

11. Sponsor: We Are What We Do

Challenge

Design an application that facilitates positive behaviors, helping people to embed positive mental health activities as part of their daily lives. Typically solutions to this problem take a direct approach, which can put off many people who don't want to be involved in activities that are associated with mental health, but we want a solution that embeds these positive behaviors into a product or service that isn't overtly associated with improving mental health. Your solution should have mainstream appeal and be something that could become part of popular culture.

Background

Mental health is a major issue affecting the UK population. 25% of people in Britain will experience mental health problems every year. It costs the NHS a great deal and causes billions in lost earnings from sick days every year. Approximately half of mental health issues are 'common mental disorders', such as depression and anxiety, and it is these this brief is focused on (as opposed to psychotic disorders such as schizophrenia).

Recent trends in psychology have focused not only on treating these illnesses but also on preventing them. Just as we should live healthy lifestyles even when we are physically well (eating well, exercising, not smoking etc.), so as to build up resilience and lower our chances of becoming physically unwell, similarly, psychologists say we should practice certain activities in order to lessen the chances of us developing mental illnesses.

Considerations

- When designing your solution, please bear in mind the incentives for people to use it or buy it aside from wanting to improve their mental health.

Examples of activities that build resilience and promote good mental health include:

- Spending time with the people you love: friends, family, colleagues, and neighbors
- Being active: doing a physical activity you enjoy
- Learning something: stretching yourself, rediscovering an old interest or trying something new
- Doing something for someone else: being part of a team, helping someone out, thinking of others
- Looking around you: thinking beyond your internal thoughts, appreciating what you're doing and noticing beauty

The following would all be viable responses:

- A service that establishes well-being habits incidentally
- A service that provides something useful to customers & helps them improve their mental well-being
- A consumer product that changes the way people behave
- An everyday activity or event people can take part in

Target audience

The audience is global. Within that, target your user group and profile them accordingly.

Further information on sponsor

www.wearewhatwedo.org

This brief was devised in collaboration with We Are What We Do, a not-for-profit behavior change company with many years of experience in shifting the everyday behaviors of individuals and tackling a series of major social and environmental issues. They create mainstream products and services, which are useful or desirable in their own right and facilitate positive behaviors, allowing them to have a major, sustainable impact on the issues they address.