Campaigns to Make a Difference

Research into Identifying Water Saving Messages

Report for Consumer Council for Water

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Summary

Background

The Consumer Council for Water (CCWater) represents the interests of consumers in the water industry in England and Wales. A core element of CCWater's Forward Programme and Operational Business Plan is to improve consumer awareness and understanding of the scarcity and value of water. The organisation is a key stakeholder on the Government led Water Saving Group (WSG) whose remit is to promote the efficient use of water in households in England leading to a downward trend in water consumption per head of population.

Informed by previous research, the WSG consider that achieving sustained change in customers' attitudes and behaviours to water use requires a long-term communication strategy, running over several years. To inform this strategy, CCWater led a research exercise to test a series of water saving messages developed with assistance from the water companies and Defra. The research objectives were to:

- understand which messages are most appealing to consumers;

- identify and understand the emotional response of consumers to these messages;

- explore why certain messages are a 'turn off' and understand why;

- identify any regional patterns in messages which are preferred and disliked;

- identify which messages would be most suitable to use within an overarching theme at national level; and

- explore ways in which messages could be refined to have a wider appeal.

Methodology

To achieve these objectives we carried out ten focus groups, one in each of the Water and Sewerage Company areas in England and Wales. The groups were stratified by a series of customer segments to ensure participation from a wide range of those who would hear or see and react to the messages (including children).

In the groups we aimed to identify the sorts of campaign messages that respondents remembered and the triggers that caused them to remember them. We also explored how participants used water, and what they thought about using it, to see if they could identify ways in which it could be more easily conserved. Each message was then discussed in turn to identify participants' emotional reactions to the message and what impact it would have on them to conserve water. The groups were then given the opportunity to identify any alternative message that would encourage water conservation.

Key findings and conclusions

For all participants the messages they remembered most were those related to campaigns which were impactful, direct, visual, repetitive and/or shocking, and messages they could relate to:

"The drink drive ones particularly, they are always quite gruesome aren't they"

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"...could happen to you, or could happen to your children, its real - something you can relate to"

Although respondents can relate to conserving water, they need to understand why it is important to conserve water:

"Why is it so bad for us to use water? Why should we conserve it? Our water runs down the rivers and out into the sea, we don't do anything to conserve it".

The messages need to relate to people seeing and hearing them, saving water will not resonate as well as saving money to people who are on a water meter:

"[saving money]...that goes together with a meter".

There may need to be more than one message to appeal to everyone. Those consumers for whom money was/could not be a direct trigger, generally favoured an environmental message with a clever double-meaning. Children, on the other hand, preferred a more 'catchy', rhyming message.

"it's not just us - the people who pay the bills who it has to get through to, it's the children as well"

The preferred messages were:

- ■   'Save Water, save money'   -   most favoured by all participants;

- ■   'Water: Don't let it cost the Earth'   -   most favoured by non-metered

                                                                     participants;

- ■   'Think about the flow of our H_2O'   -   most favoured by children;

- ■   'Save Water, save money'   -   most favoured by metered participants.

Most groups suggested amalgamating the messages to make them more memorable and impactful.

'Save Water, Save Money' lends itself to be used within a portfolio of "Save Water …" messages.

However, a crucial precursor to the success of any public campaign message is the need to overcome three barriers:

- ■   convince consumers there is a reason why they should be bothered about saving water;

- ■   explain to consumers how they can **easily** save water; and

- ■   convince consumers that the water companies are doing 'their bit'.

If these barriers can be overcome, then an amalgamated message like "Saving Water: Together we can make a difference" or one or more of those messages listed above could be successful in engaging the public to save water.

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

1.1.1 The Consumer Council for Water (CCWater) represents the interests of consumers in the water industry in England and Wales. The body came into being on the 1st of October 2005 and operates through four committees in England and a committee for Wales. CCWater is a key stakeholder on the Water Saving Group (WSG) which was also established in October 2005 to promote water efficiency in households in England. It is chaired by a Defra Minister and membership comprises Defra, Ofwat, Environment Agency (EA), Water UK, Waterwise, Communities and Local Government (CLG), and CCWater.

1.1.2 A fundamental component of CCWater's Forward Programme and Operational Business Plan is to improve consumer awareness and understanding of the scarcity and value of water. Furthermore, CCWater aims to encourage a sensible attitude towards the use of water, as set out in its *"Water on tap – a safe, reliable supply of water, used wisely"*.

1.1.3 The overarching goal of the WSG is to reduce the water consumed per head of population in England. To achieve this goal, the WSG needs to have a clear understanding of:

- consumer awareness of water resources;
- consumers' attitudes and inclination towards water efficient usage; and
- consumers' ability to adopt water efficient practices in and around the home.

1.1.4 Armed with this information, the WSG will be well placed to develop a strategy to engage consumers and educate on best practice of efficient water usage, leading to a more sustainable use of a scarce resource.

1.1.5 This requirement of the WSG sits neatly within CCWater's overall remit and planning, as indicated above. CCWater is taking the lead, in close conjunction with other WSG members, in understanding how the Group can best change consumers' awareness, perceptions and behaviour for the better.

1.1.6 In 2006, CCWater commissioned two research studies[1] under the *Using Water Wisely* banner, one qualitative and one quantitative, to better understand consumers' attitudes to water use and conservation. The research identified a range of barriers that, if overcome, could lead to a greater appreciation, amongst users, of the scarcity of water as a resource and the means by which greater efficiency could be achieved.

1.1.7 Both the research elements indicated that better, more focused information was needed to put consumers into the right mind-set, and identified the triggers that might lead consumers to actually change their behaviour for the better. Research recommendations included ways in which the WSG might achieve their aims through education campaigns. The 2006 research suggested that campaigns should be simple, digestible and impactful, first to get consumers to 'buy-in' to the idea of the need to conserve water and, second, to ensure there

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[1] "Using Water Wisely – a deliberative consultation commissioned by CCWater", Opinion Leader Research, Final Report (2006)
"Using Water Wisely – quantitative research to determine consumers' attitudes to water use and water conservation, MVA Consultancy, Final Report (2006).

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are no information or product gaps preventing consumers from carrying out their preferred water-saving activities.

1.1.8   The research also produced some initial ideas for the types of campaign message that might be successful, including:

- highlighting individuals' responsibilities and society's conscience, such as: *"Daddy, what did you do to save water?"*;

- using shock tactics, such as the 'speed kills' slogan combined with horrific images of the consequences of driving over the speed-limit;

- clever or witty messages, such as the FSA's *"when will I see you again?"*; or

- more direct techniques – *"save it or lose it"*.

1.2   Research Objectives

1.2.1   The WSG agreed that achieving sustained change in customers' attitudes to water use and behaviours requires a long-term communication strategy, running over several years. CCWater, the water companies and Defra developed a short-list of campaign messages and wanted to understand which of the short-list would be most effective in encouraging consumers to think about using water wisely, and to explore new messages that would be even more effective.

1.2.2   Water users are **not** all the same, of course. They have different awareness levels, different attitudes to saving water, different motives for behaviour change, and can be reached via different communication channels. The purpose of this research was to identify which messages 'work' best for which consumer groups.

1.2.3   The specific objectives of the current research were to:

- understand which messages are most appealing to customers;

- identify and understand the emotional response of consumers to these messages;

- explore why certain messages are a 'turn off' and understand why;

- identify any regional patterns in messages which are preferred and disliked;

- identify which messages would be most suitable to use within an overarching theme at national level; and

- explore ways in which messages could be refined to have a wider appeal.

1.3   Report structure

1.3.1   In the following chapter, we outline the methodology that was used to meet these objectives. Chapter three to five detail the research findings and chapter six provides our conclusions and recommendations.

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2 Methodology

2.1 Research Approach

2.1.1 Our approach was to use qualitative research to test consumers' responses to a short-list of ten messages, and to stimulate discussion and ideas to explore further what the messages mean to the public. Through focus groups we were able to gain insight into people's attitudes, their responses to the messages and also the sorts of messages that would trigger a change in behaviour/attitude.

2.1.2 In total, we carried out ten focus groups (9 with adults and 1 with children), one in each of the ten Water and Sewerage Company areas in England and Wales.

2.2 The messages

2.2.1 The ten messages identified by CCWater were:

- Use water, don't waste it;
- Use water wisely;
- Think Green, Think Blue;
- Water is precious, every drop counts;
- Water: A small change can make a big difference;
- Water: Don't let it cost the Earth;
- Use water, enjoy water, value water;
- Think about the flow of out H_2O;
- Saving water, together we can make a difference; and
- Save water, save money.

2.3 Sample structure

2.3.1 The sample design for this survey was structured in such a way so as to ensure participation from a wide range of different customer segments that may hold different views. These included:

- urban and rural areas;
- different socio-economic groups;
- water-stretched (with recent restrictions), water-stretched (without recent restrictions) and non water-stretched;
- metered and un-metered customers;
- household size;
- environmentally aware/ unaware; and
- adults and children.

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2.4   Description of group types

Urban and rural

2.4.1   Analysis carried out by MVA using information available on Water only Company (WoC) and Water and Sewerage Company (WaSC) websites has identified that four of the ten water areas have a rural population of greater than 30%. We selected one area from these four (the South West) to form a group of rural customers. One urban area (in the Severn Trent area) was selected from the other six more urban regions to form a group of urban customers.

Socio-Economic Groups

2.4.2   Analysis of census data showed that there are similar patterns of SEG across the ten areas. We therefore selected sample areas within the North West (low SEG participants only) and Wessex (high SEG participants only) regions.

Water Stretched and Water rich areas

2.4.3   The ten areas of England and Wales were categorised into three 'water area' types:

- Water-stretched (with recent restrictions) – those areas that experienced water use restrictions during the 05-06 drought - either a hosepipe ban or the more severe non-essential use ban (Southern and Thames areas).

- Water-stretched (without recent restrictions) – based on the Security of Supply Index (SOSI) and the assessment of renewable water resources as reported by the Environment water regions which contain water-stretched areas but which have not recently been subjected to any current water-use restrictions (Anglian and Severn Trent areas).

- Non water-stretched – Those areas that have not been identified as water stretched or subjected to any water restrictions (Wessex, South West, Wales, Yorkshire, and North West).

2.4.4   It should be noted that although the groups were stratified based on water area, participants themselves were not necessarily aware which of the above three water area types they lived in.

Environmentally aware/ unaware

2.4.5   One other stratification for group composition was to include in the research design a group of 'environmentally aware' participants and a group of 'environmentally unaware' participants.   As part of the recruitment process, participants were asked if they agreed or disagreed with a series of statements about recycling, saving energy, conserving water and sustainable modes of travel. Respondents who agreed with the statements were classed as 'environmentally aware', whilst those who disagreed were classed as less aware.

Metered/Non-metered

2.4.6   The final stratification was to include in the research design a group of only 'metered' participants (in Norwich, East Anglia region) and a group of only 'non metered' participants (in Cardiff, Wales region).

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2.4.7 Table 2.1 shows the composition of each group and its location. At each group there was a mixture of gender, age and socio-economic group and (with the exception of those in Norwich and Cardiff groups) metered/ non-metered.

Table 2.1: Sample structure

Group Type	Water area type	Region/ Location
Rural	Non Water-stretched	South West Water /Exeter
Urban (Pilot group)	Water-stretched (without recent restrictions)	Severn Trent/ Birmingham
Low SEG	Non Water-stretched	United Utilities/ Manchester
High SEG	Non Water-stretched	Wessex Water/ Bristol
Metered	Water-stretched (without recent restrictions)	Anglian/ Norwich
Non-Metered	Non Water-stretched	Wales/ Cardiff
Small household	Non Water-stretched	Northumbrian Water/ Newcastle
Children	Water-stretched (with recent restrictions)	Thames Water/ Guildford
Environmentally aware	Water-stretched (with recent restrictions)	Southern Water/ Brighton
Less environmentally aware	Non Water-stretched	Yorkshire Water/ Leeds

2.5 Group recruitment

2.5.1 Each participant (with the exception of the school children) was recruited by a trained recruiter local to the area where the focus group took place. A variety of methods were used to populate the group including door-to-door calling, on-street recruitment and telephone recruitment. For each group we recruited ten participants in order to get eight people at the group.

2.5.2 For the school group we used existing links that we have with a local junior school. The school provided us with a group of six Year 6 pupils aged between 10 and 11.

2.6 Topic guide

2.6.1 The topic guide was drafted following discussion at the inception meeting. The guide included the following:

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- ■   Campaign messages – In order to stimulate discussion and identify the triggers for recalling 'campaign messages' we asked participants to talk about message based campaigns they remembered and those which had caused them to change their behaviour.

- ■   Water use – Before identifying the messages we asked participants how they used water and discussed how much water is used in day-to-day activities. The purpose was to identify if participants could see the need to conserve water and to contextualise the message.

- ■   The individual messages – For each message we explored its meaning; any triggers of emotion; whether it would win them over or change the way they use water; and who they would expect the message to come from.

- ■   Alternative messages – Having discussed the messages, we asked participants what could be added to the messages to make them more impactful, and asked them if there were any other messages they thought would work.

- ■   An individual exercise involving the ten messages – At the end of each group the participants were asked to complete a short exercise asking them which three messages they thought were the best and to say why.

2.7   Pilot

2.7.1   The pilot focus group represented a crucial stage in the survey process and design. We undertook one pilot group with urban participants in Birmingham on the 22nd of October. The pilot group was also viewed by members of the CCWater project team.

2.7.2   As a result of the pilot, and the post-pilot meeting held on the 23rd of October, slight alterations were made to the topic guide for the remaining focus groups. A final version can be found in Appendix A.

2.8   Main fieldwork

2.8.1   The remaining focus groups took place between the 30th of October and the 6th of November. The group with children took place on the 28th of November. In total, 84 participants attended the 9 adult focus groups (each group had a minimum of eight people) and the focus group of school children had six participants. Participants were a mix of gender, age and socio-economic group (with the exception of where this was a sample criteria). Throughout the sample there was also a mix of bill payers and non-bill payers and metered and non-metered customers.

2.8.2   Some of the groups were affected by external factors, particularly the Brighton group (environmentally aware), where major works were taking place to replace the Victorian water pipes through the town. Although participants were aware they were in a 'water-stretched' area which had experienced water use restrictions in the 2005/06 drought, the problems being caused by old pipes and the work taking place may have more significantly impacted their views than the drought the suffered in 2005/06. Other groups were very aware of the levels of rain they had experienced throughout the summer.

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2.8.3   Each group was moderated by a member of the project team; all moderators had experience of facilitating group discussions within a range of communities and settings.

2.9   Analysis and reporting

2.9.1   In the following three chapters, we present the main findings. Where appropriate we have made comparisons between the different group types and also the water area types.

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3   Campaign messages

Summary of chapter

Key triggers for remembering adverts and campaigns were: repetition, shock tactics, guilt, graphic images, use of humour and visual presentation.

Participants said their behaviour changed as a result of a message when they could relate to the message; there was a financial or health benefit to change; and/or when there were long term benefits to the environment.

3.1   Introduction

3.1.1   This chapter focuses on the first section of the topic guide - campaign messages.   The analysis in this chapter includes:

- the commonly remembered campaign messages;

- the reasons why these messages were so memorable;

- the key triggers and emotions evoked by the messages; and

- ways in which participants changed their behaviour as a result of the message or campaign.

3.2   Commonly remembered messages

3.2.1   The first discussion point at each of the groups was recalling specific campaign messages which participants could remember.   As a 'pre-task', we had asked all those who had been recruited to recall any campaign messages.   It was explained that these did not need to be water-related messages, but the sort of messages which may have caused them to do something differently.

3.2.2   Across the groups a variety of messages and advertising campaigns were recalled.   The majority of groups recalled the following messages:

- 'Don't Drink and Drive'

- 'Clunk-Click Every Trip'

- 'Speed can kill'

- 'Think' and

- 'Keep Britain Tidy'.

3.2.3   Other messages recalled by one or two participants only included:

- Tango adverts;

- Washing at 30 degrees;

- Beanz meanz Heinz; and

- Give Blood adverts with celebrities.

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3.2.4   In addition to the specific messages outlined above, most groups referred to energy-saving messages and recycling messages which they were aware of, although could not remember the specific campaigns.

3.2.5   Children were unable to recall actual campaign messages. The only campaign initially recalled was from television and concerned charity-giving. After further discussion "an apple a day" was volunteered. The main source was posters, especially at the dentist's surgery.

3.2.6   When asked to consider messages regarding the environment, the children identified a number of activities that they knew could have a positive effect on the environment:

■   "turn off the tap when cleaning your teeth".

■   "turn off the lights";

■   "open the curtains and turn off the light"; and

■   "turn the power off at the wall [socket]".

3.2.7   The source of these messages was always the same, and so was the reason for children remembering - parents and repetition.

3.3   What makes a memorable message?

3.3.1   Participants gave several reasons for remembering messages. Often the campaign or message was accompanied by a catchy tune, humour, or used some sort of strong visual impact. Also participants remembered messages which had been cleverly crafted. Repetition of adverts also played a big part in the impact that they had on participants.

"I only remember it because Eddie Izzard did the voice over for it." (Less environmentally aware)

3.3.2   In particular, participants specifically remembered campaign messages because they felt they were directly affected by the messages, or could be impacted by these campaigns. This was particularly relevant to campaigns relating to speeding, the 'don't drink and drive' adverts and the 'Think' campaigns which participants had viewed on the television.

"Some of them have very hard hitting messages" (Less environmentally aware)

"There's a shock value there" (Less environmentally aware)

3.3.3   The children's behaviour had changed because the message had been absorbed through repetition and because the source of the message was authoritative. One participant's family kept a chart at home with a prize for who consumes the most fruit in the week, begging the question as to whether a parallel could be encouraged in homes for water conservation.

"You have to go round the house and switch everything off" (Children)

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3.4   The key triggers and emotions associated with the messages

3.4.1   Participants identified a number of triggers and emotions associated with the messages. Shock tactics played a large part in the sorts of messages people remembered. This was often because they were able to relate to what was going on.

"[the image] *could happen to you, or could happen to your children"* (High SEG)

"*It's real, something you can relate to" (High SEG)*

3.4.2   In addition, it was difficult to ignore the graphic images. This use of visual presentation was seen as key to the messages having an impact on participants.

"*The drink drive ones particularly, they are always quite gruesome aren't they" (Less environmentally aware)*

3.4.3   Some groups gave a mixed reaction to messages like giving blood, some said they felt guilty for not having donated more often whilst others saw it as a positive message showing how donating could help people. Guilt was a common reaction and reason for remembering messages and again was associated with the visual images of what could happen.

3.4.4   All groups were probed about the '5-a-day' message, although all groups were aware of the campaign few were able to refer to a specific advert which they were aware of.   The key triggers associated with this message were the health benefit to people, in particular children and getting them to eat more healthily. Certainly, all participants in the children's group were aware of this message and had changed their behaviour accordingly. The repetition of this message also made it more memorable as most groups agreed that the message was *"everywhere", "You see it on most packaging as well".*

3.5   How messages have changed behaviour

3.5.1   Being able to relate to the message and see how it could impact their lives was one of the biggest reasons for participants changing their behaviour. However, participants also felt that messages where there was a financial benefit, a health benefit or long term benefits to the environment also made them change the way they behaved.

3.5.2   In the Manchester group some participants had changed their behaviour because of the 'Give Blood' adverts. Although others had not given blood as a direct result of the message, they did recognise that messages like the 'Give Blood' campaign raised the importance of giving blood and the need to do it.

"*It makes me cringe but I do it now 'cause when you see the adverts you think that you could need it and could affect you." (Low SEG)*

"*It* [require blood] *could happen to any of us at any time."* (Low SEG)

3.5.3   In the Norwich group, people said that awareness was a major reason for changing behaviour relating to the environment. Their awareness had been raised by the seemingly simple ways they could change their behaviour for the better and this had prompted them to act on things that otherwise would not have occurred to them.

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3.5.4   In the Leeds group, some participants had tried to change their behaviour but did not always find it as easy as the messages implied.

> *"I have tried to recycle a lot more, and use the green bin. But it's not emptied enough, so after a while you just think what's the point?" (Less environmentally aware)*

3.5.5   Some of the environmental messages were interpreted both as a benefit to the environment, such as turning down your washing machine to 30°C, but also as a financial benefit from using less electricity. This was also true of most energy-saving messages where the drive for most participants was cost first, the environment second.

3.5.6   Participants in the environmentally aware group were the most likely to have changed their behaviour as a results of the 'washing at 30°C' message. When asked what the reasons were for changing, most felt it was because of the impact on the environment and to save energy.

3.5.7   All adult groups remembered similar messages and also had similar reasons for remembering them; however one of the biggest differences between groups was amongst metered and un-metered customers. When discussing water saving messages, participants on a water meter were the first to associate saving water with saving money.

3.5.8   Most participants were aware of turning off the tap whilst brushing their teeth:

> *"I turn it off to save water and because I am on a meter". (Environmentally aware)*

3.5.9   The children were also aware of the message, and all but one said they did this water-conserving activity (mainly because their parents encouraged it).

3.6   Water specific-campaign messages

3.6.1   Four of the groups (Cardiff, Exeter, Manchester and Newcastle) were able to think of water specific messages. These were:

- a campaign featuring Lennox Lewis (Newcastle);
- an advert from the 1970s with a brick squashing a drop of water (Exeter); and
- "Save water, take a bath with a friend!" (Cardiff).

3.6.2   In the Manchester group half of the participants remembered seeing a campaign by United Utilities that showed an itemised bill for water usage.

> *"A while ago there was this campaign, and it showed them printing out reams and reams of paper, and they said that if every time you flushed your toilet and such you actually got a bill for it you'd think". (Low SEG)*

3.6.3   Participants in this group felt that they remembered the message because it made them think about the amount of water they were actually using.

> *"What made it stick in my mind, is that you don't realise how many times you flush the toilet and how much water you use. Like you turn the tap on and let it run cold, or when you let it run when you are brushing your teeth you just take it for granted". (Low SEG)*

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4 Using water

Summary of chapter

Most participants felt that they did not 'waste' water.

Metered customers thought more about how much they used because of the cost implications of doing so.

Water companies were identified by the majority of groups as wasting the most water.

Although participants acknowledged there were ways they could save water, few actually used them in practice.

Most groups did not understand why they should conserve water.

Facts and figures about how much water is used and ways to save water were informative and encouraging.

4.1 Introduction

4.1.1 In this chapter we look at the participants' attitudes to using water. In the focus groups we discussed how and when they used water. Through thinking about their existing use, it was hoped that participants would identify ways that water could be (easily) conserved.

4.1.2 To help participants understand how much water is lost through 'every-day' wastage we showed them a 'facts and tips' showcard and a 'water use' showcard. Information provided included:

- a bath uses 80 litres of water compared with 35 litres for a 5-minute (non power) shower;

- 540 litres an hour is used by a hose or sprinkler, as much as a family of four might use in a day;

- fitting a Save-a-flush in the toilet cistern saves almost 2,000 litres per person per year;

- turning the tap off when brushing your teeth can save over 300 litres a month; and

- a dripping tap wastes up to 140 litres a week.

4.1.3 Where relevant the analysis below identifies any differences between the group types.

4.2 Attitudes to using water

4.2.1 Across all groups there was a sense that most participants did not think about the amount of water they used on a daily basis, using water was not something that they did consciously. More specifically for most people, they felt that as they paid for water they would use as much as they liked.

"I just use my water as I'm using it. If I want a bath every day I do, I'm not conscious about what I'm using" (Less environmentally aware)

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"People have got more important things to worry about than how much water they are using" (Low SEG)

"If you walk out of a room with its lights on, you're paying for it, with water you're paying the same amount each month, so you don't care". (Non-metered)

4.2.2   For all groups water was seen as a commodity which they took for granted. Even in the South East, participants felt that water was a resource they could use whenever they wanted. They did not consider it a scarce resource.

"Just take it for granted that it's always there" (Small household)

"I wouldn't even know how much water I use" (Environmentally aware)

4.2.3   There were few contrasts between the different group types with the exception of metered and non-metered customers. Metered customers were very conscious about the amount of water they used because of the cost implications. This was also recognised by those who were not charged for their water via a meter, with some participants saying that being metered would make them think more about the amount of water they used.

"I think about how much I'm using because I'm on a water meter" (Low SEG)

"If I was a metered customer I would think about it more" (Environmentally aware)

"Unless you are on a water meter, which most people aren't, you're not conscious of it" (Non-metered)

4.2.4   The only regional difference was in the South West where the high price of water meant the group was highly conscious of the amount of water they used. This group discussed in detail how their high bills were an incentive to use less water. Indeed, members of this group had pro-actively requested to be put onto a water meter in order to cut the amount they spent on their water bills.

4.2.5   There was a consensus across the groups that people did not intentionally 'waste' water.

"I don't throw the water away, I re-boil it" (Less environmentally aware)

"I don't think anyone subconsciously, deliberately uses more water that they need…this boiling the kettle with only enough water for one in it. I would never measure it. Just turn the tap on, stick the kettle under it… it's too much of a faff [to measure] in a busy working day" (Small household)

"I don't think I could use less water" (Environmentally aware)

4.2.6   Moreover, participants felt that they did *'their bit'* to conserve water. Examples given included:

- turning the tap off whilst they brushed their teeth;
- only filling the kettle with what they need;
- having a shower instead of a bath; and
- washing the car with a bucket not a hosepipe.

"I never let the water run whilst I'm cleaning my teeth, and things like that, so I am doing everything I can [to save water]" (Low SEG)

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"I think everyone in their own way is trying" (High SEG)

4.2.7   However, there is also a risk that consumers can easily get into a false comfort zone, as indicated by one participant in the children's group:

"some people think a shower doesn't use much water so stay in too long" (Children)

4.2.8   This anecdotal evidence emphasises the need to educate and remind the public, on a regular basis, as activities by the well-intentioned may otherwise be self-defeating.

4.3   Wasting water

4.3.1   As highlighted above, none of the participants felt they '*intentionally*' wasted water. However, when asked by whom and how water was wasted, the majority of groups felt that the biggest *"waster of water"* were the water companies. Only one group (Exeter) did not discuss the water companies at this stage in the focus groups. For many, it was the amount of water lost through leaking pipes that was the biggest concern:

"I think people waste water. The biggest wasters are water companies. Where I walk my dog by a lake, and there was a burst pipe and it was there for 4 or 5 days. It was pouring down the street. The people who lived there obviously reported it – but 4 or 5 days before someone dealt with it. How much water was wasted then?" (Non-metered)

"They're the biggest offenders because they won't repair leaks quickly enough" (Small household)

4.3.2   Some groups gave figures about the amount of water that was wasted by water companies, and three of the groups referred to the large fines that had been put on water companies by Ofwat. This was seen as a step in the right direction, but respondents still felt that the water companies should be doing more to conserve water.

4.3.3   When discussing water lost through leakage, most groups felt they would be more inclined to save water **if** they felt that the water companies were doing their bit as well. Too much onus was put on the water consumer when most leakage was as a result of the infrastructure.

"…they don't do anything at all, we are the ones expected to save it, what's wrong with the water companies doing it?" (High SEG)

"If they can't be bothered why should we?" (Environmentally aware)

"It [water saving] should start at the top with the Water Boards. We have two weeks sun, and they say we're out of water, yet we have 50 weeks of rain. They can't conserve it to begin with". (less environmentally aware)

4.3.4   In addition to feeling that the water companies were the biggest wasters of water, the groups also struggled to understand why anybody should need to conserve water.

"Why is it bad for us to use water? Why should we conserve it? Our water runs down the rivers and out into the sea - we don't do anything to conserve it" (Rural)

"Not in this country no [should not have to save water]" (Less environmentally aware)

"We get so much rain, we shouldn't need to" (Less environmentally aware)

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"In this country we have ample water; it's not us who need to be saving. If we were in Australia or something I could understand it, but it doesn't make sense here." (Less environmentally aware)

"What difference does it make anyway? If we use loads of water, how does that affect the environment?" (Rural)

4.3.5   This issue was raised throughout the discussions about the messages; most participants felt that, as an island with plenty of water surrounding us, water resources could not be scarce. This was more the case in non water-stretched areas, where it was recognised that given they had not been subject to hosepipe bans or any such water shortage, they could not really identify with the need to conserve water.

4.3.6   The one main group with a different outlook was the children's group. They immediately recognised the appropriateness of being careful with water. At the heart of this recognition seemed to be the automatic acceptance that extravagant use, or mis-use, was simply un-reasonable (whatever the commodity). The fundamentally different response between children and adults suggests that, when young, people can easily see that consuming in excess of what one needs is unnecessary and could be harming the planet, whilst seasoned consumers cannot now see this, and have developed a take-take-take attitude simply because *"it's there"*.

4.3.7   Children appear to be genuinely respectful of water, unlike adults. They value water, both in terms of their day-to-day use and play, and in terms of a global resource. Children have tremendous awareness and compassion for the difficulties facing third world countries, and one only needed to see the pictures of African children on the wall of the room that we were sitting in to appreciate that children are less removed from the real world than many adults.

"looking at the pictures makes you feel bad about how much water we waste" (Children)

4.3.8   Children were also more willing to immediately accept that water is wasted within the household. Taps **are** left running for longer than they should, in their view. One example of wastage that is likely to be very common in households across the UK, but only mentioned by children, is the water poured into their bedside cup each evening and then thrown away the next morning, with the cycle repeated every day of every week of every year.

4.4   Conserving water

4.4.1   Participants of all groups were interested in the show material that was used to demonstrate how much water day-to-day activities use. They felt the information was very useful and made them think more about the amount of water they used. One group was sceptical about the amounts shown:

"That can't be right"(Less environmentally aware)

"I wouldn't have thought that for one minute, I thought it would be up there, but not ahead of baths and washing machines [the amount of water used when flushing the toilet]" (less environmentally aware)

4.4.2   The information with the biggest impact was the amount of water lost through a dripping tap. Participants were surprised at this.

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"Crikey! I didn't realise it was that much" (Low SEG)

"The dripping tap's got me, Over a week that's a lot" (Low SEG)

4.4.3   After seeing these facts, the groups became receptive to the idea they could conserve more water and felt that the 'top tips' for conserving water were ones that they could easily adapt for themselves – i.e. with no inconvenience. However the biggest issue highlighted across the group was the fact they were not aware or convinced that there was a problem with water shortage. For this to be overcome, people need to understand where unnecessary waste occurs and know the measure they could easily take to use less water.

4.4.4   Across the groups there was a sense that no-one used more water than they needed to. Although they could see that there were ways water could be conserved relatively simply, most groups struggled to see why they should be conserving water or paying for a commodity that *'falls out the sky'.*

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5 Testing the messages

Summary of chapter

The ten messages supplied by CCWater were discussed in differing orders in each group.

Overall, the groups were receptive to the messages, but felt that they lacked information and visual effects which 'grabbed' them.

Different messages appealed to different groups, suggesting that one overall message may not be suitable for everyone.

Many groups again questioned why they should be saving water. It was felt that none of the messages provided them with the 'why' they should save water, or the 'how' they can save water.

5.1 Introduction

5.1.1 This chapter provides the analysis of the ten messages provided by CCWater. The messages were presented to each group in a controlled way to ensure that the study findings were not influenced by the order in which the messages were presented. For each message we asked the participants what they thought of the message, what it meant to them and if it would change their behaviour in any way. We also asked who they thought the message should come from in order to have greatest impact on the public.

5.1.2 After discussing the messages, participants were asked if the messages could be improved or if there was another more effective alternative message that could be used. At the end of each group, participants were asked to complete an individual exercise and identify the three messages which they thought were the best and say why.

5.2 The messages

5.2.1 Before presenting the messages, it was explained to participants that it was anticipated the message would feature on pamphlets, bills, the backs of envelopes and also be used for radio and TV adverts; and that the campaign would need to appeal across the country. Accompanying the message would be a reason why and a regionally specific reason for the message.

'Use water don't waste it'

5.2.2 This message was not favoured by any of the groups. Most said that it was stating the obvious, some found it patronising whilst others said that the message was not catchy. Several participants across the groups said that the message was contradictory. Children found it too *"direct"* and *"forceful"*.

"See I think that's telling you two things, it's telling you to use water, but don't waste it" (Low SEG)

5.2.3 All groups felt that this message would not have much impact on people.

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"I think because people take water for granted, they'll go: what do they mean, wasting it?" (Less environmentally aware)

5.2.4   This message was also seen as bland and did not give any information about how water could be saved. In one group (Exeter) the participants felt that the message would sound better if it said 'Save water don't waste it', however there was consensus that they needed to know why they should not waste water. This was supported by other groups who wanted to know what sort of information would be used alongside the message.

5.2.5   In the Cardiff group, participants felt the message lacked any shock value and suggested changing the message to *"Use water, don't waste it… or it may not be there at all"*.

5.2.6   None of the groups felt that if they repeatedly saw the message it would change the way they used water.

'Use water wisely'

5.2.7   Participants were more positive about this message, although some felt that it was very similar to 'Use water, don't waste it'. This message was less patronising and some felt that it would make them think. However, as most groups did not feel that they wasted water, they did not think that people would do anything differently as a result of the message.

5.2.8   One group (Newcastle) thought the message was punchy, but not shocking and would be easy to remember. Most groups said that it would need to be accompanied by an informative graphic about why water should be used wisely. The Norwich group favoured this message as it was straight to the point and encouraged people to think. They also thought that it had a wide potential use.

5.2.9   Two groups (Manchester and Leeds) disliked the message because it was patronising and would not have any impact. One participant said;

"if you're on a meter you use water wisely anyway" (Less environmentally aware)

'Think Green, Think Blue'

5.2.10   There was a mixed response to this message across the groups. The initial reaction from most groups was that water is clear and not blue; one participant at the Birmingham group felt it was yet another *"recycling"* message.

"…we don't have any blue water, do we?" (Non-metered)

"Here we go again, think green, which bag do I put in that box…" (Urban)

5.2.11   Not all groups made the link between the environment being green, with one group suggesting that it was an advert for political parties.

5.2.12   Other groups questioned what it was they were supposed to be thinking about and felt the message was too vague and would not make them think differently about using water. Some groups understood the message because of the context of the group discussion. However, if they saw the message anywhere else they would not know what it related to.

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5.2.13   The Manchester group thought that the message was thought-provoking and forced them to use their imagination. However, they did not think it would make them act differently.

5.2.14   Children, on the other hand, thought this message was *"really good"*. They immediately interpreted the message as *"save the environment, save water"*.

5.2.15   Overall though, this message was not very highly rated and participants felt they needed to see what information and graphics would go with it.

'Water is precious, every drop counts'

5.2.16   For most groups, this message conjured up images of countries that suffer from serious drought, but they did not feel that the message was relevant for the UK or was even true for the UK. They wanted to know why water was precious.

"In certain countries. Water is precious to people in Africa, but to us, water isn't precious, it's a commodity, we've got loads of it" (Less environmentally aware)

5.2.17   The Brighton group, however, felt that water was precious and liked the message as they felt it *"made a good point"*. Although this group was aware of water shortages, they also felt that a lot of it was due to the leakages and poor infrastructure. This was also discussed by the Manchester group who thought that the message was hypocritical due to the amount of leakage and water lost by water companies. The Birmingham group also agreed with this and felt that more should be done to capture the water.

5.2.18   One of the Newcastle participants suggested *"Water is precious every drop **costs**"* as a variation on the message. This would have the added benefit of the double-meaning of 'cost', as discussed below for 'Water: don't let it cost the Earth'.

5.2.19   The children's group liked this message, considering it second best overall.

5.2.20   Although the message was seen by some of the groups as making them feel guilty, they did not feel the message would change their behaviour as it was not a message they could relate to.

'Water: a small change can make a big difference'

5.2.21   Groups had a mixed response to this message. For most, it raised more questions than gave information about conserving water. The message was also seen as being too long and not easy to remember. Groups were also reminded of Tesco's slogan.

"Who's it going to make a difference to?' (Urban)

"Change what?" (Rural)

"Sounds more like something you'd find in a book" (Children)

"Long and wordy" (Children)

5.2.22   Again, some groups thought this message was hypocritical of water companies and they would want to see what changes they were making to make a difference.

5.2.23   However, Manchester and Cardiff both thought the message was a good campaign message and would have a positive impact on them and their behaviour.

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"It's only good because they are only asking you to make a small change, not to change your life" (Low SEG)

5.2.24   Overall, this message was not very popular with the groups as they wanted more information about what the changes were and what difference it would make and it was not a catchy message.

'Water: Don't let it cost the Earth'

5.2.25   This message was appealing to almost all of the groups. It was seen as a *"catchy"* message which would appeal to both children and adults.   Others also liked the double-meaning associated with the message.   Some groups saw the costs element as referring to them saving money, whilst others saw the environmental impacts of saving water.   The message was seen as both meaningful, thought-provoking and (according to one group) *"dramatic".*

"You are helping the future. It's not to help the Water Board, it's to help the Earth. Putting the word Earth in there takes it away from them, and makes it more interesting" (Less environmentally aware)

"It is a play on words" (environmentally aware)

5.2.26   The groups felt that with the right images and additional information, this message could have a wide impact and make people think about saving water.

5.2.27   However, the Norwich group felt that this message was *"rubbish"* and that it made them think of expensive water bills, therefore setting the wrong tone. The Manchester group also queried what impact we, as a relatively small country, could have on the Earth and that, in their minds, water was never going to *"run out".*

"We're such a tiny country - have we really go that much affect on the Earth?" (Low SEG)

'Use water, enjoy water, value water'

5.2.28   The response to this message was less positive than to others and made participants think of activities that involved using **lots** of water like deep baths or paddling pools in the summer. Some groups interpreted this message as encouraging them to use water and, as an after-thought, telling them to value it.

"It suggests you go out and waste water" (Low SEG)

"Use as much as you want, it implies. It's like they are selling water as a product, to push up sales" (Low SEG)

5.2.29   There was a feeling that people should value water already, and should not need to be told to do it. Overall this message had very little meaning for the groups and did not convey the idea they should conserve water.

'Think about the flow of our H$_2$0'

5.2.30   Participants of some groups felt that this message could be a catchy caption and would work well with a visual image and a catchy tune. It was also felt across most of the groups that

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this message would appeal to younger people (indeed, the children's group thought it was the best message).

"I find if it rhymes, it's easier to remember" (Children)

"Quite catchy" (Metered)

5.2.31   There was a mixed response from groups about the message rhyming, some liked the structure; however others said it was not '*hard-hitting*' enough.

5.2.32   Some groups questioned if people would know what H_2o was and therefore understand the purpose of the message. Others thought it was a good catch-phrase to summarise thinking about how much water you use.

5.2.33   There was also a mixed reaction to the wording, with some groups disliking the word 'flow' in the message.

"When you think of the word flow, you think of floods and fast flowing" (Low SEG)

5.2.34   Although this message stimulated discussion among the groups most agreed they did not like the message and did not feel it would change the way they behaved. Participants were interested in the visual and audio information that would go with the message and thought that this might improve the message, but overall it was felt it would not appeal to adults.

'Saving water, together we can make a difference'

5.2.35   Most groups questioned who the 'we' referred to in this message. Suggestions included the public, the water companies and businesses. Participants also wanted to know what was going to be done to make a difference and how they would know it was happening.

"What are they going to do, what is their effort, what's your part in this… why don't we know what the water companies are doing?" (Urban)

"They would have to prove to us that they were doing something, that they were being 'together' with us" (Low SEG)

5.2.36   The Cardiff group was most positive about the message and favoured the idea of '*all pulling together*'. However, they would need to be convinced that the water companies were doing their bit before changing their behaviour. This message was the most popular choice for the Cardiff participants.

5.2.37   The length of this slogan was also criticised and groups were again interested in what information would go with it along with visual and audio representation of the message. The message was not hard-hitting enough for most participants and for this reason they felt it would not change their behaviour.

'Save Water, save money'

5.2.38   This message had the most impact across all the adult groups with the exceptions of Cardiff (which was wholly comprised by non-metered customers)] and Brighton (the environmentally aware group). All other groups were caught by the idea of saving money. Even if it did not apply to them, participants felt they would read the message and take it in.

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"Whether you are going to do it or not, you are going to read it as it says save money" (Less environmentally aware)

5.2.39   The Manchester group felt that this message was *"stating the obvious"*, with some participants feeling that they paid for their water therefore they could use what they wanted. Overall this group did not like the message and were confused as to the reasons why they should be conserving water:

"But what is the focus of this message - are they pointing it towards someone who wants to save water for environmental reasons or money?" (Low SEG)

5.2.40   Participants from the Newcastle group felt this message lacked the environmental element that some of the other messages had contained, and suggested that combining it would improve the overall message.

5.2.41   Most participants felt the message would win them over, however it was felt that people on a meter and bill-payers were the most likely to react to such a message. The Exeter group could relate to the message mainly because the cost of water in their area was perceived to be very high. Others liked that the message was straight-forward and hit the *"money saving trigger"*.

5.2.42   However, it did nothing for the children.

5.3   General comments from the messages

5.3.1   Across all groups, participants felt that the messages needed to be *impactful*, visual and powerful for them to take notice of what the message was saying. In all of the groups, participants wanted to know what additional information would go with the messages, and the majority felt the most powerful information they had been shown throughout the groups was the amount of water used and the top tips. This was because they felt able to relate to the information and do something about it.

5.3.2   Only one of the groups discussed the costs involved with getting the water to the tap. For all other groups there was no mention of how the water gets there in the first place. All participants took for granted that there would be water in their taps when they turned them on.

5.3.3   The biggest issue for participants was the reason why they should be conserving water. This was particularly the issue in non water-stretched areas, where participants did not comprehend the need to conserve water. For those who had been exposed to water shortages, this issue was less of an obstacle, but there was still a lack of understanding about what impact conserving water would have on the environment.

5.3.4   As explained earlier in the report, most groups felt they already did what they could to save water. This suggests that the public needs further information about how they can save water. Throughout their review of each message, participants constantly wanted additional information to have the underlying rationale for the messages. Although they were told that the final message would contain guidance and be area-specific, they felt that without this, the 'strap-lines' would have very little impact.

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5.4   Who should the message come from?

5.4.1   We also asked participants who they expected the messages to come from. Overall, participants thought that the messages were best suited coming from the Government or Government agencies such as the Environment Agency. The groups did not feel that it was appropriate for the messages to come direct from the water companies.

"It can't be the water companies can it? Because it wouldn't make any sense for them whatsoever to tell us not to use water, cause it's like me telling my customers not to buy anything" (Low SEG)

"If you see somebody from the water board in a suit sat there behind a table you are not going to listen" (Less environmentally aware)

5.5   Ranking the messages

All participants were asked individually to identify their top 3 messages and state their reasons for preferring these messages. Different messages were favoured by different groups. For example 'Save Water Save Money' was the preferred message for Birmingham and Exeter, whilst 'Use water, don't waste it' was the most favoured message for the Bristol group. The full results for each group are shown in Appendix B.

5.5.1   Groups containing a higher proportion of metered customers were more likely to favour the message which related to cost. The environmentally friendly group were most in favour of the message 'Water, don't let it cost the Earth'. Participants from the non-metered group preferred the message which related to 'saving together'.

5.6   Alternative messages

5.6.1   Not all groups were able to think of any alternative messages from those that were presented. However, all groups felt that for the message to have impact it was not just about the slogan, but the overall campaign that went with it. The importance of imagery and the need to appeal to a wide audience was stressed by several groups.

"I think to get something over like this is pictures" (Low SEG)

5.6.2   Several groups suggested combining the current messages to achieve a more powerful message.

"I would take a bit out of two of them and just have it simple. 'Don't waste water, use water wisely'. Because I think that you need something really simple, that is just saying - don't waste it, use it wisely. You could have that on anything, and you'd hear it and know exactly what it meant, and it covers everything from monetary to conservation reasons" (Low SEG)

5.6.3   Other suggestions included:

- 'Use water wisely, we'll show you how'
- 'Use water wisely, every drop counts'

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5.6.4   The Newcastle group felt that the messages were missing a commitment from the water companies, which was important to encourage people to conserve water. Also, the groups felt that the messages needed to be meaningful and something they could relate to. The Brighton group also felt that the water companies needed to take accountability.

"As soon as they can turn around and hold their hands in the air to say our system is totally foolproof… now it is down to you to make the changes and make the saving, then people would be a lot happier to do it" (Environmentally aware)

5.6.5   Overall, participants wanted messages which were going to show them how, and why, they should save water.

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6 Conclusions and recommendations

6.1 Introduction

6.1.1 This chapter summarises the main findings of the research and makes recommendations of possible ways forward for the message campaign.

6.2 Successful message campaigns

6.2.1 Although the groups were receptive to the messages and their overall purpose, there were several barriers identified which will need to be overcome before any campaign is successful. The questions consumers ask themselves when confronted with any water-conserving message are:

- Why should I be bothered about saving water?
- How can I save water?; and
- What are the water companies doing to save water?

6.2.2 Most people do not think that they waste water, they also do not consider water to be a scarce resource or that it will become one. In addition, water companies are seen as the biggest wasters of water and that leakages and old infrastructure should be improved.

6.2.3 All participants felt that the three points above were critical for people accepting and responding to the messages. Understanding the why, the how and also what others were going to do, were the most significant barriers to getting people to positively change the way they use water.

6.2.4 With these barriers overcome any successful campaign needs to be:

- impactful;
- direct;
- visual;
- repetitive; and
- shocking.

6.2.5 These are the sorts of messages that participants said made them react and change their behaviour.

6.2.6 Any campaign also needs to relate to the people it is aimed at. The largest contrast between the groups was between participants who were metered and those who were not. Messages which suggest consumers should save money will only resonate with consumers who are on a water meter, or those who pay the bill. This suggests that there may need to be more than one message in order for the campaign to appeal to everyone. Similarly, there was a stark contrast between adults and children, again suggesting the need for more than one message.

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6.2.7   All participants found the facts and tips sheets motivating, and they engaged with the information far more than the specific messages. The groups suggested that they would like to see more of this, as it would make them think about the amount of water they use.

6.2.8   For any campaign to be effective, the public needs to be convinced that water needs to be conserved **and** that there are some **easy** ways of doing so without inconveniencing them. They also need to be made **aware** of what the water companies are doing to also conserve water.

6.3   Possible ways forward

6.3.1   Of the ten messages tested, the most likely ones to succeed were:

- ◼   'Save water, save money' – Urban, rural, metered, Less environmentally aware;

- ◼   'Water, don't let it cost the Earth' – Environmentally friendly, rural;

- ◼   'Use water wisely' – Small household, metered, low SEG; and

- ◼   'Think about the flow of our H_2O' – children.

6.3.2   Overall, the top three messages listed here were favoured across all the adult groups and appealed the most to the customer segments outlined above. 'Save Water, Save Money' lends itself to be used within a portfolio of "Save Water" messages. For example, whilst a 'Save Water … Save Money' message will influence metered customers, an associated message such as 'Save Water … Save the Planet' or 'Save Water … Save Our Local Environment' may resonate with non-metered customers and children. Even 'Save Water, Water Companies Are' might be well received by all. This umbrella campaigning would have the additional benefit of re-enforcing the idea that everyone's doing their bit, with all being at least slightly touched when receiving any of the portfolio messages.

6.3.3   Most groups suggested amalgamating the messages to make them more memorable and impactful.

6.3.4   However, for the messages to be successful, the barriers outlined above will need to be overcome. If they can be then messages like those above, or an amalgam such as "Saving water: Together we can make a difference" can be successful in engaging the public to save water.

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Appendix

Appendix A – Topic Guide

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Discussion Guide: CCWater – Testing messages

Focus Group Objectives:

The purpose of these groups is to test the 10 messages that have been put together by the water industry and to identify participants' emotional reactions to the messages. The messages are about conserving water and getting people to think more about the amount of water they use. The groups will also identify the sorts of campaign messages that participants remember and the reason why they resonate with them. Central to the groups is identifying what they think of the messages presented to them, and also if they can think of any other messages that would have more impact.

Introduction to Group (2 minutes)

■ Good evening, thank then for coming along, your name, explain MVA.

■ Explain "rules" (phones off, no right or wrong answers, anonymity, recorder etc) adhering to the code of conduct of the Market Research Society and that Data Protection Act.

Introduce members of group (3 minutes)

■ Participants introduce themselves, first name and where they live

Campaign Messages (10 minutes)

We have asked respondents to think about any specific messages they remember before attending the group – Probe for the messages they have remembered - The important thing to get people to discuss is messages which they feel have made them think about the things they do or the way they behave. **Be clear that you are interested in any type of messages and NOT water specific campaigns.**

■ What campaign messages are you aware of?

■ Have these campaigns affected your attitude or behaviour? How has your behaviour changed

[Prompt: "THINK – Don't Drink & Drive; tiredness can kill take a break"; "5-a-day", "Every little helps", "The car in front"; donating blood messages, Wash at cooler temperatures. Have they given blood/ driven more slowly/ eaten more fruit? – With the 5-a-day message if they do not mention it probe if they have heard of it, if yes, how are they aware of that campaign?]

■ Why do you think you've remembered this/these message[s]?

■ What is the main 'trigger' that has made the message sink-in?

[Prompt: if participants are only referring to visual campaigns probe for audio and messages they have seen in the press]

■ Can you think of any Water specific message campaigns? especially ones from your water company?

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Using water   (15 minutes)

- How do you use water? What do you think when you are using water? [probe get them to think about the times that they use water eg filling a kettle, running a bath, buying a new appliance]

- To what extent do you think about the amount of water you use?

- Do you feel that people should use less water? WHY? [generate a list of key words associated with using/ saving water – use flipchart]

  – [IF PARTICIPANTS ARE UNCONVINCED THAT SAVING WATER IS RIGHT EXPLAIN]: Some areas in the UK have a water shortage; all areas have a risk of having a hose-pipe-ban and water companies continually deplete natural river levels, etc.

  – [IF NECESSARY, ALSO POINT OUT A POSSIBLE FINANCIAL INCENTIVE]: If your water region had an abundance of water, it could sell some to 'Water-Stretched' regions reducing the bill for domestic customers]

  – [FINAL PROMPT]:   Some areas in the world have a water shortage.

- How and when is water wasted? Who wastes water? What are the barriers to being less wasteful with water?

- How much water do you think you use? [Prompt: use show material to demonstrate how much water people use]

- How do you think water can be conserved? [allow a few moments discussion and then show them the *'Top Ten Tips'* **use show material** for conserving water – also show any devices which you have]

[PROBE: what do they think are the reasons people do not conserve water]

Individual Strap-lines/messages   [40 minutes]

CONTEXT OF MESSAGES: It is anticipated that the message will feature on pamphlets, bills, the backs of envelopes and also be used for radio and TV adverts. The campaign will need to appeal across the country, underneath the strap-line there will be a reason why and a regionally specific reason for the message. The message should appeal like the 5-a-day message.
Please discuss the messages in the order indicated below so as to vary for each group.

1. Think about the flow of our H_2O

2. Saving water: Together we can make a difference

3. Save water, save money

4. Use water, don't waste it

5. Use Water Wisely

6. Think Green, Think Blue

7. Water is precious, every drop counts

8. Water: a small change can make a big difference

9. Water: Don't let it cost the earth

10. Use water, enjoy water, value water

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For each message ask:

- Ask participants to describe each message in their own words/ what does this message mean to you? Is it meaningful?

- Does the message elicit an emotion? If so, what emotion (positive/negative?; anger/outrage/duty/proactiveness/etc)?

- What is the 'trigger' for this emotion? [e.g. *saving money, save the planet, shared responsibilities, guilt, local scarcity*]

- Does the message 'win you over'? If you repeatedly saw this message, would it change the way you use water? If so, how would it change?

- Who would you expect the message to come from? [Probe: Water companies, government, other?]

Once all messages have been reviewed
[AND IF MESSAGES DISCUSSED FOR <30 MINS]

- Once you have gone through all the messages – Get respondents to match the messages with the reasons/feelings about saving water identified earlier [Use flipchart]

- Split the group into two halves and spend a few minutes deciding which messages are most likely to change peoples' behaviour. Then return to the group to explain why they have chosen these messages.

- who would be the most trusted person/organisation to give this message?

[Back-up Plan/ if time allows]:

- a) Place all 10 messages on the table and ask respondents to detail which messages they like/ dislike and why – Use flip chart to note people's reasons and encourage discussion.

- b) Place word-cards on a table and ask respondents to say which words they would associate with each message. [The words on the cards will be: 'encouraging', 'clever', 'negative', 'advising', 'forceful', 'informing', 'unclear', 'thought-provoking', 'obligation', 'win-win', 'impactful', 'actionable'.

Alternative Messages   [10 minutes]

- Thinking about successful past messages/campaigns, and main issues linked to wasting water, what do you think is missing from the current messages presented to you?

[*prompt: what triggers do you want/need? How could they be incorporated in a slogan?*]

- USE PROJECTIVE TECHNIQUE: If you were the Government Minister responsible for water, which message would you choose to encourage water efficiency? Why?

  - PROMPT: would metering everybody help?

Individual Exercise   [5 minutes]

[*Use form provided and ask participants individually to complete by identifying the top 2 or 3 messages that made a good impressions; and ditto the messages that would most make them change their behaviour*]

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At the end of the group refer them to their local water companies' website where they can get information about how they can conserve water, and what the water companies are doing. There is also useful information on the Consumer Council for Water's (CCWater) website.

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Appendix B – Ranking messages by group

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Appendix B - Message ranking by group

Message	Birmingham	Exeter	Bristol	Newcastle	Brighton	Cardiff	Norfolk	Leeds	Manchester
Save water Save money	**8**	**6**	4	5	0	0	**9**	**7**	1
Water: Don't let it cost the earth	5	**6**	5	2	**10**	2	0	6	3
Use water wisely	2	0	1	**7**	2	5	**9**	1	**6**
Use water, don't waste it	1	0	**10**	3	2	2	3	0	**6**
Water is precious, every drop counts	3	4	2	3	7	2	0	1	4
Water: A small change can make a big differences	2	2	4	2	1	4	1	2	4
Saving water: Together we can make a difference	4	1	4	0	1	**6**	1	1	2
Think Green, Think Blue	1	4	0	5	0	0	0	1	3
Think about the flow of our H$_2$0	0	1	0	0	3	0	6	2	1
Use water, enjoy water, value water	2	0	0	4	1	2	1	1	0

MVA Consultancy provides advice on transport and other policy areas, to central, regional and local government, agencies, developers, operators and financiers.

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