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# How to engage the public in water efficiency

or *what water can learn from waste*

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# The challenge

- Water environment already under stress
  - One third of catchments over abstracted or over licensed
- Increasing population and changing lifestyles = increasing demand
- Climate change = uncertain and decreasing supply





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# The challenge

- Water environment already under stress
  - One third of catchments over abstracted or over licensed
- Increasing population and changing lifestyles = increasing demand
- Climate change = uncertain and decreasing supply
- **A disengaged public who aren't even aware there's a problem**





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# Water efficiency – a big part of the solution

WWF's mission

- People living in harmony with nature
- Sustainable lifestyles linked to improved biodiversity
- Water for wildlife, water for people



Enjoy  
your  
garden  
more  
with a  
compost  
bin

34%



 recycle  
compost at home



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## What do people think about water?

- Most people don't! Using water is unconscious act.
- People don't intentionally waste it.
- Many already “do their bit”
  - 52% already cut down on water use at home
  - 46% never leave tap running whilst brushing their teeth
  - 37% never choose a bath over a shower





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## So what's the problem?

- Unclear about how much water we're using
- Unclear about why we need to save water
- Unclear about how to do it
- Unclear about what water companies and others are doing





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# Implementing water efficiency – a balance of infrastructure, service and behaviour

- Infrastructure: homes, meters, pipes, showerheads
- Service: billing, efficiency kits and audits, plumbers, value for money, perception company and service
- Behaviour: demographic, communication, action-based campaigns





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## For water efficiency

- Maximise impact of infrastructure –bigger and longer term impact
- Provide a good quality and tailored service
- Promote the right behaviour by communicating and knowing your demographic





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# How to engage?

## 1. Personalise the benefits

*Why should I save water? What's in it for me?*

- Environmental
  - Natural native environment
  - Climate change
  - Part of your green lifestyle
- “The right thing to do”
- Financial





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# How to engage?

## 2. Understand and breakdown barriers

- But it rains all the time!
- Aware of how much water using
- Feedback of how much water saved
- Minimising and honest about lifestyle impacts
- Convenience





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# How to engage?

## 3. Effective communication

- Consistent, simple messages – national campaign
- Trusted source
- Myth busting
- Regular, multi-media
- Feedback
- Speak to your audience





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# How to engage?

## 4. Targeted delivery

- People most likely to engage
- People with most water to save
- Built in monitoring





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# How to engage?

## 5. Community approach

- Visible – “everybody’s doing it”
- Create a buzz – something to talk about at the school gates!
- Local partnerships
- Efficient delivery





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## What next?

- Huge opportunity to increase engagement on water
- Industry needs confidence that water efficiency can deliver
- Shared evidence base and peer learning
- National lead to send consistent message to public
- WWF's Rivers on the Edge





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# Any questions?

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