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# Research Sponsorship

The Center for Advanced Hindsight is a behavioral science research lab at Duke University. Since its inception a decade ago, more than one hundred behavioral researchers, PhD students, post-doctorates, interns, volunteers, and generally interesting people from across the globe have called the Center home. The Center is led by Behavioral Economics Professor Dan Ariely, who has written three New York Times bestsellers, including *Predictably Irrational*. Visit our website: [advanced-hindsight.org](http://advanced-hindsight.org) to learn more.

## WHAT DOES SPONSORSHIP MEAN?

The work of the lab is supported and expanded through research sponsors. Sponsors tend to have a vested interest in research related to health and financial behaviors at home and abroad. While each sponsorship is tailored to the needs and abilities of the sponsoring organization, there tend to be one to three typical areas that a sponsor supports and benefits from:

### Fundamental Research

The Center for Advanced Hindsight conducts basic research related to the psychology of money, health, happiness, and more. This area of research explores the fundamental mechanisms to explain and change behavior through traditional lab experiments with consented subjects (online or in-person). This work leads to white papers, academic publications, or other thought pieces.

### Applied Research on Sponsor's Products and Services

Some sponsors use this opportunity to optimize their existing products and services or design new products and services to improve their client behavior for better outcomes for both the sponsor and their clients. This work leads to customized and easily scalable interventions that are tested with the sponsor's clientele.

### Applied Research with Third Party Providers

The Center also tests ideas on *real* people and *real* behavior with other organizations that provide a sample and track data. This allows the Center to test ideas on real people and real behavior without drawing on additional time and development resources from the sponsor. This work leads to relevant best practices with a growing base of evidence for adaptable solutions.

## WHAT ARE THE BENEFITS OF SPONSORSHIP?

In addition to early access to research findings across the lab, sponsors typically also receive:

- Input and direction for a relevant research agenda, often directly related to their own products or services
- Workshops on behavioral science to build internal capacity for applying behavioral insights and experimentation
- On-call advice and feedback from behavioral experts in the lab
- Thought leadership in the field
- A variety of written reports, papers or press related to the research findings

# EXAMPLES OF WORK WITH WORLD SPONSORS

## Fundamental Research

As part of a sponsorship supported by the Joep Lange Institute, a Global Health Institute that combines science, activism, and pragmatism to help the global poor be happier and healthier, we conducted research on behavioral uptakes for digital products, among all, the mobile health wallet M-TIBA in Kenya, on which the poor can save for medical cost, get insurance and receive supports from donors.

Failing to set aside funds for health shocks can be a matter of life and death for low-income populations. Yet, the savings rate for health expenses in Kenya is low. In one study, we created four different stories about fictional characters that were at first skeptical about saving for health, but ultimately felt relieved that they had saved. We varied if the story was from the point of view of the father or the mother. We found that the story from the father's point of view was most effective in changing attitudes and norms toward savings. We are continuing to explore male-centric saving narratives to increase saving behavior.

## Applied Research on Sponsor's Products and Services

Sponsored by the Joep Lange Institute, we conducted research for Carepay International Kenya on how to increase behavioral uptake of their mobile health wallet M-TIBA.

While over 1 million Kenyas have enrolled in M-TIBA, only a small proportion have regularly saved in it. After mapping out the potential behavioral barriers, the global team conducted a simple SMS messaging test creating different anchors of the amount one is encouraged to save. For one group of users, we send a SMS twice a month reminding them the currently marketed value proposition, "Save 1 dollar to get a bonus of 50 cents...". For another group - the "low anchor" treatment *group*, we remind them to "Save as little as 10 cents, to get to 1 dollar to get a bonus of 50 cents..." While those in the "low anchor" saved less per deposit (as many more saved just 10 cents as encouraged), more users saved (4.8% vs. 3.4%), and they also saved more frequently (the number of repeat savers doubled). People often underestimate the impact of small steps. Reframing the action required so that it is more aligned with users' ability to act is an effective, yet often overlooked way to improve engagement.

## Applied Research with Third Party Providers

Sponsored by the Joep Lange Institute, and in collaboration with the PharmAccess Foundation, we conducted a field study to shed lights on how inspirational stories and goal-implementation nudges can be embedded in a wall calendar - a choice architecture gadget - to promote saving for health.

A group of 536 low-income Kenyans were randomly given one of the six calendars when they attended a medical camp (where they received free medical care), either a standard calendar with brand images, or a calendar with a sequence of illustrations describing an inspirational story or a calendar with one of the goal-implementation nudges. We then tracked their savings on their mobile health wallets in the following three months. Our results show that while none in the control condition saved during the first three months after receiving the calendar, 7.5% in the story-telling condition, and on average 10% in the goal-implementation nudge conditions saved at least once. While using giveaways to engage users is a common marketing tool, the findings help our partner organizations maximize the value of their existing giveaways, as well as applying similar design tweaks to other giveaways in the future - the space of using behavioral insights to improve effective giveaways is simply enormous.

**Curious to learn more?** Contact Ting Jiang ([ting.jiang2@duke.edu](mailto:ting.jiang2@duke.edu)) to discuss how your organization can benefit from sponsoring world research at the Center for Advanced Hindsight.