Almost 30 dollars a week. always used to keep me up at night. And last but not least, my unwanted habit was costing me caused by the highly acidic qualities of coke. The caffeine from the dozen or so soft drinks
defined irrespective of whether I was consistently consuming due to acid reflux, which could have been
drinking a single glass of water and it is a commonly known fact that soft drinks can be
12 sodas a day and my "addiction" was starting to affect my life. Weeks passed without me
Drinking sodas in moderation is certainly not a problem. However, I was drinking 10
in self-monitoring to avoid relapse, and (6) self-reinforcement.
desired goals, (3) designing rewards, (4) making a public commitment to the goal, (5) engaging
press). My steps consisted of: (1) an assessment of the undesired behavior, (2) planning the
designed a plan loosely based on the steps described by Von Berger, Soper, and Caster in
drinks that I consumed daily. After considering the negative effects of my behavior, I began
The focus of my self-management project involved a reduction in the amount of soft
behaviors.

self-management techniques, we have the ability to change these and countless other undesirable
Yet others would like to improve their study habits or writing skills. Through the use of effective
would like to change about ourselves. For some, it might be losing weight or quitting smoking.
Most people do not believe that they are perfect. All of us have some things that we

Applying self-management techniques to reduce soft drink consumption
the study. I also created a large graph tracking my progress, which was posted on the refrigerator.

computer. This list was in plain sight of everyone that came to my apartment during the course of the project. I also obtained a list of the harmful effects of soft drinks, and I posted these on my refrigerator door, near the pantry, and even next to my

never started drinking. The aim was to make it much more difficult to simply pretend that I

they caught me drinking. The aim was to make it much more difficult to simply pretend that I

cutting down on soft drink consumption. They were encouraged to let me know and warn me if

Kline, 1989). With this in mind, I told several friends and family members about my goal of

performance significantly (von Berge, Soper, & Casper, in press; Holdenbeck, Willimas, &


Studies show that making a public commitment regarding self-goal increases

would mean getting the latest video game (a highly desirable reward).

Rewards. For example, earning 20 points would be celebrated by going to a movie, and at 90 points

some type of consequence. Therefore, the points could be converted into various desirable

accumulating points is not necessarily reinforcing if the points (or lack thereof) do not result in

For drinking between 7 and 9 drinks. No points were earned for anything over 9 drinks.

the maximum of 3 points. Drinking between 5 and 6 drinks earned me 2 points, and 1 point

which I earned relative to how many sodas I drank. If I had 4 or less drinks per day, I received

Based on the idea of calculating small wins, I implemented a system of reward points,


Recognizing that change usually occurs gradually is consistent with the "small wins" approach.

Improvements needed to reach a desired result. It is important to reinforce even slight improvements.

Improvements - was crucial for success. Whenever behavior modification techniques are

However, this seemed like quite a big step, and shedding - positively reinforcing small

My goal consisted of reducing my consumption from 12 to around 3 soft drinks per day.
4 a day only 4 times, all of which occurred during the last 10 days of the study.

consumption fell to 4.5 cokes a day. The graph shows that I reached my intended goal of 3 cokes a day for 

onset of the Graph shows the average for the intervention period revealed that 

the average of 10.4 cokes a day. A glance at the graph shows a significant drop in soft drink consumption following the intervention. During the baseline period, an average of 20 cokes a day were consumed each day and shown in measurements.

After the initial one-week baseline period, the intervention was implemented, which was 

how the cartoon chocolate bunnies would cause a pleasantable tingling in my mouth. 

as I anticipated that satisfying first sip of a newly opened ice cold Coca-Cola Classic, I imagined 

soda. Then act in itself seems extremely reinforcing. Perhaps its served as a powerful anchor, another. An interesting observation during this period involved the simple act of opening a can of 

behavior was impossible. In essence, as soon as I finished one drink, I could not wait to open 

since I seemingly drank all the time, pinning down any specific activity that caused this excessive 

music and reading. Several times a night I woke up and had a few sips of coke. Unfortunately, 

were consumed while playing video games, watching television, eating, studying, listening to 

found a link between drinking and the activities that I was engaging in during that time. Sodas 

accurate. Baseline figures ranged from 9 to 12 cokes a day. I was especially interested in trying 

how many sodas I had each day, and my initial estimation of about a dozen cokes was close to 

I measured my baseline performance for one week before the intervention. I counted 

instead of 12-ounce cans. And again - how does one come to this conclusion? 

added an extra element to the intervention, which involved drinking cola from 2 liter bottles.

well as others determine my progress at a quick glance. During the last 10 days of the study, I 

who, if you could, please update daily, providing insight to be a valuable visual tool in helping me as
82 points were accumulated. As a reward, I was able to go to the cinema 4 times (20 points per visit). The following page illustrates the daily points earned during the course of the study. A total of 12 cans of soft drinks were consumed for 12 days. This included the 2 liter plastic bottles of cola, which essentially contained 5.6 fluid ounces of liquid. Consequently, the average number of soft drinks consumed fell to 3.8 cans a week. 

Initially, I began drinking V8 vegetable juice as well as various fruit juices from small containers, but I grew tired of the plastic bottles. Since I knew from the baseline period that opening soft drink cans was an enjoyable activity to me, I began drinking V8 vegetable juice and switching between various fruit juices from small containers. 

Interestingly, the extra reduction in soft drinks consumed with the switch from cans to 2 liter bottles was an unexpected benefit.
plastic bottles, I did not encounter this problem. I simply took a few sips of the soda, and placed it opened a 12-ounce can of coke. I felt almost obligated to finish the whole can. With large 2 liter aluminum cans to plastic bottles was very effective in increasing the desired behavior. When I there to make sure I was not trying to grab a "cold one". Also, switching from drinking sodas in my ration of cokes for the day. When they saw me approaching the hedge, they followed me helped me avoid relapse. Friends seemed to take greater pleasure in always asking me if I have had. I was the greatest single aid that consistently kept me engaged in self-monitoring and that commitment kept me more vigilant of my own behaviors, knowing that others could scrutinize attributes to several parts of the experiment that were quite effective. For one, public project a success. Reducing my consumption level to less than half of my baseline level can be although I did not reach my goal of 3 drinks a day, I consider the self-management

![Graph 2]

price consisting of a new video game: movie during the study. However, I failed to reach 90 points and I was not able to buy my major
receiving the maximum points and staying within the daily drinking limit.

Rewarded points might end up being revised to create a more accurate contingency between
class, and perhaps redesign some aspects of it that have proven to be faulty. My system of
been significant. As such, I am inspired to carry on with the experiment beyond the course of the
Although my self-management study had some drawbacks, the overall improvement has

...day. "This method proved to be effective on quite a few occasions, be able to enjoy it with my favorite TV show at 9 p.m., and I will still be within my limit for the
"deals," with myself, along the lines of, "If I put off drinking this coke for a few hours, then I will

"Casser, in press." Anytime I had the desire have a soft drink I automatically started making

In the principle, the Premack Principle seemed to take effect without any conscious design

more immediate rewards to reinforce my day-to-day improvement. and my persistent cough. Also, looking back at my system of rewards, I should have added many

system seems counterproductive. If I wanted to reach 3 drinks a day, I should not have included

On the other hand, some parts of the project were not as effective. For one, my point
forward to collecting enough points to trade them in for weekend cinema trips.

the bottle back in the fridge. The graph of my progress was also rewarding, and I looked
I was not consciously aware that the simple act of opening a can of coke was so

experiment, one of the problems with this concept is that other people do not know what they
tend to do. (von Beren, Soper & Whisler, 2001,) As evidenced by my own self-management
doing with others as you would have others do unto you — and instead treat others as they wish to
alter for what it is that employees find reinforcing. They should try to avoid the Golden Rule —
Finally, when trying to design incentive systems for their employees, managers must be

the self-regulation framework (Ashford & Tsui, 1991, p. 254),

subsequently to correct behaviors. For this reason, feedback may be the most central aspect of
feedback from their superiors, peers and subordinates to help them detect discrepancies and
initiating them (p. 254). In order to be effective performers, managers must also seek active
that in general, individuals tend to have inaccurate views of their own behavior, often over-
This phenomenon was consistent with the research of Ashford and Tsui (1991), who point out
observed unwarranted behavior (e.g., drinking too often), which occurred more often than I realized.
Furthermore, I received quick and effective warnings from my friends and family when they
regarding my performance. I was better able to understand how others viewed my efforts.
feedback. By making a public commitment and seeking negative as well as positive feedback
Another significant concept used in my self-management study involves activity seeking
employees are no longer excited about the prospect of receiving it

Types of incentives for employees. Satiation occurs when a reinforcer is used so often that
satiation, managers often fail to take advantage of flexible systems when implementing various
satiation, managers often fail to take advantage of flexible systems when implementing various
factors. Also, since using the same reinforcer time and time again can easily result in
tomorrow. Therefore, self-management systems need to be flexible, making them easy to adapt
It is important to remember that what is reinforcing to us today might not be reinforcing
They are free to pursue personal activities.

Reinforcers is through observing how employees spend their time, especially during breaks. When social and tangible rewards employees find rewarding, The key to developing effective soft drinks, Managers are often faced with a similar dilemma of having to pinpoint what type of reinforcing to use until I actively tried to pinpoint the specific causes of my over-indulgence in...
References:


