THE NEW SOCIAL HISTORY

How to ask all your patients about voting

April 24, 2021
Maya Alper, she/her
What is ideas42?

we use insights from the behavioral sciences to design solutions to some of the world’s most persistent social problems

Started in 2008 out of a small office at Harvard

Now the largest applied behavioral science firm in the US

Conducted over 250 projects in 45 countries
THE VOTER INNOVATION LAB

We set up a specialized practice to support voters.

We’re using behavioral science to achieve a vibrant, multi-racial democracy in the United States that equitably empowers and encourages every person to be civically active.
WE WORK ACROSS THE SPACE

Election Officials - state and local
We provide direct support to improve resources and services offered to voters
(reached over 50 million voters in 2020)

Voting Nonprofits
We partners with leading orgs to improve their efficacy and provide innovation capacity
(reached over 20 million voters in 2020)

Direct to Voters
We deliver innovations through touchpoints that meet people where they are (e.g., direct mail; ERs)
(reached over 10 million voters in 2020)

• Innovative solutions
• Behavioral audits
• Voter research
• Thought-leadership
WE INNOVATE ALONG THE ENTIRE VOTER JOURNEY

We evaluate the interplay of the voting context and psychology to design solutions that facilitate equitable turnout.

Is voting easy enough? + Do people want to vote?

Do voting laws and policies support equitable access?

Are available resources reaching all people?

Do communities face targeted suppression?

Is voting personal?

Does it matter to you socially?

Do you think you can change material outcomes?
A LOOK AT VOTER REGISTRATION
WHERE DO MOST PEOPLE REGISTER TO VOTE?

- 45% of registrations occurred at the DMV
- 16% Online
- 15% Mail, Fax, Email
- 11% Other
- 9% In Person

So who ends up registered to vote?
AMONG PEOPLE NOT REGISTERED TO VOTE, WHAT PERCENT HAVE BEEN ASKED TO REGISTER BY…

The Pew Charitable Trusts. (2017). Why are millions of citizens not registered to vote?
AMONG PEOPLE NOT REGISTERED TO VOTE, WHAT PERCENT HAVE BEEN ASKED TO REGISTER BY…

62% have *never* been asked to register to vote

Candidate or Political Group
Civic Group
Government Agency

WHAT DOES THAT MEAN FOR YOU AS A CLINICIAN?
YOU HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO INVITE YOUR PATIENTS INTO THE ELECTORATE
THE TRADITIONAL DECISION-MAKING MODEL

DECISIONS

- **yes**
  - benefits > costs?

- **no**
  - yes
  - no

ACTIONS

- **A**
- **B**

OUTCOME

- yes
- no

we decide “yes” if benefits > costs

action naturally follows from decision
THE BEHAVIORAL MODEL…

DECISIONS

- Yes
- No
- I don’t know

ACTIONS

- How difficult is it?
- What’s everyone else doing?
- Am I in the mood?
- Will it take long?
- Can I just do it tomorrow?

OUTCOME

- Was I already “good” today?
REPETITION CAN HELP BRIDGE THE INTENTION ACTION GAP

Familiarity breeds comfort

Reminders can prompt action

ACROSS CONTEXTS, CREATING A MOMENT OF CHOICE GENERATES NEW REGISTRATIONS

The Filer Voter experiment: How effective is voter registration at tax time?
Vanessa Williamson - Tuesday, April 2, 2019

I Will Register and Vote, If You Teach Me How: A Field Experiment Testing Voter Registration in College Classrooms

Do Voter Registration Drives Increase Participation? For Whom and When?
David W. Nickerson, University of Notre Dame
ACROSS CONTEXTS, CREATING A MOMENT OF CHOICE GENERATES NEW REGISTRATIONS

THE BOTTOM LINE:

ASK EVERY PATIENT TO REGISTER TO VOTE

David W. Nickerson, University of Notre Dame
YOU HAVE POWER AS A MESSENGER

Status + Connectedness
WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR YOU?

Create a moment of choice

Make it easy
WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR YOU?

Create a moment of choice

Make it easy
ASK EVERY PATIENT TO REGISTER TO VOTE
QUESTIONS

Reach out to me at maya@ideas42.org!