

CHAPTER 17 DRAFT BLUEPRINT: SHIFTING BEANS

The BEANS framework provides the opportunity to develop a story with evidence and insight to advocate for what's important to you in your day to day.



Think about a change you want to bring about in your work setting. It could be something as simple as proposing Meatless Mondays in the cafeteria. It is great practice to think about how to make it happen, including the key elements that need to be considered and addressed. This exercise gives an appreciation of what it takes and why diligent preparation and follow-through are key.

As you advance in your advocacy journey it is important to understand how to SHIFT mindsets. Reflection can help to shift intention to action. It is critical to consider: Social influence, Habit formation, Individual self, Feelings and cognition, and Tangibility.

To change means to stop doing what you were doing and do something different. This can be hard at an individual level and difficult at an organizational level. To minimize disruption and form new habits, change has to have incentives, be made fairly easy to adopt, and lend itself to evaluation so that progress can be better socialized and contextualized to sustain the new ways of being.

BENEFIT

- What are all the potential benefits of your idea for your organization?
- Some things to think about, aside from health and environmental benefits: Which peer companies are already doing it? Who are some internal influencers who are likely to support the initiative? How does

the change tie into any goals the organization already has? Is there a branding or media opportunity?

- Now think about potential drawbacks. Who are the stakeholders and how will it impact them? What could be possible negative consequences? Are they manageable?

Explore emotional and cognitive responses to the topic. Consider how feelings and thoughts are interconnected and can influence perspective. Reflect upon your own reasoning for advocating for this change.

***Case Study:** Meatless Mondays offer a range of advantages, including health benefits, environmental sustainability, and broader social and ethical considerations. However, it's important to note that the perceived advantages of Meatless Mondays can vary from person to person, and the extent of these benefits may depend on individual dietary choices and preferences.*

EASE

- How can the change be integrated easily and seamlessly in the current setting?

Some things to think about: Will there still be burger options, just plant-based? Who will decide which ones to use based on their taste and appeal? Are there existing contracts or cultural agreements which will get in the way of change? Does the staff have everything they need to make this happen fairly easily?

Now think about potential challenges of doing this. It will require careful planning and execution to minimize disruption. Think about ideas for smooth

transition:

- Could there be a gradual introduction, instead of an abrupt switch, to allow stakeholders (such as employees) to adjust to the change?
- Should stakeholders be informed well in advance to explain reasoning, benefits, and any other details of the initiative?
- Will increased overall cost become an issue, and will cost-effective sourcing options be needed?

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Other things to consider:

- *Promotions and incentives to encourage participation.*
- *Taste-testing sessions or sampling events to gather feedback.*
- *Customization with a variety of toppings, sauces, and sides to suit preferences.*

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The relative ease of integrating new practices will depend upon the current practices. It is important to understand the constraints, limitations, and driving forces to manage the ease of introduction.



- How will you make people aware of this change? What means would you use to get the word out? How will you make people realize the benefits?
- Can you create engaging visuals such as eye-catching posters, flyers, or digital graphics that highlight the advantages of the proposed change?
- Can stakeholder testimonials be used as compelling personal stories to share their experiences and reasons for participating? Can it be added to regular outreach and communications?
- What role might educational workshops or seminars play? Could you host

informational sessions or workshops to educate stakeholders about the health, environmental, and/or ethical benefits of the proposed change?

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For instance:

- *Email campaigns explaining the proposal, its benefits, and links to relevant resources and recipes, including vibrant images of delicious meatless dishes throughout.*
- *Intranet and company website FAQs and resources related to make sure the information is easily accessible.*
- *Social media promotion with facts, recipes, and success stories with a unique hashtag for the campaign.*

What other techniques can be used to increase awareness that are specific to your organization? The size and structure of the organization also has an impact on the means of communication that can be harnessed.

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NORM

- How will you make it part of the normal or standard routine?
- Can peer influence be used as a motivator?
- Can leadership support be garnered to amplify the initiative?
- Can positive experiences, such as rewards and incentives, be used initially to encourage people?
- Can a sense of community be created?

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For instance:

- *Creating additional days, such as Taco Tuesdays, to establish a schedule that Meatless Mondays flow within.*
- *Organizing group lunches or potlucks on Mondays where employees can share recipes or even demonstrate a recipe live?*

Socializing a behavior to make it a norm involves the process of introducing, promoting, and reinforcing a specific behavior within a society or group so that it becomes widely accepted and expected. Consistency and long-term commitment will be necessary, and over time, it can become a habit. It is important to understand the context, build coalitions, and communicate. Socialization strategies need to be revisited and adapted based on effectiveness.

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Storytelling is a key mechanism to contextualize change. This is sometimes less about the topic and more about weaving it into the persona of an organization. Some of the recommendations above already help in sustaining the practice for the longer term.

Progress reinforcement through other channels helps, and so does the tangibility of the results.

- Can you partner with environmental organizations or local sustainability groups to raise awareness and promote the initiative along with other partners the company/organization already has committed to?
- Can educational resources be added to other communications such as health and well-being?

- Can leaders host sessions to discuss resistance to multiple initiatives and help address concerns, misconceptions or opposition with open dialog and data from subject matter experts?
- Can peer ambassadors become spokespersons to tell their stories and express why they are passionate about the initiative?

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Contextualizing a change can be complex as it depends upon exactly that – the context – and that evolves. So, it requires ongoing efforts with patience and persistence. It often involves a combination of communication, social influence, education, and policy changes to achieve lasting impact.

Continuously monitor the success of Meatless Mondays through sales data, employee surveys, and feedback mechanisms. Use this data to make adjustments as needed. Evaluate the environmental impact, such as reductions in carbon emissions and water usage, and share these findings with employees.

It is important to contextualize the change in a way that aligns with the values, preferences, and needs of the organization and its employees in order to increase the likelihood of sustaining this positive change over the long term.

While parts of the globe contend with overabundance and contemplate solutions to food waste, food security remains a pressing issue in many regions of the world, further exacerbated by climate change.

It is important to recognize the interconnectedness of many SDGs and prioritize inclusive approaches toward a more just and sustainable food future for one and all.

BEAN THERE

And yes, in case you are curious, we did implement it in our cafeteria!
Given the context of our organization, I chose to call it Mindful Monday.
Sometimes less is less. When we piloted it – plant-based and meat options were concurrently available; however, there was clear signage everywhere as a reminder of it being Monday – a day to be mindful.