existing rather than build a new highway. Useful areas to consider are:

- Job Descriptions
- Performance Appraisals
- Staff Incentives
- Communication methods – person, digital and hard copy
- Suggestion Schemes
- Incentive Schemes
- Recognition/Reward
- Health & Safety
- Quality Systems
- Contractors

In a food retailer most of the electricity used in stores is for electricity for refrigerated cabinets holding frozen food and HVAC. When there is a problem the store manager phones the maintenance contractor who decides if the problem can be resolved remotely or by a site visit. In the case of the site visit, the engineer sent out has to have an “Energy Passport” or he is not allowed in the store. This passport is only issued to individuals who have attended a three day course and exam, run by the Energy Management Unit on their particular equipment. The emphasis on the course is to ensure all maintenance is conducted in an energy efficient manner. This means the system is set up in such a way that the store manager can have confidence that not only will the maintenance issue be resolved but that the competent person will do the work in a way that maintains or improves energy efficiency.

4. ISO 50001

Perhaps the best way of building in momentum is by having an effective Energy Management System in place which complies with an/or is certified to ISO 50001:2018. This Standard has continual improvement as its goal. The key people clauses cover competency, skills, awareness, communication and feedback. This is all supported by top level commitment, management reviews, regular internal and external audits to ensure ongoing continual improvement.

“Consistency is the key to achieving and maintaining momentum”.

Darren Hardy

“One way to keep momentum going is to have constantly greater goals”.

Michael Korda

These two quotes are general observations on maintaining momentum but have a particular application on why ISO 50001 is an excellent means of maintaining momentum. The first quote touches on **consistency** which is exactly what energy management systems to ISO 50001 addresses. The second focuses on **greater goals** which is reflected in ISO 50001 by regular reviews of objectives and targets to maintain continual improvement in performance.

5. Behaviour Change linked to ISO 50001

Ibstock plc were the first brick-making company in the UK to be certified to ISO 50001. This has resulted in a fundamental change in culture resulting in significant energy savings per brick produced since 2013.

For further details of the people dimension of Ibstock’s implementation of ISO 50001 see:

<http://www.emexlondon.com/ibstocks-energy-management-strategy/>

*Ibstock’s motivation for implementing ISO 50001 was to make better use of the energy we consume and achieve consistency in production processes through our **people**.*

*We are extremely proud of what the ISO 50001 process has achieved as it has given us a clear road map, effective **communication** tools, supportive external **partnerships** and, above all, **employee involvement at all levels**.*

Michael McGowan
Quality, Environmental and Energy Manager



In the box above the behavioural and people elements are shown in bold text.

In November 2019, Ibstock were awarded the coveted *Behaviour Change/Employee Engagement Award* at *The Energy Awards*. The engagement process was driven by their EnMS certified to ISO 50001.

Commenting on the win, **Michael McGowan**, Group Sustainability Manager, said:

*We recognise that we are major energy users, and delivering sustainable performance is a priority for us. Whilst we have invested in energy efficient plant and clean technologies to make performance improvements, we realised that our energy efficiency ambitions could only be achieved by putting **people** at the heart of our strategy.*

*The results achieved are a testament to the way in which our **employees** have become more **aware** of ways to improve energy usage across our operations. This latest award offers proof that our hard-working **team** is doing the right things and our **people-led** strategies are working.*



See paper “ISO 50001:2018 – A Lever for Employee Engagement”

<https://www.mulhollandenergy.co.uk/assets/downloads/ISO%2050001%20and%20People.pdf>

6. Conclusion

Maintaining the momentum is important in any behaviour change initiative. It must be addressed at the design stage and integrate with other ways of working in the organisation. Some loss of momentum is inevitable. However, management systems, compliant with or certified to ISO 50001 can help embed continual improvement and maintain momentum.