


**THE  
BEHAVIOURAL  
INSIGHTS TEAM** ◆

IN PARTNERSHIP WITH  Cabinet Office

# The Behavioral Foundations of Policy... lessons from BIT

**Elspeth Kirkman**  
*Head of BIT North America*

 @B\_I\_Tweets

# Session goals

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1. Understand what we mean when we talk about “Behavioural Insights”
2. Understand the implications in a policy context
3. Get familiar with a new framework to consider problems from a behavioural angle

# So what are Behavioural Insights?

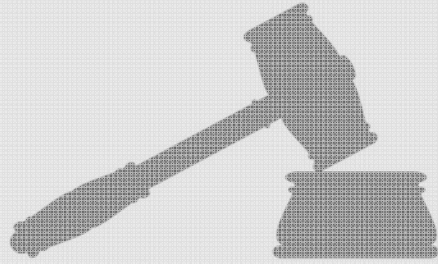
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Simply put, behavioural insights are gleaned from the study of what makes people do the things they do. Some of it is really intuitive... and some of it is pretty surprising.

Academics study human behaviour in a whole range of fields:

- ◆ Psychology
- ◆ Economics
- ◆ Anthropology
- ◆ Marketing
- ◆ Sociology
- ◆ ... and beyond!

The Behavioural Insights Team applies lessons from this research to public policy problems.



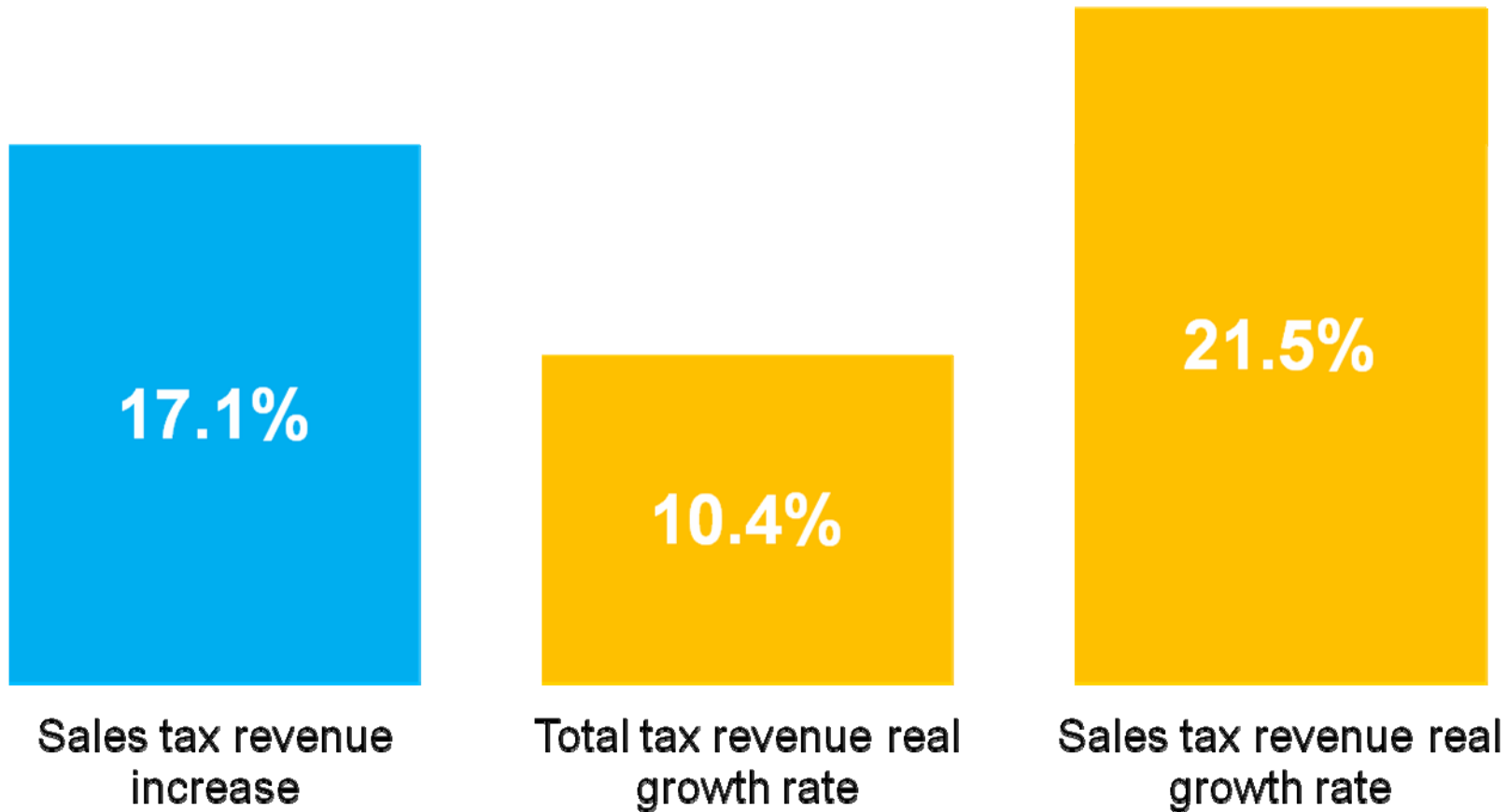
## 1. Regulation

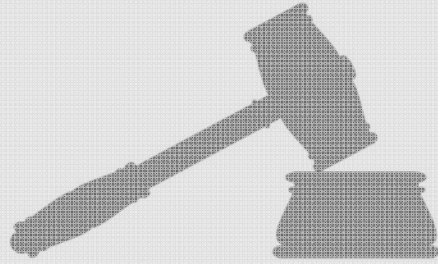
How did China  
get  
businesses to  
pay taxes by  
making  
receipts  
attractive?



# Sales tax grew considerably; a corollary for the reduction of underground economic activity

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1. Regulation



2. Incentives

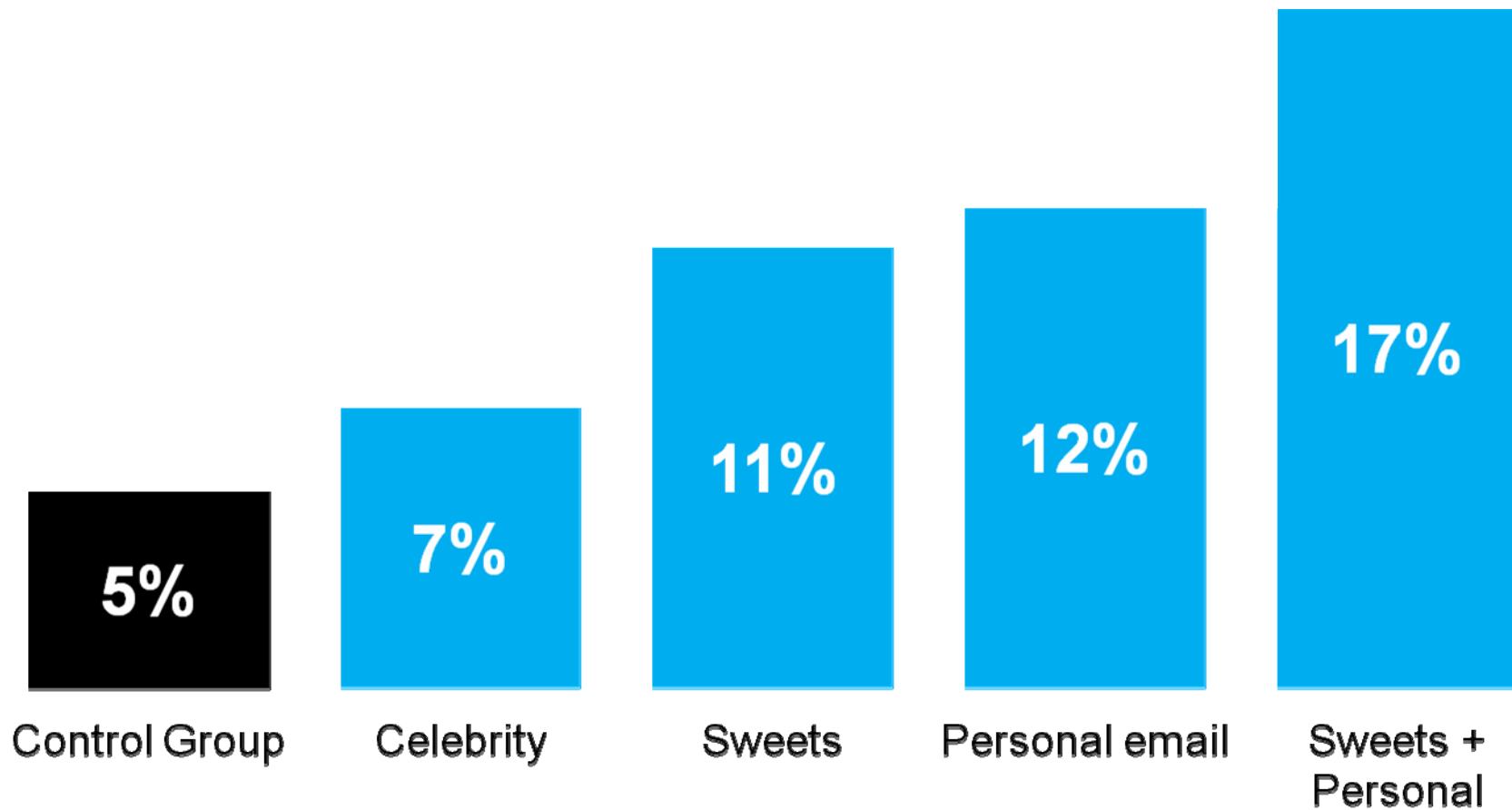
How did we  
get bankers  
to **donate**  
**£500,000** to  
**charity** in  
one day?

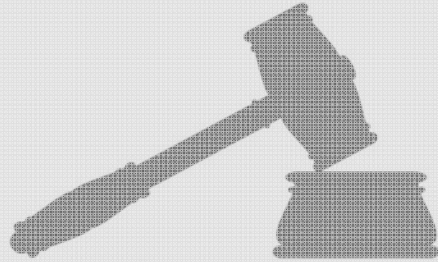




# Proportion giving away a day's salary to charity

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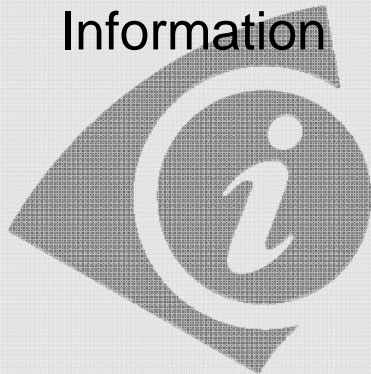




1. Regulation



2. Incentives



3. Information

# How did better forms reduce prescription errors?

Prescribers

- Write prescriptions legibly
- Use approved names, block letters, metric dosage, English instructions and avoid abbreviations
- Micrograms and units must be written in full
- Complete the prescription chart in black ink
- Changes in dose and/or frequency: discontinue drug and prescribe on a new line. Do not alter original instructions
- Discontinue drugs by crossing through, sign and date them

N.B. Unclear prescriptions or those with no completed allergy status will not be dispensed or administered

Nurses/Midwives

- Check the entries in every section to avoid omissions
- Initial administration in the appropriate box
- Enter the appropriate code in the box in the event of non-administration; specify action taken on the back of the chart

Old  
chart

REGULAR PRESCRIPTIONS

Date:

MEDICINE (Approved name)

EXAMPLE

D O S E microgram mg g units Other

OD BD TDS QDS Other

Route

Name

Signature

Bleep

New

Start date

31/03

Additional information

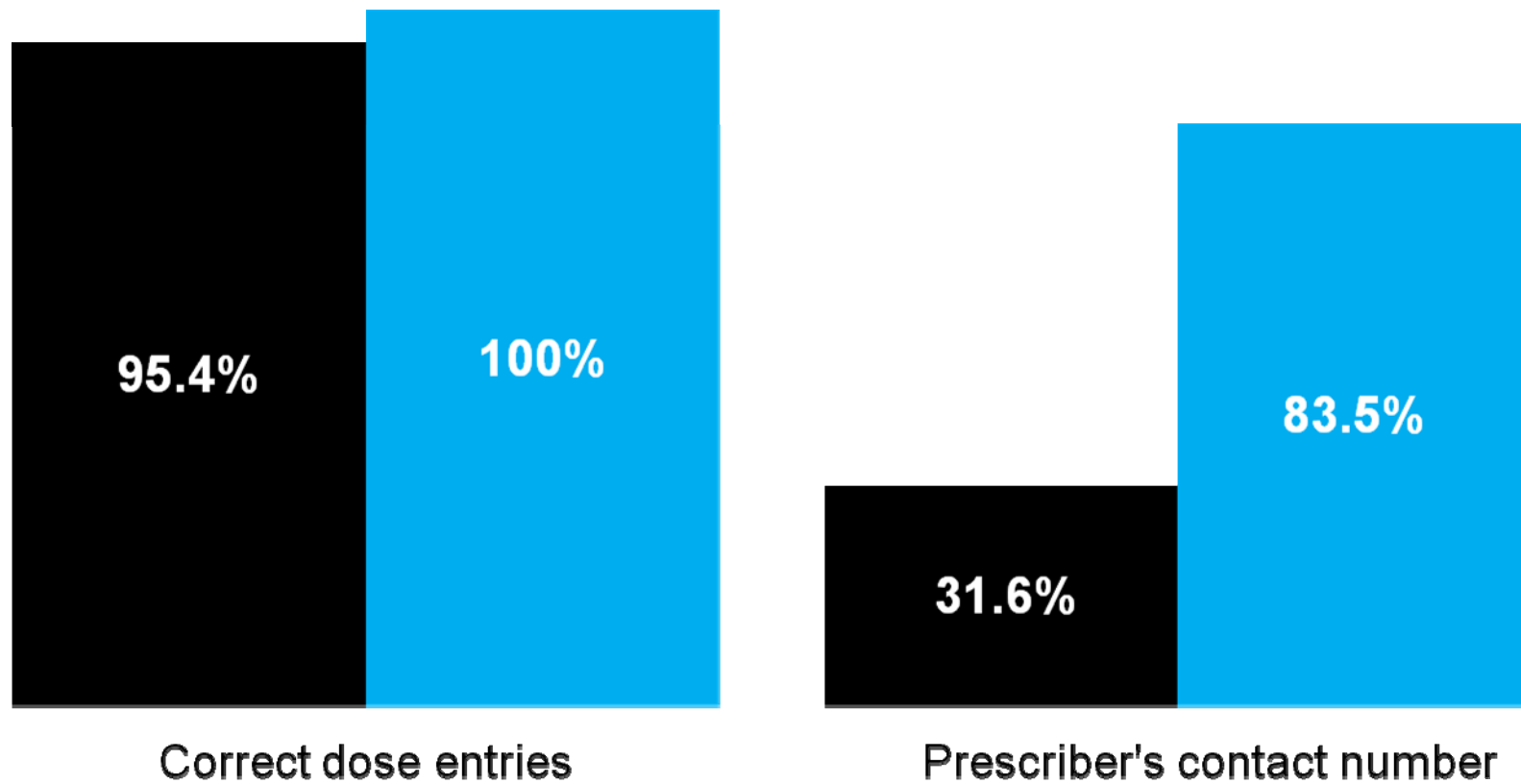
After food

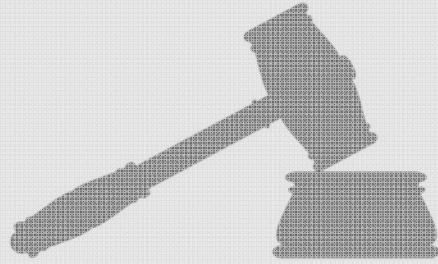
10	CSMH X CS
08	
12	CS OG CS
18	MH OG MH
22	

New  
chart

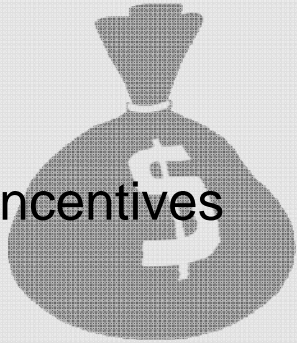
Better forms can save lives! Dosage errors were reduced and key information included more often

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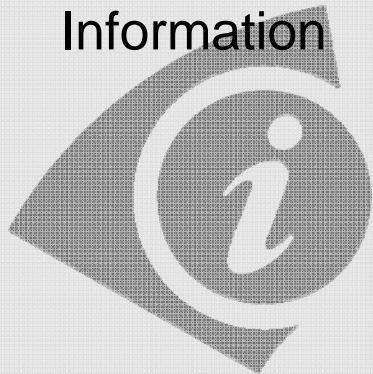




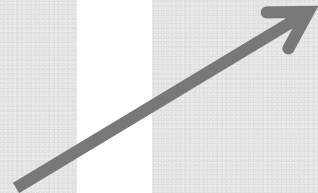
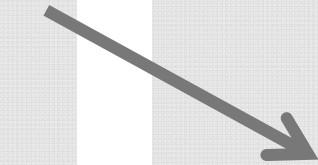
1. Regulation



2. Incentives



3. Information



**Behavioural Insights**



# We get asked to apply behavioral insights all over government and beyond

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Can you help us...

Get people to pay their taxes?

Reduce obesity?

Reduce corruption?

Understand how social workers make decisions?

Increase medical compliance in poor communities with infectious disease?

Get welfare recipients back into work faster?

Improve racial diversity in the police?

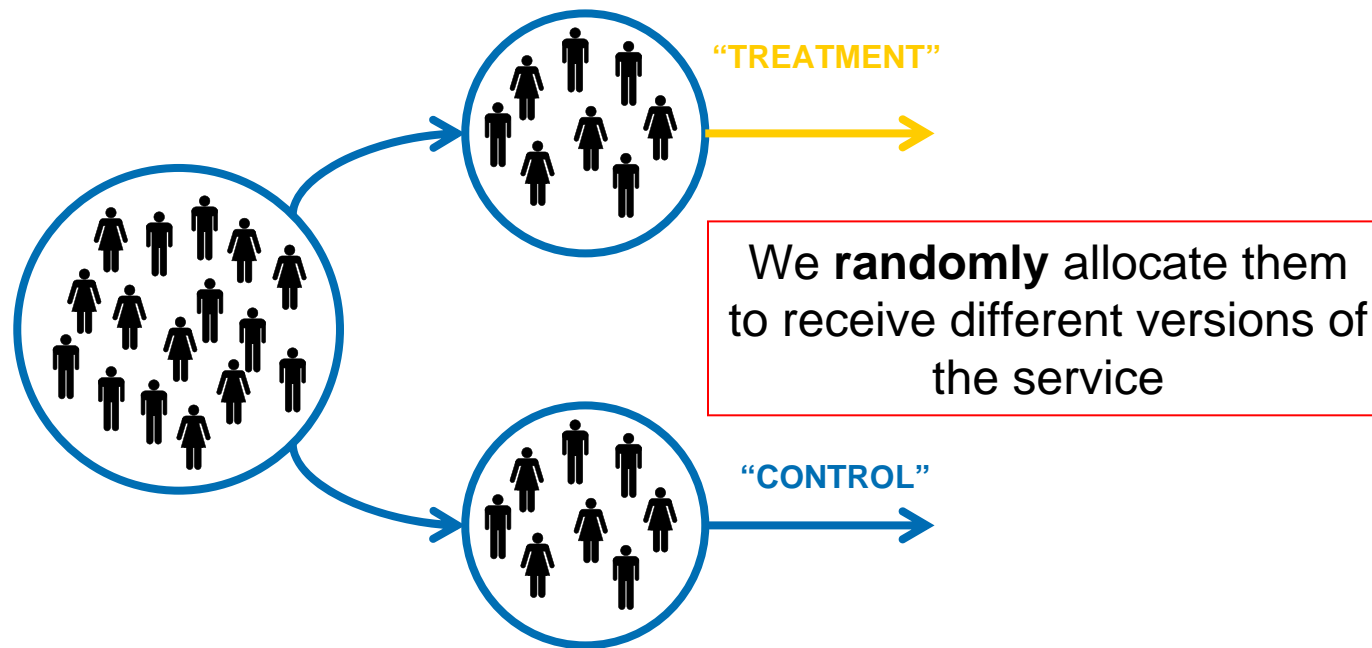
# How do we know if something worked?

Quite simply, we run an experiment!



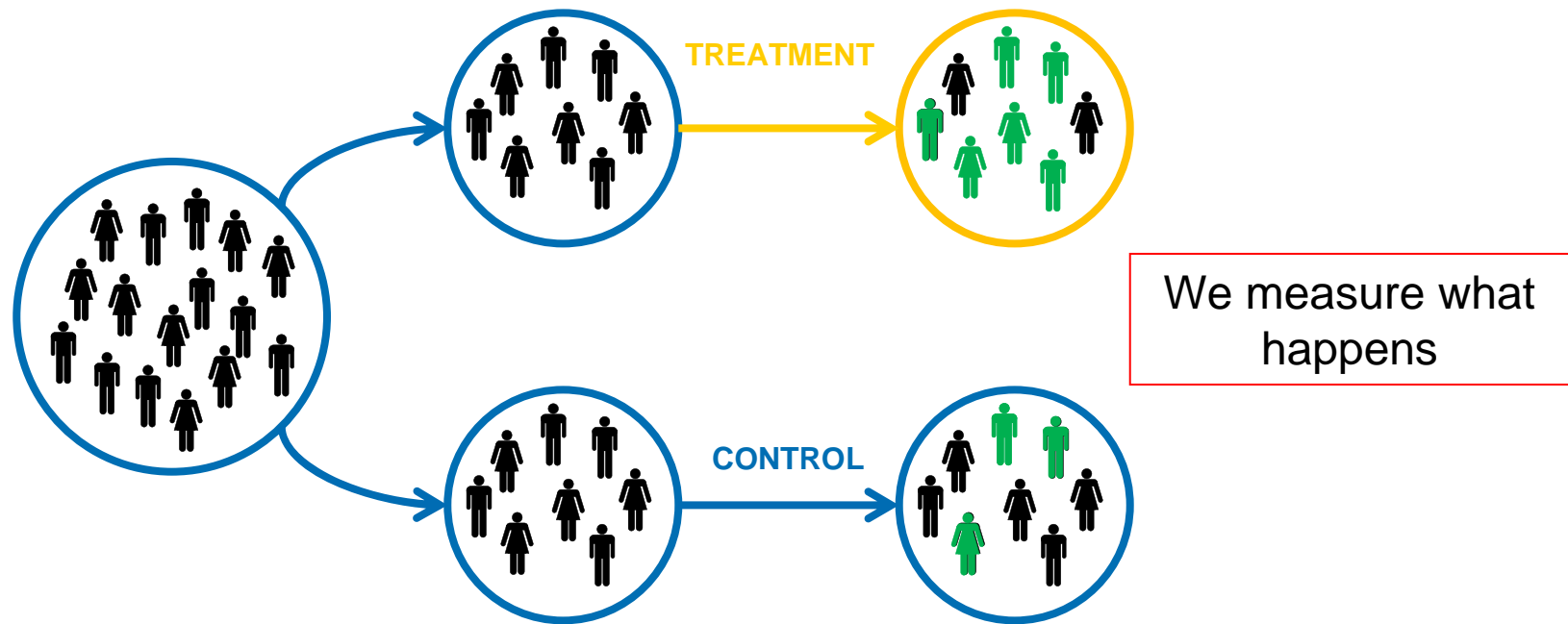
We start with a group of people (or organisations) we want to try something new with

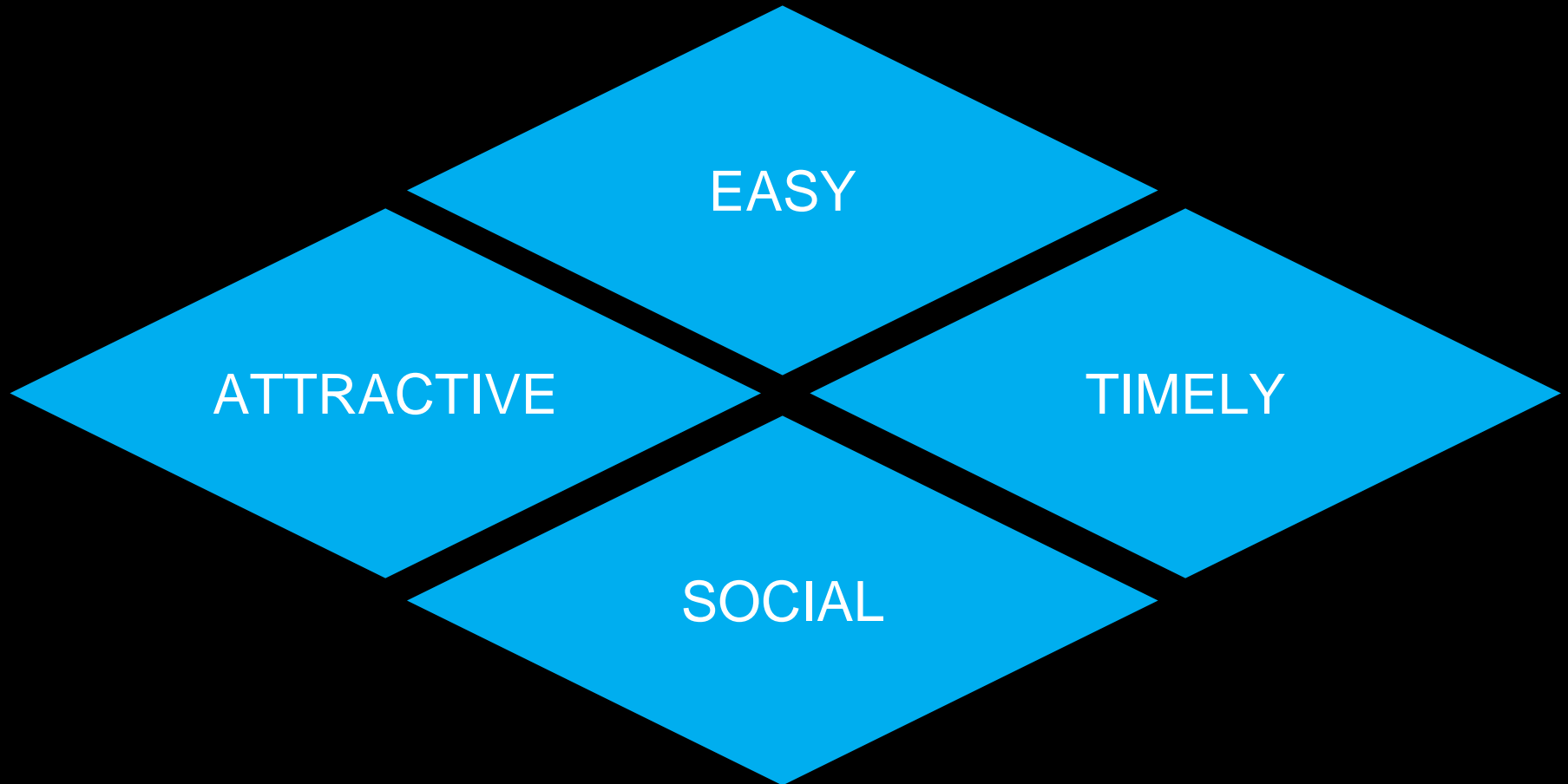
# How do we know if something worked?





# How do we know if something worked?



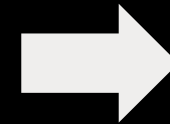


# How did we help HMRC boost its customer response rate?

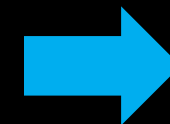
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Webpage



Direct to form



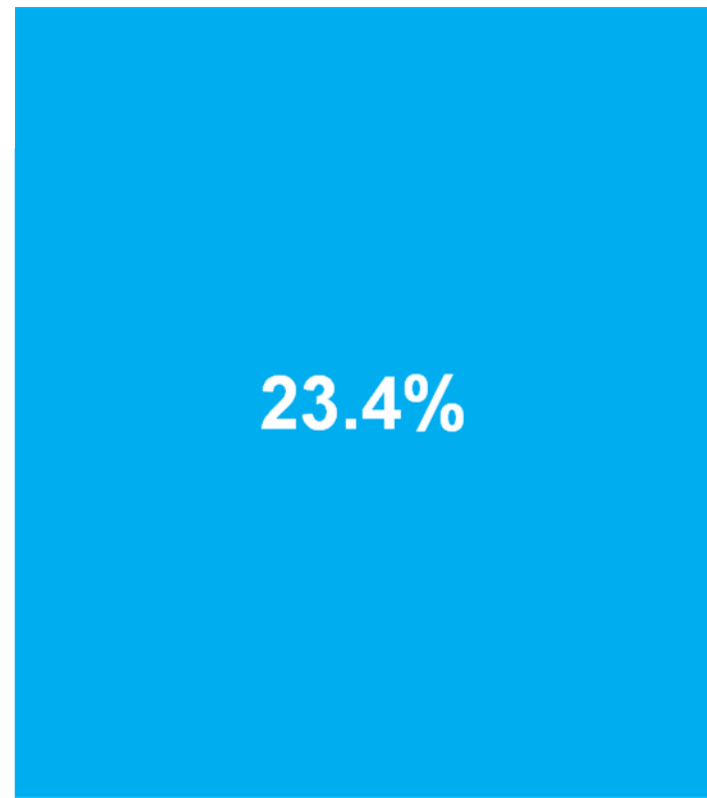
# Changing the default can make a disproportionate difference

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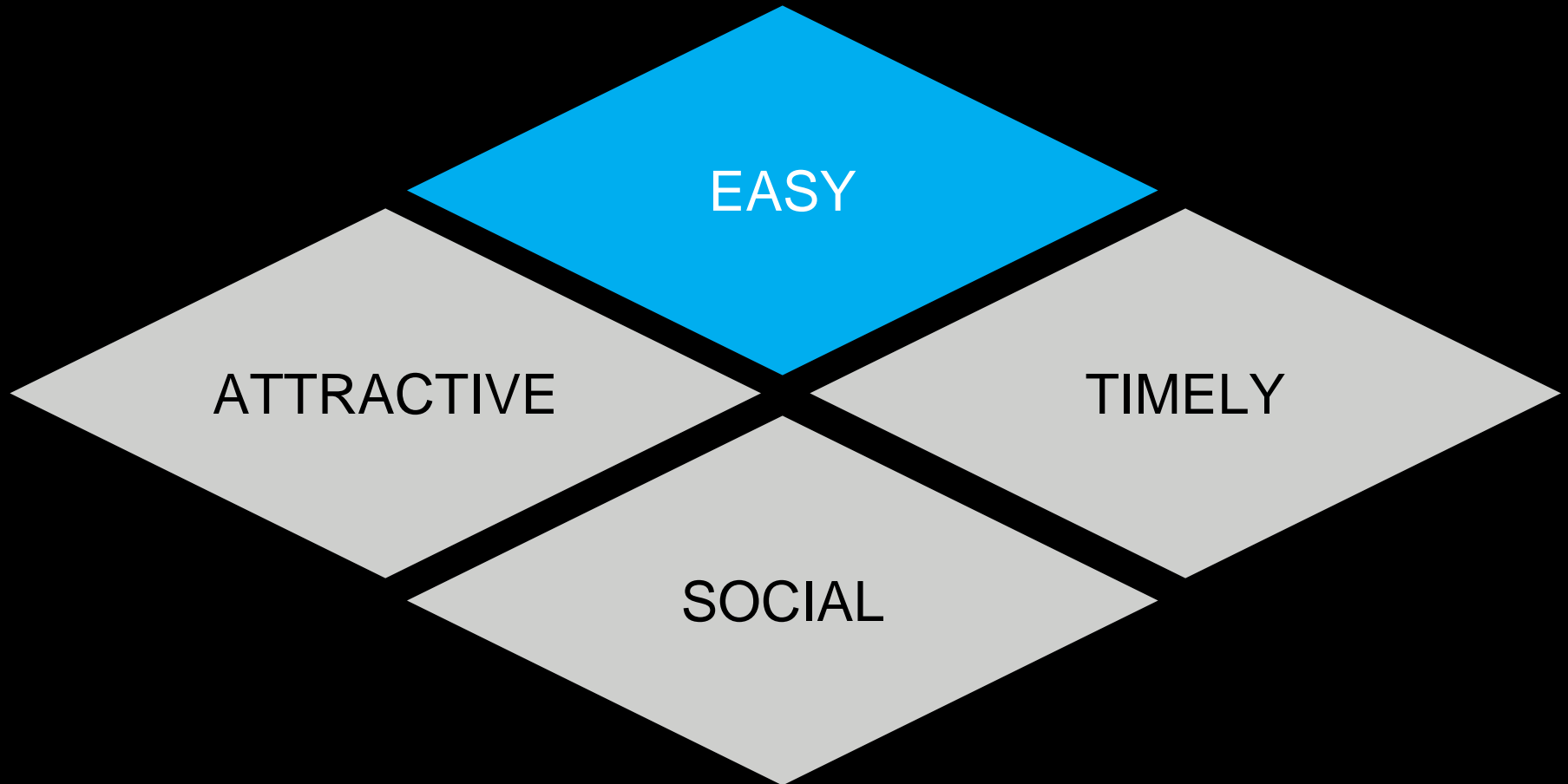
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Webpage



23.4%

Direct to Form

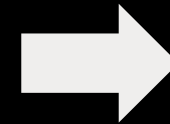


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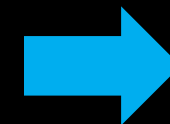
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Webpage



Direct to form

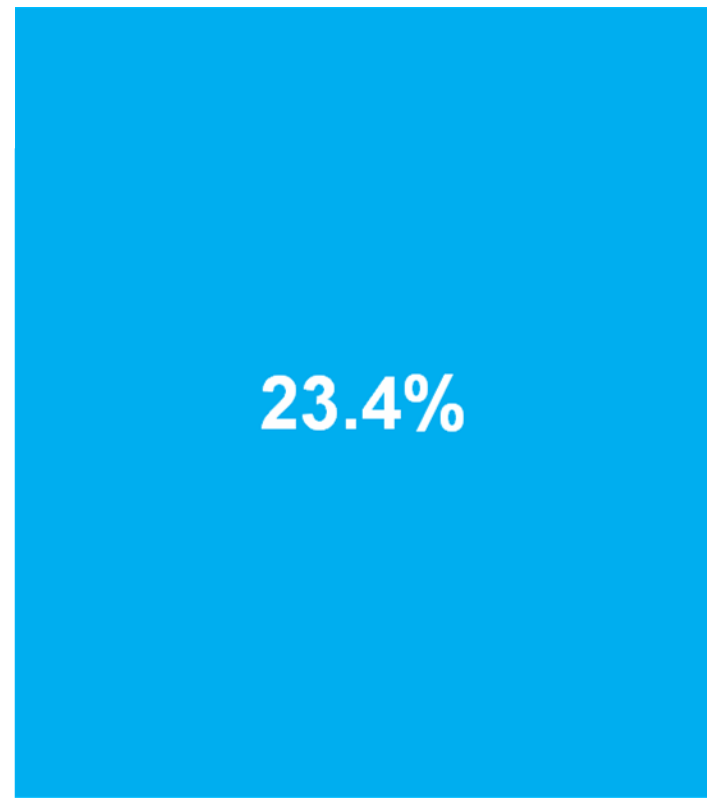


# Changing the default can make a disproportionate difference

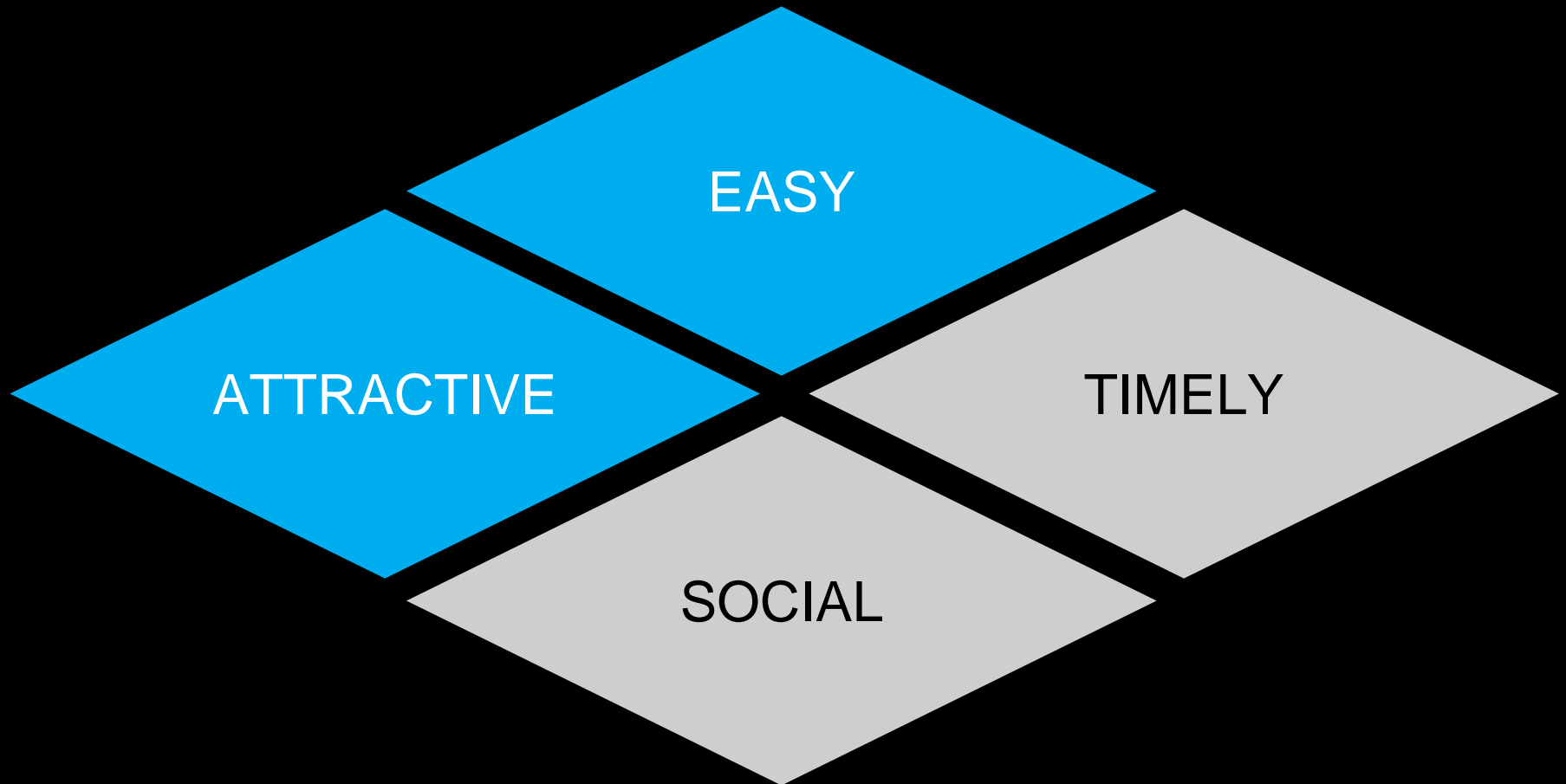
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Webpage

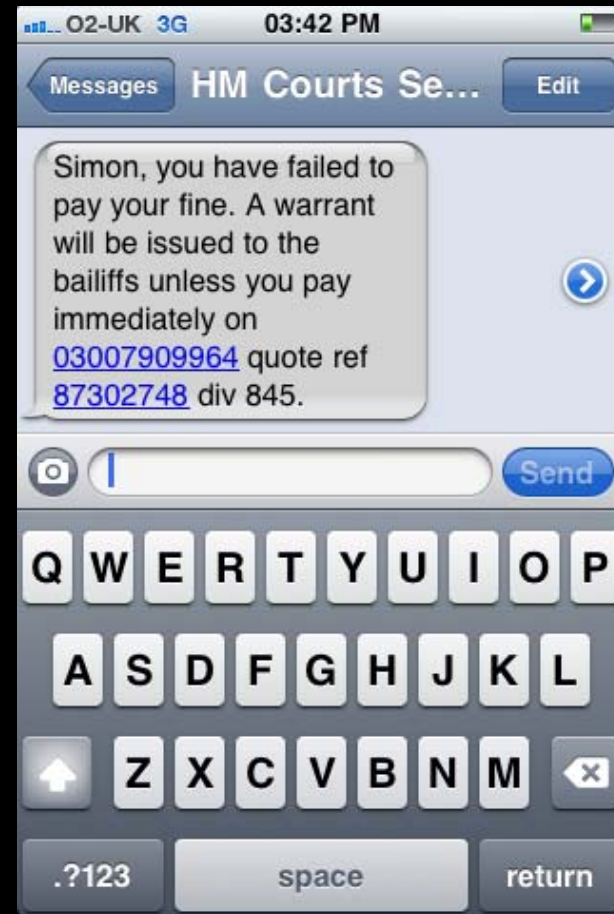


Direct to Form



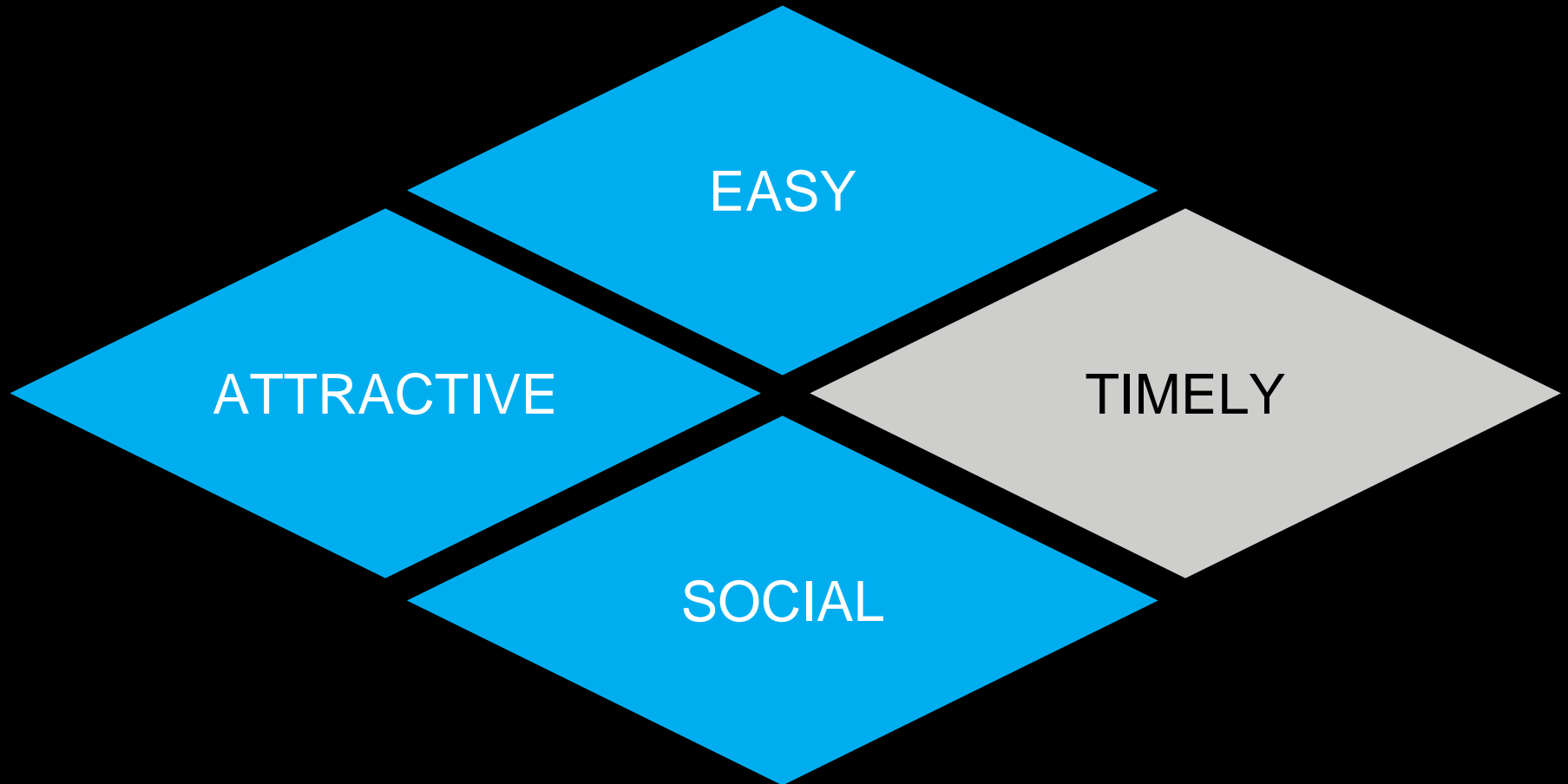


How could  
the UK  
courts'  
service **to**  
**recover an**  
**extra**  
**£860,000 per**  
**week?**



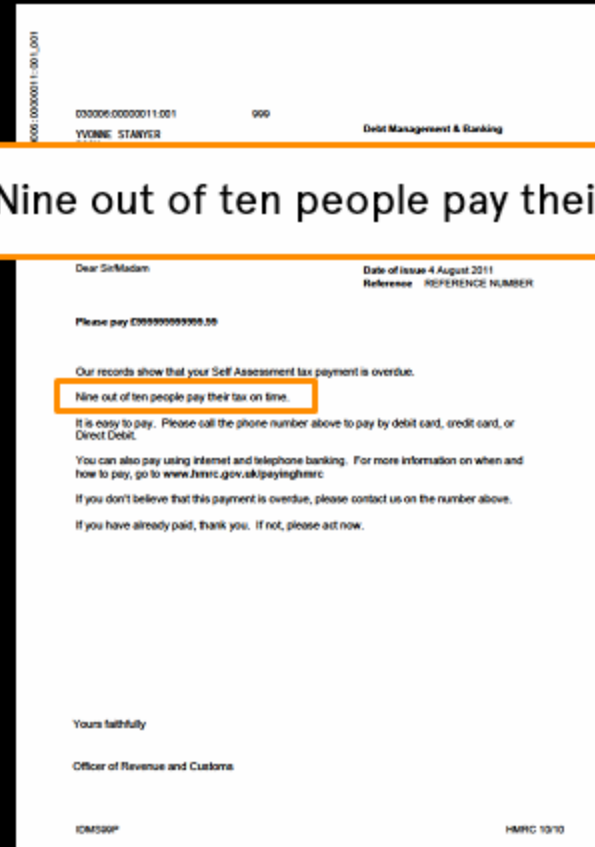
# Average amount repaid per message sent out



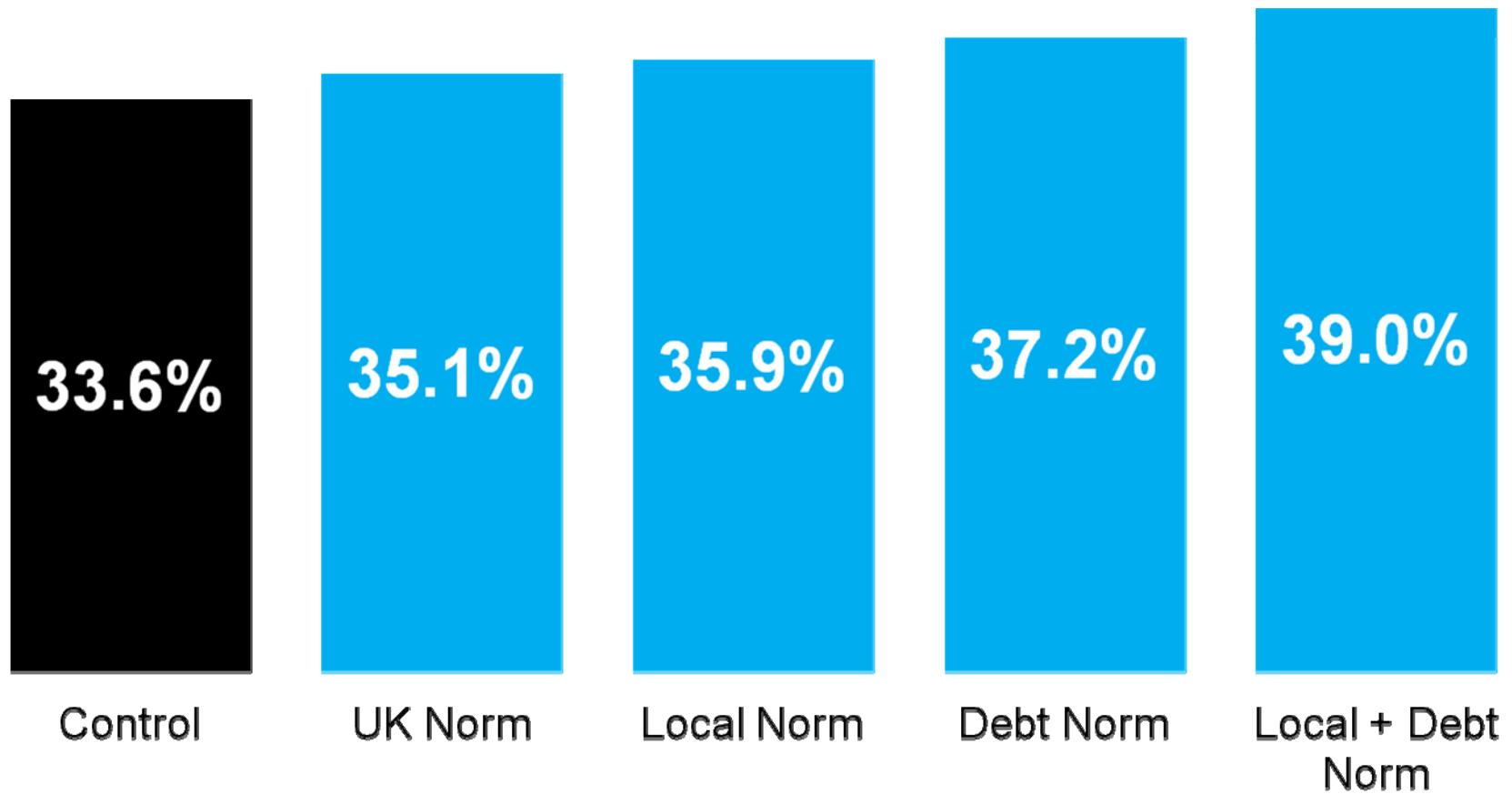


How did we  
help HMRC  
collect an  
extra £200m  
in tax debt in  
a year?

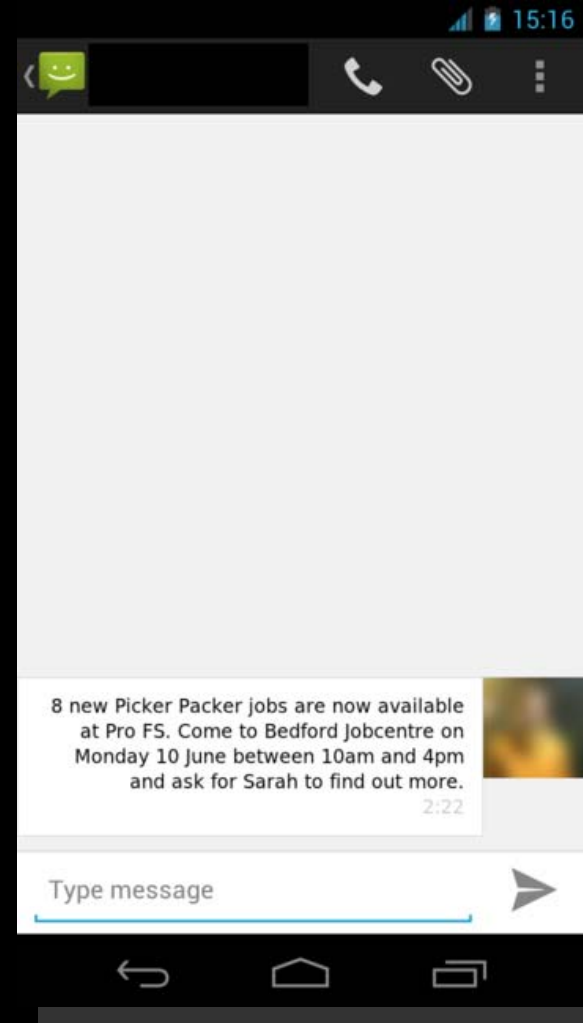
Nine out of ten people pay their tax on time.



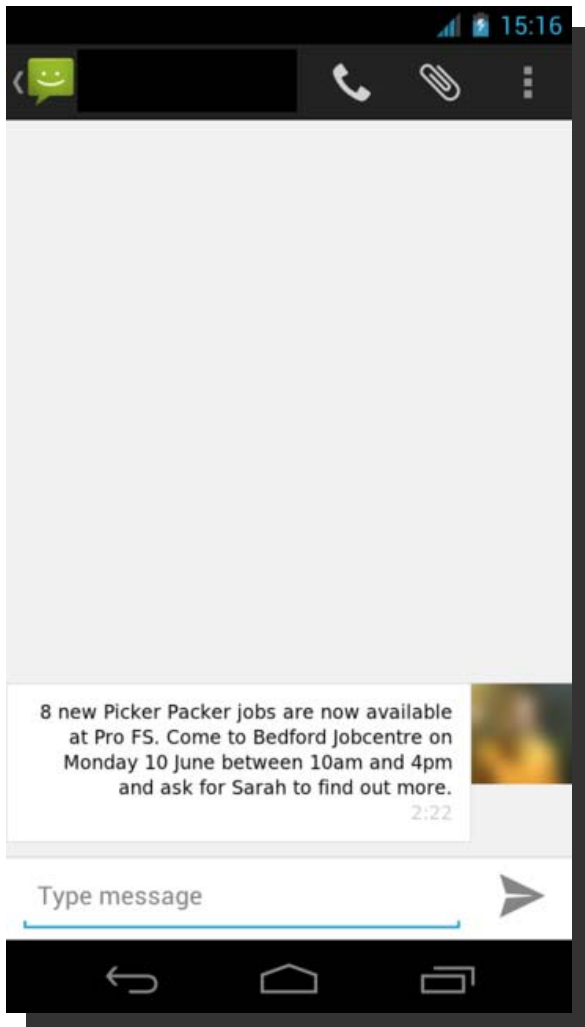
# Social norms to increase tax payment rates



How did we  
connect  
jobseekers to  
employment  
opportunities  
?

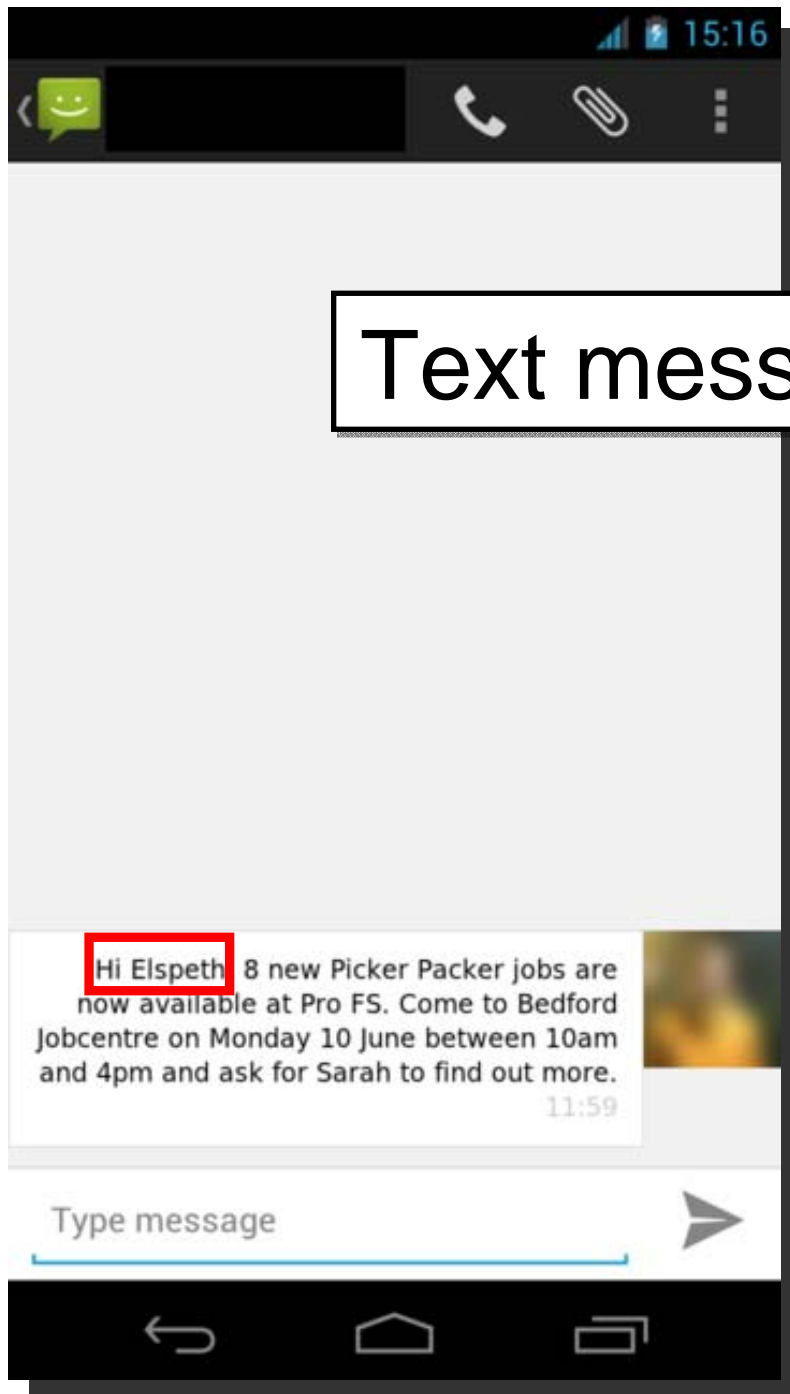


# Connecting the unemployed with jobs more effectively...



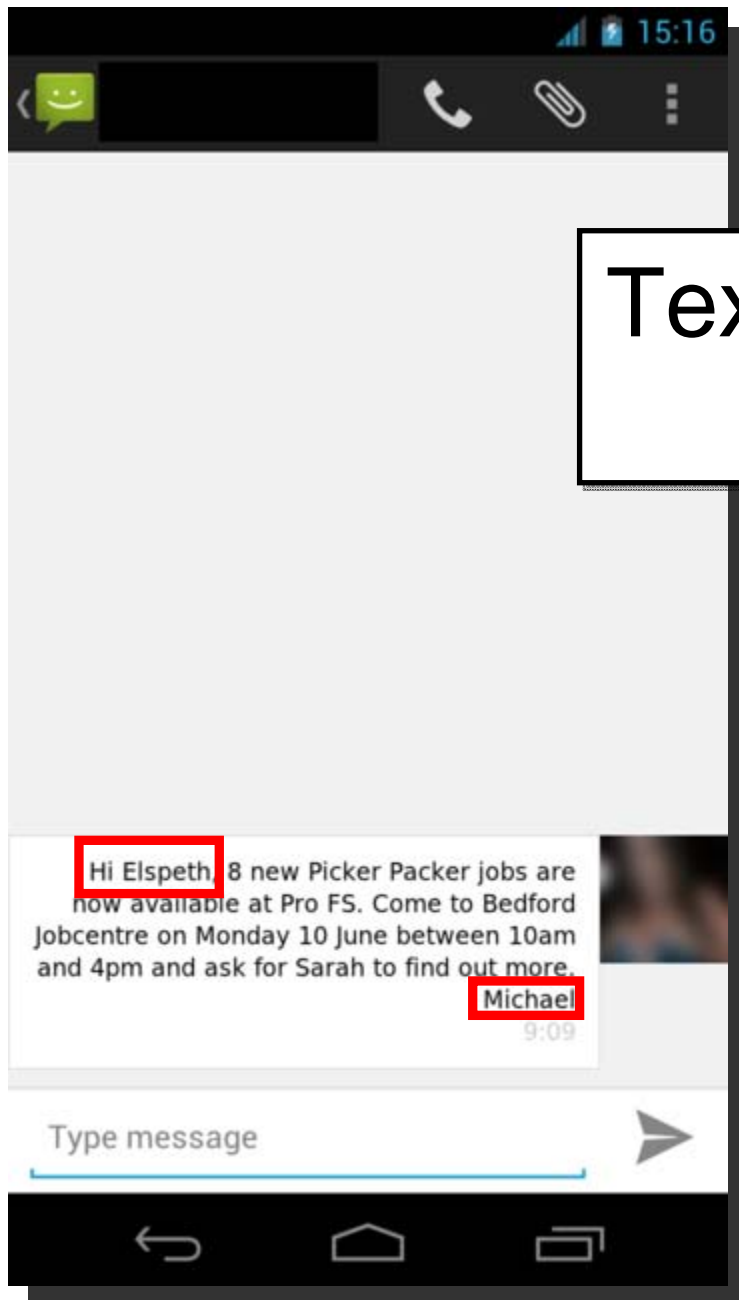
Control text message

# Text message with claimant name

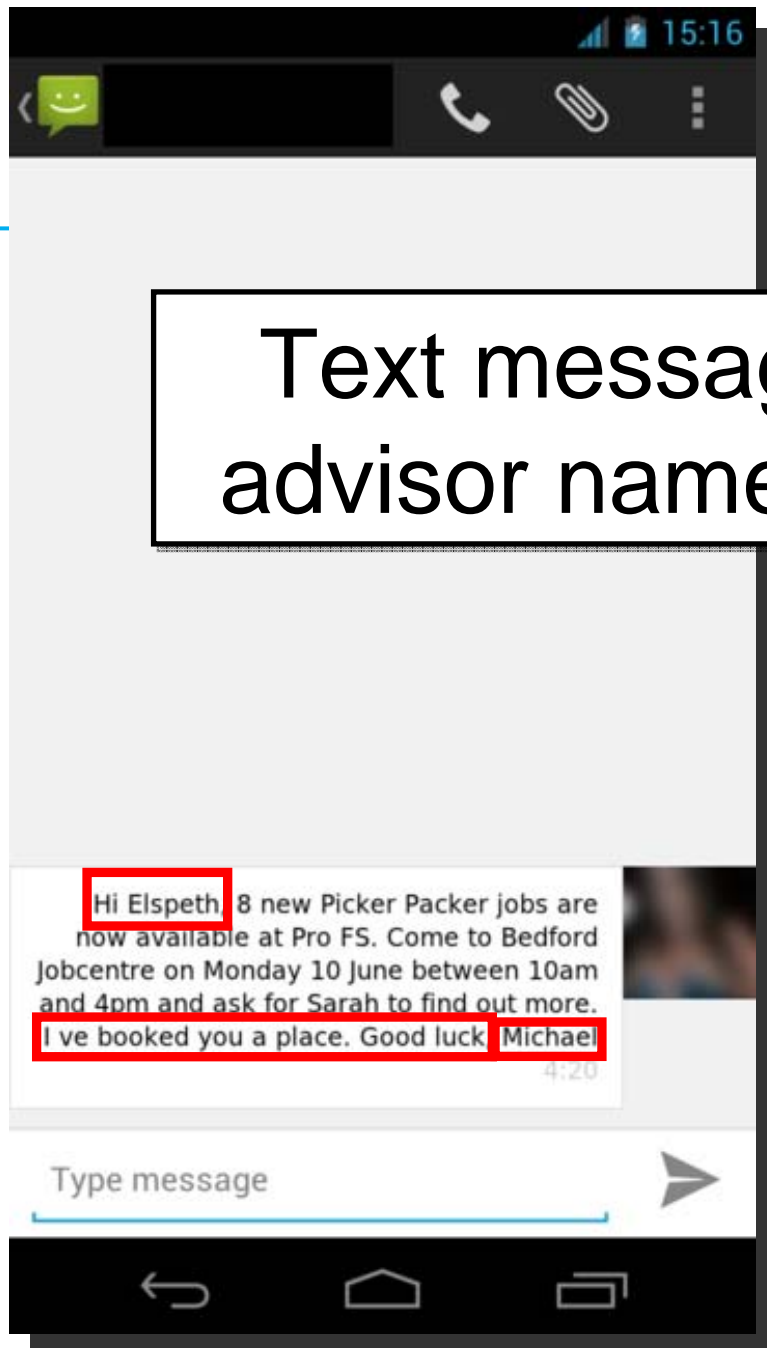




## Text message with claimant and advisor name

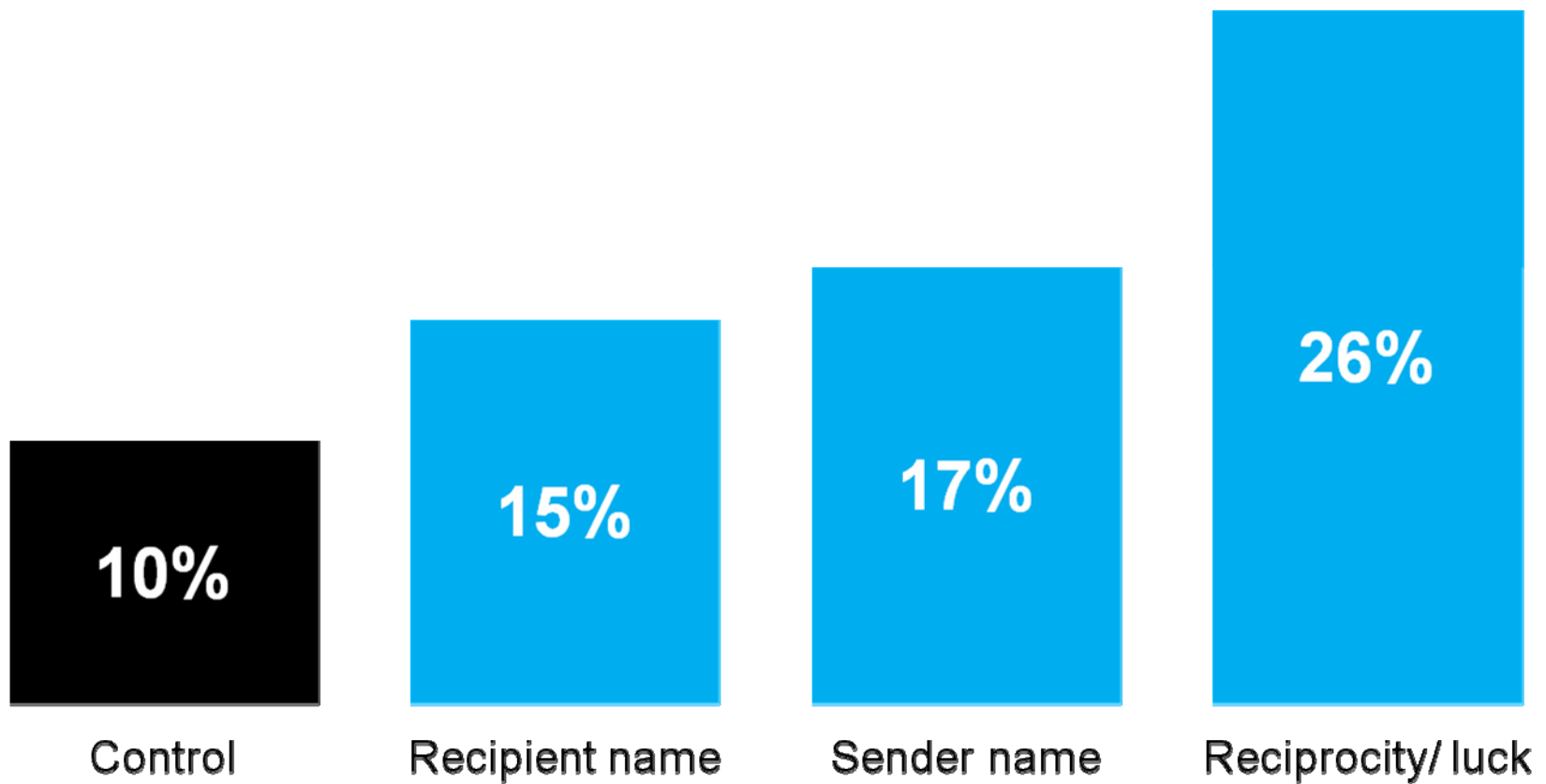


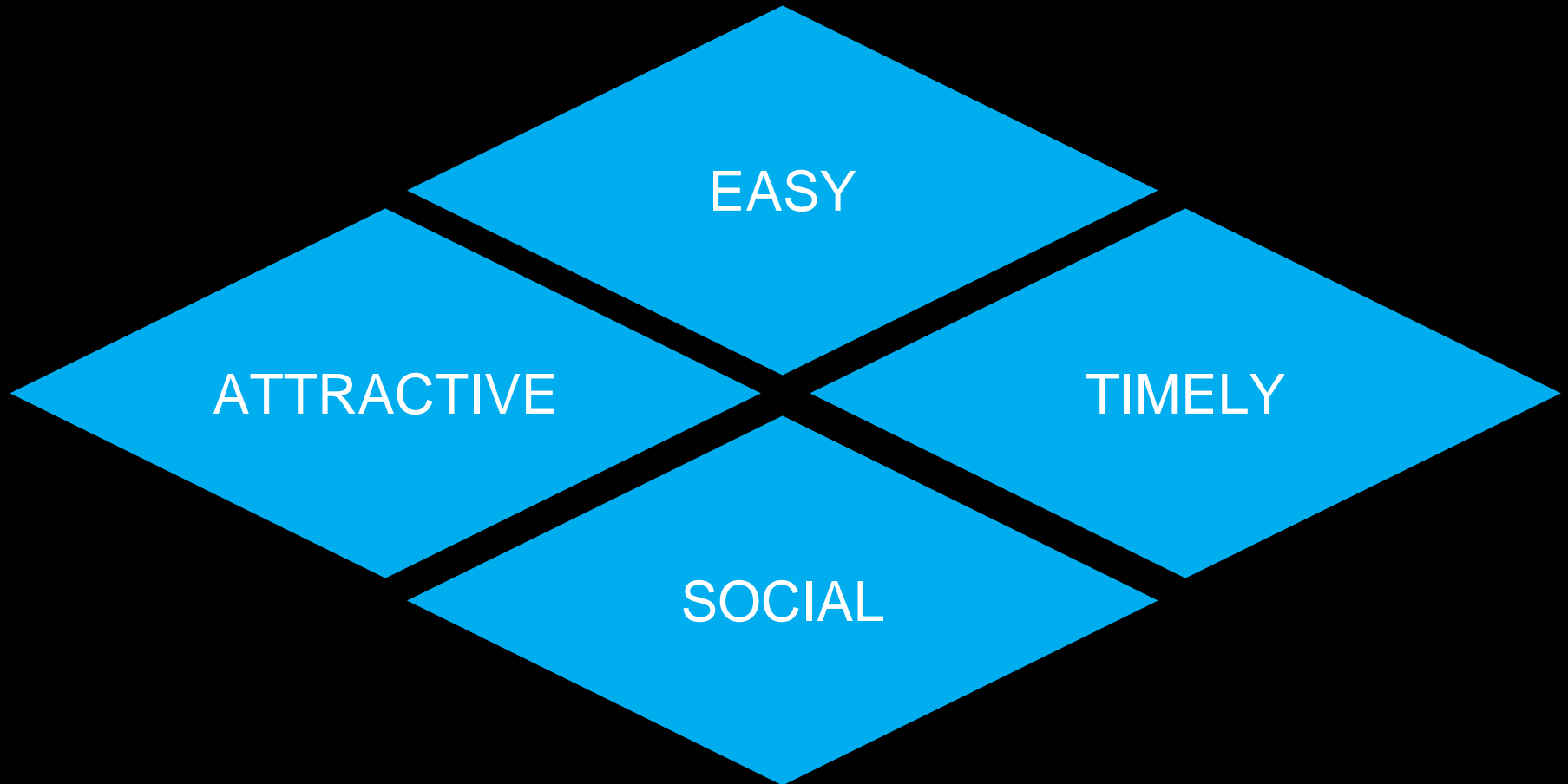
# Text message with claimant and advisor name and reciprocity/ luck



# Social norms to increase tax payment rates

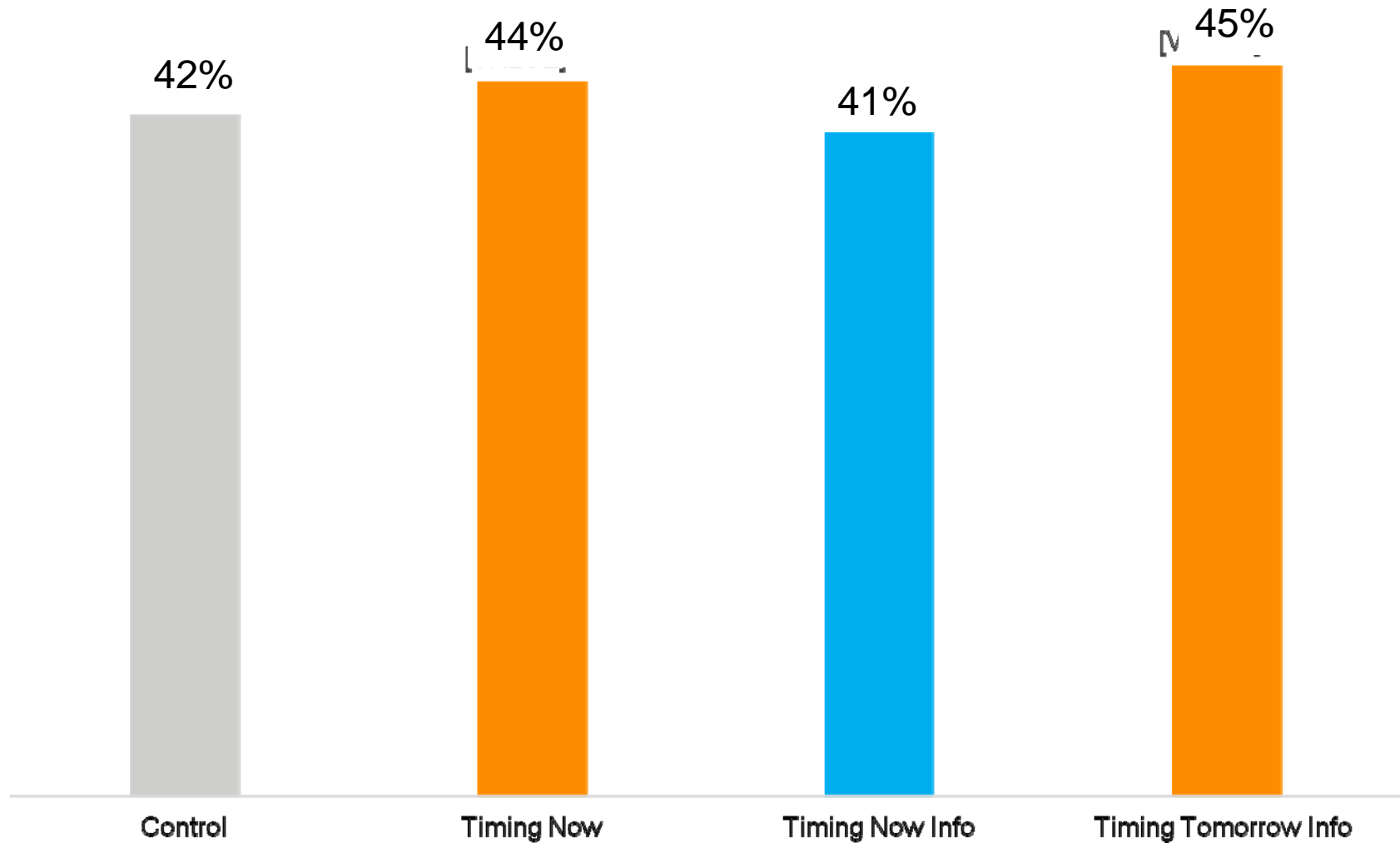
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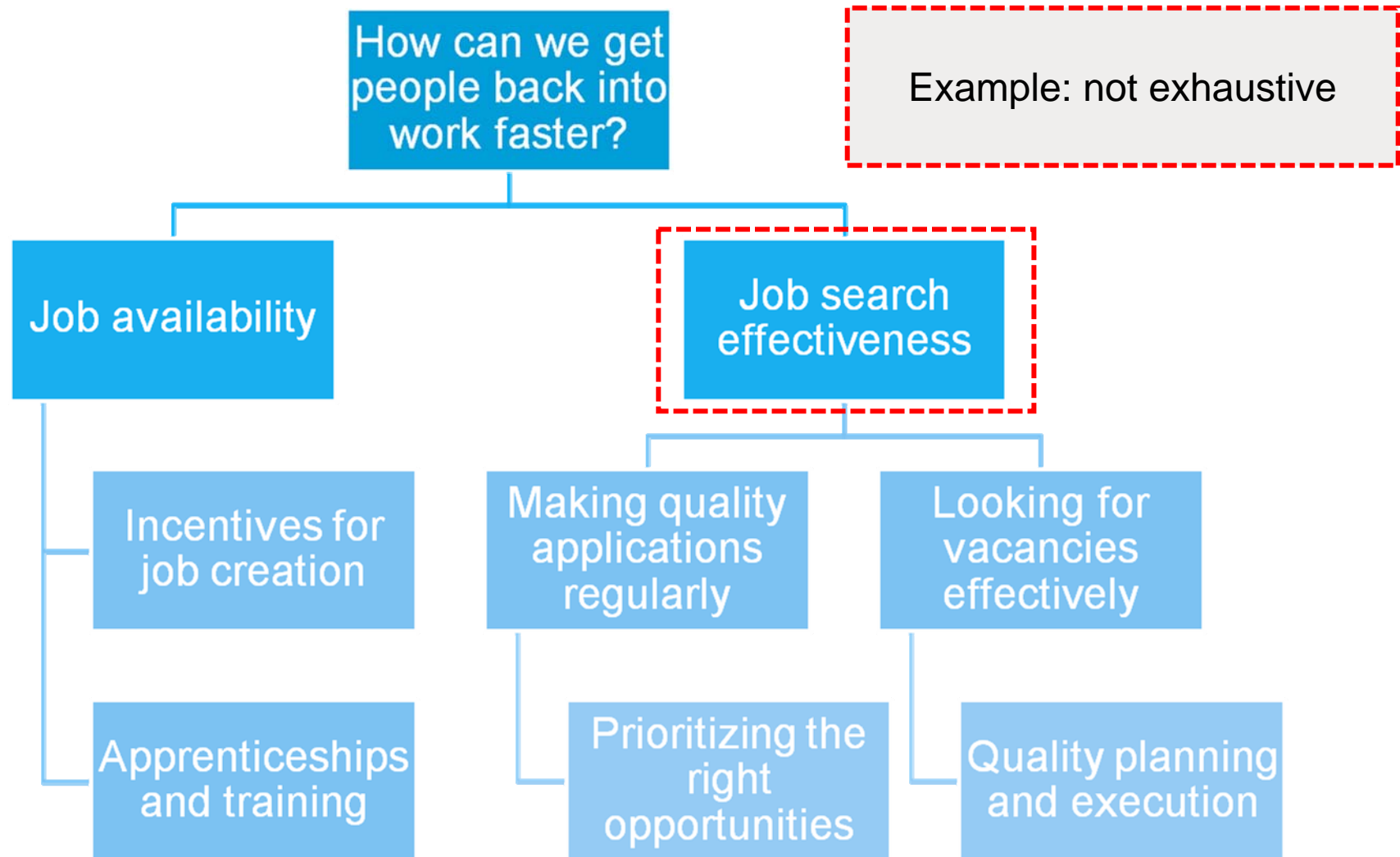


# Asking people to choose a time tomorrow appears to be more effective

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We tackle large problems by breaking them down into the small decisions points and actions that drive success...



How did we  
get  
jobseekers  
back into  
work faster?



**Low anchors:  
minimum three  
job searches**

**Too much  
paperwork =  
focus on benefit  
and impossible  
to understand**

**Notes from the field**

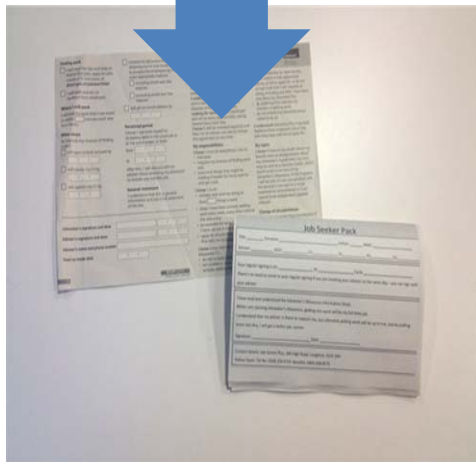
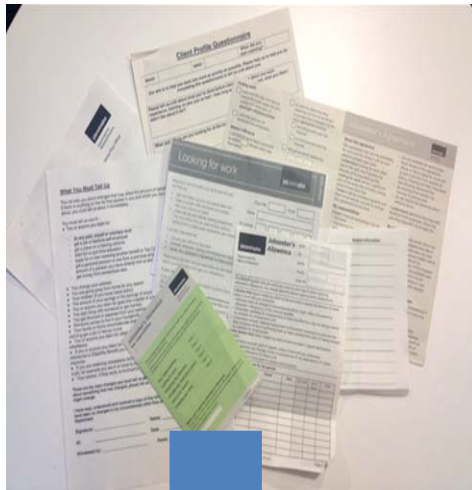
**Morale falls  
quickly**

**Getting a job can  
seem a very  
daunting goal**



# Redesigning the process

## 1. Refocus the process



## 2. Commitments

Make sure you include **WHAT** you are going to do and **WHEN** and/or **WHERE**

Commitment: I am going to update my cv and bring in a cover letter for my Advisor.	Adviser initials
Outcome:	
Commitment: I am going to identify 200 employers by 5 <sup>th</sup> sep	Adviser initials
Outcome:	
Commitment: I am going to sign up to 5 more job sites	Adviser initials
Outcome:	
Commitment: I am going to do job searching Mon-Fri 2:30-5:30	Adviser initials
Outcome:	

## 3. Morale boosting

**signature strengths**  
Complete below to find your strengths

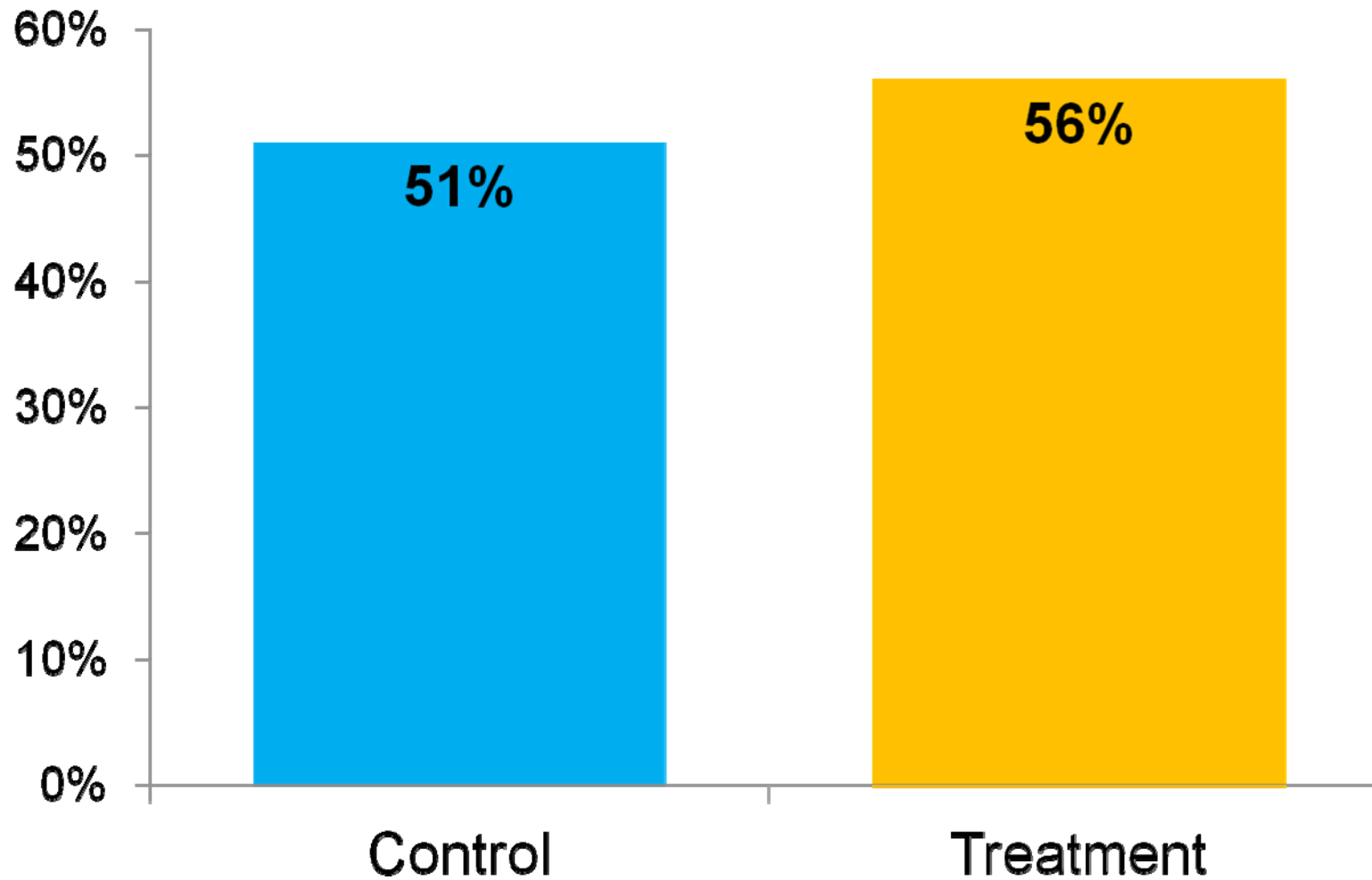
1. I am always curious about the world

- Very much like me
- Like me
- Neutral
- Unlike me
- Very much unlike me

[Previous](#) [Next](#)

Please complete all 48 questions.  
This will take about 10 minutes to complete

# Back to work: % people off benefits by 13 weeks





# THE BEHAVIOURAL INSIGHTS TEAM.

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