

A top-down view of various gambling items scattered on a green felt surface. In the center, a white tablet with a black screen displays the title text. Surrounding the tablet are several playing cards, including a 10 of hearts and a 9 of spades. There are stacks of red, green, black, and blue chips. Several red dice are also visible, some showing different faces.

**Communicating safer
gambling
messages with low and
moderate-risk gamblers**

January 2019

Project overview

Introduction

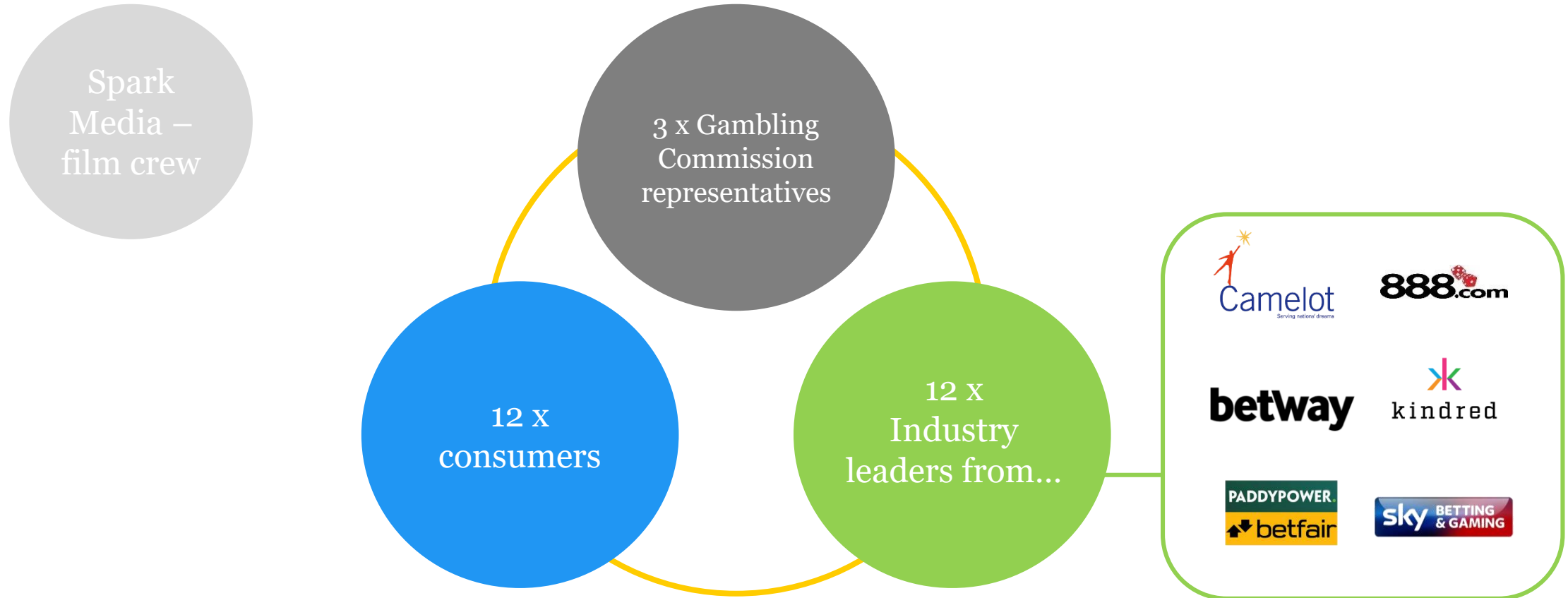
This report comes off the back of a half-day workshop featuring consumers, industry leaders and the regulator focusing on communicating safer gambling messages with low or moderate-risk gamblers. The objectives for the day were:

1. To collaborate with industry leaders to help find ways to reduce the risk of people being harmed by gambling.
2. To understand the current knowledge held by both industry leaders and the regulator, then to combine this with a consumer perspective.
3. To publish a write-up of the day, in particular covering the topics discussed and the views shared on structuring and communicating safer gambling messages to this cohort.

This report provides a write-up of the event, which encouraged consumers to share their views on how operators should communicate with them in a supportive and collaborative way, leading to a safer gambling environment.

Formal requirements relating to Customer Interaction are contained within the **Licence Conditions and Codes of Practice**, which sets out what gambling operators must do in order to hold an operating licence in Great Britain.

Who attended the workshop?



Who were the consumers?

The twelve consumers recruited to attend the workshop all scored between 1-3 on the short-form Problem Gambling Severity Index (PGSI) (Volberg, 2012), which was developed from the full 9-item PGSI.

This instrument is formed of three questions, which are scored on a 4-point scale from never to almost always, asked to all participants who have gambled at least once in the last 12 months. Responses are scored from 0 - 3 resulting in a total possible score of 9. Respondents are then categorised by their total score, as follows:

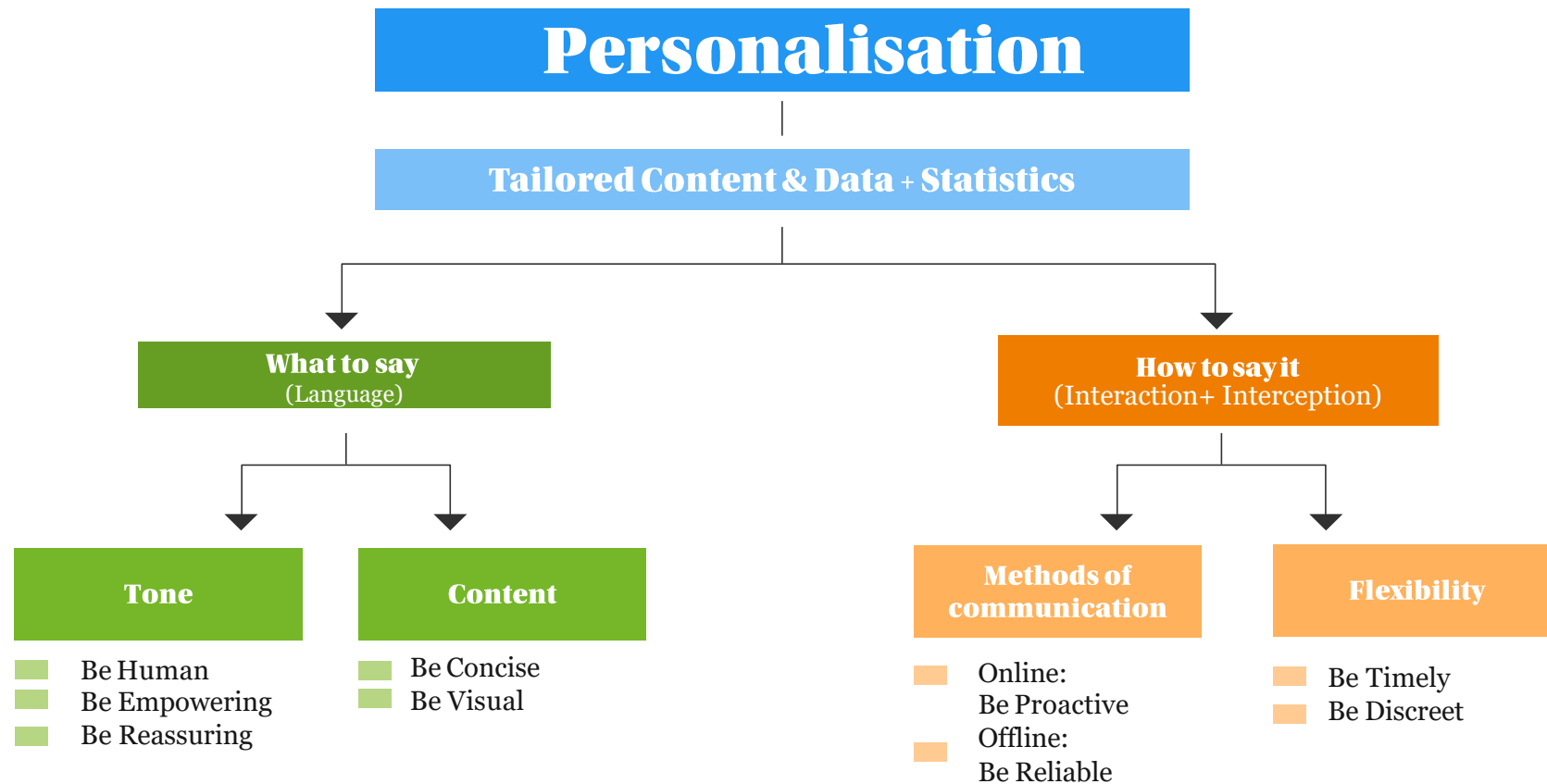
- 0 Non-problem gambler
- 1 Low-risk gambler
- 2-3 Moderate risk gambler
- 4+ Problem gambler

The consumers were recruited to represent a cross-section of participation on different gambling products, both online and offline.

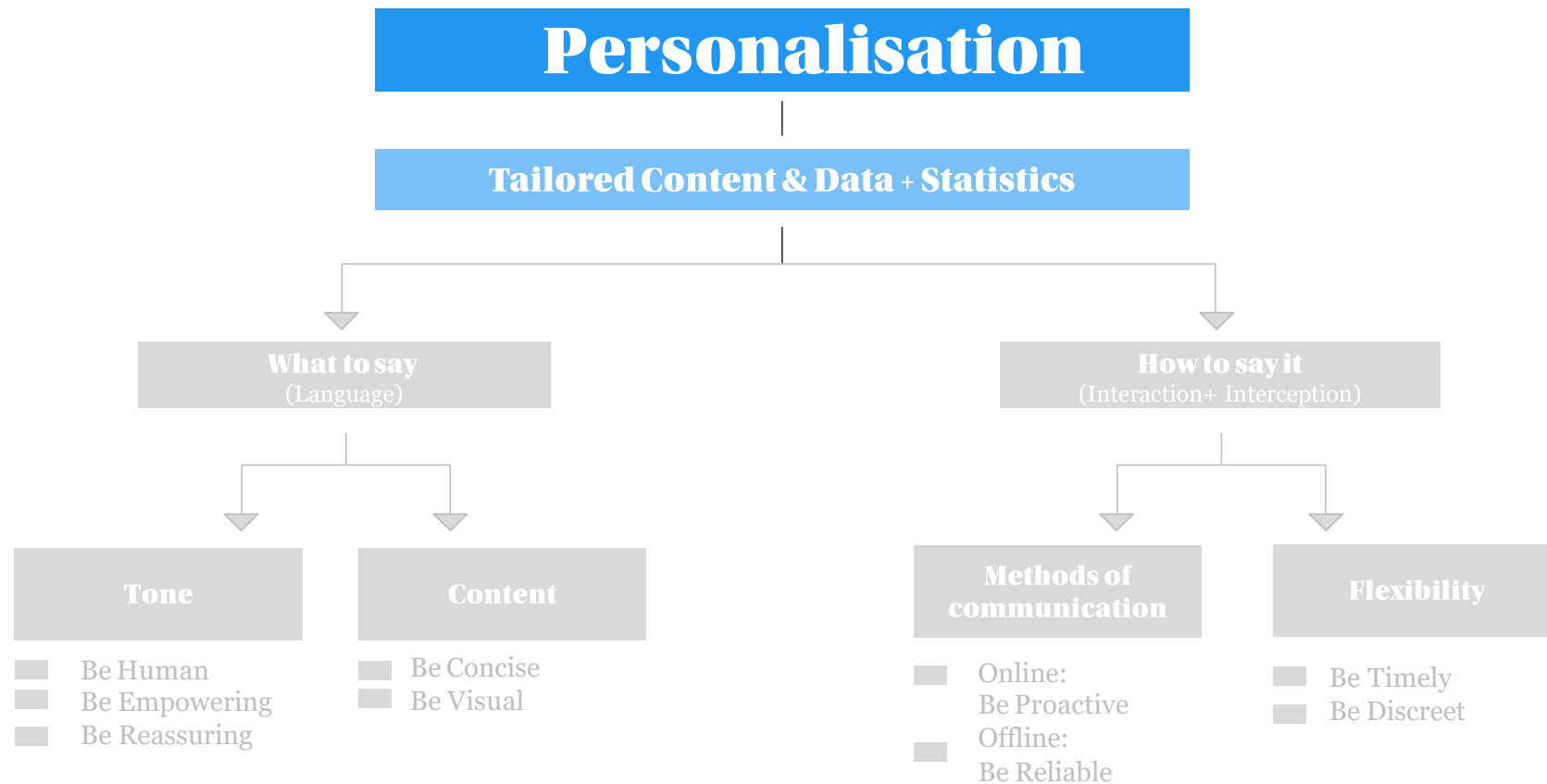


Workshop findings

Overview



Overview



Safer gambling messages need to be personalised to maximize impact

Tailored content

What do we mean?

Content that is bespoke to consumers based on their habits and preferences

Data + statistics

What do we mean?

Quantifiable data that is only relevant to a consumers personal account

Tailored content

The role of communication can be two fold, not only to engage consumers through marketing but also drive home messages around safer gambling when delivered in a way that's relevant to them.

Consumers want content which is tailored to their preferences, which feels relevant for them and does not feel like a blanket communication to everyone. This also applies to safer gambling messages.

Misplaced or too frequent messaging is often a trigger that prevents consumers from checking emails from the industry. More tailored, selective and therefore engaging content can have a positive impact on delivering safer gambling messages, which should be seen in the context of the overall communications mix.

Think about:

- Building rapport is vital for successful communications and is equally important for safer gambling messages to consumers.
- Be flexible and personalise the right message delivered in the right way at the right time for consumers.

“ I don't want deals for Ice Hockey when I don't even watch it”



“ I bought a pizza from there once and now every Tuesday I get the same buy 1 get 1 free deal. I don't even look at it anymore”

Data and stats

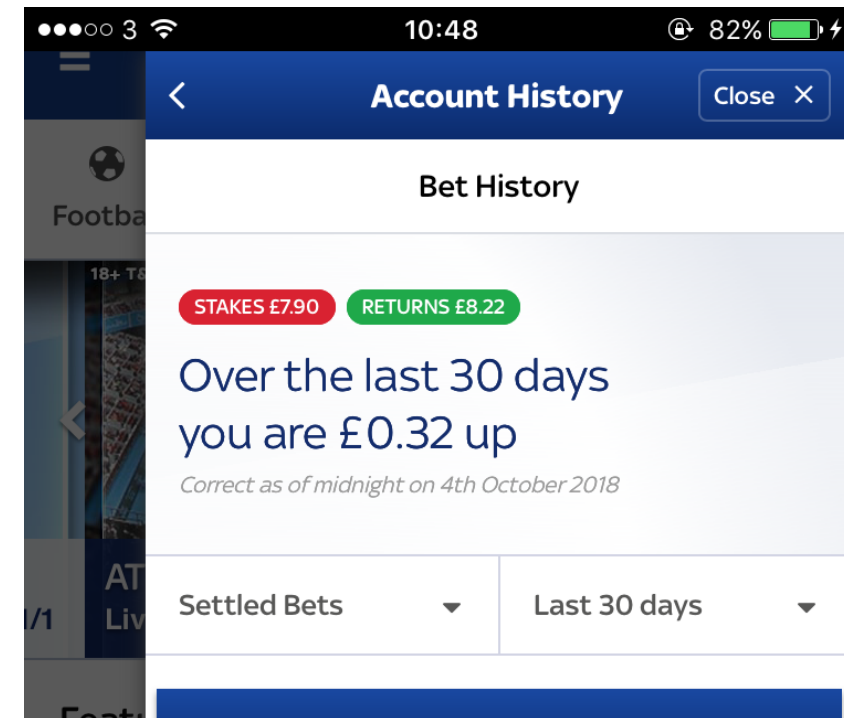
Despite research revealing consumers respond positively to information within the context of social norms (e.g. comparing people to a national average), we found that participants actually reacted negatively to this normative feedback in the workshop. It was unclear however whether such feedback would change behaviour, even when the participants said they did not like it.

Consumers said that being measured against an average made them feel as though they were being compared to unrelatable metrics, as opposed to things specifically personal to them.

However, statistics in relation to Personalisation Feedback Intervention (PFI - information in relation to consumer gambling activities and transactions) was seen as useful.

Think about:

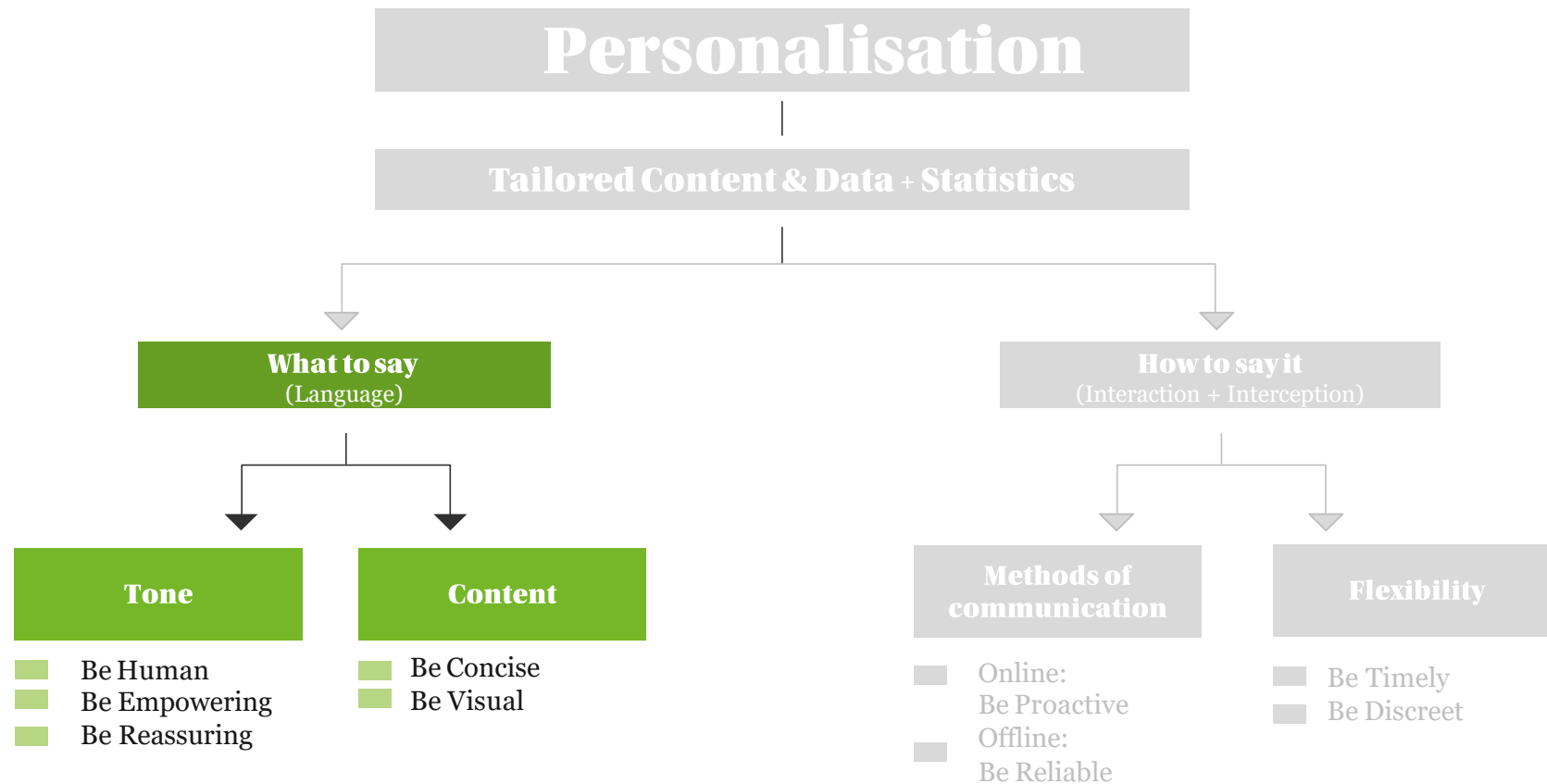
- Regular stat updates with personal account activity will allow consumers to track their spend.
- Produce 'bank statement' style updates for easy viewing, but importantly not in a 'boring' way like bank statements – make it visually more engaging.
- Further explore normative feedback with consumers in terms of behaviour change.



Quick visual displays like this example from Skybet were called out to be a very effective and simple account overview.

**Consideration of
*'What to say' and 'How to say it'***

What to say



How does this affect 'What to say'?

What to say can be broken down into two core parts. The **tone** and the resulting **content**.



TONE

What do we mean?

The expression of a message to prompt a particular feeling, mood or action



CONTENT

What do we mean?

The information that is presented to consumers from the operators

The tone consists of three key themes...

Be
Human

Speaking in an authentic way that fosters genuine trust and a two-way relationship with consumers.

Be
Empowering

Putting consumers in control of their decisions and championing them from the side lines to make educated choices.

Be
Reassuring

Normalise the use of player protection measures by promoting them using positive language.

Don't be a faceless voice...be more human

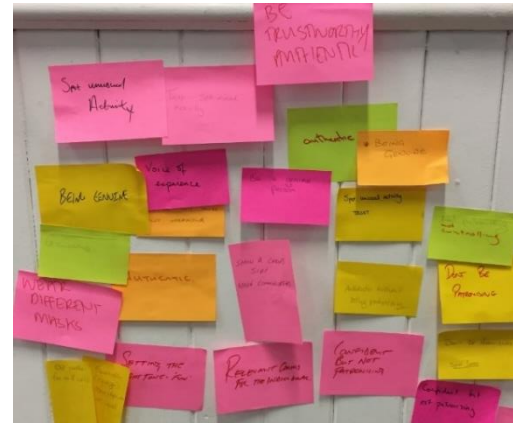
Be Human

Speaking in an authentic way that fosters genuine trust and a two-way relationship with consumers.

Consumers crave operators to be authentic in their communications, including safer gambling messages. It was important to them that they felt like they knew the brand to fully engage with the communications.

Authenticity doesn't need to mean consumers are only speaking with one point of contact, authenticity means consumers want to know they are having a genuine conversation and do not feel that they are just a 'number in the algorithm'.

Operators need to take steps to avoid coming across as patronising in their tone. Consumers said they gamble to have fun so tone needs to be realistic instead of condescending.



Think about:

- Be authentic in your tone, otherwise it will alienate your consumers.
- Use less jargon and avoid 'regulatory' terms that may confuse consumers, instead focus more on language which consumers can relate to.
- Operators should be consistent in terminology across their own brand, to drive a consistent message that resonates with consumers and will initiate action.
- Consider your 'voice' in the eyes of the consumer.


Empower me to be the one in control

Be Empowering

Putting consumers in control of their decisions and championing them from the side lines to make educated choices.

The word ‘control’ was highlighted in red multiple times in the Red Pen, Green Pen exercise*, it was felt as too authoritative and demanding. It felt too much like being *told* what to do rather than being *advised* or *suggested* what to do.

Consumers felt as it is their account and their money they should be expected to be in control at all times unless their behaviour suggests otherwise. They do not want a ‘shadow’ peering behind them to challenge their decisions, however, operators should take action to ensure they are empowering consumers to make safe choices.



- Control
- Rules
- Stop
- Responsible
- Limit
- Danger

Words that consumers reacted negatively to

Think about:

- Put the user in the driving seat by giving them the tools/info in easily accessible places e.g. providing easy click through hyperlinks in email content, empowering consumers to click through where they feel necessary. Tools should also be easily identifiable and accessible both online and in-store with click throughs and branded content.
- Give consumers a transparent overview of their accounts. Make it as simple as possible for consumers to see their account activity in a meaningful way.


Be reassuring in communicating safer gambling messages

Be Reassuring

Normalise the use of player protection measures by promoting them using positive language.

In the Red Pen, Green Pen exercise, positive words like “*healthy*”, “*balanced*” and “*enjoyment*” were highlighted by consumers as being ones which they would react more positively towards.

When it comes to communicating safer gambling messages, consider promoting them using language such as this in order to help make them a normal part of the consumer gambling experience.



- Check-in
- Balance
- Enjoy
- Options
- Support

Words that consumers reacted positively to

Think about:

- Use words and terms that elicit positive feelings e.g. balance, enhance, support, healthy.
- The benefits of safer gambling tools needs to be clearly explained, in a positive way.
- Avoid strong or harsh language that might move a positive, ‘feel good’ message into something negative e.g. warning, limits, control.

How does it affect 'What to say'?

What to say can be broken down into two core parts. The **tone** and the resulting **content**.



TONE

What do we mean?

*The expression of a message
to prompt a particular
feeling or mood*



CONTENT

What do we mean?

*The information that is
presented to consumers from
the operators*

Content should...

Be
Concise

Communications should be pithy, to the point and digestible with emphasis on one key message.

Be
Visual

A picture is worth a thousand words and the same can be said for data visualisation. Imagery and infographics break up text and catch the eye.

Be concise with what you're telling me

Be Concise

Communications should be pithy, to the point and digestible with emphasis on one key message.

Keep content short and to the point. Participants said that they want to avoid reading wordy or lengthy content.

Current emails are often too long and as a result can go unread. The fear is the messages become too long and end up looking like a list of terms and conditions, which impacts both current and future communications.

Pop-up messages were seen to be more effective because they are short and in the moment encouraging System 1* thinking. However, we need to also consider that the pop-up messages were seen as effective because it required a response in order to keep playing – therefore are not the definitive solution in all situations.



“ I don't even read it, I just delete it”

Think about:

- Use frequent short messages rather than long messages that will put consumers off from reading.
- Pop-up messages that are short and in-the-moment were popular choices for engaging consumers to drive active response.

Use data visualization to present information

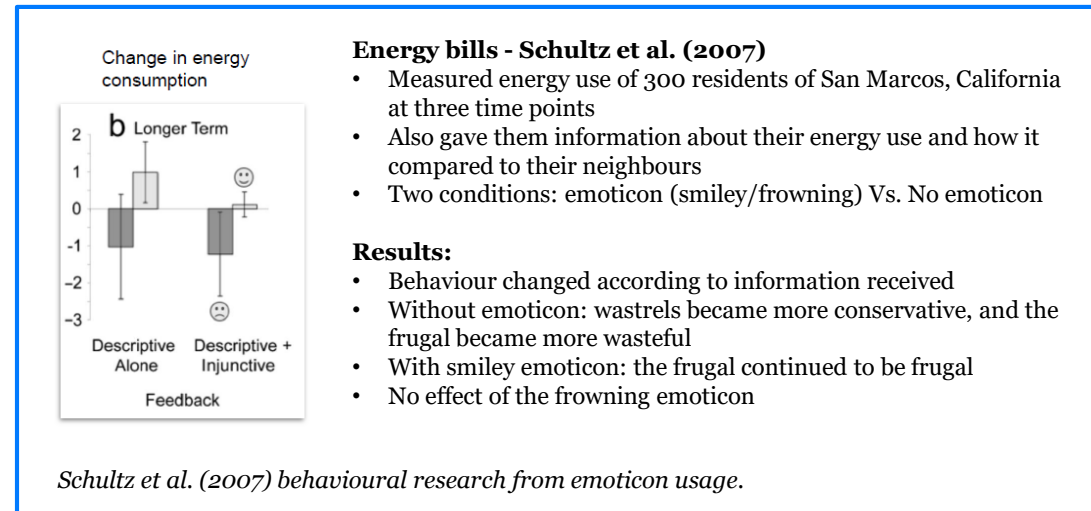
Be Visual

A picture is worth a thousand words and the same can be said for data visualisation. Imagery and infographics break up text and catch the eye.

Use visuals and graphics to communicate information in a digestible format for consumers.

Visuals help consumers to quickly grasp what information is being conveyed at a glance.

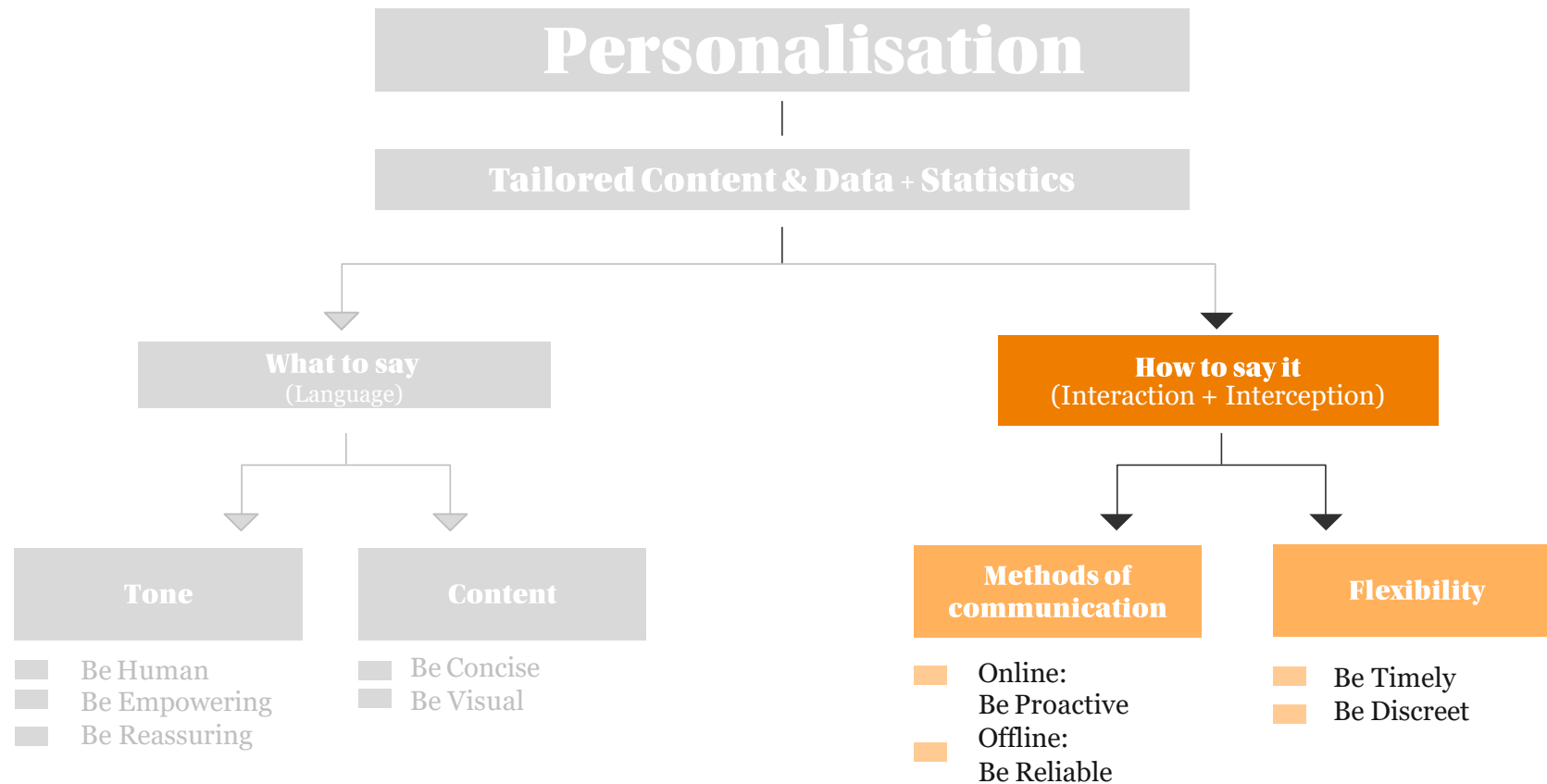
Research has shown that the use of simple positive reinforcement through visuals (e.g. happy and sad faces) have an impact on how information is received by the participants.



Think about:

- Create a set of visuals that are easily recognisable and can codify different messages.
- Operators should work together to explore standardised iconography across different brands so they become recognisable to consumers across different products / brands.

How to say it



How does it affect 'How to say it'?

'How to say it' can be broken down into two core approaches?:

METHODS OF COMMUNICATION

What do we mean?

*The channels used to
communicate to consumers*

FLEXIBILITY

What do we mean?

*The point in time when
operators choose to contact
consumers*

Communication follows two key themes...

Be
Proactive

Link existing tools to relevant communications to make the click through seamless, be selective with tools matching them to specific consumer needs.

Be
Reliable

Whilst tone and content should flex based on the need, the brand voice should remain consistent across channels to build trust and rapport.

Be proactive...and promote your tools

Be Proactive

Link existing tools to relevant communications to make the click through seamless, be selective with tools matching them to specific consumer needs.

The majority of operators already have a range of tools that aim to promote and encourage safer gambling.

However they are often hard to find, which can discourage consumers from spontaneously seeking them out.

Accessibility of tools should be more transparent and user friendly.

This was especially the case when it comes to emails, where links to suggested tools are not always provided meaning users have to actively go to the website/app to find them, therefore adding further pain points into the journey.

Think about:

- Utilise the tools already in existence by placing them in easy to access places on the website/ apps/ hyperlinks.
- Operators should work together to create a consistent industry tool package that consumers can grow familiar with across brands.
- Provide links in other messaging providing another option for access.
- Provide snappier descriptions to tools with visual backing to help quickly inform consumers what tools are for.



Sky Bet created a dedicated safer gambling ad in a campaign called 'Three Simple Tools'.

Be reliable with your online and offline comms

Be Reliable

Whilst tone and content should flex based on the need, the brand voice should remain consistent across channels to build reliability and rapport.

We heard that offline consumers had minimal recall regarding the types of safer gambling communication they receive. At a stretch, some remembered small in-store signage that had limited effect on their gambling habits.

Their general consensus is that online is a step ahead of offline when it comes to communicating consistently with consumers.

Messaging and approach needs to be consistent across channels and platforms but brought to life appropriately for different environments (e.g. in person communications offline versus pop-ups online).

Think about:

- Apply lessons learned online to the offline environment (e.g. adding these onto betting slips or as part of the in store communications).
- Allow offline consumers to have greater access to the tools that are available online for safer gambling (e.g. through signing up via emails with hyperlinks or having safer gambling pop-ups in store).
- Foster collaboration amongst operators to create a consistent safer gambling experience (e.g. using consistent iconography or messaging on the subject of safer gambling so there is a common anchoring across the industry).

Case study for reference:

Birchbox the online beauty-box specialist mirrored the success of their online platform into their physical stores. Product is merchandised by category rather than brand which goes against the standards of normal beauty stores. iPads are also strategically placed to show product tutorials and reviews to further merge the physical store with the digital realm.



How does it affect 'How to say it'?

'How to say it' can be broken down into two core approaches?:

METHODS OF COMMUNICATION

What do we mean?

*The channels used to
communicate to consumers*

FLEXIBILITY

What do we mean?

*The point in time when
operators choose to contact
consumers*

Timing is of the essence when it comes to delivering impactful messages...

Be
Timely

Know your consumers, to know the best moment to make contact and open channels of communication to target the right need at the right time.

Be
Discreet

Discretion is key to building trust and a two way conversation. Timing and channels should always be considered to understand the best mode of communication.

Be timely, know the best time to speak to consumers

Be Timely

Know your consumers, to know the best moment to make contact and open channels of communication to target the right need at the right time.

Many operators previously felt that calls were best, but consumers may work 9-5 jobs, which is when they most often receive communications from operators. This means they often do not pick up and a voicemail leaves little impetus to respond.

It is about knowing consumers and therefore knowing the best moment for interaction.

We also heard a discrepancy in timing preferences when it came to receiving news (whether good or bad). Therefore we should time interactions to maximise impact while remaining mindful of the channel and driven by consumer preferences.

Phone calls generally result in effective interactions as concerns can be genuinely conveyed and tools such as deposit limits can be explained. However, the vast majority of consumers simply do not answer the phone quickly enough when we have concerns.

- 888.Com consumer interaction research 2018

Think about:

- Ask consumers to give details on the best time to be contacted and best channel of communication via live chat or text messages to organise best time to speak.
- Take learnings from the logistics industry so consumers can pick a time to receive communications (e.g. DPD delivery).
- Be timely with the things you want to communicate based on the circumstances, consumer preferences and other planned comms.

Gambling is personal so discretion is key

Be Discreet

Discretion is key to building trust and a two way conversation, timing and channels should always be considered to understand the best mode of communication.

During the exercise, consumers fed back that many of the 'worst' ideas for communicating safer gambling messages tended to be the ones surrounding exposure or public calls to action targeting at an individual.

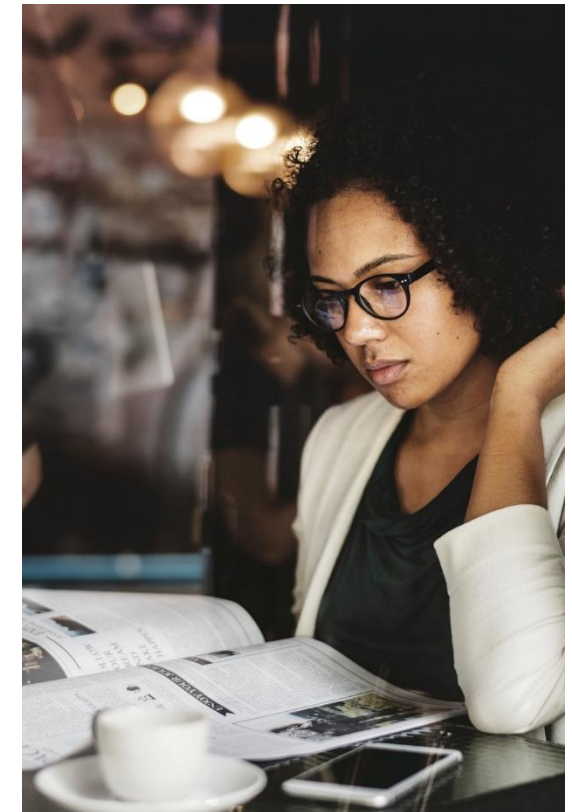
This revealed a deeper insight that even consumers with low PGSI scores see their current and historic gambling behaviour as something highly personal. It didn't matter if it was good news or bad news, they did not want the world to know about their habits.

Ideas most well received were those that were discreet and targeted the individual subtly.

“ *I don't want everyone to know about my news and gambling habits.* ”

Think about:

- Use push notifications and email titles as teasers to convince consumers to open safer gambling messages.
- Provide the user with multiple communication options so they can choose the ideal ways they wish to be contacted.



Conclusions

Summary: 'What to say'

Be Human

Speaking in an authentic way that fosters genuine trust and a two-way relationship with consumers.

- Be authentic in your tone, otherwise it will alienate your consumers.
- Use less jargon and avoid 'regulatory' terms that may confuse consumers, instead focus more on language which consumers can relate to.
- Operators should be consistent in terminology across their own brand, to drive a consistent message that resonates with consumers and will initiate action.
- Consider your 'voice' in the eyes of the consumer.

Be Empowering

Putting consumers in control of their decisions and championing them from the side lines to make educated choices.

- Put the user in the driving seat by giving them the tools/info in easily accessible places e.g. providing easy click through hyperlinks in email content, empowering consumers to click through where they feel necessary. Tools should also be easily identifiable and accessible both online and in-store with click throughs and branded content.
- Give consumers a transparent overview of their accounts. Make it as simple as possible for consumers to see their account activity in a meaningful way.

Be Reassuring

Normalise the use of player protection measures by promoting them using positive language.

- Use words and terms that elicit positive feelings e.g. balance, enhance, support, healthy.
- The benefits of safer gambling tools needs to be clearly explained, in a positive way.
- Avoid strong or harsh language that might move a positive, 'feel good' message into something negative e.g. warning, limits, control.

Be Concise

Communications should be pithy, to the point and digestible with emphasis on one key message.

- Use frequent short messages rather than long messages that will put consumers off from reading.
- Pop-up messages that are short and in-the-moment were popular choices for engaging consumers to drive active response.

Be Visual

A picture is worth a thousand words and the same can be said for data visualisation. Imagery and infographics break up text and catch the eye.

- Create a set of visuals that are easily recognisable and can codify different messages.
- Operators should work together to explore standardised iconography across different brands so they become recognisable to consumers across different products / brands.

Summary: 'How to say it'

Be Proactive

Link existing tools to relevant communications to make the click through seamless, be selective with tools matching them to specific consumer needs.

- Utilise the tools already in existence by placing them in easy to access places on the website/ apps/ hyperlinks.
- Operators should work together to create a consistent industry tool package that consumers can grow familiar with across brands.
- Provide links in other messaging providing another option for access.
- Provide snappier descriptions to tools with visual backing to help quickly inform consumers what tools are for.

Be Reliable

Whilst tone and content should flex based on the need, the brand voice should remain consistent across channels to build reliability and rapport.

- Apply lessons learned online to the offline environment (e.g. adding these onto betting slips or as part of the in store communications).
- Allow offline consumers to have greater access to the tools that are available online for safer gambling (e.g. through signing up via emails with hyperlinks or having safer gambling pop-ups in store).
- Foster collaboration amongst operators to create a consistent safer gambling experience (e.g. using consistent iconography or messaging on the subject of safer gambling so there is a common anchoring across the industry).

Be Timely

Know your consumers, to know the best moment to make contact and open channels of communication to target the right need at the right time.

- Ask consumers to give details on the best time to be contacted and best channel of communication via live chat or text messages to organise best time to speak.
- Take learnings from the logistics industry so consumers can pick a time to receive communications (e.g. DPD delivery).
- Be timely with the things you want to communicate based on the circumstances, consumer preferences and other planned comms.

Be Discreet

Discretion is key to building trust and a two way conversation. Timing and channels should always be considered to understand the best mode of communication.

- Use push notifications and email titles as teasers to convince consumers to open messages.
- Provide the user with multiple communication options so they can choose the ideal ways they wish to be contacted.

c_space