

The Green Smackdown: A Case Study in Driving Behavior Change

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What Is the Green Smackdown?

Two employees competed to decrease their CO₂ footprint

- Measured their initial footprint
- Chose which changes to make for a week
- Recruited others to join their team



The Smackdown Week

The contenders and their teams:

- Changed habits
- Talked about it – blog posts, tweets, videos, photos, emails



A screenshot of a Twitter thread from the #GreenSmackdown event. The tweets are displayed in a vertical list, each with a profile picture of a stylized letter 'A' and a 'Tw' logo. The tweets are as follows:

- engineeringmind** : #GreenSmackdown If Mking wins, a little piece of each of us dies. Please take 2 mins. and sign up: <http://bit.ly/tLhrK> 2009-09-25 09:37:14 [Reply](#)
- engineeringmind** : Marketing will stop at nothing to win the #GreenSmackdown: <http://twitvid.com/6E762>. Disappointed, but not surprised. 2009-09-24 13:45:57 [Reply](#)
- ShelleyGret** : Nice work! RT [@brianhpowell](#): [@ShelleyGret](#) #greensmackdown I ate at my desk for lunch instead of driving. #datecancelled 2009-09-23 13:48:16 [Reply](#)
- engineeringmind** : Nice! The slight dinge that remains is your badge of honor from Mother Earth! RT [@crelf](#) #greensmackdown Washing my clothes in cold water. 2009-09-22 11:21:51 [Reply](#)
- ShelleyGret** : #greensmackdown Taking the stairs (to the 8th floor!) saving LOTS of elevator energy...<http://www.twitvid.com/6AF2C> 2009-09-22 10:34:27 [Reply](#)

The Smackdown Results

- Nearly **300** participants
 - Each person did something to cut their footprint for a week
- The two contenders made enough changes in **1 week** to cut their combined footprint by **38 tons**
 - Average American footprint: 27 tons

Why Did It Work?

- Made something overwhelming manageable – just try it for **a week**
- Used **multiple** successful behavior change techniques
 - Knowledge to perform – Concise list of doable habit changes
 - Peer pressure
 - Peer support and accountability
 - Reward for behaving the “right” way

