



(Research on Lifestyles, Values and Environment)  
UNIVERSITY OF SURREY, Guildford, Surrey GU2 7XH

## **FORTHCOMING SEMINAR**

**Thursday 17 June, 2010, 1300-1400**

45b AZ 04  
University of Surrey

**Annie Austin and David Fell**  
Brook Lyndhurst

### **Influential individuals and the diffusion of pro environmental behaviours**

In mainstream commercial marketing, the concept of an 'influencer' is increasingly well established. Through their influence on those around them, particular individuals often play a crucial role in the uptake of new ideas, new products, and new ways of behaving. As such, they are highly prized by marketers interested in peer-to-peer or word of mouth marketing. These ideas have also been employed by social marketers, particularly in the field of health, where influential individuals have been shown to play a part in the establishment of new patterns of positive health behaviours.

In this presentation, we demonstrate how the principles of 'influential individuals' can be applied to the diffusion of pro-environmental behaviours. Based on the findings of an extensive multi-disciplinary evidence review and our own original fieldwork, we explain who these influential individuals are, how they can be found, and how they can contribute to making pro-environmental behaviours the 'norm'. We argue that there is potential to harness the concepts of diffusion and influential individuals as tools for pro-environmental behaviour change campaigns, although the strategy involves several risks.

This research was undertaken by Brook Lyndhurst on behalf of Defra's Environmental Behaviours Unit. Brook Lyndhurst is an independent research and strategy consultancy.

We work on projects that are concerned with understanding, promoting and delivering sustainable development. David Fell is director of Brook Lyndhurst, and Annie Austin is a senior researcher who worked on the 'Influential Individuals' project.

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