

LOOKING INTO LIFESTYLE

Are you forgetting something?

Cue-based reminders can help you remember daily tasks



CUE-BASED REMINDERS can offer a no-cost, low-effort strategy to help people remember to complete the tasks that tend to fall through the cracks in daily life, say researchers. Whether it is paying the electricity bill or taking the clothes out of the dryer, there are many daily tasks that we fully intend to complete and then promptly forget about.

New research suggests that linking these tasks to distinctive cues that we'll encounter at the right place and the right time may help us remember to follow through. "People are more likely to follow through on their good intentions if they are reminded to follow through by noticeable cues that appear at the exact place and time in which follow-through can occur," explained psychological scientist Todd Rogers from Harvard Kennedy School.

Rogers and co-author Katherine Milkman from the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania hypothesised that "reminders through association" may be a tool for remembering and

following through.

Data collected from customers at a coffee shop suggest that the "reminders through association" approach may also be useful for organisations that want to help their clients remember to follow through on intentions. Over the course of one business day, 500 customers were given a coupon that would be valid at the coffee shop two days later.

Only some customers were told that a stuffed alien would be sitting near the cash register to remind them to use their coupon. About 24 percent of the customers who were given a cue remembered to use their coupon compared to only 17 percent of the customers who received no cue - a 40 percent increase in coupon usage. *IANS*



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ALIGN YOUR LIFE

Significance of directions

Compass directions have always played a major role in Feng Shui and Chinese metaphysics. There are many stories and superstitions attached to them. However many directions have an old cultural or socio-economic significance that people tend to overlook or are not aware of. In the last week's column we tried to look at the significance of four directions and debunking the myths attached to them. This week we will look at the remaining four directions.

In the Northern hemisphere the South facing slopes and lands received maximum sunlight and warmth. Therefore it became the direction of summer and light in ancient China. This direction also represented young brides full of hope and warmth. This direction is always associated with the colour red as it is the colour of the sun and also of the wedding dress for a bride in China. This direction was believed to represent success, as the South Capital or Nan Jing is where people found success and fame through hard work.

Southwest is believed to be the direction of love and relationships. Many believed that placing a pair of mandarin ducks in this corner of the house will bring about marriage. However what people don't know is that during olden days Chinese marriages used to take place at sundown. The Chinese character for marriage still shows a woman, a man and sun low in the background. The late afternoon sun was always in the Southwest.

West was the direction of the setting sun and the land of riches, Europe. West was also the direction of hardship and great success if you were able to strike a business deal or sell silk in Europe. Due to this West always ruled the fate of the children who depended on their elders to bring fortunes from the famous silk road. Therefore West was always considered the direction for children, as they would look after the elders during old age and reap benefits of the riches earned in Europe.

The direction of Northwest was considered to be the route of travel in ancient China. This was the route taken by traders to the cold land of the West and many would help each other to survive the journey. Thus it became a direction where you made friends and went through life on the road together. Therefore it was said that the Northwest corner is always for friends who help when in need.

Once you look at the origin of the belief and the cultural significance, directions and their meanings will never be the same for you.

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Photos: Getty

Share personal info, get hired...

A FEMALE APPLICANT strongly raises her chances of getting hired if she gives out personal information, finds a new study, contradicting the conventional theory that if a woman wants equal footing professionally, she should not share any personal information. The findings showed that female candidates who gave personal information clarifying her resume gaps raised their chance of being hired by 30 to 40 percent, compared to a comparable female candidate who provided no personal information.

"Our study provides the first-ever evidence that women who conceal personal information dramatically lower their hiring prospects," said Joni Hersch, professor at Vanderbilt



University in the US.

Employers overwhelmingly preferred to hire female candidates who provided information to explain a resume gap, regardless of content. "If we start to encourage honest conversations between employers and employees on

an official level, it could lead to meaningful change in the quality of applicants, particularly in industries that have been so resistant to providing family-friendly work policies," added one of the researchers, Jennifer Bennett Shinall from Vanderbilt University. *IANS*

WHO WOULD YOU CHOOSE?

For the study, the team included 3,022 people who acted as "potential employers" and had to choose between two job candidates, described as mostly similar except for their openness about a 10-year gap in their job histories. The gap was explained with information such as taking time off to raise children or a recent divorce as the reason for leaving and wanting to re-enter the workforce.