

# Why the U.S. Government Is Embracing Behavioral Science

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## *Harvard Business Review:*

For anyone interested in human behavior and decision making, September 15 will likely be a day to remember. On that day, President Obama ordered government agencies to use behavioral science insights to “better serve the American people.” In his executive order, Obama instructed federal agencies to identify policies and operations where applying findings from behavioral science could improve “public welfare, program outcomes, and program cost effectiveness,” design strategies for using behavioral science insights, and recruit behavioral experts whenever considered necessary or helpful. (Here is the full report by the White House Social and Behavioral Science Team, which discusses some of the work that has been already conducted using behavioral insights.)

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Or consider how simple interventions can increase employee happiness and productivity. Lalin Anik, Lara Aknin, Michael Norton, Elizabeth Dunn, and Jordi Quoidbach conducted a series of field experiments in which they found that when employees share their bonuses with coworkers and charities, they are more satisfied and perform at a higher level than those who don't. Giving employees opportunities to spend money on others increases happiness, job satisfaction, and team performance, their research discovered.

Read the whole story: [Harvard Business Review](#)